

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS,
LEVEL OF MARITAL STABILITY AND SEEKING MARITAL COUNSELLING
AMONG MARRIED FISHERS IN SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA**

ROSEMARY JUDITH AKOTH ODHIAMBO

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Counselling Psychology of Egerton University**

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NOVEMBER 2021

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this university or any other university for the award of a degree.



Rosemary Judith Akoth Odhiambo

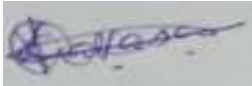
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Date

Recommendation

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.



Dr. Catherine Mumiukha, PhD

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations
Egerton University

18th October 2021

Date



Dr. George Makori, PhD

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations,
Egerton University

18th October 2021

Date

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DEDICATION

To my late parents ndungu Saul Henry Migwang'a and dada Julia Mildred Awino Migwang'a. To my dear husband Canon Ibrahim Odhiambo. To my lovely children: Edna, Julie, Brian and Marylyn.

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I would like to thank my God and my Father, the Lord my creator, redeemer, provider, who has been my source of power, wisdom, knowledge and encouragement even at the point of despair. I thank my supervisors Dr. Catherine Mumiukha and Dr. George Makori who guided me during the writing of this thesis. To the Human Resource Department, Kenya Pipeline Company for allowing me time to study and to use the company's library.

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Special thanks to my late parents, Migwan'ga Saul *wuod Musa Kobaso* and Awino Julia *nya Nyambuga, nyar Gokelo nya Nyabondo*, who brought me to this world and instilled in me the fear of God and the passion to learn. May all glory and honour be back to the Most High God for keeping to His word, "*God who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful*". He has seen to the accomplishment of the work, Amen.

ABSTRACT

Marriage and counselling are based on social cohesion, values, behaviour and beliefs which are strongly associated with socio-cultural factors. Socio-cultural factors may play a vital role in explaining and understanding marital stability and counselling. In Siaya County, there are socio-cultural factors that in many ways influence the behaviour of individuals and entire communities. The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County of Kenya. The socio-cultural factors were ethnic values and religious beliefs. This study was guided by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. The study used a causal comparative research design to investigate the outcomes of differences that already exist among groups of individuals and how they affect their overall marital relationship and counseling seeking behaviour. The target population comprised 10370 registered married fishers, 75 beach leaders and 23 religious' leaders in the main landing sites of Siaya County. All the fishers formed accessible population. Using the Yamane formula, the sampled size was arrived at as 99 married fishers. The sample size of fishers was determined as a proportion of the total population and sample size determined by simple random sampling. Purposive sampling technique was utilised to arrive at 8 beach leaders and 8 religious' leaders. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using interview schedule for married fishers and interview guide for beach leaders and religious leaders. The validity of the interview schedule was established by two counselling experts from Department of Psychology, Counselling and Education Foundations of Egerton University. The reliability of the interview schedule was established using Cronbach's alpha following pilot study. The value obtained was 0.85. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages and correlation analysis. The findings indicated that majority of the fishers had unsatisfied-stable marriages which varied with age, length of marriage, type of marriage and parenting status. Most fishers sought some form of marital counselling for serious problems which also varied according to age, length of marriage, type of marriage and parenting status. There was a positive relationship between religious beliefs and ethnic values with marital stability and a negative relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling. The study recommends counselling for fishers to improve marriages to satisfied-stable and the professional counsellors within the reach of fishers to promote religious beliefs. Finally, the religious organisations to come up with programmes and activities to provide marital counselling.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

At the global front, a long term marital relationship is regarded as one of the main life objective rendering it a crucial indicator for success in marriage and well-being of the couples (Bundgaard-Nielsen & O'Shannessy, 2019; Heshmati et al., 2022). The potential benefits to society and to new generations when strong marriages are formed cannot therefore be over emphasized. Marital relationships nevertheless is potentially a subtle relationship since it usually involves the living together of persons who relatively speaking, are strangers to each other (Bernstein et al., 2018; Jarnkvist, 2019). Since marriage entails a continuous and intimate association between persons differing in temperament and other individual characteristics (Tavakol et al., 2020), its success is pegged largely on marital stability. Consequently, satisfactory marital stability will contribute to economic well-being, physical and emotional health of the marriage (Sawai et al., 2018). Marital stability allow the couples to live harmoniously in marriage, benefiting from a loving and fulfilling affiliation without any intention of break-up (Brainerd & Malkova, 2021; Margelisch et al., 2017). A serene relationship can be accomplished when couples understand their specific tasks and systematically work towards achieving it. Therefore, if well nurtured, good marital stability produces a sense of belongingness and positive emotions among married couples (Margelisch et al., 2017). There is a thus, a consensus that marriage stability at the global front has generally declined as compared to the levels witnessed in the 1950s (Ahmadi & Saadat, 2015).

In Africa, there have been surprisingly much less literature on the marital stability and even less scarce in the sub-Saharan Africa. However, a general consensus has always been that African marriages are centred on rules, and traditions that would ensure that those marriages are stable (Djuikom & van de Walle, 2018). With rapid changes and modernity of traditional societies, the customs, traditions and values which enhanced the stability of African marriages are now being discarded (Januário et al., 2018). Current expectations from marriage are rapidly changing compared to the expectation of the past (Dommaraju & Agadjanian, 2018). Several ethnographic reports opine that marital stability in Sub-Saharan Africa is low (Ubangha et al., 2013), including in Kenya (Barongo et al., 2014). It has been reported that by around 40 years of age, nearly 50% of the African women had experience instability in their marriage or the marriage undergoing dissolution, (Takyi, 2001).

In Kenya, marital stability mirrors the trends of those reported in other Sub Saharan African Countries (Barongo et al., 2014; Masua, 2016). Marital instability in homes in Kenya has led to separation and other societal challenges that sometimes lead to divorce, separation on couples just hanging in marriage that is not blissful (Muluhya-Keverenge et al., 2020). A study in early 1970s reported low level of marital stability among diverse ethnic groups in Kenya (Gomm, 1972). More recent studies also contend that marital instability is widespread among several ethnic groups in Kenya and across all regions (Gomm, 2014; Masua, 2016; Nkonge, 2013). In a study conducted in 2017 in Nairobi County suggest that only 40% of Kenyans reported being in a stable marriage while another 50% indicated that their marriages were not stable (Odero, 2019). Although a number of studies have talked about marital stability, there the solution to marital stability lies on the understanding of marital counselling (Nkonge, 2013).

Marital counselling is a form of therapy that works to improve communication and resolve issues within an intimate relationship (Adzovic & Dabone, 2021). Counselling comes in handy in giving an individual or group an opportunity to explore his or her situation, discover and find solution or answers to a problem (Angolo, 2021; Nystul, 2015). The focus and goals of marital counselling are generally aimed at resolving immediate pressing problems for the partners (Mutunga, 2020) including social, emotional and psychological issues affecting them (More, 2021). Marital counselling addresses issues of cohesiveness, disconnection, unmet needs, and misunderstanding and help the family members work proactively to disrupt unhealthy marital behavioural patterns (Baker, 2019; Isfahani et al., 2018). Several counselling session often help individuals and couples to be able to develop skills that enable them to solve issue arising from marital union (Ramshida & Sasidharan, 2019). Such beneficial aspects of counselling enable couples to better understand their marital roles in the union (Plagnard, 2020a). When the relationship between couples is peaceful then individuals are aware of their individual and collective roles and hence put in efforts to nurture it (Sulhani et al., 2018). Where there is poor relationship, there is anxiety, disagreements as well as low marital change (Helen, 2016). For marital happiness among couples, there is dire need to ensure that disagreements occur in marital behaviours which is expected to enhance marital stability, hence marital counselling is often employed to eliminate negative feelings towards marital stability.

Marital counselling entails a short-term psychotherapy or rehabilitation taking few sessions to help stabilize marital relationships. Typically, marital counselling helps the couples to openly and honestly identify their goals, roles, and beliefs and once the partners come to understand that both contribute to problems in the relationship (Raisi et al., 2018), where partners understand the need to change their modalities of interactions to resolve pertinent predicaments (Moghaddamtabrizi, 2018). Marital counselling also allow partners to comprehend and solve differences in order to advance their personal understand (Cobbinah & Osei-Tutu, 2019). Through marital counselling, couples can single or jointly make considerate pronouncements that will rebuild their relationship such as searching for solution to marital problems. Marital counselling which is an holistic practice regarded as an exclusive relationship between counsellor(s) and couples leading to transformation in the counselees behaviour (Irani & Rezaei, 2018). Resolving marital stability and counselling is related to a suite of socio-cultural aspects.

Socio-cultural factors are obligations within society or cultures affecting the behaviours of individuals, their overall thoughts, feelings and how there are expected to act normally (Adegoke, 2010). These factors in every society exist to celebrate go life strategies, maintain couple's organization, or confer customary morals to successive generations. These values reflect the common beliefs, customs, norms and axioms held by members of a community for a long period of time normally several generations (Hoffman et al., 2018). Some of these factors may include, gender- based perceptions, kinship, societal or ethnic values, religious beliefs among many others (Jones et al., 2015). More often socio-cultural norms are dynamic and change with time and therefore cannot be used as blanket factors that affect human behaviour without looking at specific socio-cultural factors (Gelfand et al., 2017). These factors are never static and are transformed by many influences and value systems and this study considered among the factors; ethnic values and religious beliefs to help understand the relationship between the socio-cultural factors and marital stability and counselling. In other cases, socio-cultural norms may be significant in several communities and may exert considerable influence on marital stability (Narayan, 2013). In marital relationship, couples may be confronted by consequences of their socio-cultural practices (Johnson & Greenberg, 2013) which indicate that the socio-cultural factors may affect marital stability.

Socio-cultural factors that continue to cause various impacts to the families and the subsequent relationships (Bulanda et al., 2016). The wide variation of socio cultural factors,

renders it much complex topic that has been widely studied across different biomes (Willoughby et al., 2015). This is borne out by the fact that many of the socio-cultural factors, and their practices have survived centuries predating Christianity, traditional religions and Islam. These socio-cultural factors reinforce vulnerability to different problems within the families and should therefore be understood as the first for seeking solution in marriage (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006). Problem in marriages are felt by couples and children (Stevenson et al., 2014). Whenever marital relationships are strained, their functioning are negatively affected (Soleimani et al., 2015). Some of the reasons leading to these include insecurity in attachment, pride, jealousy, resentment, self-indulgence, lack of understanding or problem solving methods and so on (Ardi & Maizura, 2018). There is a clear solution to marital problems and relationships by couples sitting down together and helping the relationship to seek the path of mutual understanding which help to orient the couples' emotions and perceptions about their lives (Monemiyan et al., 2016). The principal values in marital relationships can thus be understood, respected and/or changed to ensure better marital life (Mukashema et al., 2021). The common goal that the couples adopt may lead to absolute satisfaction in the relationship and as well as their level of marital stability (Sun, 2019).

Siaya County is dominated by a population which belongs to the Luo community and dominantly speak the same language and have similar practices. The main livelihoods of the Luo people are fishing, farming and pastoral herding. The Luos in Siaya County and other counties in Kenya are known to strictly adhere to socio-cultural norms (Ketter & Arfsten, 2015) key of which is the ethnicity (Cohen, 1989) as well as religious beliefs (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2000; Harries, 2007; Ojwang, 2005). In some cases, the ethnicity and religion play a combined role in key decision within the community (Bakibinga et al., 2016; Omulo & Williams, 2018). Most of the Siaya County people especially those who live around and near the Lake Victoria have depended on fishing for their day to day living (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2000; Harries, 2007; Ojwang, 2005). This has grown stronger than farming and pastoral herding due to unpredictable weather (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2000; Harries, 2007; Ojwang, 2005). Studies on the level of marital stability in Siaya County among the Luo communities was generally described as satisfactory but in some instances, the levels were found to be low (Onyango & Obuya, 2020).

Socio-cultural changes in the Luo community are some of the factors responsible for marital counselling and stability (Nyasimi et al., 2007; Suda, 1981). The decline of marital stability has continued to be experienced and fishers have displayed signs of family distress which are signs of low marital stability (Potash, 1978). With the rising plea of family despair, there is need to help fisher couples have marital stability. However, there is lack of studies on the influence of socio-cultural factors including ethnic values and religious beliefs on marital stability and seeking marital counselling. This study established the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County, Kenya. The socio-cultural factors studied included the ethnic values and religious beliefs. These were related to the marital stability and seeking marital counselling among the fishers in Siaya County in Western part of Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Negative concerns of marital stability among couples are a global problem (Abbasi, 2017). In many countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa, level of marital stability which used to be high has declined in the recent past in the wake of modernization of culture and routine practices in families (Januário et al., 2021). Level of marital stability is increasingly being discussed issue among societies in Kenyan societies (Kiara, 2019; Njoroge, 2017; Obure et al., 2021), yet the level of research output in the subject has still remained rather low. Among the few available studies in Kenya, there have been reports of low level of marital stability in Machakos County (Musua, 2016). Many marital unions occur in the form of Christian faith which are expected to be stable due to the marital vows preceding such undertaking. However, several marriages often are embroiled in confusion leading to several cases of high levels of marital violence, high rates of divorce and separations (Aseka et al., 2021; Pike et al., 2018). It was for that reason that it remains vital to recognize socio-economic factors contributing to marital stability. This is particularly true in Siaya County where there have been reports of low levels of marital stability among fishers' community. In Siaya County, there have been efforts aimed at establishing the factors that are responsible for high marital instability and seeking of marital counselling among the fishers. Questions have also arisen as to whether the socio-cultural factors that ensured more stable marriage still stand and whether they are still able to exert any influence on marital stability and counselling seeking behaviour. Lack of particular study relating socio-cultural factors and marital stability and seeking marital counselling in Siaya County, Kenya has however, hindered knowledge of how these factors affect marital stability. As such it is imperative to understand the association between socio-

cultural factors with level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers within Siaya County in Western part of Kenya. The current study therefore established the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors namely: fishers' ethnic values and religious beliefs on level of marital stability and seeking of marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study intended to establish the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine the level of marital stability among fishers in Siaya County.
- ii. To establish married fishers' level of seeking marital counselling in Siaya County
- iii. To assess the relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability in Siaya County.
- iv. To assess the relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling in Siaya County.
- v. To determine the relationship between ethnic values and marital stability in Siaya County.
- vi. To determine the relationship between ethnic values and seeking marital counselling in Siaya County.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the level of marital stability among fishers in Siaya County?
- ii. What is the level of seeking marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County?
- iii. What is the relationship between fishers' religious beliefs and level of marital stability
- iv. What is the relationship between fishers' religious beliefs and level of seeking marital counselling?
- v. What is relationship between fishers' ethnic values and level of marital stability?
- vi. What is the relationship between fishers' ethnic values and level of seeking marital counselling?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was significant since it generated new knowledge on the provision of marital counselling to the married fishers. This new knowledge may then widen the horizon of existing knowledge on offering marital counselling services and making couples gain marital stability. This study hoped to help the fishers in enhancing their marriage while avoiding socio-cultural factors that may negatively affect aspects of their marriages. This may form the basis for intervention by relevant authorities in solving marriage problems and support for the married fishers.

The findings of the study may serve to encourage local paraprofessional counsellors and religious leaders by gaining the insight on the factors that determine marital stability and seeking counselling among the fishers. Further, the findings may be useful to institutions dealing with marital issues in the society, especially the non- governmental organizations, Culture and Social Service Department who spearheads the Country's social and cultural cohesion to strengthen the socio-cultural factors in the society as a measure to enhance fishers' marital stability and seeking of marital counselling.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study was confined to information from registered fishers in Siaya County. It considered the selected socio-cultural factors namely; married fishers' ethnic values and religious beliefs. The indicators of levels of marital stability included satisfied-stable marriage, satisfied-unstable marriage, unsatisfied-unstable marriage, unsatisfied-stable marriage. The indicators of levels of marital counselling included: basic issues, more serious problems, desperation and crisis. The study was done in Siaya County.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

- i. The respondents freely expressed their opinions and feelings about the selected socio-cultural factors during data collection shared how the factors affect their marital stability.
- ii. This study assumed that the married fishers seek some form of marital counselling.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

Language barrier was a drawback since most of the respondents could not communicate in Swahili nor English. This was done by translating the questions during the interview.

1.10 Definition of Terms

Emotional stability: A person's ability to remain calm or keen when faced with challenges, pressure or stress (Arora & Rangnekar, 2015). In this study emotional will refer to fishers' response to challenges in marriage and be able to remain balanced even when faced with marital challenges.

Ethnic values: Are the aspects that exemplify the value of communities and groups whose persisted help underpinning ethnic identity of the communities (Bisin et al., 2016). In this study, ethnic value will refer to cultural norms of the fishers' community.

Family: This refers to a cluster of people who are share consanguinity (identified by birth), kinship (relationship by marriage), or the etymology (co-residence) (Mandeville et al., 2019). In this study, family is an explicit assemblage of people such as husband, wife, and children, and, may include aunts, cousins and uncles

Fishers: Men and women who capture fish from the water body, sell some in exchange for money while use others for domestic purposes (Stephenson et al., 2016). In the present study, people who fish for their livelihood will form the fishers.

Married fisher: Fishers who are legally or formally in a personal relationship specifically husband or wife (Stephenson et al., 2016). In this study, married fisher is used to describe the fishers legally as husband or wife.

Kinship relationships: Relationships of people based upon blood and/or marriage and include the children, parents and grandparents as well as collateral bonds such as cousins, nieces and nephews, as well as the in-laws (Hsu, 2017). In this study kinship will refer to relationships between members of the fisher community.

Marital counselling: It means advice given by a trained person to people who are trying to find solutions to their marital problems (Moloney, 2016). In this study, it is a way of helping couples to be familiar with and determine divergences of their marital associations. It also includes counselling conducted by paraprofessionals.

Marital stability: Being legally married without low marital stability or separation (Ahmadi & Saadat, 2015). In other words, it is the probability that matrimony will remain intact, without the allure of dissolution or low marital stability.

Religion: Set of beliefs regarding cause, and rationale of life, considered as creation superhuman being; God, a god or a group of gods (Zinnbauer et al., 2015). In this study religion refers to where the married fishers' worship and the associated set of belief and practices.

Religious beliefs: Ability of one to adhere to the ethical rules established in religious traditions and beliefs (Leege & Kellstedt, 2016). In this study, religious belief was used to refer to values based on scriptures and faith-based norms.

Socio-cultural factors: These are obligations in culture that have an effect on the reflections, sentiments, and individual's behaviour (Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016). In the current study socio-cultural factors refer to issues associated with the norms of the fishers' community. They included ethnic values and religious beliefs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review looks at the socio-cultural factors related to the marital stability and marital counselling. It also presents studies on the relationship between socio-cultural factors and marital stability and seeking counselling. Theoretical framework and conceptual framework that guided the study are also presented in this chapter.

2.2 Definition and Background of Marriage

There is plethora of information by scholars on the subject of marriage. Marriage, matrimony or wedlock, is a recognized institution that permits the union/contract between two or more individuals, establishes rights and obligations between them, as well as any resulting biological or adopted children (Afsari et al., 2022). Simple definition of marriage, is defined by legally and/or socially permitted merger, typically between a man and a woman (Paterson & Coffey-Glover, 2018), often synchronized by rules, customs, thoughts and attitudes that lay down the rights, duties and privileges of the partners and accord status to their children” (Fineman, 2015). In some social, religious and cultural diction(s), the term marriage is socially approved, deliberate, devoted, officially permitted coming together, of two adults, recognized by the government and/or society to have definite rights, opportunities and household tasks, including money, and birth right, children-upbringing, and family related decision-making (Sanger, 2005; Waite, 2005). There was an earlier notion where marriage was established to be conjoint between economic and sexual aspects meta-morphed into a single relationship (Russell, 2017). Nevertheless, such definition was dismissed as simplistic due to narrow focus on economic cooperation as the common denominator of marriage.

A marital relationship is a durable relationship between male and female enduring past the measly action of bringing fourth children (Colman, 2018). In this conception, marriage is seen as a union between man and woman and the ensuing children born from the union who are seen as legitimate to both parents (Wallerstein, 2019). Thus, the elementary foundation of marital relationships is defined with the realm of personal connection couples and biological affiliation for mating and reproduction (Lundberg & Pollak, 2015). The centrality of marriage in the space of diverse cultural orientations is features to the numerous social functions provided for in the structure (Bookman, 2015) such as sexual gratification and regulation,

economics and consumption, and pleasure of personal needs for fondness, position, and camaraderie (Jäkel, 2014).

Several couples see marriage as a revered agreement that often lead to the formation of a family (Schweizer, 2020a). In contemporary society, marriage is viewed as a social based institution where couples unite and agree to stay together in matrimony with a view for having children (Wallerstein, 2019). Viewed based on societal angle, the marriage encompass all the behaviours, expectations, norms, roles, and values (Nouri et al., 2019). The individuals involved may be one man with one woman (termed monogamy), one man in association with two or more women (termed polygamy), and in rare cases, a woman with two or more men (termed polyandry) (Qian & Lichter, 2018). Within some communities, marriage is also construed between two or more individuals of the same gender (Kolk & Andersson, 2020). This thesis however does not pursue that line of reason concerning marriage. Regardless of the society or community where it has taken place, marriage remains a mutually agreed companionship with expectation of some form of understanding among themselves (Raymo et al., 2021). Whether that understanding is achieved or not, remains debatable but does not change the definition of marriage.

Individuals come together in marriage either legally, socially, libidinally, emotionally, financially, or spiritually (Whyte, 2018). This may lead to the recognition of the marriage by individuals or peers, an organization, state, a religious organ, and/or members of the local community (Senchak & Leonard, 1992). Also marriage is rarely sanctioned between individuals without involvement of outside institutions including the societal organization and government entities (Treas & Sanabria, 2016) in which marriage may be performed according to marriage jurisdiction laws, which is the basis of a civil marriage (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2004). Although there are many stakeholders involved in marriage institution, it is supposed to herald a new beginning for many mid aged people and should be sanctioned by God. This has led others to question whether marriage is a sacred institution instituted by God (Hunter, 2018) given that most of the customary marriage is highly honoured in many traditional societies across the globe (Nhlapo, 2019). Under extreme conditions, marriage transcends traditional virtuous, legal and spiritual aspects (Doe, 2016) but questions still remain unanswered how marriage outcomes are still controversial in at the global front.

Views concerning marriage vary widely around the world, not only between individuals, cultures, societal groups, religious affiliations, legal, psychological but also throughout the history of any given orientations (Colman, 2018; Halwani, 2018). In most cases marriage remains an enriching perception that has been disputed in socio-cultural dialogue in several contemporary societies (Dery & Bawa, 2019). Although the open-minded are in favour of extending the denotational boundary delineating marital issues, conservatives define marriage in the traditional frontier which excludes deviant marriage practices (Ponzetti & Mutch, 2006). The views stem from the varied expectation concerning the individuals involved in marital relationships, context of marriage, legal setup, and responsibilities (Wallerstein, 2019). Some common views in marriage involves the common accord for couples as well as acceptance of legality of their existence (Whyte, 2018). Whichever view is selected, people get into marriage for definite reasons and intentions or objectives.

When two people come together and negotiate marriage, it construes it as a long term physical, emotional, spiritual and social investment to each other (Hoplock & Stinson, 2021; Hughes, 2018). In various societies, the moral safeguard of marriage is widely recognized where it serves as a mean for sexual requirements and controls man's and woman's sexual cravings (Becker & Becker, 2009). The ultimate goal for most married couples include romance, sexual satisfaction, companionship and devotion (Halwani, 2018). The desire to achieve optimal longevity in marriage allows for sacrifices to be made when couples want to enjoy happy marital bliss (Fatima, 2018). Meeting these expectations in marriage occur due to commitment among the couples in the relationship and more specifically how they will put up together a cohesive unit away from their respective families (Uğur, 2016). However, there is a lot of debate as to whether these expectations can be met in marriage. Subsequently, researchers have had to content that good marriage always reflect marital stability (Salazar, 2015).

The modern marriage and family system is dominated by “nuclear family” which is HAS degree of residential and economic isolation being brought together by loyalty to partner and the children (Owen et al., 2017). This has confined that marriage and family are supposed to be bound to procreative and affective roles of the nuclear family (Lundberg et al., 2016; Salzman, 2017). This contention however seems to differ with the view of most bachelors who believe that marriage should only be a den of romance, bravado, joy, and an institution that look utopic in the world of flaws (Dew, 2016; Wittenborn et al., 2019). The prospects of

affection and/adoration in marriage seem to be significant. Currently marriage is expected to be based on stable foundation of romance, financial stability, education and personality (Fisher, 2016; Tilney, 2018). Yet, it is maintaining such component in marriage that is becoming more difficult to achieve among couples causing the relationship to turn sour, disillusioned and replete with conflict. This has led to contention that most of current marital relationships are in shambles, conflicting, and even disorganized (Evans, 2019) where universal agreements between the couples is insufficient to steady the marital relationships.

An enduring marital relationship is the minimum requirement of most marital relationships, where many spouses expect to live in utopia of “happily ever after” (Lawrence et al., 2019), the opposite has been observed in many marriages where there is often a disaffection due to stressful condition in marriage (Evans & Gray, 2018). This therefore implies that there are higher standards constituting a positive relationship among couple to endure clear and compatible criteria. More often than not, the daily social experiences show that marital failures arise from some certain behaviours formed and exhibited by one of the married partners, which is taken as unacceptable by the other (Stinson et al., 2017). This suggests that the negative beliefs, knowledge and wrong perception that contribute to dissatisfaction and rising up of accusations may result into marital breakdown. It has therefore been generally concluded that dissatisfaction of one partner reflects a negative signal that result in negative behavioural tendencies such as apathy, sarcasm and accusations.

From the foregoing that marriage is several mutually beneficial purposes has been in existence for ages and will persist to form the foundations of family life as well as the society. Therefore, marriage requires key ingredients that will keep it afloat and will entice the partners to remain committed to each other. Whereas the ambitions may be unable to coexist with marriage thriving in a lifetime, the grouping of objectives and main concern that are ascertained may be difficult to bare (Cortès-Franch et al., 2018). Failure to consider these patterns defining marital relationships are some of the root causes of strain in marital relationships. However, there have been arguments that many marriages can prosper if the causes leading to negativity in the marriage can be elucidated and rectified. Although there is a growing list of literature on marital relationships, there is still paucity of such information in many countries of Africa including Kenya, making generalizations based on studies in developed countries untenable.

2.3 Construct and Status of Marital Stability

Marital stability is defined in the realm of remaining officially or legally married within a shared household (Waite et al., 2009). A major reason why there is a great wealth of intellectual awareness in marital stability occur due to the advantages of marriage for the stakeholders in the marriage (Angrisani et al., 2020). On average, continuously married people having high marital stability have been shown to have better health, superior longevity, better quality economic situation, and in general, joy compared to those with low level of marital stability (Tavakol et al., 2017b). It is also conceptualized that marital stability include few deliberations of low marital stability, acquiring lawful and/or substantial separation, or filing for low marital stability (Karimi et al., 2019b).

Globally, less than 50% of marriages ultimately result in low marital stability (Margelisch et al., 2017). In actual fact, researchers point towards a decline in marital stability which is a custom that characteristically commence with philosophy about finishing a matrimony and then continues to take action, whether by physical or official separation and/or low marital stability (Wilcox, 2018). Therefore, determinants of marital stability regularly comprises numerous questions concerning low marital stability, as well as issues regarding the occurrence of spousal thoughts (an examples here include friends and family members), converse with partner about, and/or talk with others about taking legal action toward severance or low marital stability (Williamson & Lavner, 2020). Understanding the factors associated with marital stability is a key area of interest for family practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and public.

There are numerous information on predictors of marital stability (Margelisch et al., 2017). For decades, studies indicated that there are low levels of marital stability. The latest research suggests that marriage may only increase the risk of low marital stability when spouses have challenges amongst themselves with a major effect for young people, among whom there is normative marital relationships (Lavner et al., 2018). Commitment of the spouse to marriage institution is also related to risk of marital stability. The way partners view incentives of marital relationships and suitable substitutes affects the way they work hard to establish ways of living in harmony at difficult times (Abbasi, 2017).

The universality of marriage as a marriage institution exist in all humanity at every level of (Beegam et al., 2017). Thus variation in the types of marriage among various societies occur

based on their traditions, practices and systems of thought (Smadi, 2017). However, with the different types of marriage, families may experience different levels of marital stability (Bellani et al., 2018). First marriages has a higher probability of remaining stable within a given time period and thus have higher marital stability, while second and subsequent marriages that follow have lower likelihood to be stable (Pasha et al., 2017). Previous research indicate that low marital stability exacerbates the risk of higher rate of divorce. Second and high order low marital stability is partly due to selection and partially as a result of experiencing low marital stability (Brudek et al., 2018). A different circumstances that is possibly like to have a destabilizing effect in marital relationship, where marriages in which at least one spouse does not want the marriage to succeed due to various issue in the family due to what some researchers have called personality traits (Brudek et al., 2018). There is more evidence that highlight a complex association between marital quality and marital stability, thus more research continues to investigate determinants of marital stability.

Marriage in addition to the subsequent family life are the unique qualities of human being, that allow them to be an fundamental element of social life (Avdic & Karimi, 2018). A long term matrimony is a key life aspiration and a key pointer for well-being and health (Karimi et al., 2019a). Whether this is achieved in a marriage may be dictated by several aspects involved in the marriage. The key indicators for the wellbeing dictate that couples should live together and enjoy a rewarding rapport without any target of break-up. Such a scenario allow for every party to enter into the relationship with a hope to find positive and enjoyable life (Khodaparast, 2019) while others believing that their affiliation will last forever in holy matrimonial union (Lawrence et al., 2019). Conversely, couples who live mutually may reassess their objectives of enduring together (Wadsworth, 2016). In other cases, continuation of marital relationships may persist for several years, due to the factors that inspire doing so since a lot of satisfaction is obtained from the relationship (Whyte, 2018). The interplay of these aspects in marriage brings into force the issue of marital stability.

Operationally, marital stability is defined depending on the type of research undertakings. On a more strict note, marital stability is defined as the capacity to remain officially married sharing the bliss in the relationship within the household (Fatima, 2018; Giff et al., 2021). In most practical connotation, marital stability refers to capacity of marriages, the emotional and cognitive conditions beside the related accomplishments which are a guide to continuation or

termination of the relationship (Mitchell & Plauche, 2016). In several African countries and largely applicable to developing countries, marital stability is still debatable subject whose outcome still remains subjective in the realm of African traditions, values and norms (such as divorce or separation) (Khojasteh et al., 2016). Therefore, based on these definitions and in line with the current thesis, marital stability refers to an arrangement in which couples live together as married partners, endeavouring for love fulfilled mutual relationship with no intention for dissolution.

Marriage that has good stability is important for persons involved in the marriage (Waite et al., 2009). Marriage with good stability is the best bet for living happily by providing the most favourable circumstances for upbringing children (Umberson & Thomeer, 2020). High marital stability is the first step toward a good marriage that has immense physical, mental, financial, and sexual benefits (Lawrence et al., 2019). Good marital stability also has acutely - balanced and properly adjusted family and well accustomed articulate society (Carrere et al., 2000; Stanley et al., 2006). Thus, the ratio of positive relative to negative behaviour in marriage may be a true reflection of marital stability. Well intentioned marital association essentially help in developing healthy characters in all spheres of life (Schweizer, 2020b). As part of stable and well-functioning marriage, there is need to ensure stability in the marital relationship by taking up the necessary measures or steps to ensure smooth running of family activities that promote marital stability (Karney & Bradbury, 2020).

Marital stability in its classical conception refers to the balancing of self-interests and values leading to the formation and maintenance of steadier and consistent behaviours within and between married persons (Yucel, 2016). Married persons, husband and wife are expected to keep reliable companionship through the formation and development of healthier life styles that would prevent their marital engagement from turbulence, distrust and crises (Ojukwu & Donatus, 2016). A befitting marriage offers succinct advantages which may be why healthy marriages are holding the attention of policy makers (Lamanna et al., 2014).

In more contemporary family, marriage and counselling literature, researchers content that marital stability is a practice that characteristically entails how marriage is fairing on based on perceived marital standards (Clements et al., 2004). In a number of these literature marital stability entails balancing self-interests and values leading to the formation and maintenance of steadier and consistent behaviours within and between married persons (Graff et al., 2019).

In some other studies, marital stability is often accorded low risk of dissolution (Karimi et al., 2019a). There is, however, a lot of controversy concerning the measures of marital stability since it is not possible to tell with utmost certainty if dissolution has a future probability of occurrence. Nevertheless, measurements of couples' discussions and thoughts of low marital stability are intimately linked to dissolution in future. In this thesis, marital stability will be conceptualized to how the marriage is fairing relative to the expectation of the standard marriage and the degree to which it may end in dissolution.

One of the most important reason for the scholarly attention concerning the subject of marital stability is the contention that the benefits of marital values are adequately documented for couples, in the global arena (Hiekel & Wagner, 2017). On average, couples with high levels of marital stability are generally happier compared to those with low marital stability (Zaheri et al., 2016). One meta-analysis established that high status of marital stability positively concord with subjective well-being, where a stronger relationship was observed (Haghiyan et al., 2017). Inverse relationship between marital stability relative to lower life satisfaction, increased depressive symptoms, and more feelings of loneliness has also been reported (Mensah, 2018). Therefore, the foregoing discussion suggests that marital stability is usually used as a proxy for the well-being of the married couple. Even though there is an affirmative connection between stable marital status, and well-being, there are numerous issues that have been frequently highlighted to affect the association (Margelisch et al., 2017), findings from several research opine that the effect rely above all on the marital stability and not marital status *per se* (Wang et al., 2019).

In the quest to operationalize marital stability, the length of marriage has always been advocated (Bean et al., 2020). Factual marital stability is complex and hard to gauge since there will always a need to wait until one spouse dies to resolve the marital issue. Unfortunately, marital length and construct of marriage are often vaguely related (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). However, there is no consensus as to the standard length of time described as “long-term” which vary widely among researchers and thus not very reliable indicator when marital stability is being contextualized. This is a feeble approach to operationalize marital stability since some couples’ parents were not married in their time. There is however, a consensus that marital stability can be classified into four categories: satisfied-stable (best and highest in quality), satisfied-unstable (good), unsatisfied-unstable (bad), and unsatisfied-stable (very bad) (Brisini et al., 2018). These constructs have been used for long

in defining marital stability in studies in several places in the United State, Europe and Asia (Collins, 2017) but have rarely been used in determining marital stability in the Sub Saharan African region like Kenya. There is however, a content that a marriage may be stable but does not result in happiness a category which is estimated to affect 7.4% of men and 7% of women who are in marriage contract (Glenn et al., 2010).

There are various studies conducted on marital stability across different spheres. Results reveal a moderately high marital satisfaction among couples with long-term marital relationships (Camp & Ganong, 1997). There is a tendency of the relationship to follow a curvilinear pattern within the course of life, where it start at high level and decline over time but at latter part of the life the marital satisfaction start to improve (Mazzuca et al., 2019). Meanwhile in other findings, satisfaction in marriage decline over time, where it has been established that marital stability is a function of age of marriage among the couples (Margelisch et al., 2017). More recent studies suggest that marital stability in long-term marriage is highly heterogeneous, with wide variations in the subgroups (Otero et al., 2019). Despite the more than ample pragmatic proof for a positive relationship involving marital stability and couple's well-being, there have been conspicuous differences observed among individuals and groups across spheres. Nonetheless, integrative studies investigating the frameworks of marital stability in various subsets of population remain rare.

In the developed countries, there are sufficient empirical studies on marital stability. These literature point to low marital stability in developed countries (Yasuda et al., 2019). This is mainly attributed to causal process model that provides a chain of preferences among married persons such as satisfied versus dissatisfied (Tilney, 2018). Meanwhile relatively little is known about marital stability among African couples due to relatively very few studies. Majority of the studies conducted in the African context have been fundamental in very few African landscapes (Akinyemi et al., 2017). Conspicuously few are studies probing outcomes of marital bond and stability among African married fishers. Thus, an understanding of the level of marital stability among African couples is therefore urgently needed to help in fostering policies intervention aimed at avoiding marital dissolutions.

There are several constructs of marital stability that are available such as education, socioeconomic status, religion, race, age, economic conditions, parental levels of the same, interactions, as well as social support systems (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2006; Wright et al.,

2007). In addition, there is homogamy, suggesting that couples share some traits, adds to the aspect of marital stability (Perry, 2015). However, there is consistently lack of studies in the Sub Saharan Africa on how these constructs influence marital stability.

2.4 Aspects of Marital Counselling

Counselling is generally defined as an accompanying relationship between the counsellor and the Counselee(s) with the aim of helping the counselee to cope with specified problems or solve them (Chabakinejad et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2019). Marital counselling entails a sequence of marital counselling gatherings or talks to help the individuals discover proficiency resolve marital disagreements (Thomas, 2019). In other words, marital counselling is imparting knowledge and skills to provide married people with knowledge on improving their bond in marriage (Cobbinah & Osei-Tutu, 2019). Indeed, marital counselling, can also be referred to as “couples counselling,” as a style of psychotherapy. It includes exploration of the client’s situation and understanding of their world therefore is covering better ways of thinking and living (Tambling & Johnson, 2008). Seeking marital counseling thus enable couples deal with their problems and be able to live healthier and effective lives. At the same time, they should be able to apply the learned skills becoming better in helping themselves in their everyday life (Williamson et al., 2019). Thus counselling comes out a form of help to those in dire need of it (Naghavi et al., 2020). In the context of this study, counselling includes psychological counselling, African model of counselling that involves, couples, family/relatives and peer counselling.

Marital counselling is a form of therapy that works to improve communication and resolve issues within an intimate relationship (Parhizgar et al., 2017). The main goal why couple engage in marital counselling are generally to resolve pressing crisis which help to lend the couples some degree of emotional support to enhance their levels of self-esteem (Isfahani et al., 2018). It focuses on appreciating couples symptom of troubles and help in shaping the way they will interact in trying to solve the underlying problems in their marriage (Tobol & Yaniv, 2019). The gist of marital counselling is the inclusion of several sets of pre-marital therapy sittings aiming at serving the married couples’ useful ideas on how to ensure good marriage. Such an understanding among people in matrimony allow them to better understand marital responsibilities (Plagnard, 2020a). A calm relationship is attained among married fishers when they are able to comprehend their roles in the marriage and look for ways to enhance it. Where there is poor relationship, there is anxiety, disagreement and poor

marital alteration (Helen, 2016). Low levels of marital stability in dwelling places might cause separation and/or divorce thus in order to enjoy a stable marital relationship, married partners should work in tandem to craft a form of stability within their marriage. For marital happiness among couples, it is essential to accurately improve some of the irrational behaviours of the couples towards marriage and in this wise, marital counselling when employed helps to eliminate negative feelings that lead to low marital stability.

Aspects of counselling in marriage is extremely ingrained and control accomplishment in achieving marital happiness (Akande et al., 2008). As a result, there are lasting characteristic in marital life which is a complex of numerous experiences, that may positively or negatively depend on situations and knowledge of married couples (Moghaddamtabrizi, 2018). In some instance, marital counseling is a skill, which allows this set of complexity, diverse theories of human behaviour, and significance of a realistic attitudes (Clyde et al., 2020). Several aspects of marital counselling is a dormant factor which could sway action in an individual (Lopez et al., 2006). In order to illustrate this point, a individual's behaviour could be as a consequence made through a particular situation or experience.

It is not surprising that marital counselling is held in reserve for couples who are emotionally unstable (Mallen et al., 2005). Although couples who are affectionately unsteady require some kind of help, counselling help everyone who may have some disturbing marital issues (Hall, 2006). It is not contentious that such gestures enable couples to obtain assistance when they are faced with some form of crisis. Therefore it is clear that marital counselling psychotherapy help people undergoing marital distress to be able to change their situations by through provision of reassurance, understanding, support and leadership (Gilbert, 2021). As a result, interventions the provide assistance to individuals in helping them discover and/or develop their psychological well-being, help in unsettling complex issues that were lingering in the marital relationship. This has made marital counseling, an exciting field, renewing hopes for remedies among the married couples (Perrone & Worthington Jr, 2001).

There are principles which marital counseling must adhere to make it successful. The principles include respecting the knowledge and determination of oneself regardless opportune to access the client and obtain more complex issues associated with their lives (Rhoden, 2003). Counselling in marriage will involve the two people in marital relationships where discussion of the challenges concerns among them will be listened to and an

appropriate solution preferred to both or individuals involved in the union (Rabei, 2016). There have been arguments that married couples have several ideas that may weigh them down and thus counselling remains the best therapy to solve those problems. Therefore more advanced forms of marital counseling will be a prescriptive activity deal with a particular problems and navigating it clearly to a path that provide solution (Khojasteh et al., 2016). Nevertheless, there is no amount of extensive information that will conclusively talk about counselling and psychotherapy with any given frame of reference, it is therefore plausible that true definition of counseling for married couples, lies with the potential client”.

There isn't just one concrete reason for not seeking marital counseling. Some of the common factors behind couples decision not to seek marital counseling are: deprived communication, fiscal issues, unfaithfulness, conflicting prospects, obligations, child-upbringing fears, employment etc (Priyadharshini & Gopalan, 2019b). Yet more important, is the theoretical structure looking at the relationship within the relations which stipulate the conditions under which assistance is needed in the household for the couple (Moghadasi & Mohammadipour, 2016). This facet has increased the need for increased attention of marital counselling.

Marital counselling is usually a short-term psychotherapy which may last for a few sessions to work out predicaments in a relationship (Doherty & Harris, 2017; Lambie et al., 2019). Typically, marital counselling helps the couples to openly and honestly identify their goals, roles, and beliefs and once the partners come to understand that both contribute to problems in the relationship, the married couples can then be taught to modify their mode of interaction in solving their problems (Ziapour et al., 2017). Through marital counselling, couples can decide to rebuilt their relationships by encompassing considerate assessments concerning their marital relationship (Odero, 2018). If well nurtured can serve as the foundation of strong marital union. It also help in uncovering answers to predicaments encountered in marital life such as domestic hostility, divorce, and single parenthood.

Counselling in marriage is viewed among several institutions such as government, health experts, and religious leaders, as an successful solution against several issues pertaining to marriage (Clyde et al., 2020). This stems from the deterrence with the main goal of allowing the couples to be happy which in essence help them to uphold a fairly high level of functioning that makes the marital relationship to be stable (Ramshida & Sasidharan, 2019). In order to fulfil this aspect, counselling prescribe prevention of occurrences of martial

challenges due spousal daily routines which is frequent in marriages, in the process, provide the married couples with knowledge to successfully ameliorate future occurrence of such problems (Ramshida & Sasidharan, 2019).

The reason for advocating marital counselling entails working out solutions to problems that are recurrent in a relationship and prepare the couples psychologically for challenges anticipated during marriage (Wulandari et al., 2019). Thus, counselling programs are seen as useful in reducing low marital stability to enhance the level of marital satisfaction. Married couples request guidance in several ways (Satari et al., 2019). The advent of counseling is an insurance for the couples that they can live harmoniously in their marital relationships of intimacy (Sulhani et al., 2019). Subsequently, it is clear that each partner needs precise thoughts, positive feelings, technical information and skills, which is important competency that help in sustaining the marital union (White et al., 2019). Whether this is usually achievable in conventional marital relationships remains debatable. In a previous study that compared couples' therapy to no treatment, came to a conclusion that most of the comparative results unequivocally stipulate that marital counselling help in improving satisfaction among couples (Rathgeber et al., 2019).

Married couples are prepared to tolerate themselves without seeking any aspects of marital counselling even when it clear that the marriage is not working (Al-Qahtani et al., 2019). All too often, marital counselling has failed to bridge the diverse expectations (Kabbash et al., 2019). In cases where counselling is led by a religious organization, marital counselling are intended to support married couples in establishing a proper indulgence for their marital life (Baker, 2019). There is great difference between religious and secular counselling in which case the former uses the teaching derived from the Bible as a fibre to help couples in solving their marital issues (Smith et al., 2019). The Bible remains the ultimate power in shaping the individuals behaviour and thinking. Counsellors in the religious sphere instruct married couples to follow God's teaching and will in going through challenges in their marital relationships (Gladding & Crockett, 2019). As contrast to other modes of counselling, spiritual counselling doesn't convey to the married couples under counselling the right way to live as espoused in the Biblical teaching (Jones-Smith, 2020).

It is generally agreeable, that seeking marital counselling is significant for couples and marital union (Tambling, 2019). In instances where there is lack of challenges in marital

relationships, marital counselling endeavours to guarantee negligible predicaments in definite marital relationships (Awoyemi, 2015). In recent years, seven objectives of marital counselling to help in achieving progress in couples relationships (Irby, 2016) of which there are several components. The first is the explanation of self which involves appreciating the person's individuality for each person attentions, sentiments, convictions and hope. The second aspect is the clarification of other in which married couples acquire a deeper perception of the potential spouses including their unique characteristics. The third, is the alleviation of anxiety which deals with worry concerning matrimony and maintenance of the matrimonial unity. By understanding and obeying these principles, couples better understand their mutual relationship and assist each other with abilities that to nurture their rapport and make improved ways of communication among couples (Mofaraheh et al., 2015).

Marital counselling is one of the cornerstone of solving the broader marital challenges among couples (Cordova et al., 2014). However, a substantial amount of effort are put in place by professionals that help in preventing marital anguish and low levels of marital stability (Doss et al., 2011). It sensible to aim for considerably reduce risk associated aspects and the ensuing damaging forces, in that way enhancing quality of life among the couples in the marital union (Morrill et al., 2011). If appropriately conducted, marital counselling result in a state of mind that help marriage to improve despite the level of distrust among the couples in the marital union. It also allow the partners to take decision and actions that will be a catalyst for improved marital relationship (Bruhn & Hill, 2004). A succession of reviews established that couples therapy is discreetly successful, even though disquiets linger concerning the number of couples recording progress in their marriage and length of these reforms initiated in marriage (Farnam et al., 2011).

Regardless of its effectiveness, there is a general reluctance of the couples to seek marital counselling's to such a point where the crisis become brutal or in some instances, couples seek marital counseling among couples take place due to forces beyond them such as religion (Parkin & Nyamwaya, 2018). The effects of counseling relentlessly incomplete by the remarkably fewer couples seeking counseling and the time that naturally pass in a relationship of the couples looking for therapy (Baucom et al., 2009). A number of married couples yearn for a helping hand to which get the opportunity and there is often less of the help that is available. New married partners may mull over marital counselling but often they are hindered by their schedule in which some of the couples find themselves too busy or

preoccupied to engage in marital counseling (Coren, 2020). In several homes, the couples singly or both, may for a their own reason, have no want to focus on marital counselling (Christensen et al., 2010). The inability to try to find marital counselling is also linked to the opinion of outcomes due to attending the counseling therapy (Abbass et al., 2017). As an example, many people in the society view marital counselling as sessions for people who are incapable of solving their own problems. Married couples should also be aware of the fact that marital counseling can help them forestall any future problems in marriage before they occur. Consequently, an examination of motives why married couples fails to attend marital counseling is required to improve the understanding of the aspect of the attendees.

There is a general agreement that problems that are experienced between couples could be well handled in the counselling context (Amao-Kehinde, 2002). It is argued that counselling should be made relevant to marriage in its various stages namely, pre-marital, marital and crisis stages. In African societies, seeking marital counseling is viewed as an interfamily affair (Ratts & Pedersen, 2014). The institution of marriage is increasingly being faced with many problems and many individuals in marriage have become miserable and helpless as such counselling has been used to help people deal with many challenges (Sullivan & Davila, 2014). Hence counsellors are nowadays handling more clients with marital issues than before (Marie-Michele et al., 2011). Counselling helps couples to improve their communication and other issues in their marriage understand their differences and their issues after which they can be able to explore them and live a happier life (Doss et al., 2015). Counselling is an opportunity for the couples to share their feelings openly in a secure environment which may help to understand each other better. However, the central question in this study is, has counselling been an intervention of choice to resolve marital issues for couples or families in Kenya.

In trying to understand the married fishers' intention into the helping relationship and to save their failing marriages, both parties must agree to work together to agree mutually to seek marital counseling (Sherman & Fredman, 2013). It becomes essential to try and rectify the ridiculous behaviour to marital counselling. Counselling may be help to eliminate incorrect or depressing stance toward marriage stability (Al-Suqri & Al-Kharusi, 2015). Among the things that may hinder most couples from investing in counselling relationship are; differences in couple's age, occupation, caste differences in knowledge of, and ethnical background.

However, women are found to be seeking for marital counselling easier in the case of marriage crisis as compared to their men (Bringle & Byers, 1997).

In a study which aimed at examining the effectiveness of emotional relationships between spouses who suffered from distress in their marital lives, sample was composed of 12 spouses, and the results showed improvements in adjustment, confidence, and reductions in severity of harm and injustice following counselling (Halchuk et al., 2010). Another study which aimed at examining the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral counselling in improving marital adjustment among Iranian spouses (Azkhosh et al., 2011), showed improvements in their marital relationship in terms of emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, and social aspects. A study meant to examine the usefulness of behavioral exciting balanced counselling to improve marital alteration for married female students at Al-Aqsa university, revealed that a statistically significant differences between the experimental group's pre- and post-intervention scores (Hamidi et al., 2017). These results therefore indicate that marital counselling is effective in improving the behaviours of the couples.

In light of the above information regarding marital counselling, it is clear that marital counselling may be appropriate in solving marital issues among couples. There are cases where married couples do not agree with such simplistic approach when there are better alternatives available (Wilt et al., 2019). Others have conformed to the expectations, providing the feeling of success but the couples are rarely self-motivated. A rigid approach does not allow for disparity in character and poignant state of affair which affect the client's receptiveness to counselling therapy (Killian et al., 2019). However, there are relatively very few studies in the local context concerning marital counselling that makes drawing any meaningful conclusion remains rather difficult. There is a growing need for more local based research studies on couples seeking marital counselling to provide a framework that will be useful for married couples to seek counselling should there be marital challenges.

2.5 Socio-cultural Factors and Marital Stability

Socio-culture is the lens through which people view the world, shapes behaviour, social constructs, relationships and behaviours of individuals. Therefore there is agglomeration of research findings on the predictors of the marital stability among couples (Jennings, 2016). Several studies point out the significance of socio-cultural factors in marital stability (Tseng & Hsu, 2018). During the early part of the 21st century, socio-economically advantaged

married people were reported to enjoy a higher rates of marital stability than the socio-economically disadvantaged couples (Adegoke, 2010). The amount income, education, and employment are often linked with probability of more stable marital relationship (Alford-Cooper, 2016). There are studies that imply that economic stress and poverty is the principal factor that influences marital unity and/or stability. Research indicates that shared ethnic conditions, religion, class, and values may enhance marital stability. The most important socio-cultural factors in marital stability are ethnic/cultural background and religious beliefs (Islam, 2012).

2.5.1 Ethnic Values and Marital Stability

Ethnic value in the society is one of the factors that influence the marital outcomes (Southwood, 2012). Indeed, most families socialize their children about the impacts of ethnicity in marriage and family and that boys are often trained in their early days that marriage to members of the same ethnic group is paramount (Altman, 2013). These ideas are coupled with the importance of the teachings in which tribal hegemony is underscored as the essential component of a stable marriage (Jakoubková Budilová, 2020).

The orientation towards similar ethnic agglomeration may possibly safeguard marital stability in spite of any underprivileged financial condition (Lowe et al., 2019). This may also be disadvantaged due to the underlying deviant or antisocial behavior and cultural orientation within the society (Ardi & Maizura, 2018). For cross cultural married couples, when there is absence of proper knowledge, and appreciation of the couples' culture, they will not be in any position to correctly follow the tenets of the culture as demanded their spouse leading to cultural clashes at family level (Schoebi et al., 2010). Any lack of awareness aware of the basic assumptions in cultural values may result in a misunderstandings among the couples, leading to problems in marital relationship (Sullivan et al., 2012). Couples hailing from diverse ethnic backgrounds or groups normally have different habits of life from their childhood and have been brought up in diverse environmental setups, so they definitely have different rules, values, convictions and in some instances understanding of issues pertaining to other traditions (Hummer & Hamilton, 2010). Couples were reported to have discovered that ethnic values has a fundamental function in married life for couples and would define marriage in terms of conflict and dissatisfaction or successful marriage, (Meisenberg & Kaul, 2010).

In marriage, there is need to highlight starting from the onset of marriage that each married spouse, regardless their cultural orientation (mono-cultural, or interethnic), interact with a several factors that have the potential to influence their overall marital relationship at one time of their stay in the union (Li & Fung, 2011). Therefore it is clear that ethnic values of every couple has a critical role to play in every marriage in almost every society worldwide (Park & Rosén, 2013). It is also crucial to signal that cross-cultural barriers among married partners are shaped by some other new multifaceted dynamics that has close association to ethnicity (Sabbe et al., 2019).

In a marital relationship, ethnic value is related to a number of apparent aspects such as culture, customs and rituals, and certain ideologies core to cultural orientation that permit different cultures to believe and act in a different way during their lifetime (Qureshi et al., 2014). There is a huge significance of cultural values to the core of people's civilization, practices that allow people to improve the way married couples interact with each others (Kreager et al., 2013). Ethnic value is multi-layered aspects, such as rituals, cultural landscape and icons (Rathgeber et al., 2019). These cultural practices are visible, but values are invisible but form the basis of all the cultural practices.

Given that ethnic insights concerning matrimony are changing, conduits to marriage are multifaceted, intellectuals involved in marital affiliations have focused their consideration on thoughts, values, and beliefs that married couples have as regards marital unions and rapport and how the beliefs may modify person and their behaviors (Kaplan & Herbst-Debby, 2017). Notwithstanding the attention, research on issue concerning marital stability is stalled by discrepancy in dimension making generalizations on the subject of ethnic values of individual and outcomes of such endeavors.

Due to recent advances in ways of travel, ethnic borders are narrow, and novel associations are shaped since couples of dissimilar ethnic groups meet and make a decision in families (Lehrer & Son, 2017). As such, inter-ethnic marriages have been steadily increasing in the past and are considered by several people as a symbol of positive ethnic values (Saarela & Finnäs, 2018). The number of inter-ethnic marriages have improved extensively, just like the quantity of inter-tribal marriage that present for marital relationship (Huebner, 2007). This suggest that several more married couples are discarding the thought that they cant be married since they belong to diverse ethnic course (Lehrer & Son, 2017).

Married couples view other tribes in a different way and create an endeavor to, since the mounting sense belongs to each personality. The reality that each nation is made up of ethnic groups with several cultural orientation, customs, remains a evidence of dissimilarity within nations (Craig, 2015). Linking this aspect in marriage, different ethnic groups differ in the categories of marriages that they are able to spoil the gist. In the African Continent, kinds of marriages such as monogamy, polygamy, and polyandry (Forster et al., 2000). However, there is still no clear line on what then happens as couples differing tribes are enjoined in holy matrimony. Such studies have attracted few research studies.

In African Societies, there is strong affection of the people to their ethnic groupings and ethnic values, which may affect the way they exhibit behaviours in marital relationships. In instances where there is a strong antecedent of ethnic values, then marital relationships may be pushed to the periphery (Ahmadi & Saadat, 2015). However, there is very little anecdotal evidence that ethnic values affect marital stability in many African societies. Part of this is because of limited number of researches in this realm and the fact that defining ethnic values in many African societies is such a herculean task. Lack of such ethnic group-specific studies call for understanding on how ethnic values affect marital stability.

2.5.2 Religious Beliefs and Marital Stability

Religion is a recognized phrase of a mysticism apprehended in realization concerning the decisive certainty (Heiphetz et al., 2017). This apprehension with the decisive realism takes place when people realize the importance of their external surrounding. This consciousness drive the people to seek out to relay with the eventual authenticity because people naturally search for agreement (Sugimura et al., 2019). Religion also differs in the magnitude attached to marital ties and to people rites (Witte, 2012). The value that people may attach to marriage is prejudiced to some degree by ideological attitudes of the spiritual clusters which they are part of (Sigalow et al., 2012). Accordingly, these ideological distinctions make it clear that discrepancy in marital stability in the religious assemblages (Bahnaru et al., 2020). In religious assemblage where the responsibility of the family is vital, marital practices of their associates will be stable compared to religious groups that are less pro-family (Yelderman et al., 2018). This aspect creates a relationship between several religious aspects (affiliation, denominational homogeny, and beliefs) and marital relationships, which may perhaps play an important responsibility in increasing numerous components of the marriage (Baker, 2019). Yet, in spite of extensive controversy over current marital stability, few studies have

investigated the role of religious beliefs with respect to marital stability. Subsequently, there is a distinction in married couple's religious presence patterns which is related with higher threat of marital stability (Schafer & Kwon, 2019).

Religion highlight values depending which is reinforced socialization, which has then allowed scholars to await determine the relationship between religion values and marital relationships (Edgell, 2013). This way of thinking makes one to hypothesize that religion values will reinforce and steady marital unions. However, four problems have been identified the influence of religious value on marital stability (Mahoney et al., 2003). First, religion is uni-dimensional thus pay no attention to the complexity of religious beliefs. Second, details for religious beliefs involve the motives for the link but hardly ever test these details. Third, research in this realm is restricted by dependence on cross-sectional statistics that may confuse the course of the association (Thomas & Henry, 1985). Fourth, religious hegemony is regularly overlooked in issues that are related to marital stability. There is therefore a need to understand the relationships between there aspects in religious beliefs.

Religious belief is so multifaceted that determining a solo appraisal of religious belief is not enough. The religious belief of an individual includes connection of the person with explicit involvement in religious actions, convictions in religious instructions, and individual marital counseling therapies (Adamczyk & Hayes, 2012). The importance of religious affiliation allow for determination of denominational diversity in instructions concerning marriage play in the configuration of feelings and ensuing marital behavior (Wilson, 2013). It is clear that that spiritual affiliation may mirror the broader persuasion of ordinary observation of a religious tradition and the compassionate societal systems rather than precise doctrinal convictions concerning issues pertaining to marriage (Barclay, 2019). However, attachment offers simply the universal background of religious value since choice of religious place of worship often is a reflection of family conviction, everyday life choices, or social convenience slightly than individual faith (Anderson & Ford, 2014). Besides, religious value cross values, creating blurry limits amid religious clusters (Wardle, 2010).

The demographic characteristics and religious beliefs of couples across a range of spiritual groups give details why couples will only discover humble divergences in low marital stability rates across various religious organizations (Weeden, 2016). However, it has been established that involvement in religious behavior plays a bigger function in marital stability

compared to the denominational relationship (Leavitt et al., 2021). The levels of turnout at religious services point to the sum of occasion at the religious denomination and the level of participation in religious set-ups (Richardson-Self et al., 2020). Regardless, both of these have an effect on the indoctrination of married couples in a fussy divinity. Religious observations relating to marital association thus it remains a basis of ethical proscriptions and normative prospects for several persons in marital unions (Eekelaar, 2016). As an instance, religious wisdom form the fundamental marital beliefs toward child upbringing, sexual conduct, companionship networks, and other components of marital connections (Çetintaş & Halil, 2020; Mawdsley, 2011). Besides, recognition of biblical wisdom concerning the sacredness of marriage.

There are functional aspects and dimensions of religious values such as religious attachment, as well as religious beliefs which supports similarities between partner favorable to stability in marital association (Kloet & Galen, 2011). Attendance of several denominational activities can offer a common debate for a couple's religious direction and family obligation or become an disagreement for married partners who may sometimes fail to agree on some aspect of personal dedication (Green & Elliott, 2010). When there is a joint involvement in religious activities, the married partners have a intellect of principle and comparable costs that augment couples obligation and social assimilation (Bengtson, 2017). In contrast, the superior inconsistency in dogma and religious values in matrimonial couple's conflicting faiths resulted in larger marital unhappiness (Frazee, 2013). Later it was found that when several other breadth of religious matters are considered, religious values may not be significant than relationship or presence in influencing marital stability (Gruber, 2017). Thus is possible to that marital understanding of marital stability over religious values is expected to take place when married couples vary in the salience of religious action, and the implication they place on religious compatibility as a matrimonial attribute.

Many psychodynamic writers talk about religious belief as a 'intermediary' entity (Lundmark, 2015; Rubenstein, 2020). An intermediary objective is the figurative phrase of the experience of individual affiliations, the first icon frequently being the item that both symbolize at one level. In meta-analysis of crucial studies of a conglomerate of religious belief among some 20 married partners, the study made a finding that the role of God as a intermediary thing in gaining influence with others and with life (Nwoye, 2011).

Clarifications for religious persuasion on marital relationship is related to marital stability (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Uecker et al., 2007).

Religious values build an attachment between the husband and a wife which may possibly improve marital stability. There are several research studies that highlight the significance of religion in intensification of emotional relationship linked with improved marital stability (Amato & DeBoer, 2001). If the religious emphasis of the married couples stress the significance of marriage, they may feel greater obligation to their marriage (Call & Heaton, 1997b). Some religions values highlight the role of sex dissimilarity between husband and wife and the magnitude of a gender related sharing of duties thus helping in improving marital stability (Heaton & Pratt, 1990).

Religion is a deliberate effort to promote associations between the married couples as well as with the extra-ordinary strength to organize their marital life (Myers, 2006). One grey area which has attracted more research attention is the awareness of the role of religious value in influencing marital feelings, assessments, practices, and worth (Kim & Swan, 2019). An appraisal of 94 meta-analysis of studies indicate an average to strong association between religious values and marital relationship and satisfaction (Geist, 2017). These outcomes conducted among the Christians, Muslim and Jewish Americans suggested that religion values influence marital stability via a number of aspects such as beliefs and sharing religious practices among the couples (McPhail, 2019). In dissimilar research, suitable criterion in the selection of a spouse, there was a devotion to religious principles (Aman et al., 2019).

After marital unions a number of studies established a significant positive correlation between religious loyalty and marital stability (Hajihassani & Sim, 2019). Summarizing the studies suggest that more positive religious beliefs had the optimal relationship between married couples and religious propensity where emotion contributed mostly to the relationship (Li et al., 2018a). Religious belief has also been observed to be positively related to satisfaction with life with improving, intensification of the connection between married couples and marital stability. It can be observed that marriage improve the commitment while reducing the probability of encountering low marital stability (McDonald et al., 2018).

Several studies with sociological bearings have revealed that the value of religion practices are associated with better sense of marital stability and higher marital satisfaction status (Radmehr & Shams, 2019). Among the available studies, attending religious practices is the

most vital predictor of marital stability (Bahnaru et al., 2019). As much as the roles of the religious factors have reduced in the recent past, the society still accept that religious beliefs is important to encourage strong family values spiritual nourishment among married couples (Bahnaru et al., 2019). It is postulated that religious beliefs may be the most essential factor directly affecting stability of marital relationships (Dilmaghani, 2018). Therefore, the third objective of the study sought to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between the fisher's religious practices and their level of marital stability?

Marriage counselors perform functions of teachers in the sphere of marital counseling. Due to their training and experience in the realm of counseling, counselors are anticipated to help in ensuring that marriages are stable. Regrettably, the low level of couples seeking marital counseling is currently low hence negatively affecting the effectiveness of their work (Gwirayi & Yule, 2018). A tendency in several marriages is that married people often undergo some outline of marital counseling if they intent to conduct their marriage through religious sects by particular church (Odero, 2019). People who don't attend church services often see marital counseling as a significant instrument in marriage groundwork and even though there is no tangible evidence in marital counseling lessening marital union, where marriages tend to be more livelier (Munyiri, 2019).

There is plethora of research in the association between religious beliefs and marital stability (Chinitz & Brown, 2001). Much of this research has predicted that married couples with more attachment to religious values will most likely experience happy or stable marriages (Moss & Willoughby, 2018). This notion is supported by several other empirical findings that date back to early part of this century (Blumel, 1930; Brewster, 1904). However no conclusive evidence exists because of the few research undertakings in this realm. Married couples attending church jointly and frequently tend to have higher marital satisfaction (Chen & Chen, 2019b), and are less likely to have issues in their marital relationships (Kazemi et al., 2018). It has been established that partners who fare well in marriage are those that have a common religious beliefs compared to those couples with different marital beliefs (Reich & Kalantar, 2018). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that the link between these assessments of religious beliefs and marital stability are not universal in their application because they have been conducted in the developed countries to the detriment of the developing countries (Aman et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, religious beliefs is hailed as the most important determinant of marital stability among couples in marital life (Dilmaghani, 2018). The sets of beliefs, such as religious ethical values, customs, participate in the religious community for the conviction to a higher power (Hajihassani & Sim, 2019). Religious beliefs effectively deal with many challenges that are disastrous in marriage through spiritual nourishment. To be more effective, married couples need to show much more commitment to religious artifacts or teaching of concerning what the bible require of marital relationships (Padgett et al., 2019). Through various research, religious beliefs have been established to be exact predictors of marital continuity and therefore most of the recommendations encourage couples to seek religious values. It quite obvious that religious beliefs concerning marital relationship remains an important component that advocate for healthy relationship between a husband and wife who are committed to follow the religious teaching (Johnson, 2018).

The significance of marital and religious beliefs is that it can result in shared information about life from a religious viewpoint (Cirhinlioğlu et al., 2018). Some researcher deem it that religious belief is effective for the married couples since religion present principles for proper life of the couples (Bean et al., 2019). However, in absence of any research such general conclusions cannot be sustained especially in developing countries where religious beliefs form the basis of the moral values of the individuals. In some other research, it was shown that religious beliefs allow couples to develop positive emotions and affirmative emotions such as good frame of mind, contentment, compassion, self-confidence, admiration and tranquility (Irani & Rezaei, 2018).

It is clear that religious disagreements in the family is a cause of problems in any marriage which result in negative effects on marital satisfaction and stability (Dunn, 2018). The connection between religious views and marital stability, established that religious beliefs positively influenced marital happiness which is a precursor of marital stability (Radmehr & Shams, 2019). It is clear that religious beliefs considerably interrelated with the quantity of love and joy (Coburn & McGeorge, 2019). One researcher concluded in a study that improved religious belief decrease marital conflicts, and improve emotional and mental health (Chen & Chen, 2019a). Adherence to religious beliefs thus remains essential feature in marital stability because of its ability to solve conflicts that exist in marriage (Kim & Swan, 2019). Despite these findings, it is still not clear whether the correlation between devotion to religious beliefs and marital stability can considerably be affected. In an earlier study

conducted in Iran (Tehran), among 100 couples, the findings proved an apparent positive association between Islamic religious practice and marital satisfaction (Khalajabadi-Farahani et al., 2019). There are however a number of personal related factors such as level of education and gender that modulated the relationships between the measured variables.

A number of concerns have previously been raised which can have the potential to affect the understanding between religious beliefs and marital stability. The major one is the methodological limitations witnessed in some empirical or survey-based studies. Using the purpose of convenience samples often limit the drawing of generalizability in the findings. In some studies it was showed that using parents of the students (Lima et al., 2019), denominational congregants (Lister et al., 2020), and associates does not offer accuracy of the results because of their endeavour to be seen not to be suffering while in these religious organization (Liefbroer & Rijken, 2019). There are some available studied that have used analytical methods which tend to limit interpretation of the outcomes (Steinbach & Silverstein, 2020). Using highly heterogeneous samples of the married fishers (such as those couples who have been married for different durations, partners without children, polygamous versus monogamous marriage etc.) does not allow for the determination of the influence of religious beliefs might in marriage (Kim, 2018). Finally, most studies rely exclusively on cross-sectional statistics, which does not allow for the determination of the nature of the affiliation between religious beliefs and marital stability (Kogan & Weißmann, 2019).

There are also a number of conflicting outcomes as regard the intricate association between religious beliefs and marriage (Bakibinga et al., 2016). In some longitudinal research on the influence of religious beliefs on marital relationships, there was a finding of inverse correlations where changes in religious beliefs was negatively related with couples' marital satisfaction over time (Tavakol et al., 2017a). A different study established no association between church activities and marital stability (King et al., 2019). Yet as one study found that "enhancement of religious beliefs to some extent diminished the likelihood of marital stability being regarded as low (McDonald et al., 2018). Yet there also studies that have found no effect of the level of religious beliefs among married couples with differences in adherence to religious teachings (Bradley et al., 2019). It is therefore valid to be concluded from sequence of the available studies that association between religion and marital stability

can be direct, opposite or reciprocal and therefore more studies in specific setting are needed to decipher trends.

There are studies that have found that have presented a hypothetical thoughts on how religious beliefs influence marital stability, which brings into fore the obstacles that religion entail concerning the collective values (Sorokowski et al., 2019). Several investigators propose that the precise means that will mediate the connection between religious beliefs and marital union. Nevertheless there are few studies that have tested these theoretical models in empirical realm (Lopez et al., 2011). Therefore, the next step involves focusing on the course where religious belief has significant influence on marital stability. In a review of studies that were published between 1930s to the 2021, there are conflicting evidences proposing that high level of religious beliefs influence marital satisfaction in diverse ways (Chen & Chen, 2021; Dudley & Kosinski Jr, 1990; Ferguson, 1938; Thomas & Znaniecki, 1950; Wallin & Clark, 1964). These studies conclude that marital stability has a reasonable proposition that “lofty religious beliefs that support marital stability (Amato & James, 2018). Conceivably the main hurdle to a complete appreciation of the influence of religious beliefs on marital stability.

In a similar vein, religion is considered as a corresponding matrimonial attribute, a characteristic which possibly will determine the marital stability in the relationship (Sadeghi et al., 2019). The compatibility among or between married couples of related assurance could decrease the short- and long-term predicaments facing the married couples (Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018). Furthermore, a number of religious doctrines may possibly have repercussions for the extent of marital stability. As a case, enthusiasts of religious assemblages that view low marital stability as negating to their theological philosophy can be a reflection of themselves as differing from the customs especially among those with low marital stability. The blame that possibly will pursue such knowledge may in turn diminish the frequency of low marital stability. An additional means through which religious conviction can affect marital stability is that involvement in religious actions could affect family links by promoting proper family indulgence (Levy, 2017). Whilst it may be true that religion often promote marital stability, it is also probable that religion could be a focal point for the upholding disparity in gender roles in the society (Sadeghi et al., 2019).

In traditional societies in parts of Africa, religion was used to used to strengthen customary gender responsibilities in a non-secular culture and outlook about the circumstances of the married couples (Karimi et al., 2019c). Therefore, a religious values in the traditional patriarchal theological philosophy, which may support the economic reliance of couples (Takyi & Lamptey, 2020). If the married couples feelings toward marriage are created by their religious beliefs, then there is anticipation of marital stability may be higher amongst religious groupings (Chen & Chen, 2019a).

The scale of religious involvement among married partners can sometimes be interconnected with marital stability. Even if a small number of previous investigations examining this phenomenon established that may be considerable pointer of obligation is whether the married couples decide to be married in a religious rite, as contrasting to a universal formal procedure (Kelley et al., 2020). Certainly, married couples may encompass a lot of grounds for selecting a religious attributes, such as demands from relations and social prospects (Mezey, 2019). Nonetheless, occurrence of such customs often appeal to the support among the religious society, relations, and companions to aid the associates honor to maintain their marital attachments (Kim & Swan, 2019). Furthermore, the verdict to have a religious ceremony may be reached with the contribution of the family members, which may hint to a strong family obligation to marriage and family sustain for the married couple (Hwang et al., 2019).

The occurrence of attending religious acts may be related to the risk of marital stability (Frey, 2018). First, it may be indicator of a religious belief/devotion. Most of the couples in religious services often may also take pleasure in a better-off religious sphere, internalization and religiously inspired by love, unselfishness, compassion, and unselfishness in their marital and family relationships (Sriram & Duggal, 2016). Secondly, religious attendees promote informal support for the marital couples. From compatible associates of the flock, religious education status, social groupings, or additional activities (Li et al., 2018b). Such opinion may promote marital obligation, offer spiritual rewards for marital triumph, limit marital disagreement, encourage conflict pledge with other predicaments that possibly will hurt marriages and depress marital stability. Third, some people attending worships may offer official ministries, classes, and additional resources for marital improvement where counselling relating to family matters may also assist to deal with rapport challenges, encourage persistence, and hinder achievement of low marital stability (Stinson et al., 2017).

Fourth, usual attendance of religious activities are broader multifaceted behaviors where religious grouping may tend to draw couples who are risk averse in their worth directions (Sullivan & Davila, 2014).

A reliable finding indicate that married spouses are more religiously dedicated with better marital stability (Gurrentz, 2017). Up till now religious values for couples during marriage, also features outstandingly into marital unions understanding, regularly inexplicably to allocate advantages in the marital unions (Kim & Swan, 2019). A vital issue to mull over is the degree to which other individual factors may determine which marital partner advantages from spousal religious beliefs. Specifically, couples may experience better returns to marital class from have a religious spouse. There have been analogous relationships between religious convictions and marital dependence among spouses, with suggestions that religious factors modulate marital stability (Wright et al., 2017).

There are studies that have established that marital spouse' religious beliefs is important for enhancing marital quality (Perry, 2016). In a study of some educated white fishers, it was indicated that wives' religious convictions, was linked with better marital stability (Day & Acock, 2013). Additionally, a longitudinal study of black and white married spouses, indicated that religious presence was merely a predictor of improved marital stability as reported by wives (Brown et al., 2008). Consequently, spousal religious belief was found to be high among husbands with religious wives (Pallangyo et al., 2020). These findings nevertheless differed with others who established that husbands' religious values may be a greater forecaster of marital outcomes (Hajihassani & Sim, 2019).

When couples frequently attend religious service it was clearly observed that there is a strong tendency for the couples to have higher marital stability among males, but less likely among females (Jack et al., 2016). In a study examining predictors of marital commitment, it was established that wives' religious involvement was not related to marital results, while husbands' religious attendance was found to be strongly correlated to personal commitment to marriage (Jorgensen et al., 2016). Focusing on marital conflict, husbands' were found to be frequent religious attendees which was related with inferior probabilities of having marital disputes and marital disagreements, whereas wives' attendance was not linked with any of the outcomes (Kazemi et al., 2018).

Studies conducted from low-income married couples established that the religious attendance of the husbands' positively predicted husbands' perceptions of the marital relationship, but not no such association was established for the wives (Farrokhhabadi & Bonab, 2018). Moreover, only in families where the husbands had more religiously committed was found to be more stable in marital sense than when the wife was more in religious attendance (Kamomoe et al., 2017). The husbands' religious beliefs but rarely for the wives was therefore found to be more positive predictor of family unity, affection, admiration, mercy, or kindness (Tavakol et al., 2017c). These findings seems to recommend a better advantage in fostering marital stability for wives who married more religiously dedicated husbands, and to a less extent for the husbands married to religiously steadfast wives. The inconsistencies observed in these meta-analytical findings may be attributed to two factors. First, several studies have been conducted which are due to smaller, non-random samples or samples from a sub-population of married couples confined to a region or age, which limit generalization of the finds to other populations. The second weakness is that measure of marital stability has narrowed to a small number of specific outcomes differing between studies.

When there is a highly religious marital spouse then there is tendency to improve marital relationships that improve marital stability, then it is more reasonable to imagine that married couple would witness more camaraderie in the marital quality (Mahoney et al., 2021). Besides, principal gender customs give confidence to women to be affectionate and dedicated to their partners (Suomi et al., 2019), and therefore more religious wives will not severely dissimilar in a way they indulge with their spouses from a less religious wives. Meanwhile, religious commandments that the wife should cherish the wife, which if closely followed will be more transformative in the overall marital relationships (Mullins, 2016). This implies that beneficial results of being in a relationship with a steadfast religious partner might be moderately healthier for married women with devoted husbands.

It has been established that religious beliefs have the strongest positive liaison in the agreement between the married couples and religious inclination and marital satisfaction (Kamomoe et al., 2017). Religious beliefs generally allow for improvement, strengthening, and consolidation of the relationship among couples as far as marital stability is concerned (Johnson, 2018). Also, marriages where the partners disagree on religion is probable to have disagreement and experience marital distraction since such marriages have almost no consensuses when compared to homogamous marriages (Mahoney et al., 2020). When

spouses practice different religious affiliation there is a tendency to have lower levels of marital satisfaction (Gurrentz, 2017).

Based on the foregoing analysis religion and marital stability relying on a number of cross-sectional data, imply that the influence of religion pave the way for spousal relationships. It is clear that relationships between religiosity and family behavior are actually can take any shape like direct or reciprocal in nature. Religious behavior can sometimes change when the level of marital stability is low which create substantial queries concerning values of religious attachment, principally if religious affiliation supports the marriage. Due to changes in religious behavior owing to low marital stability, the course of the association may be contradictory of the commonly assumed direction.

2.6 Socio-cultural Factors and Marital Counselling

Defining and understanding what defines a culture is paramount. Culture may be refer to a distinct behavior, custom, conventions, or rituals that are common which can be observed, and encompass the sum total of thoughts, convictions, habits, facts, and values handed from a generation to another (Sah, 2018). In another way, culture may be regarded as a outline of responding to basic needs (Ibrahim & Heuer, 2016). Culture generally refer to a distinctive feature and way of life shared by individuals or groups of people including shared “beliefs and values, customs, and norms, religion, history, or kinship” (Thomas & Schwarzbaum, 2016). The advancement of ethnic identity take place in a sequential way during the spouse lifetime (Amoateng, 2017). This progression takes places in five stages which replicates spousal understanding of their rapport with leading culture of the people. These phases are compliance, dissonance, confrontation and fascination, introspection, and integrative consciousness.

In an ideal world, once a married couples has reached the final stage, they tend to appreciate their native culture (Agu & Nwankwo, 2019). Even though, cultural uniqueness is significant in any person, ethnic characteristics perhaps is more intricate in certain circumstances, as married couples are faced with issues such as preservation of the cultural legacy. The presence of different cultural and ethnic characteristics are vital factors of married couples identity (Sue et al., 2019). Character is developed in phases during the lifetime which necessitate periods of self-expression during which the married couples are required to evaluate themselves, their values, the roles suitable for them to make them appear distinctive

(Robinson-Wood, 2016). In general, in order to establish these identities it is essential for increasing a healthy individual identity. In most cases, when individuals have a clear ethnic value, the couples have improved psychosocial well-being, and certain in their actions and relationships (Li et al., 2016).

Socio-cultural factors determine the way people take action, believe, communicate and express their overall sensations/emotions (Henry, 2018). Culture is a behaviour that is learned being influenced by collective socialization. Culture affect the way people communicate in the structured societies, “make or build things, express feelings and emotions, and respond to the world” (Nelson et al., 2018). All the past and current cultures are passed from generation in a learning process eventually influence societal socialization. When learning has taken place, and shaped by the environment, these people have a tendency to evolve a sense of ethnic identity (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019). An ingredient of cultural exclusivity, refers to a lasting, basic characteristic of self-comprising wisdom of association in ethnic structure and emotions that relate with membership” (Merrell-James et al., 2019).

Cultural artifacts state that humans make cultural interaction to their survival demands in which case, human beings rely on their intricate culture and not sense to make sure continued existence of their kind and that appears exceptional to humankind can build culture (Falconier et al., 2016). Cultural relativism enlightens people that each culture have their own particular customs, standards, and ideals (McAuliffe, 2019). Cultural values underlie inclinations, guide selections and strengthen the values of life. Since values proffer point of view concerning objectives and behaviors, they project typical for societal life which outlines every individual action in life (Baruth & Manning, 2016).

2.6.1 Ethnic Value and Marital Counselling

Ethnicity of the people refers to their identity as being an element of an ethnic grouping, creating their unique cultural and ethnic identity. The construct of cultural personality encompass a individual or group creating cultural identifications (Purgason et al., 2016). A constituent of ethnic distinctiveness is an lasting, essential feature of individuals including a wisdom of association within an ethnic grouping and the ensuing attitudes related with that association (Cohen & Kassan, 2018). It is associated with the knowledge of acculturation, an identity that reflects the importance of individuals on their subjective culture whilst surrounded by getting on board different peers, media, convictions and customs.

Investigations concerning the relationship between ethnic value and marital counselling predict that couples who are less in ethnic beliefs are more probable to seek marital counselling than married couples who are more religious, (Moss & Willoughby, 2018). However, those predictions were based on studies done in developed countries with very little known in African context.

Individual culture has a dynamic relationship with the origin of the person, which can change with time. As people return to their culture following exposure to a new modes of living, there may be effect on marital stability (Sekibo, 2019). If there is more concentration on culture, there would be a danger of seeing the person in a conventional way if one concentrate on the person without a circumstance (Hoffman et al., 2018). Throughout, the relationship between the harmony within the individual, household system and the cultural context should be under consideration (Shiraev & Levy, 2016). Socialization process can result in low marital stability in the society (Kimanen, 2018). Character is a product of definite culture in managing marital problems, it is key that counselling discerns whether the married couple's circumstance being considered or a specific human trait (characteristics of the person within an overall societal level) (ChenFeng et al., 2017). It is stated that counselling may help the couples only by understanding the tones of individual's literary outline of situation and be able to correctly interpret the regular disparity in belief, or skill meticulous to the individualistic culture (Baruth & Manning, 2016).

In handling issues of socio-cultural challenges, marriage counselling is usually based on psychotherapy which focuses on accepting the married fishers way of interactions in the relationships (Plagnard, 2020b). It is more often than not a short-term psychotherapy that take few gatherings to resolve the challenges in the relationship. Typically, marriage counsellors may question the beliefs, roles, rules and goals of the married couples. The focal point is to aid the married couples understand each one's emotions and behavior and allow them to interpret different scenarios as honestly as possible. The counselor helping resolve marriage among couples then engage with married couple to assist them in understanding that both partners cause problems in the marital relationship (Ariyo & Mgbeokwii, 2019). If this is well known, there is a possibility of learning to change the interactions with each other in solving underlying problems. Attempts to get better in their relationship can get assist couple with behavioral problems, relationship aspects, or emotional issues by confiding in a marriage counsellor (Pauli & van Dijk, 2016).

In the course of helping couples to approve, conquer, discuss, or alter situation causing low marital stability, the aspect of individuals' culture where individuals or groups socialize in a particular way. People's personality often reflect the culture where one was socialized (Wilcox & Dew, 2016). This information provides the beginning of insight of couples. Nevertheless, it is vital to comprehend that populace are likely to internalize their customs and thus does not disclose their individual issues among themselves (Betancourt et al., 2016). It is obvious that socio-cultural factors influence counselling in many ways. An important thing to bear in mind is that cultures is similar but may also be different (Udgiri, 2017). It is therefore proper to commence a liaison recognizing the heritage shared by humanity.

Ethnic values is a categorization of people identity as part of an ethnic group, in attempting to establish a common cultural and ethnic identity (Moeti et al., 2017). Here, identity refers to the construct encompassing an individual's cultural doctrine, values and credentials (Miller et al., 2013). This will then inform the person in terms of behaviours, decisions and responses towards daily practices in life. A constituent of cultural distinctiveness or ethnic uniqueness is defined by being enduring, elementary feature of the self-including a logic of attachment in ethnic group and sentiments related with the group (Robinson-Wood, 2016), which is inclined by the knowledge of marital ties. Where ethnic values seem to be different, whether the counselor's or the client's, counter transference may be experienced posing a serious drawback to marital stability. Therapists thus need to be responsive of the personal prejudice that they may hold and influence the couples.

2.6.2 Religious Values and Marital Counselling

Religion is derived from Latin word *religare*, meaning "binding collectively or to articulate disquiet" (Sandberg, 2018). Currently, religion as an institution is visible as a way of providing an organizational arrangement for trust in the heavenly, holy, or supernatural being (Molendijk, 2018). Several ethical codes, rite practices, devotion and fêtes linked with each religious belief. Among the religions in the world, the largest are Christianity with about 2.1 billion, Islam with about 1.3 billion, agnosticism/atheism secularism with 1.1 billion followers, Hinduism with 900 million congregants, the Chinese traditional religion with a population of 394 million and Buddhism which has 376 million adherents (Johnson & Crossing, 2019). There are other religions termed non-major such as atheism, agnosticism Unitarian Universalist, secularism, paganism, and native religions, which less than 10% of

the religious sect members (Neville, 2018). It is significant that these numbers are mere estimates for the religious organization's membership which may be less accurate since most government do not consider religion in their census programs. There may be wide distribution of these religious organization but one consensus is that most of the religious organizations occur near large urban areas, while the minor religious groups have a tendency to cluster among rural communities or in areas with specific demographic aspect (Beyer, 2020). In more recent years, there has been consistent decline in proportion of Islam Budhist and Hindus at the expense of Christianity.

Religion provide several benefits to their members by preaching a unity sense of individuality and sentiment (Paul Victor & Treschuk, 2020). Additionally, religious assembly over and over again adopt definite viewpoints and demand that their congregants hold analogous, views (Urquiola, 2019). Therefore, religion here offers the populace with a mirror to observe the rear view of the world. In relation to this, religious conventions also stipulate thoughts about explicit issues and behaviors connected to adherence. While Christians have theoir ways of life derived from the Bible, five foundational principles guide Islam including (1) the belief in Muhammad as the final and greatest prophet, (2) praying five times daily, (3) giving aid (4) fasting and sexual abstinence during the holy month of Ramadan and (5) taking a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime. Meanwhile the Hindus have a conviction that reincarnation of the soul upon death into a different body (Samsara) (Acevedo, 2020). Birth into another body in the net life depend on one's deed as determined by Karma.

The aspects of religion and marital counseling as a construct has been incorrectly linked in several professional writing, despite being a very clear difference between counselling and religious based counselling relative to marital issues (Wilcox, 2018). Even though religion relative to marital counseling is not mutually limited, they are and will always remain distinct constructs (Henderson et al., 2018). As an example, religious beliefs of someone can be made clear during counselling while some other people may have a feeling that religion can possibly inhibits the full phrase of human being who have gone to seek for marital counseling. Married couple lack precision concerning many aspects to relate to their religious and spiritual perceptions, a common form of arrangement which will most likely be a mirror image of their personal understandings of, religion and marital counseling related to couples.

Religious customs also stipulated approaches on definite subjects and behaviors interrelated to observation. The quantity of obedience to religious doctrine will most probably guide the degree of loyalty among the couples and are often likely to be related to attitudes and behaviors of the married couples. In many cases, religious doctrine includes certain guiding principle for family unit in issues such as sexuality, marital roles, responsibilities and duties in the marriage (Sheehan, 2019). As a form of how religious value may affect marital issues, it is clear that many Christian religion do not allow intermarriages and therefore when one wants to marry more than one wife, they are forced to convert to another religion. Choosing the kind of religious doctrines to follow is often not easy especially when one is practicing mixed marriages (Nelson & Uecker, 2018). In marital union, the explicit duties and rights of each partner may be pre-defined, even though the degree to which these roles are adhered to can be determined in some instances by religious values (Akinyemi et al., 2017). There are so many things in life that one has to use the lens of religion to guide and wade through successfully. Whenever one is not stable in their marriage, then the role of the church and other religious organizations come into sharp focus. The religious organization can also lay a leading role in dissolving marriage that is completely broken and where the two main partners involved want to opt out (Aman et al., 2019).

It is clearly known that religion has a lot of influence on a broad range of personal issues, the marriage counselors should therefore mull over the relationship that the married couples have with religious value before attempting to solve the problems between them (Knox et al., 2019). When conducting counseling session for couples, the marriage counselors the role of spirituality among the couples should be considered because couples whose problem require spiritual solution will be content with the counselling therapy (Ellison & Xu, 2014). More important, marriage counselors ought to explore and attempt to understand the influence of their personal religious values and how it will relate with couples who sought counselling. Several models have been suggested that decipher the role of religious beliefs in predicting client behavioral response to marital issues (Worthington, 2000; Worthington Jr, 2009). It is therefore not surprising to find that couples with higher levels of religious beliefs are more inclined to use the services of marriage counselors who share similar values.

An assessment of the couples status of religious beliefs will definitely help marriage counselors to fully understand how the couples will likely to react to disputes in marriage when they are in counselling session and in general how the married couples will identify the

issues that are consideration by the counselor (Burchard et al., 2003). For this reason, marriage counselors will always take into account the religious beliefs in the couples before commencing therapy clients. Indeed, having the characteristics devoid of appreciating the level of commitment to religion values tend to limit the operation of the marriage counselors. Due to the incredible variability in religious values (Worthington Jr et al., 2013), counselling for a particular couple with defined religious values should not necessarily be construed to be similar for another couple with differing sets of religious values. There is also a need for the marriage counselling professionals to educate themselves regarding the married couples religions while allowing these people to define counselling through their prism of their religious values.

Although the practice of including religious/spiritual issues into counselling is widespread, this has often been met with a lot of resistance, more specifically from some stereotypes who have different viewpoint concerning religion vis-à-vis marital counselling (Bartoli, 2007). On the other hand, there is no denial about the role of religious values on legitimate counselling concerns. Therefore several available research that have looked at the role that marital counselling play in elevating the marital characters of the couples to ensure that they are happy with each other (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006). When one ignore the married couple's religion, it will most likely to put at risk the provision of effective marital relationship and leading to lack of potentially intervention. This is not to suggest that the marriage counsellor should be indiscriminate in their initiation of conversation of religious aspects without regarding the couple's problems. Nevertheless, religious values are usually found to be applicable to the counselling circumstance than many marriage psychologists would want to admit. While there may be notable exemptions, there is a strong conviction that this religious values in association with marital counselling captures the reluctance of many marriage psychologists to (a) investigate religious issues in marital counselling, (b) come up with strategies to deal with religious issues, and (c) conduct research with regard to religious issues in marital counselling and psychotherapy.

Marriage counsellors and psychologists are morally mandated to respect all their clients while refraining from prejudiced customs based on human differences (Aamodt & Brewster, 2022). The Ethical Principles applied to the psychologists as well as the code of conduct for most of the marriage counsellors require that they should be conscious of cultural, individual, and group roles, while trying to decipher those that arise due to age, ethnicity, gender, nationality,

disability, race, and *religion*, sexual orientation, language, and socioeconomic status (Melton, 2018). Likewise, when such disparity "significantly affect psychologists' work concerning particular individuals or groups, psychologists obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals" (p. 7). The code of conduct for psychologists does include the universal standard that marriage counsellors and psychologists "must be sensitive to cultural, contextual, gender and role differences and the impact of those on their professional practice on clients" (APS, 1999, p. 1).

Sensitizing couples during counselling session when they are with different religious backgrounds is not always quite easy (Schoeffel et al., 2018). Therefore there is an urgent need to consider the religious beliefs of the married couples and how they will impact their feelings, cognitions, and behaviours (Kennedy & Gordon, 2017). Indeed, such an awareness of religious issues was considered important enough in studies dealing with spiritual and religious issues in counselling racial and ethnic minority populations (Dixon, 2018). While religious matters go beyond ethnicity, religious values contain a myriad of diverse issue that are congruent with marital counselling (DeBlaere et al., 2019). Indeed, human beings from similar ethnic background can exhibit wide variation in their religious beliefs (Bose & Figueredo, 2021). If marriage counsellors intend to seriously address the diversity of issues concerning religious values and marital counselling, it is urgent that they consider how religious or spiritual issues may affect the married couples, and the counselling progression.

Previously some marriage counsellors are unwilling to bring religious/spiritual matters in counselling since many people (Maximo, 2019) believe that counselling should be approached from a neutral angle (Behdost et al., 2019). The marriage counsellors are not expected to compel his/her self-beliefs on the couples. Either explicitly or implicitly, the religious values are likely to have an effect on the way in human behaviour are construed, the counselling model adopted, the techniques used (Rosmarin et al., 2019). Although, there are published work in the areas of the psychology of religion including the integration of psychology and religion (Sandage & Brown, 2018). There are classic studies on "Psychotherapy and Religious Values" which was a watershed in motivating conversation on the significance of religious values in marital counselling (Bergin & Payne, 2019; Maximo, 2019). In arguing the values of an inevitable and pervasive part of psychotherapy, there is an interesting disparity between atheist or religious values (Captari et al., 2018). Rather than

ignoring the religious values, it may be ethical to recognize that there is need to implement the value systems through professional work and be more explicit regarding respect the value systems.

There are a number of studies that have demonstrated religious-compliant approaches cannot improve outcomes of marital counseling that does not focus religious values of the married couples (Lee & Baumann, 2019). Honestly, those consequences are no surprise through integration of the religious factors, the counselor accept and respect religious couples, which in return is expected to amplify hope and promote the beneficial counseling therapies. It has been shown elsewhere that religious values is an invaluable factor for instilling and facilitating constructive coping, emotional well-being, and flexibility in religious couple (Singh & Madan, 2017). Encouraging the married couples to engage in religious events, or to improve their visits to place of worship provide religious constituents that can be incorporated into counselling to drive the processes. Despite of the evidence that support integration of religious values into counselling, there is still much less research in the developing countries of Africa. Incorporating religious values in counselling would necessitate the marriage counsellor to get an in-depth appreciation of the couples' religion and to value relevant religious values in the process.

Investigations concerning relationship between religious beliefs and marital counselling predict that married couples who are less religious are more likely to seek marital counselling than couples who are more religious, (Moss & Willoughby, 2018). However, those predictions were based on studies done in developed countries with very little known in African context. Religious values has a significant function in intensification and marital stability (Moslehi & Ahmadi, 2013). There are a number of studies and reviews that have indicated an average to strong relationship between religious values and marital satisfaction (Sorokowski et al., 2017). Other studies have indicated appropriate criterion for marital spouse adherence to religious beliefs was among the first priorities (Haghighizadeh et al., 2010; Moslehi & Ahmadi, 2013). After marriage, there was a positive relationship between religious adherence and marital satisfaction (David & Stafford, 2015).

In marital relationships where counseling is involved, religious values is about the apparent things such as traditions, customs, rituals, or something that is the central part which makes married people from different cultures think and behave differently (Gaines Jr, 2014). Several

outstanding studies have indicated that the significance value as the interior of culture and other visible practices and the way people act together (Eringa et al., 2015). In order to ethically apply religiously sensitive counseling, psychologists must display the proper knowledge. This is also reflected to a definite degree of critical self-likeness on how religion and culture influences behaviors (Cunha & Scorsolini - Comin, 2019). In line with current research findings in counselling and psychology it is clear that counselors should talk about religion and the significance it holds to the couples at an early summit in the counselling to set proper lessons to evaluate potential involvement of religious ingredients.

From the review of the literature in this section, religious issues should be considered in the counselling context since (a) such beliefs are common and will without doubt come up in psychotherapy; (b) it is bound to consider how diverse aspects including religious beliefs and/or practices, can have some influence on emotions, and behaviours; (c) holistic approaches that should be considered of religious issues, which is relevant and (d) acknowledging values that they have no manner concerning psychologists. Whilst some noteworthy exceptions exist, marital counselors are generally lagging behind in stimulating argument, conducting research, and making applications in the realm of religious issues in counselling.

2.7 Summary

Relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers was examined empirically and theoretically in the light of available and presented literature. It is seen as a fundamental recipe for marital stability and marital counselling. It is also vital in understanding the socio-cultural factors that affect marriage for it outlines categorically, religious beliefs and the ethnic values. It also presents the various categories of levels of marriage and how couples feel about their levels of marital stability, namely satisfied-stable, satisfied-unstable, unsatisfied-stable, unsatisfied-unstable marriages. The presented literature review also sets a good start off in order to understand the selected socio-cultural factors and how the fishers relate with them. The literature sheds light in understanding marital counselling. Selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers even though have been used in the past studies is however scant in literature. This showed the need to research more and establish the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and

seeking marital counselling. Even though the literature is scarce, it did offer a good foundation and information worth basing the work on for reliable result. The literature review offered insight and inspiration into emotional aspects of the fishers, marital stability and the need for marital counselling. It did also offer inspiration into understanding the selected socio-cultural factors namely religious beliefs and ethical values and how fishers relate with them.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This guide for this study owes its origin to Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (Verenikina, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's theory helps in understanding human behaviour in the social and cultural context. The power of Vygotsky's ideas lies in his explanation that the development of every individual results from their culture. Ability is therefore known to develop through societal connections with others (Lantolf, 2000; Robbins, 2001). In order to appreciate why humans, act the way they do and their personality development, Vygotsky seeks to examine the regulations of the groups and subgroups. These regulations are unwritten directives directing people's actions. The socio-cultural viewpoint therefore looks at you, your behaviours, and your symptoms in the context of your culture and background. Vygotsky presents culture as providing an individual with means to, what to believe and how one is able to think (Vasta et al., 1995), as a process of adaptation, transition and internalization upon full social interaction, and as an individual experiences full development.

In the social sources of development, Vygotsky maintains that everyone develops depending on transmitted experiences of others with more experience (Rogoff, 1990). Our present actions are a result of what we learnt earlier through interaction with self and others in the cultural and social context. Married fishers live within the context of their daily social and cultural practices. Past experiences shape their way of living including the bringing up of children. Their attitude towards marriage stem from the fact that they live in a community where they also see what other people do. This therefore builds them positively or negatively. In the process of development, an individual through others is able to resolve predicaments, conquer impulsive action, prepare a answer before trying it out and manage own behaviour (Poyrazli et al., 2010). Cultural factors under which married fishers operate have a significant effect on their behaviour and decision. They are influenced from sets of customs, convictions and standards derived from family background. What people experience from their childhood often becomes part of their culture. They may understand conflict, unfaithfulness and

mistrust, domestic violence, sexual abuse and coping may be difficult leading to marital instability. This study provides a ground to put emphasis on the importance of establishing whether the selected socio-cultural factors affect marital stability and counselling and how to encourage coping within the context.

Any behaviour should be understood by looking back at the development process. From childhood to adulthood, and changes experienced. Socio-cultural theory emphasizes the decisive task of the social background in cognitive and social growth (Vygotsky, 1978). Most fishers engage in diverse religious beliefs, but some still believe in traditional doctrines and myths. Socio-cultural environment among the fishers may not encourage them to adapt to any religious changes that would expose them to better understanding of family issues and marital stability. They may not want to find other solutions regarding their marital problems. Through work inheritance and the experience married fishers go through, they tend to easily embrace traditional religious beliefs despite the challenges involved.

Vygotsky looks at cultural artefacts with human actions. He maintains that human actions be considered in relationship with the other components of an activity system (Engeström, 1999). He looks at dialogues, multiple perspectives, and networks of interactions within the family. Contradictions and struggles within the family can lead to marital instability but if well engaged will lead to change, thus positive relationship. Actions and interactions in the family are often guide by multiple contexts of social and cultural factors. Couple attitudes, ethnic values and religious beliefs are informed by the daily practices that have been carried along from the past by the community. There seems to be practices of myriad of traditionally beached and culturally negotiated customs embedded in couples' way of life. In the process of negotiation to allow change, conflict may arise causing marital instability. Vygotsky therefore is relevant and may help in understanding the relationship between the socio-cultural factors and their effect on marital stability and counselling.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Based on the notion that socio-cultural factors may affect the overall marital stability and counselling seeking behaviour, the conceptual framework developed for the purpose of this study is shown in Figure 1.

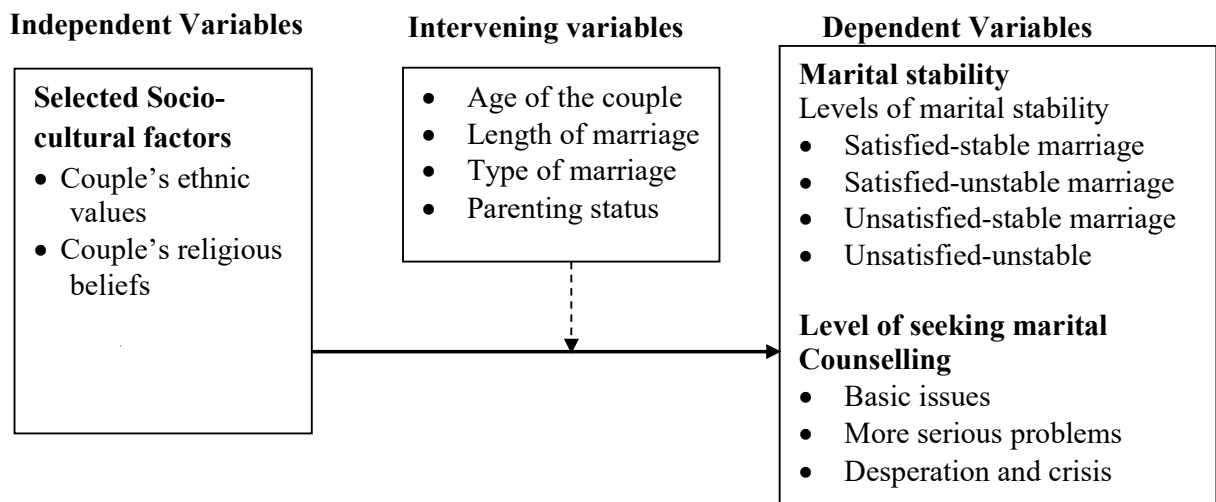


Figure 1

Relationship between Selected Socio-cultural Factors and Marital Stability and Level of Seeking Marital Counselling

According to Figure 1, study hypothesized a relationship between the selected socio-cultural factors (couples' ethnic values and religious beliefs) and level of marital stability (Satisfied-stable marriage, Satisfied-unstable marriage, Unsatisfied-stable marriage and Unsatisfied-unstable) and seeking marital counselling (Basic issues, more serious problems and desperation and crisis). The interplay of these factors influences marital stability and counselling. The figure shows that couple's ethnic values and religious beliefs affected the marital stability (Satisfied-stable marriage, Satisfied-unstable marriage, Unsatisfied-stable marriage and Unsatisfied-unstable) and counselling seeking behaviour. The intervening variables include age of the couple, length of marriage, type of marriage and parenting status which should remain constant for the relationship to hold.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides information on the methodology that was used to complete the research process. The information comprises; the research design, the location of the study, the target population, sampling procedures, sample size, instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a mixed methods research. In general, mixed methods research where both the qualitative and quantitative data is collected, analysed, and interpreted in a single study or in a series of studies where there is analysis of the same fundamental fact (Bentahar & Cameron, 2015). The current study utilized concurrent transformative design where both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time. In this research design, qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analysed simultaneously allowing for perspectives from each to be explored. The conduct of the study was informed by a theoretical perspective and data that was integrated during the interpretation phase.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Siaya County which is one of the six counties in the Nyanza region (Appendix F). The study location was selected due to previous information on low marital stability and conservative nature of the locals to the socio-cultural factors. The county is about 400 km from Nairobi, the Kenyan Capital City. The altitude of the County rises from 1,140 m on the shores of Lake Victoria to 1,400 m above sea level on the North. Siaya County is dominated by Luo people speaking Luo dialect. The main livelihoods of the Luo people in Siaya County are fishing, farming and pastoral herding however fishing is more practiced. The county is divided into six sub-counties namely; Siaya, Gem, Bondo, Rarieda, Ugenya and Ugunja. Siaya County has 67 beaches (Siaya County Report, 2018). The researcher focussed on the main landing sites which include Kadenge, Ndayi, Kamariga and Usenge. Siaya County was chosen because of the reported cases of low marital stability in earlier literature (Potash, 1978). Map of the study location is presented in Appendix F.

3.4 Target Population of the Study

A population is a group of entity/object whose focus is the scientific query (Hennink et al., 2020). This group of individuals often have a common trait which may be investigated for their attributes. The study population comprised of 10370 registered married fishers in the main landing sites of Siaya County, 75 beach leaders and 23 religious' leaders (Siaya County Statistics, 2018). All these population were accessible. The total population was derived from the six sub counties. The total number of people in each sub county are (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2018): Siaya (224,343), Bondo (197,883), Gem (179,792), Rarieda (152,570), Ugenya (134,354) and Ugunja (104,241).

The target population comprised 10,370 residents at the landing sites. Table 1 summarises the distribution of the population size at the landing sites.

Table 1

Distribution of Population Size at Landing Sites

Landing Sites	Fishers			Beach Leaders			Religious Leaders		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kadenge	952	1354	2306	8	3	11	3	2	5
Ndayi	979	1535	2514	12	2	14	5	1	7
Kamariga	1084	1531	2615	13	4	17	4	1	5
Usenge	1192	1743	2935	27	6	33	5	1	6
Total	4207	6163	10370	60	15	75	17	6	23

Source: Siaya County Statistics (2018).

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

From a target population of each unit, the sample size was determined using Yamane formula

(Yamane, 1973): thus $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$.

Where n = required responses

N = Population

e² = error limit (0.1 for samples between 100 to 1000)

Married fishers were determined as: n for respondents = $\frac{10370}{1 + 10370 * 0.1^2} = 99$

There were three methods used in sampling design: stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling. The first method was stratified random sampling

where the total population was divided into minor strata. The strata were formed according to some characteristics experienced in the population data. Upon division of the population into strata, the researcher randomly selected a sample in a proportion. In this study, married fishers, beach leaders and religious leaders were stratified into male and female. The sample size of male and female fishers was determined as a proportion of the total population. Simple random sampling was then utilised to identify the female and male fishers. Purposive sampling was utilised to select two beach leaders and two religious' leaders for each landing site. The study identified male and female beach and religious leaders who had interacted with the fishers at the landing sites over the longest period of time. The sample size was arrived at as summarised in table 2. Therefore, the sample size was 99 married fishers, 8 beach leaders and 8 religious' leaders.

Table 2

Distribution of Sample Size

Landing sites	Fishers			Beach Leaders			Religious Leaders		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Kadenge	9	12	21	1	1	2	1	1	2
Ndayi	9	15	24	1	1	2	1	1	2
Kamariga	10	17	27	1	1	2	1	1	2
Usenge	11	17	28	1	1	2	1	1	2
Total	40	59	99	4	4	8	4	4	8

Source: Siaya County Statistics (2018).

Accordingly, Kadenge had a total of 31, Ndayi had a total of 37, Kamariga had a total of 41 while Usenge had a total of 52 respondents as presented in Table 2.

3.6 Instrumentation

The instruments for data collection were interview schedule and interview guide as described below.

3.6.1 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule used in this study was for the fishers (Appendix 1). Items in the interview schedule were designed and used to collect data directly from the married fishers while the interview guide was designed to collect data from the beach leaders and religious leaders. The items were in both closed and open-ended structure and administered to all

sampled fishers. The instruments were designed to ensure the in-depth exploration of personal views, feelings and opinions the extent to which the selected socio-cultural practices affect marital stability and counselling. Interview guide was designed and used in order to get detailed information from the beach leaders and religious leaders of the fishers. The researcher recorded the sessions which were later transcribed and coded according to the emerging themes for analysis.

The scoring of the instrument was done to establish the levels of marital stability, seeking of marital counselling, religious beliefs and ethnic values. The scoring of these variables is presented in Table 3. In determining the marital stability, 28 items based on Likert scale 1 to 5 were used where the lowest score was 28 and maximum score of 140. To determine seeking marital counselling, a total of 15 items with Likert scores were used. For the religious values, the number of items were 15 while ethnic values also having 15 items based on Likert scores of 1 to 5. The questions that elicited negative responses were reverse scored.

Table 3

Scoring Metrics for the Instruments

Variable	Scores	Classification
Marital Stability	28-71	Unsatisfied-unstable
	72-99	Unsatisfied-stable
	100-128	Satisfied-unstable
	>128	Satisfied-stable
Level of Seeking Marital Counselling	< 37.5	Basic issues
	37.5-52.5	More serious Issues
Religious Values	> 52.5	Desperation and Crisis
	< 37.5	Low
	37.5-52.5	Neutral
Ethnic Values	> 52.5	High
	< 37.5	Low
	37.5-52.5	Neutral
	> 52.5	High

3.6.2 Interview Guide

An interview guide is a list of the high-level topics that a researcher plan on covering in the interview with the high-level questions that one wants to answer under each topic.

Interview guide was done with the beach leaders (Appendix 2) and religious leaders (Appendix 3) to gather information on high level topics of the research.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

3.7.1 Validity

The researcher developed the interview schedule and guide in line with the research objectives. The salience of the instruments was sought by providing the interview schedule and guides to 2 experts in the field of Counselling Psychology at the Department of Counselling Psychology of Egerton University. This was to purposely ascertain the item's face and content validities. Their comments and suggestions were used to improve the items in the instruments.

3.7.2 Reliability

The reliability of instruments was established through a pilot study in Luanda Kotieno Beach. The beach was selected as a case in point to represent all other beaches. Twenty married fishers participated in the pilot study, which represent 20% of the sample size. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the interview schedule. The study considered the instrument reliable and acceptable if the computation yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above, which is considered acceptable in most social sciences research (Taber, 2018). The reliability coefficient of the current research estimated was 0.85 and it was considered adequate.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Once the research proposal was approved, the researcher obtained the introductory letter from the Graduate School, Egerton University. The researcher then applied for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Thereafter the researcher visited the study area and through the beach leaders, planned with individual respondents on the appropriate date and time for data collection. The researcher assistants were trained for 2 weeks on how to conduct interviews with the respondents for the data collection. The entire data collection exercise was one month. The researcher used two research assistants who communicated in the local dialect. The research assistants administered the interview schedule to the fishers and the researcher conducted the interviews with religious and beach leaders.

3.9 Data Analysis

Collected data was coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version (23.0) computer package (SPSS, 2011) before analysis. Data on characteristics of the fishers, marital stability, seeking marital counselling, religious belief and ethnic values were analysed through frequencies and percentages. Differences between marital stability and seeking marital counselling relative to age of marriage, length of marriage, type of marriage and parental status were analysed using cross-tabulation. The relationship between ethnic values and religious beliefs relative to marital stability and marital counselling were analysed using Spearman Correlation analysis.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly stuck to ethical standards required in research vis-a-vis: anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. Anonymity allowed the research not to collect and identify information from the subjects (such as the names, physical address and email address). Confidentiality ensured that the researcher does not divulge character of respondents or their organizations. Informed consent for the study was acquired from study subjects including authorization from the beach management leaders. These measures enhanced the willingness and objectivity of the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the data collected from the field. The data analysed and presented were based on the responses to the items in the administered questionnaires as per the objectives and research questions of the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: i) Response rate, (ii) characteristics of respondents, (iii) Level of Marital Stability among Fishers (iv) Level of Seeking Marital Counselling, (v) Relationship between Religious beliefs and Marital Stability, (vi) Relationships between Religious beliefs and level of seeking marital counselling, (vii) Relationship between Ethnic Values and Marital Stability and; (vi) Relationship between Ethnic Values and level of seeking marital counselling.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher sampled 99 married fishers, 43 beach leaders and 19 religious' leaders. They were provided with the questionnaires and the response rates to the questionnaires are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Response Rate to the Interview Schedule and Interview Guide

Respondents	Sample Size	Number of Respondents	Response Rate (%)
Married Fishers	99	95	96.0
Beach Leaders	43	42	93.3
Religious Leaders	19	16	84.2
Total	163	153	93.9

Response rate for the married fishers was 96.0% while that of the beach leaders was 93.3% and religious leaders 84.2%. These response rates were considered very good when compared to the recommended response rates to verify consistency of measurements required for analysis of over 60% (Greco et al., 2018).

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Married Fishers

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the fishers including age, parental status, type of family, and type of marriage. This was meant to generate responses which are representative of the general view of the respondents where the research was conducted. Table 5 summarises fishers' characteristics by age, parenting status, type of family and type of marriage.

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of Married Fishers

Variable	Range	Married fishers (n = 95)	
		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-25 years	12	12.6
	26-35 years	17	17.9
	36-55 years	31	32.6
	> 55 years	35	36.8
Length of marriage	< 1 year	31	32.6
	1-5 years	8	8.4
	6-10 years	30	31.6
	> 10 years	26	27.4
Type of marriage	Monogamous	32	33.7
	Polygamous	63	66.3
Parenting status	Parenting	72	75.8
	Non-parenting	23	24.2
	Total	95	100

The results show that among the married fishers, 36% of the respondents were aged over 55 years, while 32.6% were aged between 36 to 55 years, and those between 18 to 25 years were 12.6%. The results for the three groups suggest that the age distribution is skewed towards elderly who are mainly above the age of 35 years. In most parts of Africa, marriages take place when a man is around 30 to 35 years and the woman around 26 to 30 years (Kaufman & Nandi, 2015; Maswikwa et al., 2015). Most men in newly wed relationships are often in major towns in search of livelihood and therefore chances of encountering young couples in rural areas is often low. As a result, the large numbers of elderly married fishers are most likely to be encountered in homesteads. Several years ago, marriage among women in most of sub-Saharan Africa could be described as early and near-universal (Hunter, 2016; Okpewho, 2018; Phillips, 2018). However, it is apparent that in the past, there is a trend toward delays in the onset of marriage, with early marriage becoming less frequent among

the populace (Shapiro & Gebreselassie, 2014). Therefore, in the current study, observation of more elderly couple is in line with the changes in marital norms in the current society within Sub Saharan Africa.

In terms of parenting status, the study established that 76% of the married fishers were parenting. Since most of the respondents were elderly, it is probable to find this group to have children and performing parental duties. In most of the African culture, children are the most emphasized aspect during marriage and therefore most of the families are setup to raise children (Apt, 2002) and therefore not surprising to find most of the families as parenting.

In terms of types of marriage, the study established that, most had extended families compared to nuclear families indicating that marriage in the study area still relied on the traditional marriage customs where polygamy is still acceptable norm. This issue was more complex transcending the normal man and wife relationships as outlined in another study (Myers, 2018). Marriage system in Africa has common features of involving not just the man wife and children but also include close and other distant relatives which make them more extended as a rule; unions are often more than one lineage groups and more than few family members (Phillips, 2018).

Finally, the study established that polygamy still dominates the marriage type even among the religious leaders. Approximately 85% of societies in the anthropological record permit men to marry multiple wives (Wamwara, 2019) thus taking several wives is always positively associated with status, wealth or nobility (Lawson & Gibson, 2018). Polygamy is one of the many practices still rampant in many African societies which is an ethnic customs for many African based societies (Amony, 2019; André & Dupraz, 2019; Fenske, 2015), thus it is not surprising to establish that in the current study, polygamy was more dominant.

4.4 Marital Stability among Fishers

The first objective of the study therefore sought to determine marital stability among married fishers in Siaya County.

4.4.1 Level of Marital Stability among Fishers

The first objective of the study was to determine the level of marital stability among married fishers in Siaya County. The level of marital stability was based on scoring of the interview

schedule among the fishers in Siaya County. The fishers' responses were summarized into four categories as: satisfied-stable marriages, satisfied-unstable marriages, unsatisfied-stable marriages and unsatisfied-unstable marriages as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Level of Marital Stability among Fishers

Level of marital stability	<i>f</i>	(%)
Satisfied-Stable Marriage	8	8.4
Satisfied-Unstable Marriage	16	16.8
Unsatisfied-Stable Marriage	54	56.8
Unsatisfied-Unstable Marriage	17	17.9
Total	95	(99.9)*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents had unsatisfied-stable level of marital stability (56.8%), followed those with unsatisfied-unstable marriage. These results indicated that most couples were in stable marriage but were unhappy. Unsatisfied-stable marriage is the hallmark of several marriages in Africa (Fledderjohann, 2017). Most couples never care enough to pick the little flaws and rework on the marriage, leaving a stuck wound and unresolved conflict within each partner and therefore occurrence of unsatisfied-stable marriage has been reported to dominate most marriages in Africa (Kurdek, 2002). In Kenya, it was reported that most couples get married without any form of pre-marital counselling and therefore likely to have low marital quality which was associated with most unsatisfied marriages (Odero, 2019). Although there are no such studies in Siaya County, the available findings in Kenya indicate that most couples in unsatisfied-stable relationship fear that if they end their marriage they will be subject to societal ridicule and the children will suffer as a consequence (Ndungu, 2017). Further to that, there is the societal view that once married, the couple should stick to the union to avoid ridicule by the community. In fact, a number of available studies suggest that most of the couples fear to dissolve unsatisfactory marriage because of the fear that the children will suffer the consequences, and they will be stigmatized leading them to just hang in into the relationship (Masua, 2016). Another reason is that most of the couples have fear that it will lead to sharing of the family belongings (Goodman et al., 2019).

The results in Table 6 further showed that respondents in unsatisfied-unstable marriage (17.9%) were similar in proportion to those in satisfied-unstable marriage (16.8%). In this context, most of the couples are in unstable marriage, but they still remain in their marriage satisfied. According to Social exchange theory, relationships grow, develop, deteriorate and dissolve as a social-exchange process, a consequence of rewards and costs between the partners. This will then mean that the couples consider options and remain in marriage irrespective of the challenges that surrounds them. The attractions within the relationship may not be adequate, and barriers to leaving the relationship are even higher. They will therefore remain satisfied- unstable. When couples are unsatisfied- unstable in their marriage, there is constant threat. Such couples may not be strong and resilient against common issues and obstacles within their marriage. They often experience persistent undertone of drama and disagreements are quick to escalate. When marriage is under unsatisfied-unstable, couples think and go for worst scenario (Brook, 2016). The study therefore was relevant in that it would identify and help address cases in terms of counselling before worst scenarios are experienced.

Finally results presented in Table 6 revealed that 8.4% of the couples were in a satisfied-stable (8.4%). This could be attributed to couples who had the ability to practise less dysfunctional individual coping strategies and relied more frequently on interpersonal (dyadic) coping when dealing with stressful situations between them (Wadsworth, 2016). Successful marriages must be developed and in order to achieve the marital stability (White et al., 2019). The level of marital stability under satisfied-stable however had the lowest response rate which suggests that few couples were in happy marriages.

4.4.2 Level of Marital Stability by Age of the Fishers

The study further sought to establish the level of marital stability by age. Cross tabulation of the percentage of the fishers with levels of marital stability by the age of the couples is shown in Table 7.

Table 7*Level of Marital Stability by Age of the Fishers*

	Age (year)									
	18-25		26-35		36-55		> 55		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Satisfied-Stable Marriage	5	5.3	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.1	8	8.4
Satisfied-Unstable Marriage	2	2.1	7	7.4	1	1.1	6	6.3	16	16.8
Unsatisfied-Stable Marriage	5	5.3	9	9.5	17	17.9	23	24.2	54	56.8
Unsatisfied-Unstable Marriage	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	12.6	5	5.3	17	17.9
Total	12	12.7	17	18	31	32.7	35	36.9	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

As indicated in Table 7, most of the couples who were in unsatisfied–stable marriage (24.2%) were aged between 36-55. Marital relationships have often been described using a “U-curve pattern (Graham & Pozuelo, 2017) with people generally affirming that their marriages are happiest during the early years, but not as happy during the middle years. Marital satisfaction then increases in the later years after finances have stabilized and parenting responsibilities have ended, (Craig, 2015). During the age between 36-55, relationships dissolve for as many reasons as there are numbers of challenges. In some cases, the couple cannot handle an extended crisis, the spouses change and grow in different directions and still in others, the spouses are completely incompatible from the very start. Conflicts, problems, growing out of love, and “empty nest”, feeling a lack of purpose in life or emotional stress demand to children’s need, and children who have left home, all are inevitable aspects (Solomon, 2016).

Table 7 pointed out that couples under the same age also experienced unsatisfied- unstable marriage (12.6%). During these ages, interpersonal disagreements may increase as the couple becomes better acquainted. Couples who never learned how to communicate their concerns and needs effectively with their spouse or how to work through conflicts are more likely to become separated, low marital stability d or in this scenario, remain in the marriage but unsatisfied-unstable. Most couples aged 36-55, quarrel and argue, but few know how to work at resolving conflicts making their marriages unsatisfied-unstable.

Table 7 also shows that couples in satisfied-unstable marriage at 16.8 % were aged between 26-35. This is confirmed by the literature review when couples at this age bracket experience marital failures arising from some certain behaviours or attitudes formed and exhibited by one of the married partners. Some couples may not have fully made up their minds into marriage, finances may be difficult to manage or may not be there, and conflict may be frequent, (Stinson et al., 2017). Such couples may have negative beliefs, knowledge, and wrong perception that contribute to dissatisfaction and rising up of accusations which result into marital breakdown. It has therefore been generally concluded that dissatisfaction of one partner reflects a negative signal that produces negative message and behavioural tendencies such as apathy, sarcasm, accusations and so on (Yucel, 2016).

According to results in Table 7, couples who experienced satisfied-stable marriage at 8.4% were aged between 18-25. Those couples who were within the 18-25 age group enjoyed satisfied-stable marriage meaning they were also young in their union, and much of responsibility and conflict could be at minimum. This trend however could be seen changing as the couples grow older. This shows that marital stability is affected by age of the respondents.

Also results in table 7 shows that majority of the satisfied-stable marriage occurred at the age of 18-25 years while most of the satisfied-unstable marriage occurred at the age 26-35 years. Both older and more recent studies have suggested that the negative components of marital relationships tend to be more closely associated with marital longevity than do the positive components of the physical and psychological well-being of couples (Karimi et al., 2019a), while many other studies have reported that positive aspects of relationships protect marital stability (Vaterlaus et al., 2017). Majority of the respondents attested that they experienced unsatisfied-stable marriage, majority in the category were aged 36 years and above. Finally, most of the respondents experiencing unsatisfied-unstable marriage were aged 36-55 years. These results suggest that marriage is often stable and satisfied as marriage at its inception and instability increase with age but at later stage of marriage there is more stability in the marriage. Similar finding has been reported in Kenya (Buswell & Corcoran-Nantes, 2018) .

4.4.3 Level of Marital Stability by Length of Marriage

This study determined level of marital stability by length in marriage. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8*Level of Marital Stability by Length of Marriage*

	Length of marriage (years)									
	< 1 year		1-5 years		6-10 years		> 10 years		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Satisfied-Stable Marriage	6	6.3	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	1.1	8	8.4
Satisfied-Unstable Marriage	2	2.1	8	8.4	0	0.0	6	6.3	16	16.8
Unsatisfied-Stable Marriage	11	11.6	8	8.4	19	20.0	16	16.8	54	56.8
Unsatisfied-Unstable Marriage	3	3.2	0	0.0	10	10.5	4	4.2	17	17.9
Total	22	23.2	16	16.8	30	31.6	27	28.4	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

The results in Table 8 indicate that there was a difference in the marital stability based on length of marriage. The study established that most of the married fishers who had stayed in marriage for more than five years were under unsatisfied- stable marriage having a response of 20% and 16.8%. This confirms an earlier literature review which reported that in most marriages, couples are hard pressed but do not leave due to community perspective and the view on low marital stability or separation (Maciver & Dimkpa, 2012). There has been debate about marital stability and length of marriage, where level of marital stability has been determined as related to length of marriage (Gill, 2019). Some remain in marriage though unsatisfied only for the sake of the children (Esere et al., 2011). There are individual differences in the path that marital stability follows over time, however, as not all marital stability decreases in a linear way (a slow, steady decrease), but may include more dramatic decreases at times, or may even increase in some instances.

The results in table 8 further established that those who had been in marriage for five years and below however rated lower indicating that the more one stays in marriage, the more issues arise, and the more marriage becomes complex. Extrapolating from the findings, it is often believed that there is a continuing decline in marital stability over the course of marriage. Marital stability appears to follow a curvilinear path over the course of marriage (Bellani et al., 2018), starting high, dropping sharply after the birth of children, reaching an all-time low when children are adolescents, and then increasing as children leave home and couples retire thus the findings was in line with what other writers had also found out.

Satisfied- stable, satisfied-unstable, and unsatisfied-unstable marriages however, all rated lower. The unsatisfied-stable marriage shows that marriage is bad, and this is where most respondents were. This confirms the earlier report that Siaya County had recorded poor marital stability.

Most of those who had been married for less than one year experienced satisfied-stable marriages. This may attribute to societal pressure and children responsibilities causing a lot of strains in a relationship as reported in a previous study (Kabete, 2017). Among those with satisfied-unstable marriage majority had been married for 1-5 years which were followed by those married for over 10 years. The findings suggest that staying longer in marriage results in the couples becoming unsatisfied with their marriages. This could be because of most people in marriage becoming “bored” with each other after long period of staying together (Kiara, 2019). Inconsistent findings have been reported in the literature regarding whether negative or positive aspects of marital relationships are associated with marital length. There are some findings which have reported that the longer humans stay together, the more they find faults with each other because at the start of a relationship most of the partners hide a lot of their characters which become exposed in marriage (Wachira et al., 2017).

4.4.4 Level of Marital Stability by Type of Marriage

The study sought to establish the level of marital stability by type of marriage. Table 9 summarizes cross-tabulation of the type of marriage of the fishers and level of marital stability.

Table 9

Level of Marital Stability by Type of Marriage

	Type marriage					
	18-25		26-35		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Satisfied-Stable Marriage	5	5.3	3	3.2	8	8.4
Satisfied-Unstable Marriage	3	3.2	13	13.7	16	16.8
Unsatisfied-Stable Marriage	15	15.8	40	41.1	54	56.8
Unsatisfied-Unstable Marriage	9	9.5	8	8.4	17	17.9
Total	32	33.8	64	66.4	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

Based on the results on Table 9, respondents under monogamous marriage were satisfied and stable in their marriages (5.3%) while most of those in polygamous marriages were unsatisfied–stable (41.1%). Those who are in a polygamous marriage often live in fear of divided attention and love. Emotionally, couples in polygamous marriage live in conflict and misunderstanding among the couples. Peaceful stay is often disrupted by seasonal jealousy and sometimes the leader being the man may not be able to financially meet the needs of the entire family thus competition among the wives and children erupts (Samad et al., 2016). There are disputes about inheritance, and in the case of bankruptcy, the family remains uninsured. Less time and attention are given to children exposing them to all forms of lifestyle. Polygamy is associated with mental illness (in particular, depression and anxiety) among women and children thus may compromise marital stability. Men have also been found to play it tough in the face of conflict and anxiety in polygamous homes despite all the other challenges they face.

It has been found that a disproportionate number of people in polygamous marriages rate high among psychiatric outpatient and inpatient populations in most health facilities and those polygamous families, especially reported more psychological distress and crisis in life. Those in polygamous marriages also report low self-esteem and less life satisfaction as compared to those in monogamous marriages. Fishers in Siaya who are polygamous thus experience marital instability and there is need to enhance the approach and provide way out in order to attain stability in marriage. As a universal social institution, marriage exist in all societies and at all stages of development (Beegam et al., 2017). Types of marriage vary from society to society and each differ according to their customs, practices and systems of thought (Smadi, 2017). However, with the different types of marriage, families may experience different levels of marital stability (Bellani et al., 2018).

The research determined whether the level of marital stability was different based on the type of marriage. The results in Table 9 indicate that marital stability is related to type of marriage. The current results compare well with a similar study conducted in Ethiopia where marital stability was found to be unsatisfied-stable and its stability was largely related to the family structure (John et al., 2017). The main reason for the differences in marital stability relative to type of marriage may be associated with increased family responsibilities and roles, financial strains and managing marital expectations, which are more complex in polygamous families.

4.4.5 Level of Marital Stability by Parenting Status

The study determined level of marital stability by parenting status and Table 10 summarizes cross-tabulation of the parenting status of the fishers and level of marital stability.

Table 10

Level of Marital Stability by Parenting Status

	Parenting		Non parenting		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Satisfied-Stable Marriage	7	7.4	1	1.1	8	8.4
Satisfied-Unstable Marriage	6	6.3	10	10.5	16	16.8
Unsatisfied-Stable Marriage	45	47.4	9	9.5	54	56.8
Unsatisfied-Unstable Marriage	14	14.7	3	3.2	17	17.9
Total	72	75.8	23	24.3	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

From the result in table 10, most of the couples who were parenting were under unsatisfied-stable marriage and unsatisfied- unstable marriage at 47.4% and 14.7% respectively and this shows that there were differences in marital stability based on parenting status. Supportive relationship between and among the parents and children is essential to develop healthy families in all aspects of life. Parents who are in positive relationships, have better mental and physical health and performance and in turn influence their children positively. A successful parenting is both men's and women's best bet for living healthy and happy as this provides the optimal conditions for bearing and raising children as well as maintaining family bonds.

Challenges in parenting include dissolutions, separations, dissatisfactions and even misunderstandings as well and may lead to unexpected conflict and arguments (Killewald, 2016). This is the reason as to why those parenting experiences more challenges that leads to most of them not satisfied yet have to hang on for the sake of the children. Parenting has been defined as the process of raising and educating a child from birth or before until adulthood (Gao et al., 2019). Synonymously, parenting refers to carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realize his or her full potential as a human being. This implies that parenting is the process of taking care or supporting a child from birth to adulthood involving the physical, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. Parenting therefore requires interpersonal skills and again makes

emotional demands and may be displayed in different parenting styles in order to achieve the parenting goal.

According to the results in table 10, couples with satisfied -stable marriage as well as the unsatisfied-stable majority were parenting. This suggests that most of those parenting were either satisfied - stable in their marriage or unsatisfied but stable in their marriage. Meanwhile majority of the people with satisfied-unstable were not parenting. Parents provide a framework within which the child may find roots, continuity and a sense of belonging. Parenthood and parenting have existed since the beginning of social life. Both mothers and fathers have remained contributors to the development of their children. A father is seen as bridge by which the child reaches the outside world (Soenens et al., 2017). While mother symbolizes an emotional support, interpersonal sensitivity and help giver etc. Congenial parenting correlates with good relationships between husband and wife. It is important to remember that parents have a relationship with each other as well as with their children.

Parents serve as source of mutual emotional and physical support and comfort and such support is especially important in their roles as caretakers. Positive parent-child relationships have been found when spouses are mutually supportive. When parents have more supportive and less conflicted couple and co-parenting relationships, the entire family system is equipped to better handle stressors in their lives, which helps to maintain family cohesion and child safety and permanency. The family will therefore learn to make active choices about relational commitment and encouraging the safe dissolution of dangerous and violent relationships leading to a lasting, stable, mutually satisfying marriage. Marriage relationship has important implications not only for the immediate marital satisfaction of the couple but also for the psychological development of their children. Marital stability happens to be an index of the nature of mutual identification and sharing of responsibilities and commitments of the post marital period of husband and wife. When couples take up their responsibilities, there is increasing individual and couple understanding of principles and skills in marriage by sharing information, tools, and strategies within and among the family members. Marital stability, as an index of continuity and perpetuation of nuclear relations of mutual dependency, trust, and friendship remains a measure of prediction of more or less happy marriage (Olafsson & Steingrimsdottir, 2019).

High marital stability shows low levels of anxiety and neuroticism and more security and self-esteem (Saeed et al., 2018). Research reveals an association between marital disturbance and emotional disorders among the married fishers (Cao et al., 2019). Marital discord leads to distress, depression and negative affectivity in the parents, which in turn affects their parenting style their overall marital stability (Priyadharshini & Gopalan, 2019a). A home environment that is characterized by quarrelling, nagging and disagreement has deleterious effects on both parents and children. High conflict between parents is associated with negative feelings and behaviour directed towards their children and in turn with disruptions in social and cognitive competency and increased antisocial behaviour in children.

4.4.6 Marital Issues among the Married Fishers

The fishers' response to marital issues is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Marital Issues among Married Fishers

Attribute (n = 95)	Response about marriage (N %)					
	SA	A	N	D	SD	%
My marriage makes me happy	1.1	1.1	9.5	5.3	83.2	8.8
There is no good marriage	0.0	7.4	4.2	78.9	9.5	14.0
Being married is a good idea	0.0	8.4	52.6	17.9	21.1	16.6
My spouse does not provide emotional support	1.1	37.9	45.3	14.7	1.1	21.6
Marriage is a burden	0.0	34.7	46.3	18.9	0.0	21.0
I do not have fears in marriage	0.0	7.4	64.2	21.1	7.4	18.1
There is less respect with my partner	4.2	31.6	49.5	14.7	0.0	21.7
We rarely have an intimate relationship	3.2	27.4	41.1	21.1	7.4	19.9
There is no faithfulness in marriage	6.3	28.4	42.1	21.1	2.1	21.0
Couple rarely talk to each other	0.0	49.5	10.5	40.0	0.0	20.6
There is no trust in marriage	0.0	35.8	36.8	14.7	12.6	19.7
There is no commitment in my marriage	6.3	37.9	34.7	10.5	10.5	21.2
We do not communicate in marriage	0.0	25.3	41.1	33.7	0.0	19.5
I have sense of personal fulfillment in marriage	5.3	3.2	44.2	46.3	1.1	17.7
I don't trust my partner	13.7	53.7	17.9	14.7	0.0	24.4

Based on the study, factors such as communication in marriage, sexual intimacy and trust are the only factors that attracted favorable scores among the respondents as leading to marital stability however; they had scores ranging between 2.55 to 2.58 which is considered as neutral. Interestingly these factors have also been established to be the most important in ensuring marital stability (Dew & Jackson, 2018). There are also factors such as sexual dissatisfaction which play an important role in the instability of marriage (Karimi et al., 2019a). Second issue that appeared to elicit responses with scores above two were sense of personal fulfillment in marriage, commitment and financial support that according to (Buri et al., 2018) are personal attributes that are attributed to good marital stability among couples. Marriage and family signify the stage of greater social advancement. It is indicative of man's entry into the world of emotion and feeling, harmony and culture. Marriage in many cultures is accepted as a measure of social discipline and as an expedient to eliminate social stress due to the sex rivalry. It is the most important institution of human society and a universal phenomenon and it has been the backbone of human civilisation. Marriage creates new social relationships and reciprocal rights between the spouses. It is this institution through which a man sustains the continuity of his race and attains satisfaction in a socially recognised manner. The motivations behind wanting to engage in a happy and satisfying marriage are undoubtedly diverse, researchers have found that there are many associated benefits to a happy marriage, including emotional and physical health and longevity.

Issues that ranked low among the couples were less attention from the spouse, spouses speaking together, sharing secrets, family outings together and sitting together. A closer look at these factors indicates that there are emotional contagion and negative reciprocity among couples which is clearly coming out as undesirable and are seen as agreeing with other studies (Mazzuca et al., 2019). Negative reciprocity involves the interchange of destructive marital behaviours such as complaints, criticisms, and non-verbal expressions of negative affect (Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2006). The negativity that is exchanged between marital partners is shown to negatively affect marital satisfaction (Kurdek, 1995). Overall, the study established that the mean score of predictors of marital stability was 1.91/5.00 which indicates that the level of marital stability was low and this has been reported adversely in other studies elsewhere (Ahmadi et al., 2015; Ahmadi & Saadat, 2015).

The results in Table 11 indicate that most of the responses had low percentage (<20%) suggesting a more negative response towards marriage. Responses that elicited more positive

responses about marriage included trusting partner (24.4%), provision of emotional support (21.6%), respect between partners in marriage (21.7%), commitment in my marriage (21.2%), faithfulness in marriage (21%), regular communication (20%). Lack of trust among partners has been established in several marriages due to lots of secrets in several marriages (Higgins et al., 2002), while lack of respect for marital partners is seen as a common problem attributed to the culture of most African men who have low view of the women (Cickerman, 2017).

Interviews were further conducted among the beach leaders to support the quantitative data. The participants argued that there were so many negative issues in marriages. One beach leader stated that:

'Marriage is so difficult and there are a lot of societal challenges such as alcoholism, drug abuse, financial challenges, prostitution and societal responsibilities that weigh so heavily on marriages.'

Another beach leader said that:

"Poverty in the area is so high and that is the cause of many problems with marriage'. There is widespread problem of prostitution and extra marital affair in the region that has made many people to lose trust in their spouses and therefore some of them are just in the marriage for the sake of the children and pressure from the society"

These problems have also been reported in other marriages undergoing various challenges (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). Similar scenarios have been reported in several marriages. Such situations cannot allow many of the fishers to have positive attitudes towards their marriage. An elder also argued that there was high level of poverty in the study area that marriages could not withstand.

Low marital stability and/or separation are actually rare especially in African marriages (Effa & Nwogu, 2019) and this could be seen as expressed by the respondents. Based on community and non-individualistic, the group comes first in marriage thus the individual cannot exist without their community and family sitting down over the raised issue thus couples could not walk out of marriage without consultation.

There was an expression by another beach leader stating:

"In most of the marriages in an African set-up, problems were often discussed and worked out on both sides of the family to enable amicable solution into the existing or foreseen challenge. Sometimes the whole village joins in to find

solutions for the married fishers, because they believed working out problems were better than just completely separating or divorcing”

Another beach leader also gave his view that:

“The respondents believe that they would be laughed at and face mockery and rejection from their fellow clansmen and women if they go back to stay with their parents after getting married”

It was also revealed during the interview that the respondents also expressed that those who had been in the union for a long time, were always not willing to talk to each other and in the presence of other responsibilities found the union to be burdensome.

One beach leader was of the view that:

“Communication between married fishers is imperative to marital happiness and lack of it can take a huge toll on the mental health of both partners”

Another beach leader also expressed his feeling by stating that:

“Couples who do not talk to one another often feel disconnected or frustrated about the state of their marriage while those who live in great relationship talk freely, openly, and feel safe sharing their most private thoughts”

A different beach leader opined that:

“There is poor communication between me and my spouse and this often cause vicious fight between us leading to marital dissatisfaction”

The respondents expressed lack of freedom between the couples leading to dissatisfaction in marriage. Relationship satisfaction is directly related to assurances one partner provides to the other, according to communication researchers couples who communicate effectively consistently report greater marital satisfaction, and satisfied couples are healthier and consequently live longer.

Some of the respondents felt that they were not happy in their marriages because of the way their spouses behaved. The women beach leaders who were interviewed also had their different feelings to express.

A woman beach leader stated:

“I feel husbands ignore the family responsibilities once they get money and instead turn to alcohol and marrying of other younger women which leads to a lot of problems including diseases to many families”

Another woman who is also a beach leader expressed her feelings and stated that:

“I feel that there is a lot of love between spouses when the marriage is still young, and both parties are appreciated at that stage. Afterwards, the relationship goes from bad to worse”

There was another expression by a woman beach leader stating that:

“Marriage problems including gender violence or wife battering and many other challenges rise up in marriage. Problems such as lack of payment of school fees, non-payment of dowry for those who have not been paid for, cultural norms and raising children all seem to be very stressful which uniquely threatens family harmony and marital stability”

Another beach leader then said that:

“There is no proper counselling in the region for married couples who have marital issues as such most of us we are often confused and do not know who to turn to when there is a problem in marriage”

Finally, one of the beach leaders believed that:

“...counselling should therefore be put in place to allow couples with problems get a place and a professional who would help them address their issues thus help in marital stability”

From the information given by the respondents, their feelings towards marriage based on their past experiences indicated that they were negative towards marriage. The main problems that were reported to affect their feelings were infidelity, alcoholism, economic issues, raising children among others which have been widely reported to occur among couples in other areas (Nezhad et al., 2016). It is also clear that most of the married couple lack any form of counselling that may make them have a positive attitude towards marriage. Therefore, there is an urgent need to determine ways of increasing couples' attitudes toward marriage through counselling services.

4.5 Seeking Marital Counselling

The second objective of the study was to determine the level of seeking marital counselling by fishers.

4.5.1 Level of Seeking Marital Counselling among Fishers

The issues pertaining to marital counselling sought by Married Fishers are presented in Figure 2.

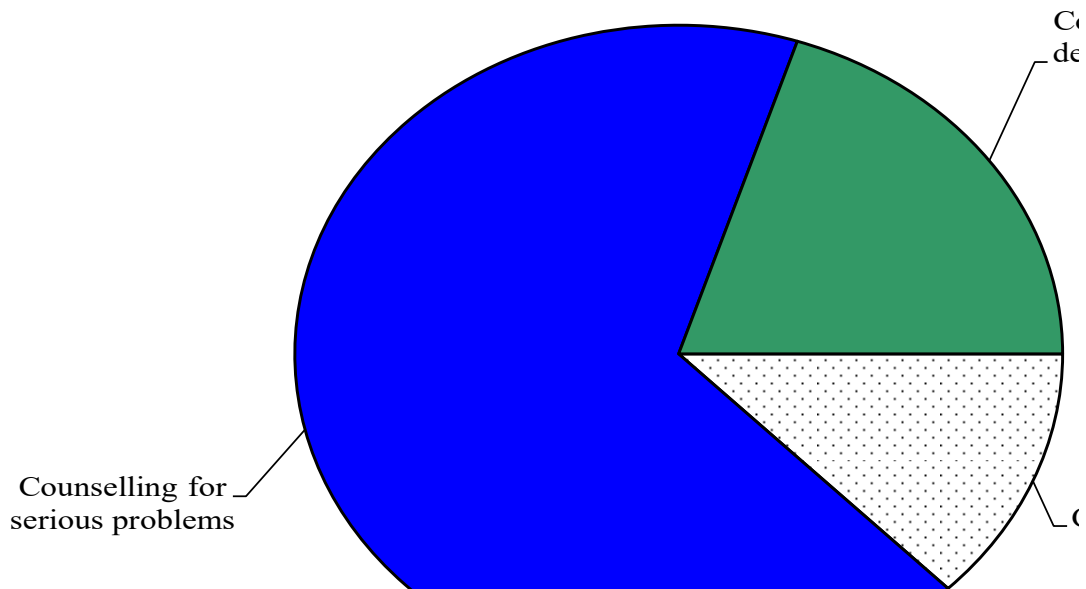


Figure 2

Issues pertaining to Marital Counselling sought by Married Fishers

According to Figure 2, 67.4% married fishers sought marital counselling for serious problems which suggests that there were a number of serious challenges in marriage that affect the marriage and that counselling must be sought. Those seeking counselling for desperation and crisis in their marriage had 20% while those who sought counselling for basic issues had 12.6%. Marital counselling aims at helping individuals to learn skills useful for resolving marital conflicts (Thomas, 2019). Evidence has shown that it is beneficial for better understanding of marital roles as the couples get an opportunity to identify with own issues as well as appreciate the partner, (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006). It has been reported that aspects of marital counselling is deeply rooted and influence success in many marriages (Akande et al., 2008). Marital problems can sometimes be very serious that may attempt to break up the marriage. Couples at this stage may also not be able to comprehend due to heightened emotions and getting the right solution may fail. Counselling therefore is vital to help the couple unlock the dark areas and be able to get solution to the problem.

Successful marital counselling often resolves most of the problems that cause unstable marital relationship, the success of marital counselling session depends on each partner's motivation and dedication to the process and couples can expect to become better listeners and communicators and to find new ways to support one another (Baruth & Manning, 2016). Convenient and conducive environment is needed for ensuring the required privacy and comfort, the counsellor's office is normally used to achieve these (Carlson et al., 2017). The counsellor is expected to be able to decide on the structure to be applied during the counselling session.

4.5.2 Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Age

The research also sought to determine the level of seeking marital counselling by age. Efforts to bridge the gap between needing and receiving couple therapy require and understanding of the reasons why couples are unable or unwilling to receive help as well as any experiences that may facilitate help-seeking. There is little research conducted to determine the couple's decision to seek marital counselling based on age. Based on the response of the fishers, the summary of cross-tabulation of the age of the fishers and seeking of marital counselling is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Age

	Age (year)									
	18-25		26-35		36-55		> 55		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Seeking counseling for basic issues	4	4.4	1	1.1	3	3.2	4	4.4	12	12.6
Seeking counseling for serious problems	8	8.4	11	11.6	20	21.1	25	26.3	64	67.3
Seeking counseling for desperation and crisis	0	0.0	5	5.3	8	8.4	6	6.3	19	20.0
Total	12	12.8	17	18	31	32.7	35	37	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

From Table 12, the results indicate that those who sought marital counselling for basic issues were aged 18-25 years or elderly aged over 55 years. Majority of those with more serious

issues seeking counselling were aged over 55 years while those who sought counselling for desperation and crisis were aged above 35 years. The results suggest that people sought marital counselling for basic issues at the start of the marriage and for more serious issues as marriage advances. It has been documented that few couples engage in therapy prior to marriage until the conditions are already difficult (Suomi et al., 2019). This suggests that barriers prevent couples from seeking or receiving help. One of the key barriers that have been established to prevent the couples from seeking help is the age. With data collected from couples living in low-income communities, it was identified that the most common barriers endorsed by couples who did not receive treatment when needed, is the young age of the couples (Williamson et al., 2019). Research on young couples suggest that many distressed couples either do not seek help at all or wait until their problems are very severe before doing so (Pitta & Datchi, 2019). Most couples find it difficult to make decision on whether to go for counselling or remain silent with their marital challenges thus they are not able to receive help (Mahmoodi, 2016). The counselling session outcome may then be different as some marriages may be strongly salvaged, low marital stability, separated or weakly salvaged (Moharrami et al., 2017). The age of seeking of marital counselling was therefore not different based on age of the couples.

Studies of age-group comparisons on marital stability have shown a steady increase in couple differences after middle adulthood, rising to levels close to that experienced by younger newlywed adults. Marital conflict and negativity generally tend to affect all ages in marriage. Just as individuals in late life work to enhance positive affect in their personal relationships and regulate their emotions to be beneficial, both young and middle couples will also seek to achieve similar emotional benefits in their marital relationships. It is only good to note that as age advances many couples choose to remain intact despite experiencing considerable dissatisfaction with their marital relationships (Lawson & Gibson, 2018). In a research it was found that, on a scale of 0–100, middle-aged and older couples reported at least some level of disagreement in each listed source of conflict (Köbach et al., 2017). Based on this, we can expect that negative marital processes (disagreement, role allocation unfairness, and maladaptive conflict resolution strategies) will be reported by young, middle-aged, and older couples.

4.5.3 Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Length of Marriage

The length in marriage is one of the factors that define marriage. However how it affects marital counselling behaviour is less studied. Results showing the relationship between seeking marital counselling and length in marriage are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Length of Marriage

	Length of marriage (years)									
	< 1 year		1-5 years		6-10 years		> 10 years		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Seeking counseling for basic issues	7	7.4	1	1.1	3	3.2	1	1.1	12	12.6
Seeking counseling for serious problems	24	25.3	3	3.2	18	18.9	19	20.0	64	67.3
Seeking counseling for desperation and crisis	0	0.0	4	4.4	6	6.3	9	9.5	19	20.0
Total	31	32.7	8	8.7	27	28.4	29	30.6	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

The result in Table 13 shows that level of seeking marital counselling is related to the length of marriage. Most of those who sought marital counselling for basic issues at 7.4% had less than a year in marriage. This confirms the fact that marriage at an early stage may be smooth and without challenges since couples are still at the stage of knowing each other and intimacy may also still be very active. The study established that the married fishers seeking marital counselling for serious problems had been married for 6-10 years. Meanwhile those who sought marital counselling for desperation and crisis were married for more than 10 years. The early years of marriage can bring some of the greatest joys—and biggest pitfalls. Every partner enters marriage with an expectation of smooth and enjoyable sharing throughout life. It's at the beginning of most marriages that we are likely to encounter the real challenges of commitment, such as the need to let go of control, the ability to overcome resistance to change, the willingness to put aside our ego-desires in favour of shared concerns, and the willingness to be vulnerable and honest in the face of fear and pain. Busy routines with work, hectic travelling schedules, pressure of achieving targets and goals, etc., might not

really leave any time for any kind of communication leading to stress and fatigue giving way to irritated attitudes, which can spark unpleasant conversations that further lead to arguments. This kind of life may spread for a period until when the couples go through experiences that shape them with age and their period of marriage.

Individuals seeking psychotherapeutic intervention face potential barriers that fall into two classes: attitudinal barriers and structural barriers (Barth et al., 2016). Attitudinal barriers stem from an individual's thoughts or beliefs about therapy, such as thoughts that therapy will not be helpful, that friends or family would be more helpful in solving the problem, or that he/she will be stigmatized for seeking therapy. In contrast, structural barriers are external obstacles to receiving therapy that must be overcome to gain access to treatment, including high cost, lack of knowledge about treatment options, and difficulty in securing childcare, time off of work, or transportation. Studies focusing on individuals in need of couples have found that these two barriers are the most important for couples who have not been in marriage for longer period of time (Dagari & Adamu, 2019). In sum, attitudinal barriers appear to be the most common barrier to seeking individual therapy, and structural barriers may also play an important role for low-income individuals. For couples considering therapy, the same attitudinal and structural barriers may not only be present but compounded by the fundamentally dyadic nature of couple therapy. Each structural barrier must be overcome by both spouses in order to be able attend couple therapy together

4.5.4 Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Type of Marriage

The research further established the association between seeking marital counselling and type of marriages as shown in Table 14.

Table 14*Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Type of Marriage*

	Type of marriage					
	Monogamous		Polygamous		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Seeking counseling for basic issues	8	8.4	4	4.2	12	12.6
Seeking counseling for serious problems	17	17.9	47	49.5	64	67.3
Seeking counseling for desperation and crisis	7	7.4	12	12.6	19	20.0
Total	32	33.7	63	66.3	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

Based on results of Table 14, most of those who sought marital counselling were in marriages under polygamous with serious problems (49.5%) and desperation and crisis (12.6) followed by those under monogamous marriage. Accordingly, polygamous marriage reported seeking counselling for serious problems which indicate that polygamous marriage tend to encourage a setup that, by its very nature, fosters jealousy, favouritism, manipulation competition, and conflict among the family members (Pervez & Batool, 2016). Polygamous homes tend to have divided attention and through this, un-satisfaction is realized among the wives who in turn may practise infidelity (Ostler, 2019). Most of polygamous families often experience conflict, jealousy, self-esteem issues, and feeling overwhelmed and for women some feel under-appreciated (Kinnear, 2019). Such are significant hurdles may add to the already existing problems and cause anxiety and depression (Rademaker, 2019). Counselling will therefore ensure progressive talk to parents as well as children in a polygamous set up to help them identify with their issues and be able to forge ahead positively.

4.5.5 Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Parenting Status

The study established the level of seeking marital counselling and parenting status among the fishers as shown in Table 15.

Table 15*Level of Seeking Marital Counselling by Parenting Status*

	Parenting		Not parenting		Total	
	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)	<i>f</i>	(%)
Seeking counseling for basic issues	11	11.6	1	1.1	12	12.6
Seeking counseling for serious problems	45	47.4	19	20.0	64	67.3
Seeking counseling for desperation and crisis	16	16.8	3	3.2	19	20.0
Total	72	75.8	23	24.3	95	99.9*

*Different from 100.0 because of rounding error

Based on table 15, those couples who were parenting and were seeking marital counselling had serious issues (47.4%) as well as those who were under desperation and crisis (16.8%). Those parenting yet had basic issues and were seeking marital counselling was 11.6%. Non-parenting with serious issues and were seeking marital counselling was 20.0%. The results indicate that seeking marital counselling was not different for parenting and non-parenting respondents where most of them sought counselling for serious issues. There are considerable problems such as anxiety and depression often associated with parenting status and style (Adubale, 2017). Parenting is often physically and emotionally demanding and causes greater levels of stress (Singla, 2016). Parents may struggle with anger or heartbroken and often times feel defeated. There is always a feeling of pain and loss as they bring up children and take care of other family members. Desperate parents try to rebuild a parent-child relationship that is severely damaged or estranged causing conflict, disorientation and un-satisfaction thus instability. Non-parenting couples also experience conflict as well as life pressure thus counselling is necessary to help them deal with issues as they present to ensure marital stability.

During the interview concerning seeking marital counselling, the issues towards marital counselling, it emerged that many of the married fishers who had marital challenges were not willing to attend counselling of any form. This agrees with other studies in the region which indicate that many African communities rarely seek marital counselling due to their cultural orientations (Lema, 2014). One of the religious leader also indicated that the local community members were more negative towards counselling which agrees with other studies done in

Nigeria (Oladeji, 2013). Furthermore, interviews indicated that there are no proper counselling services within the area as well as willingness by the government, county government as well as well-wishers to support counsellors in the region. The result of the interview supports the quantitative responses from fishers about low level of seeking marital counselling. The beach leaders indicated that married fishers lack any form of counselling which makes them develop negative attitudes towards counselling.

4.6 Relationship between Religious Beliefs and Marital Stability

The third objective of the study sought to answer the following question: Is there a relationship between the fisher's religious practices and their level of marital stability.

4.6.1 Fishers' Religious Beliefs

Married fishers' response concerning religious beliefs is shown in Table 16.

Table 16*Married Fishers Religious Beliefs*

Attributes (n = 95)	Percentage frequency					Mean
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
I believe in strong religious commitment	3.2	14.7	12.6	8.4	61.1	12.7
I and my partner worship in the same denomination	4.2	7.4	20.0	34.7	33.7	14.2
I worship in different denomination from that of my spouse	10.5	7.4	53.7	27.4	1.1	19.9
Our children should attend the same denomination that we attend	5.3	3.2	11.6	30.5	49.5	12.3
Religious practice does not matter in life	11.6	5.3	13.7	12.6	56.8	13.5
Anybody within the family is free to worship anywhere	11.6	12.6	7.4	16.8	51.6	14.4
I frequently attend religious meeting and functions	0.0	18.9	60.0	21.1	0.0	19.9
I usually read sacred scriptures or pray together as a family	0.0	8.4	32.6	26.3	32.6	14.4
I usually thank God for the things that happen in my life	16.8	15.8	20.0	41.1	6.3	19.7
I ask God for help with my problems	6.3	12.6	11.6	18.9	49.5	13.6
I seek help from my religious institution	2.1	4.2	26.3	25.3	42.1	13.3
I make decision on moral actions based on religious reasons	7.4	6.3	25.3	32.6	28.4	15.4
I keep friends with similar religious beliefs	12.6	2.1	36.8	38.9	9.5	17.9
I encourage people to seek spiritual solutions and belief	2.1	14.7	11.6	27.4	44.2	13.5

The overall mean response to this question was 3.75/5.0 which indicated that their religious beliefs were positive (3-5.0). Couples who acknowledged a divine purpose in their marriage were more likely to collaborate, to have greater marital adjustment, and to perceive more benefits from marriage. These same couples also said that they were less likely to use aggression or to come to a stalemate in their disagreements. Couples whose marriages lasted 30 years or more reported that their faith helped them to deal with difficult times, was a source of moral guidance in making decisions and dealing with conflict and encouraged them to maintain their commitment to their marriages. The more frequently husbands attended religious services, the happier their wives said they were with the level of affection and understanding they received and the amount of time their husbands spent with them.

The study further classified the respondents in terms of their religious beliefs and the results are as shown in the Figure 3.

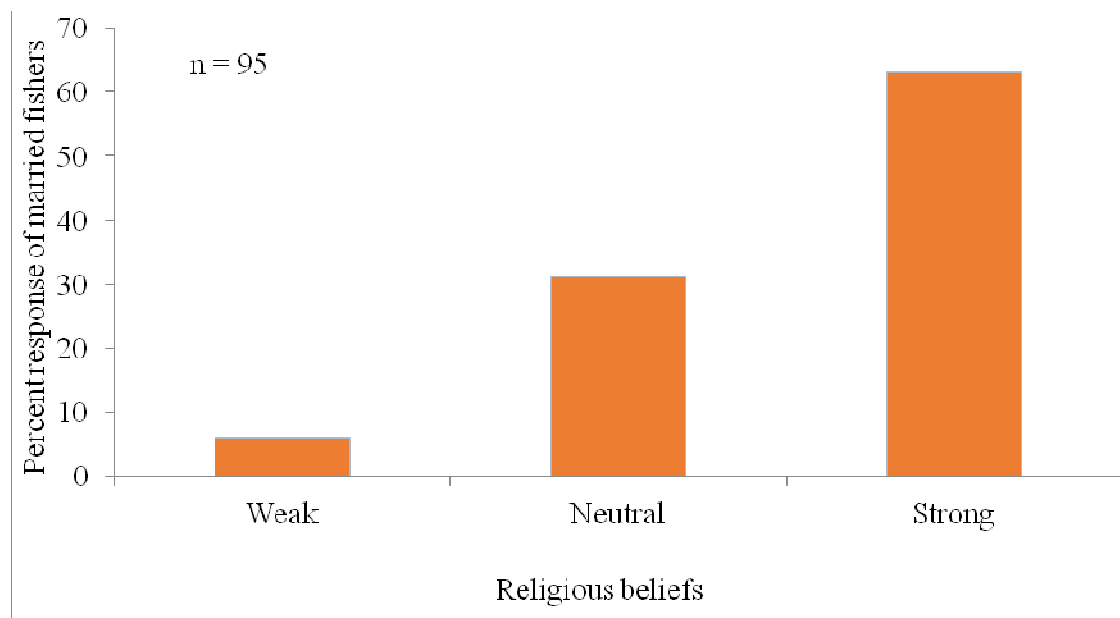


Figure 3
Percent Respondents according to their Religious Beliefs

Results in Figure 3 indicate that 63% of the respondents had strong level of religious beliefs, 31% of the respondents had neutral religious beliefs and the rest (6%) had weak level of religious value. This indicates that most of the fishers had very positive opinion about their religious beliefs or cherished their religious issues. It is undeniable fact that majority of Africans practice Christianity or Islam, but it is not uncommon to establish that they combine the practice of their traditional belief with the practice of modern religion. Worth

noting is that nearly every ethnic group in the African continent has a complex and distinctive set of religion, religious beliefs and practices (Mbiti, 2015).

4.6.2 Relationship between Fishers’ Religious Beliefs and Marital Stability

The current study determined the relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability among fishers in Siaya County according to objective three. The relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability among fishers is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Relationship between Fishers’ Religious Beliefs and Marital Stability

		Score of Religious Beliefs	Marital Stability Status
Score of Religious Beliefs	Spearman’s Correlation	1	0.618
	<i>p</i> value		0.04
	N	95	95
Marital Stability Status	Spearman’s Correlation	0.618	1
	<i>p</i> value	0.04	
	N	95	95

As indicated in Table 17, the correlation coefficient yielded an *r* value of 0.618 and a *P* value of 0.04. On the basis of this, there was a relationship between fishers’ religious beliefs and level of marital stability. This implied that positive relationship exists between fishers’ religious beliefs and level of marital stability. Numerous sociological studies have shown that valuing religion and regularly practising it are associated with greater marital stability, higher levels of marital satisfaction, and an increased inclination to marry (Radmehr & Shams, 2019). Religious attendance is the most important predictor of marital stability, confirming even studies conducted over 50 years ago (Bahnaru et al., 2020). For many cultures, religion is strongly connected to numerous relationship-related values and norms and thus it may be correlated with marital satisfaction (Call & Heaton, 1997a; Fincham et al., 2011). Positive associations between religious beliefs and marital satisfaction have been found across different religious groups, such as Christians, Jewish, Mormons, and Muslims (David & Stafford, 2015).

During the interview with religious leaders, one religious leader stated that:

‘Religious teaching is the core to many aspects of marital life: that those who depend on the religion do not experience severe marital problems and in case they have, coming out of it would be very easy’

Another religious leader was of the view that:

“The scripture talks about people who had problems in their marriage and through God’s interventions, all was resolved. Our people believe that religious leaders are God’s servants who can help marriage to work well”

There was an opinion of another religious leader stating that:

“Many local community members are usually....negative in their marital counselling seeking behaviour. They also believe that there is always no happiness in marriage and they just get into marriage as a responsibility”

There was another religious leader who expressed his feelings that:

“Attitudes of the married people towards religion is good and therefore those who are committed to religious beliefs performs better in their marriage than those who do not commit”

Customarily, one of the religious leaders expressed his opinion as:

“Customs of local community does not agree with word of God and thus, religious beliefs are better at solving marital issues. Many married people are unwilling to talk about their marital issues with religious leaders showing that they don’t trust religious leaders in their life to help them solve their marital issues.”

The opinion of another religious leader on marital counselling vis-à-vis religious belief stated that:

“Most fishers have negative perspective towards marital counselling, and they believe that their religious teaching has a lot of virtues that would allow the people to seek help in their marriages through biblical teaching”

One of the religious leaders while expressing somewhat contrary opinion stated that:

“Many fishers believe that being religiously committed will help the local community members better their marriages and if marital counselling is also involved, many marriages will be salvaged”.

Another religious leader said that:

“There are so many people in the village who claim to give marital advice and, in most cases, the outcomes from such advices are not very good in solving marital problems. They seem not to have proper structure in terms

of marital counselling to ventilate marital issues”

A religious leader was of the view that:

“Many married people do not talk about their marital issues with strangers thus even if a marriage counsellor comes here to talk to people about marital issues, many will not take them seriously. People have negative attitudes towards marital counselling seeking behaviour and will prefer religious leaders to help them solve their marital issues towards marital stability”

From the information provided by the religious leaders, their feelings towards religious beliefs among the local was positive and those who relied on religious beliefs as their main source of inspiration always found solutions to their marital issues. These findings support the earlier quantitative responses that established somewhat a direct correlation between religious beliefs and marital stability.

4.7 Relationship between Religious Beliefs and Level of Seeking Marital Counselling

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the relationship between religious beliefs and level of seeking marital counselling (Table 18).

Table 18

Relationship between Religious Beliefs and Seeking Marital Counselling

		Seeking Marital Counselling	Score of Religious Beliefs
Seeking Marital Counselling	Spearman’s Correlation	1	-0.65
	<i>p</i> value		0.001
	N	95	95
Score of Religious Beliefs	Spearman’s Correlation	-0.65	1
	<i>p</i> value	0.001	
	N	95	95

The results in Table 18 indicate that there was a negative relationship between religious beliefs and level of seeking marital counselling suggesting that most of the fishers who were strongly religious were not likely to seek marital counselling. The correlation coefficient yielded 0.65 which shows there is a relationship between religious beliefs and level of seeking marital counselling. It is important to emphasize from the beginning that each couple, regardless being mono-cultural, or interethnic relationship, need to deal with the variety of factors, which potentially may be detrimental to the marital satisfaction. Marriages are

constructed differently and uniquely across every couple. Investigations concerning the relationship between religious beliefs and marital counselling predict that couples who are less religious are more likely to seek marital counselling than couples who are more religious, (Moss & Willoughby, 2018). However, those predictions were based on studies done in developed countries with very little known in African context. However, conflicts are highly likely to occur, and act as potential obstacles (Lazar, 2017), and just like any other regular couple, all marriages are no doubt faced with various sources of marital conflict (Henderson et al., 2018). Having said that, it is also crucial to signal that couples are always subjected to more complex dynamics due to the additional factors affecting their satisfaction.

People from different backgrounds and environment have learnt different ways of life from the birth and have grown up in different physical and social environment, so they would have formed different norms, values, beliefs, languages (Mahoney et al., 2020). They would also have different perceptions of things according to the underlying rules of thinking and behaviour in their environment. For interethnic couples, if there is lack of understanding of each other's cultures, they might assume the characteristics and interpret the behaviour of the partner according to their own cultural background, which might not be correct. If they are not aware of what these assumptions and interpretations are based on, the misunderstandings would arise, which can be a stressor of the relationship (Tuttle & Davis, 2015).

Religious beliefs play a significant role in strengthening and stability of marriage (Moslehi & Ahmadi, 2013). A review including 94 meta-analysis studies referred to an average to strong relationship between religion and commitment and marital satisfaction. The results of the studies carried out on Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Americans indicated that religion affected the marriage stability through channels like anti-low marital stability beliefs and sharing religious beliefs among public (Sorokowski et al., 2017). In different studies of appropriate criteria in spouse selection, adherence to religious beliefs and principles was among the first priorities (Haghighizadeh et al., 2010; Moslehi & Ahmadi, 2013). After marriage, the results of studies indicated that there was a positive relationship between religious adherence and marital satisfaction (David & Stafford, 2015).

In a marital relationship, culture is not only about the superficial things such as dresses and rituals, there are also something that is the core of culture which makes people from different cultures think and behave differently in the daily life (Gaines Jr, 2014). Scholars have pointed

out the importance of value in culture and defined the term value as the core of culture, and other visible practices, such as dress, popular figures and the way people interact with others (Eringa et al., 2015). He described culture as multi-layered with value at the core and practices, such as rituals, heroes and symbols, at outer layers. Practices are visible, but value is invisible and is the foundation of all the cultural practices. It has been suggested that value is “the most important category” people have (Fellows et al., 2016). When marital dynamic crumble, it destroys intimacy and couple’s relationship. One partner will then 'detach'.

The stressors in marriage can be many including financial difficulty, untrustworthy or selfishness, immaturity, irresponsibility and lack of proper communication. The couples may then feel their old fiery passion flaring up and sometimes feel a low, steady burn. In order to increase the warmth and positivity in couple’s relationship, it is important for the couples to get a neutral perspective in their behaviours. Patterns must be recognized and interrupted to encourage marital satisfaction as well as stability. The religious’ leaders handled so many marital problems thus most fishers did not seek any professional counselling and their opinion towards marital counselling was either positive or negative depending on the religious leader who provided it. The respondents felt that the fishers were not sure where they could seek for help since there was neither professional counsellor/ counselling expert nor any institutions for counselling within the area. The respondents also felt that the customs of the local community did not allow one to seek counselling and therefore many people did not find strong attachment to marital counselling.

Many married people did not feel free to talk about their marital issues with people that they were not familiar with. This meant that professional counsellors who wanted to help the fishers needed to build trust in the therapeutic relationship to allow the fishers to invest in the service. Fishers who may have struggled forming relationships in their marriages, and some of them having experienced traumatic events in their marriages leading them to difficulty in trusting or forming relationships may get an opportunity to restructure their thoughts and feelings through the therapeutic relationship. The therapeutic relationship is the connection and relationship developed between the therapist and client (Aman et al., 2019). Without the therapeutic relationship, there can be no effective or meaningful help. A good therapeutic relationship would allow fishers the chance to explore their relational attachments, bonds and experiences through their relationships (Baker, 2019). Through this the fishers will be able to process their emotional ideas and motivations, be allowed to be heard, understood and

valued, and they will not have to censor themselves. This allows the couple or individual fisher to move toward more open behaviours and an increased level of self-awareness leading to more informed relations within partners thus the outcome would be a stable marriage.

4.8 Relationship between Ethnic Values and Marital Stability

The fifth objective of the study was to determine the relationship between ethnic values and marital stability.

4.8.1 Ethnic Values of the Fishers

The ethnic values of the fishers are shown in table 19 below:

Table 19*Married Fishers' Ethnic Values*

Attributes (n = 95)	Percentage frequency					Mean
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	
My community values have a lot of good things to follow	22.1	12.6	12.6	26.3	26.3	22.1
I love my ethnic group, it shapes my life	12.6	22.1	20.0	2.1	43.2	12.6
Our culture has many negative values	1.1	6.3	9.5	16.8	66.3	1.1
I often adhere to ethnic values of my spouse	15.8	13.7	12.6	12.6	45.3	15.8
I feel good associated with my people	11.6	7.4	23.2	25.3	32.6	11.6
I ignore some of our ethnic values	3.2	3.2	35.8	37.9	20.0	3.2
I have tried to find out about my ethnic group	18.9	11.6	10.5	46.3	12.6	18.9
I am a member of my own ethnic social group	23.2	15.8	12.6	12.6	35.8	23.2
My life was affected by my ethnic group membership	13.7	23.2	14.7	9.5	38.9	13.7
I talk to other people about my ethnic group in order to learn	2.1	5.3	12.6	12.6	67.4	2.1
I participate in our cultural practices	15.8	35.8	10.5	24.2	13.7	15.8
I understand my ethnic background	1.1	1.1	47.4	31.6	18.9	1.1
I belong to our ethnic social group	7.4	21.1	12.6	12.6	46.3	7.4
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means	11.6	17.9	25.3	11.6	33.7	11.6
I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group	13.7	10.5	6.3	12.6	56.8	13.7

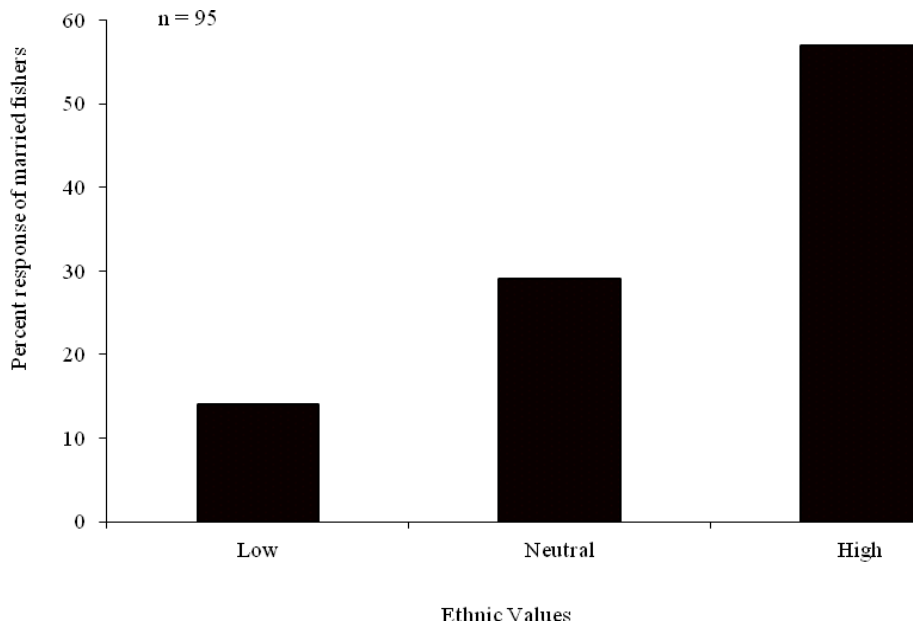
The overall mean response to this question was 3.57/5.0 which indicated that the fishers' ethnic values were more positive (3-5.0). This therefore meant that the fishers valued their ethnic values and had clear sense of what they are and what they mean to them. Ethnic value

of every couple plays an important role in every marriage within the marriage. It is also crucial to signal that cross-cultural barriers among couples are subjected to more complex dynamics linked to ethnicity (Sabbe et al., 2019). People from different ethnic groups have learned different ways of life from the birth and have grown up in different physical and social environment, so they would form different norms, values, beliefs, languages (Hummer & Hamilton, 2010). Couples were reported to have discovered that ethnic values played a pivotal role in marital relationship and would define marriage in terms of conflict and dissatisfaction or successful marriage (Meisenberg & Kaul, 2010).

The study further determined the distribution of the respondents in terms of their ethnic values and the results are as shown in the Figure 4.

Figure 4

Married Fishers' Ethnic Values



According to results in Figure 4, 57% of the respondents had positive ethnic values, 29% of the respondents had neutral ethnic values and the rest (14%) had negative ethnic value. This indicates that most of the fishers had very positive opinion about their ethnic group and all the values within the community. It also means that they cherished their ethnic identity and culture which conform to several studies that have reported that most people are positive when it comes to their ethnic values (Teeuw et al., 2014). Ethnic are moral principles that govern the conduct of an individual or a group and as a tool it restrains people's behaviour. It is

not a burden to bear, but a prudent and effective guide which furthers life and success. Community or societal ethics are important because this is an essential part of the foundation on which a civilized society is built. Good and tough ethical values provide a non-threatening environment for the people and the outcome is always exceptional behaviour. Positive attitude could therefore be attributed to aspects such as most people finding happiness with what is done within the ethnic community.

4.8.2 Relationship between Ethnic Values and Marital Stability

The relationship between ethnic values and marital stability are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Relationship between Ethnic Values and Marital Stability

		Score of Ethnic Values	Marital Stability Status
Score of Ethnic Values	Spearman's Correlation	1	0.586
	P value		0.005
	N	95	95
Marital Stability Status	Spearman's Correlation	0.586	1
	p value	0.005	
	N	95	95

$r = 0.586$, Significance at .05

According to the results in Table 20, there was a relationship between ethnic values and marital stability. The correlation coefficient yielded $r = 0.586$ which implied that there is a significant positive relationship between ethnic values and marital stability. This result demonstrates that among the married fishers, marital stability was related to their ethnic values. It is possible that these are the top echelon of members of society who have good educational background that can help them think positively in the society. It is also possible that those who have very high value of the ethnic values are custodians of some of these ethnic values and use them correctly to help in sorting out issues that arise in marriage. When individuals venture interest in marriage, mostly they would prefer clarifications on whether the relationship may be culturally matched or mismatched (Regas et al., 2017). Congruence in ethnicity stands out as a natural motivation towards effective marriage outcome

stability through interviews.

A beach leader stated:

“Most people believe that ethnic values are important in marriage and there are many ethnic values in the community which we should adhere to in order to enhance marriage. Many people stick to our ethnic values and therefore find a lot of problems in marriage”.

Meanwhile another beach leader said that:

“Local community members are suffering by refusing to observe ethnic values. Our customs are so demanding that if one has to adhere to all the required issues then the person will definitely be in a lot of trouble”.

One of the beach leaders attested to the lack of adherence to ethnic values when he stated that the customs do not allow one to seek counselling and therefore many people do not find strong attachment to marital counselling. The ethnic values therefore remain a negative factor in marriage as long as the local community members don't change their attitudes towards marriage and how best they can use the laid down values to make decisions that can enhance marital stability. Specific to women, is that many of them believed that ethnic values of the Luo tend to discriminate against them and would always bog down their marriage and therefore nothing positive could be seen in those ethnic values. The respondents therefore felt that there was need to approach the ethnic values having in mind the families and that the values should be encouraged and used positively to enhance marital stability.

The last of the interview guide indicted that people regarded ethnic values by noting that there was strict adherence to ethnic values and that for the newly wedded couples, adhering to these ethnic values only made most marriages fail. Most couples who believed in ethnic values did not give room to pursue other means of handling marital problems. Marital problems would therefore be solved amicably should the ethical values be adhered to leading to marital stability.

4.9 Relationship between Ethnic Values and Level of Seeking Marital Counselling

The relationship between ethnic values and marital counselling among the fishers in Siaya County is presented in Table 21.

Table 21*Relationship between Ethnic Values and Seeking Marital Counselling*

	Score of Ethnic Values	Marital Counselling
Score of Ethnic Values	1	0.09
Marital Counselling	0.09	1
	Spearman's Correlation	<i>p</i> value
	0.929	0.929

According to the results in Table 21, there was no relationship between ethnic values and seeking marital counselling among fishers. This result indicates that married fisher community did not seek counselling regardless of their ethnic values. One possible explanation would be that some of the members of the society may have had good background, understanding and exposure that helped them think positively. It is also possible that those who have very high value of the ethnic values are custodian of some of these ethnic values and use them correctly to help in sorting out issues that arise in marriage. In the past, it has been established that ethnic practices in marriage is the main source of many marital problems in many African societies and that most ethnic communities regard a woman as being inferior, treated with disdain and subject to men (Sodi et al., 2010). The cultural practice also discriminates against women in most aspects of life. Couples have been seen more likely to have fears when a counsellor's ethnic orientations are different from their own (Abbasi & Alghamdi, 2017). Fear of existing ethnic beliefs being challenged appears to contribute to discontinuing marital counselling. It was also reported that clients are more willing to return to a counsellor who ignores ethnic orientation than one who challenges them. Challenging produces fear because clients are worried that psychotherapists will try to discuss the ethnic beliefs (Hicks, 2010) to which they believe in to help them live their day to day lives better.

4.10 Relationship between Ethnic Values and Marital Counselling

Objective six of the study further sought the opinion of the respondents on ethnic values towards marital counselling through interviews. A beach leader stated that:

“Many married fishers have a lot of marital problems but there is no proper counselling for them, so they sought counselling on marital issues from their friends and other relatives who have very little knowledge”

Another beach leader also explained that:

“Fishers may have positive attitudes towards marital counselling but since they do not get the chance to have marital counselling, it is not clear what they think about it or what their attitude towards marital counselling would be”

There was also a beach leader who was of the view that:

“... among those who have gone to seek the necessary counselling, they did not see any improvement of the marital issues thus they did not see the importance of the service or simply, they did not care about it. They feel that marital counselling is of no help thus they do not seek of any help even when facing serious marital issues. Many married people do not talk about their marital issues with strangers hence none of them would go to a marriage counsellor”

From the information provided by the beach leaders, the attitudes towards marital counselling of the local community members were more towards negative or neutral since there were no proper counselling services within the area. This finding supports the earlier quantitative responses that established somewhat neutral and negative attitudes towards marital counselling attributed to lack of counselling services among the local community members. Counselling has been used to help people deal with many challenges, even in marriage. Marriage as an institution is increasingly being faced with many problems and many individuals in marriage have become miserable (Tseng & Hsu, 2018). Therefore, counsellors are nowadays handling more clients with marital issues than before.

Counselling helps couples to improve their communication and other issues in their marriage understand their differences and their issues after which they can be able to explore them and live a happier life. Counselling is an opportunity for the couples to share their feelings openly in a secure environment which may help to understand each other better (Chase et al., 2010). It is also vivid that the beach leaders indicated that married fishers lack any form of counselling which makes them develop negative attitudes towards counselling thus with the introduction of the service to the community, there is no doubt that married fishers will always turn to it for help in case of any problems. The beach leaders also felt that it is only by putting professional counselling into place that will allow fishers to be exposed to different avenues of addressing their marital issues rather than sticking to few available ones that may have been outdated or not effective in addressing counselling seeking behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between selected socio-cultural factors, level of marital stability and seeking marital counselling among fishers in Siaya County, Kenya. Data were collected using an interview schedule for married fishers and interview guide for beach leaders and religious leaders. This chapter presents the findings of this study in a summary form as well as the conclusions from the study. Recommendations for policy making and for further research are also included in this chapter. The study relied on the following objectives to achieve the purpose of the study:

- i. To determine the level of marital stability among fishers in Siaya County.
- ii. To establish married fishers' level of seeking marital counselling in Siaya County
- iii. To assess the relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability in Siaya County.
- iv. To assess the relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling in Siaya County.
- v. To determine the relationship between ethnic values and marital stability in Siaya County.
- vi. To determine the relationship between ethnic values and seeking marital counselling in Siaya County.

5.2 Summary of the Major Findings

This section is organized according to the research objectives of this study. The summary is discussed with a view of making conclusions for the study.

5.2.1 The results from the first objective showed that the level of marital stability for majority of the couples (56.8%) was unsatisfied- stable. The level of marital stability was different in age, length in marriage, type of marriage and parenting status. In terms of age, majority of married fishers aged 18-25 years had satisfied-stable marriage, while most married fishers aged above 25 years had unsatisfied-stable marriage. Based on length of marriage, most of the married fishers with less than one year of marriage had satisfied-stable marriage while fishers with 1-5 years of marriage had satisfied-unstable marriage. The study findings also revealed that polygamy led to satisfied-unstable marriages among married fishers (13.8%) compared to monogamous married fishers (3.2%). Also, most of the couples

who were parenting were under unsatisfied-stable marriage and unsatisfied- unstable marriage at 47.4% and 14.7% respectively.

5.2.2 The results of the second objective indicates that majority of the married fishers (67.4%) sought marital counselling for serious problems followed by those seeking counselling for desperation and crisis in their marriage (20%) while those who sought counselling for basic issues were least (12.6%). The study also established that the level of seeking marital counselling differed with age. The findings indicated that majority of the married fishers aged 18-25 years (4.4%) sought marital counselling for basic issues, while majority of the couples aged over 55 years (26.3%) sought marital counselling for serious problems. In terms of seeking marital counselling by length of marriage, the findings indicate that majority of the married fishers with less than 1 year in marriage (7.4%) sought marital counselling for basic issues and serious problems, while majority of the couples who were married for over 10 years (9.5%) sought marital counselling for desperation and crisis. Most of those fishers who sought marital counselling for basic issues were in monogamous marriages (8.45%) as compared to those in polygamous marriage. The findings also indicated that most of the couples who were parenting sought marital counselling for basic issues (11.6%). Majority of the couples who were parenting sought counselling for serious problems as well as desperation and crisis. Generally, more parenting couples sought marital counselling (75.8%) than non-parenting couples (24.2%).

5.2.3 According to the results, it was shown that there is a positive relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability ($r = 0.61$) and showed statistical significance of the two variables ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), leading to draw a conclusion that there was a relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability. The strong positive association between religious beliefs and marital stability indicates that when the level of religious beliefs increases, marital stability among the fishers is likely to increase.

5.2.4 The findings indicate that the relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling indicated that there was negative relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling ($r = -0.65$), with statistical significance of the two variables. The strong negative relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling indicates that when the level of religious beliefs increases, level of seeking marital counselling among the married fishers is likely to decrease.

5.2.5 Based on the results, the relationship between ethnic values and marital stability indicated that there was a relationship between ethnic values and marital stability ($r = 0.586$). The strong positive association between ethnic values and marital stability indicates that when the level of ethnic values increased, marital stability among the couples is likely to increase.

5.2.6 According to the study findings, the relationship between ethnic values and level of seeking marital counselling showed no relationship between ethnic values and seeking marital counselling ($r = 0.09$). The findings therefore indicate that ethnic values did not influence seeking marital counselling.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The study makes the following conclusions:

- i. The findings indicated that most fishers had unsatisfied-stable marriages which confirm presence of marital challenges that affected their relationships but felt that their marriages were still strong. This suggest that the couples are unhappy but do not want to dissolve their marriages.
- ii. Most fishers sought counselling for serious problems. This suggests that most of the married fishers sought some form of help when they faced serious challenges such as emotional issues, unfaithfulness, communication challenges, intimacy and lack of commitment.
- iii. There was a positive relationship between religious beliefs and marital stability. This suggests that the more religious a married fisher was the more they enjoyed a stable marriage.
- iv. There was a negative relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling. This implied that most of the fishers believed more in their religious beliefs whenever they had marital issues requiring counselling.
- v. There was a positive relationship between ethnic values and marital stability. This suggested that most of the married fishers relying in ethnic values had more stable marriages.
- vi. There was no relationship between ethnic values and seeking marital counselling. This implies that married fishers regarded their ethnic values more and were less likely to seek marital counselling.

5.4 Recommendations

From the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The study recommends counselling for fishers to improve marriages to satisfied-stable. This can be done by the religious, beach leaders and other professionally accredited marriage counsellors.
- ii. The fishers can be encouraged to seek marital counselling from professional counsellors even when they are not encountering serious problems.
- iii. Religious organization within the reach of fishers to enhance their interaction with married fishers. Religious beliefs and commitment should be promoted among married fishers.
- iv. To enhance provision of marital counselling to the married fishers, the religious organisations should come up with programmes and activities
- v. Promoting the understanding of ethnic values among married fishers should be encouraged.
- vi. Married fishers should be encouraged to seek marital counselling from professional counsellors regardless of their understanding of ethnic values.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study makes the following recommendations for further studies;

- i. To determine how ethnic values, affect marital stability of cross-ethnic marriages within the area as there were cases of people marrying couples from outside the ethnic group.
- ii. The total number of respondents in this study was only 95 fishers confined to only one county. Further research in counties where fishing is done as economic activities should be pursued.
- iii. Preferably, follow-up studies should be done on fishers to find out how well they adjust to interventions such as marital counselling within the area.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MARRIED FISHERS

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Dear Participant,

My name is Rosemary Judith Odhiambo. I am a PhD student at Egerton University carrying out a survey as a requirement for my academic accomplishments. My study is about the effects of selected Socio-cultural factors on Marital Stability and counselling among fishers in Siaya County. I have identified you as a respondent in this study and humbly request you to fill in this questionnaire. Your response to the items in the questionnaire used in data collection was kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose except this study. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from this study at any point you deem fit. Do not therefore write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.

Section I: Personal information

1. **Age:** 18-25 years: [] 26-35 year [] 36-55 years [] over 55 years []
2. **Denomination:** Catholic [] Traditional African Religion [] Protestant []
Other []
3. **Parental status:** Parenting [] Not parenting []
4. **Type of family:** Nuclear [] Extended []
5. **How long have you been married:** Below 1 year [] 1-5 years [] 6-10 []
Above 10 years []
6. **Which type of marriage are you in?:** Monogamous [] Polygamous []
7. **How often do you seek marital counselling?** Never [] Once a year [] Monthly []
Weekly [] Daily []
8. **From who do you seek marital counselling?** Kin []; Beach leaders [];
Religious leaders [] Professional counselors []
9. **How would you rate the marital counselling that you receive?:** Very effective []
Moderately effective [] Somehow effective [] Not effective []

Section II: Scores on Level of Marital Stability

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements relating to literacy

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

i) Please indicate your position on each statement by ticking under the right column

	Marital Stability	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I enjoy sitting with my partner					
2	We always have family outings with my partner					
3	We solve our family problems amicably					
4	My spouse and I speak often					
5	I don't depend on other people to solve our marital disagreements					
6	I and my spouse share secrets					
7	Sexual intimacy is valuable part of our life					
8	I don't like listening to my spouse					
9	When I am angry at home, I look for others to make me happy					
10	I rarely talk to members of my family					
11	Having a sense of personal fulfilment is important for a good marriage					
12	Romance is important for a successful marriage					
13	Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a good marriage					
14	Trust is important for a good marriage					
15	Commitment is valuable for a successful marriage					
16	My spouse often give money even after we quarrel					
17	My husband pay for little attention to me but it does not often affect our marriage					
18	Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage					
19	Shared values between partners are valuable for a good marriage					
20	Communication is important for a good marriage					
21	Sexual intimacy is valuable for a healthy marriage					
22	My spouse does not provide any financial support to the family					
23	My spouse does not provide any emotional support even when he is the one who is one the wrong					
24	We have not been in any intimate relationship for a very long time and my spouse does not seem interested					
25	I feel like I want to opt out of this marriage it has lost its purpose					
26	My spouse is not committed to this family and I suspect he is having another family					
27	We do not communicate at all in this marriage					
28	I don't trust my spouse at all					

Section III: Scores on Level of Marital Counselling

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements relating to marital stability

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

i) Please indicate your position on each statement by ticking under the right column

	Marital Counselling	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I always seek help about my marriage					
2	I like people who talk to me about my marriage					
3	Our marriage has many challenging issues that need help					
4	I do not believe in marital counselling					
5	I feel good associated with marital counselling					
6	I would rather ignore some of the problems I experience instead of seeking help					
7	I am happy the way I live in my marriage					
8	I am active in my marriage					
9	I think a lot about how my life was affected by my marriage if I do not seek help					
10	In order to keep my marriage, I have often talked to other people about my spouse					
11	I participate in every activity in my marriage that needs help					
12	I have a clear sense of my marriage					
13	I have a strong sense of belief that marital counselling works					
14	I prefer marital counselling to any other marital help					
15	I have a lot of pride in marital counselling					

Section IV: Scores on Religious beliefs

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements relating to religious beliefs.

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

i) Please indicate your position on each statement by ticking under the right column

	Religious beliefs	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I believe in strong religious commitment					
2	I and my partner worship in the same church					
3	I worship in different church from that of my spouse					
4	Our children should attend the church that me and my spouse attend					
5	Religious practice does not matter in life					
6	Anybody within the family is free to worship anywhere					
7	I frequently attend religious meeting and functions					
8	I usually read sacred scriptures or pray					
9	I usually thank God for the things that happen in my life					
10	I ask God for help with my problems					
11	I seek help from my religious institution					
12	I make decision on moral actions based on religious reasons					
13	I keep friends with similar religious beliefs					
14	I encourage people to seek spiritual solutions and belief					
15	The Bible is the actual word of God					

Section IV: Scores on Ethnic Values

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements relating to ethnic values

SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

ii) Please indicate your position on each statement by ticking under the right column

	Ethnic Values	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	My community values have a lot of good things to follow					
2	I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and how it shapes my life					
3	Our culture has many negative values					
4	I often adhere to ethnic values of my spouse					
5	I feel good associated with my people					
6	I ignore our ethnic values to ensure our marriage work					
7	I try to find out about my ethnic group (such as its history, traditions, and customs)					
8	I am active in a social group that include mostly members of my own ethnic group					
9	I think a lot about how my life was affected by my ethnic group membership					
10	In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group					
11	I participate in cultural practices of my own group (such as special food, music, or customs)					
12	I have a clear sense of my ethnic background					
13	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group					
14	I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me					
15	I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group					

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR BEACH LEADERS

1. What do you think about married fishers’ relationships in their marriage?
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2. In your opinion, how should married fishers having problems seek marital counselling?
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3. How do married fishers resolve their marital differences?
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.....
.....
4. Do ethnic values of the community affect married fishers’ relationship?
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.....
.....
5. What is your opinion on counselling on marital stability?
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.....
.....
.....
6. How do you help the local community members relate their ethnic values and marital stability?
.....
.....
.....
.....
7. Comment on how the local community members view religion and marital issues?
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS

1. What is your opinion as a religious leader on issues of marital counselling among couples?

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2. How would you as a religious leader help the fishers handle issue of marital problems?

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.....

3. What do you think about religion in relation to marital stability in the community?

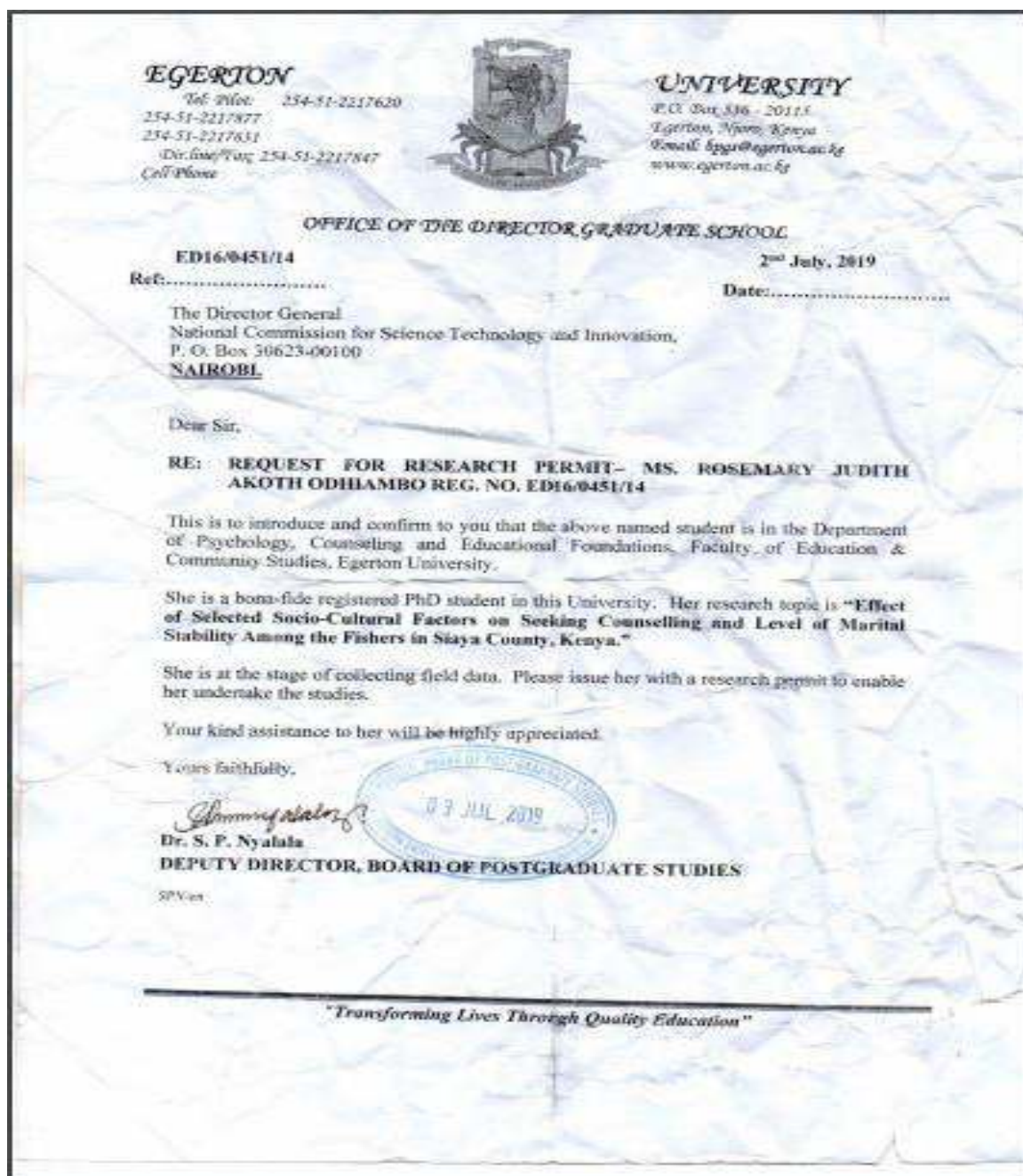
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4. Comment on how the local community members view religion and issues of marriage

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Thank you

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



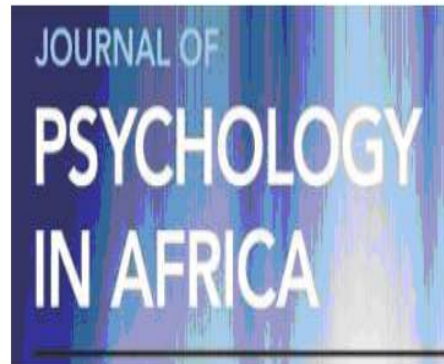
APPENDIX E: RESEARCH PERMIT

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	
Ref No: 364015	Date of Issue: 03/February/2020
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Rev., Rosemary Odhiambo of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research in Siaya on the topic: Effect of Selected Socio-cultural Factors on seeking Counseling and Level of Marital Stability Among the Fishers in Siaya County, Kenya. for the period ending : 03/February/2021.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/20/3470	
364015	
Applicant Identification Number	Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
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APPENDIX F: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA AND LOCATION



Source: Google scholar



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Research Paper

Open Access

Constructs of Marital Stability among fishers in Siaya County (Kenya)

Rosemary Judith Akoth Odhiambo, Catherine Mumiukha and George Makori

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, Egerton University

Abstract

Marriage and counselling are based on social cohesion, values, behaviour and beliefs which are strongly associated with socio-cultural factors. The purpose of this study was to establish the level of marital stability among fishers in Siaya County of Kenya. This study was guided by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. The study used Mixed Methods Research, with a Convergent Mixed Research Design. The sample size of 99 married fisher were selected. Data was collected using interview schedule for married fishers. Reliability of the questionnaires was established through Cronbach's alpha. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, and Chi-square analysis. The results indicated that majority of the marriage (56%) belonged under unsatisfied- stable level of marital stability. The levels of marital stability differed by age, length in marriage, type of marriage and parenting status. From the findings, the study recommends couple's communication enhancement, and marital counselling be put in place to help the fishers experience marital stability. Religious leaders and other stake holders to organise trainings, seminars and workshops to enhance marriage skills, religious beliefs and ethnic values. The study also recommends marital counselling should be enhanced and done at integrated level to help get solutions to marital problems and realize marital stability.

Keywords: Fishers communities, Kenya, Marital stability, Marital happiness, Siaya, Religious beliefs, ethnic values

1. Introduction

Marriage, matrimony or wedlock, is a recognized institution that permits the union/contract between two or more individuals, establishes rights and obligations between them, as well as any resulting biological or adopted children (Bookman, 2015). Thus, the elementary basis of marriage is defined as "a personal association between a man and a

Level of Seeking Marital Counseling Among Married Couples in Siaya County (Kenya)

Rosemary Judith Akoth Odhiambo, Catherine Mumiukha, George Makori

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, Egerton University, Nakuru (Kenya)

Email address:

jrodhiambo1970@gmail.com

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Received: MM DD, 2021; Accepted: MM DD, 2021; Published: MM DD, 2021

Abstract: Counseling in marriage is aimed at enhancing social cohesion, values, behaviour and beliefs. However, counseling in many African societies remains superficial. The purpose of this study was to establish the level of seeking marital counseling among fishers in Siaya County of Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish the level of seeking marital counseling among fishers in Siaya County of Kenya. The study used Mixed Methods Research, with a Convergent Mixed Research Design. The population comprised 10370 registered married fishers in the main landing sites of Siaya County from where a sample size of 99 married fisher were selected. Data was collected using interview schedule for married fishers. Most fishers sought marital counseling for serious problems which also varied according to age, length of marriage, type of marriage and parenting status. The study recommends couple's marital counseling be put in place to help the fishers experience marital stability. The study also recommends marital counseling should be enhanced and done at integrated level to procure solutions to marital problems.

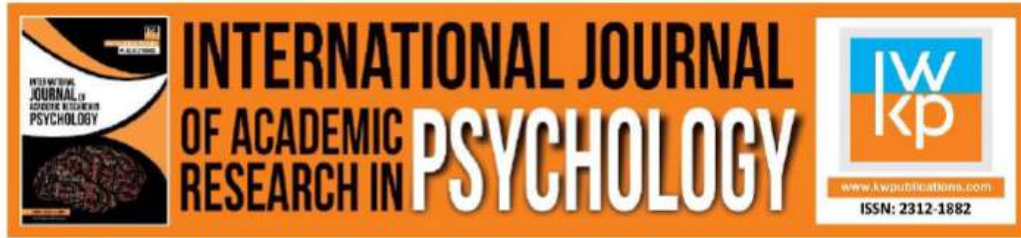
Keywords: Marital Counseling, Marital Happiness, Siaya, Kenya, Fishers Communities

1. Introduction

The union of two people in marriage is construed to be a long term physical, emotional, spiritual and social investment

conduct, responses and actions of the individuals in a relationship.

Marital counseling comes in handy in giving the married partners an opportunity to explore their situation, discover



To what extent does religious beliefs influence seeking of marital counselling? A case of married fishers in Siaya County (Kenya)

Rosemary Judith Akoth Odhiambo, Catherine Mumiukha and George Makori

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations
Egerton University

Abstract

Religious beliefs and values are the most important factors in the stability of marital life. Religious beliefs are predictor of marital success and continuity of marriage. The practice of religious beliefs has a positive relationship with emotions and positive emotions, like a good mood, happiness, kindness, confidence, respect and peace, which are essential to a stable marriage. Most marital relationships get strained at some time, resulting in a failure to function optimally. Counselling comes in handy in giving spouses an opportunity to explore their situation, discover and find solution to a problem. An individual's religious beliefs usually influence their probability of seeking help and the nature of counselling. This study interrogates the extent to which religious belief of married fishers' religious beliefs influence their decision to seek marital counselling. The results reveal that majority of the respondents (60%) attended African Traditional Religion (ATR). There was however a negative relationship between religious beliefs and seeking marital counselling suggesting that most of the fishers who were strongly religious were not likely to seek marital counselling. The fishers attributed happenings in their lives to a higher being and therefore sought God's help when faced with problems.

Keywords: Married fishers, Religious beliefs, Marital counselling, Kenya

Introduction

A long term and enduring marriage is often considered a major life goal and a key indicator not only for marital success, but also for well-being and health (Bundgaard-Nielsen & O'Shannessy, 2019). The potential benefits to society and to new generations when strong marriages are formed cannot therefore be over emphasized (Finkel, 2018; Halwani, 2018). Marriage nevertheless is potentially a delicate relationship since it usually involves the living together of

Naples, 2018; Jarnkvist, 2019). Since it entails a continuous and intimate association between persons differing in temperament and other individual characteristics, its success is pegged largely on marital stability. Consequently, a positive and satisfactory marital stability contributes to economic well-being, physical and emotional health of the marriage (Sawai, Juhari, Kahar, Ismail & Sawai, 2018); and that it is an important source of instrumental and emotional assurance for the married couple and