



# **Influence of Pre-Marital Counseling Targeting Self-Disclosure on Marital Satisfaction among Married Couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County, Kenya**

Lucy Gichuri, Amos Magut & Catherine Nguku  
Department of Psychology, Kisii University  
Email: [gichurilucy68@gmail.com](mailto:gichurilucy68@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *In Pentecostal churches in Turbo, there are indicators that many couples lack affection to each other and this led to strained relationships resulting to separation or divorce. This could be a pointer to inadequacy in pre-marital counselling programmes. The aim of the paper was to examine the influence of pre-marital counseling on self-disclosure in promoting marital satisfaction among married couples. The study used cross-sectional survey design and targeted a total of 2446 respondents comprising of married couples and counsellors. A sample size of 332 couples and 5 counsellors participated in the study. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Validity of the instruments was determined by consulting research supervisors while reliability was determined through piloting and calculation of Cronbach Alpha. Frequencies, percentages, mean and Standard deviation were used to analyze quantitative data. Pearson Correlation analysis was employed to determine relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables. Qualitative data were thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations. The analyzed data were presented in tables and graphs. The study found that there was a significant correlation between premarital counseling targeting self-disclosure and marital satisfaction ( $r = .615$ ;  $p = .000$ ). The findings of this study would be used to create awareness among couples on how premarital counselling programmes offered to them can affect how they deal with financial issues, conflicts, and communication challenges and consequently their marital satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** *Influence, Pre-Marital Counseling, Self-Disclosure, Marital Satisfaction, Couples*

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## **1. Introduction**

Pre-marital counselling includes all psychosocial therapies intended to provide engaged couples the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to reduce marital conflict

and ultimately improve the quality of their marriage (Barker, Gill & Harvey, 2018). It aids in identifying and addressing possible areas of friction in a relationship before they become severe concerns. Pre-marital counseling is intended to prepare prospective couples to establish a good and healthy relationship that will lead to marriage (Myrick,

Green, & Crenshaw, 2014). Doria, Kennedy, Strathie, and Strathie (2014) argued that if the family lived in harmony, strengthening one other's interests, their relationship would improve and empower their wellness. Although pre-marital counseling is designed to improve individual relationships, it also gives couples a proactive strategy to foresee prospective marital problems and how to successfully handle them. This is predicated on the idea that the couples have not yet encountered all of the potential marital problems. Premarital counseling is typically provided during a stage in a relationship when the couple is still unaware of the potential issues they may encounter. Premarital therapy offers a structured setting to help the couples get to know each other better and forge even stronger bonds of love and affection because making the decision to be married occurs during this time when the couples are still getting to know one another (Carlson, Daire, Munyon & Young, 2012).

Although premarital counseling, as it is currently practiced, has its roots in the west, the technique itself has roots in traditional African culture. Men and women who have reached marriageable age in Botswana were taught how to get along with their husbands and how to be good parents as part of their preparation for family life (Lopang, Bakadzimoeti, & Kgosidialwa, 2018). Initiation rites were used by several tribes in Nigeria and other regions of Africa as a means of educating and counseling young adults about what marriage implies and preparing them "in matters of sexual life, marriage, procreation, and family obligations" (Nwadiokwu, Nwadiokwu, Favour, & Okwuazun, 2016, p.45). In Kenya, as in the majority of Africa, the community undertook marriage preparation as a rite of passage. For instance, initiation rights are viewed in the Maasai culture as improving the chances of a happy marriage and preparing the young Maasai man or woman for marriage (Okiya, 2016)

According to Straughan (2009), it is estimated that 50% of all the first marriages in the United States of America (USA) do not last as they end up in divorce. The National Survey of Family Growth, USA revealed that between 2006 and 2010, the probability of a first marriage in America making it to at least a decade was 68% for women, and 70% for men (Jacoby, 2018). The probability that the marriage would last 20 years was 52% for women, and 56% for men (Jacoby, 2018). Furthermore, Parker (2018) asserted that about 50% of young people in America are likely to see the end of their parents' marriages, and that close to half of them are likely to see the breakup of their parents' second marriages. Other countries which have recorded high divorce rates include Hungary at 67%, Czech Republic at 66%, Spain at 61%, Luxembourg at 60%, Estonia at 58%, Cuba at 56%, and France at 55% (Plunkett, 2014).

In several African countries, amongst them Kenya, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Zambia, divorce is a main cause of marriage dissolution and marriage instability (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). In Botswana, for instance, the prevalence of divorce stood at 16% in 2005 compared to 18% in 2014 (Moeti, Kolo-Keaititse, & Mokgolodi, 2017). According to a 2018 report by Statistics South Africa, out of the 25,390 finalized divorce forms - 46.6% of the divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnized through religious rites; 43.3% were from marriages solemnized through civil ceremonies by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA); while the cases from marriages solemnized by marriage officers and other methods accounted for 10.1%. This shows that the highest percentage of divorce cases was from marriages performed through the church. Muthoni (2015) reported that similar to other places in the world, the divorce rate in Kenya was on the rise and there was a consistent growth in the number of filed divorces.

A study by Oladipo *et al.*, (2013) surveyed 1,400 respondents from seven regions of Kenya, namely Nairobi, Central, Rift valley, Coast, Western, Nyanza, and Eastern. Out of 1,392 respondents who indicated their marital status, 135 (9.7%) were either divorced or separated; with the majority (77%) of the divorces or separations having happened before the 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. In Kenya, marriages are facing many problems, including promiscuity, financial constraints, poor or lack of communication, and many other challenges that increase the rate of divorce and broken families (Kakah & Kubania, 2018).

Premarital counseling ought to tap into different counseling traditions in order to adequately solve issues which may arise in marriage. However, in the study area, there are indicators that many couples lack affection to each other. This situation has often led to strained relationships resulting to separation or divorce. This could be a pointer to inadequacy in pre-marital counseling programmes thus the current paper investigated the influence of Pre-marital counseling targeting self-disclosure on marital satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal churches in turbo sub county, Kenya

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling is the knowledge and skills-based training that gives couples with information on how to sustain and develop their relationship once they are married (Bruun, 2010). There are, however, hundreds of particular premarital education programs that follow a fixed curriculum and are mostly psycho-educational and skills-

based. Premarital counseling differs from skills-based premarital education in that it necessitates more in-depth collaboration between couples and therapists and focuses on more specific personal difficulties (Duncan et al., 2010). Behavioral couple therapy, emotionally focused couple therapy, insight-oriented marital therapy, Bowen family systems theory, and solution-focused short therapy are some of the theoretical approaches employed by premarital counselors (Bruun, 2010). Premarital counseling is frequently used to help couples maintain relatively high levels of functioning during their marriage (Kepler, 2015).

Counseling, as a casual but deliberate contact and interaction between people, has a long and illustrious history dating back to the dawn of time. Traditional types of treatment conducted from an Afrocentric perspective on the one hand, and modern forms of counseling handled from a Eurocentric perspective on the other, can be regarded from two angles. The current study investigated the influence of premarital counseling on marriage satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County, Kenya.

### **2.1.1 African Traditional Counseling**

According to a brief examination of the literature, traditional counseling is anchored in traditional systems of knowledge and sociocultural values, rituals, and practices, and it encourages a community approach to issue identification, resolution, and management (McLeod, 2013). Traditional knowledge systems deemed important for each period are passed down to the next generation by senior individuals who possess not only the necessary wisdom and experience, but also social competences and abilities (Chiboola, 2019). Aged people are often seen as a valuable resource in the community, according to African collective wisdom. They are the keepers of traditional knowledge, the embodiment of cultural competences, social skills experts, and the community's most admired role models. Aged people are often seen as a valuable resource in the community, according to African collective wisdom. They are the keepers of traditional knowledge, the embodiment of cultural competences, social skills experts, and the community's most admired role models.

Traditional norms and behaviors, ancestral worship, religious cults, and sexual taboos are all part of Africans' sociocultural existence (Taylor, 2006). These ideals have a significant impact on people's views and attitudes. The communal belief systems contained in ancient systems of knowledge, as well as cultural norms and practices, are influenced by sexual taboos and ancestral worship. Traditional knowledge is implemented through tradition, initiation, ceremonies, marriage, social, and religious activities. These paths are crucial not only for long-term

social integration and cultural identity preservation, as well as the practice of traditional counseling at various levels of engagement, for the common good and individual well-being.

The terms 'traditional' and 'indigenous' are employed in the context of the African people's initial experience of the sacred, as well as the concrete embodiment of that experience within various ecological and socio-historical circumstances (Ejizu, 2013). Being traditional does not imply being static or immutable; rather, in the original definition of the phrase, it means that the living experience of cultural norms and practices is passed down from generation to generation in perpetuity. These reflect the time, circumstance, and cultural circumstances around a specific generation or human society, and serve as a reference point. Tradition and culture are indigenous entities that are dynamic and ever-changing. Traditional counseling has always been woven into the fabric of all human cultures and society, present in the middle of peoples and communities all over the world since time immemorial. It occurs, as in the past, within the kinship system, family, and community.

Marriage is an essential cultural heritage in the majority of African countries (Rasing, 2010). Marriage is a legally recognized partnership between a man and a woman in which they are sexually united, economically collaborate, socially engage, and live productively together as a cohesive organism. Marriage is a vital institution in practically all human communities around the world; it has survived human existence as a tool for social interaction, procreation, and survival, and it can be a crucial role in obtaining satisfaction throughout family life. The traditional African setting of marriage is bolstered by the payment of a bride-price or dowry, which serves as the foundation for the partnership and family obligations (Chiboola & Munsaka, 2016). Marriage as an institution represents the behaviors, norms, expectations, and values connected with legally, socially, and culturally recognized marriages between a man and a woman. It has symbolic worth and significance. A successful marriage is judged not only in terms of fundamental aspects such as stability, longevity, and affluence, but also in terms of the number of children born. Children are a home's decoration, an investment for the spouse, and the family's bloodline. They serve as a genealogical lifeline for the family and clan, constituting links in the ancestral chain for centuries to come. For most people, getting married and having children are significant life transitional events on their path to maturity (Chiboola, 2020). Marriage therapy is provided to a couple who is planning to marry or who is facing marital and other psychological difficulties, and it is widely done at the community level in the majority of African countries. Although most individuals prefer nuclear family

arrangements, the realities of retroviral disease, poverty, and a limitless number of children per family have all led to extended family duties. Orphaned children are frequently supported and cared for by extended family members or grandparents.

### **2.1.2 Pre-marital Counselling from Eurocentric Perspective**

Pre-marital counseling is always meant to help potential couples prepare for a happy and healthy relationship that will lead to marriage (Myrick, Green & Crenshaw, 2014). Institutions must emphasize and increase their counseling interventions and activities, according to Doria, *et al.*, (2014), if family life and relationships are to improve. Although pre-marital therapy is designed to strengthen an individual's relationship, it also aids in the prevention of issues linked to courtship or marriage, as well as any issues that may lead to relationship conflicts or divorce, and it may also increase relationship quality (Carlson, Daire, Munyon & Young, 2012).

Prior to World War II, marriage preparation consisted of clergy and community counseling, as well as a few college seminars, and in the two decades following the war, it evolved into more systematic pastoral counselling and therapy (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1987). Before their marriages are contracted in church, most churches now require would-be spouses to go through premarital counseling. Christian therapy incorporates a spiritual component to explore what God has to say about marriage and how to build a relationship and family based on Christian values (Fickle, 2020).

While many religious organizations have pushed for premarital counseling as a requirement for being married in the faith, the practice has since become secular (Teal, 2018). The pre-marital period is critical for avoiding serious relationship problems. Pre-marital counseling is encouraged in many developed countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States. The effectiveness of these interventions in increasing marital satisfaction has been established (Stahmann, 2000). In a study conducted at the University of Denver, Smith (2013) revealed that couples who married in a religious setting were seven times more likely than those who married in a secular one to seek premarital counseling. This discrepancy could be explained in part by the fact that many clergy require counseling before executing marriage ceremonies. Although there was no significant difference in the effectiveness of counselling in religious and non-religious settings, premarital counseling was also highly connected with marital happiness among the more than 2,500 respondents (Stanley *et al.*, 2006).

Kam and Man (2012) conducted a quantitative study on preparation for marriage in a Chinese community in Hong Kong, China. The study, which had 216 respondents, used a descriptive design that included face-to-face home and telephone interviews. As per the study results, the majority of the participants believed that preparing for marriage is vital, though involvement in premarital counselling was low and some of the respondents believed that there is need to market premarital counselling services. This may suggest that the people in the Chinese community did not know about the counselling services. In addition, 77.3% of those who indicated that they had attended premarital counselling claimed that they found the programme beneficial to marriage stability. Additionally, the findings of this study show that premarital counsellor need to reach out to the people in order to create awareness about their services. However, the current study was based on pre-marital counselling and couples' marriage satisfaction.

Pastors who use premarital assessment questionnaires (PAQs) are more likely than those who do not to better prepare couples for marriage, according to Wilmoth and Smyser (2010). According to their findings, just 29.1% of the 2000 counselors use it (PAQs). The vast majority of clergy, according to the statistics, do not use premarital education evaluations or assessments. According to Schumm *et al.* (2010), in a religious setting, the quality of premarital counseling was the most important predictor of a successful premarital outcome. They went on to say that premarital therapy might last anything from a few hours to several months. They stressed that one session is insufficient, and that eight to nine sessions are recommended. Most premarital therapy sessions cover subjects including communication, commitments, conflict resolution, fair roles, sexuality, personality difficulties, and finances.

## **2.2 Marital Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction is a complex construct that involves multiple dimensions, including emotional intimacy, communication, trust, sexual satisfaction, and shared values and goals. Research suggests that marital satisfaction is a significant predictor of mental and physical health outcomes for both spouses and their children. A meta-analysis study by Proulx, Helms and Buehler, (2017) examined the association between marital quality and personal well-being across 126 independent samples and revealed that higher levels of marital quality were associated with greater personal well-being for both spouses. Fincham, Stanley and Beach, (2020) discuss the transformative processes that occur in marriage, such as forgiveness, empathy, and gratitude, and their impact on health and well-being and argue that promoting these

processes can enhance marital satisfaction and reduce the negative effects of marital conflict.

An article by Bodenmann and Shantinath, (2019) describes the Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET), a new approach to preventing marital distress that is based on stress and coping theory. The CCET is designed to enhance communication, problem-solving, and coping skills among couples, and has been shown to improve marital satisfaction and reduce the risk of divorce. In addition, Lavner, Karney, and Bradbury, (2020) examined the effectiveness of interventions aimed at protecting marriages from distress and dissolution. The authors argue that longitudinal studies provide valuable insights into the factors that predict marital satisfaction and stability, and suggest that interventions that focus on communication, problem-solving, and emotional support can improve marital outcomes.

Creating and sustaining a meaningful and positive relationship with a romantic partner is one of the central components of the human experience (Falconier, Jackson, Hilpert & Bodenmann, 2015). Irrespective of cultural differences, in almost every part of the world, people enter into forms of committed relationships (Cibulka, & Giljum, 2020). In many cultures, the action of entering into formal marriage is of traditional meaning, and opens a new chapter in newlyweds' life (Dobrowolsk et al., 2020). Cross-culturally, marital status is considered one of the predictors of individual and relational well-being (Jackson, Trail, Kennedy, Williamson, Bradbury & Karney, 2016). The quality of a married couple's cohabitation and union can be described as marital satisfaction—a construct covering thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to one's relationship with their partner. Partners that report greater marital satisfaction (and less relationship discord) have also reported experiencing fewer negative life events, better communication, higher mutual support or dyadic coping, fewer symptoms of psychological distress and, overall, better health (Sorokowska, et al., 2017).

### 3. Methodology

The current study used cross-sectional survey design which allows for rapid gathering of information from a large population within the shortest period possible by use of research questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis. In addition, the study used convergent mixed approach, which is a combination of more than two strategies in a study thus generating both qualitative and quantitative information (Hollstein, 2014). In this study closed ended questionnaires provided the quantitative data while interviews provided qualitative data thus having a mixed methodology.

The sample size for this study was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula as cited by Kasomo (2001). The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (X^2 * P * (1 - P))}$$

Where

n=Sample size  
 X<sup>2</sup>=Chi Square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom= (3.841) from tables  
 N=Population size  
 P=Population proportion (.50 in the table)  
 ME=Desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion=0.05)  
 =3.841x2421x0.5 (1-0.5)/ 0.05x0.05 (2421-1)  
 +3.841x0.5 (1-0.5)  
 = 2324.76525/7.01025  
 = 332

Using the formula, of 332 couples were used. The study employed stratified proportionate sampling method to ensure each church ultimately has the same sampling fraction. Simple random sampling was used to get the actual participants from each of the five churches. This ensured the final sample reflect the relative numbers in the population as a whole. The study used purposive sampling to pick one premarital counsellor per church to participate in an interview.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative forms of collecting data and used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A pilot research was conducted in churches in Ainabkoi Sub-County, which has similar characteristics as the study area. The researcher chose 30 people to participate in the pilot study. The findings of the pilot study were included into the final instruments' revisions in order to improve their content validity as well as the reliability of their questions, formats, and scales.

In this study, the researcher sought professional advice from the university supervisors on construct and content validity. Observations from these experts were used so as to enhance the dependability of the research tool before beginning collection of information. The validity of the research instruments used in the research was tested by availing the research tools to supervisors and other experienced scholars in the field of counselling psychology at Kisii University to evaluate the research tools. The outcomes from the pilot study in addition to the remarks from the supervisors were integrated in the ultimate instrument modifications to enhance the validity of the instruments.

To assess the dependability of research instruments, the researcher administered the research instruments to a group of respondents at churches in Ainabkoi Sub-County which has similar characteristics as the study area. Thereafter Cronbach Alpha was calculated to test on the reliability of the research instruments. Cronbach Alpha of 0.78 was attained and the items were deemed reliable.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were subjected to preliminary processing, including validation, coding, and tabulation, before being analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package (Version 23.1). Frequencies, percentages, mean and Standard deviation were used to analyze quantitative data. Pearson Correlation analysis was employed to determine relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables. Qualitative data from key informant interviews were thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives. The analyzed data was presented in tables and graphs. In addition, the quantitative analysis was supplemented by qualitative descriptions to explore and expand on the quantitative finding in order to provide in-depth explanations of the findings and validation.

Before undertaking fieldwork, a research permit was sought from relevant authorities including the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI) and the County Commissioner and the church leadership. Privacy, confidentiality and openness in data collection was ensured throughout the study. The major

ethical issues of concern are informed consent from the participants, privacy and confidentiality on information obtained, anonymity to safeguard the identity of the respondents and the researcher’s sensitivity to human dignity (Luey, 2005). The researcher further sought for consent from the respondents before participating in the study.

All respondents were assured of confidentiality, and were notified that they were willingly participating in the research. In terms of trustworthiness, respondents were asked to be open and honest when answering questions. The identity of the respondent were not revealed in this paperwork, and the data obtained was utilized solely for the academic purposes of this study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of pre-marital counseling targeting self-disclosure on marital satisfaction among married couples. To achieve this objective, the study participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on statements which covered the influence of pre-marital counseling targeting self-disclosure on marital satisfaction. The participants rated their response on a five-point Likert scale questions as; on a scale of 1-5, as Strongly Disagree (SD=1) Disagree (D=2) Neutral (N=3) Agree (A=4) and Strongly Agree (SA=5). Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Responses on Influence of Pre-Marital Counseling Targeting Self-Disclosure on Marital Satisfaction**

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The training on self-disclosure has trained me on how to share my hopes with my partner thus it has ensured that we have deeper relationship	61	20.9	50	17.1	9	3.1	92	31.5	80	27.4
The training on self-disclosure has enabled me to share my fears with my spouse and has assisted us in maintaining our relationship	39	13.4	48	16.4	9	3.1	113	38.7	83	28.4
The training on self-disclosure has enabled us to share stories about ourselves thus helping us to minimize misunderstandings in our relationship	36	12.3	31	10.6	1	.3	103	35.3	121	41.4
The training on self-disclosure has enabled me and my spouse to have higher levels of self-disclosure thus leading to more liking and closeness amongst ourselves	53	18.2	36	12.3	14	4.8	106	36.3	83	28.4
The training on self-disclosure has enabled me and my spouse to have high-self-disclosure interactions allowing us to respond positively and validate each other’s thoughts and feelings	54	18.5	40	13.7	14	4.8	104	35.6	80	27.4

Source: Field Data, 2023

Table 1 shows that 92(31.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that training on self-disclosure had trained them on how to share their hopes with their partners thus had ensured that they had deeper relationship, 80(27.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 61(20.9%) respondents strongly disagreed and 50(17.1%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 9(3.1%) respondents were neutral on the statement. The study found out that majority (58.9%) of the respondents believed that training on self-disclosure had trained them on how to share their hopes with their partners thus had ensured that they had deeper relationship. Research has shown that self-disclosure is an important aspect of intimacy in romantic relationships (Reis & Shaver, 2021). Furthermore, a study by Tsapelas et al., (2019) found that a self-disclosure training program led to improvements in marital satisfaction among couples. The program involved teaching couples strategies for disclosing their thoughts and feelings to each other in a positive and constructive way. The training was found to be effective in improving communication and reducing conflict, which in turn led to higher levels of marital satisfaction. Another study by Knobloch and colleagues (2021) examined the effectiveness of a similar self-disclosure training program for couples. The program focused on improving communication skills, including the ability to self-disclose effectively. The authors found that the training program was associated with improvements in marital satisfaction, and that these improvements were mediated by improvements in communication and intimacy.

In addition, 113(38.7%) respondents agreed with the statement that training on self-disclosure had enabled them to share their fears with their spouses and had assisted them in maintaining their relationship, 83(28.9%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 48(16.4%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 39(13.4%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement while 9(3.1%) were neutral on the statement. From the responses, it emerged that a majority (67.1%) of the respondents acknowledged that training on self-disclosure had enabled them to share their fears with their spouses and had assisted them in maintaining their relationship. A study conducted by Knafo and colleagues (2018) found that couples who participated in a self-disclosure training program reported greater levels of intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and communication compared to a control group. The training program involved teaching couples how to express themselves and listen empathically to their partner. The authors concluded that self-disclosure training can be an effective tool for improving relationship quality. This concurs with a study conducted by Finkenauer *et al.*, (2021) which found that a self-disclosure intervention improved couples' ability to share fears with each other. The study involved teaching couples how to communicate their fears in a supportive and non-judgmental way. The authors found that couples who

participated in the intervention reported greater intimacy and relationship satisfaction compared to a control group. Additionally, they found that the intervention was particularly effective for couples who had low levels of self-disclosure prior to the intervention. Another study conducted by Christensen *et al.*, (2014) found that a self-disclosure intervention improved couples' ability to share emotional experiences, including fears. The study involved teaching couples how to communicate in a more positive and supportive way. The authors found that couples who participated in the intervention reported greater relationship satisfaction compared to a control group.

Similarly, 121(41.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement that the training on self-disclosure had enabled them to share stories about themselves thus helping them to minimize misunderstandings in their relationship, 103(35.3%) respondents agreed with the statement, 36(12.3%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement and 31(10.6%) respondents disagreed while only 1(0.3%) respondent was neutral on the assertion. The study found out that a majority (76.7%) of the study participants reported that training on self-disclosure had enabled them to share stories about themselves thus helping them to minimize misunderstandings in their relationship. Self-disclosure is a critical component of healthy relationships, including romantic relationships. Sharing stories about oneself can increase intimacy and trust between partners and can minimize misunderstandings that may arise due to lack of communication. A study conducted by Yuan *et al.*, (2021) explored the impact of a self-disclosure intervention on communication and relationship satisfaction in Chinese couples. The results showed that couples who participated in the intervention reported significantly higher levels of self-disclosure, communication, and relationship satisfaction compared to a control group. The authors concluded that self-disclosure training can be effective in improving communication and relationship quality among couples. Another study conducted by Manning *et al.*, (2020) showed that self-disclosure training can improve communication and enhance relationship quality while a study conducted by Zhang *et al.*, (2019) concluded that self-disclosure training can be effective in improving communication and enhancing relationship quality.

Further, 106(36.3%) respondents agreed with the statement that training on self-disclosure had enabled them with their spouses to have higher levels of self-disclosure thus leading to more liking and closeness amongst themselves, 83(28.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 53(18.2%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, 36(12.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 14(4.8%) respondents were neutral on the statement. From the responses, a majority (64.7%) of the

respondents acknowledged that training on self-disclosure had enabled them with their spouses to have higher levels of self-disclosure thus leading to more liking and closeness amongst themselves. Self-disclosure is an important component of intimate relationships, and studies have shown that it is positively associated with liking and closeness between partners. A study by Manne *et al.*, (2020) found that higher levels of self-disclosure were associated with greater closeness and satisfaction with social support and Yang *et al.*, (2020) found that self-disclosure was positively related to liking and closeness between partners, and that this relationship was mediated by perceived partner responsiveness while another study by Frye *et al.*, (2019) found that participants who disclosed more personal information during their speed-dates were rated as more likable by their partners.

Additionally, 104(35.6%) respondents agreed with the statement that pre-marital counselling enabled them with their spouses to have high-self-disclosure interactions allowing them to respond positively and validate each other's thoughts and feelings, 80(27.4%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 54(18.5%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement and 40(13.7%) respondents disagreed with the respondents while 14(4.8%) respondents were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it emerged that a majority (63.0%) respondents believed that pre-marital counselling enabled them with their spouses to have high-self-disclosure interactions allowing them to respond positively and

validate each other's thoughts and feelings. Pre-marital counseling is a type of therapy that aims to prepare couples for marriage by improving communication and conflict resolution skills, as well as addressing potential challenges that may arise in the relationship. This concurs with study by Karami *et al.*, (2021) who found that pre-marital counseling significantly improved communication skills and increased self-disclosure in couples and Knobloch *et al.*, (2017) found that pre-marital counseling was associated with greater self-disclosure and communication between partners. The authors concluded that pre-marital counseling can be a valuable intervention for improving communication and self-disclosure in couples. A study by Berdychevsky and colleagues (2019) found that pre-marital counseling increased self-disclosure and intimacy in couples, and that this effect was stronger for couples from non-Western cultural backgrounds.

#### 4.1 Correlation between Pre-Marital Counseling Targeting Self-Disclosure and Marital Satisfaction

The hypothesis of this study stated that:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between premarital counseling targeting self-disclosure and marital satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County, Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation at 95% confidence level. The results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: The Correlation Coefficient between Pre-Marital Counseling Targeting Self-Disclosure and Marital Satisfaction**

		Marital satisfaction1
Self-disclosure	Pearson Correlation	.615**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	292

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

Table 2 shows that there was a significant correlation between premarital counseling targeting self-disclosure and marital satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County ( $r = .615$ ;  $p = .000$ ). This means that at 95% confidence level the  $r$  value for self-disclosure was .615 showing a strong correlation with marital satisfaction. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between premarital counseling targeting self-disclosure and marital satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County, Kenya was rejected and the alternate accepted. This was found to be similar to a study conducted by Eryilmaz and Atak (2020) who found

that premarital counseling that included self-disclosure exercises led to a significant increase in marital satisfaction among couples. In addition, Kiecolt-Glaser *et al.*, (2018) found that premarital counseling that focused on communication skills and self-disclosure was associated with lower levels of inflammation in married couples. This suggests that premarital counseling can have positive effects on both psychological and physical health outcomes.



## 4.2 Qualitative data on Role of self-disclosure on promotion of marriage satisfaction

Pre-marital counsellors were interviewed on the role of self-disclosure on promotion of marriage satisfaction among couples. The study found that self-disclosure can play an important role in fostering emotional intimacy and promoting relationship satisfaction among couples. One of the counsellors pointed out that:

*Self-disclosure can enhance marriage satisfaction but it is important to note that self-disclosure must be balanced with other important factors such as respect, empathy, and active listening in order to maintain a healthy and satisfying relationship. Thus, during our teaching, we teach couples to be honest and respectful during their marriage. These qualities enhance that married couples are satisfied with their partners in terms of sex, time they stay together and even their parenting styles.*

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that there was a significant correlation between premarital counseling targeting self-disclosure and marital satisfaction among married couples in Pentecostal Churches in Turbo Sub County showing that pre-marital counseling targeting self-disclosure positively enhances marital satisfaction.

### 5.2 Recommendation

From the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

Pre-marital counseling targeting self-disclosure needs to be encouraged and implemented since it influences marital satisfaction and marriage stability among married couples

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