**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG MARRIED COUPLES**

**IN MAKINDYE DIVISION:**

# BY

# SANYU AISHA KAKAIRE

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**SUPERVISOR: Dr. Frank Pio Kiyingi (PhD)**

# Abstract

*The study examined the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division. The study adopted a cross sectional research design, all expected respondents filled in the questionnaires and answered the interview guide and returned the questionnaires for analysis. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to gather data and the main methods of data collection used were the questionnaire and interview guide. A sample of 150 respondents was derived from a targeted population of 500 respondents of Makindye Division.*

*The study findings revealed that 150(100%) generally agreed that they receive counseling sessions on depression and anxiety. Receiving counseling sessions on depression and anxiety means that many people report improved conditions long after therapy has ended. Result of findings revealed that 150(100%) individual counseling increases positive feelings, such as compassion and self-esteem. People in therapy can learn skills for handling difficult situations, making healthy decisions, and reaching goals. Findings further revealed that 79(52.6%) agreed that Individual counseling improves communication of negative emotions among couples in Makindye Division. According to study findings, the majority 113(75.3%) of the respondents agreed that effective counselors help married couples improve all forms of self-expression.*

*The study concludes that Individual counseling serves as the leading approach in efforts that improve relationships in existing families, promotion of purpose in life, and psychological well-being as a whole. Psychological well-being among the married couples remains important but its enhancement is possible if both the wife and husband in a marital relationship are counseled together in case of souring relations and inhibitive autonomy among others.*

*The study recommended that the government through its agencies and non-governmental organizations should design interventions in order to address existing marital problems by undertaking economic empowerment of families through community development activities which would in turn enable families meet their needs hence increased livelihoods therefore increased marital quality*

**Definition of key terms.**

***Counseling:*** *is a process where a person with a problem (counselee) seeks help from another person (counselor) to help identify the problem and help cope with or overcome*

*the problem.*

***Psychology:*** *the study of human mind and behavior and how these behaviors can affect the behavior of others in society*

***Family:*** *is a group united by marriage, blood and or adaptation in order to satisfy intimacy needs and bear and socialize children.*

***Domestic violence****: any form of abuse a family member subjects to another member. It may be physical or emotional or psychological.*

***Community:*** *refers to people, inhabitant or social group living in one area or place considered as a while, who show genuine interest and contribute actively in the decisions affecting land access and control*

**Introduction**

This study examined the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division. The study is important because the idea of counseling has boosted the effects to develop knowledge and services in order to assist individuals in need of help without which they would have wasted away (Ankrah, M. (2013). It is difficult to stress back the emergency of counseling on the development agenda in developing countries. This is because we are struck by its complexity. What is significant is that this state of affair is man's own making. Throughout history, man has pitted his strength against the world struggle for survival. Globally, counseling has become a community issue and its imp01iance has been realized in the development fruits.

The idea of counseling has boosted the effects to develop knowledge and services in order to assist individuals in need of help without which they would have wasted away. Aseey (2017) believes that counseling would help communities develop self-confidence through psychological growth and maturity. And this maturity would promote responsible decisions in the communities. However, there is a wrong impression that counseling is a poor man’s psychotherapy. It is thought that with a greater degree of professionalism. many of the prejudices and misconceptions concerning counseling will be dispelled.

The rapid advance of modern science and technology has led to tremendous progress as well as unperceived problems. Man has never before posed such a fascinating opportunity for self-determination to pursue unexplored avenues and enjoying life to its fullest potentialities. Paradoxically, the same scientific and technological advances that have made our present age progress at a rapid pace, have also posed many problems and threats, which make it an age of anxiety (Bandura 2016). The problem of living must be solved first if we are to survive and move forward. For this reason. counseling becomes a remedy in helping individuals realize their dreams. In some advanced countries such as USA, many adolescents become economically independent they are not considered mature enough for taking up adult responsibilities. Thus today, most societies both in the developed and developing countries characterize adolescents with immaturity and perceive the need for guidance to make them responsible members of the community. Numerous forces, often apparently contradictory in nature, influence the speed of change (Bennet. 2013).

As people become increasingly enmeshed in the life style, accruing from the scientific age. the psychological consequences and behavior become more complex. As people begin to realize the potential for fuller life that modern technology can provide, they also become aware of the inadequacies of many existing institutions and practices. beliefs and codes of conduct accepted by themselves and their fore fathers at an earlier age (Chris Gillies, 2014). As a consequence, while more people hope for a better life, there 1s simultaneously a feeling of frustration and anxiety that they themselves may not be able to experience this better life, which should be available to them. They search for new anchors, new guidelines for plan of action that hold promise for realizing some of their dreams and aspirations. Such problems of adjustment led to the emergency of counseling to help people adjust to these problems (Dr. Mcyarrah. 2012).

Before counseling was formalized in Africa, counseling was in form of advises from the elders. unties, uncles, and witch doctors. This was good but the problem was that these people did have the psychological knowledge or skills to help the victims with most of the psychosocial problems. However, we should appreciate their efforts towards helping others to cope with their problems. Most of the problems in these communities have been attributed to the social ~ maladjustments which creates anxiety among the members of society. The importance of counseling services to these communities is that it will help people realize their dreams (Eysenck. 2012).

Makindye division is one of the biggest divisions in Kampala district. The division is characterized by many slums and hence many people live in slums which are associated with many social problems resulting into anxieties and psychosocial problems. Counseling services have been conducted mostly in Small health centers, churches, community workers like teachers, development workers and some schools with counseling services (Psycholog Fulk 2013).

**Problem Statement**

In the recent years. developing countries have undergone tremendous changes which range from the social, economic, political and psychological. Many communities especially those in the urban areas have experience a lot of anxieties from the societal pressures such as stress, frustrations. trauma. depression, poverty, diseases. unemployment. educational conflicts, marital conflicts, child abuse and technological related problems (Psycholog Fulk 2013). The emergency of counseling services in Uganda has been a vague argument with other people stressing that counseling services emerged to console the poor who are in hopeless and desperate conditions. The communities have been confronted with many problems which have manifested into psychological maladjustments (Maria Kangere (2013). The study therefore sought to examine the importance of counseling services to the communities of Makindye

division in Kampala district.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division

**Justification of the study**

This study holds implications for positive social change at the individual, program, and societal levels. Implications for positive social change include a contribution to the body of research in the area of marriage counseling and psychological well-being by filling a gap in the literature. Another important positive social change factor addressed by this study is the impact of mental health issues on society as a whole. There is a tremendous need for healthy counselors to address these mental health needs especially among the married couples. To the marriage counselors, the study is likely to provide useful information on enlightening their roles that need not to be missed out while carrying out their counseling roles. At the same time, marriage counselors will acknowledge their special importance in contributing to psychological well-being of married couples. The positive impact on the future of therapeutic services offered to society could be immense.

**Literature review**

This section reviews what other people have written in relation to the topic under study. The chapter also identifies the gaps that have not been filled by other writers for purposes of addressing them during data collection. The section of this chapter is arranged according to the objective of the study.

**Theoretical Framework**

The study was built on Carl Rogers's theory of client- centered Approach or the humanistic approach. Rogers (1952) describes counseling as the process by which structures of self is relaxed in safety of client's relationship with therapist and previously desired experiences are perceived and then integrated into an altered self.

The theory aims at promoting psychological growth and maturity to the individuals by identifying their inborn abilities to solve or cope with their problems. Therefore. such a growth of in individuals is aimed at improving their functioning and or accelerating their maturity. The counseling services are therefore expected to help people realize their abilities and hence gain self confidence in solving personal and community problems. The aim of this approach was not to cure sick people but to help people live more satisfying and creative lives. This theory in the development interpretation is that individuals get empowered psychologically and this helps them to solve and cope with their problems which might be a handwrite to community development.

This theory argues that the individual exists in a constantly changing world of his own experiences which he is the centre. That the individual’s private world experience (the internal frame of reference) can only be known in any genuine and complete sense to the individual himself. Hence, the individual is the best source of information about himself. The individual reacts to the field or the world as it is perceived by him.

Knowledge of stimulus alone is not enough to predict the response. It is necessary to know how the individual perceives the stimulus which explains why individuals react differently to the same stimulus (Rogers, 1956)

Rogers attaches enormous importance to the concept of a fully- functioning person. A normal or healthy person who is not subject to any anxieties or maladjustments is able to behave in a harmonious manner. According to Rogers. a fully functioning self, i.e. a healthy individual will open to new experiences. He will be able to live a full life and will be self-dependent and self-directed as he will trust his own capacities, judgments, and abilities to make choices without depending on guidance or assistance from other individuals.

Rogers’s arguments are quite relevant on the present community atmosphere where problems have become part of societal obstacles to development. Counseling will therefore help individual persons understand problems-and of course help them cope or solve societal problems from individual point of view. However. the theory fails to understand that today society is built on capitalistic arrangements where individuals aim at satisfying individual grow1h and development than communal development. Another criticism is that man is born selfish and will always satisfy his individual needs without helping others realize self-actualization.

Another theory that was considered in the study was the Guttmann Method Couple Therapy. Here interventions are designed to help couples strengthen their relationships in three primary areas; friendship, conflict management and creation of shared meaning. Couples learn to replace negative conflict patterns with positive interaction and to repair past hurts.

In Gottman method couple therapy, the therapist assists clients in learning how to use a softened startup when approaching one’s partner with a difficult topic (Gottman, 1999). The clinician gives examples of a harsh startup and asks the couple to come up with ways of softening the startup. For example, the clinician will give the clients a phrase such as, “I’m sick of you going out with your friends all the time. The therapist will then help the couple or family create ways of saying the same thing in a less critical way. The therapist explains that a softened startup is done without blame while clearly stating one’s needs (Gottman, 2004). Eliminating a harsh startup is an initial step toward more positive couple and family interactions.

Interventions are designed to improve friendship, deepen emotional connection and create changes which enhance the couple's goals. The goals of Guttmann Method Couple Therapy are to disarm conflicting verbal communication, increase intimacy, respect and affection, remove barriers that create a heightened sense of empathy and understanding within the context of the relationship.

**Importance of Counseling Services in the Development of Communities**

Counseling usually involves helping people to address specific problems that are troubling them. Additionally; it involves helping people develop different and more positive ways of coping with life (Sink. & MacDonald. G. 2018). Counseling is a service designed to help an individual analyze himself by relating his capabilities, achievements. interests and mode of adjustments to what new decision he has made or has to make (Sink. & MacDonald. G. 2018). The importance of counseling services to the development of communities can be analyzed under three elements such as social development, educational development and Health awareness. One of the most important ways in which man tried to cope with rapidly changing world around him was to start the guidance movement.

The guidance movement later led to the growth of counseling psychology in the first decade of twenth century, based on the man's concerns for his fellow men and their wellbeing, particularly the younger members of the society (Sink. & MacDonald. G. 2018).

By exposing pupils to materials of common cultural heritage and values, education unifies people and societies all with common goal of attaining sustainable development in respective countries. (Shertzer 13. & S. C. Stone 2018). From the earliest times, man has recognized the need for education. But with ever growing complexity of civilization and increasing space of life, there is need to equip the youth of today to the challenges of life in the future (Shertzer 13. & S. C. Stone 2018). All the world over, countries invest heavily to educate and equip their citizens to meet future challenges. But the teachers have come to be assigned a very small role today in development of the individual. It is found that students who clamor for education and succeed in gaining admission to Institutions of learning perform far below the standards that might be expected of them. The question is why students fail in their academic efforts.

Binet (1905) the French education minister examined the failure of students and suggested the means for averting it. In U. S.A, this problem of student failure has led to the appointment of commission, such as the Regents commission and has provoked a vast number of research studies which have tended to suggest that intelligence or scholastic ability are, perhaps the guarantors of academic success. The recognition of non-intellectual factors in scholastic performance has led to the need for providing assistance aimed at helping student adjustment. Management also realized that disciplining was not enough and that there should be a positive change in the attitude of the school or college authorities towards students.

Binet (2006) argued that young people appear to labour under heavy odds. Therefore, their behavior is often impulsive. They have resources but have no faith in themselves for taking decisions. They may often be in a state of prolonged 10 conflict, most of the students exhibit vague and agitated reactions usually referred to as anxiety reactions. Students' difficulties and problems were recognized and accepted as legitimate; therefore, most students want to find sympathetic listeners in their teachers (Bandura A. 2016). Counseling therefore will help to minimize the danger of psychological, social, and academic problems.

Counseling the elementary school child involves helping these children with their learning problems and making their experiences at school enjoyable and engaging. Early identification and alleviation, if not elimination of emotional problems will go a long way towards ensuring the healthy development of children into useful citizens (Golgberg w. 2011). Counseling at the high school would help the students gain insight of into their problems and help resolve some of these problems which could assume tremendous proportions if not neglected at this stage. Another important aspect is to help the pupil develop vocational consciousness, occupational interests and related goals. Most societies hold academic achievement to be an important goal for adolescents (Golgberg w. 2011).

Therefore, counseling is the most important agency which can help young people to be normal and healthy individuals who are emotionally mature and who can make significant contributions to their communities. Counseling aims at forging the link by helping to crystallize feelings by giving them expressions directions and intellectual substance. If academic failure is to be provided relevant values, then counseling services should be inculcated to stimulate the academic and cultural aspirations of students (Golgberg w. 2011).

A review of family-planning literature reveals that researchers adopt narrow definitions of sexual behavior rmd focus almost exclusively on risks of pregnancy and diseases. In addition to the basic roles of program management, guidance, counseling, consultation, coordination, and assessment today, schools need guidance programs with definite plans that provide adequate time for counselors to assist the growing numbers of students with special needs. These are students who are substance abusers, teenage parents, and victims of abuse or neglect, depressed, suicidal, educationally disadvantaged, disabled, or potential dropouts before high school graduation for any reason.

The guidance program provides competencies for students to acquire from such domains as knowledge of self and others, career planning and exploration, and educational-vocational development. Even though the instruction programs in school settings are the largest in terms of numbers of student competencies to be achieved, they are not more important than the guidance program elements. The education delivery systems are equal in significance to student growth and development and this should be reflected in the focus and provisions of all school reform efforts. It should not be a case of either/or but one of both/and (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000).

**Individual counselling and psychological wellbeing**

Individual counseling is a personal opportunity to receive support and experience growth during challenging times in life. It is a process between a counselor and an individual which helps the individual to gain an understanding about oneself and one’s behaviours and fosters the development of skills to be used in dealing with difficulties associated with personal, 43 academic and social life. The process works on the basis of trust and confidentiality principle (M.E.T.U, 2012). Counseling can help one deal with many personal topics in life such as anger, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, marriage and relationship challenges, parenting problems, school difficulties, career changes etc. Individual counseling is an opportunity to talk confidentially with a counselor about personal concerns and to facilitate personal growth. The counselor and client work together to define and discuss personal issues and to reach mutually agreed upon goals.

Sometimes, life experiences often disrupt our sense of wholeness, leaving us feeling unable to find our way back to ourselves. When this happens, our lives and our relationships can become difficult, or even unbearable. Individual counseling provides the opportunity for individuals who find themselves in such situations to reunite with their innate wisdom, so that they can experience more of the love, connection and happiness. However, the most important benefit of individual therapy is that it can help individuals enjoy and appreciate their most valued relationships.

According to Goodwin (2008) individual therapy is a joint process between a therapist and a person in therapy. Common goals of therapy can be to inspire change or improve quality of life. People may seek therapy for help with issues that are hard to face alone. Individual therapy is also called therapy, psychotherapy, psychosocial therapy, talk therapy, and counseling.

Butler, Cooper & Wylie (2012) assert that psychotherapy can help people overcome obstacles to their well-being. It can increase positive feelings, such as compassion and self-esteem. People in therapy can learn skills for handling difficult situations, making healthy decisions, and reaching goals. Many of them enjoy the therapeutic journey of becoming more self-aware. Some people even go to ongoing therapy for self-growth. The authors add that even if therapy cannot cure a condition, it can help people develop healthy coping skills. Determination to be active in therapy and heal is essential for meeting therapeutic goals and fostering a positive therapeutic relationship.

Murphy & Eckhardt (2013) report that individual therapy may result in fewer relapses of common conditions, including moderate depression and anxiety.

Furthermore, it indicates that the positive effects of good therapy extend beyond treatment. Many people report improved conditions long after therapy has ended. Individual therapy is often more effective than psychotropic medication or medical treatments alone. When used on their own, those treatments may cause harmful side effects.

A study by Murphy & O’Leary (2011) found out that decreased depressive and anxiety symptoms are evident in effective individual counseling. The overarching decrease in symptoms is the main reason one would initially venture into a counseling environment. The correlation between the reduction of symptoms and improvement in other areas is important to note. The authors further added that individual counseling can improve communication of negative emotions, which can help to elevate mood. Enabling someone to explore their negative emotions and release them in a safe environment allows them to express things that may not be well received by someone who is not a licensed practitioner.

Pretzer, Epstein & Fleming (2014) revealed that coping skills are a long-term benefit of entering into individual counseling for depression and anxiety. They also added that improvement in interpersonal relationships is correlated with a reduction of symptoms of depression and anxiety through individual counseling. Effective counselors can help their clients improve boundary setting and other forms of self-expression. These improvements lead to more growth in other areas of personal development. The authors further added that when offered interventions in positive psychology, improved wellbeing can also be a benefit of individual counseling for depression and anxiety (Pretzer, Epstein & Fleming, 2014).

**Summary of identified literature gaps**

The reviewed studies herein depicted a general agreement that the different marriage counseling approaches are highly important in the changes witnessed in individuals in a marital relationship with particular regard to psychological wellbeing (Brown & Manela, 2011). There are however exists contextual, content, knowledge and methodological gaps. In the first case, methodological gaps exist as the reviewed studies adopted more of a process than proven scientific methods in research (Miller et al. 2000). In addition, some studies made use of only qualitative approaches which suffer generalization (Kendler et al. 1997; Miller et al. 2000). In addition, knowledge gaps exist as several of the reviewed studies do not empirically bring out the effect resulting from religious counseling (Koenig et al., 200I; Kendler et al. 1997). Besides, there were inconsistencies inherent in some studies like (Perera & Kathriarachchi, 2011; Drummond, Fleming, McDonald &Kysela, 2005) that needed further investigation. Most importantly, several of the reviewed studies for instance by Hahlweg & Markman (2016) and Byrne, Carr, & Clark (2013) were based on Western Settings with less regard to the local settings particularly Makindye Division in Kampala. It was imperative that this study needed to be conducted so as to generate information for local evidence-based initiatives that promote psychological wellbeing.

**Research Methodology**

This chapter discusses the methods and procedures that were utilized in this study including the population, research design and procedures, data analysis procedures and the limitations of the methodology. The study adopted a cross-sectional design employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative and Qualitative approaches of data collection were engaged in order to generate quantifiable data that could explain the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division. The sample size comprised of 150 respondents from Makindye division out of the targeted 500 respondents thereby representing a response rate which is good for any standards. Structured interview guides were designed in such a way that more specific and in-depth responses related to the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division. A survey of the perception of the respondents was undertaken. An interview guide was developed and applied on key informants because they are thought to be more informed about the subject under focus. The study employed an unstructured questionnaire with both open- and closed-ended questions.

The study employed purposive and simple random sampling methods to choose participants for this research. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain expert opinions for the study. The technique was used since purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that were knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest(Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Morra Imas & Rist, 2009). Simple random sampling was used to boost the credibility to a sample involving many individuals. A simple random sample is a subset of a statistical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen. Results were analyzed using qualitative methods.

**PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between individual counselling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division. This chapter will present the results with background information first, followed by demographic data. The results were examined and analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences).

**Characteristics of the Respondents**

This section presents the age group, gender, highest level of education attained, marital status, occupation and number of years employed in Makindye division.

**Age group of the respondents**

Result of findings in table 4.1 below reveals that the majority 43(28.7%) of the respondents were between 32 and 38 years, 14(9.3%) were between 18 and 24 years, 24(16%) were between 25 and 31 years, 27(18%) were between 39 and 45 years, 22(14.7%) were between 46 and 52 years, 20(13.3%) were above 53 years. These are the most active dynamic age group, and capable of providing reliable and accurate information on marriage counseling and psychological well-being among married couples focusing on Makindye division.

**Age group of the respondents**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Frequency** | **Percent** | **Valid Percent** | **Cumulative Percent** |
| Valid | 18 - 24 | 14 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 9.3 |
| 25 - 31 years | 24 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 25.3 |
| 32 - 38 years | 43 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 54.0 |
| 39 - 45 years | 27 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 72.0 |
| 46 - 52 years | 22 | 14.7 | 14.7 | 86.7 |
| 53 years and above | 20 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

**4.1.2: Gender of Respondents**

Findings in table 4.2 below presents that 95(63.3%) were male and 55(36.7%) were female working and residing in Makindye division. This shows that both male and female respondents were considered in this study. The inclusion of both sexes targeted collecting data from both sexes so as to avoid biased reporting.

# Gender of the Respondents

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 95 | 63.3 | 63.3 | 63.3 |
| Female | 55 | 36.7 | 36.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

**Highest level of education attended**

Table 4.3 below indicates that 37(24.7%) of respondents had certificates, 64(42.7%) had diplomas, 44(29.3%) had undergraduate degrees, and 5(3.3%) had masters. The majority of the respondents were technically capable of providing accurate and reliable information on marriage counseling and psychological well-being among married couples.

# Highest level of education attended

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Certificate | 37 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 24.7 |
| Diploma | 64 | 42.7 | 42.7 | 67.3 |
| Undergraduate degree | 44 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 96.7 |
| Masters | 5 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

**Marital status of the respondents**

According to table 4.3 below, 44(29.3%) of respondents were single, 50(33.3%) were married, 35(23.3%) were cohabiting, 11(7.3%) were separated and 10(6.7%) were widowed. This implies that the majority of the respondents were technically good for providing accurate and reliable information on marriage counseling and psychological well-being among married couples.

# Marital status of the respondents

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Single | 44 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 29.3 |
| Married | 50 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 62.6 |
| Cohabiting | 35 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 85.9 |
| Separated | 11 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 93.3 |
| Divorced | 10 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 202****2**

**Number of years employed in Makindye Division**

In table 4.5 below, 41(27.3%) of the respondents had worked for between 1-3 years, 97(64.7%) had worked for between 4-6 years and 12(8%) having worked for more than 7 years with Makindye Division. This reveals that quite a number of respondents in the population were not that very old in Makindye Division, but with a good blend to provide very good ideas and responses. The inclusion of both old and new was to provide a balance in responses and ideas.

# Number of years employed in Makindye Division

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 1-3 years | 41 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 27.3 |
| 4 - 6 years | 97 | 64.7 | 64.7 | 92.0 |
| 7 years and above | 12 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

# Position of employment

According to findings in table 4.6 below shows that 1(.7%) of the respondents was the mayor, 9(6%) were the auditors, 10(6.7%) were managers of different municipal sectors, 11(7.3%) were accountants, 27(18%) were tax collectors, 23(15.3%) were business owners, 20(13.3%) were councilors and 49(32.7%) were residents of Makindye Division. This was a good sample of the study because almost an equal number of major positions were considered in giving information on marriage counseling and psychological well-being among married couples, focusing on Makindye Division.

# Position of employment by the respondents

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Mayor | 1 | .7 | .7 | .7 |
| Auditor | 9 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.7 |
| Manager | 10 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 13.3 |
| Accountant | 11 | 7.3 | 7.3 | 20.7 |
| Tax Collector | 27 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 38.7 |
| Business Owner | 23 | 15.3 | 15.3 | 54.0 |
| Councilor | 20 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 67.3 |
| Resident | 49 | 32.7 | 32.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Source: Field Data, 2022**

**To establish the relationship between individual counseling and psychological well-being among married couples in Makindye division**

According to findings, 150(100%) generally agreed that they receive counseling sessions on depression and anxiety. Receiving counseling sessions on depression and anxiety means that many people report improved conditions long after therapy has ended. It should be noted that individual therapy is more effective than psychotropic medication or medical treatments alone. However, when used on their own, those treatments may cause harmful side effects. The findings above are in line with Murphy & Eckhardt (2013) who reported that individual therapy may result in fewer relapses of common conditions, including moderate depression and anxiety. Furthermore, it indicates that the positive effects of good therapy extend beyond treatment.

Result of findings revealed that 150(100%) individual counseling increases positive feelings, such as compassion and self-esteem. People in therapy can learn skills for handling difficult situations, making healthy decisions, and reaching goals. Many of them enjoy the therapeutic journey of becoming more self-aware. Some people even go to ongoing therapy for self-growth. The findings above are in line with Butler, Cooper & Wylie (2012) who assert that psychotherapy can help people overcome obstacles to their well-being. It can increase positive feelings, such as compassion and self-esteem. From the interview held with some of the respondents, they argued that even if therapy cannot cure a condition, it can help people develop healthy coping skills. Determination to be active in therapy and heal is essential for meeting therapeutic goals and fostering a positive therapeutic relationship.

Findings further revealed that 79(52.6%) agreed that Individual counseling improves communication of negative emotions among couples in Makindye Division. This implied that individual counseling enables someone to explore their negative emotions and release them in a safe environment allows them to express things that may not be well received by someone who is not a licensed practitioner. However, 26(17.3%) were neutral on the statement and 45(30%) of the respondents were in disagreement, this reveals that the overarching decrease in symptoms is the main reason one would initially venture into a counseling environment. The correlation between the reduction of symptoms and improvement in other areas is important to note. From the interview held, it was revealed that individual counseling can improve communication of negative emotions, which can help to elevate mood.

According to study findings, the majority 113(75.3%) of the respondents agreed that effective counselors help married couples improve all forms of self-expression. This implied that these improvements lead to more growth in other areas of personal development. The authors further added that when offered interventions in positive psychology, improved wellbeing can also be a benefit of individual counseling for depression and anxiety. However, 37(29.3%) of the respondents were in disagreement. Therefore, the findings above are in line with Pretzer, Epstein & Fleming (2014) revealed that coping skills are a long-term benefit of entering into individual counseling for depression and anxiety. They also added that improvement in interpersonal relationships is correlated with a reduction of symptoms of depression and anxiety through individual counseling

Findings from the field revealed that 94(62.7%) of the respondents were in agreement that they receive counseling sessions on management of Intra-and inter-conflicts. This implied that counseling sessions on management of Intra-and inter-conflicts is as effective, and in some cases more effective than standard and/or individual treatments for many mental health problems such as: adult schizophrenia, affective (mood) disorders, adult alcoholism and drug abuse, children's conduct disorders, adolescent drug abuse, anorexia in young adult women, childhood autism, chronic physical illness in adults and children, and marital distress and conflict. However, 7(4.77%) were neutral and 49(32.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement. This means that married couples may face conflicts and differing expectations in their relationship, leading to marital stress and grow apart. From the interview held with some respondents at Makindye Division Headquarters, they argued that no one is perfect and having disagreements in a relationship is inevitable. There’s always room for reconciliation when things go wrong between a couples. It takes maturity, time and effort to work through issues. Do not give in to pride, or allow anger and conflict to destroy your marriage.

Findings further revealed that 121(80.6%) of the respondents generally agreed that they are encouraged by the counselor to work hard to meet my financial needs. This implied that those with a higher economic/financial status will have better access to education and health services and will have higher status in these areas. It is important to take into account the socio-economic status of a woman, couple or family because this status will affect the decisions they have to make as well as the needs they have. However, 11(7.3%) were neutral on the statement and 18(12%) of the respondents disagreed. From the interview held with Mrs. Masembe Margaret; she argued that a woman who is poor may not have money to attend a health facility (either for child care, transport or where she must pay user fees). Being able to accept each person as an individual, and communicating this to the client, will start to build a relationship in which the client feels safe to explore their situation

**Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

**Summary of findings**

According to the findings, People’s attitudes varied depending on the knowledge about the existence of counseling. In other words. people's attitudes were negative, positive, and neutral. More recently, Fulk (1993) found out that group members who hold strong attraction to their group tended to similar attitudes on other important aspects. For example, people living with HIV/ AIDS tented to hold similar attitudes towards other HIV related problems. Some of the respondent’s attitudes depended on how their counterparts perceived them. However, people's attitudes were generally negative because of the ignorance about the counseling services. The study found that many respondents felt that if they disclosed their secrets or problems the counselors would reveal them to the public which in turn would ruin their reputation in their respective communities.

Since counseling attempts to teach the individual to develop more constructive concepts of himself, the client finds some relief from his current difficulties. Counseling helps individuals develop constructive changes in their personality characteristics and personality structure, changes which brings them closer to the personality characteristics of well-functioning person; that there is a change in directions defined as personal integration and adjustment. These behavioral changes are therefore attributed to responsible decisions making which can have a positive on the development agenda of any society. However, the challenges are diverse; many counselors have faced a lot of resistance from their clients especially those who do not understand the philosophy of counseling

**Conclusion**

Nowadays in every society, the family is the main source of security for individuals. However, families encounter different challenges and problems in modern societies which affect their marital satisfaction. This study based on the findings as per the different objectives herein makes the following conclusions. Individual counseling serves as the leading approach in efforts that improve relationships in existing families, promotion of purpose in life, and psychological well-being as a whole. Psychological well-being among the married couples remains important but its enhancement is possible if both the wife and husband in a marital relationship are counseled together in case of souring relations and inhibitive autonomy among others. In counseling efforts towards improving impaired psychological wellbeing call for integrated initiatives considering all individual grievances as to avoid divergence which would otherwise render a marital relationship in bad shape. Spiritualism and its players are vital in the Counseling efforts that improve impaired marital relationships for better psychological wellbeing. If married career individuals could be helped through Marriage counseling to understand and be intentional in implementing strategies related to psychological wellbeing, they could increase the likelihood that they maintain a satisfying and stable relationship in their careers, and as a result stronger marital relationship.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are given;

Counselors should focus on strengthening relationships, addressing role conflicts, enhancing life skills, and helping to foster wellness and resiliency to cope with stress, fatigue, and role overload. Interventions that aim to increase career-related awareness and relationship building should be put in place to help promote marital satisfaction

Counselors should take an educator role in career experiences, adjustment issues and the role of Marriage and family counseling. Counselors should provide a working approach which helps all career spouses with the decision-making process, to understand themselves and the effects of careers on their marital satisfaction

There is need to provide Marriage and family counseling training packages to married career individuals that promote marital intimacy and satisfaction tailored to the cultural context of the society

The Government of Uganda should establish functional marriage counseling centers and clinics in every district where both couples and intending ones can solicit for assistance as the case may be.

The study recommended that the government through its agencies and non-governmental organizations should design interventions in order to address existing marital problems by undertaking economic empowerment of families through community development activities which would in turn enable families meet their needs hence increased livelihoods therefore increased marital quality.

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