

## Effect of Premarital Counseling on Faculty of Nursing Students at Helwan University

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### Abstract

**Background:** Premarital counseling (PMC) is an important strategy for helping individuals to learn skills about better understanding of marriage, improving social relationship, resolving marital conflicts and then apply what is learned in everyday lives. Preparing university students for marriage is a key event that is needed for reducing the high divorce rates in the society. **Aim:** This study aimed to evaluate the effect of premarital counseling on faculty of nursing students at Helwan University. **Design:** A quasi-experimental research design was used to conduct the current study. **Setting:** This study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Helwan University. **Subjects:** A purposive sample of 120 students. **The study tools were:** 1) Socio-demographic characteristics sheet, 2) Role Concepts Questionnaire, 3) The Relationship Questionnaire and 4) Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory. **The results:** There was statistically significant direct positive correlation between nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles post the premarital counseling implementation. There was a statistically significant relations between nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles with their socio-demographic characteristics pre & post the premarital counseling implementation. **Conclusions:** Premarital counseling had a positive effect on students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles with high statistically significant differences between pre & post implementation. **Recommendations:** Counseling centers should be considered as a priority for universities' students to ensure an effective response to their psychosocial needs.

**Key words:** Counseling, Premarital counseling, University students.

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### I. Introduction

Marriage is defined as a contract between man and woman that considers a special role for each person. Marriage includes the coupling of two people possessing different interests, desires and needs, also is a special association given shape by social rules and laws and significantly affects individuals' development (Houlgate, 2017).

Functions of marriage are meeting the need for love, meeting both individuals' biological, social, psychological and motivational needs, bringing new generations to world, gaining a place in society, the feelings of being safe and protected, the sense of cooperation and being confident about the future (Moodi M., Miri M., & Sharifirad G., 2016).

Premarital counseling (PMC) has a significant impact on individuals who want to learn how to be in a successful and stable marriage. Additionally PMC has preventive, educational and therapeutic aspects (Parhizgar et al., 2017).

Accordingly PMC aimed to provide support the individuals to decrease marital problems and to increase satisfaction in current relationships. These programs teaches individuals how to cope with conflicts and problems in marriage, taking precautions before problems occur, preparing couples for roles in the future and teaching them skills to solve the problem before they become serious (Williamson H. et al., 2018).

University student is one of the individuals who have a lot of daily life problems such as; stressors, lack of motivation and self-confidence, public speaking, fear of failure, time management and problems experienced in the relationships with the opposite sex (Nicholas L., 2016).

The university stage includes plans for marriage after university life which provides the youth with opportunities of gaining independence, self-development, improvement of living conditions and preparation for

the next development period. So that university students are considered as one of the most important target groups of marriage programs to maintain and improve their marital life later on (**Kocyigit M. , 2017**).

Psychiatric nurse works as a counselor who can introduce a sense of hope, give a sense of acceptance, gain insight, work through unresolved problems, be good listener to the feelings and thoughts of the individuals, participate in promoting success of the marriage and help in bringing much life changes in preparation of marriage (**Kabir S., 2017**).

#### **Significance of the study:**

The number of marriage cases recorded 913 thousands in 2017, while the divorce cases hit 198 thousands, averaging 21.7% of divorce ratio to every 100 marriage case. The divorce rate is common in urban than rural areas and the highest divorce rate recorded in Cairo governorate (**Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics CAPMS, 2017**). Accordingly Egypt's divorce rate hits an all-time high; there is a divorce case every two minutes (**National Council of Women NCW, 2017**). Total number of marriages across Egypt increased to 928,800 contracts in 2019 compared to 887,300 in 2018 with increase of 4.6 percent while divorce certificates meanwhile reached 225,900 in 2019 compared to 211,500 certificates in 2018 with an increase of 6.8 percent (**Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2019**).

#### **Aim of the study**

This study aimed to evaluate the effect of premarital counseling on Faculty of Nursing Students at Helwan University **through:**

- 1) Assessing nursing students' role concepts, feelings about relationship and conflict resolution styles pre and post.
- 2) Planning for premarital counseling on faculty of nursing students.
- 3) Implementing premarital counseling on faculty of nursing students.
- 4) Evaluating the effect of premarital counseling outcomes pre and post.

#### **Research hypothesis**

Premarital counseling will have a positive effect on Faculty of Nursing students at Helwan University.

## **II. Subjects And Methods**

**Research design:** A quasi-experimental research design was used to conduct the current study. **Setting of the Study:** This study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing Helwan University. **Subjects:** A purposive sample of 120 students was used in the current study according to the following inclusion criteria:

- 1) Accept to participate in the study.
- 2) Both sexes.
- 3) Aged 20 years old and above.
- 4) Unmarried students.

#### **Data collection tools:**

Data were collected by using the following tools:

##### **1- Socio-demographic characteristics sheet:**

This questionnaire was used and developed by researcher after reviewing national and international related literature. The aim of the scale to assess nursing student's socio demographic data such as (age, sex, place of residence, family size, order between siblings, father's and mother's education and job, previous conduct of premarital counseling and sources of information about premarital counseling).

##### **2- Role Concepts Questionnaire (Faith Chapel Center, 2006):**

This questionnaire was designed and used by (**Faith Chapel Center, 2006**). The aim of the scale to assess expectations regarding the husband-wife roles in the future relationship. It consists of 19 items. The scale use the 5-likert scale with response options of strongly disagree(5), mildly disagree(4), not sure (3), mildly agree(2), strongly agree(1).

##### **3- The Relationship Questionnaire (Griffin, & Bartholomew, 1994):**

This questionnaire was designed and used by (**Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994**).The aim of the scale to describe the feelings about the relationship. It consists of 30 items. The scale use the 5-likert scale with response options of not at all like me(1), rarely like me( 2), somewhat like me(3), often like me(4) and very like me(5).

##### **4- Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) ( Kurdek, 1994):**

This questionnaire was designed and used by (**Kurdek, 1994**). The aim of the scale to assess how frequently that the individual will use each of the conflict styles to deal with arguments or disagreements with the future partner. It consists of 16 items. The scale use the 5-likert scale with response options of never (1), rarely ( 2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5).

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted on 10% of the total study sample (12 students) of the total students in the 4<sup>th</sup> year at Faculty of Nursing at Helwan University, In order to ensure reliability, clarity of questions and applicability of the tools, the time needed to complete the tools and perform the required modifications according to the available resources. Subjects who shared in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample.

**Ethical Considerations**

- Ethical approval obtained from the Scientific Ethical Committee of nursing faculty -Helwan University.
- The study facilitation letter to conduct the study was received from the department of postgraduate studies at faculty of nursing-Helwan University to the dean of the faculty to obtain an official permission.
- The researcher assured for every selected student involved in the study sample, that participation is voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason.
- The researcher assured confidentiality of data for every student involved in the study sample by using codes to identify participants instead of names.
- The researcher clarified that all information would be used for scientific research and for the students' benefits.

**III. Results**

**Table (1): Socio-demographic characteristics of the studied sample (n=120):**

Item	No	%
<b>Age</b>	20-22	83
	23 or more	37
	Mean±SD	21.57±1.4
<b>Sex</b>	Male	30
	Female	90
<b>Place of residence</b>	Urban	88
	Rural	32
<b>Family size</b>	3-5	62
	6-8	54
	9 or more	4
<b>Order between siblings</b>	1 <sup>st</sup>	49
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	32
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	25
	4 <sup>th</sup>	8
	up to 4 <sup>th</sup>	6
<b>Father's education</b>	Educated	105
	Not educated	15
<b>Father's job</b>	Employed	97
	Unemployed	23
<b>Mother's education</b>	Educated	93
	Not educated	27
<b>Mother's job</b>	Employed	33
	Unemployed	87

**This table** represents that age of the study sample ranges from 20-22 was (69.2%) with a Mean±SD of 21.57±1.4. Regarding their sex, Male's distribution is (25.0%), while females are (75.0%). The Place of residence is (73.3%) in urban areas, also the family size of cases that ranges from 3-5 is (51.7%) and the order of the cases between siblings is the 1<sup>st</sup> (40.8%). However the Fathers who are educated (87.5%) and Fathers who are employed (80.8%), the mothers who are educated (77.5%) and mothers who are unemployed (72.5%).

**Table ( 2): Total score role concept pre and post premarital counseling of the studied sample:**

Total role concepts	Pre (N=120)		Post (N=120)		Chi-square	
	No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Positive (57-95)	74	61.7	43	35.8	16.027	<0.001** HS
Negative(19-56)	46	38.3	77	64.2		
Mean±SD	60.69±14.23		65.93±12.80			
% of improvement	7.95%					

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001 at p< 0.05

(\*) Statistically significant S

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post premarital counseling regarding total role concepts among studied sample at p-value < 0.001\*\* with Mean±SD 60.69±14.23 pre premarital counseling , with increase Mean±SD 65.93±12.80 post premarital counseling & % of improvement (7.95%).

**Table ( 3): Total score relationship pre and post premarital counseling of the studied sample:**

Relationship	Pre (N=120)		Post (N=120)		Chi-square	
	No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Positive(90-150)	38	31.7	72	60.0	19.401	<0.001** HS
Negative(30-89)	82	68.3	48	40.0		
Mean±SD	82.33±19.10		96.58±16.91			
% of improvement	14.75%					

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001 at p< 0.05

(\*) Statistically significant S at

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post premarital counseling regarding total relationship among studied sample at p-value < 0.001\*\* with Mean±SD 82.33±19.10 pre premarital counseling , with increase Mean±SD 96.58±16.91 post premarital counseling & % of improvement (14.75%).

**Table ( 4): Total score conflict resolution styles pre and post premarital counseling of the studied sample (n = 120):**

Total conflict resolution styles	Pre (N=120)		Post (N=120)		Chi-square	
	No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
High(60-80)	56	46.7	21	17.5	35.283	<0.001** HS
Moderate(48-59)	40	33.3	34	28.3		
Low(16-47)	24	20.0	65	54.2		
Mean±SD	48.06±8.10		37.21±9.72			
% of improvement	22.58%					

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001 at p< 0.05

(\*) Statistically significant S

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post premarital counseling regarding total conflict resolution styles among studied sample at p-value < 0.001\*\* with Mean±SD48.06±8.10 pre premarital counseling, with Mean±SD 37.21±9.72 post premarital counseling & % of improvement (22.58%).

**Table ( 5): Correlation between total relationship and total role concepts pre and post the premarital counseling among studied sample (n = 120).**

Total relationship		Total role concepts					
		Positive		Negative		Chi-square	
		No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Pre	Positive	32	26.7	6	5.0	11.956	<0.001** HS
	Negative	42	35.0	40	33.3		
Post	Positive	38	31.7	34	28.3	22.477	<0.001** HS
	Negative	5	4.2	43	35.8		

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001  
at p< 0.05

(\*) Statistically significant S at

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant correlation regarding total relationship and total role concepts pre and post the premarital counseling.

**Table ( 6) Correlation between total conflict resolution styles and total role concepts between pre and post the premarital counseling among studied sample (n = 120):**

Total conflict resolution styles		Total role Concepts					
		Positive		Negative		Chi-square	
		No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Pre	High	54	45.0	2	1.7	69.538	<0.001** HS
	Moderate	20	16.7	20	16.7		
	Low	0	0.0	24	20.0		
Post	High	20	16.7	1	0.8	83.495	<0.001** HS
	Moderate	23	19.2	11	9.2		
	Low	0	0.0	65	54.2		

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001  
at p< 0.05

(\*) Statistically significant S

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant correlation regarding total conflict resolution styles and role concepts pre the premarital counseling and statistically significant correlation post the premarital counseling.

**Table ( 2): Correlation between total conflict resolution styles and total relationship pre and post the premarital counseling among studied sample (n = 120):**

Total conflict resolution styles		Total relationship					
		Positive		Negative		Chi-square	
		No	%	No	%	X <sup>2</sup>	P-value
Pre	High	30	25.0	26	21.7	23.283	<0.001** HS
	Moderate	5	4.2	35	29.2		
	Low	3	2.5	21	17.5		
Post	High	19	15.8	2	1.7	35.831	<0.001** HS
	Moderate	30	25.0	4	3.3		
	Low	23	19.2	42	35.0		

(\*\*) High SignificantHS at p<0.001 (\*) Statistically significant S at p< 0.05

This table shows that there is a highly statistically significant correlation regarding total conflict resolution styles and total relationship pre and post the premarital counseling.

#### **IV. Discussion**

The current study results revealed that slightly more than two thirds of the participants ranged from 20-22 years. This finding might be due to the age of the students who are coming from secondary schools are at the 18 years and graduate at the age of 20-22 years and the study sample were at 4<sup>th</sup> year of the faculty. This result was congruent with **Ali I., et al., (2019)** who studied "Perception of Importance of Premarital Counseling among Medical Students of Tanta University, Egypt" and found that more than half of the participants ranged from 20-22 years.

The present study results represented that three quarters of participants were females. This finding might be due to the culture view of the society that nursing profession is more suitable for females than males which make a nursing profession not favorable for males. This result was in agreement with **Flansburg T., (2016)** who studied " Factors Involved in College Students' Use of Counseling Services" and reported that more than three quarters of participants were females. This result was in with incongruent with **Al-Qahtani FS, et al., (2019)** who studied "Perception of Premarital Counseling among King Khalid University Students" and reported that most of the sampled students were males.

The current study results illustrated that near to three quarters of the participants were resident in urban area. This finding might be due to the most of students live in Cairo and Giza governorates and the majority of these places located in urban areas. This result was in agreement with **Ali M., et al., (2018)** who studied "Perception about Premarital Screening and Genetic Counseling Among Males And Females Nursing Students" and reported that more than half of the participants were resident in urban area.

The present study results reported that slightly more than half of participants' family size ranged from 3-5. This finding might be due to the most of small size families are interested in education and occupation of their children so first choice is nursing. This result was in incongruent with **Saleh W., (2020)** who studied "Effect of Emotional Intelligence Program on Nursing Students Behavior at Helwan University" and reported that most of the participants were from large-sized families.

The current study results revealed that more than one third of the participants were the 1<sup>st</sup> between siblings. This finding might be due to focusing from the family on the first sibling to be model for the other siblings. Additionally the present study results represented that slightly more than four fifth of the participants' fathers were educated. This finding might be due to the educated fathers are more aware of the education benefits for their children to help in their life decisions than uneducated fathers.

This result was in agreement with **Ali I., et al., (2019)** who studied "Perception of Importance of Premarital Counseling among Medical Students of Tanta University, Egypt" and reported that more than three quarter of the participants' fathers were educated. Additionally the current study results illustrated that more than four fifth of the participants' fathers were employed. This finding might be due to family needs that require financial support. This result was in agreement with **Ahmed W., (2017):** who studied "Knowledge and attitude of the first year student at Faculty of Medical and Applicable Sciences at Yanbu governorate about some aspects of reproductive health" and reported that more than three quarter of the participants' fathers were employed.

The current study results illustrated that more than three quarter of the participants' mothers were educated. This finding might be due to mothers' desire to be knowledgeable for giving their children appropriate care and to be a good model for them .This result was incongruent with **Duran S.& Tepehan S.,(2019)**who studied "Socio- demographic Correlates of Marriages: A Study from Turkey" and reported that more than half of participants had illiterate mothers.

The current study results illustrated that more than two third of the participants' mothers were unemployed. This finding might be due to the mothers' sense of responsibility to spend more time with their children taking care of them. This result was in agreement with **Ahmed W., (2017)** who reported that three quarter of mothers were housewives but only one quarter were workers.

There was a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post the premarital counseling regarding all items of role concept and total role concepts with percentage of improvement (7.95%). This finding might reflect the effect of premarital counseling in improving the concepts about husband-wife roles. This result was in agreement with **Kepler, A. (2015)** who studied "Marital Satisfaction: The Impact of Premarital and Couples Counseling" and reported that role functioning has a difference in values before and after premarital counseling.

There was a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post the premarital counseling regarding all items of relationship and total relationship with percentage of improvement (14.75%). This finding might reflect the effect of premarital counseling in improving communication and relationships skills. This result was in agreement with **Siji. M.M & Rekha .K.S (2018)** who studied "Effectiveness of Marital Counseling on Marital Quality among Young Adults: A Pre-Post Intervention" and reported that the marital quality of young adults relationship has increased after the intervention of marital counseling and the chance of the relationship improvement increases for persons who received pre marital counseling.

There was a highly statistically significant difference between pre and post the premarital counseling regarding all items of conflict resolution styles and total conflict resolution styles with percentage of improvement (22.58%). This finding might reflect the effect of premarital counseling in enhancing skills regarding conflict resolution. This result was in agreement with **Kepler, A. (2015)** who reported that premarital programs are commonly successful in constructing meaningful advances in conflict management skills.

The current study results clarified that, there was a statistically significant direct positive correlation between total relationship and role concept, As regards there was a highly statistically significant direct positive correlation between total relationship and total role concept post the premarital counseling. This may be due to making cooperative and different roles that are played by men and women can improve their relationship. This result was in agreement with **Siji. M.M & Rekha .K.S (2018)** who studied "Effectiveness of Marital Counseling on Marital Quality among Young Adults: A Pre-Post Intervention" and reported that the strong or positive relationship of such personal factors as marital conflict resolution strategies implies that people within these relationship are likely to adjust quickly in their family' roles.

The present study results reported that, there was a statistically significant direct positive correlation between total conflict resolution styles and role concept post the premarital counseling. This may be due to individuals who use appropriate conflict resolution styles are more likely to acknowledge their role and others' roles in the life situations. This result was in agreement with **Zanella M., & Wagner A., (2018)** who studied "Marital Conflict Management of Married Men and Women" and reported that women responsibilities within the home that last for long time compared to men can contribute to difficulties with managing conflicts and the accumulation of housework, child care and formal work can cause exhaustion, lack of availability and energy to resolve conflicts.

The current study results revealed that, there was a statistically significant direct positive correlation between total relationship and total conflict resolution styles post the premarital counseling. This finding might be due to the individuals who use positive conflict styles may experience more frequent interactions and positive relationship with others. This result was in agreement with **Hee C. W., (2018)** who studied "Can Attachment Behaviors Moderate the Influence of Conflict Styles on Relationship Quality" and reported that the use of extreme conflict styles in marriage is significantly associated with poorer reported relationship quality for both men and women and the constructive strategies of conflict are related to higher relationship quality.

## **V. Conclusion**

**On the light of the current study results, it can be concluded that:**

Premarital counseling had a positive effect on Faculty of Nursing students at Helwan University. Nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles improved after premarital counseling implementation with high statistically significant differences between pre & post implementation. More than half of the participants were strongly agreed with "the husband is the head of the home" as a role concept. More than one third of the participants very liked "it is very important to me to feel independent" as an item of a relationship. More than one third of the participants used "sitting down and discussing differences constructively" as an item of conflict resolution styles. There was statistically significant direct positive correlation between nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles post the premarital counseling implementation. There was a statistically significant relations between nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles with their socio-demographic characteristics pre & post the premarital counseling implementation.

## **VI. Recommendation**

**Based upon the results of the current study, the following recommendations were suggested:**

- Considering the effect of premarital counseling on nursing students' role concepts, relationship and conflict resolution styles and counselors should use these findings of the program design.
- Premarital counseling should be added into the nursing curriculum to prepare students for marriage.
- Counseling centers should be considered as a priority for universities' students to ensure an effective response to their psychosocial needs.
- Preparation for marriage must be mandatory for all final year students in the schools and universities and every person who is nearly to get married.
- Postgraduate diplomas or masters' degrees of counseling should be added into postgraduate studies.
- Further researches are indicated to implement an analysis on the effect of premarital counseling outcomes, as well as the impact on the divorce rate after implementation of premarital counseling for further support the evidence of its effectiveness.

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