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Evaluating a Short Duration Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) Event Across Time and Format: 8 Years of Learning

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The COVID-19 pandemic changed how short-term relationship and marriage education (RME) reached participants for events such as the Utah Marriage Celebration Conference. This article examines participant-perceived relationship knowledge from an annual marriage conference that began prior to the pandemic and has continued through the disruption (from 2015 through 2022). Results indicate this short-duration marriage conference does improve participant-perceived knowledge across years [$t(2381) = 59.84, p = .001$]. Further, results indicate that online participants rate their perceived relationship knowledge as higher than in-person participants at both pre [$F(1, 2752) = 153.0, p = .001$] and post [$F(7, 2594) = 25.14, p = .001$]. Results also indicate differences in perceived knowledge by participant age, replicating previous results from this specific program. While participants may desire the ease and convenience of online learning, results suggest that a mixed modality yields the best learning outcomes for participants. Suggestions and recommendations for future short-term RME are provided as it continues to be necessary to navigate post-pandemic educational environments.

Keywords: Relationship Marriage Education (RME), online learning, marriage, couple relationships, extension

Introduction

The Utah Marriage Celebration (UMC) conference has been an annual short-term relationship and marriage education (RME) date-night event offering marriage education (see Brower & Payne, 2018). However, the ways in which the event evolved were unimaginable at the time of its initial development. The desire for RME has continued to increase steadily since the 1950s (Cowan & Cowan, 2014; Cowan et al., 2010), in part as an attempt to mitigate the high financial and psychological costs of divorce across individuals and generations (Donley & Wright, 2008; Fagan et al., 2002; Scafidi, 2008; Schramm, 2006; Schramm et al., 2013).

The Utah Marriage Celebration is characterized as a “date-night” event that originally was held on one evening with multiple presentations available to participants (Brower & Payne, 2018; Brower et al., 2019; Payne, Brower, & Jewkes, 2019; Payne, Brower, & Lefthand, 2019; Wilcox

& Dew, 2012). Brower and Payne (2018) describe the event process in more detail. The nature of short-term RME has evolved over time, and nothing has accelerated that evolution like the COVID-19 pandemic (Division of Public and Behavioral Health, n.d.; Utah Department of State Health Services, n.d.). In March 2020, immediately after the 2020 Marriage Celebration event, social distancing mandates were imposed by national, state, and local leadership. These mandates led to a temporary suspension of non-essential business operations across the United States (Division of Public and Behavioral Health, n.d.; Utah Department of State Health Services, n.d.). As a result of such mandates, educational programs at all levels had to re-evaluate how they delivered and assessed the efficacy of such programs.

Research has shown that date-night events like this Marriage Celebration (Brower et al., 2019; Payne, Brower, & Jewkes, 2019; Payne, Brower, & Lefthand, 2019) and other relationship education or enhancement programs are effective in increasing relationship knowledge (Higginbotham, et al., 2021; Javdivala, et al., 2021; Spencer & Anderson, 2021). Differences have been shown for gender in relationship education in several meta-analyses. Javdivala et al. (2021) found that the number of sessions and gender both impact RME outcomes. Specifically, 10-15 hours of education was most effective, but as little as 5 hours was impactful for both females and males (depending on the length of the program). Furthermore, Javdivala et al. (2021) found in a meta-analysis that relationship education was more impactful for males than females. However, in a meta-analysis, Spencer and Anderson (2021) found no gender difference between females and males in relationship outcomes, which is not dependent upon couple distress. This suggests that short-duration RME, like the date night event, can have positive implications for participants' relationships but that gender may impact the effect of relationship education.

Despite the previous success of this event, the future of the traditional Marriage Celebration as an in-person date-night event was challenged when, as mentioned previously, immediately after the 2020 event, a lockdown of all non-essential services and state mandates limited the convening of large groups. As these restrictions continued beyond the initial two weeks that were anticipated, there were multiple conversations related to what the Marriage Celebration would look like in the future.

The goal was to continue the Marriage Celebration despite the ongoing pandemic. However, it was clear that change had to occur. In the following years (2021-2022), the Marriage Celebration was adapted to continue providing short-term RME to the people of Utah by transitioning from in-person to online modalities. The Marriage Celebration is in a unique position to evaluate the transition from in-person programming to online events since the same evaluation tool has been utilized to measure participants' perceived relationship knowledge (Bradford et al., 2005) across years and modalities. Since 2015, the same foundational evaluation has been utilized, allowing participant outcomes to be evaluated annually and then compared across years. This provides a unique opportunity to examine how a single event has evolved and understand how couples

perceive their learning at both in-person and online RME events. The move to online relationship education has been happening for years, well before the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the UMC has previously been exclusively in person. However, when online learning was the only viable option for continued programming, it accelerated the digital move. Evaluations of online RME have indicated that online RME does, in fact, have positive impacts on relationships (Spencer & Anderson, 2021).

Outcomes and results from annual surveys of the Marriage Celebration have been analyzed and suggest the event does increase participants' perceived knowledge. However, additional results from the UMC have suggested that different age groups of participants may perceive their learning differently, with those in mid-life perceiving their learning to be less than either younger and older participants (Brower et al., 2019; Payne, Brower, & Jewkes, 2019; Payne, Brower, & Lefthand, 2019). In addition to exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on modality, further evaluation allows the exploration of how participant age might influence perceived knowledge. As a result of changes in modality, as well as previous research, the following research questions were examined:

- 1) Did perceived relationship knowledge improve from before to after the Marriage Celebration using a retrospective pre-then-post evaluation regardless of event year?
- 2) Did perceived relationship knowledge and commitment to change increase from before the Marriage Celebration to after the event using a retrospective pre-then-post evaluation based on event year?
- 3) Did participation in an in-person event (2015-2020) result in different levels of perceived relationship knowledge compared to attending the online Marriage Celebration event (2021-2022), using a retrospective pre-then-post evaluation?
- 4) Did different ages show differences in their perceived relationship knowledge from before the Marriage Celebration to after the event using a retrospective pre-then-post evaluation regardless of event year?

Materials & Methods

The data for these analyses came from evaluations conducted at the annual Marriage Celebration event between 2015 and 2022. In 2015-2020, participants completed a paper-pencil retrospective pre-then-post evaluation at the end of the Marriage Celebration event. Participants from 2021-2022 received a link to an online Qualtrics evaluation at the end of the Marriage Celebration event, including a retrospective pre-then-post evaluation. Each year, all registered participants received a link to a Qualtrics follow-up survey approximately one month after the conference related to individual and relationship experiences since the event. For purposes of this paper, follow-up results are not included for two reasons. The first is that the follow-up survey has not been the same evaluation across the eight years of UMC. This presents a challenge for comparison across the same period of evaluation. Furthermore, the follow-up questions represent

different research questions related to changes since the event. The follow-up survey, while similarly brief, is focused on the utilization of event information since the conclusion of the UMC.

Participants

Between 2015 and 2022, a total of 3,930 participants completed an evaluation related to UMC. Across these years, there were a total of 1,796 male participants, 2,032 female, and 2 participants identifying as other (100 participants failed to respond). Most respondents identified as White-Caucasian. Participants ranged in age from 18–80 ($M = 33.0$, $SD = 19.2$). Detailed demographics by year of participation are listed in Table 1. The event was held in only one county for the first year of data examined from the Marriage Celebration (2015). Between 2016 and 2020, there were events in two counties. The event was held virtually in 2021 and again in 2022 because of restrictions and safety concerns related to the ongoing pandemic. The Marriage Celebration is an event targeted to romantic partners. As such, many participants come to the event with their dyadic partners, and their data are interdependent (Kenney et al., 2006). Due to the brevity of the evaluation measure and the continuity of the evaluation over time, dyadic pairs cannot be identified in the data. As a result, interdependence cannot be calculated for dyadic pairs. To avoid and reduce result inflation because of interdependence, we have conducted our analyses separately for males and females since the pairs are primarily heterosexual (Kenney et al., 2006). This is a limitation that will be discussed further; however, this method limits the conflation of the results.

Table 1. Participant Demographics by Year 2015–2022, n (%)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Participant Sex	Male: 233 (48.5%), Female: 247 (51.5%)	Male: 260 (47.2%), Female: 291 (52.8%)	Male: 321 (47.4%), Female: 356 (52.6%)	Male: 312 (47.5%), Female: 345 (52.5%)	Male: 274 (48.2%), Female: 294 (51.8%)	Male: 206 (46.7%), Female: 234 (53.1%)	Male: 150 (43%), Female: 199 (57%)	Male: 82 (39.4%), Female: 125 (60.1%)
Combined Sample Age	Mean: 40.0 years, SD: 10.7, range: 18-70	Mean: 41.8 years, SD: 11.1, range: 18-74	Mean: 40.54 years, SD: 11.5, range: 18-75	Mean: 42.0 years, SD: 11.7, range: 18-76	Mean: 41.8 years, SD: 11.4, range: 19-76	18-30: 69 (20%), 31-40: 101 (30%), 41-50: 84 (25%), 51-60: 84 (25%)	18-29: 61 (16%), 30-39: 92 (24%), 40-49: 91 (24%), 50-59: 67 (18%), 60-69: 28 (7%), 70-79: 6 (2%)	18-29: 19 (8%), 30-39: 47 (20%), 40-49: 79 (33%), 50-59: 44 (18%), 60-69: 16 (7%), 70-79: 3 (1%)
Female Age	Mean: 39.10 years, SD: 10.60, range: 19-69	Mean: 40.74 years, SD: 10.80, range: 19-68	Mean: 39.50 years, SD: 11.04, range: 19-66	Mean: 41.20 years, SD: 11.30, range: 19-76	Mean: 40.84 years, SD: 11.20, range: 19-75	18-30: 42 (24.1%), 31-40: 51 (29.3%), 41-50: 44 (25.3%), 51-60: 37 (21.3%)	18-29: 39 (19.9%), 30-39: 58 (29.1%), 40-49: 54 (27.6%), 50-59: 34 (17.3%), 60-69: 11 (5.6%), 70-79: 1 (0.5%)	18-29: 14 (11.2%), 30-39: 30 (24%), 40-49: 49 (39.2%), 50-59: 21 (16.8%), 60-69: 11 (8.8%)
Male Age	Mean: 41.10 years, SD: 10.74, range: 21-70	Mean: 43.12 years, SD: 11.23, range: 22-74	Mean: 41.63 years, SD: 11.83, range: 22-75	Mean: 42.93 years, SD: 12.13, range: 21-76	Mean: 42.84 years, SD: 11.50, range: 19-76	18-30: 26 (16.3%), 31-40: 50 (31.3%), 41-50: 39 (24.4%), 51-60: 45 (28.1%)	18-29: 22 (14.8%), 30-39: 35 (38.3%), 40-49: 37 (24.8%), 50-59: 33 (22.1%), 60-69: 17 (11.4%), 70-79: 5 (3.4%)	18-29: 5 (6.1%), 30-39: 17 (20.7%), 40-49: 29 (35.4%), 50-59: 23 (28%), 60-69: 5 (6.1%), 70-79: 3 (3.7%)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Combined Sample Ethnicity	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	White: 561 (97.6%), Latino: 15 (1.5%), Black: 4 (.4%), Asian: 1 (.1)	White: 510 (88.4%), Latino: 14 (2.4%), Asian: 4 (0.7%), Black: 2 (0.3%)	White: 302 (97.4%), Latino: 7 (2.3%), Asian: 1 (0.3%)	White: 327 (86.5%), Latino: 3 (.8%), Asian: 3 (.5%), Black: 1 (.3%)	White: 197 (82%), Latino: 3 (1%), Asian: 2 (1%), Black: 2 (1%)
Female Ethnicity	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	White: 295 (85.5%), Latino: 10 (3.0), Black: 2 (0.6%), Asian: 1 (0.3%), Other: 1 (0.3%)	White: 267 (95.4%), Latino: 8 (2.9%), Black: 1 (0.4%), Asian: 4 (1.4%)	White: 153 (97.5%), Latino: 3 (1.9%), Asian: 1 (0.6%)	White: 186 (97.4%), Black: 1 (0.5%), Latino: 3 (1.6%)	White: 121 (98.4%), Asian: 2 (1.6%)
Male Ethnicity	Not Collected	Not Collected	Not Collected	White: 264 (84/6%), Latino: 5 (1.6%), Black: 2 (0.6%), Filipino: 1 (0.3%), Other: 6 (2%)	White: 243 (96.8%), Latino: 6 (2.4%), Black: 2 (0.8%)	White: 146 (97.3%), Latino: 4 (2.7%)	White: 141 (97.2%), Latino: 2 (1.4%), Asian: 2 (1.4%)	White: 75 (92.6%), Latino: 3 (3.7%), Black: 2 (1.6%)

Note. White – Caucasian/White; Latino – Hispanic/Latino; Black – African-American/Black

Measures

The online retrospective pre-then-post evaluation included the Perceived Relationship Knowledge Scale (PKRS; Bradford et al., 2015), a six-item measure assessing various relationship skills, including communication, problem-solving, intimacy, and strengthening relationships. Participants rated the PKRS using a 5-point scale from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1). Participants were asked to evaluate their knowledge before participating in the 2021 UMC (pre) and their knowledge after participating in the event (post). Items were examined as a scale (Bradford et al., 2005; Brower et al., 2019; Payne, Brower, & Jewkes, 2019; Payne, Brower, & Lefthand, 2019). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha measure of internal consistency (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004) for this study demonstrated good reliability at pre-assessment ($\alpha = .82-.88$) and post-assessment ($\alpha = .83-.88$). Table 2 has complete scale descriptives by year.

Results

All analyses were conducted using SPSS Statistics 28.0.1. The overall goal was to better understand the impact of the Marriage Celebration event and short-term RME on participant knowledge between 2015 and 2022. As mentioned previously, because dyadic data is interdependent (Kenny et al., 2006), and dyadic partnerships cannot be determined from our evaluation data as that information was not gathered, analysis were conducted separately on female and male participants to reduce the interdependence in the results. Research question one was addressed by performing *t*-tests to assess whether there was a change in perceived relationship knowledge from before to after the event, regardless of the year or format of attendance. Results for females indicate there is a significant difference in pre- ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.67$) and post- ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.52$) perceived knowledge, $t(2,1251) = 45.24$, $p = .001$. Results for males indicate that there is a significant difference in pre- ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 0.70$) and post- ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.52$) perceived knowledge, $t(2, 1121) = 39.50$, $p = .001$. These results suggest that even a short-term RME event can have implications for growth in relationship knowledge.

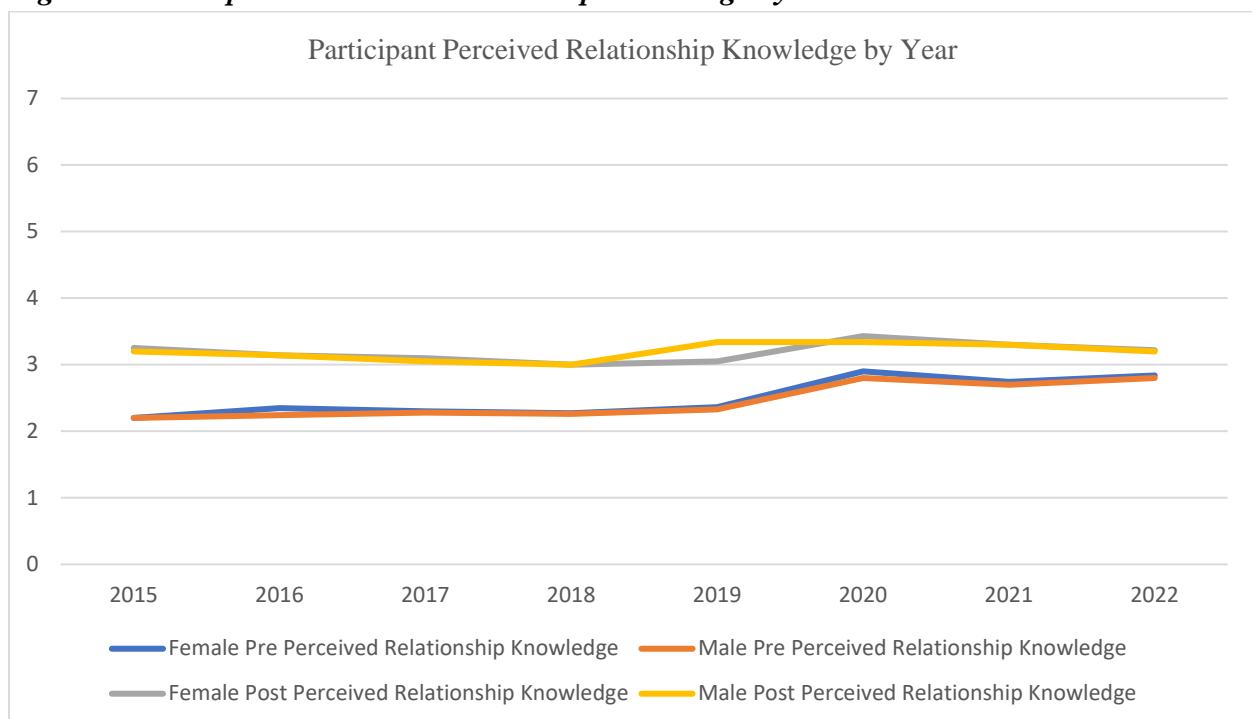
Table 2. Knowledge Scale Descriptive by Year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male Pre-Knowledge Scale	N = 64 Mean = 2.20; SD = 0.73 Alpha = 0.88	N = 83 Mean = 2.24 SD = 0.81 Alpha = 0.88	N = 269 Mean = 2.28 SD = 0.60 Alpha = 0.87	N = 268 Mean = 2.26 SD = 0.63 Alpha = 0.90	N = 222 Mean = 2.34 SD = 0.58 Alpha = 0.86	N = 148 Mean = 2.80 SD = 0.64 Alpha = 0.73	N = 147 Mean = 2.70 SD = 0.66 Alpha = 0.83	N = 82 Mean = 2.80 SD = 0.70 Alpha = 0.87
Female Pre-Knowledge Scale	N = 59 Mean = 2.20 SD = 0.70 Alpha = 0.86	N = 82 Mean = 2.35 SD = 0.73 Alpha = 0.88	N = 307 Mean = 2.31 SD = 0.60 Alpha = 0.85	N = 290 Mean = 2.30 SD = 0.63 Alpha = 0.87	N = 241 Mean = 2.40 SD = 0.55 Alpha = 0.85	N = 162 Mean = 2.90 SD = 0.60 Alpha = 0.71	N = 196 Mean = 2.74 SD = 0.64 Alpha = 0.80	N = 124 Mean = 2.84 SD = 0.70 Alpha = 0.77
Male Post-Knowledge Scale	N = 72 Mean = 3.20 SD = 0.50 Alpha = 0.87	N = 95 Mean = 3.14 SD = 0.50 Alpha = 0.87	N = 242 Mean = 3.05 SD = 0.45 Alpha = 0.82	N = 250 Mean = 3.00 SD = 0.50 Alpha = 0.86	N = 199 Mean = 3.06 SD = 0.47 Alpha = 0.86	N = 135 Mean = 3.34 SD = 0.55 Alpha = 0.71	N = 147 Mean = 3.30 SD = 0.60 Alpha = 0.81	N = 81 Mean = 3.20 SD = 0.64 Alpha = 0.86
Female Post-Knowledge Scale	N = 83 Mean = 3.30 SD = 0.51 Alpha = 0.90	N = 95 Mean = 3.14 SD = 0.40 Alpha = 0.87	N = 254 Mean = 3.10 SD = 0.50 Alpha = 0.85	N = 260 Mean = 3.00 SD = 0.50 Alpha = 0.87	N = 222 Mean = 3.05 SD = 0.45 Alpha = 0.83	N = 144 Mean = 3.43 SD = 0.51 Alpha = 0.70	N = 194 Mean = 3.30 SD = 0.60 Alpha = 0.73	N = 119 Mean = 3.22 SD = 0.54 Alpha = 0.71

Research questions two through five were addressed by utilizing analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine group differences in perceived relationship knowledge. Research question two seeks to understand how the Marriage Celebration has impacted participants over the years. Results indicate that for females, there are significant differences in participant perceived knowledge depending on the year in which they attended the event at both pre, $F(7, 1453) = 32.82, p = .001$, and post, $F(7, 1363) = 14.88, p = .001$. Similarly, for males, there are significant differences in participant perceived knowledge depending on the year in which they attended the event at both pre, $F(7, 1275) = 21.20, p = .001$, and post, $F(7, 1213) = 10.30, p = .001$ (see Figure 1).

Specifically, the most recent three years (2020–2022) were significantly different from all prior years for both females and males. Pandemic years (2021 and 2022) are significantly higher in participant-perceived relationship knowledge at both pre- and post-evaluation compared to all years prior to 2019. Also of note, 2020, 2021, and 2022 were uniquely different from all prior years but not significantly different from each other for all participants.

Figure 1. Participant Perceived Relationship Knowledge by Year

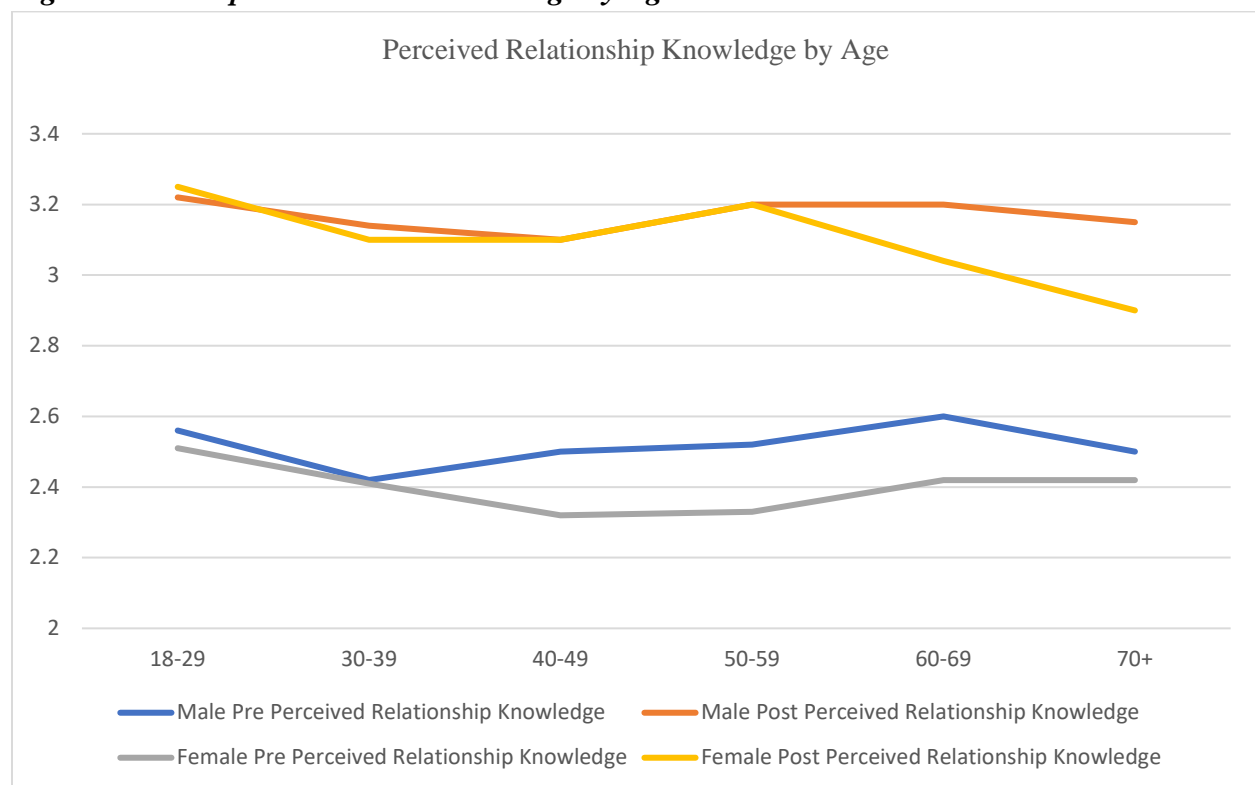


Research question three examines differences in perceived relationship knowledge depending on whether participants attended the Marriage Celebration event in person or online/virtually. ANOVA results indicate for female participants, a significant ($p = .001$) difference between in-person and online/virtual delivery at both pre, $F(1, 1458) = 91.43, p = .001$, and post, $F(1, 1368) = 19.90, p = .001$, and a similar difference existed for male participants at pre, $F(1, 1279) = 58.90, p = .001$, and post, $F(1, 1217) = 18.10, p = .001$. These results indicate that participants perceived their relationship knowledge higher at both pre-and post-evaluation during years when online

delivery was primarily utilized compared to those who attended in-person events in previous years.

Research question four addresses possible differences in perceived relationship knowledge by age. Results indicate there are significant differences by age for females at pre, $F(4,1453) = 2.50$, $p = .04$, and approaching significance at post, $F(4,1344) = 2.24$, $p = .06$, indicating differences in perceived relationship knowledge primarily at the pre-evaluation. For male participants, results indicate a significant difference by age at pre, $F(5, 1246) = 3.75$, $p = .002$, and post, $F(5,1181) = 5.31$, $p = .001$. The youngest participants, those ages 18–29, are significantly different in their perceived relationship knowledge at both pre- and post-evaluation from those 30–39, 40–49, and 60–older. Figure 2 highlights the differences between the various age groups at pre- and post-evaluation. These results replicate prior results (see Brower et al., 2019; Payne, Brower, & Jewkes, 2019; Payne, Brower, & Lefthand, 2019) and allow for future adjustments to the way the event is held.

Figure 2. Participant Perceived Knowledge by Age



Discussion

Overall, the annual Marriage Celebration is an event that has positive implications for participants' perceived relationship knowledge. Survey results suggest that despite changes in the modality of the event, participants benefited from participation in this short-duration method of RME. There are several findings that warrant specific discussion, including the event modality

(online vs. in-person), the impact of the impending and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and participant age, which appears to impact perceived learning.

First, while our results showed that all participants across years reported increased perceived relationship knowledge at both pre-and post, there are some notable differences. While participation in either in-person or online RME through the Marriage Celebration showed increased knowledge, participants who engaged in online events (2021–2022) showed significantly different pre- and post-perceived knowledge compared to other years, except 2020. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, participants in 2020 rated their pre- and post-knowledge significantly higher than any other year. While there are several possibilities for why 2021 and 2022 were different (starting with modality, online versus in-person), that does not apply to 2020, which was held in person. While Higginbotham and colleagues (2021) found no differences in online learning compared to in-person RME, our event differed slightly in duration (one night vs. several hours over weeks) and had evaluation comparisons over many years. There are a few potential reasons why those who attended the Marriage Celebration online perceived their overall knowledge as higher than that of in-person participants. Perhaps those who attended online perceive themselves to be more confident in general, with different skill sets, than those who attend and prefer an in-person event. For instance, event organizers noted that many participants who were used to the in-person format struggled with transitioning to the online format. According to N. Brower (personal communication, April 14, 2022), some participants called Utah Extension offices for assistance with registration despite online access. In addition, online participants had differential access to information and presentations compared to in-person participants. For instance, in 2021, participants had access to content for three months after the initial event, and in 2022, they had access for six months, whereas those in person did not have any access to content after the event. Online participants only had a few additional days to reflect on their participation compared to in-person participants who completed the evaluation on the evening of the event. However, this does not account for the difference shown in the 2020 in-person event that was held in Utah prior to any COVID-19 restrictions being in place.

While this project has several strengths, including the consistent evaluation across eight years of programming, there are also limitations. One limitation of the current evaluation is the brevity of the assessment, particularly in relation to the demographic information and the inability to match dyadic pairs and relationship knowledge. It would be very informative to have additional information regarding participants, such as if they have children, length of marriage, income, etc. Further, it would be important to understand how many participants attend as part of a dyad so that the interdependent nature of their data could be accounted for. This information might be useful in understanding why participants in the 30–50-year age range typically report lower scores than their younger and older counterparts. In addition, changes to the information collected (e.g., age, ethnicity) over time are a limitation in that there are places that lack continuity, making comparisons more difficult. As with long-term evaluation data, there is often a compromise between continuity and change in data collection.

Table 3. Perceived Relationship Knowledge by Year

Scale	Mean (SD)	<i>F</i> (<i>df</i>)	η^2
Female Pre-Perceived Relationship Knowledge		21.2 (7, 1275)***	0.001
2015	2.20 (0.73)		
2016	2.24 (0.81)		
2017	2.30 (0.61)		
2018	2.26 (0.63)		
2019	2.34 (0.58)		
2020	2.80 (0.64)		
2021	2.70 (0.66)		
2022	2.80 (0.70)		
Male Pre-Perceived Relationship Knowledge		32.82 (7, 1453)***	0.001
2015	2.20 (0.69)		
2016	2.35 (0.73)		
2017	2.31 (0.58)		
2018	2.27 (0.63)		
2019	2.36 (0.55)		
2020	2.90 (0.60)		
2021	2.74 (0.64)		
2022	2.84 (0.66)		
Female Post-Perceived Relationship Knowledge		10.30 (7, 1213)***	0.001
2015	3.20 (0.48)		
2016	3.14 (0.48)		
2017	3.05 (0.45)		
2018	3.00 (0.46)		
2019	3.06 (0.47)		
2020	3.34 (0.55)		
2021	3.30 (0.59)		
2022	3.27 (0.64)		
Male Post-Perceived Relationship Knowledge		14.90 (7, 1363)****	0.001
2015	3.25 (0.51)		
2016	3.14 (0.40)		
2017	3.07 (0.48)		
2018	3.00 (0.50)		
2019	3.05 (0.45)		
2020	3.43 (0.51)		
2021	3.30 (0.55)		
2022	3.22 (0.51)		

***p < .001

Further examination of participant preferences relative to the Marriage Celebration format is needed. In 2021, 60% of participants indicated they wanted the event to take place entirely in person or in person with only some pre-recorded content. However, in 2022, 55.7% wanted an in-person-only event, 43.2% of participants wanted a more hybrid event with some in-person RME and some online material, and 62.5% of participants wanted an online only. While participants may like the convenience and ease of online events, our results suggest that learning may be done best in a mixed modality.

Future RMEs will need to find ways to balance the benefits of online learning with managing the compromises to outcomes that may occur. One future direction is to explore follow-up evaluation data that was collected as well as qualitative data that has been collected across the eight years of the program. While some qualitative data has been examined (Brower et al., 2019), qualitative data from the pandemic events may be insightful to understanding how participants experienced the event differently because of the event format. While this is insightful, it is also important to understand participants' preferences related to the Marriage Celebration event format moving forward and how that corresponds to learning outcomes.

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