

**PREMARITAL COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS IN SUSTAINING  
MARITAL STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN LANGATA AND  
DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCES, OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DEGREE IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY OF  
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## DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

### Declaration by Student

I declare that this research thesis is my original work and has not previously been presented for the award of a degree in any university.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to thriving marriages which lead to healthy families. This forms the basis of stable successful societies where peace and harmony prevail within communities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge Mount Kenya University for giving me the opportunity to pursue my doctoral studies in Counselling Psychology through this institution. My supervisors namely Dr. Owen Ngumi and Dr. Susan M. Macharia, for professional guidance, constructive criticism and encouragement, from inception to completion of this work. In addition, I wish to acknowledge Dr. Maroko, Head of Department of Psychology, for constant positive word of encouragement and professionalism. Professor Kavulya of Catholic University of Eastern Africa, for allowing me to use the library at will. Special appreciation to my spouse, Laban Marang'a, for emotional and financial support. Our children Wambui, Kibuka and Levi Machira; together with their families; for motivation as I continued writing the thesis. Appreciation is extended to research assistants led by Rose Njoroge, Waithaka, Kimani, Njeri and Florence Mwaura. Finally, I thank all married men and women who filled the questionnaires and premarital counsellors who participated in interviews, within the area of study.

## ABSTRACT

Marriage is regarded as the primary relationship between men and women in many societies and cultures of the world. Considering this reality, this study assessed premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability. Specifically, the study sought to determine current status of marriage stability, explored influence of communication skills, examined spousal romance and investigated financial management skills, among couples; who undertook Premarital Counselling. The study was anchored on Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory as advanced by Albert Ellis (2005) and Contextual Family Therapy theory by Boszormenyi-Nagy, (1987). Mixed methods research design comprising of Survey, Phenomenological and *ex-posto facto* Causal Comparative; were used in gathering statistical elements of data, which enriched the research with the behavioural characteristics of respondents. The study sample comprised of 416 married men and women participants, identified from Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County. Probability sampling technique through systematic random sampling identified the participants. Research tools included questionnaires for gathering quantitative data and fill-in section for qualitative data. To ensure validity of the research instruments, the researcher personally generated the instruments and submitted them for expert judgement on content validity. Reliability was ascertained by carrying out a pilot study (test and retest) with fifteen participants. Results obtained repeatedly, ensured the instruments were reliable and acceptable; with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient above 0.7. Regarding qualitative instruments the researcher ensured reliability by submitting them to experts in marriage counselling. Quantitative data was subjected to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS); for analysis. Results were expressed statistically and presented in tables, percentiles, pie charts and bar graphs. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in narratives. Key findings at the completion of the study indicated that couples who went through premarital counselling experienced greater commitment to spouse, enhanced affective communication, cordial co-existence and couple cohesion; culminating in marriage stability and longevity. The study further established that romance created cooperation and sexual intimacy leading to spousal fulfilment and contentment. About financial management skills, budgeting, trust in handling family finances, openness in savings, investment and living within one's means; contributed to stability of marriages. The study recommended that premarital and marriage counsellors should be trained in counselling psychology, among other qualifications. Consideration on age, religious beliefs, culture and attitude to life partner should be considered before marriage. Mentor couples and implementation of post marital counselling was also recommended, within the area of study.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CBT	- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CFT	- Contextual Behaviour Therapy
DAP	- Data Analysis Procedure
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
IPV	- Intimate Partner Violence
KCPA	- Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association
NACOSTI	- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
PMC	- Pre-Marriage/Marital Counselling
PMCs	- Premarital Counsellors
REBT	- Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory
SPSS	- Statistical Package for Social Sciences



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study carried out an assessment of the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. This chapter contains the background of the study, problem statement, and purpose of study, objectives, research hypotheses, significance, justification, assumptions, scope, limitations and delimitations and operational definition of terms of this study.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Marriage is regarded as the primary relationship among men and women in many societies and cultures of the world and a lot of people, especially in their early adulthood, hope to get married. The writer has a lot of experience as a counselling psychologist and has related with many young men and women who are hoping to get married. It is correct to say that she has prepared many in preparation for their life together as a couple. This has been individual preparation through her office or under various churches which run what is referred to as school of marital wisdom, within Nairobi City. It is interesting to note that when young people are preparing for marriage there are a lot of things they do not know about living together as man and wife. In the African context cultural values encourage, and at times demand that young people should get married and sire children to ensure continuity, posterity and preservation of generations (Wambugu, 2006). Marriage is also regarded as a serious rite of passage and young men and women are encouraged to join the institution of marriage.

However, in these modern times entry point to marriage is delayed due challenges in getting employment, pursuit of higher education and career development. Also, due to women emancipation movements and improvements in girl child education, among other factors; not many women are entering marriage before they finish college and work towards self-reliance as intimated by Emonyi (2006).

This delay has necessitated both men and women to undergo premarital counselling and education, to acquire insights on how to relate in inclusive and affective ways, which may result into an empathic cordial co-existence; culminating into a healthy happy marriage. In marriage counselling, the writer often deals with individuals as well as couples who did not get good preparation or tuition about co-existence as man and wife after marriage. This prompted the writer to come up with this study to enable prospective couples to be encouraged to seek tuition on co-existence within marriage.

According to Worthington (2005) in 'A Guide to Brief Therapy' (IVP Academic, Illinois) many countries especially where Christian norms, virtues and beliefs may have been embedded for centuries; marriage is regarded as a permanent union between a man and a woman. However, Ribar (2003) Working Paper on Evaluation and Research to the US Department of Health and Human Services, Washington DC; brings forth information that families experience hardships at times resulting in separation and divorce. Further, Amato and Rogers (2003) in Family Relations Journal conjectured that separation and divorce has replaced death as the endpoint for majority of marriages.

In addition, marriage and intimate relationships have become legitimate objects of scientific study. Feminism, with changes in gender roles in marriage, has risen while remarriage has declined. In concerted efforts to reduce divorce in USA, some states including Georgia, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Minnesota give discounts to men and

women who choose to participate in approved premarital programs (Gardiner, *et al.* 2002). Collins (2007) in 'Christian Counselling – A Comprehensive Guide' (Wheaton, Illinois), points out that wedding preparation has replaced premarital counselling and character virtues including royalty, generosity, justice and courage are not taught or encouraged before marriage. Lack of adequate preparation exposes couples to unpreparedness in handling disagreements and misunderstandings, rendering the couple impotent in tackling any negative eventualities, which ultimately results in instability, and at times dissolution of the marriage. To curb such occurrences individuals intending to get married should undergo intensify awareness, especially on handling conflict as well as giving and receiving forgiveness, within the union.

Cartwright, Farnsworth and Mobley (2009) in *Family Matters Journal*, 82, 30-37; sheds insight that families have translated from traditional man as breadwinner with the woman, his wife, being the homemaker. In many countries both husband and wife work within and without the home environment. In this state of role reversal contentions arise in actualizing the duties adequately, at times resulting in role negation and confusion. Lowenstein (2005) in the *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, observed rising trends of divorce which the study attributed to conflicting roles between husband and wife, contributed by women's emancipation and risk taking behavioural traits where couples live beyond their means. In the Australian Institute of Family Studies 2014, Qu and Weston (2014) reports that crude divorce rate of parents with children ranging one to eighteen (1-18) years in 2012 stood at 48%. (This represents the number of divorces which has taken place in every 1000 residents each year). Children of divorce in the quoted age brackets experience confusion, harassment and neglect within homes especially where conflicting arguments is the norm, exposing them to hardship, confusion and stress.

Stanley (2001), points that increased marriage instability exposes couples to distress, misuse, abuse and it is not uncommon for children of such marriages to be abandoned at breakage of the marriage. In a study carried out at Purdue and National Universities of Singapore, conclusions were made that spouses understanding of affective-cognitive meta-bases predicts good and quality relationships. As a result, Thomas and Fletcher (2003) concluded that understanding between spouses is crucial and important, especially in relationships where romantic partners' interaction is consistent. Unfortunately, this is not recorded as a regular occurrence among couples, exposing the relationship to misunderstandings and mistrust.

However, Halford (2004), Carol and Doherty (2003), observed that questions and disputes, opportunities of Pre-marriage Counselling and functioning of marriage and family seemed to be simpler in Hungary, and were supported by stronger and clearer rules, definite roles and strong external expectations. This has changed with passage of years, necessitating worldwide recognition of pre-marriage counselling and introduction of well-structured programs, adjusted to the complexity of marital relationships, and the education or training of facilitators (Halford, 2004; Carol & Doherty, 2003). Recent pre-marriage counselling should be directed not only at behavioural changes, but also at modifying deeper motivations at the nature of relationship dynamics. In addition, increasing positive while simultaneously decreasing negative interactions as well as mobilising the resources of the relationship. Ansah-Hughes, Oduro-Akyina *et al.* (2015) research in Ghana intimates that good premarital counselling includes communication techniques that promote understanding, foster empathy, and bring about insight and facilitation of forgiveness, as essential parts of a solid program. Unfortunately, this kind of preparation does not occur often.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that in Kenya, the state of the Judiciary and Administration of Justice Annual Report for 2012/2013; the numbers of filed divorce-grievous-harm-matrimonial cases were reported as 6,402; the heard and determined cases stood at 11,021 and the pending cases were 26,540. This portrays instability within marriage and in families. Muthengi and Gitau, *et.al.*(2016), in a study on the Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence among young married couples, reported that IPV is prevalent manifested by pushing, slapping, punching, kicking, burning and threatening by using a weapon. Manifestations of physical trauma includes injuries associated with disability and death, while psychological trauma and stress could lead to substance abuse and mental health problems such as anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder (PSTD), depression and suicidality among other vices. Hence need for intensive appropriation of what could create harmony between the couple and the need for conflicts to be solved, to enable couplesto thrive, within their marital home.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The institution of marriage has raised numerous concerns in relation to pathological functioning of many a married man and woman, in the context of their life together, within their home environment. Spousal fights including and not limited to battering, verbal and physical abuse, threats towards harm, suicidality or death; characterises this institution. Traditionally, in many societies, husbands were regarded as custodians and protectors of their families while wives were regarded as nurturers and care givers. Unfortunately, child abandonment manifested in quiet detachment from parents is experienced in many homes. Divorce has become an easy option in ending marital relationships instead of working on conflict to achieve a stable environment to rear children and achieve personal satisfaction. Communication between husband and wife, with efforts to create cohesion, good will and harmony; is no longer a priority in

many homes. According to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2015; marital strife is common as evidenced by the number of concluded divorce cases (21,573) divorced and (34,272) separated. However, arguments and fights created by financial mismanagement in families were evident. Many wives opted to handle their own finances while husbands were expected to provide for the major family expenses. Unfortunately, many couples get married without realizing that marriage is about sharing own life with spouse.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine status of marriage stability, among couples who undertook premarital counselling in Lang'ata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.
- ii. To explore the influence of premarital counselling on communication skills among couples in Lang'ata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya
- iii. To examine the influence of premarital counselling on spousal romance, among couples in Lang'ata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County Kenya.
- iv. To examine the influence of premarital counselling on financial management skills among couples in Lang'ata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

## **1.6 Research Hypotheses**

This study was guided by four Research Hypotheses and the associated null hypothesis of each as stated below-

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in marriage stability between couples who undertook premarital counselling and those who did not, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in marriage stability between couples who undertook premarital counselling in communication skills and those who did not, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in marriage stability between couples who undertook premarital counselling in spousal romance and those who did not, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

H0<sub>4</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in marriage stability between couples who undertook premarital counselling on financial management skills and those who did not, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study was of great significance to the researcher because firstly it enabled her to put theory into practice. The fact that the marriage institution is connected to all other institutions as it is the genesis of the human capital to industries, governments, groups of all types; its stability and cohesion may translate to improvements and growth of other institutions and associations. Various groups will benefit from this study and specifically men and women who will learn how to co-exist in love and mutual commitment at home,

before they get married. Premarital and marriage counsellors and therapists will use the recommendations of this study, in preparing couples for marriage especially in handling communication, romance and financial management; among other areas. Researchers in Counselling Psychology and specifically on marriage and family therapy, social and relational issues, will benefit from this study, as they address various marital and relational issues. Further the researcher recommends more research to be carried out with regard to premarital counselling and marital quality.

The PMC professionals could come up with a theory as stated by Kerlinger and Lee (2000) a theory explains phenomena “by specifying which variables are related to which variables”. Such a theory, based on the marriage relationship and mutual co-existence of couples, may prove the need for married men and women to co-exist in societies, including future generations; that would translate into conducive environments, where raising of children by two parents is actualized. This would eventually translate into transforming future generations, who could guide societies to reach their highest potential, in offering quality management of resources. The transformed citizenry would embrace positive psychological and cultural change, resulting into great heights of developments.

The transformed citizenry may also lead the country towards a 10% GDP achievement by the year 2030. Vision 2030 in Kenya focuses on three pillars led by societal (social) pillar seeking to create ‘a just, cohesive and equitable social development in a clear and secure environment’. The economic pillar with the aim of creating better infrastructure as well as increasing tourism, agricultural growth, trade and manufacturing; among others. Finally, the political pillar which will create a constitutional reform, instil post election legal counselling, ensure truth, justice and reconciliation commission, national



cohesion and independent review commission becomes operational by 2030. This calls for social interventions aimed at improving the quality of life which will be achieved through positive family interactions. Finally, the unmarried men and women may look forward to joining the institution of marriage as stability continues to be manifested.

### **1.8 Justification of the Study**

This study is important for various reasons including the fact that there is a gap in Africa, on premarital counselling because very little research has been carried out in this area. Scholars and academicians will develop more learning in expounding knowledge on existing theories, regarding premarital counselling and in line with this study. The study will positively affect children brought up in stable homes, as far as moral concepts are concerned, but more importantly such children may be visionary and positively impact communities in the future. If marriage stability would be attained, the country may have policy makers, leaders in government, various professionals, and industrialists of integrity; who may positively impact the society, as everyone comes from home to the work place. Such a situation would enable Kenya to achieve her social developmental goals through not only the Government effort but also through the input of a highly trained stable and confident citizenry.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that premarital counselling will influence marriage stability if:

- i. Effective communication skills are thoroughly taught to premarital men and women intensively discussed conclusively during the premarital counselling.
- ii. Premarital couples should be made to understand the contributions made by romance between the husband and wife within marriage, and the importance of

married men and women keeping fulfilling and enjoying sexuality, intimately and deliberately to enrich their union and cohesion.

- iii. Premarital couples are made to understand that good financial management that incorporates budgeting, savings, discipline in expenditure and openness; will create harmony, loyalty and mutual understanding between the spouses within marriage.
- iv. Irrespective of age, couples will embrace cultural influence on marriage and family, embrace religious beliefs and have positive attitude on the spouse.

### **1.9 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the assessment of PMC in sustenance to marital stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. Langata Constituency consists of Karen, Nairobi West, Mugumoini, South C and Nyayo Highrise. Dagoretti South Constituency consists of Mutu-ini, Ngando, Riruta, Uthiru, Ruthimitu, Waithaka and Kabiria sub-locations. It took the researcher approximately six months to collect and analyze data from the couples and premarital counsellors, using probability and non-probability sampling strategies. She ensured that the research instruments, in this case filling of the questionnaires, as well as attending to the detailed probing spaces in question seven, were properly and correctly finalized. Data analysis and report writing were done concurrently and the researcher had a finished document by end of May, 2018.

### **1.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

Marriage issues are both sensitive and emotive due to cultural differences, in Kenya and in Africa generally. However, this study had both limitations and delimitations as indicated below:

### **1.10.1 Limitations**

- i. The participants in the field were not familiar with the exercises on data collection.
- ii. Permission of entry to institutions and usage of time for interviews and explanations, in reference to questionnaires, could delay the study.
- iii. The researcher had a card confirming that she was a doctoral student at Mount Kenya University and the interviews were for academic purposes only.
- iv. The participants were made to understand that they were participating in the data collection exercise or interviews voluntarily, and had a right to withdraw at any point during the exercise.

### **1.10.2 Delimitations**

- i. The limitation was solved by the researcher organising training to participants on data collection procedures, before data collection started.
- ii. The second limitation was overcome by the researcher obtaining permits to enter institutions and sometimes homes to carry out the needed exercise.
- iii. The study identity card saved time in most places.
- iv. The participants had a right to withdraw from the exercise at any point, if they so wished.

### **1.11 Strategies Used in Addressing Challenges**

In the area of study people were hesitant to discuss marital issues with non-family members. However, cultural and socialization inhibitions were reduced because the researcher explained the objectives of the study to the married men and women, as well as to premarital counsellors; who were participating.

- i. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality in data presentation. This was further buttressed by ensuring that participants understood they were voluntarily participating in the study and were entitled to informed consent and rights of withdrawal, if need be. Hence, they participated from a point of knowledge. Except for twenty questionnaires which were not returned, everybody else cooperated to the end.
- ii. The participants who withheld vital information for this study did not particularly affect the findings of the study significantly, because others provided the much-needed data for the sections concerned. Besides, these participants contributed enormously to the study by providing relevant data in other sections of the questionnaire.
- iii. The researcher had targeted 436 respondents for the study and eventually 416 participated (360 married men and women returned the questionnaires and 44 marriage counsellors participated in the focus group discussion; 12 married men and women (6 couples) were interviewed, representing 96% response rate which was valid for analysis. Hence those who did not take part in the study or failed to return the questionnaire did not constitute a significant limitation, considering the response rate.

## **1.12 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Assessment** : In this study assessment refers to determining the contribution of premarital counselling, that included communication, romance and financial management could be contributing in maintaining marriage stability. This may require use of research instruments for measuring purposes.

**Counselling** : In this study counselling refers to a relationship where a trained professional psychological counsellor engages a couple in therapies, about the couple's relationship, which may lead to marriage. The counsellor may guide the couple on marriage issues such as communication, finances, and romance, among other topics during premarital counselling.

**Counsellor** : In this study a counsellor is a person with adequate knowledge and experience to give counsel and professional guidance to prospective couples, on communication, romance and financial management, among other courses, before they get married, in order to enhance their marriage stability.

**Healthy Marriage:** The manifestations of a healthy marriage may include effective communication which creates understanding between husband and wife; romance which enhances keeping mutual conjugal fidelity and financial management skills; all resulting in cordial co-existence between husband and wife and ultimately leads to a stable marriage.

**Influence** : With reference to this study influence refers to the contribution, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural traits, that a couple may adopt and portray to one another or to the society, which could have been conceptualized in the mind by what they had learnt during premarital counselling.

**Marital Stability:** In this study marital stability is demonstrated by quality and nature of relationship displayed by a married couple and manifested by effective communication, romance and good financial management where peace and harmony, love, commitment, sharing of life and resources are evident, and divorce is not an option.

**Premarital Counselling:** In this study this phrase refers to information given to a couple who are intending to get married to give them insight and possibly create understanding of what marriage involves. This tuition could include communication skills, financial management skills, relational attitudes especially about romance, the coherence and connectedness necessary in marriage in order to fulfil each other's needs during the lifetime of the marriage.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses what marriage is, what premarital counselling contains, and why it should be offered to people before they get married. The section also carries out a critical review of empirical studies in line with the objective of the study, summary of gaps, theoretical framework, review of theoretical literature and conceptual framework.

#### **2.2 Concept of Marriage**

Among all human relationships marriage is regarded as the most profound and central feature of co-existence, established with the consent of both partners. It is looked at as the glue that holds all human societies together in nurturance and continuity. It is an institution composed of a culturally accepted agreement, between a man and a woman, in a husband-wife relationship; as well as roles that recognize an order of sexual behaviour, and finally legalizes the function of parenthood (Hunter, 1990). Collins (2007) asserts that the traditional marriage includes a socially recognized sexual union which is begun with a public announcement or ceremony, defined by an explicit contract, and undertaken with the intent of permanence. It might be added that marriage provides the social legitimization for bearing children. Bird and Melville (1994) purport that the reasons that make people marry vary widely and cover a wide spectrum. In a stable, rational society, marriage is valued for its ordering of relationships. Through it property is allocated and passed on to heirs. Further, marriage includes the coupling of two people possessing different interests, desires and needs; is a special association given shape by social rules and laws and significantly affects individuals' development and self-realizations (Ersanli and Kalkan, 2008).

By marriage, intimate companionship between a man and a woman is defined, progeny are provided for and families are protected and organized. Functions such as meeting the need for love, and being loved, meetings both individuals' biological, social, psychological and motivational needs as well as bringing new generations to the world and gaining a place in society. In addition, the feelings of being safe and protected, the sense of cooperation, being confident about the future, feeling proud of each other and healthy functioning of sexual life; makes marriage universal and significant for societies (Canel, 2012). Although its dimensions and contents have changed during human history, the institutions of family and marriage have maintained their universality and are still the core unit of societies (Qzguven, 2001).

In many societies, marriage is acknowledged as the institution in which intimacy and fellowship exist and children are raised in safety and that allows individuals to have sexual intercourse and provides an emotional development opportunity (Yavuzer, 2012). History undoubtedly confirms that marriage has regulated sexual intercourse, a regulation once again vigorously challenged by many, and certainly not for the first time. For purposes of this study marriage is limited to unions between two heterosexual partners (a man and a woman).

According to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, adulthood is divided into three stages starting with early adulthood, at seventeen years to forty-five years: 17-45; middle adulthood: 40-65; and late adulthood: 60 years and above (Sdorow, 1993). During early adulthood, according to Erikson's developmental stages, wellbeing is achieved and manifested in establishing a relationship, with a strong sense of emotional attachment and personal commitment. Many people get married during this stage (18-45). In Kenya adulthood starts at 18 years of age. The years 40-45 are described as the



mid-life transition stage and at 45 years of age, people are said to start experiencing the midlife crisis as couples restructure for middle adulthood (40-65) consciously or otherwise. Middle adulthood has its challenges for many couples as children enter high school and colleges and parents start retiring from workplace. At this time O'Leary and Smith, (1991) avers that success of a marriage depends on certain factors, for example, similarity in personality, age, religion, ethnicity, attitudes, intelligence and educational level. At such age, Erikson says it is a time of intimacy or isolation, and openness is an important component of intimacy and spouses who have successfully resolved the intimacy versus isolation crisis, show enhanced ability to maintain their marriages; in part because they are more willing to engage in self-disclosure. Prager ( agrees with Erikson's view.

Middle adulthood (40-65) is referred to as generativity versus stagnation; according to Erikson's developmental stage, in which success is achieved by becoming less self-absorbed and more concerned with the well-being of others. This is manifested by mutual respect, trust, loyalty, love, and dependability between the spouses. The marital status predicts spousal behaviour at the final stage; referred to as integrity versus despair, in which success is achieved by reflecting back on a meaningful life. Couples at late adulthood can continue to contribute to their livelihood or can experience hard times depending on how their life was led previously.

In recent times there is a lot of discussion and debate regarding marital compatibility, but this is not a new debate. In Baker Encyclopaedia of Psychology, Benner (1993) elaborates on what marital compatibility means and defines it as a term describing the character of the relationship fit for the two spouses. In the highly compatible marriage both spouses are acting, thinking, and feeling in such a way that their needs and

expectations are being met and few blockages exist to interfere with the relationship. In such a marriage, significant blockages are present that prevent one or both spouses from obtaining satisfaction of their needs and fulfillment of their expectations.

Various societies of the world have different requirements for marriage. Among the many requirements is the age at which a person can get married. In most countries it is age eighteen (18) onwards. In Bangladesh marriages between the Muslim and Santal ethnic groups, adolescents can get into arranged marriages before they are physically, socially and psychologically mature enough to bear sexual, reproductive and social responsibilities that go with marital and family life (United Nations Children's Fund, 2001).

In some countries like the rural Punjab, Pakistan, marriage is a key mechanism of taking care of family lineage and defining the boundaries of social relationships (Jauregui and McGuinness, 2003). Most marriages in rural communities of Pakistan are strictly endogamous, that is within their castes. Bridal exchange has been a popular traditional marriage practice in rural Punjab (Jacoby and Mansuri, 2010; Zaman, 2013). Exchange marriages generally take place between illiterate or less educated families (Zaman, 2013). First cousins and extended families are preferred in this regard. Honour of the family and economic constraints are observed to be the reason behind this practice.

In some parts of Africa, especially in Chad and Niger, marriage is rooted in the family social cultural issues which mean that culturally accepted behaviours, ideas and preferences of family patterns, residence patterns, inscriptive gender division of family status and roles, marital and power arrangements, rest with the larger family or the clan as indicated by Revillard (2006) and Stone (1994). In West Africa many men will have

an official wife, married legally according to the laws of the land in a monogamous setting; and at the same time have another wife and children living in a different setting. The man is father to the children of the two wives and has authority and responsibility of meeting their needs including school fees, clothing, and shelter. The official wife in most cases is well educated, lives in the city with the man while the other one lives in the village and is visited by her husband at will. McGoldrick and Hardy (2008) describe this kind of situation as monogamous/married with parallel family. This kind of family exists in many other parts of Africa.

In the traditional Kenyan society and precisely the Agikuyu, their customs, traditions and folklore, Wambugu (2006), sheds light that a young man who had reached the marriage age could identify a young woman and after consultation with his parents and the clan, could get married in the traditional manner which would include first announcement, betrothal, dowry payment and physical movement of the bride to her new home. However, at this point in time, though traditional marriages still takes place in Kenya, majority of the people continue to get married according to the Marriage Act, 2013. This law prescribes marriages in Kenya into the Civil marriage which is officiated at the Attorney General's office or through representatives of that office at the County level; Christian marriage which is officiated by clergy according to Christian principles; Muslim marriage which is officiated by a Kadhi according to Islamic principles; Hindu marriage for Hindus according to their faith; and finally the Traditional marriage according to the customs and cultures of various ethnic groups. These marriages are conducted according to the law of the land in line with the Marriage Act (2013). This study assessed the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability of couples whose marriages were conducted through the Christian marriage prescription, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **2.3 Premarital Counselling**

In the field of marriage and later pre-marriage, what is popularly referred to as premarital counselling was a precursor for family therapy and is based on the concept that psychological disturbances arise more from conflicts between persons than from conflict within a person. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008), focusing on some of the unique problems of this special form of coupling, early marital counsellors (gynaecologists and sometimes other physicians, lawyers, social workers, psychologists, and college professors who were family-life specialists), viewed as “experts”; attempted to provide answers for people with sexual and other marital difficulties. At that point in time, the church ministers and priests were prominent in offering formal premarital counselling, often as part of an optional or mandatory preparation program, before a wedding. However, it may be correct to assume that informal premarital counselling has been there for as long as the institution of marriage has existed.

In the year 2001, the State of Minnesota initiated a bill which was sponsored by Senator Dill and Representative Elaine Harder, which was approved and signed into law effective August 1, 2001. Thereafter the state continued to encourage couples planning to get married to go through premarital preparation programs for twelve hours, take a premarital couple inventory and learn communication and conflict resolution skills. Proponents of the bill insisted that the ultimate goal of this bill was to help strengthen marriage and reduce the rate of divorce. At that time the divorce rate was about 50% in Minnesota and nationally; the goal was to improve the quality of marriage so that people will be more satisfied and less interested in divorce (Olson, 2000).

The main benefit of premarital counselling is preparing couples for marriage. In this preparation, among other details, marriage itself as an institution is demystified. This is

done by encouraging the prospective couples to express their fears by asking questions. They also get opportunities to express their anxieties about the institution of marriage. The main concerns embrace what is expected in marriage including and not limited to communication, conflict and resolution, financial management, romance and sexuality as well as roles in marriage and parenting. In some countries this tuition is often referred to as premarital education. One of the topics that should always be taught is communication skills, which address emotional engagement and support, with the aim of providing benefits to a relationship partner. Collins and Feeney (2000), guides that the supportive behaviour that an individual enacts accounts for only a fraction of the support his or her partner perceives. However, the benefit goes a long way to create cordial co-existence.

The use of the term Marriage Education here rather than Relationship Education is to capture both the relational and institutional dimensions of marriage, with a life course perspective to facilitate covering issues of importance to youth and unmarried adults. The pre-marriage education to be given should be geared towards a healthy marriage consisting of a generous behavioural trait when one spouse goes out of their way to do positive actions to partner, without necessarily being requested. According to Hawkins and Caroll, *et al.* (2004), this includes respectful treatment of one another, voluntarily without any coercion. In addition, honouring the concept of equal partnership, in creating and maintaining a relationship where respect and consideration prevails, and abuse of any form is not encouraged.

Three sub-dimensions of content are emphasized: relational skills, awareness, knowledge and attitudes; motivations and virtues. Relational skills include communication patterns, problem-solving behaviours that sustain and strengthen

marriages (Gottman & Notarius, 2000). Spouses expect marriage to bring life-long joy, companionship, growth, and sexual fulfilment. Couples need better skills to achieve their vision of marital success. Browning (2003) argues that a skills education perspective tends to see marriage in a therapeutic worldview that is less attentive to the institutional features of marriage and the virtues that undergird healthy marriages. These include, among other virtues; awareness of spousal needs, knowledge and attitudes that enhance cohesion and love; where spouses are willing to make sacrifices for one another voluntarily. Commitment to the marriage is crucial and important to sustain healthy, stable marriages (Stanley, Whitton & Markman, 2004). Also newly weds could be assigned a mentor couple to walk with them in the marriage journey.

Parrot (2003) highlights the fact that conventional dating methods, meaning spouses being introduced to one another by parents, is no longer applicable and prospective marriage partners may meet in college, work place and even through internet. Further, Kulman (2006) established that many couples are not aware of the fact that good, skill-based counselling could reduce divorce by up to 30%, leading to a significantly happy marriage. Einhorn, Markman, *et al.* (2008) emphasizes necessity of premarital programs and describes them as useful preventative approaches; as the tutelage contributes to strong marriage relationships and this improves the quality of interactions thereafter. Collins (2007) emphatically prescribes that if premarital counselling takes place before marriage, marriage life might possibly improve if not stabilize, as men and women would enter marriage from a point of knowledge.

Quoting a study in Germany, Klann, Halweg, Baucom, and Kroeger (2011), Lebow, (2013) shed light that relationship and marital counselling and education could be instrumental in preventing and addressing the most common divorce determinants and

risk factors. Couples therapy has been largely considered as an effective approach in mitigating both determinants and generic risk factors that contribute to marriage instability. The study concluded that communication is one of the determinants and, therefore, capacity, skills and abilities to communicate effectively, assertively, tactfully and openly together with ability and will to solve problems and avoidance of escalation, should be included in premarital couples' therapy. Further, if couples are able to negotiate, and consequently prevent escalation of problems, marital stability could be achieved. In addition, successful financial and resource management with intention to make and maintain the will to stay on a budget, ability to augment (increase) assets; make plans and establish both short and long-term goals and achieve them; could also help a lot. In addition and in reference to sexuality, premarital couples in therapy may be empowered to build capacity and competence, which may enable them to consistently satisfy spouses; maintain a passionate and exciting sexual life; have intimacy under control and be master of his or her own sexuality.

Nganga and Wasanga (2010) in a presentation to the 11<sup>th</sup> Kenya KAPC Counselling Conference assessed the current pre-marriage counselling programs in various PCEA churches in Kiambu District (now Kiambu County), Kenya; indicated that the programs offered had a very strong bias on the west and were purely biblically based, though they included some cultural perspectives. It would be hard to generalize such a study. The elaboration of whether knowledge being disseminated on the ground is skill-based, and if there are preventive measures being taken to ensure healthy marriages, would be important before assessment of influence of PMC in sustenance to marriage stability; can be accurately assessed.

In conclusion, it is evident from the studies in the penultimate paragraph that premarital counselling and education is a necessary component in equipping couples before they enter marriage. The skills learnt would empower them in various ways regarding the relationship and co-existence between husband and wife. In Kenya, and specifically in Nairobi County, premarital counselling endeavours are known to exist, for example, at Amani Counselling Centre, Deliverance Church, St. Barnabas, St. John the Evangelist, Community Church, Mutero Presbyterian Church; all in Langata Constituency, among others. Premarital counselling is also carried out at the Orthodox Church in Mutu-ini, Anglican Church in Ruthimitu, Church on the Rock at Dagoretti Corner, Riruta Presbyterian Church, among others within Dagoretti South Constituency. In the above-mentioned congregations premarital counselling is mandatory.

However, problems and hardships exist in marriages as stated in the Statement of the Problem. This study was very important and has assessed the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, as well as making recommendations, on the ways and means of creating fulfilling family life experiences. This will be manifested in healthy family co-existences among married men and women together with their children.

#### **2.4 Critical Review of Empirical Studies and Research Gaps**

These sections have critically reviewed the empirical studies and indicated research gaps in line with the study objectives.

#### **2.5 Current State of Marital Stability of Couples who Undertook Premarital Counselling**

Whitton, Stanley *et al.* (2007) emphasizes that the main objective in educational settings, at premarital level, should be geared towards strengthening commitment, with



the aim of creating healthy marriages. Doherty (2003) in evaluating the influence of pre-marriage education and counselling, at the University of Minnesota, concluded a longitudinal study of over 40 years. Doherty emphasized that to address marital distress and divorce, scholars and educators alike, should advocate for creation, development and implementation of premarital counselling. Collins (2007) posits that every civilization, regardless of socio-economic, location or cultural background, places high value on marriage, both as a personal relationship and as a social institution. Collins (2007) further asserts that unfortunately, pre-wedding ceremonial arrangements have replaced premarital counselling. There is need to find out if PMC encouraged creation of healthy marriages, as well as elaborate whether there could be longitudinal studies taking place in the two constituencies. Could pre-wedding ceremonies be more emphasized than marriage itself? Determination of current marriage stability among couples, who undertook PMC, has shed light on these gaps, indicating that emphasis should be on marriage itself in preference to wedding arrangements, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

## **2.6 Influence of Premarital Counselling on Communication Skills**

Many scholars prescribe the need for pre-marriage counselling, as not only necessary, but also extremely useful before marriage. Hove (2007) teaches that inclusive effective communication for couples should be verbal and non-verbal. Non-verbal communication is crucial as it is full of visible and invisible messages couples send all the time. In many instances, couples have used static language which hinders accurate understanding. In Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology, it is intimated that cultural influence of the spouses could distort meaning, as cultures are filled with jargon and are vocationally, and therefore, linguistically tribalised. This hinders correct meaning to across cultural couples, creating suspicion.

Browning (2003) considers openness, morality and honesty, truth, faithfulness, giving and receiving, as factors which cannot be ignored in couple communication; but unfortunately, these factors are not given much prominence exposing couples to misunderstandings and discord. On the same course, Accordino and Gueney (2001), in contributing to research and practice in humanistic psychotherapies, emphasized that both professionals and paraprofessionals dealing with communication within marriage, needed to specifically include skills on clarifying expectations, enhancing friendships and fun and commitment to communicate, as a preventive measure to misunderstandings in marriage; with reviews and follow ups every five years. Unfortunately, this does not happen, exposing the husband and wife to discord and marriage instability. Mentorship after marriage was highly recommended not only by married men and women but also by the premarital and marriage counsellors to enhance marriage stability but there is very little concrete evidence that this takes place.

Stanley, Amato *et al.* (2006), findings from a large random household survey found that couples did not communicate to one another as cooperating partners, with the hope of helping the partner reach understanding; hence in many instances marital instability is never addressed. Further, Clapp (2000) recommends for businesslike serious communication, to enable couples to deal with concrete and practical issues of the here and now. This would engage dialogue that takes prevalence over violence, not only in the original marriage but also in remarriage. Unfortunately, where this is lacking marriage instability is likely to become palpable.

Further, Henry and Miller (2004) purports that either gender may hinder effective communication manifested by withdrawal from what the spouse may be expressing; mainly due to selfish interests when dealing with children, emotional issues especially

where power struggles are evident, also decision-making needs among the couple. Miller and Yorgason (2003) asserts that good communication involves respect, diligence, character shaping, meeting needs at the level of the particular person concerned, and attending to issues as they occur. There are limited studies indicating that this is an obvious occurrence in many homes making couples vulnerable to marital instability. However, Kenny and Acitelli (2001) argue that where needs and expectations are not met, and little effort has been put on effective communication that addresses problem solving and time together; couples complain of neglect and marital dissatisfaction, resulting in marital malfunctioning and incompatibility, leading to marriage instability.

Unfortunately, many courting couples do not foresee any problems with communication and get caught up in the quagmire of misunderstandings, fights, and frequent destructive modes of miscommunication. These inevitably result in serious irresolvable differences within marriage, constant psychological torture, where spouses feel neglected, with needs which are not adequately met, culminating in serious marriage instability.

Wilmoth (2007), in a survey on marriage preparation conducted in Oklahoma, found out that people were interested to learn couple communication, geared towards taking responsibility leading to conflict resolutions and parenting skills, spiritual matters, sexuality and gender roles. The survey concluded that such a program may empower couples to enter marriage, knowing themselves and their partners properly. Holman and Associates (2001) brings to light that communication which will address preventive interventions in conflict during premarital counselling, may also help couples who may be carrying unresolved individual issues, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Such

individuals could bring into marriage low self-esteem issues that were unresolved in the family of origin, as well as unresolved guilt which may wreak havoc on a new marriage.

In a study in Nigeria towards family stress, Dimpkpa and Wilcox (2010) quoting Schwartzbeg and Dytell (2008) from the journal of Occupational Health Psychology, purports that where purposive communication is lacking, both men and women may experience stress at work place and at home. Schwartzbeg, *et al.* (2008) insist that working fathers were more attuned to their emotional relationship with spouses, while working mothers seem more attuned to the amount of actual assistance they receive around the house. In such a scenario the couple have different priorities and this might not be directed to cohesive and effective communication which could lead the couple to marital alienation within the home.

Ansah-Hughes, Oduro-Akyina *et al.* (2015) research intimates that good premarital counselling includes skills in effective communication techniques, which promote understanding, foster empathy, and bring about insight and facilitating of forgiveness; as essential parts of a solid program. Gaps have emerged in unanswered questions as the researcher wonders whether PMC emphasizes or teaches, and are couples interested to learn couple communication skills; and how is the content disseminated? Does PMC in place foster empathy, communication techniques, include insight on unresolved guilt issues, low self-esteem problems; and are there preventive interventions in place in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **2.7 Influence of Premarital Counselling on Spousal Romance**

Premarital counselling on romance may be crucial to explain the role of romance within marriage. Research has been carried out for many years across the world, and specifically research carried out on Chinese and American couples by Sternberg and

Gracek (1984), suggests that feelings of attachment and intimacy, emotional connection and closeness; is central to all types of love. What may differ across relationships is the degree of passion as well as commitment. Gao (2001) intimates many couples complain that in their marriages there has been no passion or desire to be intimate, as partners seem to have lost sexual desire with their spouses. He concludes that this may have led spouses to seek sexual gratification outside the marital bed. Further, Kenny and Acitelli (2001) point out that the most desired and useful forms of support in love making, a partner provides to another, as the climax and highest expression of feelings of intimacy and connection; is availability and meeting each other's emotional needs. Unfortunately, this connectivity has been lost and the partners have no desire to seek for sex therapy, exposing themselves to emotional dissatisfaction and ill feelings towards the spouse. Kaplan in Baker Encyclopaedia (1993) asserted that sexual problems cannot be separated from individual psychopathology and interpersonal relationships. Trends in technology and economic priorities have placed pressure on husbands experiencing performance anxiety, to withdraw from a wife who constantly reminds him of poor performance, this encourages partners to seek enjoyment and sexual fulfilment elsewhere. Such behaviour and misunderstandings bring ill feelings and destabilize the marriage.

Erick Erickson's psychosocial development stresses that the idea of integration where intimacy builds, enlarges, and incorporates what has gone before, that is a strong sense of identity is often lost, when intimacy in a marriage continues to decrease (Kroger, 2007). Following this argument, no spouse feels gratified or willing to validate the partner's efforts in sexual encounters. Such behaviour could lead spouses to seek fulfilment in alcoholism and promiscuity, resulting in both physical and emotional abuse. Kroger continues to write that a manifestation of instability in marriage includes

and is not limited to mistrust, anger, non-forgiveness, unhappiness, neglect, rejection, stress and psychological torture.

According to Robson (2000), it is not a question for married couples to mean well but to do well in all areas including keeping fidelity and meeting satisfactorily spousal needs, which will be expressed through sexuality. In the same light, Busby and Ivey (2007) contend that although PMC could have taken place, infidelity and spousal dissatisfaction persist, resulting in marriage instability. In reference to passion, Barber (2002) opines that where strong feelings, accompanied by physiological arousal, strong desire and fire for sex, are not actualized feelings for longing and excitement for a special person dies off. In addition, Kurup *et al.* (2003) contort that passionate love is characterized by commitment to love one another, instantaneous surrender and domination of the partner's life, where physical intimacies (often including sex) take place within a marriage. Where this situation is deficient, instability sets in. Kurup, *et al.* (2003) conclude that this may ultimately lead to dissatisfaction with the spouse creating anxiety, emotional unfulfilment together with a lot of negative thoughts and annoyance; which could eventually destabilize the marriage. Further Sternberg (2004) summarizes that commitment to the relationship, with trust and willingness to incorporate adjustment, happiness and permanence; cannot be actualized where marital relationships are not coherent.

Through social psychological process of enhancement, Nwoye (2000) asserts that where couples are stimulated by service to one another, give and take and a life of love, in addition to positive reinforcement; romance could be achieved whenever the wife appreciates her husband for enabling her reach orgasm in their sexual encounters. This may inspire the gratified spouse to embrace and incorporate the new effort, which has

now been recognized and validated, into his or her personality structure (Gayne *et. al.*, 2004). However, there is little evidence to show that lack of expression of appreciation between spouses, has perhaps accounted or led to mental discontent ultimately resulting in multiple sex partners; though this would automatically expose many married men and women to serious marital instability. Finally, Fowers (2000) asserts that virtues, such as loyalty, generosity, justice and reciprocal behavioural traits, may be encouraged to keep spouses contented with each other. However, there is no evidence to confirm that this behavioural trait is a regular exercise in many marriages across the world.

Du (2013) in writing on romance in China, addresses how daughters-in-law are supposed to give service to their husbands, though they suffer from constant oppression; based on gender, age and generation, at the hands of both the husband and mother in law. In such a situation romance is limited to the husband, who enjoys sex with a wife who is supposed to be totally obedient to his mother, in a situation where the mother in law has a say in conjugal ties between her son and his wife. This makes the marriage stable as the daughter-in-law, in proving to the community that she is a good wife, endures all odds and stays on in the marriage. In defining romantic love, Diamond (2003) describes it as being motivated emotionally, associated with feelings of attachment and the inclination to seek commitment with one partner; while defining sexual desire as a motivational state that leads the individual to seek opportunities for sexual activity. In critical analysis of such a situation, Diamond (2004) recommends specific components in premarital counselling, including skilled love making in order to ensure expression and sharing of true love, sexual satisfaction, experiencing mutual orgasms for both husband and wife; as mandatory lessons before marriage. Gonzaga and Keltner, *et al.* (2001) intimate that emotional and passionate love, sexual desire; serve commitment and reproduction-related functions respectively within short term romantic

interactions. May be sexual desire and intensity thereof, as a component of romance, will be understood and experienced in the marital bed.

Gaps emerge in form of questions with reference to PMC in this study, for example, in China daughter-in-law/mother-in-law conflict with a daughter in law proving against all odds, she is a good wife. The research also came across women who had problems with their in-laws within the area of study. However, in this case the disagreements had nothing to do with romance and were more a case of power display, disrespect and competitions in some areas where the mother-in-law did not agree often with her son's wife. The PMC in place include tuition on love-making, expression of love and appreciation; but many were not elaborate on things like orgasms and such detailed sexual expressions. Spousal validation in sexual connection, criticism by wives on husband's inability to perform in sexual encounters which results in feelings of inadequacy and rejection, which could lead partners to seek fulfilment elsewhere, regularly came out in discussions. Further, women are found to prefer male children and this overtakes any other form of gratification in certain areas, as intimated by in the International Journal of Social Economics carried out in Kenya. Male children are needed culturally, to continue the family lineage, more than sexual gratification of husband and wife (Kiriti&Tisdell, 2005).

## **2.8 Influence of Premarital Counselling on Financial Management Skills**

Many couples enter marriage without any idea on how to handle finances in the marriage setting. Stanley (2001) in the Family Relations Journal, while making a case for premarital education emphasized that it is mandatory for couples to undergo premarital counselling on finances, as money problems are not normally discussed or emphasized in counselling journals. Stanley (2001) further observes that lack of information on



financial management skills has led to individual tension, marital and familial conflicts, interpersonal strife, anger and frustration, among other issues associated directly or indirectly to the pursuit and management of finances. In addition, Kasser and Kanner (2004) in the *Journal of Psychology and Consumer Culture*, attribute causes of financial problems to the culture of consumerism with extreme alluring advertising and marketing techniques, promising wellness, pleasure, better relationships with others, independence, greater life satisfaction and fulfilment. Unfortunately, individuals, couples, families and even companies, spend funds which could otherwise be saved. On the services of these advertising messages products are described in very alluring language to try to motivate consumers into buying more.

Bradley, *et al.* (2002) in research on influence of socio-economic status (SES) influence on families (including marriages) brings out the concept that adolescents and young adults may enter marriage without understanding the influence of SES on their relationships. Marriage relationships may be influenced by parental financial capital (material resources), human capital (non-material resources such as education), and social capital (resources achieved through social connections). Knowledge on how SES affects families, marriages included, may be information that couples need to know in premarital counselling in order to work on their finances and possibly live within their means.

In South Africa, Patel and Hochfeld, *et al.* (2012) in a Research Report in Johannesburg: Centre for Social Development in Africa, intimate that many women find alternative ways of getting finances to provide the physical, emotional, and economical needs as their husbands fail to remit funds home from far off work stations. Walker (2013) while addressing conflict between gender and traditional values in South Africa insists that

these could have led to economical and relational insecurity, ultimately resulting in marriage instability.

However, questions arise whether this knowledge has been disseminated on the ground such that couples are aware and conversant with how such knowledge would benefit them. Secondly, will this knowledge on finances be upon the couples themselves or their parents? Creating awareness in regard to finances based on couples capacity and capability are crucial to encourage financial independence and living within someone's means.

Monyoncho (2010) writing on finances within marriage emphasizes that men and women should understand finances, savings, banking and spending issues, before marriage, to set short and long term specific and realistic goals. Challenges posed by financial management include individual tension, marital and familial conflicts, interpersonal strife, anger, frustration and feelings of lack of consultation on personal needs of each spouse. Further non-payments of debts lead families to hard economic factors forcing couples to stretch themselves beyond their capacity to cope (Kirago, 2011). Many couples have entered into spousal accusations and counter accusations, where manipulations and power struggles take place, resulting in spousal stress and anguish. From the studies reviewed the focus on the need for assessing the influence of premarital counselling, on sustenance to marriage stability, becomes a fundamental study in Australia, America, Europe, Africa, Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

## **2.8 The Age, Cultural Support, Religious Beliefs and Attitude to Life Partner**

Looking at age, as a social measure of rites of passage which places individuals into a specific bracket for certain actions, helps one understand individuals' adaptability and

challenges to sexuality. With regard to marriage, Feliciano and Robnett, *et al.* (2009) put an assumption that by the time an individual enters marriage, they understand the life cycle and gender expectations, including reproduction and organized sex scripts, and sexual attributes as well as cultural factors that play a great part in intimate relationships. Smith and McCullough, *et al.* (2003) explain that internally actualized religion may contribute to well-being through pursuit of spiritual goals, and extrinsic religiosity may inhibit well-being because it diverts energy away from pursuit of spiritual goals. See and Petty *et al.* (2008) opines that in the area of affective and interpersonal perception, focus should be directed on how knowledge of specific partner traits might influence relationship functioning. Just as individuals bring their own attitudes into any relationship and hold differing opinions regarding attitudinal issues, close partners also bring into their relationships their own meta cognitive assessments of their attitudinal bases; influenced by affective and cognitive aspects of their spouses, leading to persuasion and decision making.

With regard to culture and specifically in Africa, Mbiyu (2011) insists that marriage is traditionally sanctioned by bride price payments, from the groom's to the bride's side of the family, which empowers the groom's family to obtain control over the children of the marriage and the wife's labour in the field. While tradition of bride price payments has been considered a barrier to change, Anderson (2007) avers that the increasing acceptance of female education is expected to empower women. This is echoed by Dodoo and Frost, (2008). Despite these factors, the attitudes on behavioural traits and norms perceived by the spouse are personal and pegged on many other factors, including and not limited to daily interactions, mode of communication, and often influenced by upbringing and family values. However, the influence of premarital counselling on age, culture, religious beliefs and attitude to life partner, in Langata and

Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya; was evident, though it should be improved regularly.

## **2.9 Summary of Gaps in Empirical Literature**

In critical review of empirical studies, a research gap exists in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya. A short summary of gaps in empirical literature, as per studies appearing in the background (Chapter One) and in empirical studies review (Chapter Two) are summarized herewith. A comparative study on marriage stability in monogamous and polygamous marriages carried out in Nigeria by Ansah-Hughes, *et al* (2015), using descriptive survey research design, found out that people who have positive attitude on premarital counselling recommends that all should access what is taught in various places, including churches. This study is finding out the influence of premarital counselling, and is addressing only monogamous marriages. Other studies include Du, (2013) in a study carried out in China. The study concentrated in establishing how daughters-in-law are supposed to give romantic services to their husbands despite mother-in-laws interference. In this study the mother-in-law has a say in conjugal rights for her son from his wife. This creates a gap in the indebtedness of the couple to one another regarding conjugal rights. In addressing the influence of PMC on marriage stability, the current study established that romance is an integral part, in longevity towards marriage, and the indebtedness of the couple is to one another, as far as conjugal rights are concerned.

Qu and Weston (2012) in focusing on parental marital status and children's wellbeing; was addressing predictability of moral concepts and integrity of children is achieved in future marriages. This study was done in Canberra, Australia, and did not address premarital counselling. The current study confirmed that influence of premarital

counselling, especially on moral concepts and integrity, is crucial as it ensures marriage stability. This was evident among the couples who had gone through premarital counselling before entering marriage in the area of study.

Nganga and Wasanga (2010), in a scholarly paper to Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association Conference in Nairobi, Kenya; assessed premarital counselling in Kiambu Presbyterian Churches, but did not give any report on marriage stability. This study addressed various religious and non-religious groups. The findings confirmed that where premarital counselling was taken, stability was evident in marriage.

Whitton, Stanley and Markman (2007) addressed strengthening commitment at pre marriage counselling, looking at perceptions of sacrifice in romantic relationships where they followed couples from dating, marriage and beyond. This Cross-sectional study did not emphasize counselling and stability in marriage. Study on influence of premarital counselling on marriage stability was not longitudinal, as field research took nine months, however, where premarital counselling had taken place, commitment to spouse was evident.

Kulman and Gregory (2006) on a study addressing Premarital Education as a precursor to stability and divorce prevention recommended that good, skill based, premarital education and counselling may reduce divorce by up to 30%. However, they did not address sustenance of marriage stability. This study confirmed that premarital counselling contributed greatly not only in sustenance of marriage stability but also addressed prevention of divorce in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

Further, Accordino and Guerney (2001), in their Empirical Validation of Relationship Enhancement on Couple/Family Therapies study on teaching commitment to communication, as a preventive measure to misunderstandings within marriage, did not address premarital counselling influence on marriage stability. This confirmed that influence of premarital counselling on marriage stability was evident in the area of study. Further, enhancement of couple connectivity and mutual sharing of love and resources came out strongly in the questionnaire, focus group discussions and interviews; in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. It may be noted that most of the studies were done outside Africa save for South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and Kiambu in Kenya.

## **2.10 Critical Review of Theoretical Literature and Gaps in Theories**

This section addresses critical review and theoretical framework and gaps in Contextual Family Therapy Theory (CFT), and Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory (REBT).

## **2.11 Contextual Family Therapy and Rational Emotive Behaviour Theoretical**

### **Address to the Study Objectives**

This study was guided by both Contextual Family Therapy (CFT) and Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) theories in address to the study objectives.

## **2.12 Current Marriage Stability of Couples who took Premarital Counselling**

The impact of unavoidable facts and conflicts on each individual is acknowledged while the importance of individual psychological domain lies in understanding how each spouse makes meaning of his or her own experiences as intimated by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (1986). This describes how people transform information from their external environment into cognitive information, including experiences, emotions, feelings, motivations and memories (Hargrave and Pfitzer, 2003). Each spouse may

appreciate being respected and regarded as an individual within marriage. Recognizing this individuality would assist the couple to agree on boundaries and appreciation of personal specific needs, within the marriage. Corey (2005) asserts that therapeutic goals and beliefs insist on clients to develop a more positive outlook in applying constructive entitlement to one another. At the same time giving and receiving what each spouse needs to enhance cordial co-existence, among couples who undertook premarital counselling. It will be inevitable to ascertain if what CFT proposes has and will be helpful in enhancing communication, romance and financial management; and if they were part of the premarital counselling initially given.

The tenets of Contextual Family Therapy theory include individual psychology which represents facts of life and realities in relationships, for example experiences, emotions, memories, view of self and the world. Such facts are difficult to change as they include age, sex, medical conditions, historical, racial, cultural facts and personal information (Hargrave and Pfitzer, 2003). In premarital counselling it is important to recognize and acknowledge pre-existing factors that are unchangeable. Genetic inheritance, relational histories, medical problems, and life experiences are facts that do not necessarily change after marriage. Power alignments, family rules, in addition to balance of fairness, as well as giving and receiving within marriage are crucial lessons at premarital counselling.

According to Dryden (2003) REBT's main focus is dealing with irrational thoughts that affect people to the extent of causing detrimental effects, and how those thoughts act as barriers to a happy self-fulfilling life. Corey (2005) teaches that REBT therapeutic goals and beliefs insist that clients develop a more positive outlook towards maintenance of positive cognitions. This can be achieved through restructuring the irrational thoughts and beliefs that clients hold. To determine the current marriage stability among married

men and women who undertook premarital counselling, it was inevitable to ascertain if what REBT proposes has been, and will be helpful, in enhancing communication, romance and financial management, and if they were part of the premarital counselling given initially. In application of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) couples may need to understand the ABC concept to learn what activating events and what beliefs may be leading to various consequences and eventually resulting in problems within marriage. REBT teaches that humans have capacity to deal with rational or straight thinking and irrational or crooked thinking. Humans have predisposition for self-preservation, happiness, thinking, verbalizing, loving, communion with others and many more concepts. To assess is to take action and review, judge, evaluate or appraise in an effort to find out the state of the programs being offered and elaborate if they include concepts of REBT: in addressing communication, romance and financial management; in endeavouring to sustain marriage stability. If this is the case, then certainly CFT and REBT will continue to contribute to marriage stability in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **2.13 Premarital Counselling on Communication Skills**

Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987) includes a systemic interaction (power assignments) component to CFT in order to accommodate the multi-dimensional patterns of family behaviour. Building from general systems theory and family systems theory, he describes the complexed nature by which families organize and interact together. This dimension deals with communication patterns in relationships, which is objective because systemic interactions can be witnessed (Metcalf, 2011). Each family has peculiar boundaries made up of unique rules and roles which describe the power structures, power alignments, subsystems, conflict resolution and manipulative influence (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). If these concepts are not included in



the premarital counselling, couples will be stagnant in their efforts to create understanding and cordial co-existence. Hence the situation becomes conducive to misunderstandings.

Family rules are pegged on systemic interactions, which are already set, and members are expected to observe and respect them. This makes it mandatory for couples to be committed to what is already expected. In case of communicating or discussing matters in regard to parenting or on relating with in-laws, there will be ready set rules, though unwritten, which are followed. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008) in discussing relational ethics and the family ledger of CFT; the multi-generational patterns of connection within a family brings forth the debt that continues through generations, where issues which were not sorted out in one generation continue in the next up to the fourth generation. The said debt is put in the ledger of merits, meaning future generations will pay or clear this debt. If a person gets married without first clearing the generational debt within the family of origin, this is carried on and the spouse could suffer in some areas. This is because the indebted person projects the debts to the marriage partner who was not party to the indebtedness, in the first place. Boszormenyi-Nagy, the father of CFT, concludes that to function effectively, family members must be held ethically accountable for their behaviour with one another, and must learn to balance *entitlement* (what is due to one or one has come to merit) and *indebtedness* (what one owes to whom).

With regard to REBT and in reference to communication, self-talking is one of the therapeutic applications taught by RET therapists. Changing irrational beliefs on self-blame and others, takes place in therapy enabling the client to communicate first to self and then to other people. Loving and having communion with others in guiding towards

self-preservation and happiness are some of the tenets making Ellis therapy (D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010). This theory will guide the study to establish what kind of communication is given to premarital couples, and elaborate the effects of such tuition in positive value addition, to sustaining marriage stability in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **2.14 Premarital Counselling on Spousal Romance**

Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (1986) hold that integration of all valid knowledge about both mind and system is inevitable to human beings. This therapeutic approach is therefore, about understanding and intervening in relationships (Hargrave and Pfitzer, 2003). Strong concepts such as entitlement to freedom to enjoy life including sex and loyalty within the relationship; trust between the couple manifested by fidelity; in-depth dialogue, and give-and-take which will address the question of romance among couples. This is about the husband and wife giving and receiving romance as a confirmation of loyalty to one another (Metcalf, 2011). In PMC possibly couples were taught the manifestations of romance as physical closeness, holding hands, sitting together, caressing, which may result in feelings of love and connection, possibly leading to sexual intimacy (Robson, 2000). This make spouses embrace each other and continue living their life in a bond of love and fellowship when exercising loyalty, give-and-take concepts, within the marriage and specifically where romance is concerned.

Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory may enrich this study through changing irrational beliefs and unhealthy feelings including self-defeating behaviours, to the maintenance of positive cognitions, by restructuring the irrational thoughts and beliefs they may hold, inference to romance (Corey, 2005). This helps spouses to embrace each other more warmly and continue loving each other more strongly, when exercising and employing

rational beliefs and cognitions within the marriage, especially where romance is concerned. Field research shed light that in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya, premarital counselling has contributed positively to marriage stability, in reference to romance; though there are a few areas where improvements can be implemented, as indicated in the recommendations in chapter five.

### **2.15 Premarital Counselling on Financial Management Skills**

Rational ethics (the balance of fairness), seems to be the most compelling component of the Contextual model, especially regarding explanation of relationship within marriage. Boszormenyi-Nagy's relational ethical dimension draws significantly from his dialectical definition of relationships, such that relating encompasses both transactional (systemic) and experiential component (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1987). The tenets of CFT rotates on relational ethics and the family ledger, focusing attention on the long-term; oscillating balance of fairness among members within a family, whereby the welfare interests of each participant are considered by others (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008). Further financial management matters, and especially regarding power assignments, may be systematically encouraged within the duration of premarital counselling, with emphasis being made on creation of clarity, trust, and accountability. In reference to REBT, Ellis's use of sabotaging self-defeating behaviours may empower couples from impulse buying since consumerism advertisements at times become too strong and alluring (Kasser, *et al.*, 2004). Corey (2009) insists that REBT therapists teach clients how to use newly acquired knowledge in the future as opposed to becoming dependent and going to therapy every time things start going wrong in their lives: which is in line with the APA (2002) notion of fostering autonomy in the client, as stated earlier. Once a client on finances becomes autonomous, it may be possible to live within their means,

spend money cautiously, cultivate the saving culture including investing funds for the future.

## **2.16 Confounding Variables - Age, Cultural Support, Religious Beliefs and Attitude to Life Partner**

The Contextual Family Therapy theory in discussing individual psychology looks at age, sex, medical conditions, historical racial and cultural factors and personal information as unchanging facts of life (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003). Further CFT therapeutic approach is integrative, intergenerational and applies a multilateral family therapeutic approach. It seeks understanding of the individual and family context of at least three generations (Goldenthal, 1993). Regarding PMC and in line with this study, the age factor will be taken as the maturity age where one is regarded as an adult (Marriage Act, 2013) and can get married. With reference to culture, CFT looks at three generations, Boszomenyi-Nagy, (1987) and PMC therapists may address whatever generation comes seeking therapy before marriage.

In reference to religious beliefs and due to the intergenerational strength emphasized by CFT contents, which include trustworthiness, loyalty, fairness, and entitlement, at PMC the couples may need to embrace these tenets in line with their religious beliefs. Regarding attitude of the life partner, CFT emphasizes that earning entitlement in relationships enables one to enjoy life, including sexuality, to undertake the risks of new relationships, and to be free from maladaptive behaviours. This could direct couples to cultivate positive attitude to life partners.

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy application in this study takes into consideration the age of adulthood where people are mature enough to get married (Marriage Act, 2013). As long as the couple seeking marriage has attained the required age, PMC

therapists should apply unconditional positive regard to all couples seeking therapy and teach skills with regard to cognitive, emotive, and behavioural methods in reference to communication, intimacy, and relationships; to enable clients experience good marital co-existence including happiness(D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010).

With regard to culture, it is important to note that this has a lot of influence depending on the family of origin. REBT therapists should counsel clients during premarital counselling on the importance of learning and understanding the spouse's culture. This would create mutual accommodation and cohesion among the spouses. Further REBT therapists prepare individuals for difficulties they are likely to encounter in marriage and family relationships, by encouraging clients to experience unconditional self-acceptance, unconditional other acceptance, unconditional life acceptance and high frustration (tolerance (D. Joffe Elis, personal communication, May 2010). Ellis therapy encourages clients to embrace these concepts religiously in order to actualize happiness.

In reference to attitude of spouse to life partner, this can be assessed or influenced by the stressors within the relationship, Ellis (2001). REBT therapists strive to teach clients how to deal with the problems and create change. Basic lessons at PMC could emphasize how loyalty transcends current imbalances and how spouses could embrace each other with acceptance of strengths, weaknesses, careers including adjusting to one another. Further REBT emphasizes the use of behavioural techniques to assist families with changing their basic philosophic assumptions, as well as their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Ellis (2001) also asserts that REBT teaches family members effective relationship skills including unconditional self-acceptance and unconditional other acceptance.

## **2.17 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework in informing this study consists of Contextual Family Therapy Theory and Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory.

### **2.17.1 Contextual Family Therapy Theory**

In this study the Theoretical Framework consists of guiding principles on Contextual Family Therapy concepts, which include elements that allow individuals in a relationship to claim their dues to enjoy life, including sexuality. CFT tenets teach that in close relationships everyone is obligated to accept loyalty and power sharing as ethical issues (Brown-Standridge and Floyd, 2000). Parentification refers to misuse of authority and repetition of same mistakes and omissions across generations. Revolving slate is a repetition of unresolved conflicts and injustices, passed on from family of origin to the next two or three generations. Finally, ledger of merits is described as the balance of give and take within a relationship. Each individual is obligated to give and is entitled to receive from the relationship. These CFT tenets are summarized as relational ethics, systemic interactions, individual psychology, and facts (see figure 1) and will contribute in assessing the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

Boszormenyi-Nagy was born in Hungary, the son of a Supreme Court judge in the lineage of three generations of high court judges (Ducommun-Nagy, 2002). The teachings of his father sparked Nagy's interest in loyalty and justice. Boszormenyi-Nagy's Contextual theory provides a description of how an individual, relational, intergenerational, and societal level factor contributes to the development and maintenance of a phenomenon. Marriage involves generations manifested in children,

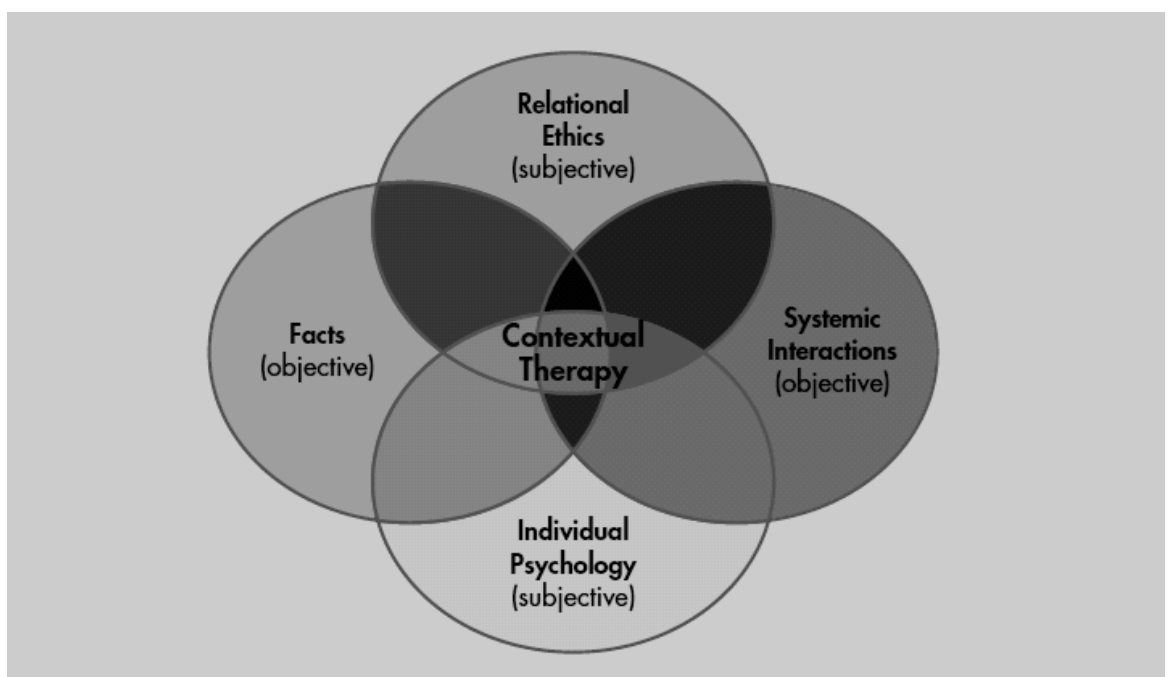
parents, and grand-parents (three generations). Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner state, “Contextual therapy holds that, real progress lies in the genuine integration of all valid knowledge about both mind and system”, as echoed in (Metcalf, 2011). This therapeutic approach is about understanding and intervening in relationships.

Hargrave and Pfitzer (2003) asserts that the main theme of contextual family therapy is its emphasis on creating understanding in marriage and family relationships, across two to three generations; with the family of origin displaying dynamics which have influence on the next two generations. The contextual therapy model links together the individual and his or her needs with the relational aspect of his or her being. People do not live in isolation, and their lives are affected and shaped on the present as well as past relationships and encounters (Goldenthal, 1993). Marriage intertwines the couple with their family of origin. At times a spouse could have carried relational debts of the past which hinders him or her to relate effectively with their husband or wife. Contextual therapists, therefore attempt to understand and be partial to all affected by the discussions in therapy sessions, even if not all family members may be present (Soyez, *et al.*, 2004). Strong concepts such as entitlement to freedom to enjoy life, loyalty, trust, give-and-take, among other things, may create healthy relationships.

However, where one of the entitlements was bypassed, this could carry feelings of indebtedness to one’s spouse which may create disconnect between the husband and wife. Trust is a strong concept and is a resource hidden in relational investments which supersedes focusing on efforts to fight pathology (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Metcalf (2011), in reference to marriage therapy, records Dalai Lama teachings; with arguments that people are social beings and come into the world as the result of others’

actions, survive depending on others, and cannot do without relationships with other human beings, making marriage a societal matter.

According to Boszormenyi-Nagy *et. al.* (1986) it is integrative because CFT embraces biology, psychology, transaction patterns and responsibility. CFT is intergenerational as it seeks the understanding of the individual and family context of at least three generations (Goldenthal, 1993), with the hope that this will address current malfunctioning (see *Figure 1*). Issues such as trustworthiness, loyalties, fairness, and entitlement are addressed during the sessions. Metcalf (2011) points that it is important to note that strategies used in contextual therapy are not meant to delete or discount the impact of a past relationship; instead they are intended to recognize the patterns that will lead, repair and enrich the present and future relationship. This argument can be summarized as creating a free and secure future is dependent in remembering a different past. This confirms the importance of foreknowledge, at premarital counselling and the effect thereof on marital stability, despite any shortcomings that may be experienced.



**Figure 1: Dimensions in the Contextual Family Therapeutic Approach**



**Source:** Hargrave & Pfitzer (2003).

However, various studies including Gangamma and Bartle-Haring, *et al.* (2012) indicate CFT theory's relational ethics, in couples in therapy, contend that the hallmark feature of fairness in relationships in Boszormenyi-Nagy's CFT theory; has largely remained untested among couples in therapy creating gaps. Further, Claffey and Mickelson (2009) Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, (2010) Sabatelli and Shehan, (1993) acknowledge that the construct of fairness has been studied extensively in the family science literature, mostly terms of equity and division of labour, bringing arguments in marital roles.

In contrast, CFT treats fairness as an ethical factor in relationships, instead of enhancing sharing and communication to create equity and balance among the couples, creating a gap in the relationship. Dankoski (2000) insists that despite the elegance of CFT framework, it has received less attention in the family therapy literature than other popular frameworks such as structural therapy (SFT), solution-oriented therapy, and strategic therapy. Goldenberg (2008) posits that SFT tenets once established may be self-perpetuating and resistant to change until a family's changing circumstance; cause tensions and imbalance within the system.

### **2.17.2 Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory**

To enrich this study further, Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory (REBT); which was developed by psychologist Albert Ellis, a pioneer of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) after finding psychoanalysis inadequate, Ellis (2005), will be applied. Ellis's key concepts in REBT assumes that human beings are born with a potential for both rational, or straight thinking and irrational, or crooked thinking; predispositions for self-preservation, happiness, thinking, verbalizing, loving, communion with others, growth and self-actualization. People have propensities for self-destruction, avoidance of

thought, procrastination, endless repetition of mistakes, superstition, intolerance, perfectionism, self-blame and avoidance of actualizing growth potentials (Ellis, 1993). Ellis concluded that humans are self-talking, self-evaluating, and self-sustaining. They develop emotional, behavioural difficulties in taking simple preferences (desires for approval, success and love) and make the mistake of thinking of them as dire needs (Corey, 1996).

Metcalf (2011), states that Ellis's therapy is based on the A-B-C theory of emotions; in which A is an activating event; B is an irrational belief; and C is an emotional consequence. Ellis points out that most people believe that (A) causes (C) when, in fact (B) causes (C) (Hauk, 1980). Through changing these irrational beliefs, people can change their unhealthy feelings and self-defeating behaviours. Once discovered, irrational beliefs can be counteracted by using REBT techniques to prevent self-sabotaging thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and to create healthy ones (D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010). Corey (2009), describes REBT as "the active, directive, time-limited, present-centred, structural approach used to treat various disorders such as depression, anxiety and phobias".

REBT therapeutic goals and beliefs has enriched this study due to insistence that clients develop a more positive outlook, and maintenance of positive cognitions by restructuring the irrational thoughts and beliefs they hold (Corey, 2005). Further, REBT theorists teach their clients how to use newly acquired knowledge in the future, as opposed to becoming dependent and going for therapy every time things start going wrong in their lives, Corey (2009) which is in line with the APA (2002) notion of fostering autonomy in the client.

However, Dryden (2003) posits that REBT theory mainly focuses on how irrational thoughts affect people to the extent of causing detrimental effects and how those thoughts act as barriers to a happy self-fulfilling life. This happens by completely ignoring the role played by individual differences without bearing in mind that each and everyone has their own individual threshold, for succumbing to irrational thoughts (DiGiuseppe, 1996). This knowledge may make the couple to take self-evaluation otherwise they succumb to irrational beliefs. REBT may include aspects of Satir human validation process model which encourages the clients to keep the story short and use it as part of the context within which to do therapy (Banmen, 2002).

Szentagotai and Jones (2010) critiques REBT asserting that during stressful situations, the general core irrational beliefs interact with various specific activating events ingenerating specific automatic thoughts that further generate distress. This knowledge may enable a husband or wife to critique self in relation to the spouse. This may complicate therapy or therapist/client relationships. Mukangi (2010) argues that reconstructing negative to positive emotions can have a congruent positive effect on both cognition and behaviour, which reinforces a person's attitude, whether positively or negatively. Cottam (2004) wonders if ethics are considered by REBT therapists during therapy. Unlike REBT, this notion has been seriously considered and counted for in the APA (2000) and especially by the European Association of Gestalt Therapy (2008); code B1.2 which encourages Gestalt therapists to either work collaboratively with other professionals or refer appropriately. Code 3.09 of the APA (2002) also emphasizes the same. This is clearly stated in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

### **2.17.3 Summary of Gaps in Theoretical Literature**

In regard to Contextual Family Therapy Theory, specifically relational ethics in couple's therapy, there exists a contention that these tenets have not been highly tested (Gangamma and Bartle-Haring *et al.*, 2012). Further Lachance-Grzelar, and Bouchard (2010), insistence on the construct of fairness, which has been studied extensively in family science literature, in terms of equity and division of labour as Contextual Family Therapy theory conceptualizes fairness as an ethical factor in relationships. In addition, probably CFT tenets should include some structural family therapy teachings to make CFT self-perpetuating and to enable its effectiveness on family therapy; particularly in psycho-educational arguments (McFarlane, *et al.*, 2003). It may be necessary to use other theories in addition to CFT, to address some areas within marriage, for example, irrational thoughts and beliefs which the couple could have.

In this light REBT concentrates on irrational thoughts and other negative perspectives, without encouraging clients to shorten the story and concentrate on therapy, with the aim of achieving catharsis within a short time. REBT has been critiqued in regard to observation of ethics during therapy, especially in usage of vulgar language during the training and teaching sessions (APA, 2000).

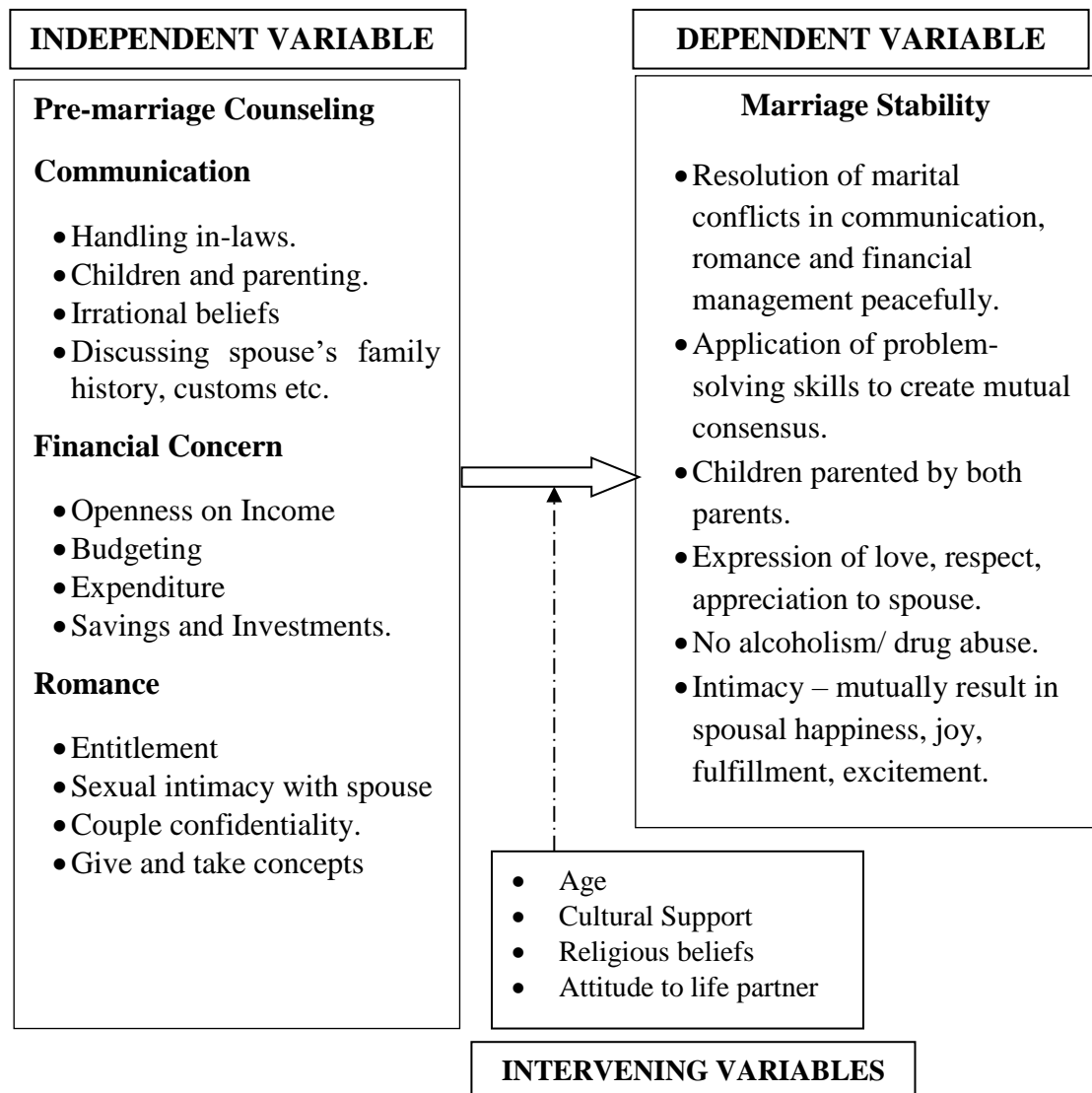
In order to understand the conceptual framework as explained by the drawing (see Figure 2 above), the dependent variable is marriage stability while premarital counselling is the independent variable. This is manifested in romance with the aim of creating mutual conjugal fidelity expressed in sexual intimacy with spouse alone; physical closeness, couple confidentiality, and looking after the welfare of one's spouse. Communication between married men and women, as manifested by couples in sharing

challenges from in-laws, discussing parenting, holding dialogue on work experiences in hardships, and working together to create solutions; came out as very important part of creating stability within marriage. In addition, financial management matters manifested by openness on incomes, budgeting; discussions and agreements on expenditures including rent, food, mortgage; and ways of dealing with savings and investments, within marriage, proved to be very important ingredients of marriage stability. Other factors that contributed to marital stability included culture, and especially African culture which supports marriage, family and children; religious beliefs and positive attitude towards life partner.

#### **2.17.4 Premarital Components in Sustenance to Marital Stability**

Manifestations of marriage stability include marriages where divorce is discouraged and marriage longevity is embraced. Further, where amicable conflict resolution endeavours are in place, mutual consensus between the couple would be experienced. Stability is manifest where resolutions of marital conflicts in communication, romance and in financial management, are handled peacefully.

The conceptual framework under which the study was taken is as shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Premarital Counselling Components in Sustenance to Stability**

**Source:** Marang’a (2018).

In addition, CFT concepts of individual psychology would be a concept to be understood in marriage because a person still displays personal characteristics even after marriage, meaning they still manifest a steady way of relating before and after the marriage. Another important component of CFT is “facts”, for example, things that are historical and are not changeable, for example medical conditions, age and so forth. Behavioural traits manifested through REBT include an irrational belief which

influences individuals while relating with a spouse. These traits are due to early childhood experiences and training and are difficult to change, even after marriage. This may necessitate couples therapy before marriage.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter systematically describes procedures that were used in conducting the study. It contains research design, location of the study, target population, sampling procedures and description of the sample, description of the research instruments, validity and reliability of the research instruments, data collection and data analysis techniques; and lastly ethical considerations to be applied.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Mixed methods research approach was applied to address qualitative and quantitative data. This approach made the overall strength of the study greater than using one research method alone. Creswell and Clark (2007), conjecture that qualitative research is deficient because the researcher's subjective interpretations, and the ensuing biases, make it difficult to generalize the findings. Teddie and Tashakkori (2009) aver that mixed methods approach is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting both quantitative and qualitative data in the research process, within a single study, to understand a research problem more completely. Qualitative information was sought in reference to social and behavioural aspects that were used without numbers or statistics but through personal expressive open interactions (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Quantitative data or numerical/statistical information was obtained through questionnaires. The two data bases were analyzed concurrently in assessing the influence of premarital counselling (independent variable) in sustenance to marriage stability (dependent variable). Creswell and Clark drawing (2011) display how mixed design can be carried out simultaneously.

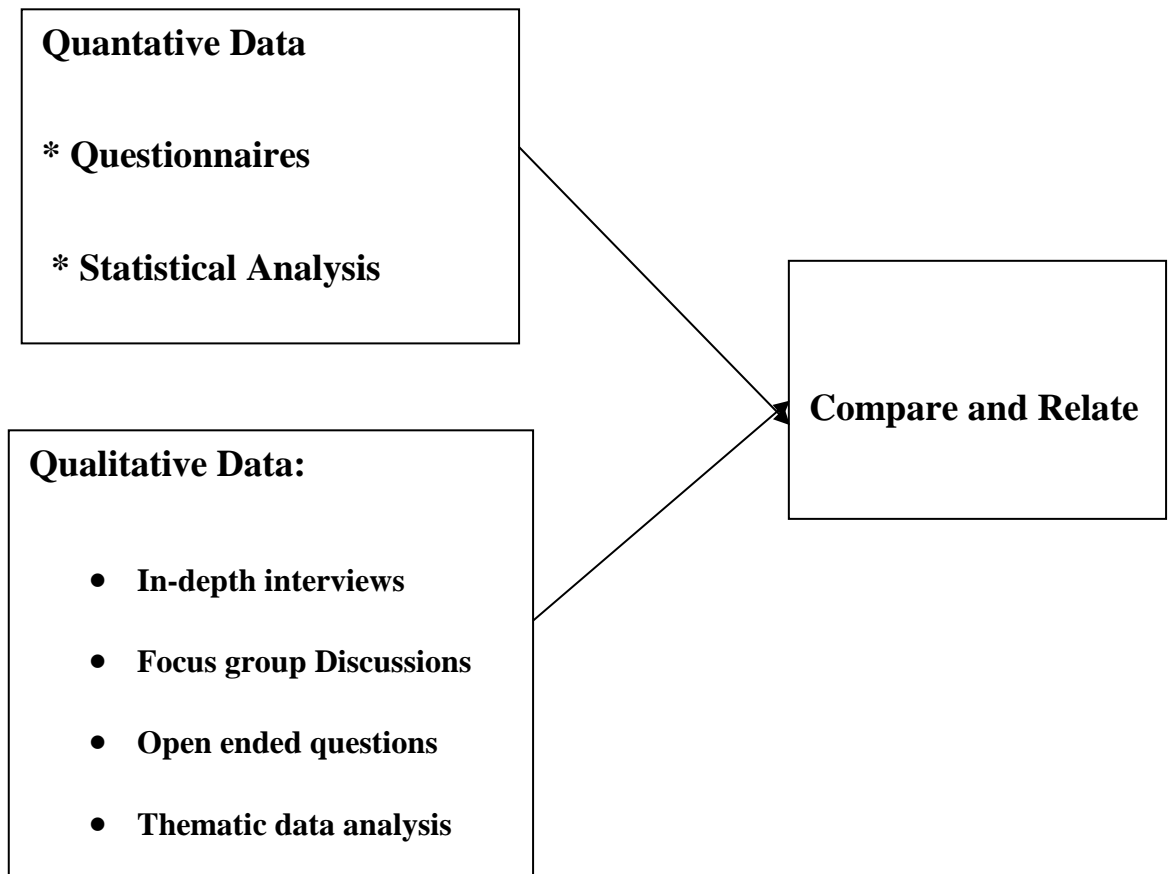


The survey design often referred to as descriptive survey, was useful in giving insights into a general picture of a situation, without utilizing the entire population (Kothari, 2012). This design was used to describe and analyze an aspect of society as asserted by Bangura *et al.*, (2007), in this case through the questionnaire given to couples. This enabled the researcher to actualize the study in assessment of the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance to marriage stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

*Ex-posto factol* Causal Comparative design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of the independent variables, because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). In this study, *Ex-posto-facto* causal comparative design enabled the researcher to determine status of marital stability, among couples who undertook premarital counselling in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

Phenomenological design was applied in order to elaborate the current stability of married couples. In this design the operative word is “describe”. Gubrium, *et al.* (2000) describes phenomenological research as “toward the ways in which ordinary members of society attend to their everyday lives”. Gall *et al.* (2007) avers that phenomenological inquiry is a straight forward procedure capable of detecting many aspects of experiences that may prove to be important, with no further analysis on couples and pre-marriage counsellors, within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **Convergent Parallel Mixed Design:**



**Figure 3: Convergent Parallel Mixed Design**  
**Source:** Adopted from Creswell & Clark (2011).

### **3.3 Location of Study**

The study was carried out in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. Langata Constituency consists of Karen, Nairobi West, Mugumoini, South C and Nyayo Highrise. Dagoretti South Constituency consists of Mutu-ini, Ngando, Riruta, Uthiru, Ruthimitu, Waithaka and Kabiria. The researcher chose this area because it is inhabited by various and diverse social groups; forexample, different ethnic groups who hold different religious and cultural beliefs; havedifferent educational levels andbelong to different political affiliations. Further, the inhabitants engage in various economic activities including formal employment in different institutions; large

and small-scale farmers as well as large and small traders. It is important to point out that Langata constituency can be described as totally urban while Dagoretti includes a rural aspect especially in Mutu-ini, Ruthimitu and Waithaka.

### **3.4 Target Population**

A target population could be described as the group of people on which the researcher intends to generalize the results of a study, Muvumbi and Ngumbi (2015). The total population for the two constituencies, according to 2009 National census, is 355,005 persons. The selection criterion was specifically married men and women currently residing in Langata and Dagoretti South, Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. Out of this population 360 were married men and women, 44 marriage counsellors and six couples (12 people) participated in this study.

### **3.5 Sampling**

Sampling may be defined as the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality, on the basis of which a judgment or inference about the aggregate or totality, is made. In other words, it is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it (Kothari, 2012).

#### **3.5.1 Sampling Procedures and Techniques**

Creswell (2008) points out that in research sampling is conducted to permit detailed study of part, rather than the whole, of a population. Therefore, sampling is a technique or process of choosing a sub-group from a population to participate in a study. In this study the researcher applied probability sampling and systematically identified 360 married men and women in various institutions and work places. Non-probability sampling strategy was applied by purposively identifying forty-four (44) pre-marriage counsellors for focus group discussions and six couples (12 people), to take part in this study; within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

### 3.5.2 Sample

Kerlinger (2000) intimates that an ideal sample should be large enough to enable the investigator have confidence and certainty that a different sample of the same size, if drawn using the same procedure, would give approximately the same results. In this study the sample included married men and women as well as premarital counsellors, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. The sample was composed of 360 married men and women as well as 44 premarital counsellors, as indicated in Table one below.

**Table 1: Sample of Respondents**

Administration Area	Married-Men&Women (Probability sampling)	MarriageCounsellors (Purposive sampling)	Number of Respondents
Langata Constituency	85	22	192
DagorettiSouth Constituency	85	22	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>384</b>

**Source:** Marang'a, L. W. (2018).

### 3.6 Research Instruments of the Study

In preparation for collecting data for this study, research instruments were developed and tested through a pilot group repeatedly. They were revised and then administered to collect data from the respondents. The instruments included questions to couples using Likert Scale (numbers 1-6) and number 7 (i-vii) as open-ended questions. The researcher used focus group discussions with premarital counsellors using the Focus Group Discussions guide. Components of CFT including relational ethics in addressing fairness as an ethical factor, equity in giving and receiving; individual psychology in reference to husband/wife relationship with regard to emotions, experiences, and self-development; were captured in the instruments. Components of REBT were evident in

the instruments including and not limited to, irrational thoughts and self-defeating reasoning among couples, attitudes, and beliefs as well as consequences of actions.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is an instrument used to gather or collect data, which allows measurement for or against a viewpoint, May (2001). The researcher had carefully designed a questionnaire as an instrument of collecting data from married men and women. The use of questionnaires upheld confidentiality because the respondents were not required to write their names. According to White (2002), a questionnaire is an instrument with open and closed ended questions or statements, to which a respondent responds to. Further, questionnaires are relatively economical, ensured anonymity, permitted uses of standardized questions constructed for this study, had uniform procedures, saved time for respondents, and were easy to score and analyze. Therefore, the researcher administered a questionnaire in addressing the components of the independent variable, to every married man and woman within the targeted population, in line with the objectives of this study. Questions one to six were multiple choices, addressing the six research objectives of this study. Questions one to six were multiple choices, addressing the six research objectives, using Likert Scale. Question seven was open-ended seeking qualitative information that the married men and women were willing to share (see Appendix II, page 171): and Appendix IV: page 173).

### **3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions with Premarital Counsellors**

Focus group discussions which are also described as group interviewing is a tool for data collection in research through guided discussions with people (May, 2001). According to Bailey (2007) interview guides are flexible and direct the researcher in the interviewing process, making it more systematic and comprehensive. The researcher

had already prepared a focus group discussions (FGD) guide to ensure that the same information may be obtained from a number of people covering the same material (Hughes, 2002), but in particular to their own situation. The researcher encouraged participants to speak the truth since information given at the discussions would be included as narratives in the final report. Ample time was given to respondents in order to bring out in-depth information in address to the components of the independent variables; and in line with study objectives as per the premarital counsellors focus group discussions guide (Appendix E).

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), the meaning of validity of research instruments is best epitomised by the question: “are we measuring what we think we are measuring?” The researcher had to be sure what she was measuring. When the content of the instrument was scrutinised, the degree to which the items therein represented what they were designed for, was crucial as ascribed by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). Reliability on the other hand, refers to the quality of measurement methods, which suggest that the same data would be correct each time, in repeated observations of the same phenomenon under similar circumstances (Rudestan & Newton, 2007) and Babbie, (2004). In other words, when repeated measurements in the same study give identical or nearly similar results, the measuring instrument is said to be reliable (Vogt, 1999, p. 245).

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data specifically represents the phenomenon under study (Muvumbi & Ngumbi, 2015). Validity, therefore, has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this study, the researcher

ensured a pure representation by aligning the instruments to seek information related to the influence of premarital counselling on marriage stability; in line with the variables of the study. This was achieved by the researcher personally creating the instruments and subjecting them to experts in marriage counselling for validation of qualitative data. This was actualized and, therefore, instruments contained sufficient information to adequately answer the research questions.

### 3.8.2 Reliability

The research instruments were specifically made for this study. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003), aver that this will be ensured by testing the instruments on a pilot group to check consistency in the answers given. The researcher ensured that questions in the research instruments meant the same thing to everybody who participated in the pilot study, over time. Thereafter, results were correlated to find out if the answers given were consistent repeatedly. Consistency of the answers given ensured reliability, which was ascertained by the fact that the level was Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) as indicated in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2: Predictor Measure Matrix for Married Men and Women**

Question	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
1	0.83	5
2	0.91	5
3	0.90	5
4	0.93	5
5	0.89	5
6	0.94	5
Average	0.90	

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

**Table 3: Predictor Measure Matrix for Premarital Counsellors**

Question	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
1	0.87	5
2	0.85	5
3	0.92	5
4	0.94	5
5	0.93	5
6	0.91	5
Average	0.90	

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Conducting this pilot study with premarital counsellors and married men and women (couples) who had undertaken premarital counselling before marriage, was key in assessing the questionnaire's acceptability by its target population. The results of the pilot study indicated high reliability at Cronbach Alpha (0.9). This was partly because content and language in the questionnaire, were pitched at a level that could be easily understood by all participants, because it was free of jargon and it was well-designed. From the data collected, it was reassuring for participants to report that premarital counselling was very important for the stability of their marriages. Several participants reported that premarital counselling programs should include a wide variety of topics covered and that post-marital counselling programs should be developed. Participants' comments, both positive and negative, were very constructive and provided the researcher with extremely useful feedback, which was used in the discussions.

### **3.8.3 Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

Data collection began after the proposal was approved by the School of Post Graduate Studies of Mount Kenya University. Thereafter, the researcher obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The permit was used to secure authority from Nairobi County Education Director's



office to conduct field research in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **3.8.4 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures**

All data collected was cleaned, classified, coded, tabulated and recorded correctly. Quantitative data was recorded numerically and was analyzed statistically, by subjecting it to a computer system, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 26. Finally, results were presented in figures, tables and graphs.

Firstly, qualitative data was organized and prepared for analysis in a step by step procedure, starting with recording the open-ended questions, transcribing focus group discussions, carefully scanning material, typing up field notes, sorting and arranging data into different categories, depending on source of information. Thereafter, the researcher read through the data to obtain a general picture of the information, as well as reflecting on its meaning. Finally, the detailed analysis with a coding process, starting with text data gathered during the data collection process; was carried out. English language was used throughout the whole process, except in one place where Swahili was necessary because of two participants. The final findings were expressed in form of narratives and direct quotes, from the group focus discussions and interviews.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were looked at in reference to the research as well as in consideration to the participants, as indicated below.

#### **3.9.1 Ethical Considerations Related to Research**

A permit authorizing the field research to commence was obtained from Research Director in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County,

Kenya; after explaining that the research was for academic purposes only. Primary research commenced immediately thereafter.

### **3.9.2 Ethical Considerations Related to Participants**

The researcher explained to the participants that the study was for academic purposes only. The participants were informed what was expected of them before any field work activity started. Confidentiality, anonymity was ensured. Security was also ensured as the authorities in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies were aware of the exercise. The Rights of Termination was explained and honoured in respect of any participant who wanted to drop from the study. There were some married men and women who did not return the questionnaire even after persuasion to do so. However, such cases were few and did not affect the results of the study significantly.

### **3.9.3 Ethical Considerations Concerning the Research Process**

The researcher as expected has reported honestly on data, results, methods and procedures. Objectivity in the use of mixed research methodology, data analysis, data interpretation, citations whenever used; was recorded properly. The researcher displayed integrity by keeping promises, agreements and acting responsibly during the duration of the whole process. The researcher was open to criticism and paid respect to intellectual property by acknowledging and honouring works done by others as prescribed in Corey, *et al.* (2011).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research findings of the study. Data was collected from 416 participants drawn from the two constituencies, by way of a questionnaire for married men and married women, in Langata (167) and Dagoretti South (193). Focus group discussions with premarital counsellors, and interview guides for couples, enabled the researcher to find out happy and unhappy marriages. The study questionnaire was administered to 380 married men and women out of whom 360 were completed. This translated to a response rate 95%. All the sampled 44 PMCs fully participated in FGDs and 6 couples participated in interviews conducted by the researcher. The quantitative data obtained was statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics which included frequency distributions, cross-tabulation, graphs and charts. The qualitative data obtained through FGDs and in-depth interviews, was analyzed and presented by way of narrations and quotations.

#### **4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Participants**

The demographic profiles of the participants of interest to the study were gender, age, level of education, position and the various subjects taken and taught in different premarital counselling centres, including and not limited to churches. Data obtained in respect to these variables was analyzed statistically and the results are presented in the following sub-sections.

##### **4.2.1 Gender of Participants**

Data about the gender of the married men and married women, premarital counsellors and couples, were of interest to a study of this nature, in the sense that the issues concerning the premarital counselling and stability of marriages involved both gender.

The collected data in respect to the gender of the married people and premarital counsellors was analyzed and the results are as presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Gender of Participants**

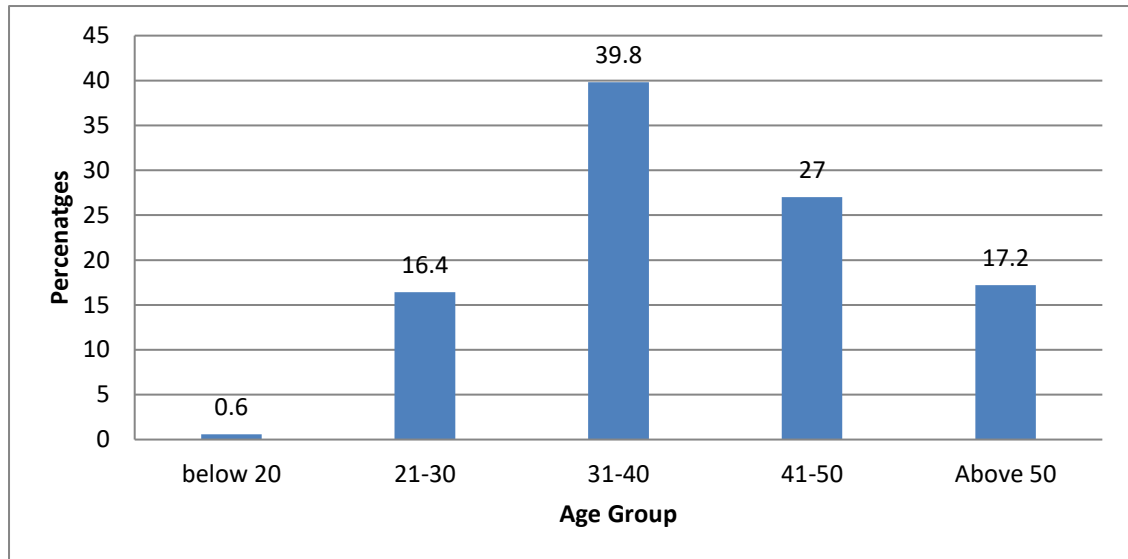
Gender	Men & Women		Premarital Counsellors		Couples	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	175	48.6	24	54.5	3	50.0
Female	185	51.4	20	45.5	3	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Data displayed in Table 4 shows that there was fair representation of married men (49%) and women (51%) in this study. As concerns PMCs, majority of them were male at (55%) while female PMCs were (45%). This means that both men and women carry out premariage counselling in the area of study, though the number of men is slightly higher. This is probably because most premarital counselling is conducted through churches and the researcher noted that there are more male clergy in comparison to female, though among the laity male and female counsellors are more or less the same in number. It is interesting to note that in the Journal of the Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice (2000), Premarital Counselling, a focus for family therapy; it is reported that the clergy carry out mandatory marriage preparation programmes before a religious wedding ceremony takes place in the United Kingdom, as reported by Stahmann and Hiebert (1997). In this study the premarital counsellors had carried premarital counselling among many married men and women, within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### 4.2.2 Age of Married Men and Women Participants

Information about the age of participants is as indicated in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4: Age of Married Men and Women Participants**

**Source:** Researcher (2018).

Data depicted in Figure 4 shows that majority of married men and women (67%) who took part in the study were aged between 31 and 50 years. A notable proportion of (17%) were aged below 30 years while a similar (17%) were aged above 50 years. This probably shows that data collected was from a majority of married men and women, whowerewithin the active age of marriage life, which is between 30-50 years. Such people's expectations and demands in marriage portray a wealth of experience in reference to communication, romance and finances; to address PMC and stability. Whiting and Crane (2003) opines that the age between 31-50 is looked at as a time when the couples are able to positively reframe situations, constructively engage with each other, rather than withdraw or engage in violent behaviours; and effectively use optimism during stressful situations. They also tend to be happier and more stable than those who do not use such coping strategies. In addition, it has been found by other

studies that marital satisfaction is associated with demographic variables such as age at marriage, gender, length of marriage, income and educational level.

The age of a person at the time of marriage has been found to be one of the most common predictors of divorce. Also when people are married at a younger age, they are more likely faced with marital conflicts, mainly in the area of disloyalty and jealousy, as stated by Smart (2008) and earlier pointed out by Amato and Rogers (1997). During the group discussions with premarital counsellors the questions of age at marriage were evident. Some marriage therapists and counsellors recommended or rather encouraged people looking for marriage partners to frequent places where singles are. For some this could mean singles bars, for others it could be places of work, others could go to places of worship with the hope that someone might show up, and others could just meet their mates by coincidence. It may be concluded that wherever people meet and in reference to age, connectivity between men and women still take place. However prospective couples at times seem unsure about their age and their forthcoming marriage. There is need therefore, for encouraging premarital counselling, not only on age at marriage but on the importance of openness, friendship and commitment.

The above is in agreement with Ellis' rational emotive behaviour therapy where conclusions are made that humans are always self-talking, self-evaluating, and self-sustaining. They develop emotional, behavioural difficulties in taking simple preferences for love (desires, approval, success) and make the mistake of thinking of them as dire needs (Corey, 1996). Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987), regards age as a factual element of life and relationships that are difficult to change. Age of an individual cannot be changed as it is influenced by biological factors. Not all clients in therapy and marital

counselling will be willing to admit that specific facts of their personal history have had any effects on their lives, especially in marriage (Hargrave and Pfitzer, 2003).

#### 4.2.3 Highest Education Level of Participants

The married men and women participants were asked to indicate their highest academic qualifications and the responses gathered were as depicted in Table 5.

**Table 5: Highest Education Level of Married Men and Women (n=360)**

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
None formal	10	2.8
Primary	9	2.5
Secondary	29	8.1
Tertiary	34	9.4
Diploma	84	23.3
Degree	119	33.1
Postgraduate	73	20.3
PhD	2	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

The findings in Table 5 reveal that more than half of the participants (54%) had bachelor's degree and above, while 33% had a diploma and tertiary level of education. However, a sizeable number of married men and women (14%) had secondary level of education and below. This means that data was collected from participants of all educational categories.

The level of education of either spouse affects life style and in some areas, as stated by Chen (2012) and Adler (2010), the level of education may affect marital stability positively or negatively. However, in a study by Tucker and O'Grady (2001), it was pointed out that couples with similar educational levels would be more satisfied with

their marriage. In this study the education of spouses did not, directly, indicate any major negative effects on marriage. In one particular instance the researcher noted that the PMC facilitators are well educated and it emerged that the lessons in communication, romance and financial management; were offered in English language which was understood by the majority of attendants. In one particular instance Swahili and Kikuyu languages were used during an interview but were simultaneously translated into English for reporting purposes.

#### 4.2.4 Employment Status of Participants

Information about the employment status of the participants was of paramount importance to this study in that it would shed light on how employment influences marriage stability in relation to PMC received. Also, it was important to find out employment status of participants to enable the researcher understand how the married men and women handled their finances, including and not limited to savings and investment. Apparently handling of finances in this area caused a lot of anxiety in some families due to miscommunication. The data collected in this regard was analyzed and the results are as summarized in Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Employment Status of Participants**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Formally employed	229	63.6
Business	89	24.7
Farmer	19	5.3
Self employed	7	2.0
Retired	3	.8
Unemployed	2	.6
Stay at home mother	2	.6
No response	9	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018).

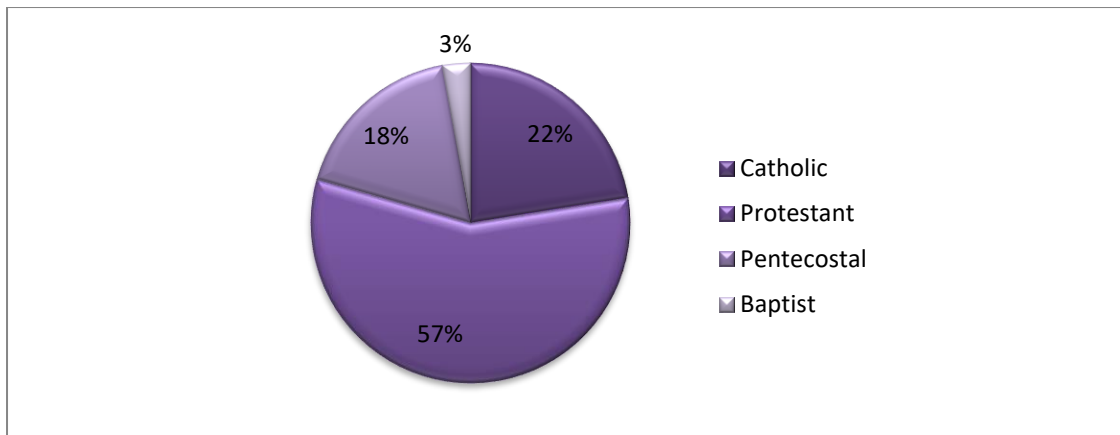


Data displayed in Table 6 reveals that a majority of the married men and women who took part in the study were formally employed (64%), followed by those in business (25%). Information on employment was important in enabling the study to elaborate on how the couples managed to take care of their families and if occupations affected the marriage stability. This led the researcher to discover that money matters caused misunderstandings, among some couples, where each spouse handled money issues individually, leading to tension and neglect of some duties and provisions at home. This often became a contentious issue and at times led families to live in debt instead of getting out of it, as prescribed by Buckett (2000). This confirmed Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987) elaboration on entitlement in the family which is positive as well as negative. Looking at the positive perspective, the couples could be arguing on the “necessity for freedom to enjoy life, creativity and courage of commitment”.

However, since financial matters are causing arguments and disunity in the family, the argument on entitlement becomes destructive (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1993) as it results in conflicts in the family; as evidenced in this study. Further, the study sought to find out employment or income status of the married men and women, in endeavouring to get answers and or guidelines, not only on financial management skills, but also in communication and romance among couples.

#### **4.2.5 Denominational Status of Participants**

The study was focused on the Christian marriages within the area of study and this necessitated the need to seek knowledge on denominational affiliations of the participants, which is a key factor to this study. Data collected from the married men and women in regard to their denomination was as depicted in Figure 5.

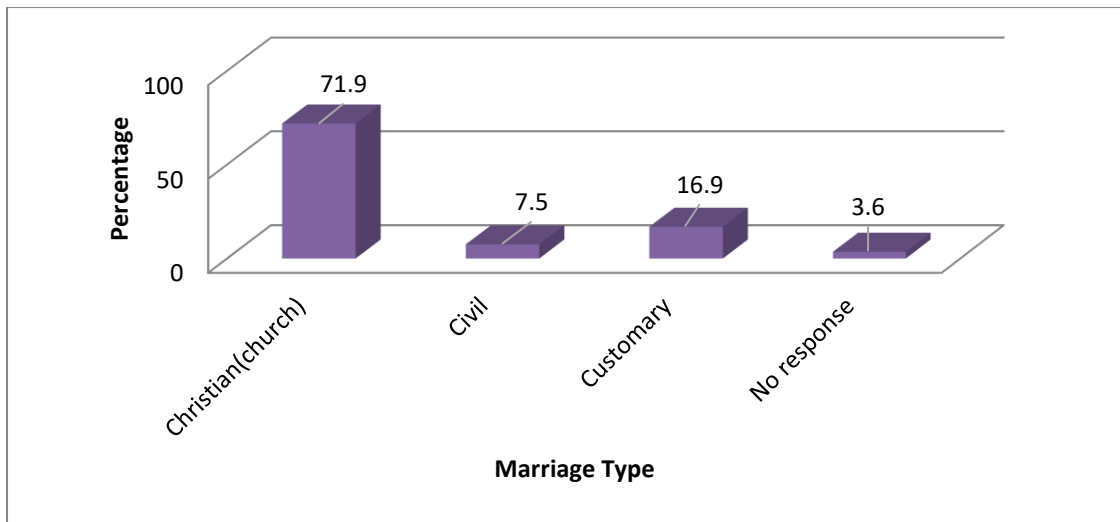


**Figure 5: Distribution of Participants by Denominational Affiliation**

The findings in Figure 5 revealed that a majority of the participants (57%) were Protestants followed by Catholics (22%) and Pentecostals (18%). This means that though data was collected randomly through the questionnaire, a lot of married men and women are from the three main denominations indicated in figure 5 above. Further, religious beliefs are among the confounding variables of this study and it was important to find out about faith matters. In addition, and as stated by Worthington (1999), religious beliefs and concepts of forgiveness play a great role in solving marital problems.

#### **4.2.6 Marriage Type of Participants**

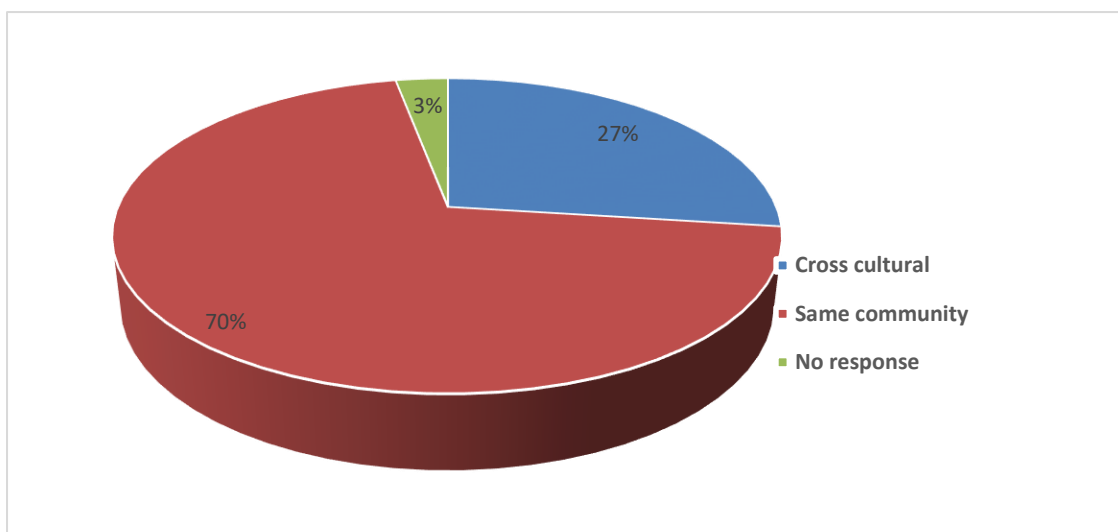
Information about the marriage type of the participants was of interest to the study. The information was to help in exploring further the kind of premarital counselling that go with the type of marriage and how stable the relationships are. The respondents were asked to indicate their respective marriage types and data gathered is as shown in Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6: Responses on Types of Marriage in Denominations**

Source: Researcher (2018).

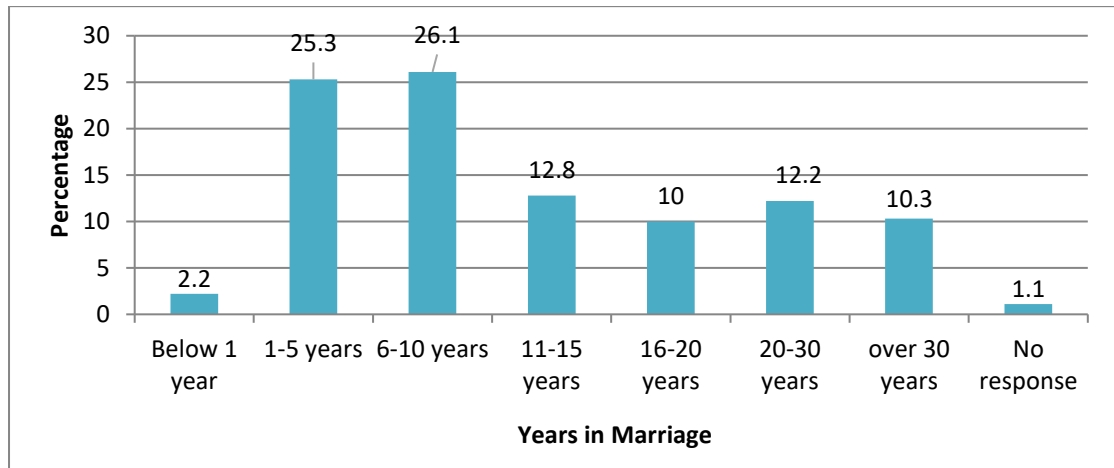
Data displayed in Figure 6 clearly shows that a majority of the participants had Christian marriages (72%), (17%) had customary marriages while only (8%) had civil marriages. Further, the participants were asked to indicate how best they would describe their marriage and the data obtained is as summarized in Figure 7. As can be seen in Figure 7, below, majority of the participants described their marriages as from the same community (70%) followed by the cross cultural (27%).



**Figure 7: Description of Various Types of Marriages**

Source: Researcher (2018).

Further, the participants were asked to indicate the number of years they had been married and the responses were as summarized in Figure 8. As for the duration of their marriage, most of the participants (46%) were married for 11 years and above while over 50% were married for 10 years and below.



**Figure 8: Duration of Marriage in years**

**Source:** Researcher (2018).

The data displayed in Figure 8 shows that it was collected from married men and married women, whose duration of marriage was varied from as low as one year to over 30 years.

### 1.3 Premarital Counselling Status of Participants

#### 4.3.1 Premarital Counselling Status of Participants

In as far as premarital counselling among married men and married women was concerned, the study explored numerous aspects to unearth the true position of the participants in the study. The participants were asked to indicate if they went through any form of PMC and the responses gathered were as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Married Men and Women who went through Premarital Counselling**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	302	83.9
No	58	16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Data depicted in Table 7 shows that a majority of the participants who took part in the study went through some form of premarital counseling (84%) while 16% did not. Data displayed in Table 8, further depicts that majority went through church PMC (65%), followed by 23% who went through both traditional and church while 15% went through traditional PMC only. This is possible since about 17% of the participants were customarily married. It is important to express the fact that in many countries a large number of couples are encouraged to go through premarital counselling. There has been much discussion in the United States about the proposal of making marriages harder to dissolve. Some of these issues are complex as stated in a paper presented at the Revitalizing Marriage Conference in Brigham Young University (Parkman&Spaht, 2000). During the conference a common belief was established which strengthened feelingstowards the fact that, some increased delay might be valuable to couples who could be thinking about taking such a significant step like divorce. Rational Emotive Behaviour theorists would prescribe to a lot of rational thinking and evaluation before taking steps towards marriage dissolution. The study was also interested in knowing who did the premarital counselling among those who went through it. The study findings in this respect are as summarized in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: Specific Premarital Counselling each Participant went Through (N=302)**

<b>Premarital Counselling</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Traditional	44	14.6
Church	197	65.2
Both traditional and Church	70	23.2

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

A large number of premarital couples went through church PMC (65.2%); both traditional and church jointly was 23.2% and only 14.6% went through traditional

counselling. These figures indicate that although majority go through religious PMC still quite a large number seek traditional counselling, within the area of study. The study found out that traditional counselling is often carried out by aunties and uncles of the persons seeking to get married. This would include the need for fidelity and the importance of being faithful to spouse. In addition, the responsibilities for the respective couple or couples would be brought out. This is what would be described as roles of husband and wife in marriage, among other topics.

**Table 9: Specific Conductors of Premarital Counselling (N=302)**

<b>Facilitator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Church Minister	210	69.5
Marriage Counsellor	66	21.9
Father	5	1.7
Mother	22	7.3
Both parents	28	9.3
Relatives	25	8.3
Friends	26	8.6
Best couple/experienced couples	5	1.7
Lawyer	3	1.0

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Data in Table 9 reveals that about 70% of the participants went through PMC conducted by church ministers while 22% was done by marriage counsellors. This shows that most of the PMC to married men and women is done by the church through the church ministers and marriage counsellors. Halford (2004) and Carrol and Dahortey (2003), emphasize that premarital counselling is a recognized undertaking worldwide. It requires both the development of well-structured programs adjusted to the complexity of marital relationships and the education or training of facilitators to lead those programs. Horvath-Szabo, *etal*, (2015) emphasize that such kind of programs should not only aim at behavioural changes but also at modifying deeper motivations and the nature of relationship dynamics. This necessitates increasing positive and decreasing negative

interactions as well as mobilising the resources of the relationship by putting more emphasis on inner factors such as trust, respect towards partner, support of partner's development and change. This is in line with Ellis (2001) assertion that rational emotive behaviour family therapy follows the same principles and practice of individual REBT. This is because it exposes the fundamental premises that underlie family members' disillusionment with themselves. And family arrangements in addition to using cognitive, emotive, and behavioural methods; in trying to improve relationships.

It is important to note that a small percentage of the married men and women were counselled by their parents (9%), relatives (8%) and friends (9%). This is in line with the relational ethics (the balance of fairness) in Contextual family therapy, which asserts that to the extent that one person or generation benefits from the other; they become indebted to give to a younger generation. In line with this entitlement the 'ledger' of the younger generation must benefit from the older (parents) because they, too; were counselled by an earlier generation. This balance of fairness or relational ethics, according to Hargrave *et al.* (1991), is summarised in that 'without the experience of relating, giving and receiving from another person, the individual has an insufficient basis to experience or benefit from another'. Therefore, in this argument, the new couple is entitled to bring the balance between give and take with the older generation.

Further, those who did not go for any form of PMC were asked to give reasons why and their responses are as listed in Table 10. Among the reasons advanced by most of the participants for not going through PMC were that most married men and women had lived together. This is not a good enough reason because cohabitation, in most cases, is not regarded as marriage, and the preparation made and the topics taught at PMC becomes applicable to all men and women living together. In the Handbook of Family

Life Education, Stahmann and Salts (1993) are quoted as having intimated that the typical goals of various approaches, to marital preparation include easing the transition from single to married life, increasing couple stability and satisfaction, for the short and long term. This enhances the communication skills of the couple, increasing friendship and commitment to the relationship, increasing couple intimacy; and enhancing problem-solving and decision-making skills; in such areas as marital roles and finances.

Other participants indicated that there was no church PMC counselling done by the time they got married, or no one was there to offer counselling (2%); while others were not aware of PMC services (1%). In addition, other participants indicated that they knew each other before they got married (0.6%), the marriage was unplanned (0.6%) while others were busy and had no time for PMC (0.9%). Among the reasons advanced by most of the participants for not going through PMC included the fact that some men and women had lived together before marriage (3%). Whatever the reasons given for non-attendance of PMC, premarital couples should be encouraged to participate. Greef and DeBruyne (2000) aver that marital satisfaction is also about emotional understanding and support, independence, problem solving and conflict resolution. In addition, couples should work hard to keep their relationship growing, avoiding extra marital affairs and giving sexual satisfaction to spouse. It may be intimated that according to Conceptual therapists, endeavouring to give sexual satisfaction to one's spouse is an entitlement within marriage.



**Table 10: Specific Reasons for missing Premarital Counselling (N=58)**

Statement	Frequency	Percent
We were young and the pastor said No	1	.3
We knew each other before we got married	2	.6
Not yet married	1	.3
Not aware of premarital counselling	5	1.4
We had lived together before marrying	10	2.8
There was no counselling back then/ No one was there to offer counselling	8	2.2
Busy, no time for counselling	2	.6
I was staying away, but relied on written literature	1	.3
Lack of adequate money for counselling	1	.3
I did not seek counselling services	2	.6
The wedding was done at the Attorney General's office	1	.3
Unplanned/accidental/I had not planned to get married	2	.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

#### **4.3.2 Participants' Perception of Premarital Counselling on Marriage Stability**

In order to assess the perceptions of the participants on various aspects of premarital counselling and stability in marriages, the researcher used Likert scale items where the respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. The results obtained are as presented in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.3.3 Nature and Contribution of Premarital Counselling to the Relationship**

The nature of PMC conducted to married men and women was of interest to this study and was assessed using (10) Likert items, as summarized in Table 11 below.

**Table 11: The Nature of Premarital Counselling and its Contribution to Marital Stability**

**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Uncertain A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Contents of premarital counselling have contributed to our stability	11 (3.1)	22 (6.1)	69 (19.1)	169 (46.9)	89 (24.7)
The counselling was given in an interactive and clear manner each time	9 (2.5)	34 (9.4)	43 (12.0)	137 (38.1)	112 (31.1)
The curriculum consisted of real-life issues which we have faced in marriage	9 (2.5)	23 (6.4)	65 (18.0)	144 (40.0)	119 (33.1)
The sessions were intense and relevant to me and my spouse	11 (3.1)	31 (8.6)	77 (21.3)	151 (41.9)	90 (25.0)
It would be commendable if topics covered could be increased	7 (1.9)	11 (3.1)	83 (23.0)	110 (30.6)	149 (41.4)
My mother counselled me never to fight/quarrel with in-laws	24 (6.7)	37 (10.3)	80 (22.2)	109 (30.3)	110 (30.6)
Counselling given by my father was very brief but concrete each time	33 (9.2)	38 (10.6)	94 (26.1)	126 (35.0)	69 (19.2)
My uncles/aunts taught me to respect my spouse always	30 (8.3)	62 (17.2)	79 (22.0)	120 (33.3)	69 (19.2)
My married peers insisted on the importance of tolerance in marriage	22 (6.1)	27 (7.5)	75 (20.8)	153 (42.5)	83 (23.1)
It would be commendable if all counselling could be organized	7 (1.9)	11 (3.1)	43 (11.9)	97 (26.9)	202 (56.1)

**Source: Researcher (2018).**

As can be deduced from data displayed in Table 11, majority of the participants were overwhelmingly in agreement over several items. For instance, the participants indicated that it would be commendable if all PMC counselling could be organized (83%) while 73% agreed that the curriculum consisted of real life issues which they experienced in marriage. The nature of PMC conducted in relation to stability experienced in marriages was supported by about 70% of the participants, who indicated that the contents of premarital counselling contributed to their marriage stability; and that the counselling sessions were given in an interactive and clear manner each time (72%). Despite the fact that 67% of the participants supported the fact that the PMC sessions given were intense and relevant to them and their spouses, a majority (72%) of the married men and women felt that it would be commendable if PMC topics covered, could be increased.

All in all, over half of the participants supported counselling done by the mother, father and relatives; over the issues of respect to each other, to in-laws and tolerance. These recommendations are in line with a Consultation Paper released in the United Kingdom in November 1998 by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw on “Supporting Families”, which was aimed at showering up families and providing resources to do so. The purpose was to give a pre-marriage package to a couple before marriage. The purpose then, which is still the purpose today on anyone researching on premarital counselling, was and still is, to include transition from single to married life, as well as increasing couple stability and satisfaction for the short and long term. This involves enhancing communication coping skills in marriage, in addition to increasing friendship and commitment to the relationship. This would enable the couple to increase intimacy as well as enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills, in such areas as marital roles and financial management skills (Stahmann and Salts, 1993).

Results indicated in Table 11, as per the data displayed the contents of the PMC given was appreciated, but recommendations were that all premarital counselling should be organized and structured. The contents of the table consisted of real life issues but there is need to increase the topics covered. Even though PMC was carried out by both the clergy and premarital counsellors, about 5% of the participants appreciated counsel and guidance from parents and relatives on marriage issues. This indicates that parents should be sensitized to teach their children about family life and family matters, not only during marriage preparation but also throughout life. This becomes an ethical concept of obligation, and especially looking at it from the contextual family therapist’s eye of loyalty. Feelings of loyalty are a psychological domain, and being loyal involves accepting, as well as honouring obligations in relationships and sharing power (Goldenthal, 1993). Boszomenyi-Nagi (1987) continues to indicate that loyalty

transcends current imbalances in the ledger of give-and-take because of the human need to be loyal (Brown-Standridge & Floyd, 2000). This continuous repetition of beneficial acts, not only in premarital counselling; but also in other areas of life between parents and their children, may be described as a continuous human behavioural trait in many families.

#### **4.3.4 Premarital Counselling Undertaken and Current Marital Stability**

The issues of stability in marriages as related to PMC undertaken by the participants were explored using ten (10) items and the results are as summarized in Table 12. In terms of marriage stability, the study reveals that majority of the participants were in total agreement that premarital counselling encouraged them to seek interventions when needed (73%), empowered them to consult each other regularly (72%), while the knowledge gained during PMC influenced their exhibition of positive emotions to each other (72%). In addition, the participants acknowledged that due to premarital counselling they received, they relate respectfully to each other to date (70%). Table 12 clearly brings out the fact that men and women who had undertaken PMC indicate that due to the learning they had received, they also exhibit mutual understanding. This clearly portrays stability in their marriage. Lack of consultation is one of the issues facing many couples currently as reported during the group focus discussions with the marriage counsellors. The table indicates that nearly 50% of the married men and women consult one another regularly.

**Table 12: Premarital Counselling Contribution to Current Marriage Stability**  
**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Uncertain A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Due to premarital counselling we relate respectfully to date	14 (3.9)	25 (6.9)	68 (18.9)	156 (43.3)	97 (26.9)
Premarital counselling empowered us to consult each other regularly	10 (2.8)	30 (8.3)	60 (16.7)	166 (46.1)	94 (26.1)
Knowledge gained influences exhibition of positive emotions to spouse	10 (2.8)	20 (5.6)	67 (18.7)	188 (52.2)	75 (20.8)
Premarital counselling encouraged us to seek interventions when needed	6 (1.7)	15 (4.2)	71 (19.8)	182 (50.6)	86 (23.9)
After a few years of marriage we recommend post marital counselling	13 (3.6)	21 (5.8)	78 (21.7)	105 (29.2)	143 (39.7)
Due to informal advice given by relatives we relate respectively to date	17 (4.7)	43 (11.9)	116 (32.3)	134 (37.2)	50 (13.9)
Nobody talked to us in regard to regular consultations	66 (18.3)	98 (27.2)	87 (24.2)	75 (20.8)	34 (9.4)
With passage of time we both learnt to handle negative emotions	10 (2.8)	11 (3.1)	55 (15.3)	178 (49.4)	106 (29.4)
Parental and peer advice has enabled us to seek interventions often	20 (5.6)	54 (15.0)	106 (29.5)	129 (35.8)	51 (14.2)
I would recommend teachings on stability in post marital counselling every five years	7 (1.9)	14 (3.9)	62 (17.4)	99 (27.5)	178 (49.4)

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

However, about 30% did not consult regularly which calls for concern and indicates poor quality relationships. Amindu, Quiredu, *et al.* (2011), intimate that quality of marriage is characterized by happiness, pleasure, affection, intimacy, tenderness and love together with communication, commitment and marital satisfaction associated with the level of these characteristics. This is in line with Contextual family therapists' assumption that the key ingredient of any relationship is trustworthiness, which is achieved by all family members having mutual consideration of each other (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1980). Contextual therapists further assume that accountability and fairness are the essential connecting powers in relational associations (Soyez, Tatrai, Broekaert, & Bracke, 2004). This leads to the assumption that couples recommendations that there is need for post marital counselling should be emphasized, not only in this area of study but also everywhere.

### 4.3.5 Null Hypothesis 1

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between marital stability of couples who had gone through premarital counselling and those who had not.

**Table 13: Marital stability and Contribution of Counselling to Marital Relationship**

		Contribution of counselling to marital relationship			Total	
		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Marital stability	Agree	Count	106	0	12	118
		Expected Count	80.3	3.9	33.8	118.0
	Disagree	Count	3	7	11	21
		Expected Count	14.3	.7	6.0	21.0
	Uncertain	Count	136	5	80	221
		Expected Count	150.4	7.4	63.2	221.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>360</b>	
	<b>Expected Count</b>	<b>245.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>103.0</b>	<b>360.0</b>	

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	102.536 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	76.583	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	360		

a. 2 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .70.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than alpha (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant difference between marital stability of couples who had gone through premarital counselling and those who had not. This means that the couples who had taken premarital counselling appropriated their roles immediately after marriage as opposed to those who did not, resulting to unnecessary quarrels and arguments. These findings are consistent with a study done by Martin *et al.* (2015).

## **4.4 The Influence of Premarital Counselling on Communication Skills within Marriage**

### **4.4.1 Premarital Counselling on Communication Skills within Marriage**

The perceptions of the participants on the influence of PMC on communication between married men and women was equally assessed using ten (10) Likert scale items and the responses gathered were as depicted in Table 13.

Data in Table 13 clearly shows that a majority of the participants in the study were in total agreement on all the items under consideration. However, the items highly favoured by majority of the participants were that through PMC they learnt that dialogue strengthens commitment to marriage (87%), and sharing daily experiences regularly was important in marriage (83%). In addition, participants indicated that they would be happy if they could jointly discuss with their spouses challenges experienced with in-laws, relatives and parenting of their children (82%). A similar proportion felt that they would be happy if their respective spouses allowed them to finish what they were saying without interruptions (82%) and seeking clarity on any vague issue.

Further, the participants indicated that PMC taught them how to speak openly to each other to strengthen their marriage (81%) as well as guarding against being influenced by friends and peers (81%). PMC also taught the participants how to deal with problems instead of attacking each other (78%).

**Table 14: Responses on the Influence of Premarital Counselling on Communication Skills in Marriage**

**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Uncertain A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Counselling taught us to speak openly to strengthen our marriage	9 (2.5)	17 (4.7)	41 (11.4)	144 (40.0)	149 (41.4)
My spouse and I agree to communicate openly and guard against being influenced by friends and peers	5 (1.4)	10 (2.8)	52 (14.4)	144 (40.0)	149 (41.4)
Counselling taught us to deal with problems and not to attack each other	10 (2.8)	14 (3.9)	54 (15)	158 (43.9)	124 (34.4)
During premarital counselling I learnt asking questions creates clarity	8 (2.2)	28 (7.8)	64 (17.8)	151 (41.9)	109 (30.3)
We are able to mentor couples younger than us due to counselling given	10 (2.8)	26 (7.2)	62 (17.4)	151 (42)	111 (31.1)
I have learnt that dialogue strengthens commitment to marriage	4 (1.1)	6 (1.7)	37 (10.3)	127 (35.3)	186 (51.4)
I would be happy if my spouse and I discuss challenges on in-laws, relatives and parenting together	7 (1.9)	10 (2.8)	48 (13.3)	141 (39.2)	154 (42.8)
I would feel happy if my spouse allows me to finish what I am saying without interruptions.	7 (1.9)	7 (1.9)	51 (14.1)	161 (44.7)	134 (37.2)
We have learnt the importance of sharing daily experiences regularly	1 (.3)	9 (2.5)	50 (13.9)	173 (48.1)	127 (35.3)
I feel upset when my spouse consults peers on our family issues before sharing with me.	14 (3.9)	15 (4.2)	54 (17.8)	101 (28.1)	166 (46.1)

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

#### **4.4.2 Null Hypothesis 2:**

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between marital stability of couples who had been trained in effective communication during premarital counselling and those who were not.



**Table 15: Marital Stability and Communication skills**

			Communication			Total	
			Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Marital stability	Agree	Count	60	2	56	118	
		Expected Count	35.7	12.1	70.1	118.0	
	Disagree	Count	1	9	11	21	
		Expected Count	6.4	2.2	12.5	21.0	
	Uncertain	Count	48	26	147	221	
		Expected Count	66.9	22.7	131.4	221.0	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>Count</b>	109	37	214	360
			<b>Expected Count</b>	109.0	37.0	214.0	360.0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61.859 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	57.177	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	360		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.16.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than alpha (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant difference between marital stability of couples, who did or did not, undertake communication skills in premarital counselling. This is consistent with a study done by Martin, *et al.* (2015) who found that couples who had undertaken premarital counselling in communication skills might have found dialogue with their partners within marriage, which could have averted misunderstandings and enhanced marital stability compared to their counterparts who had not learnt proper communication styles before marriage. Data collected through interviews and FGDs revealed a wealth of real life experiences concerning communication within marriage as encountered by marriage counsellors and couples. For instance, one female PMC said that:

*“Both husband and wife should work at their communication skills from premarital stage and throughout their marriage. Proper communication amongst couples is the glue that holds and connects the couple together as it creates cohesion, clears up issues and gives guidance and the way forward. In any case, two cannot walk together unless they agree and this agreement can only be achieved through verbal and non-verbal communication”.*

On the same note, a male PMC put more emphasis on couples cultivating effective communication skills in order to avoid misunderstandings and confrontations within marriages. He pointed out that many of the couples who live in this area do not communicate effectively, because in some cases it generates to verbal abuse and at times this results to physical violence. Another male PMC added that *“A husband could ask the wife for certain information and the wife would respond without hesitation by saying that ‘I do not know’ or simply ask him ‘why are you asking me?’”* The counsellor continued to explain that such kind of dialogue clearly indicates disrespect to the husband and could create ill feelings between the spouses. This led to the assumption that many couples do not understand what effective communication during PMC sessions is; resulting to one male PMC saying that *“Premarital counselling training should first and foremost demystify marital communication”*. This is in agreement with Kennedy-Lightsey, Martin, *et al.*, (2015), who avers that marital couples public performance, require the joint communication of two individuals to present a unique entity in the relationship, while remaining true to individual identity.

However, for proper communication to occur and result to a stable marriage, a female PMC insisted that:

*“Men need to understand women. When a woman complains about something to her husband, she does not necessarily want him to fix it, but for him to listen. Unfortunately, many married men do not know how to do it or what it means. The woman wants to be listened to and for the husband to understand how she is feeling about the problem. The woman*

*may understand and appreciate his suggestion, but at the moment what she really needs is for him to show emotional support by listening more”.*

Generally, men seem to have trained themselves to cut through the clutter of emotions in order to focus on the ‘real issue’ but for the women, it is the feelings that are the real issue and what matters in a relationship. Hence, men need to learn and understand women and their feelings well before marriage, as intimated by another male premarital counsellor:

*“In counselling men and women, men need to know that in dealing with women’s issues in marriage, regardless of how successful, self-assured, or mature they are, or how long you have been together as a couple, you have to keep on telling her how she is gorgeous and how youthful and beautiful she is. She needs to hear words of compliment, appreciation, encouragement and acknowledgement from her own husband.”*

Contrary to this observation, many PMCs opined that in general, a man begs for respect from the wife, even if the whole world is against him. They noted that there is nothing that makes a husband feel motivated, honoured and treasured, than his wife’s assurance of her love, dedication, and respect for him. This is more important to a man than seeking assurance from anybody else. This agrees with a study carried out on ‘married couples’ perceptions on family stress, where Schwartzberg and ScherDytell, (2008), states that working fathers were more attuned to their emotional relationship with their spouses. Unlike men, working mothers seem more attuned to the amount of actual assistance they receive around the house.

Where communication and appreciation of spouse is lacking, dissatisfaction sets in the home. In this regard, great emphasis during PMC should address communication at the home front. In addition couples need to know that this is a strong tool to help them learn and understand one another, in order to create solutions and cohesion. At this juncture, one female PMC retorted that proper communication takes maturity on how issues in

marriage are addressed, taking into consideration partners' knowledge and understanding. In support to this, another female PMC insisted that many couples put a lot of importance on the time spent together, to create true friendship between husband and wife:

*“The heart of marriage is in its communication between a husband and wife as they share each day the meaning of their lives. Although no couple begins with highly developed dialogues at the onset of their life together, communication in marriage must have clear content, to make it easy for the spouse to understand. This necessitates a clear verbal language to enhance understanding of what is being said.”*

This makes it clear that openness and sincerity in communication would enable married men and women handle issues on finance, romance, parenting, conflict and in laws, among other matters; in ways that would create understanding in the relationship. It is imperative that couples understand gender issues which would guide them in how men and women think, feel, and conceptualize concerns; especially about life experiences. In marriage, couples should strive to understand the personality of each other for the marriage to work and be stable. This includes systemic interactions (power alignments) to accommodate the multi-dimensional patterns of family behaviour, as echoed by Metcalf (2011), in describing communication patterns in relationships. Metcalf further argues that each family has peculiar boundaries made up of unique rules and roles within familial operations.

During FGDs discussions, accusations were levelled on men, regarding their modes of dialoguing because they do not talk much, while women are said to talk too much, in most cases. One male PMC said that *“in marriage, both partners should sit down and discuss their concerns, fears, excitements and their fulfilment”*. Another PMC echoed the same sentiment:

*“Free expression of emotions for the partner, whether verbal or non-verbal, to understand and distinguish what the husband or wife needs, should convey this information vividly and as couples start and continue living together, they should strive to understand the style of communication of their spouses”.*

This is in line with McBride and Toller (2011) connotation that communication skills should always be taught to couples at premarital level, with the intention of creating joint couple connectivity. The intention would be to fulfil social and emotional needs, in addition to giving instrumental support to for the maintenance of a healthy marital relationship and the achievement of general wellness for the couple. For instance, a female PMC interviewee said:

*“A husband or wife could be auditory-oriented and depends upon spoken words for information and use auditory words like ‘...that sounds good to me; I hear you clear as a bell...’ and so on. If a spouse is visually oriented, he or she uses visual images in remembering or thinking for example “.....I see what you are saying.....that looks good to me.....” and so on. If a spouse is kinaesthetically oriented, he or she will tend to feel their way through experiences”.*

Communication within marriage, therefore, needs internal, external, as well as clear and truthful expressions. Dishonesty and pretence during courtship may not touch the heart and emotions of a spouse or prospective marriage partner. Consequently, this negative behaviour should be extinguished to help in cementing the relationship. Most important also is the way couples express love and concern to bring their hearts together in marriage. Creating a stable marriage requires *“the connectivity created initially being maintained, so as to encourage and drive couples to have deepened love and understanding of one another, leading to cordial co-existence”*, as one male participant added. This is a clear indication that many times, the communication can be in coded language that only the couple understand. For instance, one of the female PMCs said that *“couples could use phrases like “.....I cannot get a handle on this or I got a good feeling, or touch, or grasp on this and so on”*. This is in agreement with Larson, *et al.*

(2002) who insists that premarital counselling communication should be taught to a group or on one-on-one basis. The focus should be on communication skills such as listening, paying attention to spouse and recall, coupled with problem solving skills. Conversational skills are therefore, critical for developing and maintaining satisfying personal relationships (Dindia & Timmerman, 2003). This would depend on how skilled a spouse is in expressing themselves as well as in communicating needs and aspirations.

However, where couples spend long hours at work place, come home exhausted by end of the day, without creating time for each other, could become a recipe for an unstable marriage. One female PMC said that *“Miscommunication in marriages or in relationships, with very limited conversation taking place, could cause spouses to lose each other gradually”*. This observation was supported by one married woman who noted that:

*“The major challenge in my marriage was when my husband continued to spend too much time with friends in the evenings and at weekends coming home on Sunday mornings. This brought a lot of fighting and strain on my life. I often slept after midnight, continuously, which led to mental and physical exhaustion. Since we could not agree on anything, I involved our parents but my husband did not change”*.

Such frustrations were also experienced by married men. One male interviewee said:

*“My wife kept on quarrelling with my mother and this caused a lot of tension between us. I did not want to be put in a situation where I will have to choose between the two women. I asked my aunt to talk to her sister and at the same time I decided to be very candid with my wife. Eventually the two women agreed to co-exist and currently we live in peace at home”*.

It is clear that, where there is communication breakdown between couples, the interventions of parents, friends, relatives or marriage counsellors can broker peace. For instance, a married man interviewee had this to say:

*“I had problems at work, and was involved with friends who helped me get relief from the frustrations, by going out to drink. In addition, my wife was creating a lot of tension, especially by involving parents. My wife and I were helped by a mutual friend who introduced us to a marriage counsellor. Though it took time, we were able to set boundaries and worked out our misunderstandings, through the counsellor’s guidance on effective communication”.*

In line with the examples given by the above husband in this study, Roberts (2000) cautions that fiery, hostile, contemptuous, or aggressive communication between partners signal trouble in an intimate relationship; and is hardly a matter of debate. In addition, Roberts and Linney (2000) purport that where couples have not been prepared properly on issues to do with spousal communication, and where hostile behaviours are displayed, to the detriment of the relationship; marital erosion could create dissatisfaction and even lead to marital dissolution. Despite misunderstandings and shortcomings, Ansah-Hughes, Oduro-Akyina, *et al.* (2015) emphasizes that good premarital counselling includes communication techniques that promote understanding, foster empathy, bring about insight and facilitation of forgiveness; as essential components of a solid program.

#### **4.5 Influence of Premarital Counselling on Romance in Sustenance to Marriage Stability**

##### **4.5.1 Premarital Counselling on Romance in Sustenance to Marriage Stability**

The main aspects of the influence of PMC on Romance between married men and women was equally assessed using ten (10) Likert Scale items. As depicted in Table 14, a majority of the participants in the study were in agreement that PMC influenced romance positively in marriage. For instance, 85% of the participants agreed that living together had taught them that keeping fidelity and confidentiality increases love and commitment to one another while (76%) preferred showing each other their need for sexual intimacy and this mutual need kept them connected regularly (75%).

Furthermore, through PMC the participants learnt that courtship is a lifetime commitment (71%) and they must share roles at home so as to create time to be together (71%). Openness to each other in expressing sexual needs was found to eliminate feelings of rejection at any one time in marriage (71%) and for those who did not go through PMC on romance encouraged prospective couples to take it as a matter of necessity (76%). Through the Focus Group Discussions within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County; marriage counsellors underlined many other ways in which couples seek counselling on romance within marriage.

**Table 16: Influence of Premarital Counselling on Romance in Sustenance to Marriage Stability**

**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Uncertain A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Counselling on romance taught us courtship is a lifetime commitment	17 (4.7)	28 (7.8)	65 (18.1)	141 (39.2)	109 (30.3)
My spouse and I share roles at home to create time together	16 (4.4)	30 (8.3)	60 (16.6)	159 (44.2)	95 (6.4)
We prefer to show each other our need for sexual intimacy regularly	10 (2.8)	25 (6.9)	52 (14.5)	182 (50.6)	91 (25.3)
I have noticed that giving gifts to my spouse increases romance	18 (5.0)	23 (6.4)	88 (24.4)	131 (36.4)	100 (27.8)
I do not feel we learnt enough on romance before we got married	27 (7.5)	58 (16.1)	82 (22.8)	118 (32.8)	75 (20.8)
We are open to each other on sexual needs to eliminate feelings of rejections at any one time	13 (3.6)	23 (6.4)	69 (19.2)	153 (42.5)	102 (28.3)
Sometimes I feel attracted to other people even when with my spouse	110 (30.6)	80 (22.2)	77 (21.3)	67 (18.6)	26 (7.2)
Our mutual need for sexual intimacy keeps us connected regularly	9 (2.5)	20 (5.6)	61 (17.0)	176 (48.9)	94 (26.1)
Living together has taught us that keeping fidelity and confidentiality increases mutual love and commitment	6 (1.7)	8 (2.2)	39 (10.8)	132 (36.7)	175 (48.6)
Though we did not go through premarital counselling on romance, we encourage prospective couples to take it	14 (3.9)	9 (2.5)	65 (18.1)	109 (30.3)	163 (45.3)

**Source:** Researcher (2018)



### 4.5.2 Null Hypothesis 3

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in marriage stability between couples who did or did not undertake spousal romance in premarital counselling.

**Table 17 : Marital stability and Romance**

			Agree	Romance Disagree	Uncerta in	Total
Marital stability	Agree	Count	102	1	15	118
		Expected Count	76.7	2.6	38.7	118.0
	Disagree	Count	5	2	14	21
		Expected Count	13.7	.5	6.9	21.0
	Uncertai n	Count	127	5	89	221
		Expected Count	143.7	4.9	72.4	221.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>Count</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>360</b>
		<b>Expected Count</b>	<b>234.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>118.0</b>	<b>360.0</b>

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.439 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.004	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	360		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .47.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than alpha (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant difference in marriage stability between couples who did or did not undertake spousal romance in premarital counselling. Couples who undertook premarital counselling in spousal romance related openly with each other and appreciated their romantic behavioural traits within their marriages, than couples who did not. The results are in agreement with the findings of most researchers such as Kroger (2007), Busby and Ivey (2007), Kenny and Acitelli (2001), and Gao (2001). Data collected through Focus Group Discussions and interviews revealed a wealth of real life experiences, concerning romance within

marriage, as encountered by marriage counsellors and married men and women. For instance, one male PM Counsellor said that:

*“In numerous occasions during marriage counselling, both men and women complain of unfulfilment and lack of exhibition of love and joy, leading to dissatisfaction. This makes it clear that sex problems exist and create untold difficulties and marital discord. Other times, marital conflicts cause couples to drift apart, and little or no conversation or dialogue, takes place. This generates a lot of anger, disappointment, resentment, fear, and tension that leads me to conceptualize that mutually satisfying sex no longer takes place. This eventually creates mental separation and withdrawal from spouse”.*

Another male PMC pointed out that to heal this kind of situation is not easy because many of the couples are traditional and do not like sharing bedroom matters with outsiders. Tackling bedroom issues is also a tedious task and pillow-talk is a private affair, according to many married people in this particular area. He insisted that this would involve open discussions on whether each spouse feels sexually fulfilled.

Suggestions on ways of improvement, and especially, in reference to the fact that sex begins earlier than bedtime may be a necessary subject for discussion. Another male PMC joined the conversation and emphasized that *“married men and women, at times do not seem to know that preparation for sex begins at day-break. Spouses should keep connected within the day through a text or a telephone”*. In line with these suggestions, this study is in agreement with sentiments expressed and concluded in an International Study by Curan and Utley, *et.al* (2010), that marriage primarily signifies commitment, love, fellowship, trust, giving promise and family.

Further an individual, who accepts marriage as a lifelong notion, is thought to considerably solve his problems, and increase his individual happiness in marriage, because divorce is not an option for that individual (Amato & Booth, 1997); - as cited in Hall, (2006). Considering the fact that the meanings spouses attribute to marriage

affect their expectations, it is believed that determination of these meanings are of vital significance. Thus, there is need to explain the true meaning as well as actualizing that those men and women understand the importance of premarital counselling on romance, and its contribution to stable marriages. In addition to the above, a female PMC reported that before marriage there was very good connection and affection, between the engaged couples.

*“Unfortunately, this state of affairs deteriorated after marriage or after the birth of the first child. This kind of scenario could be caused by too much concentration on the wedding without paying heed to preparing for marriage.”*

Premarital counselling teaches problem solving and preventive features with the aim of preparing and improving relationships before marriage (Yalcim, 2012). It became quite clear that many married men and women need regular counselling on romance. One female PMC insisted on the importance of making conditions in living together conducive as much as possible. For example expression of a husband’s and wife’s fears, concerns, anxieties, discomfort and any other was destabilizing feelings, that may affect sexual connection after marriage. Such fears should be shared before marriage in order to salvage a breaking relationship. Simultaneously a male PMC had insistently suggested that a habit of giving gifts to spouse should become a way of life, welcoming one another when one was out of the home for a period of time, plus lifelong grooming; among other initiatives. Non-verbal cues may be included during counselling because they have meaning, and couples need to understand what translates to negative behaviour or description of no love. For instance, one female premarital counsellor stated that:

*“Spousal romance cannot be manifested where husband and wife are not continuously well connected, through communication and acts of endearment to spouse. Some couples seem well connected especially on Sundays. However, not all couples attend religious houses, and if connection is lost, counsel on resumption could be a tedious task”.*

In reference to connection, Robson (2000) insists that at PMC couples should be taught the manifestations of true romance, for example, physical closeness, holding hands, sitting together, caressing and kissing. These could result in feelings of love and connection, possibly leading to sexual intimacy. Metcalf (2011) refers to this kind of behaviour as ‘giving and receiving romance’ as a confirmation of loyalty to one another. Another male PMC emphasized that unfortunately around the area of study, alcoholism is manifest in most homes, and many men have taken to compulsive liquor consumption. He reported how women keep on complaining that there is very little romance in marriages and a lot of men seem to have lost the urge for sexual connection altogether. *“It is discouraging to disclose that those who have the urge, at times cannot sustain an erection”*, as reported by one male PMC. However, not all couples are experiencing problems on romance because as reported by another male premarital counsellor: *“For many couples, especially where husband and wife are friends, there is confidentiality, and many such homes know peace, stability and contentment”*.

Nevertheless, many PMCs reported that married men and women kept on giving negative stories, in reference to romance, as indicated here below by one of the husbands interviewed:

*“My wife is not interested in romance and sex. I have been suffering a lot due to withdrawal of my conjugal rights by my wife. Many a time I am tempted to seek sexual gratification elsewhere. Recently I found myself wooing our domestic worker for sexual favours. This strain is causing me a lot of anxiety and stress”*.

One female PMC opined that such frustrations were being experienced in many homes and there is need for good premarital counselling to be carried out with the aim of educating couples properly in matters of romance and sexuality. This should include clear understanding that marriage has expectations. Expectations include preparing

prospective couples, before entry into marriage life, to embrace the fact that fulfilling the conjugal rights of the spouse includes sexual satisfaction and fulfilment. Pines (1996) and Pines (2010) concludes that although not everybody; a high number of men and women are fascinated by romantic love, and get married expecting irresistible happiness and high expectation of finding their soul mate, which cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, when the magic of romantic love is lost over time, their lives lose the meaning they had assumed that their soul mates had given to them. They are left alone with serious disappointments and feelings of burnout.

However, one male PMC categorically stated that:

*“For married men and women, coming together regularly and giving sexual satisfaction to spouse, is an expectation that has to be met. Premarital and marriage counsellors need to teach their clients about ways of satisfying one another, whenever the need arises, unless there is a good reason for postponement of the act, at any one time”.*

This makes it necessary as reported by one male PMC how a newly married couple came to his office on a Monday morning. The man shared his experience on the previous night. His newly married wife refused to remove her clothes at bed time and a struggle started. He got tired and lost sexual psyche. Consummation of the marriage did not take place during the whole week of honeymoon. This clearly demonstrated that at PMC the couple was not well prepared or properly informed on the sexual relationship and action, with regard to sex within marriage. This counsellor insisted that it is very important for couples to understand that:

*“The couple must embrace the fact that marriage is a merger and not a partnership, therefore each partner belongs to the other. Further, the purpose for honeymoon is to discover each other and share expectations, fears, anxieties and anything else that needs to be known or told. Agreement on this is very important. Actually, it is mandatory for men and women to understand and appreciate the importance of romance and sex within marriage”.*

Another male PMC insisted that the best expression of romance is as expressed in the Songs of Solomon; for example, where the woman says “*his left arm is under my head and his right arm embraces me.....do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires*”. The covenant of marriage teaches about place of romance and place of sex and love making, within marriage. What men and women need to know and do, in planning for sex, is actions that can add or spice up sex life. This PMC continued to insist that each couple needs to work towards fulfilling one another, during the act and afterwards, throughout their life together.

A female PMC insisted that couples should also establish boundaries with regard to intimate matters. This will include establishment of “*their own boundaries among themselves and to keep the children within a healthy boundary. There should be friendship boundary as well as work boundary,*” in order to keep the relationship healthy from all dimensions. One PM Counsellor insisted that the major cause of infidelity, for example, within the African culture, where the man is regarded by society as potentially polygamous in mind and deed; peer pressure takes the centre stage, especially on attainment of fifty (50) years when midlife sets in; and at times becomes a crisis. “*The man wants to feel he is still young and attracting women younger than his wife. Recently such men have been referred to as ‘sponsors’ where young working women and at times college students seeking pocket money and fees, give sexual favours when approached*”, as asserted by one male counsellor.

Further data collected through FGDs and interviews shed light on many happenings within marriage settings, which have been established by premarital counsellors. For example the fact that married couples has behavioural games, which they play on each other. One of the male PMCs established that these include “infidelity” – imagined or

actualized, sexual needs, using forgiveness either genuinely or as cover-up, gender needs and things to do together. *“In resolution, especially after an affair, I assess the nature of betrayal, I wish to emphasize that affairs are very destructive and I regard infidelity as a disorder, which needs treatment and healing”*, the counsellor concluded.

In interviews with couples, one wife “confessed:

*“I did not know that I would be getting into bad behaviour when one of my colleagues in the office started sending romantic messages and pictures through the phone. I would reply as a joke. This went on for a while. I started enjoying these messages and sooner than later got hooked and started initiating the discussions. I started feeling that this colleague was offering me beautiful and intellectual discussions. As this game continued, I realized I was becoming hooked to these conversations. I also realized that I was being attracted to this colleague in a sexual direction, greatly. This of course was detrimental to my marriage”*.

In addition to that a male PMC confessed that unfaithfulness in marriage in this particular area is widely spread. Married men and women often come seeking counselling and assistance in reference to this vice. There are a few families which are polygamous, but they do not seek counselling, leading the counsellor to assume their marriages have no issues.

In relation to unfaithfulness, a female PMC reported that:

*“There is a new trend in this area where young women are being lured and led to sexual relations with older men because of money. Wives of such men usually seek counselling because of confusion and at times lack of financial assistance from their husbands. It is true that some marriages are in what is often referred to as ‘come we stay’ situations. This kind of marriage has not been legally formalised or registered as per the Kenya Marriage Act 2013”*.

Another female PMC added that:

*“During these modern times, families and couples in particular, live very busy lives full of urgency, immediacy and stress. There is no time for romance or easy moments to enable couples to prepare for intimacy, which could regularly culminate to sexual fulfilment. There is a lot of misinformation on sex, cultural values and attitudes, pornography, the influence of social media, careless flirting, emotional infidelity and*

*attachments, leading to intellectual adultery where a lot of intimate conversations take place online”.*

A Male PMC went on to explain that sometimes it is hard for spouses to feel comfortable or to trust spouse in the middle of too many expectations during these hard times; especially if the couple is within the mid-life crisis years (age 50 +).

*“Romance is negatively affected by boredom with the spouse brought about by physical manifestations, for example, alcoholism, regular spousal conflicts, insecurities, and at times physical uncleanliness”.*

Many times, married men and women get suspicious about the spouses’ faithfulness.

This creates disconnect and ill feelings as stated by one of the husbands below:

*“There was a time when we had difficulties in our marriage because of suspicions on adultery on either side. This caused us to waste a lot of time quarrelling instead of doing things that would be beneficial to us and our children. My wife told our Priest about our situation. I first refused to cooperate but eventually I did. We held a couple of meetings and we went through confession and penance and currently these issues are in the past”.*

A female PMC shared some experiences observed during counselling, where a spouse shared deep problems within their marriage, in reference to certain expectations, which the couple disagreed. Hindrance to positive romance includes sexual fears, especially if a spouse doubts the trust and honesty of the partner. Sometimes differences in sexual preferences breeds conflicts if one partner does not like or agree with what he or she is being asked to offer. Cases of husband and wife fighting on romance issues are regular. For example, there is this couple who kept on fighting because the wife was infected with sexually transmitted infections continuously. The husband treated it as a lie even though the wife had sought medical treatment. The Counsellor reported that he prescribed HIV/AIDs testing, which fortunately indicated negative. This confirms what Corey (2005) says in reference to Rational Emotive Behaviour theory, where he teaches that changing irrational beliefs and unhealthy feelings, including self-defeating behaviours to the maintenance of positive cognitions, by restructuring the irrational



thoughts and beliefs; is important for mutual benefits in relationships. Therefore, as emphasized by a male PMC romance or intimacy, sexual connectivity or whichever other term one could use, is a very important part of marriage. Any problems or inhibitions should be addressed quickly and settled, in order to enable the couple to enjoy life together in mutual love and understanding. One of the wives interviewed said:

*“Personally, I decided to trust my husband and this became reciprocal. We co-exist in a spirit of commitment to our union and try as much as possible, to be appreciating each other. Our interpersonal communication on romance and connectivity has greatly improved”. Otherwise, “Couples should establish boundaries with regard to intimate matters, children, friendship and work; in order to keep the relationship healthy from all dimensions”,*

Respondents equally underlined other ways in regard to romance, within a marriage setting, its importance and pivotal role in marital sustenance.

This agrees with Boszorenyi-Nagy (1987), where he sheds light that the person capable of earning entitlement through relationships is more able to claim his due in relationships. He is entitled to enjoy life, including sexuality, to undertake the risks of new relationships and to be free of either psychosomatic illness or self-destructive patterns of behaviour. Because of this entitlement, both married men and women should ensure that they have to create adequate time to enjoy sexuality and to experience mutual enjoyment as a man and wife.

#### **4.6 Influence of Premarital Counselling on Financial Management skills in Marriage Stability**

##### **4.6.1 Premarital Counselling on Financial Management skills in Marriage Stability**

Financial management issues within marriage are crucial determinants of a stable relationship. Information about how PMC influences marital stability is important. This was done through a five (5) Likert Scale statements put across to all married men and

women participants and the responses gathered are as summarized in Table 15. Data displayed in the table shows participants were in total agreement that PMC influenced financial management, in their respective marriages, a great deal. This was done through a five (5) Likert Scale statements put across to all married men and women participants and the responses gathered are as summarized in Table 15. Data displayed in the table below clearly shows participants were in total agreement that PMC influenced financial management in their respective marriages, a great deal. For instance, majority of them indicated they learnt about budgeting, which is a key factor in financial management in marriage (81%) and how to live within their means and never to compete with others (81%).

**Table 18: Influence of Premarital Counselling on Financial Management Skills in Marriage**

**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
We totally trust each other in handling all our financial matters	18 (5.0)	29 (8.1)	48 (13.3)	144 (40.0)	121 (33.6)
We were taught to live within our means and never compete with others	8 (2.2)	12 (3.3)	50 (13.9)	145 (40.3)	145 (40.3)
We learnt budgeting is key in financial management in marriage	6 (1.7)	17 (4.7)	44 (12.3)	166 (46.1)	127 (35.3)
Both of us prioritize paying rent/mortgage, fees and food first	8 (2.2)	12 (3.3)	43 (12.0)	154 (42.8)	143 (39.7)
In counseling we learnt savings and investment is important for future	13 (3.6)	14 (3.9)	54 (15.0)	147 (40.8)	132 (36.7)
Through trial and error we have learnt importance of trust in handling all our financial matters	22 (6.1)	28 (7.8)	53 (14.7)	151 (41.9)	106 (29.4)
Experience has taught us that living within our means has contributed greatly to our marriage stability	3 (.8)	6 (1.7)	40 (11.1)	152 (42.2)	159 (44.2)
I try my best to avoid impulse buying	6 (1.7)	10 (2.8)	64 (17.8)	184 (51.1)	96 (26.7)
As time progresses we learnt it is important to purchase a fixed asset	3 (.8)	10 (2.8)	43 (11.9)	165 (45.8)	139 (38.6)
Hard times taught us savings and investment for future is vital	4 (1.1)	12 (3.3)	36 (10.0)	149 (41.4)	159 (44.2)

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Then couples will be empowered to use money as a tool to enhance their life together. Consequently, 83% of the participants were able to prioritize jointly as a couple on paying rent or mortgage, fees and food first; while at the same time avoiding impulse buying in order to meet their financial obligations. Due to the PMC they went through, participants indicated that they totally trusted each other in handling all their financial matters (74%).

However, through trial and error, married men and women learnt the importance of trust in handling all their financial matters (71%). Majority of the participants (78%) equally acknowledged that in counseling, they learnt about savings and investment as important for future, especially during hard economic times (86%), or in purchasing fixed assets (78%). This agrees with Dupas and Robinson (2013), that access to savings and proper utilization of finances can also increase enterprise and investment in marriages. All in all 86% of the married men and women who participated in the study agreed that experience taught them that living within their means contributed greatly to the marriage stability. This is in line with Schaninger and Lee (2002) where the study confirmed that traditional families, which are (families composed of a man and woman) had the highest average expenditure and ownership of most major appliances, houses, and many other durable goods. This leads to the conclusion that in general family income is known to be positively correlated with marital satisfaction. This clarity and realization is in line with REBT's concept of *unconditional self-acceptance* where PMCs may, or could have taught or counseled the married men and women; to embrace self-acceptance in their own conditions or prevailing situations, as husband and wife (D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010).

#### 4.6.2 Null Hypothesis 4

Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference in marriage stability between couples who did or did not undertake financial management skills in premarital counselling.

**Table 19: Marital stability and financial management**

		Financial management			Total	
		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain		
Marital stability	Agree	Count	117	0	1	118
		Expected Count	98.0	1.3	18.7	118.0
	Disagree	Count	10	4	7	21
		Expected Count	17.4	.2	3.3	21.0
	Uncertain	Count	172	0	49	221
		Expected Count	183.6	2.5	35.0	221.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>360</b>	
	<b>Expected Count</b>	<b>299.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>57.0</b>	<b>360.0</b>	

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	98.562 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.262	4	.000
N of Valid Cases	360		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.

Source; (Researcher, 2018)

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than alpha (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis and conclude that there is significant difference in marriage stability between couples who did or did not undertake financial management skills in premarital counselling. This means that the couples who undertook premarital counselling on financial management skills, were more stable and reasonable to their spouses, in the way they handled their finances, than those who did not. These results are in line with the findings of Patel and Hochfeld, *et al.* (2012), Walker (2013), Monyoncho (2010), and (Kirago, 2011), among others.

Data collected through FGDs and Interviews revealed a wealth of real life experiences concerning financial management skills within marriage, as encountered by marriage

counsellors and married men and women. For example, one male PMC went ahead to say:

*“It is important to note that in many instances, men do not welcome discussions on financial issues, and often budgeting is not discussed. Serious discussions on finances, family income and expenditure should be held regularly. The importance of openness on family income, budgeting, savings and investment for the future, are key concerns in reference to family resources. Couples need to be encouraged to be transparent with one another on the total family income, during premarital counselling”.*

Likewise, one female PMC shed light on the fact that other matters that bring discord within this particular community include helping parents and extended family on both sides, running bank accounts, whether jointly or individually. She reported that *“in counselling, it often comes out clearly that majority of the married men and women prefer running their own bank accounts, but share responsibilities within the home”*. It is important to point out that those residents work in their farms and businesses. Some of them have built semi-permanent houses, which they rent to tenants working in schools or other institutions, within the area.

Another female PMC shed more light by saying: *“Apparently behavioural traits, especially among the young couples, are similar. Money is spent on everyday needs such as food and school fees among other family matters”*. On the same light, a male PMC reported that on many occasions couples borrow money for the wedding and enter marriage in debt. This creates problems as the couple start paying loans for money used in catering during the wedding, photography, transport, entertainment on the wedding day, hotel expenses for honeymoon, among other expenditures. This creates a lot of stress and fatigue resulting in a negative relationship at the onset of the couple’s life together. These shortcomings and/or problems may be curbed by looking for knowledge on money matters as per Godwin and Carroll (1986) recommendations that family

financial management is wide-ranging; including studies on debt management, asset portfolios, tax planning, risk management, retirement and estate planning, family cash flow management based on frequency or extensiveness of planning behaviour; the existence of a written budget or record-keeping and account management.

When newly married men and women start their homes on debt, disagreements and fighting on financial matters set in immediately. Another male PMC pointed out that in many cases “*couples are not open to each other with regard to personal income and expenditure. There is a lot of individualism on finances and this causes instability, in that spouses are not in a position to predict what could happen tomorrow*”. He went on to expound that such behavioural traits hinder investment undertakings and foresight about the future. Further, in some homes wives earn more than their husbands, and this becomes a problem instead of a blessing, in that the woman feels that her money is hers alone while her husband’s money is family income. This kind of scenario indicates that many couples do not understand about effective financial management skills, during the duration of PMC sessions, as evidenced during the discussions. This could lead to a lot of malfunctional financial and relational difficulties. Unfortunately, financial difficulties predict increases in depression, decreased marital satisfaction, increased marital conflict, and higher likelihood of divorce (Dew, 2008); Amato and Rogers, (1997); Conger et al.(1990); Gudminson, Benter, Israelsen, McCoy, and Hill, (2007); Stanley, Markman and Whitton(2002). However, there are many married men and women, who frequent churches where guidance on expenditure before and during the wedding, is taught in young couples meetings. It is clear that very few married men and women could be saving money because majority of the families live from hand to mouth, as reported by one premarital counsellor.

It is important to point out that in the process of data collection, the researcher learnt that in some homes within one of the Constituencies, there are men who are unemployed and are often referred to as 'house husbands', a terminology they do not like. Also, there are some men who spend their resources outside with friends while neglecting their families. This is very unfortunate because all monies earned within marriage should be used for the benefit of the family. It is common knowledge that such behaviour, sometimes, leads to conflicts and violence. A female PMC pointed out that:

*“Many married couples develop negative ambitions where they want more than they can afford. Such unrealizable expectations bring distress to the relationship. Such couples could benefit from counselling on ‘living within their means’ which could create contentment. Counselling in financial management is in great demand in this area”.*

A male PMC emphasized on the fact that financial management, within marriage, is a very important part to a couple and to families in particular. In this general area these matters are causing a lot of dissatisfaction, and are also a source of conflict and violence. This is in agreement with Chethik (2000) and Oggins (2003) who aver that financial disagreements enjoy a level of notoriety over other types of distress between spouses. However, at times it is asserted that this is more of a perception than actual reality. Papp, Cummings and Goeke Morey (2009) using a convenience sample of married couples, found out that in comparison with other topics of disagreement, financial disagreements tended to be less-easily resolved, were more salient to couples, generated more heated responses and lasted longer; than other types of marital disagreements. These disagreements on finances in marriage may be curbed possibly by applying rational behavioural traits as recommended by Ellis (2001). The main goals for rational emotive behaviour family therapy include assisting family members with recognizing that they largely disturb themselves, and they can choose not to upset themselves about other persons' misbehaviours. This may challenge married men and women to analyze their

irrational beliefs, and work on changing the adversities that contribute to these beliefs in addition to eliminating the dysfunctional consequences.

Further, another female PMC stated her experience when counselling a certain couple, who recently sought counselling on finances, after the man and wife explained how their life together had become difficult, the husband emphatically said: *“we can no longer continue living together since my wife insists that her money is hers alone, and my money is for the family”*. Likewise, during another FGD in one of the institutions a male PMC candidly explained a case where in one home:

*“Children are sent away from school because the husband takes all the family money and misuses with drinking and entertaining friends. The wife has run away and went back to her parents. Right now, mediation is going on to try and get the couple together, with the hope that, they will agree and come to consensus on budgeting and honouring important matters in the marriage, jointly”*.

This kind of behaviour seemed to be a regular occurrence within the area of study between some couples.

In another case, a female PMC discussant reported that during counselling couples, she had found out that many of them are not open on personal income and expenditure. This agrees with Stanley (2001) in the Family Relations Journal, 50, 272-280; in making a case for premarital education: emphasized that it is mandatory for couples to undergo premarital counselling on finances, as money problems are not normally discussed or emphasized in counselling journals. This would help solve problems before they start as men and women would learn how to handle financial issues before they enter marriage.

Problems on finances were many, not only because of alcohol, but also due to other factors for example loss of a job or sickness. When a married man loses a job, marriage becomes unstable due to inability to provide, as stated by one divorced man:



*“We were living well with my wife and children, until the day I lost my job in the bank. My wife immediately started displaying disrespect, contempt and being rude to me, even in front of visitors and our children. I tried my best to look for employment and to help at home, especially with reference to the children in their school assignments, among other areas. It reached a time when the abuse from my spouse became intolerable. My wife started misbehaving and having serious sexual relationships with other men. I had no alternative but to leave and file for divorce”.*

However, for proper financial management and responsibility to take place, a female PMC insisted that during premarital counselling, couples should be taught how to balance responsibility and relationship, for the wellbeing of the whole family; this would call upon both parents to take financial responsibility.

*“This would be enacted by agreeing on the types of accounts to operate, for example, joint or individual accounts as well as dividing responsibilities in the home.” A male PMC emphasized candidly that the “dos and don’ts of handling finances, should be elaborated, by the couple, where spousal roles are addressed to ensure the family is catered for in reference to family responsibilities.”*

This confirms the fact that financial management within marriage needs seriousness and action, as well as transparency in keeping accounts; together with honouring marital relationship agreements and ensuring that the family benefits from what they own. Therefore, as the couple plans to spend or save, they should work within a budget; with the aim of acquisition of property and investment. *“Apparently behavioural traits, especially among the young couples, have similarities. Money is spent on everyday needs such as food, school fees, shelter and clothing; among other family matters. With the exception of a few couples, who may be saving some money, majority of the families live from hand to mouth”*, reported one male PMC.

Another male PMC simultaneously reported that many married couples develop negative ambitions where they want more than they can afford. Such unrealizable expectations bring distress to the marriage. *“Such couples could benefit from counselling on ‘living*

*within their means' which would create contentment. Counselling in financial management is in great demand in this area"* reported one male counsellor.

There is tendency to borrow money from financial institutions, since accessibility to credit has become easy. Unfortunately, this brings harassment and confusion as reported in an interview with one of the husbands:

*"Many a time, whenever we had shortage of cash, I would take a bank overdraft which led us to a lot of debt. Our home was threatened with repossession by the mortgagor because we were late in monthly instalments' remittance. I had also started using credit cards in purchasing clothes, among other things. My spouse did not approve the kind of lifestyle we were leading. We quarrelled a lot and she decided to give up. We lost a lot of property to clear the debts. Since our marriage did not break then, I think we shall live together till death does us part?"*

This discussion is in agreement with Boszormenyi-Nagy's individual psychology perspective description, in reference to how people transform information from their external environment into cognitive information, experiences, emotions, feelings, motivations, and memories; according to needs at any one time, Hargrave&Pfitzer, (2003). This would lead the married men and women to agree on ways of managing their finances even though they are two different individuals that have commonality in sharing life as husband and wife.

Finally, it is correct to shed light that financial management within marriage is a key concern to many couples and families. However, in this general area these matters seem to be causing dissatisfaction and are a source of conflict in many homes, as spelt out by respondents in the focus group discussions. In addition, many married men and women do not seem to have instituted proper financial planning, as reported by one woman in an interview on challenges in controlling expenditure. She described her behaviour as a disorder called *impulse buying*:

*“I call it awakening. I was used to impulse buying as a young woman. I was also competing with my peers on clothing and general lifestyle. I would be having a lot of money but would not share with my husband. He tried his best. However, one time our children were chased out of school due to fees arrears. I had money but I would not disclose or even clear fees. My husband sought counselling for both of us. Currently we have managed to keep our children in school among other things. However, I am still struggling with impulse buying addiction”.*

Further, one female PMC conjectured that couples should always be taught how to balance responsibility and the relationship, for the wellbeing of the family, for example having both parents taking financial responsibility. This would be enacted by agreeing on the types of accounts to operate, for example, joint or individual accounts. She went on to say that prevention and relationship concepts taught during PMC should emphasize on improving skills necessary for a well-functioning marriage in all areas. This is in line with recommendations given by Stanely (2001) and Markman, *et al*, (2010), on prevention and relationship programs with emphasis on improving skills necessary for well-functioning marriages through recognising and understanding key aspects of relationship dynamics, focusing on reduction of risks and enhancement of protective factors. They insist that premarital programs should cover all aspects of marriage including financial management. This was echoed by a male PMC who insisted on transparency in keeping accounts and in honouring family relationship agreements, to ensure that the family benefits from what they own, even as the couple plans to spend as well as save within a budget, with the aim of acquisition of property and investments.

Contextual therapy confirms the need for this behavioural trait in their teachings on loyalty as an ethical concept of obligation to another person in a close relationship. As already mentioned earlier, feelings of loyalty are a psychological domain, and being loyal involves accepting obligations in relatedness and sharing power (Goldenthal, 1993). Loyalty often transcends current imbalances in the ledger of give-and-take

because of the human need to be loyal (Brown-Standridge & Floyd, 2000). Accepting obligations in relatedness and especially in handling family finances between husband and wife, the concept of loyalty goes beyond saying or telling the other that they are committed, but showing it by action. For example, where married men and women borrow finances to enhance their family life and to meet obligations, according to their plans and desires, self-giving comes in. Many premarital counsellors expressed the need and reality of sharing life as a couple and the consequences of bringing in behaviours that could qualify to be described as destructive entitlement, within marriage.

#### **4.7 Influence of PMC on Age, Culture, Religious beliefs, Attitude towards**

##### **Spouses in Marriage**

Information on how PMC on age, culture, religious beliefs, and attitude towards spouses influenced the stability of marriage was explored through a five (5) Likert scale items and the responses obtained are as depicted on Table 16. As far as age, culture, religious beliefs and attitude towards one's spouse is concerned, data in Table 16 reveal that a majority of the participating married men and women indicated the emphasis on the premarital counselling they received was on love, respect and consultation among spouses (83%). In addition, devotion to one another in order to strengthen and enrich their mutual and positive attitude towards spouse (83%), and knowing that they belong together for life (84%). These ratings are in agreement with Gottman and Notarius (2000) where emphasis is made on relational skills that put importance on interactional processes, communication patterns, and problem-solving behaviours, that sustain or weaken marriage.

The authors go further to explain that marriage is expected to bring life-long joy, companionship, growth, and sexual fulfilment. Age did not influence a great deal on

their learning during PMC (58%) nor did it influence behaviour. With regard to religious beliefs, PMC counselling taught the participants the importance of guiding the children to embrace faith in God (84%) while majority agreed that it was important for couples to exchange information about the families' origin before marriage as this helped them to settle and accept both sets of parents easily (73%).

**Table 20: Influence of Premarital Counselling on Age, Culture, Religious Beliefs and Attitude towards Spouse**

**SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Uncertain A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
I do not feel my age influenced my learning during premarital counseling	26 (7.2)	54 (15.0)	72 (20.0)	129 (35.8)	79 (21.9)
According to our culture all marriage requirements were fulfilled	20 (5.6)	51 (14.2)	93 (25.8)	121 (33.6)	75 (20.8)
With regard to religious beliefs counseling taught us the importance of guiding children to embrace faith in God	6 (1.7)	10 (2.8)	40 (11.1)	120 (33.3)	184 (51.1)
Emphasis was made on Love, respect and consultation with my spouse	8 (2.2)	5 (1.4)	47 (13.1)	145 (40.3)	155 (43.1)
Knowledge gained continues to encourage mutual devotion to spouse	7 (1.9)	8 (2.2)	64 (17.8)	157 (43.6)	124 (34.4)
I do not feel my age at marriage influenced my later behavior on spouse	25 (6.9)	37 (10.3)	84 (23.3)	137 (38.1)	77 (21.4)
My spouse and I exchanged information on our families' origin before marriage and this helped us to settle and accept both sets of parents easily	14 (3.9)	26 (7.2)	59 (16.4)	151 (41.9)	110 (30.6)
We have always tried not to keep record of wrongs in our relationship	13 (3.6)	32 (8.9)	64 (17.8)	157 (43.6)	94 (26.1)
We encourage each other to remember we belong together for life	4 (1.1)	14 (3.9)	39 (10.8)	159 (44.2)	144 (40.0)
Devotion to one another has strengthened and enriched our mutual positive attitude	5 (1.4)	7 (1.9)	48 (13.3)	140 (38.9)	160 (44.4)

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

In summary, the knowledge gained during PMC continued to encourage mutual devotion among the spouses (78%), trying not to keep record of wrongs in marriage (70%). This is in line with Ellis teachings on rational and irrational behaviours where a person, in this case a spouse, could be having rational or irrational beliefs and these beliefs will lead someone to act wrongly and negatively to the spouse. According to

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008) in reference to Ellis's A-B-C theory of dysfunctional behaviour; it is not the activating events (A) of people's lives that have disturbing consequences (C) but the unrealistic interpretation they give to the events, or the irrational beliefs (B) about what has taken place, that cause them trouble.

#### **4.8 Influence of Age within Marriage**

Age is an important factor of consideration in all societies and cultures of the world. In this regard the researcher enquired on the effects of age within marriage.

Data collected through Focus Group discussions and interviews revealed a wealth of real life experiences concerning effects of age between men and women getting married. One female PMC explained that in Kenya, according to the Marriage Act, 2013, people can get married from age eighteen (18) and above. Where a man is forty (40) years and the woman is eighteen (18) years, the gap is considered too big and proper cohesion might be unattainable due to the age difference. The younger spouse may be considered by the older spouse as a junior or a child. Also, the needs at age eighteen are different from those of a forty-year old. This is confirmed by Olson, Defrain,*et.al*, (1999). According to literature marriage between people aged fewer than twenty (20) years, is regarded special risk factor as reasoned in Developmental Psychology, where Erickson's developmental model regards this as borderline age between adolescence and young adulthood.

This is a time of role identity and confusion vis-a-vis intimacy and isolation, which comes later. Atinkson, Smith, *et. al*. (1999), confirms that huge age differences bring future challenges in the relationship due to decrease in attractiveness, vitality and sexual efficiency of the elder party. At the same time, challenges of the older party experiencing health issues such as aging and dying parents, mature children, plus younger or

adolescents from the partner are expected. Conversely a male PMC insisted that while counselling married or prospective couples, consideration of age differences has to be taken into account. He went on to say that if the difference is big, it could create incompatibility because the couple may be looking at various situations, from diverse considerations, for example, if the younger one is a woman, there may be fear that she might go outside the marriage bed to experiment with her peers. A male PMC said that within the area of study it can be recorded that in general terms issues with regard to age and religious beliefs are minimal.

Nonetheless, another male PMC insisted that *“in case the woman is the senior spouse and especially if she cannot get children and at the same time if she is experiencing menopausal problems; the man may be led to seek sexual fulfilment elsewhere”*. However, a female PMC explained that during counselling, at times it is possible to recommend that people marry within one to five years age bracket, and insist that the age difference should not exceed ten years, whenever possible. She recommended that it works best if the man is older than the woman. Another female PMC insisted that age at marriage is an important factor to consider. In marriage counselling, at times one comes across a married man or woman with a counselling issue on respect, abuse and violence among other issues. In an effort to understand or find out reasons for such behaviours, age differences are often sited. Some couples gave information that they were very young, age eighteen to twenty for both partners; other couples could be over fifty years but they got married at adolescence. These types of marriages report a lot of problems and misunderstandings, where the young woman behaves like a child to her husband.

The researcher found out that according to many premarital counsellors, when age difference is too big, cases of one spouse treating the other as a child or as a parent results to be a contentious issue. In conclusion they recommended that difference in age should not be too big. The PMCs emphasized the importance of accountability and respect, regardless of the age difference. On the same note, a male PMC reported that:

*“The man and woman met and after a little courtship moved in and started living together. As time went on this couple sought membership in a church and they were accepted. They continued for a short time and the priest noted they were not coming to church together after some time. He talked to the woman who informed him that she discovered the man was four years younger than her, and he had started disrespecting her, and being abusive, both verbally and physically. The woman moved back to her own parents. It became clear in this scenario that age caused these problems”.*

The Chairman of Counselling in this area recommended that premarital counselling on age is a factor of contention and cannot be ignored and individuals should be truthful in stating their correct age, before marriage. During interviews one married woman spoke openly and informed the researcher:

*“I was open about my age to my life partner and had no issues marrying my husband who is four years younger than I am. Sometimes the age difference presents challenges in how we view situations and the approach to addressing issues. Secondly, I have learned that his mother and aunts are always reminding him that I am older than him and he should be careful not to be manipulated. However, my husband and I live in harmony together with our two children aged six and ten”.*

From the words of the wife, it is clear that her husband's mother and relatives keep on reminding her husband that she is older than him. This could influence his behaviour negatively depending on the level of maturity. However, it would also depend on what kind of PMC they attended before marriage. It seems despite the insistence of relatives on her age, she and her husband have confidence in one another, and they are in good and regular communication, which enables them to relate well and co-exist amicably.



This indicates they have appropriated unconditional self-acceptance as well as unconditional other acceptance (Ellis, (2005).

#### **4.9 Influence of Religious Beliefs on Stability in Marriages**

The focus group discussions spent some time addressing the religious beliefs and their influence on marriage stability within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. However due to its proximity to the City of Nairobi, some people working in the city live in these areas. Some residents' frequent churches but there are quite a large number of people who do not attend. One male PMC cautioned that:

*“Through counselling premarital or married couples, I have learnt that there is a lot of infidelity in this area. I wish suggest to the counselling fraternity, especially through churches; that in future seminars on marriage, especially with regard to commitment, faithfulness, respect, an awareness on sexually transmitted diseases including gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV Aids; is thoroughly taught”.*

A female PMC pointed out that:

*“It is true to say that evangelism in religious beliefs prohibits traditional infidelity, in some communities, where men of the same age could exchange wives. This involve men exchanging wives where if a husband finds an age mate has planted a spear outside the home, he allows whoever is inside to spend the night with his wife. Fortunately, some of these beliefs have been overtaken by time. The leaders in this community, including marriage counsellors, have been encouraging and insisting, on one man one wife. Forgiveness, tolerance, respect and encouragement to the residents in and outside churches, should be actualized by the married people”.*

The Chairman of the Counselling Fraternity in one of the institutions candidly informed the researcher that spiritual intimacy in marriage is very important. This can be achieved if married men and women would embrace similar religious beliefs in their home. He went on to say: *“During premarital counselling the couple should communicate and agree which beliefs they will embrace in their marriage and family life. This would prepare the couple psychologically and enhance spiritual intimacy.* One Senior Clergy

informed the researcher that Christian religious beliefs are embraced by many married men and women belonging to various denominations, in Langata Constituency of Nairobi County. Some of the married couples had done church weddings, in line with biblical foundations, while three quarters of the married couples entered marriage traditionally or they are in come-we-stay relationships, but eventually undertake blessing of marriage functions in churches.

According to the marriage Act (2013) these marriages are not registered, hence, the need to officiate marriages in order to get a marriage certificate. However, the study established that not every couple goes to church, but when problems arise, some of them seek counselling either directly with a church minister or a marriage counsellor or both. In reference to religious beliefs, though, a very small number of residents frequent religious houses in both constituencies. The study can be summarized by quoting a National Survey Research by Larson and Olson conducted in 2000, "... the most important feature for the parties – concerning the issue of faith- is to agree in the way of practical expression of the religious values and beliefs". In line with this study 84% of the respondents indicated the importance of embracing faith in God as well as guiding their children towards faith.

#### **4.10 Influence of Culture within Marriage**

Data collected through FGDs and interviews revealed a world of real life experiences concerning cultural issues as encountered by PMCs and married men and women. It came out clearly that within the area of study, there is need for prospective couples to be counselled, and explained the cultural practices, amongst the various ethnic groups. In this connection one male PMC informed the group that in counselling young men and women, who are about to get married, he learnt that majority do not understand the

traditional requirements. Unfortunately, majority are not willing to learn, and they do not understand the need for dowry payment, among other practices.

Simultaneously, a female PMC retorted that it is common knowledge among many communities, especially in Africa and Kenya in particular, that if a father paid dowry for his wife, he should receive dowry for his daughter. She argued that her daughter got married cross culturally, and she and her suitor displayed impatience during the various meetings that had to take place, between the parents on either side. A male PMC informed the group that the family where his daughter is married insisted that they had to pay dowry, the way the family of origin in their clan paid. This made it easy and all requirements were made clear. However, the young people requested for the things needed to be tabulated in monetary form and the clan was given an envelope. This young woman's clan looked at this as contemptuous even though the envelope was accepted. This behaviour could cause stress and breakdown of traditional values as stipulated by Schwartzberg and ScherDytell, (2008) and Dreyfus, (2009).

On the same note, one female PMC informed the group that regarding culture and its influence on stability, one of the concerns and cause of instability, is a wife's continuous business movements, from town to town, leaving the family alone for long periods of time. Within the area of study this behaviour has become almost a cultural norm. She cautioned that these regular absences may create scenarios for the spouses to look for alternatives, with regard to sexual fulfilment. Further, working mothers get too tired for regular connections to take place. Simultaneously, many men engage in alcoholism and cheating treating it as cultural behaviour.

The researcher further established that the area is inhabited by various cultural groups with many men and women working far away from their families. Such people come

home after two to four months, exposing themselves as well as their spouses, to seek possibility of sexual gratification elsewhere. One male PMC contorted that such absences, eventually lead to disintegration of the families and breakage of marriages. He added that since there was very little, if any, premarital knowledge given to the couples, the welfare of the spouse is secondary to all other needs. The above problem result in some couples being described as “married singles”, a term interpreted negatively by peers.

One female PM Counsellor concluded that:

*“Culture and especially cross-cultural marriages, could pose problems if one spouse regards the culture of their partner with negativity. Negative cultural practices such as wife cleansing, sometimes applied by force on the surviving spouse (mostly on wives) could cause problems. On the other hand, cross cultural marriages could tame tribalism. Other cultural practices, for example, polygamy might not be welcomed in some places. In this area a new scenario has come about where the women are questioning African cultural practices of treating the man as head of family”.*

The FGDs discussed the subject at length, with reference to culture, insisting that all depends on how the couple met and issues to consider include their differences, aspirations and compatibility. One male PMC asserted that the major factors to consider include openness, language of communication, especially in cross cultural marriages; willingness to divorce themselves from their backgrounds and embracing the new settings.

The FGDs concluded that with regard to culture, and to avoid conflicts, the couple should be prepared to work on understanding of spouse in reference to the setting. It is crucial to create in-depth and well-grounded foundations. It is imperative to find out if any of the spouses went through premarital counselling, and if not, the two should be encouraged to undertake PMC with the aim of asking relevant questions.

One female PMC asserted that where cultures are different, conflicts are bound to occur, and the couple should be well equipped in order to cope and to create understanding. Apparently in the area of research there are diverse cross-cultural couples. This study agrees with Zoll (2007) that in cross cultural marriages, consideration must be given to the fact that a couple will adopt or understand the loss of the norm, and train themselves to new cultural dynamics; including and not limited to language, value systems, role models of a society or sub-society, and become a member of the new society. In any case, according to Bosormenyi-Nagy (1987), entitlement in the family is the foundation of “freedom to enjoy life, creativity and courage of commitment”. This phenomenon belongs to the individual and is achieved by each family member striving to care about the interests and well-being of others.

#### **4.11 Attitude to Life Partner’s Influence on Marriage Stability**

During data collection a lot of information was revealed in reference to attitude to life partner and its influence on marriage stability, within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya. The study revealed that both positive and negative attitude to life partner contributes tremendously to the way the married men and women live together as husband and wife. Within premarital counselling initiatives, the prospective couples may need to be reminded that they are coming from different families with diverse backgrounds. In Boszormenyi-Nagy’s Contextual Family Therapy, the influence of family of origin on the future or prospective husband and wife’s behavioural traits, after marriage is emphasized (Boszorenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). In addition, attitude to life partner can bring positive and negative reactions within marriage. Positive reactions include encouragement, motivation and well-being while negative traits include intimate partner violence, belittling and other vices, as reported by Khawaja and Linos *et al.*, (2008).

During the group focus discussions, one male PMC shared his interactions with married couples and reported that not many couples learn at premarital level, the importance of non-verbal behaviour; for example, interpreting moods, looks, words and half-sentences of their prospective spouses. It is important to insist that marriage thrives because of spouses understanding on how to interpret the perceptions, moods and views of their partners. This is in agreement with Willoughby (2010) where he defines marital attitude as “the individual meaning and expectations an individual holds toward both marriage in general and their own future marital relationships”. Further, a female PMC reported that negative attitude often demeans the spouses in self evaluation. Lack of appreciation creates ill feelings and may be reciprocated by negative behaviours, for example the wife or husband deliberately refusing to encourage or urge one another to do the right thing, where weaknesses are actualized. If one spouse acts negatively all the time, this could lead to deterioration of relationship, resulting in lack of interest in one another; and or loss of interest in spousal conjugal satisfaction, which ultimately opens windows towards infidelity. Positive marriage attitudes may influence couples’ behaviours in relationships. However, on the contrary negative marriage attitudes may affect beliefs about close relationship and faithfulness which could eventually destroy marriages completely (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Riggio & Weiser, 2008).

A female PMC insisted that through experience in premarital and family counselling, she realized that where negative behavioural traits are not checked, separation and divorce might actualize. Many spouses have run away from home due to verbal and physical abuse. This manifests through lack of interest in spouse, infidelity and physical violence, among other vices. In summary, negative attitude destroys while positive attitude builds a relationship in increasing love and cohesion. Botlami, Ahmadi, *et. al.* (2010) explain that marriage is a special relationship between two people whose

quality plays a significant role in one's lifetime. A high quality marital relationship can affect both physical and psychological well-being of the couple.

Another male PMC reported that in the African context the head of the family is traditionally the man while the woman (wife) is expected by society to submit to her husband. This statement may be debatable at the moment. However, positive attitude towards spouse makes things flow smoothly within the marriage resulting in commitment, joy and cordial co-existence. A female PMC argued that where respect for one another is mutual and the couple enters marriage with an attitude of respect in dealing with money and proper communication, chances of success are high. A positive attitude to spouse overcomes many handles such as sickness, accidents, childlessness, overweight, disability or stress; among others. The attitude to life partner can determine continuity or withdrawal in a marriage setting. Amidu, Owiredu, et.al. (2011) agrees with these sentiments by asserting that the attitude of a partner, and especially if it is positive, can be characterised by happiness, pleasure, affection, intimacy, tenderness, love, strong communication, commitment and marital satisfaction.

In conclusion one female PMC insisted that the major complaint in this area is desertion, whether physically or emotionally. Negative attitude to life partner at times, lead spouses to seek sexual gratification elsewhere, which becomes a very serious marital issue. A few cases of separation and divorce, together with couples living in the same house but in different bedrooms, were reported as something that happens regularly. Finally, a male PMC added that during counselling a few couples have tendencies of tearing each other apart. When finding out the causes of disagreements, it came out clearly that spousal confidentiality is lacking in many marriages, causing scandals geared among spouses. Issues on parenting, one car syndrome as well as material

(money) control, resulting in a lot of disagreements were brought out. This calls upon non-partisan counselling where a counsellor would need to know what the activating events leading to the conflicts are and what beliefs are shared. Finally, the consequences, and how all can be addressed without making the situation worse. Additionally, the researcher concluded that positive attitude creates marital satisfaction and rotates on emotional understanding and mutual support to life partner.

#### **4.12 Free Expressions from Married Men and Women in the Questionnaires**

The study was interested in finding out more information, from the married men and women, on what kind of premarital counselling they would like to be implemented, and modalities of carrying out the lessons. Suggestions on the kind of counselling they would recommend improvements on what they could have gone through, plus any other information as indicated in tables 14 to 22. Further, the study has been enriched by giving free expressions on future undertakings, in reference to premarital counselling, within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi County, Kenya. Data obtained in this regard was analyzed and the results are as shown in Table 16. As can be deduced from data displayed in Table 16, most of the participants preferred biblical kind of PMC (46%) while about (30%) preferred both psychological and biblical. In addition, a sizeable proportion of the participants (12%) recommended psychological premarital counselling only while 4% preferred cultural and traditional type.

**Table 21: Types of Premarital Counselling Recommended by Participants (n=360)**

<b>Type of Premarital Counselling</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Biblical	167	46.4
Psychological and biblical	104	28.9
Psychological	43	11.9
Real life issues (Social, financial, contemporary)	17	1.9
Cultural/traditional	15	4.2



**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Further, the participants were asked to indicate the most important topics they learned in the premarital counselling they went through. As shown in Table 16, the study findings revealed that the most important topic learnt in premarital counselling by most of the married men and women was communication and consultation between couples (34%), followed by financial management (33%) and issues about trust, honesty, respect, humility, and patience in marriage (28%). Other important topics learnt in premarital counselling were about God, love and religious beliefs scored (26%) while parenting, family planning and commitment in marriage was (19%).

In addition, intimacy and romance scored (17%) while conflict resolutions and forgiveness attained (13%). These were among the topics liked by many of the participants.

**Table 22: Topics Learnt in Premarital Counselling in Order of Preferences**

Topics learnt	Frequency	Percent
Communication and Consultation	121	33.6
Finance Management	117	32.5
Trust, Honest, Respect, Humility and Patience	100	27.8
God, Love and Religious beliefs	93	25.8
Parenting, Family planning and Commitment	69	19.2
Intimacy, Romance, Foundation of marriage	60	16.7
Dealing with family members	48	13.3
Conflict resolutions, Forgiveness, Leaving and cleaving to spouse	44	12.2
Inter-personal and inter-cultural relationships	28	7.8
Roles of husband and wife, personality	25	6.9
Praying together, Unity of purpose, Openness, faithfulness and positive attitude towards life	21	5.8
Tolerance and submission to one another	18	5.0

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

#### 4.13 Modalities of Conducting Premarital Counselling

The researcher established that there are various methods of conducting premarital counselling sessions within Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies, of Nairobi

County, as elaborated in Table 18. The study further explored on how the PMC tuition was conducted and based on the collected data shown on Table 18, it was found that most premarital counsellings are done through interactive sessions (41%) which were comprehensive and informative (11%). On the contrary, a number of the participants complained that the exercise was hurried and there was not enough time to cover all the topics. Others said it was very shallow (9%), done informally by elders verbally, and sometimes through question and answer sessions, (11%). This made it hard to relate practically in addressing real life issues since a small portion of the Church Ministers did not have life experience in marriage (4%).

**Table 23: Modalities of Conducting Tuition on Premarital Counselling**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Interactive sessions	149	41.4
Informative and comprehensive	40	11.1
It was very hurried, limited time to cover all the topics and very shallow	34	9.4
Informal meetings, briefing by elders, free service, oral based, questions and answers	25	11.3
It was a group/classroom setting	22	6.1
Involved meeting with the minister/ brief and to the point	12	3.3
Hard to relate to real practical issues since the church minister did not have real life experience	3	.8
Given through biblical references and eal-life testimonies of different people	3	.8

**Source:** Researcher (2018).

However, it is correct to point out that most of the clergy had long experience in guiding premarital couples and also were well schooled in theology, biblical counselling and sociology. A few had good training in family counselling and one had a doctorate in counselling psychology. However, a sizeable number of the lay premarital counsellors are qualified and hold diplomas in counselling psychology.

From the information above, it is clear that some of the married men and women had attended premarital counselling. Also from the table it is clear that majority of the

couples did not benefit much from the pre-marriage counselling they attended. However, the necessity of premarital counselling is recognised worldwide, along with the fact that it requires both the development of well-structured programs adjusted to the complexity of marital relationships and the education or training of facilitators who lead those programs (Halford, 2004; Carol & Doherty, 2003). It may be interesting to note that according to Carol and Doherty (2003), the earlier programs were primarily concerned with behavioural changes, and the facilitators were poorly trained lay people and priests. However, recent programs aim not only on behavioural changes but also at modifying deeper motivations and the nature of relationship dynamics; increasing positive and decreasing negative interactions and mobilising the resources of the relationship. This is in line with the recommendations made by married men and women, through the questionnaire, that there should be structured programs and the trainers should be trained clergy and counselling psychologists.

#### **4.14 How Premarital Counselling Enriched Marriage Stability**

When asked about what could have enriched their relationships for all the years they have been married, many of the participants cited a number of aspects as shown in Table 19. The findings show that most of the respondents indicated that good communication between the married men and women as well as working and praying together, in addition to loving one another unconditionally (15%), enriched their marriages.

Other ways in which their relationships have been enriched was by knowing God and seeking his ways and embracing trust, humility and tolerance, honesty, openness, respect, and living within one's means; as key ingredients of a stable marriage. In light of these testimonies it is gratifying to note that in the United States, family life education programmes are found in high schools and colleges, and more recently through community adult education; as reported in the journal of 'Association for Family

Therapy and Systemic Practice (2000). Such courses and programmes are usually structured so that participants gain knowledge about marriage and relationships and learn to apply that knowledge practically. The goals for such training in Nairobi County may include marital satisfaction and stability with skills development on communication and problem-solving strategies.

**Table 24: Main Contributors to Stability learnt during Premarital Counselling**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Work/Pray together/loving each other unconditionally	51	14.2
Knowing God and seeking his ways	37	10.3
Trust/Humility/Tolerance	30	8.3
Honesty/openness/respect/living within your means	26	7.2
Finance management/budgeting together	25	6.9
Avoiding blame game and keeping accountability	25	6.9
Testimonies from real life experiences	23	6.4
Post marital counselling	20	5.6
Sticking with one another through thick and thin/Submissiveness	12	3.3
Role playing and modelling/group discussions with other couples	13	3.6
Sex/ intimacy and being privy to family matters	11	3.1
How to handle in-laws	9	2.5
Comprehensive Premarital Counselling sessions	9	2.5
Family support/proper parenting	6	1.7
How to deal with midlife crisis	7	1.9
Do Premarital Counselling before customary marriage	2	0.6

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

In addition, expectations among spouses should be discussed during courtship. The roles carried out or to be carried out by each spouse should be addressed. Religious beliefs on such matters as parenting, addressing finances and romance, should be mandatory subjects at premarital level. Further, it is important to note that general tuition on such programmes should start when the prospective or future spouses are in high schools in order to enlarge general knowledge on marriage and family.

#### 4.15 Influence of Age on Marriage Stability

Data collected from the participants regarding how age influenced their marital life is summarized in Table 20 and it shows that mature couples are better placed to handle issues in marriage (22%) since being older is associated with wisdom in making very crucial decisions (8%) and commitment in marriage. However, on the contrary, some indicated that age was not an issue since same age group in marriage fosters better understanding and compatibility in many ways (18%). It was also found that marrying too early or very young in life, makes one tired of marital life and can interfere with schooling (3%). Hence, emotional and mental maturity is very important for a relationship, and wide age gaps between couples do not seem to work nowadays (7%).

**Table 25: Influence of Age on Marriage Stability**

Effects of Age	Frequency	Percentage
Mature couples are better placed to handle issues in marriage	79	21.9
Same age group fosters better understanding and compatibility in many ways	66	18.4
It doesn't matter	41	11.4
Being older makes you wiser in making decisions	27	7.5
Wide age gap does not seem to work	23	6.4
Getting married at the right time fosters respect between each other	19	3.3
Maturity of couple helps in making a commitment	15	4.2
Marrying too early makes one get tired of married life and can interfere with schooling	9	2.5
Emotional maturity and clarity of mind are very important for a relationship	5	1.4
Marriage gets better with time	4	1.1

**Source:** Researcher (2018).

In light of the above, Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000) wrote that marital satisfaction is related to the age of the married man and woman. People, who get married very early, at times find themselves experiencing cohesion and power together with control issues; which could lead to divorce. Jose and Alfons (2007) examined the effects

of age, number of children, employment status, and length of marriage on marital satisfaction. They found that individuals who married later in life were more likely to remain married, but also that those who married younger and get divorced, are more likely to remarry. In conclusion, it may be said that the age of a person at the time of getting married, has both positive and negative effects on the marriage.

#### 4.16 Influence of Culture on Marriage Stability

Cultural issues play a key role in the stability of marriages in Africa. Responses from the married men and women in this regard are summarized in Table 21. Data displayed in Table 21 clearly show that in most cases culture negatively affects marriages especially if the couples are from different communities (14%), cultural beliefs (13%).

**Table 26: Influence of Culture on Marriage Stability**

<b>Culture</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Has a negative effect especially if the couples have different cultures	50	13.9
Negative effect due to outdated beliefs	46	12.8
Positive cultures, even if from different tribes, create great families where there is love, understanding and commitment.	45	12.5
Important to discuss family origin for it plays a big role in establishing a stable marriage	28	7.8
Similar culture strengthens marriage	26	7.2
We have learnt to embrace each other's cultures as we rely on the Holy spirit not culture	29	8.1
Culture has given us a deeper understanding of each other/ knowing of traditional roles for each spouse	22	6.2
In different cultures, it is hard to unite both families, especially dealing with in-laws	17	4.7
One becomes enlightened with their culture	16	4.4
Cross cultural marriages foster unity/ appreciate other people's culture but children miss out on learning their vernacular language	14	3.9

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

However, a number of the participants indicated that there are positive aspects of culture, even if couples are from different tribes that create great families where love, understanding and commitment are embraced. Despite the fact that similar culture

strengthens marriage in most cases, it is important to discuss family of origin for it plays a big role in establishing a stable marriage (8%) while acknowledging that it might be hard to unite both families, and especially when dealing with in-laws in cross cultural marriages.

#### 4.16.1 Influence of Attitude to life Partner on Marriage Stability

The study also explored the influence of attitude to spouse in establishing stable relationships within marriage, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County. The data collected in this regard was analyzed and the results are as indicated in Table 22. The findings as summarized reveals that attitude to life partner plays a great role in establishing a steady relationship within marriage.

**Table 27: Influence of Attitude to Life Partner’s Contribution to Marriage Stability**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A positive attitude towards the partner is key for a stable relationship	172	47.8
A positive attitude helps to resolve conflicts in a marriage	80	22.2
It is essential to respect and never take your partner for granted	60	16.7
Negative attitude causes collapse in marriage	44	12.2
Attitude is vastly affected by age, culture and religion	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

Most of the participants indicated that a positive attitude towards partner was key for a stable relationship (48%) for it helps in resolving conflicts within marriages (22%). Therefore, it is essential to respect one another and never to take your spouse for granted in any way (17%) since a negative attitude could cause collapse in marriage relationship (12%). It may be concluded that commitment is crucial within the marital relationship.

#### **4.16.2 Influence of Religious Beliefs on Marriage Stability**

Information about how religious beliefs influenced marriage was gathered from the married men and women who took part in the study and the results are shown in Table 23. The study findings in Table 23 clearly reveal that religious beliefs greatly influence marriages of many couples. A number of participants were of the opinion that believing in a higher power is the foundation of a good relationship (23%). Same religion was found to foster mutual understanding, thus making it easier to live in harmony with a person who has similar beliefs (16%). Couples that share same faith were noted to have experienced a healthier marriage as opposed to couples with different religious beliefs (9%) while a sizeable proportion of the participants believed that differences in religious ideologies could cause conflicts in marriages and have a negative effect on children's relationship with God. However, respecting each other's religious beliefs could promote a stable relationship. Therefore, it is imperative to agree on the issues of religion first before getting married to enhance the stability of a couple co-existences, within the marriage relationship (10%).



**Table 28: Influence of Religious Beliefs on Marriage Stability**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Believing in a higher power is the foundation of a good relationship	83	23.1
Same religion fosters mutual understanding and makes it is easier to live with a person with similar beliefs	59	16.4
Differences in religious ideologies can cause conflict	56	15.6
Enhances marriage by teaching a biblical approach to marriage	37	10.3
Couples that share one faith have a healthier marriage as opposed to couples with different religious beliefs	31	8.6
Respecting each other's religious beliefs promotes a stable relationship. Agree on religion first before you get married	16	4.4
It has been an issue in our marriage since we are from different religions but eventually agreed on the church the family should attend	6	1.6
Different denominations have a negative effect on children's relationship with God. in some religions, civil/customary marriage is not acknowledged	3	0.9

**Source:** Researcher (2018)

#### **4.17 Recommendations on Improvement of Premarital Counselling in**

##### **Community**

The recommendations advanced by the participants on how premarital counselling could be enhanced, are shown in Table 25. Participants recommended that premarital counselling should not deal with men and women or couples who are preparing for marriage only. Despite the fact that the men and women need to be thoroughly prepared before they enter marriage, they should continue receiving more knowledge on the life of a married man and woman, after marriage. To emphasize this concept, as indicated in table 24 below; 14% of the participants indicated that after marriage, there should be follow up sessions with couples.

**Table 29: Recommendations on Improvement of Premarital Counselling (n=360)**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
PMC should be expanded to include post marital counselling	50	13.9
PMC should include a variety of topics and deal more on parenting, in-laws and relatives	45	12.5
Mentorship lessons should be introduced earlier in life (i.e. in schools, colleges and universities)	40	11.1
Sensitize couples on the importance of PMC and maintenances of confidentiality	41	11.4
Give adequate time, more follow-up sessions and couple retreats	34	9.4
Counselling on sex/intimacy issues and how to improve stability in marriages	31	8.6
Counselling should be a requirement for marriage with more focus on intercultural marriages	31	8.6
PMCs should be more realistic in giving lessons to different facilitators to broaden what is taught	30	8.3
PMC should be carried out by trained personnel	23	6.4
People need to be more open to one another and speak facts	22	6.1
A structured PMC should be developed to discuss detailed financial management at length	21	5.8
PMC should be conducted in a formal way without bias or prejudice	16	4.4
Counselling environment should be conducive as well as relaxed in time and content	12	3.3
One on one counselling sessions were recommended	8	2.2
Inclusion of family members and religious leaders in PMC	4	1.1

The follow-up sessions, preferably in form of seminars and retreats, should include daily real-life issues facing married men and women. Such follow-ups may include communication skills where couples would learn the importance of appreciating spouse, verbally and practically, as well as observing basic behavioural etiquette within marriage. In addition, 13% of the participants indicated that various topics, including parenting, should be taught. Such tuition should include how to look after oneself while pregnant, how to breast-feed, bathe and nurture the child, dietary lessons and personal hygiene; among others. Financial management skills should also continue to be taught even after marriage.

As indicated earlier, many marriages experience a lot of problems, disagreements and fights on money matters. The knowledge gained will help the couple to appreciate that they own what they have jointly, as husband and wife, and the argument whether what they have belongs to one spouse or to the whole family; ceases to be a contentious issue. Further, emphasis should be made on the importance of embracing budgeting on expenditure to avoid impulse buying.

Recommendations were also made on the importance of training married men and women on ways of dealing with in-laws and relatives. Many premarital counsellors kept on insisting on the importance of training the couples to embrace the fact that, parents should be honoured but this does not mean that parents run their lives. Topics on in-laws, relatives and friends should be included in post marital counselling. Mentorship lessons should be introduced earlier in schools and colleges. Some of the participants indicated that newly married men and women should be encouraged to have mentors who have been in marriage (11%). Mentors could assist the couples to adjust to married life. Mentorship gives guidance and answers on some questions which the couple had not learnt during premarital counselling.

Majority of the married men and women recommended that premarital counselling should be carried out by well trained personnel preferably trained and qualified counselling psychologists. Where clergy carries out counselling, they should have been trained in marriage counselling in addition to their theological qualifications. Topics taught should empower the newly married men and women not only to learn but also to embrace practical perspectives of marriage. It came out strongly, especially during interviews that each topic should be handled in detail and the lessons should contain

relevant and useful information, which will eventually benefit married men and women within their relationships.

A structured premarital counselling and education programs should be developed by experts in marriage counselling, focusing more on intercultural marriages. This should be encouraged as there are many married men and women who have married across cultural boundaries; as indicated in table 24. Actually (9%) of the participants were married in different cultural backgrounds. Further recommendations indicated that the environment under which premarital counselling and education takes place, should be more conducive to the study. The lesson or counselling should not be rushed, and the contents should include all real-life issues.

#### **4.18 Theoretical Implications in Premarital Counselling**

In concluding chapter four, the study found out that there are numerous theoretical implications in premarital and marriage counselling, through Rational Emotive Behaviour and Contextual Family Therapy theories, which could be useful in counselling. In the light of this reality, the study looked at the specific objectives and how theoretical mitigations and or implications could be applied in creating or restoring marriage stability.

##### **4.18.1 Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory's Implications on Premarital Counselling in Communication Skills within Marriage**

Ellis (2001) offered guidance in that families become disturbed not merely because of their organization or disorganizations, but due to the serious personal problems of individual family members. Those problems need to be dealt with in order to create change within the family system. This directly addresses communication skills, among couples, within marriage.

In addressing communication within the family or between a husband and wife, according to the rational emotive behavioural therapist's point of view, each person should first and foremost address their own problems, individually. Metcalf (2011) posits that once the irrational thoughts or beliefs are attended to individually, and a solution reached, the individual reaches catharsis. This leads to the decision for the individual to change behaviour and become more logical in attitude and speech, or in seeking personal therapy, in order to reach a situation where the unhealthy behavioural traits are addressed. Otherwise miscommunication with spouse would continue. However, good communication and effective dialogue between the husband and wife would be achieved when the spouses learn how to stop creating their own personal and family problems in addition to their own disturbed emotions (D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010).

In order to create, establish and sustain marriage stability, and in line with REBT, married men and women need to focus on identifying what is important and helpful, in line with their own and their family members' behavioural traits, and on encouraging clients to come up with healthy new beliefs (D. Joffe Ellis, personal communication, May 2010). Effective communication, therefore, should be encouraged within marriage, coupled with self and other-unconditional acceptance, in order to create harmony and cordial co-existence which would translate to couple cohesion, ultimately resulting in marriage stability.

Finally, within marriage, communication is mandatory and has to take place in order to establish clarity and enhancement of good co-existence, between man and wife, in all areas of their life together. It is critical to emphasize that whenever REBT is applied in counselling and psychotherapy, the treatment is basically teaching, manipulating and persuading clients; to change their irrational thoughts and emotions to rational ones

(Sdorow, 1993). Counsellors and psychotherapists should conceptualize that the activating event (A) and the irrational belief (B), and emotional consequence (C) are connected. Counsellors should, therefore, understand that the irrational belief (B) causes the emotional consequence (C) without the activating event (A) necessarily being involved. In counselling, whether at premarital or post marital counselling, rational emotive behaviour theoretical concepts, become very important to enlighten the married men and women on everyday life, and the importance of understanding that irrational beliefs cause emotional consequences. Communication should be honest and candid between married men and women, where elimination of irrational beliefs would result in harmony and effective interaction.

#### **4.18.2 Contextual Family Therapy's Implications on Communication Skills within Marriage**

With reference to Contextual Family Therapy (CFT), Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987), the father of CFT, responded when asked about relationship-based treatment: "I consider it 'scientifically' the most rational treatment for the 'patient' as well as for all others involved in these important relationships". The contextual therapy model links together the individual and his or her needs with the relational aspect of his or her being. People do not live in isolation, and their lives are affected and shaped based on the present as well as past relationships and encounters (Goldenthal, 1993). One of the major concepts of CFT is entitlement, which is a fundamental concept in marriage therapy.

According to Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987) entitlement in the family, and in this case within marriage, is the foundation of "freedom to enjoy life, creativity and courage of commitment". This phenomenon belongs to the individual and is achieved by each family member striving to care about the interests and well-being of others. In marriage, therefore, both husband and wife are and should strive to ensure that communication

between the two are not only cordial, but are effective and add value to the union. The married man or woman is entitled positively to receive and return: fair constructive entitlement within the marital union, which should include and is not limited to acknowledgement, praise and enjoying life including sexuality. If there is proper and effective communication, coupled with love and self-giving, married men and women would experience joy together with commitment, in mutual sharing of life. Creating awareness of the implications of counselling using tenets of CFT is important not only at premarital counselling but also within marriage.

#### **4.18.3 Rational Emotive Behaviour Theory's Implications on Romance within Marriage**

In the master therapist interview, Ellis (2005), when asked about who benefits most from REBT, he empathically answered that it is the young, who are active, who are verbal, who are intelligent and who are sensitive. The therapists, therefore, should clearly point out the implications for both premarital and post marital counselling; in their teaching on romance. They should not be disturbed themselves nor be prejudiced, instead they ought to be very directive and active. Therapists should be clear on what they are teaching. In addition, a therapist should be having unconditional self-acceptance as well as unconditional other acceptance; whenever counselling is carried out. No matter how hard a couple is struggling with romance and sex or how they may be expressing themselves, the therapist should accept them unconditionally.

In addition, REBT therapists should be people with unconditional life acceptance. They should be people who accept their own lives with whatever inadequacies they could have. Such therapists would be in a position to help or guide married men and women, who may be struggling with issues on sex and romance. Many a married man and woman, as indicated in Table 14, (76%) would be open to each other in expressing

sexual needs and in fulfilling spousal expectations in relation to sex and romance. Rational emotive behaviour therapy is all about erasing irrational beliefs, actions and thoughts, and adopting rational actions through psycho-education, which is significant in this model. Therefore, psycho-education, in relation to romance, should teach premarital couples what sexuality involves and its importance within marriage.

#### **4.18.4 Contextual Family Therapy Theory's Implications on Romance within Marriage**

When asked about relationship-based treatment, Boszormenyi-Nagy (1987) echoed what he had said earlier, that he considers CFT as the most rational treatment for the 'patient' as well as for all others involved. CFT is a therapeutic versus theoretical approach from which all the theoretical facets originated and were validated by Boszormenyi-Nagy's observations of individual, family, or couples therapy (Goldenthal, 1993). In reference to CFT's mitigation on romance within marriage, this model links together the individual and his or her needs, with the relational aspect of his or her being. It is possible, within marriage, and especially with reference to spouse, to feel neglected or unfulfilled due to the partner's behavioural traits such as seeking sexual gratification outside the marriage bed. CFT further mitigates through ethical concepts of loyalty and obligation to another person, in this case through the close relationship and cordial co-existence, devotion and love exhibited by married men and women, which would act as the glue that keeps the couple together. Within the connectivity and togetherness of the couple, keeping loyal to the institution of marriage, the give and take concepts obliges honesty in fidelity among other marital issues.



#### **4.18.5 Rational Emotive Behaviour's Implications on Financial Management in Marriage**

Married men and women have indicated on Table 14 that at premarital counselling they learnt about budgeting (81%), and how to live within their means and never to compete with others (81%). Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapists teaches clients not to be indoctrinated with self-defeating ideas, for example impulse buying; but to keep actively investing, accepting themselves, and continuing to refuse dysfunctional beliefs (Ellis, 2001). This would be actualized by accepting what a family owns and living within the territory of their income. REBT is known for the ABCDE model, in which Ellis states that an activating event (A) is not responsible for a person's feelings, it is the person's beliefs or thoughts (B) about that event that lead to the consequences or his or her feelings (C). The goal is to dispute the IBs (D) to arrive at an effective new philosophy (E). In reference to financial management skills within marriage, it is the responsibility of the married man and woman to ensure that they own up to their income and expenditure in ensuring that the family is catered for and is not living under undue stress. Knowledge to these facts makes REBT an effective mortgage on financial management skills within the home.

#### **4.18.6 Contextual Family Therapy's Implications on Financial Management Skills in Marriage**

Contextual Family Therapy is a multigenerational approach that works very well with families whose members are stuck in the past, troubled by the hurt experienced from their parents, and presently cannot move forward. It consists of guiding principles including family loyalties which are passed from one generation to the other. In regard to financial management skills, it may be correct to point out that traditional families have similar behavioural traits with reference to finances and handling of fixed assets.

Wealth is passed on from one generation to another (Ducommun-Nagy, 2002). There is a large spectrum of families who can benefit from contextual therapy, because exploring relationships, from the point of view of responsibilities is never something that could be detrimental. Any family can benefit from contextual therapy because anyone can benefit from giving and receiving.

Contextual therapists tend to be available to the families they treat for a long time (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1993). Financial management skills are often passed from one generation to another and because of the long-term relationships between CFT therapists and their clients, generations tend to save or spend money according to the familial behavioural traits. As far as family financial management traits are concerned, and in reference to issues of controls in expenditure, the need to budget and invest, would be an important part of life, which contextual therapists would be expected to include in their family therapy and counselling, in particular. This mitigation would influence family consultation in reference to current and future usage of family finances, resulting in marriage cohesion and stability.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

This research set out to assess the Influence of Premarital Counseling in Sustenance to marriage stability in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. Data was collected by means of researcher-designed questionnaires, which were submitted to the married men and women, in the area of study. The filled in questionnaires provided useful data which enabled the researcher to obtain important information from both married men and women. Focus group discussions were held with premarital counsellors, who enabled the study to find out in detail the major need of marital counselling, as it elaborating how this influenced stability in marriage. In addition the study carried out interviews from married men and women, which enabled the researcher to access both positive and negative information, in reference to marriage stability. This study further established that both constituencies house heterogeneous and diverse members of different backgrounds, ethnic groups, social status as well as different religious denominations. Notable among the participants included marriage counsellors, religious leaders, and constituency officials, professionals including medical practitioners, teachers, farmers, business people and a few small scale traders, within the two constituencies. All these participants enriched the study by establishing needs to be attended to as indicated in the recommendations below.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Research Findings

Significant findings emerged through data analysis and collection, in line with the statement of the problem, and the specific objectives of the study. The men and women who had gone through premarital counselling, indicated that the knowledge gained contributed greatly to their life as a couple; though the sessions given should have been

delivered in an interactive manner. Further findings indicated that premarital counselling the married men and women learnt dialogue strengthens commitment to marriage life and sharing daily experiences regularly, is important for cordial co-existence. Most of the people (couples) who had attended premarital counselling emphasized the point that courtship is a lifetime commitment, meaning even married couples should continue doing good to spouse throughout life. In addition sharing roles with spouse helps the couple to create time for togetherness within the home. Investigations confirmed that the influence of premarital counselling on financial management skills among couples in the area of study. It came out clearly that if men and women access these skills, before marriage; they would become empowered on how to live within their means and avoid impulse buying.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

According to the results of the study, couples who undertook premarital counseling before marriage often have steady marriages. However, recommendations on communication skills, especially from focus group discussions with premarital counsellors and interviews, came out strongly that at premarital counseling and even later in marriage, premarital counseling should be demystified. This would guide both husband and wife, to work on their communication from the time they received their premarital counseling and throughout their life together as man and wife..

### **5.4 Recommendations from the above Conclusions**

In light of the above conclusions the study would recommend the following:-

All institutions dealing with marriage, such as churches and government departments, should insist that premarital counselling be declared a 'must learn' for all prospective men and women intending to get married. This would prepare couples on marital issues

from a point of knowledge. In reference to communication, prospective couples should learn the basics of relating which would include sharing life in the first instance. Such couples should be trained on the concept that non-communication is not an option in marriage and couples should share anxieties as well as worries on issues that may interfere with the smooth running of their homes. Further the study reviewed that in reference to romance couples should endeavour to ensure they have intimacy with spouse regularly. This should not just be taken as a duty but as an expression of the highest giving and receiving of love, between the husband and wife. Finally, finance This study confirmed that both husband and wife should be open on matters earnings, savings and expenditure; at all times. Budgeting and investments should be treated as one of the important decisions the couple should agree on. Therefore, there is need for premarital counselling at all times, among other learnings..

### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

It is imperative to recommend further research on the following areas:

- i. Merging Family Income:-** A research should be carried out, within the area of study or elsewhere, to find out why a portion of the married men and women refuse to merge their incomes.
  
- ii. A Study on Preparing for Marriage:-** Traditionally a young man and woman prepared for marriage seriously and learnt how to manage their homes and families. The study may inform the modern man and woman, how such families thrived and related as man and wife(s) Indications on the possibilities or inhibitions of such a family to progress as a unit, with multiple wives, may curb secrete polygamous unions.
  
- iii. A Study to kerb Alcohol/Drugs Consumption: -**There is a great need for a study on over-indulgence in alcohol and drugs consumption. This behaviour has resulted in

breakage of marriages causing untold suffering to children. Such specific studies may find out the reasons for over-indulgence in alcohol, and possibly spell out modalities to curb the vice within the area of study.

Finally, the Government, through the Ministry of Education and Curriculum Development Departments, should introduce studies on family and marriage in schools. This would inculcate the citizenry to family values from early age. A research on this initiative should take place within Langata and Dagoreti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya.

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## APPENDICIES

### APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Name of Researcher: Leah WairimuMarang'a**

**Title of Study: ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL COUNSELLING IN SUSTENANCE TO MARRIAGE STABILITY, IN LANGATA AND DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCIES OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA.**

As a participant in this study you are requested to volunteer your answer to the questionnaires provided by the researcher; or participate in focus group discussions. The study may not benefit you directly as an individual as it is expected to produce useful results to University management and policy makers.

I, Steve Opapa being 18 years and above and having full capacity to consent, do hereby volunteer to participate in this research study.

The implications of this voluntary participation, nature, duration, methods and purpose of the study, have been explained to my satisfaction. I have also been given opportunity to ask questions on the study. All questions and any other concerns have been answered and thoroughly explained to my satisfaction.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

In case of any complaint, the contact person is The Chairman, MKU ERC, P. O. BOX 342-0100, THIKA.

## APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRES TO MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN

Dear Participant

My name is Leah W. Marang'a, a post graduate student of Mount Kenya University. I am carrying out a research on *Assessment of the Influence of Premarital Counselling in sustenance to Marriage Stability, in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya*. I humbly request you to participate in filling the questionnaires, in interviews or in group focus discussions. In this connection I wish to assure you that anything you participate in will be treated with highest discretion and confidentiality. Anonymity will be observed and kept. No information given by you, as respondent, may be given to anyone else. The information given is for purposes of research and is strictly for this study. Please accept my appreciation, in advance, for accepting to participate in this study.

### SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Part (I) Individual details of participant

Constituency:                      **Langata**    [  ]    **Dagoretti**    [  ]

1.      Please indicate your gender: Male [  ] Female [  ]

2.      What is your age group?      Below 20 [  ] 21-30 [  ] 31-40 [  ] 41-50 [  ]

Above 50 [  ]

3.    Indicate your highest education level:

No formal education [  ] Primary [  ] Secondary [  ] Tertiary [  ]

Diploma [  ]                      Degree [  ] Post graduate [  ]

Other (specify): .....

4.      Employment status:

Formal Employment [  ]      Business [  ] Farmer [  ]

Other      kind      of      earnings,      please      specify

.....  
.....

5.      Career/Profession:.....

.....

6. Denominational affiliation: Catholic [ ] Protestant [ ] Pentecostal [ ]

7. Type of marriage: Christian (church) [ ] Civil [ ] Customary [ ]

8. How can you best describe your marriage?

a. Cross cultural [ ] b. Same community [ ]

9. How long have you been married?

Below 1 year [ ] 1-5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ]

16-20 years [ ] 20-30 years [ ] Over 30 years [ ]

**Part (2) Premarital Counselling Details**

10. Did you go through any form of premarital counselling? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. If yes, indicate the form of premarital counselling you went through:

a. Traditional [ ]

b. Church [ ]

c. Both Traditional and Church [ ]

12. For the answer given in question 11 above, indicate who conducted the counselling (indicate the ones that apply):

Church Minister [ ] Marriage Counsellor [ ] Father [ ] Mother [ ]

Both Parents [ ] Relatives [ ] Friends [ ]

Other (specify):.....

13. If the answer in question 10 is No, please explain why

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**APPENDIX III: QUESTIONAIRES TO MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN**

**SECTION II: QUESTIONAIRES TO MARRIED MEN AND WOMEN**

**Q.1. Please respond to statements 1-5 regarding the nature of counselling given to men and women before marriage and how such counselling has contributed in your relationship as a couple. State how you agree or disagree by circling the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Uncertain	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree				
<b>Nature of programs</b>				1	2	3	4	5
(a) Contents of premarital counselling have contributed to our stability'								
(b) The counselling was given in an interactive and clear manner each time.								
(c)The curriculum consisted of real life issues which we have faced in marriage for example roles of husband and wife.								
(d)The sessions were intense and relevant to me and my spouse.								
(e) It would be commendable if topics covered could be increased.								
(f) My mother counselled me never to fight/quarrel with in-laws.								
(g) Counselling given by my father was very brief but concrete each time.								
(h) My uncles/aunts taught me to respect my spouse always.								
(i)My married peers insisted the importance of tolerance in marriage.								
(j) It would be commendable if all counselling could be organized.								

**Q.2. Respond to statements 1-5 to determine current marital stability, among married men and women, who undertook premarital counselling in Nairobi County, Kenya. State how you agree or disagree by ticking the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Uncertain	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree			
			1	2	3	4	5
Marriage stability of couples who went through premarital counselling							
(a) Due to premarital counselling we relate respectfully to date.							
(b) Premarital counselling empowered us to consult each other regularly.							
(c) Knowledge gained influences exhibition of positive emotions to each other.							
(d) Premarital counselling encouraged us to seek interventions when needed.							
(e) After a few years of marriage, we recommend post marital counselling.							
(f) Due to informal advice given by relatives we relate respectfully to date.							
(g) Nobody talked to us regarding regular consultations.							
(h)With passage of time we both learnt to handle negative emotions.							
(i)Parental and peer advice has enabled us to seek interventions often.							
(j)I would recommend post marital counselling after a few years of marriage.							



**Q.3. Please respond to statements 1-5 about the influence of premarital counselling on communication regarding your relationship as a couple presently. State how you agree or disagree by circling the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Uncertain	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree				
<b>Communication</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(a)Counselling taught us to speak openly to strengthen our marriage.								
(b) My spouse and i agreed to communicate openly and guard against being influenced by friends and peers.								
(c) Counselling taught us to deal with problems and not to attack each other.								
(d) During premarital counselling i learnt asking questions creates clarity.								
(e) We are able to mentor couples younger than us due to counselling given.								
(f) I have learnt that dialogue strengthens commitment to marriage.								
(g) I would be happy if my spouse and i discuss challenges on in-laws, relatives and parenting together.								
(h) I would feel happy if my spouse allows me to finish what i am saying without interruptions.								
(i) We have learnt the importance of sharing daily experiences.								
(j) I feel upset when my spouse consults peers on our family issues before sharing with me.								

**Q.4. Please respond to statements 1-5 in finding out the influence of premarital counselling on romance, regarding what describes your relationship as a couple. State how you agree or disagree by circling the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Uncertain	4=Agree	5=Strongly Agree				
<b>Premarital counselling on Romance</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) Counselling on romance taught us courtship is a lifetime commitment.								
(b) My spouse and i share roles at home in order to create time together.								
(c) We prefer to show each other our need for sexual intimacy regularly.								
(d) I have noticed that giving gifts to my spouse increases romance.								
(e) I do not feel we learnt enough on romance before we got married.								
(f) We are open to each other on sexual needs to eliminate feelings of rejection at any one time.								
(g) Sometimes i feel attracted to other people even when with my spouse.								
(h) Our mutual need for sexual intimacy keeps us connected regularly.								
(i) Living together has taught us that keeping fidelity and confidentiality increases love and commitment to one another.								
(j) Though we did not go through premarital counselling on romance, we would encourage prospective couples to take it.								

**Q.5. Please respond to statements 1-5 in investigating the influence of premarital counselling on financial management, regarding what describes your relationship as a couple. State how you agree or disagree by circling the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

<b>1=Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2=Disagree</b>	<b>3=Uncertain</b>	<b>4=Agree</b>	<b>5=Strongly Agree</b>				
<b>Influence of PMC to Financial Management</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) We totally trust each other in handling all our financial matters.								
(b) We were taught to live within our means and never compete with others.								
(c) We learnt budgeting is key in financial management in marriage.								
(d) Both of us prioritize paying rent/mortgage, fees and food first.								
(e) In counselling we learnt savings and investment is important for future.								
(f) Through trial and error we have learnt importance of trust in handling all our financial matters.								
(g) Experience has taught us that living within our means has contributed greatly to our marriage stability.								
(h) I try my best to avoid impulse buying.								
(i).As time progresses we learnt it is important to purchase a fixed asset.								
(j) Hard times taught us savings and investment for future is vital.								

**Q.6. Please respond to statements 1-5 in investigating the influence of premarital counselling on Age, Culture, Religious beliefs, Attitude towards spouse, in regard to what describes your relationship as a couple. State how you agree or disagree by circling the number of your choice in the scale provided, for each statement.**

<b>1=Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2=Disagree</b>	<b>3=Uncertain</b>	<b>4=Agree</b>	<b>5=Strongly Agree</b>				
<b>Age, Culture, Religious beliefs and Attitude towards spouse.</b>				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
(a) I do not feel my age influenced my learning during premarital counselling.								
(b) According to our culture all marriage requirements were fulfilled.								
(c) With regard to religious beliefs counselling taught us the importance of guiding our children to embrace faith in God.								
(d) Emphasis was made on love, respect and consultation with my spouse.								
(e) Knowledge gained continues to encourage mutual devotion to spouse.								
(f) I do not feel my age at marriage influenced my later behaviour on spouse.								
(g) My spouse and i exchanged information on our families of origin before marriage and this helped us to settle and accept both sets of parents easily.								
(h) We have always tried not to keep record of wrongs in our relationship.								
(i) We encourage each other that we belong together for life.								
(j) Devotion to one another has strengthened and enriched our mutual positive attitude.								

**Q.7 Please respond to this enquiry by filling the blanks in answering questions i-vi.**

i. What type of premarital counselling would you recommend?

Psychological.....

Biblical.....

Other.....

ii. List what you learnt, starting with what you consider as the most important topic.

.....  
.....

iii. How was the tuition or counselling given (please give a short description).

.....  
.....

In the years you have been married, please indicate what could have enriched your relationship with regard to counselling. Give a brief explanation.

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iv. With regard to age, culture, religious beliefs and attitude to life partner, please explain what these factors contribute to marriage, either positively or negatively.

Age

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Culture

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Religious beliefs

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Attitude to life partner

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**Thank you for your participation**

**APPENDIX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH PREMARITAL  
COUNSELLORS**

Q.1. a) For how long have you counselled couples, before marriage, in this institution?

b) What are the main areas of concern?

Q.2.a). How do you assess marriage stability of the couples you counselled before marriage?

b) How do you rate marriage stability within this general area?

Q.3. How would you rate the contribution by each of the following to marriage stability?

a). Age

b). Culture

c). Religious beliefs

d). Attitude to life partner

Q.4. (a) In general terms, describe the state of most marriages, for example in longevity.

(b) Have any couples separated/divorced in the last two years?

(c) Briefly explain the major reasons for the separation/divorce.

Q.5. Do couples seek counselling on communication issues, and if so for what reasons?

Q.6. Do couples seek counselling regarding romance, intimacy and spousal confidentiality within this community?

Q.7 (a) In general terms how is counselling on financial management given?

(b) Do couples seek counsel on many issues in regard to handling money?

Q.8. In a few words please describe the effect of age, culture, religious beliefs and attitude to life partner's effect on marital stability among couples in your area of counselling.

Q.9. When disagreements or conflicts occur in marriages, do you have any intervention measures in place to reduce or erase the problems?

Q.10. Aspremarital counsellor what recommendations would you suggest to improve the premarital counselling in place, to ensure stability in marriages is achieved?

**Thank you for participating.**



**APPENDIX V: GROUP FOCUS DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH PREMARITAL  
COUNSELLORS**

<b>Resp. Code</b>	<b>Date &amp; Place</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Comments</b>
		<b>Nature of Premarital Counselling</b> -Contents of PMC - Lessons and content - PMC is it mandatory - Variables of this study only or more - Knowledge of PMC counsellors	
		<b>Couples who undertook Premarital Counselling</b> - Relate with respect/disrespect - Consultation in case of differences - Accusation without evidence - Intervention in case of crisis - Differences between couples who went through PMC and those who did not.	
		<b>Communication skills among couples</b> -Clarification of needs removes discord - Sulking and silence solves no problem - Is PMC on com. mandatory for every couple? - Empathy and sympathies regarding com. - Verbal/non-verbal com. Must learn?	
		<b>Spousal romance among couples</b> -PMC should be candid on sexuality -Display of affection precursor to sex -PMC emphasis on fidelity and loyalty -Romance rotation – give and take -PMC teach irrational thoughts on sex	
		<b>PMC on financial management skills</b> -PMC emphasis openness on total income - PMC give guidance on budgeting - Savings and Investment – lesson - Prioritizing in making payments - PMC counsellors need knowledge on finance	
		<b>PMC on Age, Culture, Religious beliefs, and Attitude to life partner.</b> - Effect of age on marital stability - Influence of culture in marital stability - Influence of religious beliefs in MS - Influence of attitude to life partner	

**APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW GUIDE TO COUPLES**

1. Did you go through premarital counselling before marriage, and if yes has it helped or contributed positively/negatively in your marriage?-----

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2. Please explain briefly what it composed of or rather what was taught-----

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3. Were you satisfied with the way the counselling was conducted, and if not what can you recommend to improve the counselling in place?-----

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4. Most marriages break because of none or poor communication. Please elaborate how you restart communicating with your spouse after disagreements-----

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5. Finances is a challenging issue with many couples, how do you and your wife handle your money issues, please elaborate and or advise where probably you have failed-----

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6. Talk a little about bedroom matters or intimacy for you two, citing frustrations if any, and also giving guidance to improve-----

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7. Any other information you would give to assist any couples with difficulties-----

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**APPENDIX VII: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**



SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

Ref. No. MKU/ERC/0524

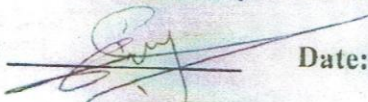
**CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

This is to certify that the proposal titled "ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL COUNSELLING IN SUSTENANCE TO MARRIAGE STABILITY, IN LANGATA AND DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCIES OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA", whose Principal Investigator is Ms Leah Wairimu Marang'a (PhDCOUNS/2013/57031) has been reviewed by Mount Kenya University Ethics Review Committee (ERC), and found to adequately address all ethical concerns.

**Mr Francis W. Makokha**  
Secretary, Mount Kenya University ERC


Sign:  Date: 12.09.2017

**Prof. Francis W. Muregi**  
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ERC

Sign:  Date: 12.9.2017

The Chairman  
Mount Kenya University  
Ethics Review Committee  
P. O. Box 342 - 0100, Thika

## APPENDIX VIII: INTRODUCTION LETTER



**Mount Kenya University**

**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

REF: PHDCOUNS/2013/57031

13<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

*The Director, Research Coordination Division,  
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation,  
Utalii House, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
P.O Box 30623 - 00100,  
NAIROBI.*

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: LEAH WAIRIMU MARANG'A - REGISTRATION NO. PHDCOUNS/2013/57031**

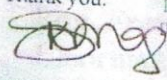
The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing PhD in Counselling Psychology in the Department of Counselling Psychology in the School of Social Sciences.

The title of her research is *"Assessment of the influence of premarital counselling in sustenance of marriage stability in Lang'ata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya."*

She has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data for her thesis in the course of this semester (September to December, 2017).

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

  
Mount Kenya University  
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies  
P. O. Box 342 - 01000  
Thika

**Dr. Samuel Karenga**  
**Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies**

---

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika. Tel: +254 067 2820 000, Cell: +254 720 790 796  
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke  
Chartered and ISO 9001 : 2008 Certified Institution

## APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM NACOSTI

### CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science  
Technology and Innovation  
RESEARCH CLEARANCE  
PERMIT

Serial No.A 15897

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  
**MS. LEAH WAIRIMU MARANGA**  
of MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY,  
57188-200 NAIROBI, has been permitted  
to conduct research in *Nairobi County*

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/43978/19323  
Date Of Issue : 21st September, 2017  
Fee Received : KSh 2000

on the topic: **ASSESSMENT OF THE  
INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL  
COUNSELLING IN SUSTENANCE OF  
MARRIAGE STABILITY IN LANGATA AND  
DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCIES OF  
NAIROBI COUNTY KENYA**

for the period ending:  
21st September, 2018

.....  
Applicant's  
Signature



.....  
  
Director General  
National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation

**APPENDIX X: LANGATA CONSTITUENCY- RESEARCH  
AUTHORIZATION**



**Republic of Kenya  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Nairobi  
Telephone: Nairobi 020 2453699  
Email: [rcenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:rcenairobi@gmail.com)  
[cdenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:cdenairobi@gmail.com)

REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI REGION  
NYAYO HOUSE  
P.O. Box 74629 - 00200  
NAIROBI

When replying please quote

DATE: 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

Ref:RCE/NRB/GEN/VOL.1

Leah Wairimu Maranga  
Mount Kenya University  
P O Box 342-01000  
NAIROBI

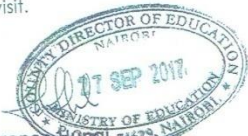
*Handwritten signature and date: Leah Wairimu Maranga, 29/9/2017*

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

We are in receipt of a letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on "**Assessment of the influence of premarital counseling in sustenance of marriage stability in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya**"

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2018 as indicated in the request letter.

Kindly inform the Sub County Director of Education of the Sub County you intend to visit.



Florence ~~RODOL~~ 74629, NAIROBI  
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI

C.C.  
Director General/CEO  
Nation Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
NAIROBI

**APPENDIX XI: DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCY – RESEARCH  
AUTHORIZATION**



**Republic of Kenya  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Nairobi  
Telephone: Nairobi 020 2453699  
Email: [rcenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:rcenairobi@gmail.com)  
[cdenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:cdenairobi@gmail.com)

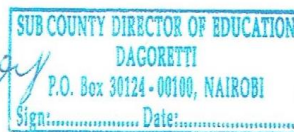
REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI REGION  
NYAYO HOUSE  
P.O. Box 74629 – 00200  
NAIROBI

When replying please quote

Ref:RCE/NRB/GEN/VOL.1

DATE: 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

Leah Wairimu Maranga  
Mount Kenya University  
P O Box 342-01000  
NAIROBI



RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

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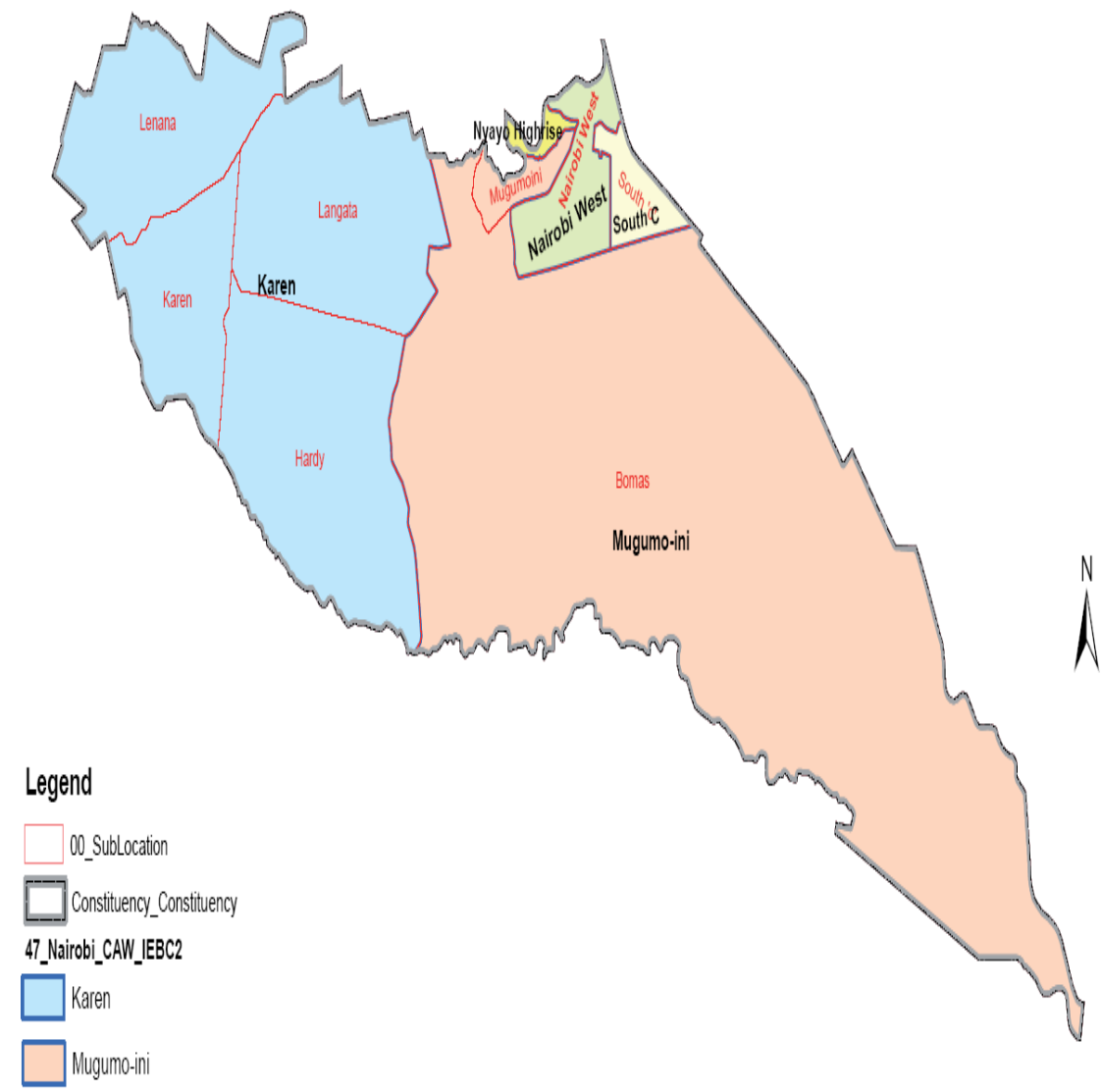
Florence Bongel  
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI

C.C.

Director General/CEO  
Nation Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
NAIROBI



## APPENDIX XII: LANGATA CONSTITUENCY



### Wards in Langata Constituency

Karen

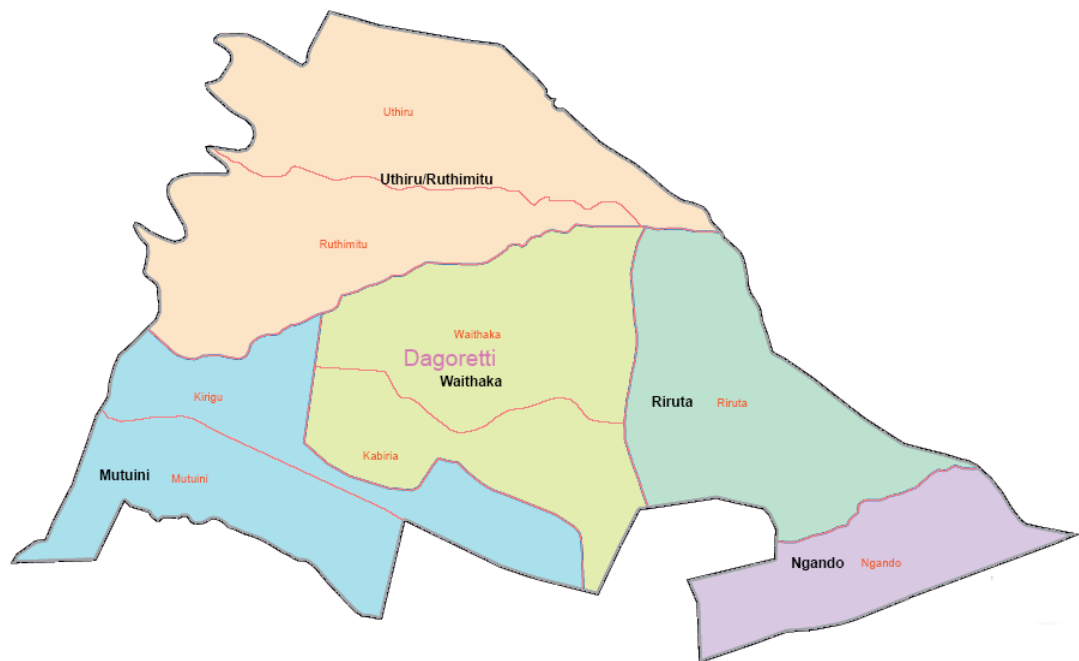
Mugumoini

Nairobi West

South C

NyayoHighrise

## APPENDIX XIII: DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCY



### Wards InDagoretti South Consituency

Mutuini

Waithaka

Riruta

Ngando

Uthiru/Ruthimitu

## APPENDIX XIV: SIMILARITY INDEX

### ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF PREMARITAL COUNSELLING IN SUSTENANCE TO MARRIAGE STABILITY, IN LANGATA AND DAGORETTI SOUTH CONSTITUENCES OF NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>19%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

#### MATCH ALL SOURCES (ONLY SELECTED SOURCE PRINTED)

3%

★ Submitted to Kenyatta University

Student Paper

Exclude quotes

Exclude bibliography

Exclude matches

18 words

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7/1/19  
Confirmed by  
Dr G. Keri  
[Signature]*

Mount Kenya University  
School of Postgraduate Studies  
P. O. Box 342-01000 Thika