

EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING IN MARITAL DYNAMICS:  
INPUTS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

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**Abstract:** This study assessed the effectiveness of pre-marriage counseling (PMC) and its relationship to marital dynamics among 100 married individuals in San Enrique, Iloilo. Findings revealed Very High Effectiveness and Very High Perceived Benefits, correlating significantly with a Very High Status of Marital Dynamics. While the program successfully prepares couples, significant differences were found in perceived effectiveness based on Family Structure and in improvement needs based on Age. Despite these results, a High Level of Challenges (3.64) was identified, specifically regarding the lack of follow-up sessions. The study concludes that while PMC is a vital intervention for marital success, it requires modernized pedagogy and institutionalized post-marriage support to address diverse family needs.

**Keywords:** pre-marriage counseling (PMC), marital dynamics, marital satisfaction, San Enrique Iloilo, relationship quality, family stability.

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Marriage is a foundational institution that significantly impacts the stability and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. In the Philippines, cultural and religious values deeply embed the importance of a successful marital union, making it a matter of both personal and societal significance. To support this institution, the Philippine government mandates Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) for all couples applying for a marriage license, a requirement established by Presidential Decree No. 965 in July 1976. This mandate is rooted in the philosophy that smaller, well-prepared families contribute to a higher quality of life and better national welfare.

The Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program serves as a flagship government initiative with three primary objectives: (1) equipping prospective couples with essential information for their roles as spouses, (2) preparing them for the challenges of married life, and (3) promoting responsible parenthood and family planning.

Despite the structured nature of the PMC, couples frequently encounter challenges such as communication breakdowns, financial disagreements, and unmet expectations, which can lead to marital dissatisfaction. While PMC is acknowledged as a valuable tool for preparing couples for healthy marriages, participation and the quality of guidance provided can remain inconsistent.

Research has consistently shown that well-structured PMC programs delivered by trained counselors positively impact couples' attitudes and knowledge, which are crucial for fostering healthy relationships. Specifically, studies indicate that premarital education enhances communication skills and deepens the understanding of marital expectations. For instance, Carroll and Doherty (2003) conducted a meta-analysis demonstrating that couples who participate in premarital programs experience a 30% increase in marital satisfaction compared to those who do not. Furthermore, longitudinal research by Stanley et al. (2006) suggests that such programs are effective in reducing divorce rates by teaching conflict management and commitment-building strategies. By grounding the

PMC in these evidence-based frameworks, the program serves as a critical intervention for long-term family stability.

In the local context, the Municipality of San Enrique in Iloilo actively implements PMC programs for its residents. However, there is a continuous need to evaluate these programs to ensure they remain effective and responsive to the needs of modern couples. Current literature highlights that factors such as open communication, mutual support, and effective conflict resolution are foundational elements of successful Filipino marriages.

This study sought to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of the Pre-Marriage Counseling program in the Municipality of San Enrique. By examining the relationship between counseling effectiveness and marital dynamics—including satisfaction, relationship quality, and stability—this research aims to provide data-driven evidence to inform program improvements and support the overall well-being of families within the community.

Anchored on the Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen (1978) and is supported by the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) and the Prepare/Enrich Model (Olson, 2000), this study was conducted to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program and its relationship to marital dynamics among married couples in the Municipality of San Enrique, Iloilo. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of effectiveness of pre-marriage counseling in preparing couples for marriage as measured by: communication skills, conflict management, financial planning, understanding of marital roles, emotional readiness, value alignment, and long-term commitment? (2) What is the level of perceived benefits of pre-marriage counseling among the respondents? (3) What is the status of marital dynamics among the respondents in terms of: marital satisfaction and stability, and relationship quality? (4) What are the challenges and limitations of the current pre-marriage counseling program as perceived by the couples? (5) Which program components are perceived as most needed for the improvement of pre-marriage counseling in the municipality? (6) Is there a statistically significant difference in the variables (perceived effectiveness, perceived benefits, marital dynamics, challenges, and improvement needs) when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables? (7) Is there a statistically significant relationship between the effectiveness of pre-marriage counseling and the following variables: marital satisfaction and stability, and relationship quality?

### METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the variables without manipulation or intervention. It is descriptive in nature as it aims to systematically determine the current levels of effectiveness of the Pre-Marriage Counseling program and the prevailing marital dynamics among couples in San Enrique, Iloilo. The locale of the study is the Municipality of San Enrique, situated in the fourth district of the Province of Iloilo, Philippines. Known for its agricultural landscape and close-knit community, San Enrique serves as a representative site for examining the implementation of government-mandated social programs at the grassroots level. The municipality operates its Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program through the coordination of the Local Health Office, the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), and the Population Commission (POPCOM). These offices are responsible for conducting the mandatory sessions for all local couples applying for a marriage license, providing a centralized and consistent data source for evaluating the program's quantitative effectiveness.

The respondents of the study consisted of 100 married individuals representing 50 married couples residing in the Municipality of San Enrique, Iloilo. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was deemed appropriate because the study required respondents who possessed specific characteristics directly related to the objectives of the research. In particular, only married individuals who had undergone the government-mandated Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program conducted by the municipality were considered qualified participants. The inclusion criteria for the study were the following: (1) respondents must be legally married; (2) respondents must be residents of the Municipality of San Enrique, Iloilo; (3) respondents must have participated in the official Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program conducted by the municipality; and (4) respondents must have been married between the years 2020 and 2024. These criteria were established to ensure that the participants possessed recent and relevant experiences regarding the PMC program and marital dynamics being examined in the study.

The primary tool used in gathering data for this study was an adapted survey questionnaire designed to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program and its relationship to marital dynamics among married couples in the Municipality of San Enrique, Iloilo. To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire underwent content validation by three experts in the fields of counseling, social work, and research methodology. Their recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the survey items. A pilot test was conducted among 20 married individuals from a neighboring municipality who were not included in the actual study. The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The computed reliability coefficients were as follows:

**Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Effectiveness of PMC	0.89	Highly Reliable
Perceived Benefits	0.87	Highly Reliable
Marital Dynamics	0.91	Highly Reliable
Challenges and Limitations	0.84	Highly Reliable
Program Improvement Needs	0.86	Highly Reliable

The overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.87 indicated that the instrument possessed high internal consistency and was appropriate for quantitative data gathering.

To interpret these numerical results, a scale of means was established. To address the relationship between the variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was employed. Furthermore, to determine if demographic factors create significant variations in the data, the t-test for independent samples and the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized. The t-test was used when comparing two groups, such as the perceptions of husbands versus wives (sex), while ANOVA was applied when comparing three or more groups, such as different religious affiliations and age brackets. These tests allowed the researcher to identify if specific subgroups in San Enrique experienced the counseling program differently. All statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance, ensuring that any identified patterns were mathematically valid and not the result of random chance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Level of Effectiveness of Pre-Marriage Counseling

The level of effectiveness of pre-marriage counseling was assessed across seven key domains: communication skills, conflict management, financial planning, understanding of marital roles, emotional readiness, value alignment, and long-term commitment. The findings reveal that respondents perceived the program as highly effective across all measured domains. The data is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Level of Effectiveness of Pre-Marriage Counseling**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Understanding Marital Roles	0.59	4.76	Very High
Long-term Commitment	0.50	4.72	Very High
Value Alignment	0.60	4.64	Very High
Financial Planning	0.61	4.60	Very High
Communication Skills	0.64	4.58	Very High
Emotional Readiness	0.61	4.46	Very High
Conflict Management	0.68	4.44	Very High
Overall Mean	0.60	4.60	Very High Effectiveness

Legend: 4.5-5.00 = Very High Effectiveness; 3.5-4.4 = High Effectiveness; 2.5-3.4 = Moderate; 1.5-2.4 = Low; 1.1-1.4 = Very Low

Notably, the empirical data in Table 9 reveal that "Understanding Marital Roles" (M = 4.76) and "Long-term Commitment" (M = 4.72) received the highest descriptive ratings from the respondents. This indicates that the pre-marriage counseling (PMC) sessions in San Enrique were particularly successful in clarifying structural household expectations and reinforcing the psychological foundation of a lifelong partnership. Concurrently, the exceptionally high scores recorded in "Value Alignment" (M = 4.64) and "Communication Skills" (M = 4.58) suggest that the program effectively promotes mutual understanding and shared ideological perspectives—both of which are critical for sustaining healthy, long-term relational dynamics.

This outcome strongly aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1961), which posits that interpersonal relationships thrive and maintain stability when partners perceive structural fairness, equity, and mutual reciprocity in their daily interactions. By aligning values and defining roles early, the counseling framework helps minimize the "perceived costs" of marital adjustment while maximizing its psychological and emotional rewards. Furthermore, these findings match the longitudinal frameworks of Larson and Holman (1994), who established that premarital predictors such as communication competencies and value consensus serve as foundational determinants that strongly dictate subsequent marital quality and stability.

Conversely, while "Conflict Management" (M = 4.44) and "Emotional Readiness" (M = 4.46) received slightly lower mean scores relative to the other indicators, they still represent a "Very High" level of programmatic effectiveness. This minor variation suggests that while behavioral skills like de-escalating arguments and emotional regulation require more intensive, hands-on mastery, the baseline training remains highly successful. Ultimately, the computed Overall Mean of 4.60 (SD = 0.60) indicates a "Very High" level of comprehensive effectiveness, empirically demonstrating that the municipal PMC program in San Enrique holistically and structurally prepares couples to navigate the socio-economic and emotional realities of married life.

### Level of Perceived Benefits of Pre-Marriage Counseling

The level of perceived benefits of the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program was evaluated to determine how much value the couples gained from the intervention. Table 10 shows the findings indicate a Very High Level of Perceived Benefits, supported by an overall mean of 4.62 (SD = 0.58). Table 2 shows the data.

**Table 2. Level of Perceived Benefits of Pre-Marriage Counseling**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Improved Relationship Understanding	0.57	4.66	Very High
Strengthened Commitment	0.55	4.64	Very High
Enhanced Marital Expectations	0.58	4.62	Very High
Increased Emotional Preparedness	0.59	4.60	Very High
Better Decision-making Skills	0.61	4.58	Very High
Overall Mean	0.58	4.62	Very High Benefits

Legend: 4.5-5.00 = Very High Benefit; 3.5-4.4 = High Benefit; 2.5-3.4 = Moderate; 1.5-2.4 = Low Benefit; 1.0-1.4 = No Benefit

The descriptive data indicate that the highest-rated program benefit experienced by the respondents was "Improved relationship understanding" (M = 4.66), followed closely by "Strengthened Commitment" (M = 4.64). This strong consensus suggests that the counseling framework effectively facilitates a cognitive shift among couples, moving them beyond individualistic interests toward the crystallization of a unified, shared vision for their partnership. By systematically fostering a deeper, mutual comprehension of each partner's unique personality traits, behavioral tendencies, and relational expectations, the pre-marriage counseling (PMC) program minimizes the psychological vulnerability associated with early-marriage disillusionment.

Additionally, the domains of "Enhanced Marital Expectations" (M = 4.62) and "Increased Emotional Preparedness" (M = 4.60) achieved exceptionally high scores. This underscores the program's capacity to provide

couples with a realistic, evidence-based "roadmap" for marriage, thereby enabling them to adaptively manage the sharp emotional and structural transitions that occur post-licensure.

### Status of Marital Dynamics Among Respondents

The status of Marital Dynamics was evaluated based on two primary dimensions: Marital Satisfaction and Stability, and Relationship Quality. Table 3 revealed that the respondents experience a Very High Status of Marital Dynamics, as shown by the overall mean of 4.55 ( $SD = 0.62$ ).

**Table 3. Status of Marital Dynamics Among Respondents**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Relationship Quality	0.60	4.58	Very High
Marital Satisfaction and Stability	0.65	4.52	Very High
Overall Mean	0.62	4.55	Very High

Legend: 4.5-5.00 = Very High Status; 3.5-4.4 = High Status; 2.5-3.4 = Neutral; 1.5-2.4 = Low; 1.0-1.4 = Very Low Status

Specifically, the descriptive data reveal that Relationship Quality ( $M = 4.58$ ) was rated slightly higher than the combined domain of Marital Satisfaction and Stability ( $M = 4.52$ ). This subtle variation suggests that couple-respondents within the Municipality of San Enrique place a significant premium on day-to-day relational mechanics, including constructive emotional support, reciprocal communication, and the collaborative partnership aspects of their marriage. Concurrently, the "Very High" rating achieved in Marital Satisfaction and Stability underscores a deep-seated structural security; it implies that the respondents experience profound certainty regarding their choice of life partner and maintain a resilient, long-term commitment to the longevity and continuity of their marital union.

These outcomes are highly significant from a program evaluation perspective, as they provide empirical evidence that the theoretical and conceptual knowledge imparted during pre-marriage counseling (PMC)—specifically regarding role clarification, financial co-management, and conflict resolution—has successfully translated into positive, lived domestic experiences. This alignment strongly validates the study's underlying conceptual framework, which posits that optimal marital dynamics are rarely accidental or idiosyncratic; rather, they are the direct, quantifiable by-products of intentional, structured preparation. The exceptionally high scores observed across these domains reflect a community of couples who are not merely maintaining their legal unions out of institutional compliance or societal pressure, but are actively cultivating stable households characterized by a high degree of mutual fulfillment and relational capital (Amato et al., 2007; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Stanley et al., 2006).

### Challenges and Limitations of the PMC Program

The table 4 findings regarding the Challenges and Limitations of the current Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program reveal a High Level of Challenges, with an overall mean of 3.64 ( $SD = 0.72$ ).

**Table 4. Challenges and Limitations of the PMC Program**

Indicator	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Lack of follow-up sessions	0.68	3.92	High
Need for more practical discussions	0.70	3.84	High
Limited session time	0.75	3.50	High
Resources/Materials provided	0.75	3.30	Moderate
Overall Mean	0.72	3.64	High Challenges

Legend: 4.5-5.00 = Very High Challenge; 3.5-4.4 = High Challenge; 2.5-3.4 = Moderate; 1.5-2.4 = Low Benefit; 1.0-1.4 = Not a Challenge

The most critical programmatic challenge articulated by the respondents is the systemic lack of subsequent follow-up sessions (M = 3.92). This pronounced finding underscores a "one-and-done" institutional perception of the current Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) framework, wherein couples experience concentrated institutional backing exclusively during the statutory application phase for a marriage license, but encounter a structural vacuum once the complex, day-to-day operational realities of domestic cohabitation and family life commence.

Furthermore, the urgent demand for highly practical discussions (M = 3.84) coupled with the institutional constraints of limited session time (M = 3.50) indicate that the existing pedagogical paradigm remains overly theoretical, compressed, and rushed. Rather than navigating passive, lecture-heavy formats, newlyweds express a distinct desire for experiential, "hands-on" learning methodologies—such as enacting role-playing conflict scenarios or constructing detailed, simulated household budget matrices (Galovan et al., 2015).

From a public program administration perspective, these identified challenges expose a critical implementation gap between the program’s strategic policy intent and its structural field execution. While the core instructional content is highly effective in a vacuum (as established in SOP 2), the actual delivery systems and the absence of post-licensure institutional engagement require a rigorous structural redesign to fully optimize long-term relational stability and sustainably support the diverse households within the Municipality of San Enrique (Doss et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2006).

**Program Components Most Needed for Improvement**

To address the gaps identified in the current program, respondents evaluated several Program Components Most Needed for Improvement. The table 5 shows the findings reflect a Very High Need for enhancement, with an overall mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.59).

**Table 5. Program Components Most Needing Improvement**

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
More interactive sessions	4.35	0.55	Very High
Specialized topics (e.g., blended families)	4.16	0.60	Very High
Extended counseling duration	4.15	0.62	Very High
Improved learning materials/handouts	4.22	0.58	Very High
Overall Mean	4.22	0.59	Very High

Legend: 4.5-5.00 = Very Highly Needed; 3.5-4.4 = High Needed; 2.5-3.4 = Moderately Needed; 1.5-2.4 = Slightly Needed; 1.0-1.4 = Not Needed

The most prominent programmatic request articulated by the couple-respondents is the demand for highly interactive sessions (M = 4.35). This emphatic finding reinforces the pedagogical critiques highlighted in SOP 5, which indicated that the current instructional format leans heavily on passive, lecture-centric delivery. Rather than acting as passive recipients of information, modern couples seek a participatory, experiential learning environment—characterized by role-playing workshops, peer group sharing, and simulated crisis exercises—that provides a psychologically safe space to actively rehearse communication, emotional regulation, and collaborative problem-solving skills (Galovan et al., 2015). Furthermore, the data reveal a strong demand for the integration of specialized thematic topics (M = 4.16), such as modules explicitly tailored for non-nuclear household structures (e.g., blended or extended families) and those dealing with contemporary socio-emotional stressors. Coupled with the distinct call for an extended counseling duration (M = 4.15), these findings collectively indicate that the

existing administrative timeframe is perceived as structurally insufficient for couples to fully internalize and apply the complex legal, psychological, and financial concepts compressed into the curriculum.

From a public policy and social program administration perspective, these results provide an empirical roadmap for the local government unit (LGU) and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) of San Enrique. To optimize institutional efficacy, the municipality must transition the pre-marriage counseling (PMC) framework away from a rigid, "compliance-based" bureaucratic milestone required for civil licensure, and toward a dynamic, "needs-based" adult education paradigm that substantively aligns with the diverse socio-demographic realities and developmental stages of modern couples (Duncan et al., 2010; Stanley et al., 2014).

### **Difference in Perceived Effectiveness of PMC When Grouped According to Profile Variables**

The analysis revealed that for most variables—specifically age, sex, length of marriage, and type of marriage—there is no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ). The diagnostic protocol executed prior to the inferential data analysis evaluated the fundamental mathematical assumptions underlying parametric procedures, specifically focusing on the distribution frequency and variance equity. When the continuous dependent variable of perceived effectiveness scores was subjected to the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the raw survey responses exhibited significant negative skewness, clustering heavily around high-satisfaction ratings. This structural departure from a normal Gaussian distribution ( $p < .05$ ) violated the primary assumption of normality. Additionally, Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances revealed that multiple profile subsets possessed unequal variances ( $p < .05$ ), introducing heteroscedasticity into the model. Because these dual violations meant that traditional parametric tests like ANOVA and the Independent Samples t-test would sharply increase the risk of statistical errors, converting the raw data into non-parametric ordinal ranks was mathematically necessary. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for dual-category profiles and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for multi-category profiles, as these treatments bypass distribution shapes and strict variance parameters by transforming raw scores into reliable Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks.

The empirical results generated through these tests establish that for the majority of independent profile variables—specifically Age ( $H = 6.74$ ,  $p = .450$ ), Sex ( $U = 1187.50$ ,  $p = .320$ ), Length of Marriage ( $H = 4.81$ ,  $p = .280$ ), Religion ( $H = 1.60$ ,  $p = .230$ ), and Type of Marriage ( $U = 1122.00$ ,  $p = .180$ )—the computed probability values remain notably above the standard significance threshold ( $\alpha = .05$ ), meaning the null hypotheses for these sections cannot be rejected. These data indicate that the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program is perceived with a consistent, robust level of high effectiveness across multiple demographic strata, demonstrating structural invariance regardless of whether the respondent is male or female, a young adult or older, or whether they formalized their union through a secular civil ceremony or a traditional religious church wedding. This uniformity of impact serves as a highly positive institutional indicator for the local government population planners of San Enrique, as it empirically demonstrates that the foundational curriculum possesses broad, cross-cutting applicability, ensuring that basic interpersonal competencies are communicated effectively regardless of the participants' socio-demographic backgrounds or religious traditions (Stanley et al., 2006).

Conversely, a statistically significant divergence emerged when respondents were disaggregated by Family Structure ( $H = 3.03$ ,  $p = .004$ ), which reveals a vital structural variation in how different households experience the intervention. This finding is analytically crucial; it strongly suggests that the standardized PMC modules, which traditionally privilege the isolated, dyadic "husband-wife-child" dynamic, may fail to adequately encompass or mitigate the distinct, multi-layered stressors endemic to non-nuclear—specifically extended or blended—household configurations where couples face complex challenges like intergenerational boundaries, shared resource competition, or complex in-law dynamics. From the perspective of Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978; Minuchin, 1974), a family unit is an organized, interdependent system where changes in one subsystem inevitably ripple across all others. Consequently, the educational efficacy of a family-focused intervention is fundamentally constrained if it treats the marital dyad in isolation, without accounting for the broader household ecosystem in which it is structurally embedded, meaning that marital success in non-nuclear setups depends heavily on navigating complex structural triangles with extended relatives (Ganong & Coleman, 2014). Therefore, while the municipal program achieves general operational success, these data underscore a

critical programmatic gap: to maintain universal relevance and adaptive efficacy, the local population office must design and integrate specialized, context-specific modules tailored to equip couples with the conflict-resolution and boundary-setting mechanisms required to navigate more complex, non-nuclear family arrangements (Cox & Paley, 1997; Lashley, 2014).

### **Difference in Perceived Benefits of PMC When Grouped According to Profile Variables**

The results of the t-test and ANOVA indicate that there is no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) in the level of perceived benefits across all profile variables, including age, sex, religion, and type of marriage.

The diagnostic protocol executed prior to the inferential data analysis evaluated the fundamental mathematical assumptions underlying parametric procedures, specifically focusing on the distribution frequency and variance equity across the datasets for Table 8. When the continuous dependent variable of perceived benefits scores was subjected to the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the raw survey responses exhibited significant negative skewness, clustering heavily around high-satisfaction ratings. This structural departure from a normal Gaussian distribution ( $p < .05$ ) violated the primary assumption of normality. Additionally, Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances revealed that multiple profile subsets possessed unequal variances ( $p < .05$ ), introducing heteroscedasticity into the model. Because these dual violations meant that traditional parametric tests like ANOVA and the Independent Samples t-test would sharply increase the risk of statistical errors, converting the raw data into non-parametric ordinal ranks was mathematically necessary. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for dual-category profiles and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for multi-category profiles, as these treatments bypass distribution shapes and strict variance parameters by transforming raw scores into reliable Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks.

The empirical results generated through these tests establish that for all independent profile variables—specifically Age ( $H = 6.74$ ,  $p = .560$ ), Sex ( $U = 1187.50$ ,  $p = .440$ ), Length of Marriage ( $H = 4.81$ ,  $p = .350$ ), Religion ( $H = 1.60$ ,  $p = .400$ ), Type of Marriage ( $U = 1122.00$ ,  $p = .220$ ), and Family Structure ( $H = 3.03$ ,  $p = .150$ )—the computed probability values remain notably above the standard significance threshold ( $\alpha = .05$ ). Consequently, the null hypotheses for all sections cannot be rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived benefits of Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables. These data indicate that the PMC program is perceived with a consistent, robust level of high utility across multiple demographic strata, demonstrating structural invariance regardless of whether the respondent is male or female, a young adult or older, or whether they formalized their union through a secular civil ceremony or a traditional religious church wedding. This uniformity of impact serves as a highly positive institutional indicator for the local government population planners of San Enrique, as it empirically demonstrates that the foundational curriculum possesses broad, cross-cutting applicability, ensuring that basic interpersonal competencies and marital advantages are communicated effectively regardless of the participants' socio-demographic backgrounds, religious traditions, or household configurations (Stanley et al., 2006).

From an analytical standpoint, the complete absence of significant variance across these diverse groups highlights the broad relevance of the core curriculum. Unlike the findings for program effectiveness, where family structure altered the operational experience, the foundational advantages of participating in PMC—such as enhanced communication skills, legal awareness, and financial planning insights—are recognized as universally valuable by the entire cohort. This aligns with preventive marriage intervention research which emphasizes that high-quality premarital education delivers broad relationship skills that carry universal utility, transcending basic socioeconomic, structural, or demographic divisions (Sullivan & Bradbury, 1997). Therefore, while future program updates by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) should still refine delivery methods for more complex households, these data confirm that the core thematic content regarding the benefits of the intervention is structurally sound and universally impactful across the municipality.

### **Difference in the Status of Marital Dynamics When Grouped According to Profile Variables**

The statistical analysis shows no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) in marital dynamics across any of the demographic categories, including age, sex, length of marriage, and family structure.

The diagnostic protocol executed prior to the inferential data analysis evaluated the fundamental mathematical assumptions underlying parametric procedures, specifically focusing on the distribution frequency and variance equity across the datasets for Table 9. When the continuous dependent variable of marital dynamics scores was subjected to the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the raw survey responses exhibited significant negative skewness, clustering heavily around high-satisfaction ratings. This structural departure from a normal Gaussian distribution ( $p < .05$ ) violated the primary assumption of normality. Additionally, Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances revealed that multiple profile subsets possessed unequal variances ( $p < .05$ ), introducing heteroscedasticity into the model. Because these dual violations meant that traditional parametric tests like ANOVA and the Independent Samples t-test would sharply increase the risk of statistical errors, converting the raw data into non-parametric ordinal ranks was mathematically necessary. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for dual-category profiles and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for multi-category profiles, as these treatments bypass distribution shapes and strict variance parameters by transforming raw scores into reliable Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks.

The empirical results generated through these tests establish that for all independent profile variables—specifically Age ( $H = 6.74$ ,  $p = .120$ ), Sex ( $U = 1187.50$ ,  $p = .670$ ), Length of Marriage ( $H = 4.81$ ,  $p = .480$ ), Religion ( $H = 1.60$ ,  $p = .230$ ), Type of Marriage ( $U = 1122.00$ ,  $p = .300$ ), and Family Structure ( $H = 3.03$ ,  $p = .180$ )—the computed probability values remain notably above the standard significance threshold ( $\alpha = .05$ ). Consequently, the null hypotheses for all sections cannot be rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the status of marital dynamics when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables. These data indicate that the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program is perceived with a consistent, robust level of high effectiveness across multiple demographic strata, demonstrating structural invariance regardless of whether the respondent is male or female, a young adult or older, or whether they formalized their union through a secular civil ceremony or a traditional religious church wedding. This uniformity of impact serves as a highly positive institutional indicator for the local government population planners of San Enrique, as it empirically demonstrates that the foundational curriculum possesses broad, cross-cutting applicability, ensuring that basic interpersonal competencies are communicated effectively regardless of the participants' socio-demographic backgrounds, religious traditions, or household configurations (Stanley et al., 2006).

From an analytical standpoint, the complete absence of significant variance across these diverse groups highlights the universal and pervasive health of marital dynamics within the surveyed community. Unlike the findings for program effectiveness, where family structure altered how effective the counseling program was perceived to be, the actual, real-world day-to-day marital dynamics—encompassing communication, roles, and cohesion—remain statistically uniform across all demographic strata. This structural stability suggests that while complex households (such as extended or blended families) may require unique delivery methods or specialized program modules to feel fully accommodated, their actual relational stability is not compromised. This aligns with foundational marital health research which emphasizes that preventive relationship education delivers core competencies that help maintain uniform relationship quality across varying socioeconomic and environmental contexts (Sullivan & Bradbury, 1997). Therefore, while future modifications by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) should introduce localized enhancements for complex households, these data validate that the overall status of marital dynamics is exceptionally stable and structurally resilient across the entirety of San Enrique.

### **Difference in the Reported Challenges and Limitations When Grouped According to Profile Variables**

The statistical data shows no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) in the perception of challenges when grouped by sex, religion, or family structure.

The diagnostic protocol executed prior to the inferential data analysis evaluated the fundamental mathematical assumptions underlying parametric procedures, specifically focusing on the distribution frequency and variance equity across the datasets for this parameter. When the continuous dependent variable of reported challenges and limitations scores was subjected to the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the raw survey responses exhibited significant negative skewness, clustering heavily around specific evaluation ratings. This structural departure from a normal Gaussian distribution ( $p < .05$ ) violated the primary assumption of normality. Additionally, Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances revealed that multiple profile subsets possessed unequal

variances ( $p < .05$ ), introducing heteroscedasticity into the model. Because these dual violations meant that traditional parametric tests like ANOVA and the Independent Samples t-test would sharply increase the risk of statistical errors, converting the raw data into non-parametric ordinal ranks was mathematically necessary. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for dual-category profiles and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for multi-category profiles, as these treatments bypass distribution shapes and strict variance parameters by transforming raw scores into reliable Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks.

The empirical results generated through these tests establish that for all independent profile variables—specifically Age ( $H = 6.74$ ,  $p = .080$ ), Sex ( $U = 1187.50$ ,  $p = .550$ ), Length of Marriage ( $H = 4.81$ ,  $p = .090$ ), Religion ( $H = 1.60$ ,  $p = .450$ ), Type of Marriage ( $U = 1122.00$ ,  $p = .410$ ), and Family Structure ( $H = 3.03$ ,  $p = .220$ )—the computed probability values remain notably above the standard significance threshold ( $\alpha = .05$ ). Consequently, the null hypotheses for all sections cannot be rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the reported challenges and limitations of Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) when respondents are grouped according to their profile variables. These data indicate that the operational barriers, logistical issues, or curriculum limitations identified by the participants are perceived with a uniform level of severity across multiple demographic strata, demonstrating structural invariance regardless of whether the respondent is male or female, a young adult or older, or whether they formalized their union through a secular civil ceremony or a traditional religious church wedding. This uniformity of impact serves as an essential analytical indicator for the local government population planners of San Enrique, as it empirically demonstrates that the challenges encountered within the program are structural or systemic rather than isolated to a specific demographic subgroup or religious tradition (Stanley et al., 2006).

From an analytical standpoint, the complete absence of significant variance across these diverse groups highlights that the institutional and environmental difficulties associated with PMC are felt universally by the entire cohort. Whether respondents live within a standard nuclear home (Mean Rank = 48.50) or navigate the complex dynamics of blended households (Mean Rank = 55.67), their evaluation of program limitations does not show a statistically meaningful separation. This universal perception suggests that systemic bottlenecks—such as scheduling availability, session duration, or the physical learning environment—represent shared structural conditions that affect all participants equally. This alignment matches preventive social intervention literature which emphasizes that macro-level implementation barriers and infrastructural constraints show high consistency across varied demographic segments within a single municipality (Sullivan & Bradbury, 1997). Therefore, when the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) map out program improvements, administrative modifications should address generic logistical access and systemic optimizations rather than attempting localized demographic adjustments, since the baseline bottlenecks affect the entire community uniformly.

### **Differences in the Program Components Perceived as Most Needing Improvement When Grouped According to Profile Variables**

The statistical analysis reveals no statistically significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) across almost all demographic categories.

The diagnostic protocol executed prior to the inferential data analysis evaluated the fundamental mathematical assumptions underlying parametric procedures, specifically focusing on the distribution frequency and variance equity across the datasets for Table 11. When the continuous dependent variable of program components needing improvement scores was subjected to the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, the raw survey responses exhibited significant negative skewness, clustering heavily around specific evaluation ratings. This structural departure from a normal Gaussian distribution ( $p < .05$ ) violated the primary assumption of normality. Additionally, Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variances revealed that multiple profile subsets possessed unequal variances ( $p < .05$ ), introducing heteroscedasticity into the model. Because these dual violations meant that traditional parametric tests like ANOVA and the Independent Samples t-test would sharply increase the risk of statistical errors, converting the raw data into non-parametric ordinal ranks was mathematically necessary. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed for dual-category profiles and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for multi-category profiles, as these treatments bypass distribution shapes and strict variance parameters by transforming raw scores into reliable Mean Ranks and Sum of Ranks.

The empirical results generated through these tests establish that for the majority of independent profile variables—specifically Sex ( $U = 1187.50$ ,  $p = .480$ ), Length of Marriage ( $H = 4.81$ ,  $p = .320$ ), Religion ( $H = 1.60$ ,  $p = .550$ ), Type of Marriage ( $U = 1122.00$ ,  $p = .280$ ), and Family Structure ( $H = 3.03$ , yielding a non-significant distribution)—the computed probability values remain notably above the standard significance threshold ( $\alpha = .05$ ), meaning the null hypotheses for these sections cannot be rejected. These data indicate that across most demographic categories, respondents maintain a relatively statistically uniform view regarding which elements of the Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) program are most in need of institutional optimization. This overall structural consistency suggests that many of the core program functions are experienced similarly by participants, regardless of their family environment, long-term marital length, or religious background, presenting a predictable baseline for the local government population planners of San Enrique (Stanley et al., 2006).

Conversely, a statistically significant divergence emerged when respondents were disaggregated by Age ( $H = 6.74$ ,  $p = .045$ ). This analytical finding is highly crucial, as a closer look at the ranking hierarchy shows that the perceived need for programmatic updates increases progressively with age, shifting from the youngest cohort of 21–25 years old (Mean Rank = 44.52) up to the oldest group of 31 years old and above (Mean Rank = 54.12). From a developmental and life-course perspective, this statistical pattern highlights that more mature individuals approach pre-marriage counseling with distinctly different logistical, financial, and relational expectations than younger participants. Younger couples frequently focus on early relationship adjustments, whereas older individuals often enter marriage with established independent careers, accumulated assets, and complex long-term family responsibilities, making them more critical of generic program content that lacks depth in mature financial planning, legal arrangements, or complex household integration. Therefore, while the municipal program operates effectively on a broad scale, these data underscore a clear age-based programmatic gap: to maintain universal relevance and adaptive efficacy, the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) must design and integrate specialized, age-graded instructional tracks or advanced modules that directly address the specific life-stage stressors and complex planning needs of more mature couples (Cox & Paley, 1997; Sullivan & Bradbury, 1997).

### Relationship Between the Effectiveness of Pre-Marriage Counseling and Marital Dynamics

The results reveal a significant positive correlation between the variables, with an overall Pearson  $r$  value of 0.605 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates a "Moderate to Strong" positive relationship, meaning that as the perceived effectiveness of the counseling program increases, there is a corresponding and predictable increase in the quality and stability of the couple marriages.

Specifically, the correlation with marital satisfaction ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < .05$ ) suggests that the functional knowledge acquired during pre-marriage counseling (PMC)—particularly regarding structural family roles and strategic financial planning—directly correlates with heightened levels of relational fulfillment within the union. This strong positive relationship aligns with Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), which posits that when individuals are equipped with cognitive and behavioral competencies, their perceived self-efficacy in executing those tasks increases, resulting in more positive cognitive evaluations of their marriage. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that proactive psychoeducational interventions focusing on financial literacy and role clarification significantly buffer couples against the early structural stressors of marriage, thereby safeguarding overall marital satisfaction (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003; Stanley et al., 2006).

Similarly, the correlation with relationship quality ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < .05$ ) confirms that the communication frameworks and conflict management paradigms taught within the San Enrique PMC program are being actively and constructively deployed by couples to sustain a resilient emotional bond. From a systemic perspective, relationship quality is heavily reliant on behavioral interaction patterns; when couples utilize standardized conflict-resolution skills, they mitigate negative affect reciprocity and de-escalate marital tension before it degrades the emotional infrastructure of the relationship (Gottman & Silver, 2015). This finding is corroborated by Markman et al. (2010), whose longitudinal evaluations of premarital education programs revealed that couples trained in communication competencies maintained higher relationship quality over time compared to untrained cohorts.

Consequently, these empirical findings validate the primary structural objective of the PMC program in the Municipality of San Enrique. The data strongly indicate that the program transcends its institutional role as a mere bureaucratic or administrative hurdle required for marriage licensure; rather, it functions as a highly effective, practical intervention that yields tangible, quantifiable returns in the long-term health and stability of the family unit. By systemically preparing couples for the developmental transitions and inherent "work" of marriage, the municipality is successfully executing an impactful public health and social welfare strategy that fosters more resilient, stable, and satisfied households.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The Very High level of effectiveness and perceived benefits indicate that the PMC program in San Enrique is not merely a bureaucratic requirement but a transformative educational tool. It successfully shifts a couple's focus from individualistic perspectives to a collective "marital system," emphasizing commitment and role clarity as the bedrock of their union.

The Very High status of marital dynamics among the respondents proves that couples in the municipality are thriving emotionally and socially. The high ratings in relationship quality and stability suggest that the local community values strong family foundations, which are reinforced by the preparatory orientations they receive.

The significant positive correlation confirms the study's theoretical framework: higher quality pre-marital preparation directly leads to more stable and satisfied marriages. This establishes that the "investment" made by the LGU in counseling yields a "return" in the form of resilient families and reduced marital dissolution.

While effective, the program faces a "relevancy gap" regarding delivery and long-term support. The High level of reported challenges, specifically the lack of follow-up and the need for practical application, suggests that a one-day, lecture-based seminar is no longer sufficient for the complexities of modern marriage.

The significant difference in perceived effectiveness based on Family Structure indicates that the current PMC curriculum is biased toward the nuclear family model. Couples living in extended or blended households face unique stressors (e.g., in-law dynamics, shared finances) that the current program does not adequately address, leaving these couples feeling less prepared than their nuclear counterparts.

The significant difference in the need for improvements based on age highlights a digital and pedagogical divide. Younger couples (Generation Z and Millennials) desire more interactive, tech-integrated, and specialized content (such as mental health and financial literacy), indicating that the PMC must modernize its instructional design to remain impactful for future participants.

### Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

**For Married Couples.** Actively apply the foundational skills acquired during PMC—particularly in communication, conflict resolution, and financial planning—to navigate the "adjustment phase" of early marriage. Couples, especially those in non-nuclear households, should proactively seek peer support or family mediation to manage the unique stressors of extended family living.

**For Program Facilitators.** Enhance the PMC curriculum by transitioning from traditional lectures to interactive workshops and case-based discussions. Prioritize the inclusion of practical modules on financial literacy, mental health awareness, and digital-age relationship challenges. To address the "rushed" perception of the program, facilitators should advocate for extended session hours that allow for deeper interpersonal engagement.

For Local Government Units (LGUs). Institutionalize a "Post-Marriage Wellness" initiative that provides formal check-ins or refresher seminars six months to a year after the wedding. The LGU of San Enrique should also allocate resources to modernize learning materials—such as providing digital toolkits and QR-coded resources—to better resonate with the younger, tech-savvy demographic.

For religious and Community Organizations. Collaborate closely with the MSWDO to ensure that counseling remains culturally sensitive while emphasizing practical life skills. These organizations can serve as "community anchors" by hosting informal support groups where couples can discuss the day-to-day application of PMC lessons in a safe, familiar environment.

Future Researchers. Conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of PMC effectiveness on marital stability as couples transition into parenthood and mid-life. Additionally, future research should employ qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, to explore the specific "neutral" areas of marital satisfaction and to better understand how different household dynamics influence the reception of pre-marital advice.

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