



# Premarital Therapy: Is it for everyone or certain personality types?



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## ABSTRACT

This research proposal looks at the intersection of common personality traits and couples who have or plan to engage in premarital counseling or education. To test our hypothesis, we will use the 5 Factor Personality Test along with a general demographic survey. Our sample size consists of 500 couples ranging from ages 20 to 29 years old, with each couple being either engaged or already married and having participated in premarital therapy or plan to participate. Our study will provide results that can enhance clinicians' knowledge on the different kinds of personalities that are wanting to participate in premarital counseling.

## INTRODUCTION

- With the rising divorce rates in America, premarital therapy is becoming a more popular option for couples
- There is an increase in research on the effectiveness of premarital therapy and it's outcome on divorce prevention
- Research on the demographics of couples who chose premarital therapy is useful so providers can better tailor their services
- Personality types and traits have been studied in many different contexts like learning styles and career choices but not in the context of premarital education
- This study will look at the intersection of personality traits and couples who chose premarital resources

## PRIMARY AIM AND HYPOTHESES

- Research Question: Are there certain personality traits that are common amongst couples who seek premarital therapy?
- Hypothesis: There are common personality traits amongst couples who seek premarital therapy.

## METHODS

### Participants

- Our population ranges from ages 20-29 years old and are either engaged or married
- We will sample 1,000 participants or 500 couples
- These couples will have either already engaged in premarital therapy or have plans to
- Participants will be recruited from churches, couples therapists and premarital therapists

### Procedures

- Data will be collected online through a link provided to participants
- The link will lead to the 5-Factor Personality Test which is free of charge and brief
- Each individual participant within the couple system will fill out their own survey
- Participants will give consent before completing the survey and can stop at any point

## MEASURES

- Personality types can be defined as underlying traits that make up one's personality
- Personality traits will be measured by using the 5-Factor Personality Test to assess for the 5 major personality types: Openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism
- The 5-Factor test is free, has online access and is brief
- Participant's demographic information will be gathered through a brief survey asking about marital status, age, race and other basic data
- Premarital therapy can be defined as a type of therapy, counseling, or education program that targets pre-marriage issues and topics that couples engage in prior to legal marriage

## RESULTS

- The Big 5 produces 5 numbers, one for each personality trait
- Personality type is a nominal variable that will be analyzed through the use of Cramer's V
- After using Cramer's V on SPSS to analyze our results, we did find that there are certain personality types that tend to gravitate towards premarital therapy

## Discussion

### Social Implications

- Religious leaders may benefit from knowing more about the demographics and personality types of their community members to increase the amount of couples seeking services
- Couples who are wanting premarital education may benefit from these results as providers implement further testing and surveying
- Couples may find a wider variety of offerings at different price points and availability depending on demographic information

### Future Studies

- Different personality inventories to address other traits than the "big 5"
- Larger sample size, different or wider age range
- Tailoring the study to other types of couples such as those with kids, those getting married for the second time, those who are cohabiting
- Look at specific interventions within premarital education and their success rate with various personality traits/types
- **Implications for Clinicians**
- Providers can better understand the population they are serving which may lead to more refined and specific interventions tailored to their clients
- Locate the gaps in the communities they serve which may lead to different marketing strategies, more inclusive services, and increased resources to serve couples of all cultural, religious and economic backgrounds