

THE RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS ON THE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING: A SURVEY OF PROVIDERS

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Abstract:

To explore the influence of client characteristics in premarital counseling, a five factor model is presented that includes the social context, family-of-origin influences, individual characteristics, couple interactional processes, and motivation for attending premarital counseling. The findings demonstrate that providers believe that many client characteristics influence the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. Providers rated the influence of the client characteristic factors in the following order (from most to least influential): couple interactional processes, family-of-origin influences, individual characteristics, motivation for premarital counseling, and the social context. Recommendations for future theory development, practice, and research are discussed.

Key Words: premarital counseling; client characteristics; marriage preparation.

Article:

This article presents the findings of a study that examined the attitudes of premarital counseling providers toward the relative influence of client background characteristics on the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. The five client background characteristic factors that were examined included: (a) the social context, (b) family-of-origin influences, (c) individual characteristics, (d) couple interactional processes, and (e) motivation for entering counseling.

The most successful relationship prevention programs attend to couple risk factors to determine the most appropriate interventions (Bradbury, Cohan, & Karney, 1998). A need exists for increased research on the effectiveness of premarital counseling with diverse populations (Christensen & Heavey, 1999; Stanley, 2001; Williams, 1992). Generally, prevention programs—such as premarital counseling—strive to enhance strengths and minimize (or manage) couples' weaknesses and should attend to the unique protective and risk factors of each couple (Sayers, Kohn, & Heavey, 1998). The existing research has not determined which couples benefit most and least from premarital preparation programs (Stanley, 2001).

Much of the existing premarital counseling research was conducted on white, middle-class college students (Holman, 2001; Silliman & Schumm, 1995; Silliman, Schumm, & Jurich, 1992; Valiente, Belanger, & Estrada, 2002), which limits the ability to generalize the findings to other populations. The overuse of homogenous samples in this research has produced a lack of information on the unique qualities of couples who participate in premarital counseling. A few existing studies suggest that background characteristics of individuals and couples influence the degree to which clients benefit from premarital interventions (e.g., Halford, Sanders, & Behrens, 2001; VanWidenfelt & Hosman, 1996). This suggests that the same program can produce different effects for couples based on their background characteristics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study proposes a five-factor model of unique couple characteristics in premarital counseling. This model is based on two existing theories: Holman's (2001) theory of premarital prediction of marital outcomes and Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory. This conceptual framework provides a context for understanding the needs of premarital counseling participants and for matching clients' needs with appropriate interventions. Following an introduction to each theory, the five-factor model examined in this study is presented.

Holman's Theory of Premarital Prediction of Marital Outcomes

Holman's (2001) theory of premarital prediction of marital outcomes integrates research on marital development, focusing on the influence of premarital factors on subsequent marital outcomes. According to this theory, four major premarital factors influence subsequent marital outcomes—the social context, family-of-origin influences, individual characteristics, and couple interactional processes.

According to Holman's (2001) theory, the social context variables that influence marital outcomes include social network support and the sociocultural context. Social network support describes the amount of support a couple receives from significant people in their lives, including friends and family members. Sociocultural context factors include age at marriage, socioeconomic factors, race, and gender identity. Family-of-origin influences include the family structure (e.g., whether one or both partners experienced parental divorce) and the family environment (e.g., interaction patterns, the level of family conflict, and the emotional climate). Individual characteristics include personality characteristics, values, and attitudes toward marriage. Both partners' individual characteristics influence the marital relationship. Couple interactional processes include “communication, consensus, similarity, and relationship identity” (p. 142).

Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory presents a framework for understanding human motivation. They posit motivation along a continuum which depicts the degree to which behaviors are internally (intrinsically) or externally (extrinsically) driven. Intrinsically motivated activities “are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake” (Deci, 1975, p. 23). Extrinsically motivated activities are done for an external reward, although at times the meaning for this reward is internalized. Typically, when people are motivated intrinsically, they experience more positive outcomes and enhanced learning. Intrinsic motivation is related to enhanced creativity, increased persistence, positive emotional states (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and long-term maintenance of behavior change (Deci & Ryan, 1987).

A Five-Factor Model for Understanding Couple Characteristics in Premarital Counseling

Based on Holman's theory of premarital prediction of marital outcomes and Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, a five-factor model was developed to conceptualize the client characteristics that influence the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. This model combines the four factors that Holman posits as premarital predictors of marital outcomes with motivation specific to the premarital counseling program. In this five-factor model, social context, family-of-origin factors, individual characteristics, couple interactional processes, and the couple's motivation for entering premarital counseling are proposed to influence the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. To examine this model in the current study, the perspective of premarital counseling providers was sought.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a cross-sectional survey methodology. The methodology was based on Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method and incorporated a mixed-mode survey utilizing Internet and mail surveys. The population comprised premarital counseling providers in Florida. In Florida, each county clerk of court maintains a list of individuals who register to provide premarital counseling to couples who marry in that county (Florida Statutes, 1998, Section 741.0305). The Florida Statutes hold that couples who complete a premarital counseling program with a registered provider are eligible to receive a marriage license fee discount and a waiver of the three-day waiting period to receive their licenses. The researcher contacted all 67 county

clerks of court in Florida to request a copy of the list of providers in each county. Of the 67 counties, 51 (76.1%) provided that list. From these lists, systematic sampling was used to select a representative sample of 1,000 individuals to be invited to participate in this study.

Each individual selected into the sample was contacted three times to request his or her participation in this study. Participants were contacted either over e-mail or through postal mail. Every participant had the option to complete either an Internet-based or a paper-based survey. The number of individuals who participated in this study was 210. Of the 1,000 providers who were selected into the sample, the surveys of 201 providers (20.1%) were not able to be delivered to the intended respondent either through electronic or postal mail. Therefore, the response rate to this survey, including participants who received the survey, was 26.3%.

Instrumentation

This study involved the development of a new instrument, the Premarital Counseling Survey (PCS). The first section of the PCS assessed providers' beliefs about the relative influence of client characteristics on the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. The question in this section asked, "Based on your experience across all couples with whom you have worked, how influential do you think each of the following characteristics is in determining the degree to which a couple will benefit from a premarital counseling and/or educational program?" Item responses were based on a four-point Likert type scale, and response options ranged from 1 (not at all influential) to 4 (very influential). Thirty-seven items described various client background characteristics. The overall scale contained five subscales: couple interactional processes, individual characteristics, family-of-origin influences, the social context, and motivation for premarital counseling. Table 1 presents the corresponding subscale for each item.

Items on the PCS were adapted from three existing instruments: (a) Aubrey, Bond, and Campbell's (1997) survey of client suitability for counseling, (b) the Family-of-Origin Scale (FOS; Hovestadt, Anderson, Piercy, Cochran, & Fine, 1985), and (c) the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE; McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1991). In addition, four new items were developed for this section. Items from existing instruments were selected for inclusion on the PCS based on their degree of fit with the five-factor model proposed in this study. When appropriate, items from existing instruments were modified to match the format of the PCS. Survey items were ordered randomly apart from their subscales.

A number of steps, based on Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method, were taken to develop the survey. These steps included: (a) an analysis of the instrument by knowledgeable colleagues to determine the face validity of the proposed factor structure, (b) interviews with potential survey respondents to understand the thoughts and reactions of the respondents as they complete the survey, (c) a small pilot study of the instrument, and (d) a final check by a small number of knowledgeable reviewers who had been uninvolved with the development of the instrument.

Twenty-four premarital counseling providers participated in the pilot study. Participants were drawn from the same population as the sample in the final study. The pilot study sample was a convenience sample of population members whose e-mail addresses were available through public Internet sites. The total scale Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the pilot study data was $\alpha = 0.96$.

TABLE 1
Client Background Characteristic Items: Subscale Designations, Rank-Ordered Means, and Standard Deviations

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
The couple reports a history of aggression	CIP	3.39	0.86
The couple is experiencing an immediate crisis	SC	3.38	0.90
The couple displays a tendency to behave destructively towards one another	CIP	3.29	1.08

Each partner remembers his or her family-of-origin as being warm and supportive	FOI	3.26	0.82
Each partner remembers that his or her family members usually were sensitive to one another's feelings	FOI	3.25	0.77
One of the partners demonstrates a tendency to behave in self-destructive ways	IC	3.25	0.97
The couple demonstrates a poor capacity for problem solving	CIP	3.25	0.88
In one of the partner's family-of-origin, resolving conflict was a very stressful experience	FOI	3.24	0.76
The atmosphere in each partner's family-of-origin usually was pleasant	FOI	3.23	0.77
The couple demonstrates a general difficulty in speaking about thoughts and feelings with one another	CIP	3.22	0.80

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
One of the partners is not comfortable with sexuality in the relationship	CIP	3.19	0.91
The partners appear reluctant to identify with feelings of one another	CIP	3.16	0.89
One partner shows an inability to hold down a job	IC	3.15	1.01
One partner exhibits unresolved grief	IC	3.14	0.88
It is the second marriage for the partners	SC	3.14	0.83
One of the partners exhibits poor capacity for self-reflection and self-exploration	IC	3.13	0.87
The partners seem to deny their own part in interactional processes	CIP	3.12	1.00
One of the partners demonstrates no desire for change	MOT	3.12	1.09
The couple reports poor sexual functioning	CIP	3.09	0.93
Partners come from different religious backgrounds	SC	3.09	0.84
One of the partners has low motivation to come to premarital counseling	MOT	3.09	0.94
One of the partners appears reluctant to understand himself or herself or to gain insight	MOT	3.04	0.92
In one of the partner's family-of-origin, the atmosphere was cold and negative	FOI	3.02	0.76
The couple appears to have inadequate support between sessions	SC	2.97	0.84

TABLE 1 (Continued)

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
The couple appears to have inadequate support between sessions	SC	2.97	0.84
One or both of the partners are under age 20	SC	2.97	0.94
The partners avoid eye contact with one another	CIP	2.96	0.97
One partner's parents were separated or divorced	FOI	2.89	0.75
One partner seems reluctant to meet at the agreed time and place	MOT	2.89	0.98
One of the partners expresses a limited range of feelings	IC	2.87	0.73
One of the partners has few inner resources	IC	2.86	0.78
The couple has limited financial resources	SC	2.84	0.92
One partner has a criminal record	IC	2.78	0.94
The couple is interracial	SC	2.64	0.99
The couple indicates that the primary reason they are in premarital counseling is to receive a discount on their marriage license	MOT	2.59	1.14
The couple is obviously very wealthy	SC	2.05	0.91

Note: Subscales are represented by the following abbreviations: Couple interactional processes (CIP), Individual characteristics (IC), Family-of-origin influences (FOI), Social context (SC), and Motivation for entering premarital counseling (MOT). A copy of the Premarital Counseling Survey is available in Microsoft Publisher format from the author at cborasky@hotmail.com. Please include "Premarital Counseling Survey" in the subject line.

Research Question and Data Analysis

The following research question guided this inquiry: which client characteristic factors do premarital counseling providers believe are most and least influential on the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling? This question corresponded with the following null hypothesis:

H_0 = There are no differences in the mean subscale scores of the client characteristic scales on the PCS (participant motivation, individual characteristics, couple interactional processes, social context, and family-of-origin influences).

To address this research question, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used.

RESULTS

Description of the Sample

Respondents ranged in age from 26 to 83, and the average age of respondents was 55.28 years ($SD = 10.83$). Of the sample, 86.76% were men, and 13.24% were women. The majority of the sample was Caucasian (80.1%). Representatives of other ethnic backgrounds included African Americans (14.43%), Hispanics (3.48%), Native Americans (2.99%), and Asian Americans (1.00%). Providers varied in their educational backgrounds and religious affiliations. The largest number of participants had completed a master's degree (39.3%), while 27.36% had completed a doctoral degree. The most common religious affiliation for members of the sample was Baptist (26.73%), followed by Methodist (11.88%), Roman Catholic (11.39%), and non-denominational Christian (10.4%).

Respondents represented several different professional affiliations, although most respondents were clergy (81.46%). Mental health professionals (clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists) represented 10.73% of the sample, and 7.81% of the sample was comprised of representatives of other professional affiliations. Providers averaged 19.44 years ($SD = 12.08$) of experience conducting premarital counseling. The average number of couples seen within the past year was 14.84 ($SD = 61.35$). The mean length of time of the providers' premarital counseling programs was 8.71 hours ($SD = 8.56$).

Psychometric Properties of the PCS

To measure internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for the total client background characteristics scale and its five subscales. The overall scale Cronbach's alpha coefficient was $\alpha = 0.95$. The coefficients for each of the five subscales were as follows: couple interactional processes ($\alpha = 0.92$), individual characteristics ($\alpha = 0.88$), motivation ($\alpha = 0.86$), social context ($\alpha = 0.76$), and family-of-origin influences ($\alpha = 0.63$).

The Relative Influence of Client Characteristics in Premarital Counseling

Mean scores were calculated for the individual client characteristic items and the five subscales. Scores ranged from 1 (not at all influential) to 4 (very influential). The mean scores and standard deviations of the individual items can be found in Table 1.

Providers rated the following five client background characteristic items as most influential on the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling: (a) the couple reports a history of aggression, (b) the couple is experiencing an immediate crisis, (c) the couple displays a tendency to behave destructively towards one another, (d) each partner remembers his or her family-of-origin as being warm and supportive, and (e) each partner remembers that his or her family members usually were sensitive to one another's feelings. In contrast, providers rated the following five characteristic items as least influential: (a) the couple has limited financial resources, (b) one partner has a criminal record, (c) the couple is interracial, (d) the couple indicates that the primary reason they are in premarital counseling is to receive a discount on their marriage license, and (e) the couple is obviously very wealthy.

The standardized means for the five subscales were as follows: couple interactional processes ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.73$), family-of-origin influences ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.46$), individual characteristics ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.63$), motivation for entering premarital counseling ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.81$), and the social context ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.55$). A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the degree to which providers believe that each of these categories influences premarital counseling outcomes (Table 2). The results of this analysis reveal that the means differ significantly from one another. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and there is a significant difference in the mean scores on the client characteristic subscales. A Scheffe *post-hoc* test was conducted to determine which mean subscale scores differed from one another. The results of the Scheffe test (Table 3) revealed that the subscale means for couple interactional processes and family-of-origin influences differed from the subscale means for motivation for premarital counseling and the social context.

TABLE 2
ANOVA Summary Table for Comparison of Means of Client Characteristic Subscales

<i>Source</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Mean differences	13.69	4	3.42	8.13	< 0.0001*
Error	423.31	1005	0.42		
Total	437.00	1009			

* $p < 0.05$.

TABLE 3
*Results of Scheffe's Test for Differences in Means of Client
 Characteristic Subscales*

<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Scheffe Grouping</i>
Couple interactional processes	3.19	A
Family-of-origin influences	3.15	A
Individual characteristics	3.02	A B
Motivation for premarital counseling	2.94	B
Social context	2.89	B

Note: Means with the same letter for Scheffe Grouping are not significantly different from one another.

DISCUSSION

Early relationship interventions, such as premarital counseling, can promote sustainable marriages and reduce the likelihood of divorce (Senediak, 1990), as long as they meet the needs of the couples who enter these programs. This investigation involved the development of a framework for understanding the influence of client characteristics in premarital counseling. Providers rated the relative influence of these characteristics on premarital counseling outcomes.

In this section, the major findings of this investigation, limitations of this study, and implications for theory, practice, and research are discussed.

The Relative Influence of Client Characteristics in Premarital Counseling

The findings of this investigation demonstrate that premarital counseling providers believe that certain client characteristics exhibit a more powerful influence than others on clients' outcomes in premarital counseling. The characteristics that providers rated as most influential were (a) a history of aggression, (b) an immediate crisis, (c) destructive behavior toward one another, (d) a warm and supportive family-of-origin, and (e) a family-of-origin in which people were sensitive to others' feelings.

The model used in this study provided a framework for examining five categories of client background characteristics. Providers rated couple interactional processes and family-of-origin influences as more influential on premarital counseling outcomes than motivation for entering premarital counseling and the social context.

Limitations of this Investigation

The first limitation to this investigation relates to the sample used. The participants in this study offer premarital counseling to couples in the state of Florida in accordance with state requirements. Providers of premarital counseling in Florida may differ from providers in other states. Future research should examine whether providers in other states are similar to providers in Florida in their beliefs about the influence of client characteristics in premarital counseling.

Second, despite the use of acceptable strategies to increase the response rate—such as repeated mailings, provision of a self-addressed stamped return envelope, and a prenotice contact letter (Cozby, 1997; Dillman, 2000; Dooley, 2001)—the relatively low response rate (26.3%) may have introduced a response bias, in that providers who chose not to respond to the survey may differ from the providers who responded (Cozby, 1997). Third, this study did not assess premarital counseling clients, but rather involved the perspective of providers. Therefore, the findings of this study must be interpreted as providers' beliefs about the influence of client characteristics on premarital counseling outcomes. These findings provide a framework for future assessment of client characteristics in premarital counseling outcome studies.

Fourth, this investigation did not involve a factor analysis of the items on the PCS to determine whether the proposed five-factor model was consistent with the findings.

Implications for Premarital Counseling Theory

This study proposed a conceptualization of the influence of client background characteristics on the process and outcomes of premarital counseling. The findings suggest that client characteristics vary in the degree to which they influence couples' experiences in premarital counseling. Providers rated couple interactional processes, family-of-origin influences, and individual characteristics as most influential on premarital counseling outcomes. Motivation for premarital counseling and social context variables were rated as least influential. However, all five client characteristic factors received average ratings as "somewhat influential" on the degree to which couples benefit from premarital counseling. This lends support for further theoretical examination of the role of each of these factors on client outcomes in premarital counseling.

Holman's (2001) findings suggest that family-of-origin characteristics have the most powerful influence on marital outcomes. The providers who participated in this study confirm that family-of-origin influences are likely to influence premarital counseling outcomes as well. Previous research demonstrated that family-of-origin characteristics can have an impact on a couple's experience in premarital counseling (Halford, et al., 2001; VanWidenfelt & Hosman, 1996). Together, these findings indicate a need for further theoretical refinement in the area of family-of-origin influences on clients' experiences and outcomes in premarital counseling.

It is notable that social context variables were rated by providers as least influential on premarital counseling outcomes as compared with the other client characteristic factors. Possible explanations for the low ratings of the influence of social context variables on premarital counseling outcomes include the following: (a) providers may be less likely to discuss social context variables during premarital counseling sessions, and (b) couples may be less aware of the impact of these issues on their relationships as compared with more immediate issues—such as personality characteristics and relationship skills.

Larson and Holman (1994) assert that many factors interact to define a couple's experience in their relationship. In this study, premarital counseling providers indicated that each of the five categories of client characteristics has some influence on couples' experiences in premarital counseling. As such, the five-factor model provides a context for further theory development related to clients' experiences in premarital counseling.

Implications for the Practice of Premarital Counseling

Holman (2001) states, "Most premarital educational and therapeutic interventions are based on the assumption that understanding and improving premarital individual and couple interactional factors can influence both the quality and stability of the marital relationship" (p. 1). The focus of this investigation has been the manner in which these couple characteristics influence outcomes of premarital interventions across diverse client populations. In order to better meet the needs of diverse clients, providers can develop thorough assessment strategies and modify standardized programs to suit each couple's unique needs.

Thorough assessment at the outset of premarital counseling allows practitioners to identify which aspects of clients' relationships are most in need of attention. Practitioners can assess issues within the five-factor model proposed in this study. Each couple may demonstrate unique needs, so providers should assess each couple's needs individually. A number of premarital assessment instruments can guide this exploration—such as the RELATE assessment (Holman, 2001); the Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation (PREPARE; Olson, Fournier, & Druckman, 1986); and the Premarital Inventory Profile (PMIP; Burnett & Sayers, 1988). No single assessment offers a complete picture of all the factors associated with premarital concerns (Larson & Holman, 1995). Therefore, practitioners may use informal assessment techniques (e.g., open-ended interviewing) to complement or replace formal assessment. Assessment aids the practitioner in determining each couple's unique needs.

Carroll and Doherty (2003) suggested that standardized programs may be less useful for addressing couples' unique needs. However, standardized programs have some value. There is significant research that demonstrates that standardized programs—such as the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)—are

effective at producing positive outcomes for couples (Renick & Blumberg, 1992; Sayers, et al., 1998; Stahmann, 2000; Stanley, 2001). However, research also suggests that all couples do not respond equally to standardized programs, and outcomes are influenced by couple background characteristics (Halford, Sanders, & Behrens, 2001; VanWidenfelt & Hosman, 1996). The findings of the current investigation suggest that a number of characteristics influence clients' needs in premarital counseling. Therefore, providers who use standardized formats should consider the value of adapting the standardized format to meet the needs of each couple. One caution with modifying standardized programs must be noted, however. Practitioners who modify their program must do so with the understanding that outcomes that have been established by previous research may not apply to the modified program. Thus, practitioners must weigh the benefits and risks of adapting standardized programs on an individual, rather than an aggregate, level.

Implications for Premarital Counseling Research

Prior to this investigation, there had been a call for more attention to diverse client background characteristics in premarital counseling research (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Christensen & Heavey, 1999; Silliman & Schumm, 2000). This need stems from the over-reliance in previous research on rather homogeneous samples (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Christensen & Heavey, 1999; Holman, 2001; Silliman & Schumm, 1995; Silliman et al., 2000; Silliman, et al., 1992; Valiente, et al., 2002). Because of the homogeneity of the samples used in previous research, it has been difficult to generalize the findings of these studies to more diverse populations.

The call for increased research on premarital counseling with diverse populations is important, yet it does not define operationally the term diverse. Diversity commonly refers to social context variables (e.g., race and socioeconomic status). However, couples differ in many other ways as well. The findings of this investigation suggest that researchers should assess the influence of the five factors examined in this study when studying the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs. Because it may not be possible to evaluate the impact of every client characteristic when conducting research, it becomes necessary to identify the most relevant characteristics. Based on the results of this investigation, researchers should focus on couple interactional processes, family-of-origin influences, and individual characteristics.

Different clients are suitable for different types of interventions (Aubrey, et al., 1997). Also, clients who enter premarital counseling are likely to change throughout the course of the intervention (Rosenbaum & Horowitz, 1983). Therefore, future research should examine which premarital intervention formats are most effective with different types of clients in different situations.

Future research should examine how providers can assess most effectively relevant client characteristics at the outset of the intervention. Related to this issue is how providers can modify programs to meet couples' unique needs. For example, if a couple presents with low intrinsic motivation at the start of the program, the provider may utilize motivational strategies to enhance the clients' motivation to participate (Curtis, 1984; Deci, Eghrari, Patrick, & Leone, 1994; Walitzer, Dermen, & Connors, 1999). Future research should examine the merits of modifying premarital counseling programs based on client assessments.

Another area for future research is further empirical investigation of the five-factor model proposed in this study. A factor analysis of this model should be conducted to confirm whether the items on the PCS group into a pattern that is consistent with the hypothesized factor structure for the scale (Penfield, 2003). In addition, future research should examine the psychometric properties of the PCS and its validity with other populations of premarital counseling providers.

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