

Knowing On-self, Making Sense of Relationships: Self-Reflection as an Intervention in Shaping Romantic Beliefs and Marriage Expectations among Early Adult Women

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Abstract

Changes in modern social dynamics have led many early adult women to experience ambivalence toward marriage, shaped by unrealistic romantic beliefs and idealized marriage expectations. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a self-reflection intervention in reshaping romantic beliefs and marriage expectations among early adult women. A quantitative experimental approach with a one group pretest-posttest design was employed. Participants consisted of 11 individuals aged 20–25 years who had never been married, recruited through purposive sampling. The Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS) developed by Sprecher and Metts (1989) and the Marriage Expectation Scale (MES) developed by Jones and Nelson (1997) were used as measurement instruments, both of which were adapted into Indonesian. The self-reflection intervention was delivered through structured sessions covering the introduction of self-reflection concepts, reflection on romantic beliefs, reflection on marriage expectations, and integration of perspectives. Data were analyzed using paired sample t-tests after normality assumptions were confirmed. Results showed a significant change in romantic beliefs ($p = 0.000$) and marriage expectations ($p = 0.001$) following the intervention. These findings indicate that the self-reflection is effective as a psychological intervention in forming more realistic and adaptive romantic beliefs and marriage expectations in early adult women. These results have practical implications for the development of premarital psychoeducation programs aimed at fostering psychological readiness and relational health among young adults.

Keywords: Self-reflection, romantic beliefs, marriage expectation, early adulthood, intervention

1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage expectation is a psychological construct that describes an individual's anticipations regarding future marital life, encompassing role allocation, communication, conflict resolution, and the emotional quality of the relationship [1]. Expectations about marriage begin to form during adolescence and grow increasingly complex during early adulthood, shaped by cultural values, social experiences, media exposure, and individual beliefs about love and romantic relationships [2,3]. Contemporary phenomena reveal that many early adult women face ambivalence toward marriage. On one hand, they harbor hopes for an ideal marriage filled with love and emotional intimacy; on the other, they worry that the reality of a relationship will rarely align with those hopes. Many individuals perceive marriage as frightening, fear choosing the wrong

partner, or desire marriage yet feel emotionally unprepared. These conditions have become increasingly prevalent in social narratives, particularly on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram [4], [5]. Data from the Indonesian National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) in 2023 indicate a shift in the average age of first marriage among Indonesian women, rising from 21 to 24 years. This trend suggests a growing tendency among women to delay marriage, partly attributable to emotional unpreparedness and the idealization of relationships [6].

One psychological construct that can account for this phenomenon is romantic beliefs, idealistic convictions about love and romantic relationships. Sprecher and Metts describe romantic beliefs as encompassing notions of true love, love at first sight, idealization of a partner, and the conviction that love can overcome all obstacles [7]. Such beliefs can give



rise to unrealistic marriage expectations, which in turn affect an individual's readiness to build a long-term relationship [17]. A body of research confirms that romantic beliefs play a central role in shaping marriage expectations that is, an individual's anticipations regarding future marital life. Sprecher and Metts found that romantic beliefs correlate significantly with idealization of marriage and the expectation that love will endure indefinitely. The stronger one's adherence to romantic love ideals, the higher one's expectations for the emotional quality and relational satisfaction of marriage [7]. Montgomery [17] further argues that romantic beliefs can generate unrealistic expectations for long-term relationships such as marriage. When these expectations go unmet in reality, individuals risk experiencing relational dissatisfaction or outright conflict in their marital relationship [17].

Larson [20] explains that unrealistic romantic beliefs frequently serve as the primary source of cognitive dissonance in long term relationships, particularly when individuals lack the skills or emotional readiness to manage the complexities of domestic life. Nevertheless, not every individual with high romantic beliefs is destined for relational disappointment. A pivotal factor that can help balance expectations is self-reflection, the capacity to consciously evaluate one's own values, experiences, and beliefs. Through self-reflection, a person can discern whether their expectations are idealistic or aligned with their social and psychological reality [9]. Self-reflection is an intrapersonal process involving the deliberate evaluation of one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. According to Silvia and Duval, self-reflection enables individuals to examine their values, goals, and personal beliefs, thereby facilitating the alignment of their expectations with social and relational realities [9]. In the context of romantic relationships and marriage expectations, self-reflection assists individuals in discerning whether their hopes are grounded in genuine experience or in idealization alone.

Based on the foregoing, it is evident that shifts in the dynamics of modern society have produced significant changes in the way individuals view marriage. Amid rising average marriage ages and a growing tendency to delay marriage, particularly among early adult women, expectations regarding the institution of marriage have become increasingly complex and steeped in idealism, shaped by romantic beliefs and cultural norms [1, 6]. A mismatch between expectations and reality in marital relationships can serve as a risk factor for conflict, dissatisfaction, and even premature divorce, with downstream consequences for social stability and family welfare. This situation calls for psychological interventions

that are not merely educational, but reflective and transformative in nature. The present study is expected to provide an empirical contribution to the development of psychological interventions aimed at fostering healthy and realistic marriage expectations amid the complexities of contemporary relationships, as well as to contribute to the promotion of social well-being at the national level. Accordingly, the central research question of this study is: How does a self-reflection intervention influence romantic beliefs and marriage expectations among unmarried early adult women?

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Romantic Beliefs

Sprecher and Metts [7, 8] define romantic beliefs as the beliefs individuals hold about romantic love that reflect the ideology of romanticism within Western culture. Romantic beliefs constitute part of a broader set of relational schemata, generalized expectations and beliefs about how a relationship should unfold, what makes it satisfying, and the rules that should guide partners' behavior within a relationship.

Sprecher and Metts [8] explain that when a relationship is perceived as having romantic potential, the subset of expectations and beliefs that comprise the romantic ideal becomes highly salient. These beliefs can exert a powerful influence during initial attraction and serve as an important resource for coordinating the early stages of relationship development. Moreover, romantic beliefs, like the broader relational schemata of which they are part, can be modified and adapted in response to experiences within a particular relationship.

Sprecher and Metts [7, 8] identify four primary dimensions of romantic beliefs:

- a. **Love Finds a Way:** This dimension reflects the conviction that love possesses the power to overcome all barriers and obstacles in a relationship.
- b. **One and Only:** This dimension reflects the belief that each individual has only one true love in their lifetime, and that true love is eternal.
- c. **Idealization:** This dimension reflects the belief that the partner and relationship one will have are perfect, or nearly so.
- d. **Love at First Sight:** This dimension reflects the belief that a person can fall in love almost instantaneously upon meeting the right individual.

1.2 Marriage Expectation

Jones and Nelson [10] define marriage expectation as the hopes individuals hold about how their future marriage will unfold. These hopes encompass one's vision of various dimensions of married life, from emotional intimacy and role equality to compatibility with a partner. Jones and Nelson [10] assert that marriage expectations begin to form during adolescence, when individuals start to explore their feelings regarding love, marriage, and their image of a future life partner.

More specifically, Jones and Nelson [10] explain that marriage expectations are influenced by several factors, including the individual's family of origin structure (i.e., whether parents divorced), love style, and level of romanticism. Drawing on the transmission hypothesis proposed by Mueller and Pope (as cited in [10]), patterns of family disruption in one generation tend to persist into subsequent generations, including in the formation of marriage expectations.

Marriage expectations comprise three primary dimensions:

- a. **Intimacy:** The intimacy dimension encompasses individual expectations regarding emotional closeness, communication, romantic relationships, and sexual relations within marriage. Expectations within this dimension reflect the degree of emotional intimacy individuals hope to achieve with their partner, the openness of communication they anticipate, and the quality of romantic and sexual relations they envision in married life.
- b. **Equality:** The equality dimension encompasses individual expectations regarding the balance of roles and responsibilities in household matters, family life, social activities, and childcare. Expectations within this dimension reflect the extent to which individuals anticipate an equitable distribution of tasks and responsibilities in domestic life, including in shared decision-making.
- c. **Compatibility:** The compatibility dimension encompasses individual expectations regarding shared personality traits, physical attraction, and recreational activities with a partner in the future. Expectations within this dimension reflect the degree of alignment individuals hope to share with their partner in terms of interests, personality, and joint activities.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using an experimental method. The *independent*

variable in this study was the self-reflection intervention, while the *dependent variables* were romantic beliefs and marriage expectations. The experimental design used was a *one-group pretest-posttest design*. This design was selected because it allows researchers to directly compare participants' conditions before and after the treatment, thereby enabling a more accurate assessment of the intervention's effects [11]. In other words, measurement was conducted twice, before the intervention (pretest) and after the intervention (posttest), so that any changes that occurred could be identified in a more systematic and measurable manner. The experimental procedure of this study is illustrated in the following figure:

$$Y_1 \rightarrow X \rightarrow Y_2$$

Figure 1. One-Group Pretest-Posttest Experimental Design

Participant selection employed purposive sampling, a technique for selecting participants based on specific criteria determined by the researcher [11]. The inclusion criteria were individuals aged 20–25 years who had never been married. This age range was established based on the developmental characteristics of early adulthood. Arnett [12] explains that individuals in this age range are in the phase of emerging adulthood, during which they actively explore various aspects of life, including romantic relationships. During this phase, individuals begin to consider more serious relationships and form expectations about future marriage. The study sample comprised 11 participants, consisting of 10 women and 1 man.

Data collection employed two measurement instruments. The first was the Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS) developed by Sprecher and Metts [7], [8]. The RBS is a self-report scale consisting of 15 items on a 7-point Likert response format, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale is 0.88 for women. The second instrument was the Marriage Expectation Scale (MES) developed by Jones and Nelson [10]. The MES is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 40 items on a 5-point Likert response format, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this scale is 0.81 [10]. Both instruments were adapted and translated into Indonesian by the researchers prior to use. The adaptation process followed the procedure outlined by Azwar [13], comprising six stages: (1) understanding the behavioral indicators of each dimension to be measured; (2) translating the items

from English into Indonesian with the assistance of a language expert; (3) synthesizing the translation results to produce the item formulations to be used; (4) conducting expert judgment by involving a subject-matter expert to assess the alignment of the synthesized items with the theoretical constructs and their dimensions; (5) testing item readability with individuals whose characteristics are similar to those of the study’s target population; and (6) conducting item discrimination analysis as well as estimating the validity and reliability of the scale.

This study was conducted in three main stages: preparation, implementation, and data analysis. During the preparation stage, the researchers carried out a series of activities including a literature review and preliminary study, problem identification, and the selection of the research methodology. The researchers also prepared the intervention venue, developed the self-reflection module, and adapted and piloted the research instruments according to the established procedures. During the implementation stage, the self-reflection intervention was conducted in a structured manner through a series of sessions designed in accordance with the study’s objectives. The complete description of the implementation stage, including the activities, objectives, and time allocation for each session, is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Stages of the Self-Reflection Intervention

Phase	Activity	Objective
Preparation	Completion of informed consent	Ensure participants’ willingness and understanding of the study
	Pre-test administration (RBS & MES)	Measure participants’ baseline condition prior to the intervention
	Rapport building and program introduction	Establish a comfortable atmosphere between the facilitator and participants, and provide an overview of the intervention program
Implementation	Introduction to the concept of self-reflection	Provide participants with an understanding of the definition of self-reflection, its benefits, and how to practice it effectively in daily life
	Reflection on romantic beliefs	Guide participants to reflect on the

		romantic beliefs they have held, and identify which are realistic and which are not
	Reflection on marriage expectations	Guide participants to reflect on their expectations regarding future marriage, covering the dimensions of intimacy, equality, and compatibility
	Integration of reflections and construction of new perspectives	Help participants integrate the insights from previous sessions and develop a more balanced and adaptive perspective on love and marriage
Closing	Group sharing and discussion	Provide a space for participants to share their experiences and key learnings gained throughout the intervention program
	Completion of final reflection journal	Invite participants to document their shifts in perspective and meaningful insights acquired throughout the program
	Post-test administration (RBS & MES)	Measure participants’ condition following the intervention to identify changes relative to pre-test results
	Closing ceremony and expression of appreciation	Formally conclude the program and acknowledge all participants for their active engagement throughout the study

Following data collection, the next stage was data analysis. Prior to hypothesis testing, the researchers conducted assumption testing to determine whether parametric or non-parametric statistical analysis was appropriate. This assumption

testing is essential to ensure that the selected statistical technique is suited to the characteristics of the obtained data [13]. Based on the results of the assumption tests, the data were found to be normally distributed; accordingly, hypothesis testing was performed using the *paired-sample t-test*, a statistical technique used to compare the means of two measurements taken from the same group, in this case the pretest and posttest scores of the study participants [11].

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the quantitative experimental data analysis aimed at examining the effectiveness of the self-reflection intervention in shaping romantic beliefs and marriage expectations among early adult women. Data were collected from all participants who completed the full intervention sequence ($N = 11$, degrees of freedom $df = 10$). Hypothesis testing was conducted using inferential statistical analysis via the paired-sample *t-test* following confirmation that normality assumptions were satisfied.

Prior to hypothesis testing using parametric statistics, normality tests were conducted on the distribution of data for both the romantic beliefs and marriage expectation variables, at both the pre-test and post-test stages. This testing was intended to confirm that the data followed a normal distribution.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variabel	Normality Test (p-value) Pre-test	Normality Test (p-value) Post-test
Romantic Beliefs	0.291	0.471
Marriage Expectation	0.167	0.147

As shown in Table 2, the normality test results indicate that the significance value (p) for the romantic beliefs variable was 0.291 at the pre-test stage and 0.471 at the post-test stage. For the marriage expectation variable, the significance values were 0.167 at the pre-test and 0.147 at the post-test stage. Since all significance values were $p > 0.05$, it can be concluded that all data were normally distributed. This confirms that the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis using the paired-sample *t-test* were met. Hypothesis testing was then conducted to assess whether statistically significant differences existed in participants' levels of romantic beliefs and marriage expectations before and after the self-reflection intervention.

Table 3. Paired-Sample T-Test Analysis Results

Analysis Pair	Mean	df	Significance (p)
Pair pre-test - post-test Romantic Beliefs (RB)	-22.27	10	0.000
Pair pre-test - post-test Marriage Expectation (ME)	19.82	10	0.001

As shown in Table 3, the results of the paired sample *t-test* for the pre-test and post-test comparison of the romantic beliefs (RB) variable yielded a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a highly significant change in participants' romantic beliefs after the self-reflection-based intervention. The results for the marriage expectations (ME) variable yielded a significance value of $p = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). These findings confirm a highly significant change in young adult women's marriage expectations between the pre- and post-intervention measurements. Thus, the hypothesis in this study was accepted. In addition, it was also known that the mean score between the pre-test and post-test for the ME RB variable increased by 22,273 points and for the ME variable decreased by 19,818. The change in the mean score indicates that the intervention can increase romantic beliefs and reduce marriage expectations, making them more realistic. The findings of this study demonstrate that the self-reflection intervention was effective and produced statistically significant results in reconstructing romantic beliefs and marriage expectations among early adult women. The significant changes observed indicate that a structured process of self-discovery can introduce a new, more adaptive worldview for individuals in making sense of their interpersonal relationships. These findings are consistent with the perspective that individuals' beliefs and expectations regarding romantic relationships are not static constructs, but rather can be transformed through systematic processes of reflection and self-evaluation [14].

The self-reflection intervention in this study was designed as an active process in which participants were guided to monitor, evaluate, and assign meaning to their personal life experiences and feelings. King explains that self-reflection is a metacognitive activity that encourages individuals to revisit the thought patterns, assumptions, and beliefs they have long held, including those pertaining to romantic relationships and marriage expectations. From the standpoint of social cognitive theory, Bandura [14] asserts that individuals' thinking about interpersonal relationships is shaped through internal cognitive processes that are continuously updated by experience and self-evaluation. The self-reflection process directly activates this mechanism by

encouraging individuals to interrogate the origins of their beliefs, whether rooted in personal experience, internalized cultural norms, media influence, or patterns of relating learned within the family of origin. As this evaluative process deepens, individuals gain a more objective understanding of themselves and their relationships.

Furthermore, the theory of objective self-awareness proposed by Duval and Wicklund [15] provides a relevant theoretical framework. According to this theory, when attention is directed inward through reflection, individuals tend to become more objective in assessing their own capacities and the demands of external reality. This condition enables individuals to recognize the gap between their idealistic beliefs and actual circumstances, thereby fostering healthier and more adaptive cognitive adjustments. An empirical study by Sharafi, Hasanvandi, and Ghadampour [16] confirms that psychological interventions focused on strengthening reflective capacity and self-awareness contribute significantly to reducing cognitive distortions regarding intimate relationships and marriage expectations in young adults. In the context of this study, the self-reflection process was implemented through a series of structured sessions that facilitated participants in exploring their romantic beliefs, identifying the origins of their marriage expectations, and reconstructing more realistic and adaptive perspectives. Active participant engagement throughout this process was a key factor explaining the significant changes observed in both measured variables.

The statistical analysis revealed a highly significant change in romantic beliefs ($p = 0.000$). Sprecher and Metts [7] define romantic beliefs as the beliefs individuals hold about romantic love that reflect the ideology of romanticism. In their longitudinal study, Sprecher and Metts [8] found that romantic beliefs correlate positively with feelings of love, satisfaction, and commitment in relationships; however, excessive levels of romanticism tend to decline over time as the relationship develops. During early adulthood, women frequently adopt excessively idealistic romantic beliefs as a result of exposure to mass media, internalized social norms, or a limited understanding of the actual dynamics of real-world relationships [25]. Such unrealistic romantic beliefs have the potential to generate expectations that cannot be fulfilled in actual relationships, ultimately contributing to relational dissatisfaction and emotional disappointment [8].

Through the self-reflection intervention, participants were guided to critically evaluate the cognitive structure and origins of their romantic beliefs. This cognitive process requires individuals to

shift from thinking dominated by unrealistic romantic fantasy toward a more mature understanding of long-term commitment. This reduction or adjustment of romantic idealism scores toward a more rational orientation is consistent with the findings of Montgomery [17], who demonstrated that emotional maturity and high self-awareness in early adult individuals are associated with a reduction in naïve romantic beliefs, transforming them into a relational foundation grounded in communication and mutual effort. Within the framework of attachment theory, Mikulincer and Shaver [18] explain that an individual's romantic beliefs are formed early through attachment patterns with primary caregivers and continue to develop through subsequent relational experiences. Deep self-reflection on these attachment patterns enables individuals to recognize how past experiences have shaped their current romantic beliefs, while simultaneously opening space for revising those beliefs toward more adaptive ones. This process is consistent with the principle that internal working models of relationships can change through meaningful experience and reflection.

Additionally, research by Jones and Nelson [10] demonstrates that an individual's level of romanticism is closely related to their love style, particularly styles characterized by intense romanticism and passion. Individuals with strong romantic beliefs tend to expect that this form of passionate love will persist throughout marriage, which is a psychologically unrealistic expectation. The self-reflection intervention helped participants recognize these dynamics and develop a more nuanced understanding of love in long-term relationships namely, that meaningful intimacy is built through trust, communication, and mutual effort rather than through the intensity of romantic emotion alone.

This study further demonstrates that the self-reflection intervention significantly influenced participants' marriage expectations ($p = 0.001$). Jones and Nelson [10] define marriage expectation as the hopes individuals hold about how their future marriage will unfold, encompassing three primary dimensions: intimacy, equality, and compatibility. Nilforushan, Abedi, Navidian, and Ahmadi [19], in their study adapting and validating the MES, found that individuals' marriage expectations can be categorized into three types, realistic, idealistic, and pessimistic, each with distinct implications for the quality of the relationship in later life. Excessively high and unrealistic marriage expectations frequently serve as a primary predictor of marital dissatisfaction and an increased risk of divorce [20]. Larson [20] specifically highlights that marital myths—such as the belief that the right partner will always intuitively understand one's needs, or that conflict in marriage

signals failure, contribute to the formation of expectations that cannot be met by the reality of marital life. Individuals who hold such expectations tend to experience greater disappointment when confronted with the real challenges of domestic life.

Early adult women are at the developmental stage of intimacy versus isolation described by Erikson [21], wherein the primary developmental task is to build committed intimate relationships. At this stage, marriage expectations play a highly critical role, as they constitute the cognitive framework guiding individuals' relational behavior and decisions. Arnett [12] further notes that individuals in the emerging adulthood phase (ages 20–25) are actively exploring their relational identities and beginning to consider marriage as a concrete and real life stage; consequently, the quality of the expectations they construct during this phase is highly determinative of their readiness to enter married life. The implementation of the self-reflection intervention in this study facilitated participants in revisiting their internal values, family-of-origin patterns, past relational experiences, personal hopes, and psychological readiness to confront the realities of married life. This exploratory process enabled participants to distinguish between expectations arising from authentic personal desires and those shaped by social pressure, internalized cultural norms, or media influence. As a result, participants were able to align their expectations with a more concrete and realistic understanding of marriage.

The significant changes in the marriage expectation data indicate that participants successfully shifted their orientation. They began to regard marriage not merely as the conclusion of a perfect love story (happily ever after), but rather as a dynamic process of adaptation requiring constructive conflict resolution, sound financial management, and the coordination of new roles in shared life [22]. This shift in perspective reflects the development of cognitive and emotional maturity, which is a primary goal of the self-reflection intervention conducted. These findings are also consistent with the research of Steinberg, Davila, and Fincham [23], who found that adolescents' and young adults' marriage expectations are influenced by their perceptions of the quality of their parents' relationship and the attachment patterns formed within the family of origin. Individuals with positive perceptions of their parents' relationship tend to hold more realistic and healthy marriage expectations. The self-reflection intervention in this study encouraged participants to critically examine how their family of origin patterns shaped their marriage expectations, thereby enabling them to maintain a healthy distance from maladaptive patterns.

From a theoretical standpoint, the relationship between self-reflection and changes in romantic beliefs and marriage expectations can be explained through an integrative framework encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. From a cognitive perspective, the self-reflection process activates individuals' metacognitive capacities to evaluate and revise their cognitive schemata regarding romantic relationships and marriage. These cognitive schemata, referred to as relational schemata [24] are organized mental representations of how interpersonal relationships should function, and they can be modified through meaningful reflective experiences. From an emotional perspective, the self-reflection intervention facilitates the development of more effective emotion regulation. Individuals who are capable of reflecting deeply on their emotional experiences tend to demonstrate greater proficiency in managing relationship-related emotions, such as anxiety about rejection, fear of intimacy, or excessive expectations of a partner. This emotional regulation capacity, in turn, contributes to the formation of more balanced and realistic romantic beliefs and marriage expectations.

From a behavioral perspective, the changes in romantic beliefs and marriage expectations produced through self-reflection have direct implications for individuals' relational behavioral patterns. Sprecher and Metts [8] demonstrate that more realistic romantic beliefs correlate with healthier communication patterns in relationships. Similarly, Jones and Nelson [10] found that realistic marriage expectations are associated with healthier love styles, such as Storge, which emphasizes friendship and intimacy, and Agape, which reflects altruistic and self-sacrificing love. In summary, the "Knowing Oneself, Making Sense of Relationships" intervention program successfully positioned self-reflection as a strategic and effective psychological instrument. A comparison of pre-test and post-test mean scores further illustrates the direction and magnitude of these changes. For the Romantic Beliefs (RB) variable, the mean score increased from 56.00 at pre-test to 78.27 at post-test, representing an average increase of 22.27 points. This increase reflects a shift toward a more realistic understanding of romantic beliefs. The participants' improved scores indicate that, after reflecting on and examining their previous romantic assumptions, they have a realistic outlook on developing romantic love in the future. For the Marital Expectations (ME) variable, the mean score decreased from 133.00 at pre-test to 113.18 at post-test, a decrease of 19.82 points. This decrease reflects a positive corrective change: participants shifted from overly idealistic or unrealistic expectations toward more realistic, grounded, and adaptive expectations for married life.

Taken together, these mean changes are consistent with the theoretical goal of the intervention, which aimed not simply to raise or lower scores, but to facilitate a more reflective and balanced orientation toward romantic beliefs and marital expectations. This program not only produces changes at the cognitive level, but also has a comprehensive impact on how young adult women understand, interpret, and prepare themselves to enter married life. The success of this program simultaneously provides empirical evidence that self-reflection-based interventions hold significant potential as a key component in premarital psychoeducation programs, particularly for early adult women who are navigating the phase of relational identity exploration.

4 CONCLUSION

The “Knowing Oneself, Making Sense of Relationships” intervention program, delivered through the method of self-reflection, was proven to be significantly effective in influencing the reconstruction of romantic beliefs and marriage expectations among early adult women. The structured self-reflection process assisted individuals in reducing naïve and idealistic romantic beliefs while simultaneously aligning their marriage expectations to be more realistic, functional, and adaptive. From a theoretical standpoint, these findings reinforce the view that romantic beliefs and marriage expectations are not static constructs, but rather can be modified through appropriately targeted psychological interventions. In this regard, self-reflection was demonstrated to be an effective mechanism of change by activating metacognitive processes, enhancing objective self-awareness, and facilitating the restructuring of cognitive schemata regarding romantic relationships and marriage.

The practical implications of this study underscore the importance of self-reflection-based premarital psychoeducation programs in enhancing psychological readiness and relational health in future marriages. Similar programs are recommended for broader development and implementation, particularly in marriage counseling institutions, student support centers, and communities serving young adult populations. Future research is advised to incorporate control groups and more diverse samples to strengthen the generalizability of these findings.

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