

**INFLUENCE OF SELECTED STRESS COPING STRATEGIES ON THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF GIRLS IN EARLY MARRIAGES IN SILALE
WARD, TIATY SUB-COUNTY, BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA**

PETER ORWENYO MOSE

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Master of Education Degree in Guidance and Counselling of Egerton University.**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER, 2024

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted to this or any other University for an award of any degree.

Signature 


Date: 12 -09-2024

Peter Orwenyo Mose

EM16/13064/21.

Recommendation

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

Signature 

Date: 15-09-2024

Prof. Teresiah Njonge

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations.

Egerton University

Signature 

Date: 19- 09 - 2024

Dr. Jane N. Gacohi

Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations.

Egerton University

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to my Late Father, my mother, brothers and sisters who always encouraged me to pursue this course while offering me their physical, moral, psychological and even financial support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge and thank the Almighty God for his abundant grace and blessings on my academic journey while enjoying his free gift of life, good health as well as the company of people of good will. I also thank the Egerton University for providing the platform for my studies. My sincere thanks go to my supervisors Prof. Teresiah Njonge and Dr. Jane Njeri Gacohi for their relentless efforts to ensure that this Thesis met all the academic requirements. Thanks for your support, patience, guidance, encouragements and corrections you made to this research work. Thanks to all teaching and non - teaching staff members of the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations of Egerton University for the support you offered to me during my study period. May the grace of God be always your shield. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Mr. David Korir, Sylvester Omondi, Everlyne Oduor, Susan Ngigi, Joan Kimani, Sean Paul, Mr. and Mrs. James Karanja and his entire family life group of St Joseph the Worker Racecourse. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement and financial support. May God bless you abundantly. In addition, am greatly indebted to all good people who inspired me in one way or the another. Since I can't be able to mention all of you by name because of the limited space, I recognize and appreciate you all for your support. Your contributions will be immensely treasured forever. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

High prevalence (27%) of early marriage of girls below 18 years have been recorded in Tiaty Sub- County over the years. This affects the girls' psychological wellbeing since they often experience challenges such as chronic stress, depression, trauma, social phobia and anxiety disorders. This study investigated the influence of selected stress-coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Kenya. The study was guided by the Transactional Theory of Stress and adopted the descriptive research design. The target population was 1025 girls in early marriages aged between 13 years and 17 years in Tiaty, while accessible population was 530 girls in early marriages who were registered in educational or rehabilitation programs in Silale Ward. Purposive and snow-ball sampling techniques were used to select 106 girls in early marriages and 10 key informants, who comprised of 3 primary school head teachers, 3 secondary school principals, 1 village elder, 1 chief, and 2 directors of rescue centers. A girls in marriage questionnaire and key informants interview guide were used to collect data. Content and face validity of these two instruments were checked through expert judgement. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The questionnaire was deemed reliable as it yielded a coefficient of 0.744. Quantitative data gathered using questionnaires was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 while qualitative data from the interviews was analysed with the aid of NVivo software version 12. Qualitative data was analysed thematically which hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), simple and multiple linear regression. The findings showed that both physiological ($t = 8.377$, $p = .000$) and psychological ($t = 14.365$, $p = .000$) coping strategies were significant predictors of the wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The study concluded that the selected coping strategies influenced girls' psychological wellbeing. The study recommends that family members and husbands of girls in early marriages should employ physiological stress coping strategies such as recreational activities like games, provide enough food, promote good health among others to boost their psychological wellbeing. It is also recommended that managers of rescue centres and schools for girls in early marriages should offer psychological stress coping strategies such as professional guidance and counselling services, with a view of encouraging them not to give up but have hope that they will excel in life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BHU	Banaras Hindu University
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
IIPS	International Institute for Population Sciences
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
SCS	Stress Coping Strategies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Psychological wellbeing is defined as the level of enjoyment, pleasure (hedonic) and extent of fulfillment and meaning in life (eudaimonic) and happiness, as well as resilience in life such as ability to cope with different situations, ability to regulate emotions as well as having healthy problem solving skills (Gao, 2018a). Institutions all over the world are concerned with improving the psychological wellbeing of individuals across diverse contexts. According to De-Juanas et al.(2020), when people have positive psychological wellbeing, they are able to have healthier lives and live longer. According to the Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being by Carol Ryff, psychological wellbeing is measured in terms of purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations (Gao, 2018a). Therefore, psychological wellbeing can analogously be defined as the appraisal of an individual in regard to purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations (Pravitha & Sembiyan, 2017).

Morales-Rodríguez et al. (2020) defines purpose in life as the ability to have a sense of purpose and meaningfulness in life. This implies that one enjoys making plans for the future and works to achieve the plans (Qader et al., 2019). Individuals with purpose in life believe that their life is meaningful and important and they have fulfillment in life (Villarosa & Ganotice, 2018). Being focused in life and looking forward to achieve goals in life is an indicator that one has a positive purpose in life (Samman, 2017). Environmental mastery on the other hand refers to the capacity to be in control of one's life and surrounding life events (Bavani & Mohan, 2019). Environmental mastery scale assesses the extent to which individuals are in charge of the situation in which they live (Tanget al., 2019). Ability to manage one's life and taking charge on life events that happen to the person is an indication of positive psychological wellbeing (Villarosa & Ganotice, 2018).

Autonomy refers to the ability of an individual to make independent decisions while resisting social pressures (Bazaadut, 2018). Autonomy scale assesses the sense of self-determination, self-motivation, self-regulation, self-direction and freedom from norms (Bavani & Mohan, 2019). In respect to this, an individual possessing positive psychological wellbeing is able to make own independent decision and not influenced by people with strong opinions or the prevailing norms in a given context. Personal growth is defined as the extent in which one is open to new experiences and willingness to grow in diverse aspects of life

(Tang et al., 2019). It is the sense of continuous development and advancement in one's life through new experiences and learning towards optimal growth. It also refers to the ability to learn, to change and to grow (Villarosa & Ganotice, 2018). Having positive psychological wellbeing through personal growth scale, individuals are willing and open to have new experiences and seek to learn, change and grow through those experiences (Homan, 2019).

Self-acceptance assesses one's attitude towards oneself (Tang et al., 2019). It refers to the evaluation and appreciation of oneself in regard to the present and past events in life (Nwanneka et al., 2018). It is the assessment of one self's worthiness and pride in life (Bavani & Mohan, 2019). Individuals with positive psychological wellbeing implies that they are able to have a positive and favourable evaluation of oneself and their past life. Positive relationships on the other hand refers to the extent in which one has satisfying relationships with others. It is also defined as the ability for an individual to belong to a warm, trustworthy and satisfying relationships with others (Hicks & Mehta, 2018). According to Nwanneka et al. (2018), those who have positive relationships with others are able to positively interact socially with others, and are able to open up to others in a friendly manner. Individuals with positive relationships often have many friends with whom they share their many concerns with and thus, their personal space is occupied leaving no chance to loneliness (De-Juanas et al., 2020).

In achieving positive psychological wellbeing, high scores in purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations scales is desired (Gao, 2018b). However, due to stressing factors in life, many people across the globe experience psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Morales-Rodríguez et al., 2020). These challenges emanate from multiple and interacting factors at different levels of an individual's life. One of the groups that experience high prevalence of psychological challenges include girls in early marriages. According to Braimah (2020) early marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 years and an adult or another child. Psychological challenges experienced by girls in early marriages include neglect and abandonment, stigmatization, negative feelings of shattered dreams, stress related to living in poor and unhygienic conditions, feelings of embarrassment out of teen pregnancies, shame, hopelessness, and to the extreme, suicidal thoughts (Ahmad et al., 2019).

High prevalence of early marriages necessitated the girls to develop stress coping strategies (SCS) in order to improve their psychological wellbeing. Stress coping strategies refer to the response mechanisms in order to master, tolerate or reduce the impact of stress

(Romero et al., 2018). It is the strategies applied to adjust and manage external and internal demands that are beyond the resources of a person and thereby affecting the person's psychological wellbeing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). According to Morales et al. (2016) stress coping strategies are categorized into four; physiological, sociological, psychological and religious. The physiological stress coping strategies refer to bodily activities adopted to master, tolerate or minimize the impact of stress (Okeke et al., 2019). These physiological stress coping strategies include physical exercises, recreational activities and games, meals, sleep, and relaxation (Morales et al., 2016).

Sociological stress coping strategies on the other hand involves aspects of attachment and relationships that provide a safe haven of protection during times of distress (Esia-Donkoh et al., 2017). Sociological stress coping strategies may include interaction with others, belonging to a group that discuss problems experienced, sharing concerns with others, being conscious of others, visiting family and friends and entertaining others (Berjot & Gillet, 2018). Psychological stress coping strategies are emotion-focused attempts to reduce negative emotional responses associated with stress such as embarrassment, fear, anxiety, depression, excitement and frustration (Khalili et al., 2018). Psychological stress coping strategies include, counselling, mental engagements, distraction (that is, keeping one's mind occupied with other things in order to take the mind off the issue) and emotional disclosure (that is, expressing strong emotions by talking or writing about negative events that resulted to stress. Meditation, breathing exercises, behavior change mindfulness, journaling, cognitive reappraisal and suppressing negative thoughts and emotions also comprise of psychological stress coping strategies (Kumanova & Karastoyanov, 2019; Roming, 2018).

Religious stress coping strategies refers to the use of religious beliefs or practices to cope with stressful life situations (Rahman et al., 2017). According to Aflakseir and Mahdiyar (2016) religious stress coping strategies makes one feel less pressure to control circumstances and to worry about results. Religious stress coping strategies may include making prayers, singing, reading the scriptures and holy books, having faith in higher power and fellowshiping with others such as worshipping and attending religious seminars (Aflakseir & Mahdiyar, 2019). However, there are numerous global, regional, and local interventions and efforts to end early marriages in different regions of the world (Chybuikem, 2019; Symonds et al., 2021).

Globally, in 2014, The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) initiated a call for global action to end human rights violation of early marriage by 2030 (Hassan et al., 2019). In 2015, 193 governments across the world adopted target 5.3 of the

Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) to end early marriages by 2030. In 2016, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), launched the Global Programme to End Early marriages (UNICEF, 2018). The programme sought to empower 12 million adolescent girls at risk of marriage or already in union through life skills training and school attendance support. In Nepal, National Strategy to End Early marriages between 2015 and 2030 was initiated. Bangladesh drafted National Action Plan to Eliminate Early marriages between 2015 and 2021 (Hajihassani & Sim, 2019).

Regionally Egypt and Ethiopia developed National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in their respective countries between 2014 and 2015. Mozambique government initiated a National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of Early marriages between 2015 and 2019. Uganda's National Strategy on Ending Early marriages and Teenage Pregnancy run from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020 while Zambia's National Strategy on Ending Early marriages run between 2016 and 2021 (Burgess et al., 2022). Burkina Faso developed National Strategy to prevent and eliminate early marriages between 2016 and 2025. Chad developed a road map to end early marriages and female genital mutilation between the year 2016 and 2018. Ghana drafted National Strategic Framework for Ending Early marriages between the years 2017 and 2026.

Locally, the Kenyan government committed itself to eliminate child, early and forced marriages by 2030 in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 1990, Kenya ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which set a minimum age of marriage at 18, and acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1984, which obligated states to ensure free and full consent to marriage. In 2000 Kenya ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, including Article 21 regarding the prohibition of early marriages. In 2010 Kenya ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, including Article 6 which sets the minimum age for marriage as 18. Kenya co-sponsored the 2013, 2014, 2016 and 2018 UN General Assembly resolutions on child, early and forced marriage, and the Human Rights Council resolution on child, early and forced marriage. In 2014, Kenya signed a joint statement at the Human Rights Council calling for a resolution on early marriages. At the London Girl Summit in 2014, the government signed a charter committing to end early marriages by 2020. In 2015, Kenya supported four recommendations to strengthen efforts to eliminate early marriages during

Universal Periodic Review. In 2017 Kenya became the 19th country to launch the African Union Campaign to End Early marriages in Africa (Government of Kenya, 2021).

Despite numerous initiatives against early marriages and ratification of international and regional policy frameworks as well as development of laws, conventions, treaties, and international agreements that criminalize early marriages, the vice is still rampant in several regions and communities. Globally, approximately one in five girls get married before the age of 18 years. In Africa, before the year 2030, more than 100 million girls are expected to marry before their eighteenth birthday (Burgess et al., 2022). In Kenya and according to a 2017 UNICEF study, 64% of girls of Pokot origin got married before reaching the age of 18, followed by 54% of Rendille girls, 38% Somali girls and 28% of Maasai girls. 38% of Pokot boys and 14% of Somali boys got married before reaching the age of 18. Tiaty Sub- County is dominantly occupied by the Pokot tribe who engages in retrogressive practices such as FGM and early marriage (Wambu, 2018). According to UNICEF and World Vision (2021), 27% of the girls in Silale Ward of Tiaty Sub-County are in early marriages and this made Silale Ward the choice of the study area. This study however, focused only on the physiological and psychological stress coping strategies that were in line with the field of study. The current study therefore sought to establish the influence of selected stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Silale Ward in Tiaty Sub- County experience high prevalence of early marriages at 27% of all girls below 18 years. These girls experience challenges that threatened their psychological wellbeing such as chronic stress, depression, trauma, social phobia and anxiety disorder. Girls in Silale Ward portray these psychological challenges through thinking, extreme highs and lows in mood, long-lasting sadness, irritability, and withdrawal from family and social events, excess fear, anxiety, a lot of worrying and also dramatic changes in eating and sleeping habits. Others manifest strong feelings of anger, hallucinations and delusions, thoughts of suicide and inability to cope with their daily problems and activities. These girls in early marriages in Silale Ward might have been using various strategies to cope with their psychological challenges which might have affected their psychological wellbeing negatively or positively. There have been limited conclusive studies that have been conducted to show how girls in early marriages cope with stress and thus a research gap. The current study therefore, sought to establish the influence of selected stress coping strategies on the

psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of selected stress-coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives;

- i) To establish the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.
- ii) To determine the influence of psychological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

1.5 Research hypotheses

The study sought to test the following research hypotheses;

- HO₁: There is no statistically significant influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya
- HO₂: There is no statistically significant influence of psychological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help to enhance psychological wellbeing of the girls in early marriages through adopting the positive stress coping strategies as a result of insights on how girls in early marriages cope with stress. The findings of the study may also help the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender in Kenya to understand how better to address the plight of girls in early marriages. In addition, the Ministry of Education in Kenya will also benefit from the findings by understanding various ways of addressing early marriages in primary and secondary schools while implementing the back-to-school program. Policy

makers, organizations and stakeholders on matters affecting women and girls might draw some lessons on how to effectively address early marriages in Kenyan context and beyond. The findings of the study may contribute to the body of knowledge useful to researchers and academicians for further studies on early marriages, stress coping strategies and psychological wellbeing.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County of Baringo County. Tiaty Sub-County is one of the Six Sub-Counties in Baringo County where the other Sub-Counties include; Mogotio, Baringo North, Baringo Central, Baringo South and Eldama Ravine. The study sought to establish the influence of selected stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The independent variables of the study were; physiological stress coping strategies that included; sleep, physical exercises, games, meals and relaxation. and the psychological stress coping strategies such as; counselling, mental engagements, distraction and emotional disclosure. The dependent variable was the psychological wellbeing measured in terms of; purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations of girls from Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study faced the following limitations:

- i) Since early marriages are prohibited, the study had challenges in accessing girls in early marriages. To overcome this challenge, the researcher engaged the village elders, chiefs and local residents to guide the researcher to reach out the respondents. In addition, necessary procedures, authorization and permits were acquired before embarking on data collection for ethical purposes.
- ii) Tiaty Sub-County being an area with adverse security challenges characterized majorly by banditry, the researcher faced the lock down of the area due to security problems. To overcome this challenge, the researcher had to provide all the necessary documents to show that he was authorized to carry out the research in the area. The security men manning the area linked the researcher with the chiefs who in turn introduced the researcher to the village elders who had to provide security instead of the chiefs whom the resident of Tiaty recognized as the symbol of the government in the area thus might have scared away the respondents.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study was conducted under the following assumption:

- i) The stress coping strategies that the girls might have been using to cope with psychological challenges cuts across physiological stress coping strategies and psychological stress coping strategies. With respect to this, the study assumed that there were no interactions with other possible coping strategies such as sociological and religious. However, through pilot study, content validity as well as reliability was done to ascertain the relevance and the internal consistency of the two strategies among girls in early marriages. Through regression analysis, provision was made for the unexplained variance in psychological wellbeing.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The following are the key definitions of terms that were used in the study and as operationalized in the contexts of girls in early marriages:

Early marriage: According to Braimah (2020) early marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 years and an adult or another child. This definition was adopted in this study and also for child marriage as well.

Girls: Girls will refer to female children in any formal marriage or informal union under the age of 18 years (Braimah, 2020). This definition was adopted for this study.

Negative psychological wellbeing: Negative psychological wellbeing on the other hand is associated with dysfunctional thought patterns, emotional disorders, and behavioral challenges that may lead to significant distress and that is considered deviant in that person's culture or society (Duin et al., 2019; Manyema et al., 2018). This definition was adopted in this study.

Physiological Stress Coping Strategies: The physiological stress coping strategies refer to bodily activities adopted to master, tolerate or minimize the impact of stress (Okeke et al., 2019). Physiological stress coping strategies in this study referred to bodily activities such as physical exercises, recreational activities and games, meals, sleep, and relaxation.

Psychological Stress Coping Strategies: Psychological stress coping strategies are emotion-focused attempts to reduce negative emotional responses associated with stress such as embarrassment, fear, anxiety, depression, excitement and frustration (Khalili et al., 2018). In this study, psychological stress coping strategies included counselling, mental engagements, distraction (that is, keeping one's mind occupied with other things in order to take mind off the issue) and emotional disclosure (that is, expressing strong emotions by talking or writing about negative events that brought stress).

Psychological Wellbeing: Psychological wellbeing is defined as the appraisal of an individual in regard to purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations (Pravitha & Sembayan, 2017). In this study, psychological wellbeing was defined as the level of enjoyment, pleasure (hedonic) and extent of fulfillment and meaning in life (eudaimonic) and happiness, as well as resilience in life such as ability to cope with different situations, ability to regulate emotions as well as having healthy problem-solving skills.

Positive psychological wellbeing: Positive psychological wellbeing is defined as happiness, enjoyment, pleasure and fulfillment in life as well as resilience in regard to coping, emotion

regulation and healthy problem-solving skills (Hicks & Mehta, 2018). This definition was adopted in this study.

Stress Coping Strategies: Stress coping strategies refer to the response mechanisms in order to master, tolerate or reduce the impact of stress (Romero et al., 2018). Stress coping strategies in this study it referred to the strategies applied to adjust and manage external and internal demands of stress that are beyond the resources of the girls in early marriages and thereby affecting their psychological wellbeing.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature review organized according to the study objectives. The chapter presents related literature on early marriages, psychological wellbeing and stress coping strategies. The chapter further covers theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

2.2 Concept of Early Marriages

According to Braimah (2020) early marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 years and an adult or another child. There are numerous studies that have been carried out to outline the prevalence and causes of early marriages (Chybuikem, 2019; Symonds et al., 2021). In the context of Nepal, Mahato (2016) carried out a study that sought to examine the consequences and causes of early marriage among South Asian countries. Qualitative type of research approach was utilized to obtain the data from informants on early marriage. Information was collected from five key persons (main players of the organizations) who were engaged in and had verifiable experience in the development sector specifically in education and early marriages concerns of Terai. It was revealed from the study that the poor standard of living, eco-deprived and illiterate populations have a high rate of early marriage. Further, the three main factors driving early marriages were poverty, a desire to strengthen links within the community, and the idea that marriage provides some sort of safety net. Health and education of the young women were directly impacted. In addition, School dropout rates for female students were found to be far higher than for male students. In addition, girls' health was found to be deteriorating due to their heavy burden at home, such as cooking and mowing the lawn (Mahato, 2016).

In Pakistan, Ullah (2019) did an analysis of the influence and drivers of early marriage in Khyber Pakhtunkwa (KP), Pakistan, through a qualitative research. Semi-structured interview with respondents was conducted in order to gather information on the research's goals. Findings from the study depicted that a number of factors contributed to early marriage, including: lack of effective law enforcement, poverty, women's lower status in society, cultural and traditional norms that protect virginity and family honor, close family ties, and children in rural areas who are not in school, orphans and stepchildren, and children without social support or supervision. The study recommended that early marriages can be prevented or reduced if there were educated parents, affordable and high-quality education

for all children, and a positive role for community leaders like religious leaders, councilors, political leaders, and elders of the community, who can play an influential role in preventing and reducing the number of early marriages in their communities.

In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, Maswikwa et al. (2015), carried out a study that sought to investigate the prevalence of early marriages. Early marriage and adolescent pregnancies in 12 Sub-Saharan African nations were studied using data from demographic and health surveys and the Child Marriage database established by the MACH Equity initiative at McGill University. It was therefore revealed from the study that the minimum age for marriage in four of the 12 countries was 18 or older. Following an adjustment for variables, the prevalence of early marriage in countries with consistent legislation banning the practice was 40% lower than in countries without such laws (prevalence ratio, 0.6). Moreover, Teenage pregnancy was 25 percent less common in countries with consistently enforced minimum marriage age laws than it was in nations that did not.

In Mombasa County, Said (2019) conducted a study that examined the reasons and implications of early marriage with an emphasis on Mvita Sub-County. Surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews, and secondary sources were used to collect data. Findings from the study depicted that early marriages in the Sub-County were commonly caused by the tradition of marrying girls early in order to keep them off from indulging in inappropriate behaviour. Poverty, religious obligation and societal pressure were also found to be the other reasons for early marriage. Furthermore, the study established that early marriage had a negative impact on a girl's health.

Lilian et al. (2015) carried out a study on child marriage and its effect on girls' education in Migori County, Kenya. Girls who should be in school but were not, were the primary focus of the study. As a result of early and forced marriages, 30 women were studied in this study. According to the findings, parents' attitudes towards the practice of early marriage are influenced by their children's quality of education. Similarly, the perception that females in some communities are a source of wealth and constitute the lowest portion of society accelerated the early and forced marriage pandemic. The study recommended that there should be an evaluation of existing regulations, including the minimum age for marriage, to ensure that legal and regulatory frameworks are strengthened, as well as the efforts to avoid early or forced marriages.

2.3 Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages

Psychological wellbeing is measured in terms of purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self -acceptance and positive relations (Gao, 2018a). Different individuals and categories of people experience stress at different levels depending on the existing risk factors (Qader et al., 2019; Samman, 2017). This may result to positive or negative psychological wellbeing. Positive psychological wellbeing is also associated with happiness, enjoyment, pleasure and fulfillment in life as well as resilience in regard to coping, emotion regulation and healthy problem solving skills (Hicks & Mehta, 2018). Positive psychological wellbeing brings sense of balance in emotions, thoughts, social relationships, and pursuits resulting to active engagement in social interactions (Kheswa, 2017). Negative psychological wellbeing on the other hand is associated with dysfunctional thought patterns, emotional disorders, and behavioral challenges that may lead to significant distress and that is considered deviant in that person's culture or society (Duin et al., 2019; Manyema et al., 2018).

Burgess et al. (2022) carried out a study in London, United Kingdom to assess the present literature on early marriages in terms of treatment of its mental health. One mixed-methods research and fifteen quantitative studies (14 cross-sectional and one longitudinal) were used to compile the final sample, which comprised data from 12 nations, mostly from the global South. It was therefore found from the study that those girls who were married as children cited domestic abuse, poverty, difficulties in child bearing, and social isolation as contributing causes to their emotional anguish. Most people who sought treatment for mental illness were depressed. On the other hand, fears, phobias and psychological distress were mentioned less frequently while substance abuse was also less common. While early marriage is associated with emotional discomfort and specific mental health disorders, there are still gaps in the understanding. The study further recommended that to better understand the mental health needs of young males and those working in humanitarian settings, more research was needed.

Maurya (2018) did a study with an aim of looking into the nature of the connection between the level of life happiness and the mental health of Indian research scholars. 287 researchers from the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) participated in the project. It was revealed from the study that researchers' mental health was clearly linked to their level of life satisfaction while researchers' psychological wellbeing was strongly, positively connected with family, friends and university and adversely correlated with

suffering. Moreover, study participants were shown to have significant, unfavorable correlations between family and self-reported psychological discomfort. An Indian scholar's psychological wellbeing differed significantly when taking into account factors such as life satisfaction, living conditions, the individual, friends and family. Level of life happiness of the researcher was strongly correlated with his or her level of psychological suffering.

Sarfo et al. (2020) did a study where adolescent married girls in Ghana's northern area had their psychological wellbeing examined in order to determine what factors contributed to early marriage and what its repercussions were. In respect to this, 21 married girls, 8 parents, and 7 elders from various communities in Ghana's northern region were subjected to in-depth interviews in order to learn more about the likely causes and effects of adolescent female marriage. Results from the study depicted that early marriage had both negative and positive implications on the psychological health of the young girls. The implications were basically reflective of age at marriage, objectives for marriage and relations with the husband and in-laws, stressful housework and abuse. Results also showed a strong influence on early marriages in Ghana from cultural values and conceptions of marriage as well as adolescence, gender and sexuality.

In the context of Nigeria, Adeniyi and Onadiji (2016) did a study where emotional intelligence, as well as demographic characteristics, were examined to establish their impact on the psychological wellbeing of undergraduates. Surveys were conducted in a descriptive manner in this study. A convenience sampling technique was used to select 480 undergraduates from among the 13 faculties at Obafemi Awolowo University. Ninety-five percent of the students had high levels of psychological wellbeing, according to the findings. For undergraduates, emotional intelligence had a significant impact on their psychological wellbeing. In addition, the results showed that gender and residence had a substantial impact on undergraduates' psychological wellbeing. On the other hand, undergraduates' psychological wellbeing was not significantly influenced by their age. Emotional intelligence was found to be a strong predictor of psychological wellbeing in the majority of undergraduates.

John et al. (2019) carried out a study in Niger and Ethiopia where early marriages and its sub-domains: depression, anguish, anxiety, positive wellbeing and self-control and general health were examined in the study. To put the psychological wellbeing of child brides in a broader historical context, qualitative data was collected in Ethiopia. Analysis of the relationship between early marriages and psychological wellbeing was done using multivariate linear regressions. In both Niger and Ethiopia, regression analysis indicated a

substantial negative correlation between early marriage (marriage at 15 years or younger) and general mental health. With the exception of self-control, early marriage was found to be negatively associated with all aspects of psychological wellbeing, including depression, anxiety, positive wellbeing, vitality, and general health. In addition, Ethiopian child brides reported experiencing emotional distress and depression as a result of having to take on marital responsibilities at such a young age in the qualitative analysis (John et al., 2019).

In the context of Ethiopia and Niger, International Women's Research Center (2016) conducted a study that sought to examine whether and how early marriages affected women's mental health and wellbeing. A subset of women who answered all questions about their mental health were used in this study (2,463 women in Niger and 3,501 women in Ethiopia). It was depicted from the study that women who married at a young age were more likely to suffer from poor mental health and wellbeing as a result of early marriages. In addition, early marriages had a significant impact on women's psychological wellbeing in both nations, even after accounting for other characteristics that may affect the mental health, such as home affluence and experiences of intimate partner abuse. In Niger, getting married before the age of 15 had a considerable negative impact on the woman's overall psychological wellbeing, with those who got married before the age of 18 experiencing the most negative impact. On the other hand, only individuals who got married before the age of 12 in Ethiopia were shown to have a statistically meaningful association.

In Kenya, Wambu (2018) carried out a study to establish among other variables the psychological challenges of girls in early marriages in Baringo County. The study established that girls in early marriages experience challenges that threaten their psychological wellbeing such as chronic stress, depression, trauma, social phobia and anxiety disorder. These psychological challenges have also been noted among the girls who are in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County. The girls in early marriages experiences extreme highs and lows in mood, long-lasting sadness, irritability, and withdrawal from family and social events, excess fear, anxiety and a lot of worrying and also dramatic changes in eating and sleeping habits. Other girls manifest strong feelings of anger, hallucinations and delusions, thoughts of suicide and inability to cope with daily problems and activities (Wambu, 2018). The study did not however establish how the girls cope with the stress and thus a conceptual research gap.

2.4 Stress-Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages

Stress coping strategies refers to the response mechanisms in order to master, tolerate or reduce the impact of stress (Romero et al., 2018). It is the strategies applied to adjust and

manage external and internal demands that are beyond the resources of a person and thereby affecting the person's psychological wellbeing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). According to Morales et al. (2016) stress coping strategies are categorized into four major categories; physiological, sociological, psychological and religious. In the context of Malaysia, Ruqayat and Owoyemi (2019) conducted a study that investigated the stress coping strategies and academic stress among the students in Islamic University. The study embraced on a sample of 100 married female and male students who were selected randomly. Coupled male and female international students' coping and stress levels were found not to be significantly different, according to the study results. Gobindgarh (2022) did a study in India that conducted a comprehensive literature study on the topic of stress and coping among married female college students. Stress and coping among married female students, as well as papers written in English, met the inclusion criteria for this study. Thirteen of the 40 articles that were selected for review were deemed worthy of further investigation. The study revealed that married female students were under stress and were resorting to unhealthy coping techniques. The study recommended for stress reduction intervention if they were to improve their academic achievement and their position as a married couple.

In a study based in Iran, Richter et al. (2014) carried out a study that sought to scrutinize on the ENRICH marital satisfaction inventory, ways of coping with marital stress (Ways of Coping Questionnaire), and social support (Social Support Questionnaire). The study used a sample 100 female medical staff members in Tehran university hospitals. According to the findings, there was a substantial negative correlation between marital satisfaction subscales and methods of dealing with marital problems such as seeking social support, confronted coping, escape avoidance, distancing and self-controlling. It was also found that job satisfaction and strategies of coping account for between 24% and 38% of the variance in marital satisfaction sub-scales. It was therefore concluded that it is possible to improve marital satisfaction among female medical staff members by focusing on these characteristics.

A study conducted by Rahman et al. (2017) showed that married women in Chittagong were divided into three groups based on the sort of family they had and the type of job they had in order to investigate the coping strategy they embraced. A representative sample of 100 people took part in the research. It was therefore found that family type had no significant effect on anxiety in this study, while employment position had a significant effect. As compared to employed married women, housewives indicated increased anxiety. In addition, emotional-focused and problem-focused coping were not significantly affected by

employment level or family type and anxiety was linked to both problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies.

2.4.1 Physiological Stress Coping Strategies and Psychological Wellbeing

The physiological stress coping strategies refers to bodily activities adopted to master, tolerate or minimize the impact of stress (Okeke et al., 2019). These physiological stress coping strategies include physical exercises, recreational activities and games, meals, sleep, and relaxation (Morales et al., 2016). In Sweden, Kokutensa (2021) carried a study to examine among other aspects the stress and coping strategies of employees under distance working program. The study adopted qualitative research design by carrying out online interviews and thematically analysing the data. The findings of the study established that there were several stressing factors among the employees which included lack of independence at work, lack of enough working resources, communication challenges among colleagues and overworking among others. Major coping strategies established by the study included engaging in physical exercises, finding alternatives to solve problems, getting occupied by extra work by extending the working hours and avoiding to pick calls and answer emails on purpose. Kokutensa (2021) recommended for employee motivation through effective communication, availing enough resources and supporting the employee when need arises as well as reducing amount of work. There exists a methodological research gap in the reviewed study since it only focused on qualitative research design and thus not able to quantify the influence of coping strategy and psychological wellbeing of the employees.

In Eritrea, Yikealo et al. (2018) carried out a study that focused on the psychological wellbeing of college students as well as their coping strategies. Using questionnaires and descriptive research design, the study sampled 123 college students. The study found out that students adopted both positive and negative stress coping strategies. For positive coping strategies, it was found out that most students coped with stress by sleeping and taking enough rest, watching movies, comedies and programs, engaging in other activities, and doing regular exercises. The positive stress coping strategies had a positive significant influence on the psychological wellbeing of students. Negative stress coping strategies established by the study were eating too much, taking alcohol, going for the nightclub, making fun and smoking cigarette. These negative stress coping strategies were found to have negative significant influence of the psychological wellbeing of the students. It was recommended to have regular group counselling services in the university as well as development of more recreational centres in the university. The study by Yikealo et al.

(2018) was done in Eritrea whose psychological support systems and cultures are different from Kenyan cultures in regard to early marriages.

Johari (2020) outlined some of the physiological stress coping strategies adopted by employees in stressing environments. The study used meta-analysis obtained from 14 articles on western literature. Some of the physiological stress coping strategies used by the workers included having enough sleep before and after work, eating well, drinking of coffee during work, engaging into trips and tours and other recreational activities. The study recommended employees to be given off days and vacations to rest as well as awarding of employees upon performance improvements at work. The current study will use quantitative approach to meet its objectives and thus able to link various coping strategies to psychological wellbeing as opposed to qualitative approach adopted by the reviewed study.

In the study to examine the stress coping strategies of the life-sentenced prisoners in maximum-security prisons in Kenya, Muring'u et al. (2021) focused on the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of the inmates. The study acquired comprehensive information from a sample size of 365 prisoners through structured questionnaires. Some of the physiological stress coping strategies used by the inmates were; watching television and listening to music, participating in games, doing exercises, sleeping well and enough relaxation among others. For the psychological wellbeing of the life-sentenced inmates, the study recommended that it was important to have effective reintegration and rehabilitation of the lifers. The current study differs from the reviewed study in that the context will be based on establishing the stress coping strategies among girls in early marriages and not on life-sentenced prisoners.

2.4.2 Psychological Stress Coping Strategies and Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological stress coping strategies are emotion-focused attempts to reduce negative emotional responses associated with stress such as embarrassment, fear, anxiety, depression, excitement and frustration (Khalili et al., 2018). Psychological stress coping strategies include, counselling, mental engagements, distraction (that is, keeping one's mind occupied with other things in order to take the mind off the issue) and emotional disclosure (that is, expressing strong emotions by talking or writing about negative events that brought stress. Meditation, breathing exercises, behavior change mindfulness, journaling, cognitive reappraisal and suppressing negative thoughts and emotions also comprised of psychological stress coping strategies (Kumanova & Karastoyanov, 2019; Roming, 2018).

Dimunová et al. (2021) carried out a study among nurses to examine how personal wellbeing is affected by the various coping strategies to stress in Slovakia. The study used a sample of 509 nurses who were given structured questionnaires to fill. Using descriptive and inductive statistics, the study found that the nurses used both adaptive and maladaptive stress coping strategies. In respect to this, the study revealed that most nurses coped with stressing job demands by disengaging from stressful tasks and few self-blamed themselves for the stress encountered. It was further revealed that there was a negative correlation between self-blame and personal wellbeing. The study also noted that a proportion of the nurses engaged into personal meditation that led to improvement on the personal wellbeing index. The study recommended personal management training and initiatives such as team building, effective conflict resolution, counselling services and promotion of effective stress coping strategies. The reviewed study measured psychological wellbeing in terms of personal wellbeing while the current study will focus on purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations as measures of psychological wellbeing and thus broad scope.

Focusing on University academic staff, Shen and Slater (2021) sought to determine the effect of coping strategies on the emotional wellbeing in Northern Ireland. The study adopted cross-section online research design and sampled 87 academic staff at the university in Northern Ireland. The findings of the study revealed that the academic staff experienced moderate stress and coped majorly by adopting distractive behaviours. In respect to this, it was noted that distraction behaviours had a negative effect on the emotional wellbeing of the staff. It was also found that the academic staff who adopted acceptance coping styles and positive reframing had higher scores on emotional wellbeing. It was noted that there was a positive significant correlation between acceptance coping styles, positive reframing and emotional wellbeing of academic staff. For improved emotional wellbeing and increased productivity of academic staff, the study recommended development of reliable methods and policy frameworks of coping to stress. Since the reviewed study only focused on emotional wellbeing, the current study focuses on psychological wellbeing as a whole; there exists a conceptual research gap to be filled.

In Nigeria, Ukeh and Hassan (2018) sought to establish the effectiveness of stress coping strategies towards improving the psychological wellbeing of students. The study used cross-sectional research design and sampled 149 students. It was revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between stress coping strategies and students' purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive

relations. Specifically, it was noted that students coped with stress by using psychological coping measures such as wishful thinking, self-criticism, problem avoidance and cognitive restructuring. However, it was noted that self-criticism had a negative effect on all the six measures of psychological wellbeing. The study recommended guidance and counselling services among the students as well as peer counselling. The reviewed study was done among university students while the current study will be done on girls under the age of 18 years and in early marriages and whose stressors differ.

Using systematic literature review, Johari (2020) outlined some of the psychological stress coping strategies adopted by employees in stressing environments. The study obtained its conclusions from 14 articles on western literature. The main stressors established through the systematic literature review were high workload, lack of independence at workplace, poor interpersonal interactions and conflicts and harsh physical environment. Psychological stress coping strategies adopted by workers included behavioural disengagement, denying the stressors, self-distraction, mental disengagement, self-blaming, trying to forget everything, and hopeful thinking. The study recommended employees not to use suppression and avoidance methods of stress coping such as behavioural and mental disengagement, denial, distraction, self-blame and procrastination. Since the study was based on western literature in a meta-analysis approach, there is biasness and thus the current study will focus on African and specifically Kenyan Literature on empirical evidence.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping to explain how individuals experienced, appraised and coped with stress. The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and defines psychological stress as an encounter between an individual and environment that is cognitively appraised and exceeding the available resources and pose threat to the persons' wellbeing. According to the proponents of the theory, psychological stress undergoes two phases; cognitive appraisals and coping. Cognitive appraisals refer to the process in which an encounter is evaluated as potentially stressful or threatening the wellbeing of a person (Esia-Donkoh et al., 2017).

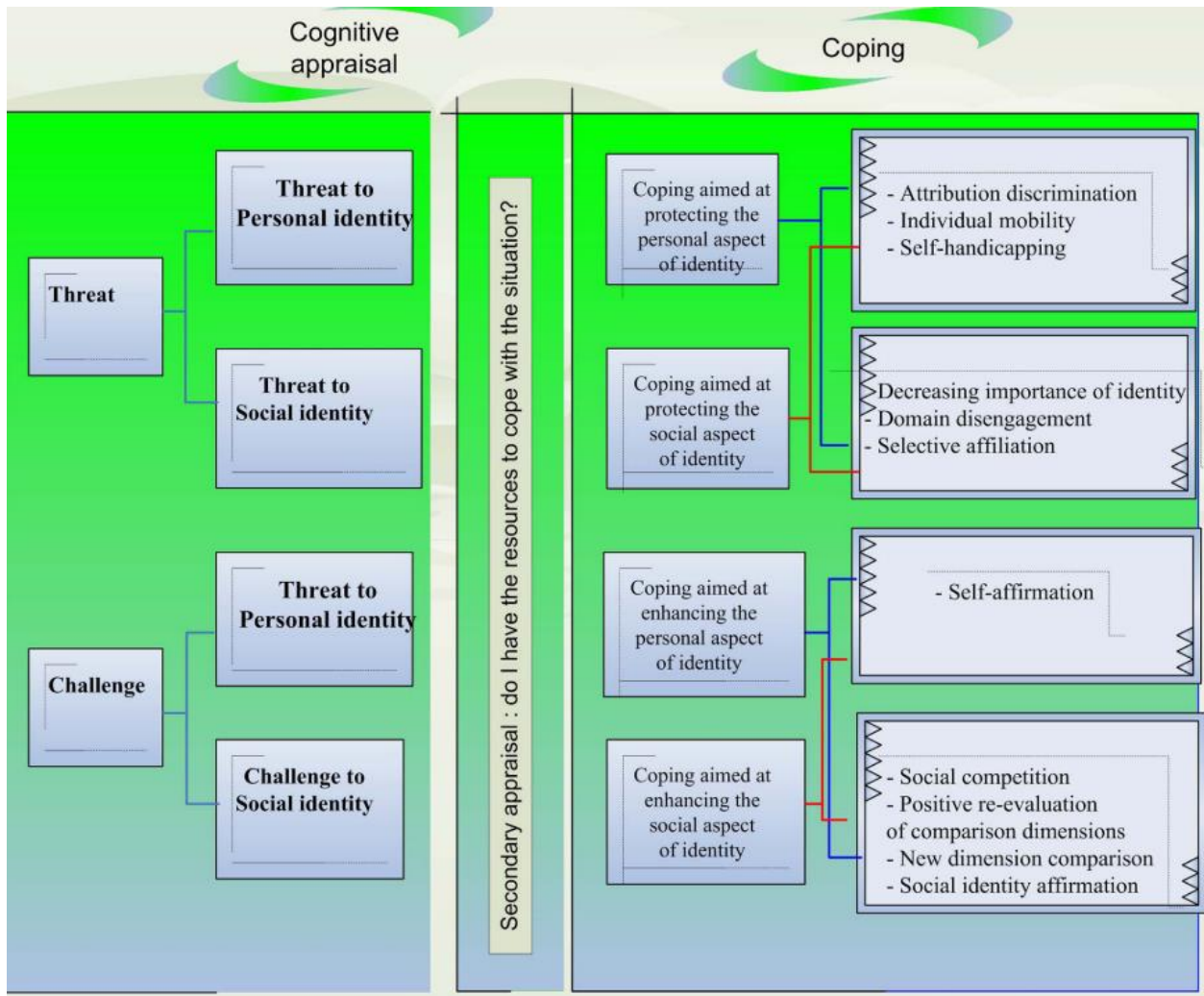
Cognitive appraisals have two cognitive appraisal stages. The first stage is primary appraisal stage which seeks to assess an encounter on whether it is threatening or challenging through asking the self "am in a trouble?" If the answer to the question is "yes", then the encounter is appraised as either a threat or challenge (Berjot & Gillet, 2018). A threat refers to an encounter that may lead to negative effects on one's self esteem or psychological

wellbeing. A challenge on the other hand refers to an encounter that may lead to personal growth or new lessons. An encounter can be both a threat and a challenge and are often not mutually exclusive (Goh *et al.*, 2010). The second stage of appraisal is secondary appraisal. This stage evaluates the ability of an individual to cope with the situation. It seeks to answer the question “Am I able to cope with the situation”? The available resources for coping might be physical, Social, psychological and religious (Dillard, 2019).

The second phase of Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping is coping. Coping refers to the behavioural and cognitive processes in which an individual master, reduce, or tolerate the internal and external demands that are created by the stressful transaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Coping can be passive or active. Two major types of coping to stress are emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping refers to the process in which one regulates the emotions and responses towards a stressing situation while problem-focused coping refers to the process of management of stressors with a view of eliminating the stressors (Dillard, 2019). The method of coping used by individuals depends on the appraisal on the encountered situation. Problem-focused coping is mostly used when the stressors cannot or are less changeable while emotion-focused coping is used when the stressors can be changed or eliminated (Berjot & Gillet, 2018). Figure 1 shows the process of appraisals and coping to stressors.

Figure 1:

An illustration of the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping.



Source: Lazarus and Folkman (1984)

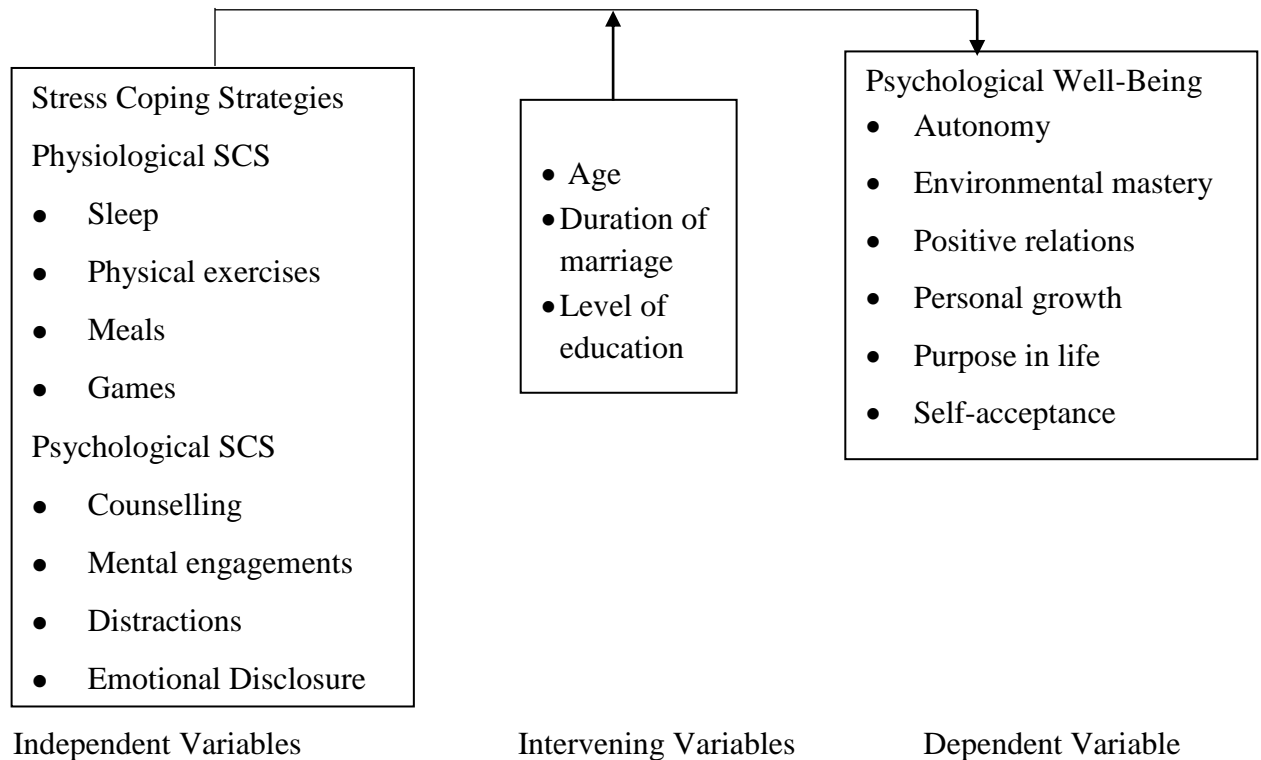
Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping was relevant in predicting coping towards a stressing situation based on the appraisals given to the stressors. It offered a systematic guide to the procedures towards coping to certain levels of stress (Goh et al., 2010). However, few studies have shown that correct and objective appraisals cannot be made during a stressful encounter (Dillard, 2019). In this study, Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping was relevant in explaining how girls in early marriages coped with stress. Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping further categorized coping strategies as physiological stress coping strategies and psychological stress coping strategies among others and thus in line with the current study.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The study sought to establish the influence of selected stress coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The conceptualization of the study variables is as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

Conceptual framework illustrating the relationship among variables



The independent variables of the study were; physiological stress coping strategies and psychological stress coping strategies. The dependent variable was the psychological wellbeing measured in terms of; purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations. The study hypothesized that stress coping strategies influences the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. Age, duration of marriage and the Level of education of the girls in early marriages may determine the level and coping strategy as well as their psychological wellbeing and thus were the intervening variables of the study. Therefore, the intervening variables may influence both the dependent and independent variables or fail to influence at all.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological aspects of the study. The chapter covers the research design, study location, population, sampling procedure and sample size, instrumentation, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

The study used the descriptive survey research design. The design involved collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from a population or a sample of it (Bilgin, 2017). The gathered data is analysed and used to describe the “who”, “what”, “when” “where” and “how” of a situation, problem or a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design does not entail any manipulation of variables. This design was selected because the study collected data using a sample of girls in marriage in Tiaty sub county and exploring the association between selected stress coping strategies and psychological wellbeing without manipulation of variables.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County. Baringo County is situated in the Rift Valley Region and shares borders with 8 counties namely, West Pokot to the North West, Turkana to the North, Samburu to the North East, Laikipia to the East, Nakuru to the South, Kericho and Uasin-Gishu Counties to the South West, and Elgeyo-Marakwet to the West. It is located between longitudes 35 30’ and 36 30’ East and between latitudes 0 10’ South and 1 40’. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, the County has a population of 666,763 with a population density of 61 people per sq km. The County occupies an area of 11,015 square kilometers. The County is divided into 6 Sub-Counties, namely Baringo South (1,678 km²), Mogotio (1,315 km²) Eldama Ravine (1,003km²), Baringo Central (800km²) Baringo North (1,704km²) and Tiaty (4,517km²). Silale Ward is one of the seven wards in Tiaty Sub-County. The other wards in Tiaty Sub-County comprises of Tirioko, Kolowa, Ribkwo, Tangulbei/Korossi, Loiyamorok and Churo/Amaya. Silale Ward has a population of 21,947 (12,241 female and 9,706 male) and its geographical coverage is 335.36 square kilometers (Kenya National Bureau of

Statistics, 2019). Silale Ward was suited for the present study as it presented a unique social and cultural practices such as early marriages, FGM and is driven by varied socio-economic activities such as nomadic pastoralism. Silale Ward faces high prevalence of early marriages at 27% due to high poverty levels, high illiteracy rates among parents and retrogressive cultural beliefs (Ayub et al., 2021).

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all girls in early marriages between the age of 13 years and 17 years. This was in line with the definition of early marriages with exclusion of girls below 12 years as they were young to comprehend the information sought by this study. Out of 12,241 females in Silale Ward, 31% are between the age of 13-17 years and thus translating to 3,795 girls. According to UNICEF and World Vision (2021), 27% of the girls in Silale Ward were in early marriages and thus translating to 1025 girls. Therefore, the target population of the study was 1025 girls in early marriages. However, due to the illegalities of early marriages the 1025 girls were not practically accessible. Therefore, the accessible population was 530 girls in early marriages who were registered in educational and rehabilitation programs such as; primary and secondary schools, Girls Not Brides program, local authorities and other organizations that sought to help girls in early marriages. The study in addition targeted 30 key informants who comprised of ten primary school head teachers, ten secondary school principals, three village elders, one chief and six directors of organizations that were involved in saving girls from early marriages within Silale Ward. Table 1 shows the accessible population distribution.

Table 1:

The study population

Category	Target Population	Accessible Population
Girls in Primary School	219	113
Girls in Secondary School	806	417
Key Informants	30	30
Total	1055	560

Source: Girls and not bride (2021)

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The study used both purposive sampling and snow ball sampling techniques to select girls in early marriages in Silale Ward. Purposive sampling refers to non-probability sampling technique where the respondents are selected based on certain qualification and criteria or judgment (Kunisch et al., 2018). Purposive sampling helped to select most qualified and right individuals to participate in the study in order to provide valid information (Creswell, 2014). Snow ball sampling refers to purposively selecting the available and known participants and ask them to recruit other participants who qualify to take part in the study (Latunde, 2017). Snow - balling is used in cases where the participants are rare to find or are not publicly known (Sloan & Quan-Haase, 2017). Early marriages being illegal and hidden practices in Kenya, snow- ball enabled the researcher to access girls in early marriages. The researcher began by purposively sampling the girls in early marriages who were attending primary and secondary schools within the ward and then using the snow ball technique, the girls had to refer the researcher to other girls in early marriages but might have dropped out of school. According to Kershaw and Nicholson (2011), a sample size should be at least 20% of the accessible population and thus the current study sampled 106 girls in early marriages who comprised 20% of the accessible population. The study in addition sampled 30 key informants who comprised of ten primary school head teachers, ten secondary school principals, three village elders, one chief and six directors of organizations that were involved in saving girls from early marriages within Silale Ward. Total sample size for the study was therefore, 116 respondents.

Table 2:

Sample Size Distribution

Sample	Sample Size
Girls in Primary School	23
Girls in Secondary School	83
Key Informants	10
Total	116

3.6 Instrumentation

The study used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data. Questionnaire were used to collect data from the girls in early marriages while the interview guides were used to collect data from the key informants. Questionnaires were able to yield large amount of

information while upholding the privacy of the respondents. This was in line with the interest of the study in collecting data from the girls in early marriages. Interview guide was also able to provide supportive information as well as detailed information in regard to the psychological wellbeing and coping strategies to the stress experienced by the girls. The questionnaire contained four sections. The first section comprised of questions that sought to collect the background information of the girls. The other sections on physiological stress coping strategies, psychological stress coping strategies and psychological wellbeing followed respectively. The psychological wellbeing was assessed using a modified 18 item version adopted from Ryff's Scales of Psychological Wellbeing which has reported Cronbach's alpha Coefficient of more than 0.7 and was widely used in psychological studies (Costea-Bărluțiu et al., 2018). The scale included 3 items for each of the 6 facets of wellbeing: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and personal growth. All items in section two, three and four were rated using a five-point Likert scale, that is, Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly agree (5).

3.6.1 Validity of Research Instruments

To ensure the content validity of the instruments, the items were developed as per the objectives of the study, literature reviewed and within the scope of the variables of the study. Additionally, the research supervisors and experts from the Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations and Faculty of Education and Community Studies, Egerton University, were requested to assess the face and content validity of the girls in early marriage questionnaire and key informants interview guide. Their recommendations were used to improve the instruments before they were used to gather data during the actual study.

3.6.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

The reliability of the girls in early marriage questionnaire was estimated in Ribkwo Ward in Tiaty sub-county. Ribkwo Ward is in Tiaty sub county and has almost similar characteristics with Silale Ward. The reliability test was done in another ward as a way of minimizing contamination. The number of respondents that were involved in estimating reliability was 31 girls as per Miller and Whicker (2017) recommendation of 10% of the study sample size. The reliability coefficient was computed using the Cronbach's alpha method.

Table 3:

Reliability of Research Instruments

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Physiological Stress Coping Strategies	10	0.733
Psychological Stress Coping Strategies	10	0.716
Psychological Wellbeing	18	0.783
Overall	38	0.744

The physiological stress coping strategies had a coefficient of 0.733, psychological stress coping strategies had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.716 and psychological wellbeing had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.783. The overall Cronbach's alpha test for all the items was 0.744. This therefore implied that the questionnaire was reliable since it met the Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.7 (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Upon approval by the Board of Postgraduate Studies of Egerton University, the researcher sought for research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). After receiving research permit from NACOSTI, further consent was sought from the County Commissioner's office, then County Director of Education, Baringo County and Tiaty Sub-County level. Each sampled school and organization for this study was visited before the data collection commenced in order to inform and seek permission from administrators and the girls for data collection. The study administered the research questionnaires to the sampled girls in schools and organizations. To fill the questionnaires, the girls used the researcher administered questionnaire method. This method involved the researcher filling the questionnaire on behalf of the respondents through asking the questions as outlined in the questionnaire. This was appropriate since most of the girls in early marriages were minors and had low education. In addition, this ensured valid feedback was obtained by the study. Since early marriages were illegal practices, the study used formal channels to reach the girls such as primary schools, secondary schools and organizations dealing with early marriages in Silale Ward. In these institutions, the researcher was focused on the only registered girls. Despite them being registered under such institutions, the study further sought the consent of the individual students before taking part in the study. This was done by filling an assent form for the minors. In addition, necessary procedures, authorization and permits were acquired before embarking on data collection for

ethical purposes. Tiaty Sub-County at large experiences adverse security challenges characterized majorly by banditry and thus the study focused on institutions in relatively secure places and sought appointment for data collection on relatively safe periods or grounds. The researcher sought for an appointment to conduct in-depth interviews with the selected key informants. During the interviews, notes were taken on the feedback provided by the key informants.

3.8 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (simple linear regression) were used in quantitative data analysis. The descriptive statistics was used to show the extent of use of both physiological stress coping strategies and psychological stress coping strategies as well as the extent of psychological wellbeing. The simple and multiple linear regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the study hypothesis at 5% significance level. Qualitative data from the interviews was analysed using NVivo software version 12. Thematic content analysis was based on the emerging themes from the interviews was used during analysis of qualitative data. The NVivo software was then used to organize and track the analysis, develop codes and present annotated summaries (Lin & Jeng, 2015). The results of the analysis were presented in tables and narrative form.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study observed all ethical considerations whereby the researcher had to obtain all relevant permits, licenses, authorization and consents. The researcher was also cleared by the Ethics Office of Egerton University. The researcher sought consent from all individuals who were participating in the study. Since girls in early marriages were minors, they were required to fill an assent form detailing what the research was all about, the procedures, ethical considerations, and the benefits. To avoid conflicts emanating from harmful and outlawed cultural practices of early marriages, the study focused on primary schools, secondary schools and registered organizations in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County that focused on girls in early marriages. The study sought to collect data in line with the research objectives and not to condemn the cultural practices. To avoid any domestic violence accruing from the study, the husbands and parents' consent was sought. Participation in the study was on voluntary basis and therefore anyone who was unwilling to take part in the study was opted out without

victimization. No respondent was required to provide any identifying details and therefore anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed. The information provided by the respondents was treated with utmost confidentiality and was only used for the academic purposes of the study. Girls in early marriages filled the questionnaires at their own privacy without compromising their feedback. In doing that, the researcher-administered questionnaire was filled in an enclosed environment and within the comfort of the girl. If the respondents decided to stop after they had begun, they were allowed to do so.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results for the data analysis as well as the discussion of the findings with respect to the existing literature. The chapter first presents the response rate and the demographic findings of the respondents. This chapter further presents the descriptive and inferential findings in line with the study objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

The study sought to collect data from 116 respondents who included 23 Girls in Primary Schools, 83 Girls in Secondary Schools and 10 key informants who included three primary school head teachers, three secondary school principals, one village elder, one chief, and two directors of organizations involved in saving girls from early marriages within Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. Table 4 shows the response rate for the study.

Table 4:

Instruments' Response Rates

Respondent	Administered/Interviewed	Responded	Response rate (%)
Girls in Primary School	23	20	87.0
Girls in Secondary School	83	78	94.0
Key Informants	10	7	70.0
Total	116	105	90.5

The study revealed that the response rate for girls in primary schools was 86.96% while the response rate of girls in secondary schools was 93.98%. The response rate achieved for the key informants was 70%. The overall response rate was 90.52% which implied that out of the sample of 116 respondents, complete data was obtained from 105 respondents. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009), a response rate of at least 70% implied that the results obtained from the study can be generalizable to the entire population. This therefore indicates that the findings in this study are generalizable to girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

4.3 Demographic Findings of Girls in Early Marriages

The study sought to find out the present age of the girls, their age at marriage, and the period they have been in marriage in years. The study further sought to establish the

education level of the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. Table 5 shows the demographic findings of the girls.

Table 5:

Demographic of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Scale	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Present Age	13 Years	9	9.2
	14 Years	7	7.1
	15 Years	28	28.6
	16 Years	35	35.7
	17 Years	19	19.4
Age at Marriage	Less than 13 Years	17	17.3
	13 Years	19	19.4
	14 Years	20	20.4
	15 Years	21	21.4
	16 Years	13	13.3
	17 Years	8	8.2
For how long have you been married?	Less than 1 year	16	16.3
	Between 1-2 years	41	41.8
	Between 3-4 years	40	40.8
	5 Years and Above	1	1.0
Education level	Junior Secondary (Grade 7)	9	9.2
	Primary school (Class 8)	14	14.3
	Secondary school	75	76.5

The study found out that 9.2% of the girls in early marriages were aged 13 years, 7.1% were aged 14 years, while 28.6% were 15 years of age. In addition, 35.7% of the girls were 16 years of age while 19.4% were 17 years of age. It was noted that majority of the girls in early marriage were aged 16 years. This is contrary to the study by Ridzuan et al. (2018) which noted that most of the girls in early marriage were aged between 12 and 15 years. The study further revealed that the 17.3% of the girls in early marriage got married before attaining 13 years of age, 19.4% got married at the age 13 years while 20.4% got married at the age of 14 years. In addition, 21.4% of the girls got married at the age of 15 years, 13.3% got married at the age of 16 years while 8.2% got married at the age of 17 years. This shows that majority of

the girls in early marriage got married at the age of 13 and 14 years. A study by Hajjhasani and Sim (2019) noted that girls entered in marriage even as early as at age of 10 years.

It was established that 16.3% of the girls in early marriage had been married for less than one year, 41.8% were married for between 1 and 2 years, and 40.8% were married for a period of 3 to 4 years while only 1.0% were in marriage for a period of 5 years and above. The study noted that majority of the girls were in marriage for a period of 1 to 4 years. This is similar to findings from a study by Kosimbei et al. (2023) which also noted that most of the teenage girls were in their marriage for more than 3 years. The study further revealed that 9.2% of the girls in early marriage were in junior secondary school, 14.3% were in primary school while 76.5% were in secondary school. This implies that majority of the girls in early marriage were in secondary school. Wainaina et al. (2021) asserts that most of the girls get married after completing primary education and some in their secondary school level.

4.4 Stress Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages

The study examined two types of stress coping strategies of girls in early marriages; physiological stress coping strategies and psychological stress coping strategies. Various statements were used to measure the extent of agreement to various coping strategies and activities using a five-point Likert scale such that; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Neither agree nor disagree (NAD) = 3, Agree (A) = 4 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 5. With respect to this scale, a mean score of more than 3.00 implied a tendency to agree while a mean score of less than 3.00 implied a tendency to disagree with the corresponding statement. On the other hand, a standard deviation of more than 1.0 implied lack of consensus among the girls in responding to a given metric (Gama & Alves, 2021).

4.4.1 Physiological Stress Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages

The various physiological stress coping strategies of girls in early marriages were examined. The summaries in percentages (%), mean and standard deviation (SD.) are presented in Table 6.

Table 6:

Physiological Stress Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Physiological Stress Coping Strategies	Percentage					Descriptives	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD
I participate in physical exercises or games	48.0	34.7	9.2	7.1	1.0	1.79	0.96
I get enough food to eat	33.7	42.9	18.4	2.0	3.1	1.98	0.94
I get enough time to sleep	38.8	36.7	19.4	3.1	2.0	1.93	0.94
I get enough time to relax/rest	27.6	46.9	13.3	10.2	2.0	2.12	1.00
I am able to receive good health care	34.7	40.8	18.4	2.0	4.1	2.00	1.00
I occupy myself with more work	1.0	8.2	14.3	38.8	37.8	4.04	0.97
I watch movies, games or listen to music	40.8	31.6	24.5	2.0	1.0	1.91	0.91
I read story books	26.5	43.9	18.4	9.2	2.0	2.16	0.99
I involve myself in recreational activities	26.5	39.8	30.6	2.0	1.0	2.11	0.86
I involve myself with family chores	2.0	10.2	1.0	50.0	36.7	4.09	0.99
Composite Scores						2.41	0.96

The study revealed that on average, the girls disagreed with the statement that they participated in games and exercises as a coping strategy as shown by a mean score of 1.79 and a standard deviation of 0.96. Gobindgarh (2022) indicated that many girls in early marriages involved themselves in regular physical exercises to relieve themselves of the stressful moments. In Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, girls in early marriages lacked physical exercises due to lack of social amenities such as fields due to poor terrains of the area, they also lacked enough time for these activities thus, for them, physical exercises did not act as a physiological stress coping strategy.

It was further established that on average the girls in early marriages did not have enough food to eat as revealed by a mean score of 1.98, which is less than 3.00. The girls

were unanimous on their lack of enough food to eat as evidenced by a standard deviation of 0.94. It was further noted that 77.6% disagreed (disagree and strongly disagree) that they had enough food to eat. Ridzuan et al. (2018) noted that it was hard for the girls in early marriages to acquire enough food and clothing. Silale Ward in Tiaty Sub-County is a semi-arid area and therefore a lot of poverty and hardships are experienced including lack of food leading to physical emaciation among these girls. Similarly, the study noted that majority (strongly disagree=38.8%; disagree=36.7%) of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they got enough time to sleep as evidenced by a mean of 1.93. It was established that majority of the girls tended to agree that they involved themselves with family chores as a coping strategy as evidenced by a mean score of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.99. Other studies have noted that girls tried to avoid stress through occupying themselves with so many duties in the house (Gobindgarh, 2022b; Wainaina et al., 2021). This concurs with the study by Rehn-Mendoza (2020) which noted that most of the girls did not have enough time to sleep due to so many responsibilities on their side. In Silale Ward, girls in early marriages suffered the same fate making them ineffective in their duties and responsibilities. Thus, sleep and rest as a physiological stress coping strategy did not play any role among these girls. This also impacted their psychological wellbeing negatively.

The study found out that the girls were in agreement on insufficient time to relax or rest as their physiological coping strategy. This is also evident from the study done by Hajihassani and Sim (2019b) which noted that most girls were engaged with a lot of activities in their homes in order to provide for their families, thus no sufficient time to rest. Lack of enough sleep may lead to psychological challenges among the girls. The results from the study showed that majority of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they were able to receive good health care (strongly disagree = 34.7%; disagree = 40.8%). This concurs with the findings from the study done by Rehn-Mendoza (2020) which revealed that most of the girls in early marriage suffered from poor health. Poor health among the girls in early marriages may be associated with psychological challenges they experience. It was also established that on average majority of the girls agreed (38.8% = Agree; 37.8% = strongly agree) that they occupied themselves with more work as indicated by a mean of 4.04, which is greater than 3.00. A study done by Kosimbei et al. (2023) indicated that most of the girls in early marriages kept themselves busy in order to take their minds off from the distressing issues. In Silale Ward too, the girls in early marriages occupied themselves with a lot of domestic chores like fetching water, looking for firewood and herding animals so that they can forget their challenges, especially when their exposure cannot fully be avoided.

The study revealed that on average, majority of the girls disagreed that they watched movies, games or listened to music as their coping strategy as evidenced by a mean of 1.91 and a standard deviation of 0.91. This is contrary to a study by Amangbey et al. (2019) which noted that majority of girls in early marriage distracted themselves from thinking about their situation through listening to music and entertainment. The divergence of the results is due to the fact that Silale Ward in Tiaty is a remote area plagued with high poverty index and amenities such as electricity were scarce to support such entertainment methods. The findings also revealed that majority of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they involved themselves with recreational activities (strongly disagree = 26.5%, disagree = 39.8%). The study further established that on average majority (strongly disagree = 26.5%, disagree = 43.9%) of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they read story books as their physiological coping strategies. This may be due to lack of time or the books and thus implying that this coping strategy did not work in Silale Ward and thus increasing prevalence of psychological challenges.

The study analyzed qualitative data with respect to physiological challenges and physiological stress coping strategies of girls in early marriages and whose results are shown in Appendix E. Two themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis; physiological challenges and physiological stress coping strategies of girls in early marriages. With respect to physiological challenges. The study established that health related problems and domestic violence were the two major challenges as cited by 70% and 30% of the respondents respectively.

With respect to health-related problems, one of the key informants indicated that;

“I think most of the time, the girls experience complications during pregnancy since they are young and they are giving birth. Yeah, of course their bodies are not fully developed to maybe carry the pregnancy to terms or to carry it properly as it should be.”

Another indicated that;

“These girls get to have sexually transmitted diseases due to their husbands having multiple partners”

Focusing on domestic violence, one of the key informants indicated that;

“They are beaten up, so they get marks on their bodies. They are beaten up by their husbands mostly because they see them as young and immature.”

The Physiological Coping Strategies cited included participating in games and exercises (100%), fleeing marriage (60%), Socialization (20%), engaging in domestic chores (30%),

family support (20%) and education (10%). With respect to participating in games and other physical activities, one key informant said that;

“Participating in games – games make one to freshen up, it makes one to interact with other people, so it will end those stress.”

On fleeing from their marriage, one of the interviewee indicated that;

“They withdrew from marriages – they move out of that marriage instead of suffering what they are going through.”

Engaging in domestic chores was indicated as a strong one whereby one of the key informants revealed that;

“Involvement in activities such as herding animals, searching for water, cooking food, yeah, they engage in those activities so that they can forget about the torture they go through.”

4.4.2 Psychological Stress Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages

The study examined the various psychological stress coping strategies of girls in early marriages and whose percentages (%), mean and standard deviation (SD) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7:

Psychological Stress Coping Strategies of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Psychological Stress Coping Strategies	Percentages					Descriptives	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD.
I seek psychological counselling.	48.0	34.7	10.2	4.1	3.1	1.80	0.99
I get personal time for meditation.	60.2	33.7	4.1	1.0	1.0	1.49	0.72
I blame myself for getting married as a child	37.8	46.9	6.1	6.1	3.1	1.90	0.98
I maintain positive attitude through it all	27.6	37.8	12.2	15.3	7.1	2.37	1.24
I have given up trying to make things better	34.7	36.7	11.2	13.3	4.1	2.15	1.16
I have accepted that am a wife	37.8	43.9	9.2	6.1	3.1	1.93	1.00

Psychological Stress Coping Strategies	Percentages					Descriptives	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD.
I keep wishing I was not married	3.1	5.1	5.1	31.6	55.1	4.31	1.00
I keep trying to forget everything that happen to me	2.0	6.1	28.6	37.8	25.5	3.79	0.97
I have hope that I will excel in life	2.0	0.0	12.2	31.6	54.1	4.36	0.85
I find meaning in everything that has happen to me	49.0	30.6	10.2	6.1	4.1	1.86	1.09
Composite Scores						2.60	1.00

In regard to psychological stress coping strategies, the study established that on average majority of the girls disagreed that they sought psychological counselling as evidenced by a mean score of 1.80 and a standard deviation of 1.00. This did not agree with the study done by Wainaina et al. (2021) which revealed that most of the girls in early marriage sought out for guidance and counselling in efforts to overcome their depression. The divergence of the results may be occasioned by lack of professional counselling services in Silale Ward, Tiaty sub-county or treating early marriage as a norm thus increasing the level of psychological challenges. The study further revealed that on average majority of the girls in early marriages (strongly disagree = 60.2%, disagree = 33.7%) disagreed with the statement that they got personal time for meditation, as indicated by a mean score of 1.49 and a standard deviation of 0.72. Girls perceived that personal time for meditation would only cause them more stress (Amangbey et al., 2019).

The findings further established that majority of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they blamed themselves for getting married as a child (strongly disagree = 37.8%, disagree = 46.9 %.). This is further evidenced by a mean of 1.90 which is less than 3.00. The study also noted a unanimity in the responses obtained from the girls regarding to whether they blamed themselves for getting married early, as shown by a standard deviation of 0.978. The study done by Rehn-Mendoza (2020) indicated that most girls blamed their parents for making them marry at an early age because they are the ones who forced them to the early marriages. In Silale Ward, the girls are forced by parents to get married early because the parents get bride price to make themselves wealthy. It was indicated that on average, majority of the girls disagreed that they maintained a positive attitude throughout as revealed by a

mean score of 2.37 and a standard deviation of 1.24. The study done by Offorma (2019) revealed that having a positive attitude makes the mind to focus on the good and makes one view life with hope and possibilities. In Silale Ward, this is just but a mirage.

The results established that on average majority of the respondents (strongly disagree=34.7%, disagree=36.7%) disagreed that they had given up trying to make things better as evidenced by a mean score of 2.15 and a standard deviation of 1.16. Ridzuan et al. (2018) noted that most of the girls in early marriage had given up in life. In Silale Ward, the girls in early marriages were at the verge of losing hope and thus experienced negative psychological wellbeing. The study found out that on average, majority of the girls disagreed that they had accepted to be wives as shown by a mean score of 1.93 which is less than 3.00. Kosimbei et al. (2023) revealed that only a few girls accepted that getting married was a step towards independency. The forced marriages of girls in Silale Ward, only resulted into negative psychological wellbeing. The study further revealed that on average majority of the girls in early marriages affirmed that they kept wishing that they were not married as indicated by a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 1.00. A study done by Dankyi et al. (2019) revealed that most of the girls in early marriages kept regretting why they became the victims of early marriages. However, their regrets only became a source of negative psychological wellbeing.

The study established that on average majority of the girls in early marriages tended to agree (agree = 37.8%, strongly agree = 25.5%) that they tried to forget everything that had happened to them as pointed out by a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.97. The study done by Gobindgarh (2022b) indicated that girls in early marriages engaged themselves with various practices that will help them forget their situation. Avoidance by trying to forget may also be associated with high psychological challenges of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward. The study found out that majority of the girls agreed that they had some hope that one day they will excel in life (agree = 31.6%, strongly agree = 54.1%, a mean score of 4.36). National Research Council (2019) indicated that most of the girls in early marriages kept themselves moving by their thought of being able to succeed in life one day. This implied that girls in early marriages in Silale Ward lived in hope, which is far from reality hence psychological wellbeing is far-reaching. The results found out that on average majority of the girls in early marriages disagreed that they found meaning in everything that had happened to them as shown by a mean of 1.86 and a standard deviation of 1.09. Gobindgarh (2022a) revealed that only very few girls who were married at an early age were able to find the meaning in their situation. In Silale Ward, the girls can't find any

meaning in misery and suffering caused by forced marriages thus low psychological wellbeing.

Appendix E shows the results from the qualitative data analysis on the psychological stress coping strategies. The study revealed that seeking for counseling (10%), meditation and deep breathing were the psychological stress coping strategies among the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. One of the interviewed key informants indicated that;

“They seek advice from their friends, they seek company, and they seek counselling “

While another asserted that;

“They give themselves a time to meditate, to relax their mind, and at least to forget what they were going through. “

With respect to deep breathing as a psychological stress coping strategy, one of the key informant narrated that;

“They take deep breath to ease their tension, to release that tension from inside, so once they get that deep breath, it goes away.”

4.5 Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages

The study further sought to establish the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The study used six constructs of psychological wellbeing, namely; self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relations with others, and personal growth. Table 8 shows the descriptive results for positive relations of girls in early marriages.

Table 8:

Positive Relations of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Positive Relations	Percentage					Total	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD
Maintaining close relationships has been easy for me.	45.9	39.8	10.2	3.1	1.0	1.73	0.84
People would describe me as person willing to share my time with others.	37.8	53.1	6.1	1.0	2.0	1.77	0.78
I have experienced warm relationships with others.	55.1	37.8	4.1	3.1	0.0	1.55	0.72

Composite Scores	1.68	0.78
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In regard to positive relations as a psychological wellbeing coping strategy, the study found out that on average majority of the girls disagreed on all aspects of positive relations as evidenced by a composite mean score of 1.68. This implied that the girls in Silale Ward, had difficulties in maintaining close relationships, were unwilling to share their time with others and did not experience warm relationships with others. Kosimbei et al. (2023) revealed that keeping positive and close relations were helpful in overcoming stressful situations. Amangbey et al. (2019) noted that girls who were married early secluded themselves from others due to the fear of being ridiculed. Iris Group (2021) noted that most of the girls in early marriages experienced loneliness since girls in their age group didn't like being associated with them.

Table 9 shows the frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations on the level of self-acceptance among girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County.

Table 9:

Self-Acceptance of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Self-Acceptance	Percentage					Descriptives	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD.
I like most parts of my personality.	7.1	4.1	10.2	41.8	36.7	3.97	1.135
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	31.6	59.2	4.1	2.0	3.1	1.86	.837
In many ways I feel encouraged by achievements in life.	66.3	23.5	3.1	4.1	3.1	1.54	.965
Composite Scores						2.46	0.98

Overly, the study revealed that on average majority of the girls disagreed that self-acceptance was a psychological coping strategy as evidenced by a mean of 2.46. This therefore indicated that girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County had self-acceptance challenges and when they looked at the story of their lives, they were not pleased with how things had turned out so far and they felt discouraged by the achievements of their lives. A Study done by Reza et al. (2020) indicated that accepting one's personality led to having a positive attitude towards one's situations. Dina (2020) revealed that most girls in early marriages were

not pleased with the life they lived. Amangbey et al. (2019) noted that most girls in early marriage were faced with a challenge of low self-esteem and thought of themselves as unsuccessful in life.

In Silale Ward, the girls had seen that the world had turned upside down for them. Table 10 shows the descriptive results on the level of independence of the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County.

Table 10:

Autonomy of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Autonomy	Percentage					Descriptives	
	SD	D	NAD	A	SA	Mean	SD.
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	30.6	14.3	7.1	17.3	30.6	3.03	1.67
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from those of others.	48.0	16.3	11.2	15.3	9.2	2.21	1.42
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of others.	4.1	3.1	3.1	42.9	46.9	4.26	.98
Composite Scores						3.17	1.35

The study found out that on average the girls in early marriages agreed to using autonomy as a psychological coping strategy as revealed by a composite mean score of 3.17. However, the results pointed divergent opinions in which a proportion of girls were indifferent to whether they got influenced by people with strong opinions and yet another proportion of girls judged themselves by what they thought was important and not by the values of others. A different paradigm was also expressed by those who did not have confidence in their own opinions, even if they were different from those of others. Shahan (2021) indicated that girls were able to make and uphold their decisions. A study done by Gesora (2018) revealed that girls in early marriages were more individualistic. A study conducted by Kumar et al. (2018) noted that most girls in child marriages were able to evaluate themselves through the situation without being influenced by others. The personal growth metrics for the girls in early

marriages in Tiaty are presented in Table 11 in terms of percentages, mean and standard deviations.

Table 11:

Personal Growth of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Personal Growth	Response in percentage					Total	
	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	SD
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growing.	38.8	42.9	11.2	3.1	4.1	1.91	1.00
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.	50.0	23.5	16.3	6.1	4.1	1.91	1.13
I did not give up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	2.0	4.1	16.3	31.6	45.9	4.15	0.98
Composite Scores						2.66	1.04

Generally, the study revealed that on average majority of the girls in early marriages disagreed in regard to personal growth as a psychological coping strategy as evidenced by a mean score of 2.66. This therefore implied that the girls in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County did not consider learning, change, and growth and also did not think it was important to have new experiences that challenged how they thought about themselves and the world. A composite standard deviation of 1.04 implied that each girl experienced a unique experience with respect to personal growth and thus the divergence of opinions. Wainaina et al. (2021) stated that the girls in early marriages couldn't accept that their life was a continuous process of learning. Ridzuan et al. (2018) noted that girls in early marriages found it hard to accept that it was important to have new experiences that challenge their thinking about themselves and the world. A study by Hajihassani and Sim (2019b) revealed that victims of early marriages who had accepted their situation were able to realize that they had been expanding and developing.

Table 12 presents the study findings with respect to the level of environmental mastery among the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County.

Table 12:

Environmental Masterly of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Environmental Masterly	Response in percentage					Total	
	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	SD
The demands of everyday life do not often get me down.	33.7	32.7	26.5	5.1	2.0	2.09	1.00.
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	42.9	36.7	10.2	9.2	1.0	1.89	1.00
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.	52.0	30.6	11.2	6.1	0.0	1.71	0.90
Composite Scores						1.90	0.96

Overall, the study revealed that on average majority of the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County had poor environmental masterly as evidenced by a composite mean score of 1.897. This implied that on average, the demands of everyday life often got them down and they felt that they were not in charge of the situation in which they lived. In addition, they were not good in managing the responsibilities of daily life. A study done by Kosimbei et al. (2023) showed that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the demand of life got them down. Masselink et al. (2018) noted that the girls and women who were married at an early age found it hard to be in charge of the situation they were living in. A study done by Gobindgarh (2022b) noted that most of the girls in child marriages were able to manage well the responsibilities of day-to-day life.

Descriptive results for the study with regard to purpose in life among girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County are shown in Table 13.

Table 13:

Purpose in Life of Girls in Early Marriages (n = 98)

Purpose in Life	Response in percentage					Descriptives	
	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	SD
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	2.0	4.1	18.4	28.6	46.9	4.14	1.00
I live life one day at a time, not really thinking about the future.	-	3.1	16.3	30.6	50.0	4.28	0.85
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	1.0	3.1	17.3	33.7	44.9	4.18	0.90
Composite Scores						4.20	0.91

In general, the study noted that on average majority of the girls in early marriages agreed to the realization of their purpose in life as evidenced by a composite mean of 4.20. This further implied that majority of girls in early marriages did not wander aimlessly through life. Ridzuan et al. (2018) revealed that most of the girls in early marriages had a sense of direction as well as possession of goals for their lives. A study done by Amangbey et al. (2019) indicated that only few girls who got married early had a feeling that there was a meaning to the present and the past life.

The qualitative data with respect to psychological challenges of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County is presented in Appendix E. Psychological challenges established from the qualitative data analysis include depression (20%), low esteem (30%), anxiety (20%), isolation (30%), lack of autonomy (10%), suicidal thoughts (20%) and neglect (20%). Given the interpretation of the information and supporting it with other research findings with respect to experiencing depression, one of the key informant indicated that;

“These people exhibit depression as evidence of the result of early marriages. These people are depressed from the life that they are having from these early marriages.”

Consequently, it was noted that suicidal thoughts were a resultant theme as opined by one of the key informant;

“Most girls in early marriages they tend to think about committing suicide.”

In the context of low self-esteem, it was noted that;

“They lack self-esteem because they have the fear of being beaten up by their husbands.”

Anxiety as an emerging theme, one of the key informants expressed that;

“You are just afraid to do something and to say something.”

On isolation and neglect it was noted that;

“This people are isolated from the community since they have maybe a new husband to serve or a new family to serve and so they cannot engage in activities they used to be actually active to the society.”

And;

“These husbands tend to abandon their wives and they move to the next, maybe someone tends to marry another wife, so the first wife is abandoned”

With respect to autonomy, one of the key informants said that;

“Limited control over their life. This people have little to say about whatever happen in their lives”

The study further sought suggestions from the key informants on how to mitigate psychological challenges and improve psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The feedback obtained is as shown in Appendix E. The key informants of the study suggested the establishment of guidance and counselling services and centers (30%), establishment of health facilities (40%), having women chiefs (20%), offering education (60%), establishing livelihoods for the girls (60%), carrying out community sensitization (50%) and having religious interventions (20%). Given the interpretation of the information and supporting it with other research findings

With respect to guidance and counselling, one of the key informants indicated that;

“The community should set up guidance and counselling centers to improve the wellbeing of these young girls.”

On establishing health facilities, it was opined that;

“The government should come in to help the community to set up the health centres so the girls can get the health services over there.”

In addition, one of the key informant indicated that having women chiefs may act as motivation for the girls in the region and beyond;

“Employing more women to be chiefs. – when we see a woman working and having salary, living in a good standard it will motivate other girls also to work hard in their studies.”

With respect to equipping the girls with education, one of the key informants noted that;

“Education will help because if she is in school she will not think about marriage. So she will be fighting about her dream, what she wants to be, what she wants to do in future”

Majority of the key informants also suggested that girls should be trained in various skills in order to earn livelihoods and whereby one of the key informant indicated that;

“Encourage the girls to be self-reliant, they should not rely on their husbands only, they should rely on themselves, so they should get something to do so that they can support themselves not only relying on their husbands.”

It was also suggested that;

“The community should be sensitized on the effect of early marriages”

And that;

“Encourage them to participate in religious activities. This will reduce their stressing time and they will have a let out.”

Consequently, it was noted that suicidal thoughts were a resultant theme as opined by one of the key informant;

“Most girls in early marriages they tend to think about committing suicide.”

In the context of low self-esteem, it was noted that;

“They lack self-esteem because they have the fear of being beaten up by their husbands.”

Anxiety as an emerging theme, one of the key informants expressed that;

“You are just afraid to do something and to say something.”

On isolation and neglect it was noted that;

“This people are isolated from the community since they have maybe a new husband to serve or a new family to serve and so they cannot engage in activities they used to be actually active to the society.”

And;

“These husbands tend to abandon their wives and they move to the next, maybe someone tends to marry another wife, so the first wife is abandoned”

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It was also suggested that;

“The community should be sensitized on the effect of early marriages”

And that;

“Encourage them to participate in religious activities. This will reduce their stressing time and they will have a let out.”

4.6 Demographic Differences in Coping Strategies and Psychological wellbeing

The study further sought to find out whether there were differences in physiological and psychological stress coping strategies and psychological wellbeing of girls in early

marriages based on their demographic information. Table 14 shows the results of test of differences that was conducted using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique.

Table 14:

Demographic Differences in Coping Strategies and Psychological Wellbeing (n = 98)

Demographic	Categories	Physiological Coping Strategies	Psychological Coping Strategies	Psychological Wellbeing
Current age (at time of the study)	13 Years	1.80	2.01	1.91
	14 Years	1.86	2.19	2.02
	15 Years	1.85	2.44	2.14
	16 Years	2.01	2.70	2.35
	17 Years	2.27	2.92	2.59
	Significance	F(4,93) = 42.436, p<.05	F(4, 93) = 2.806 p < .05	F(4, 93) = 228.335, p<.05
Age at time of marriage	Less than 13 Years	1.81	2.10	1.96
	13 Years	1.88	2.47	2.18
	14 Years	1.99	2.54	2.26
	15 Years	2.05	2.76	2.41
	16 Years	2.14	2.79	2.47
	17 Years	2.20	2.95	2.58
Significance	F(5, 92) = 26.053, p<.05	F(5, 92) = 0.928, p > .05	F(5, 92) = 50.024, p<.05	
Years in Marriage	Less than 1 year	2.11	2.84	2.48
	1-2 years	1.95	2.52	2.24
	3-4 years	1.97	2.50	2.23
	5 Years and Above	2.20	2.60	2.40
	Significance	F(3, 94) = 4.895, p<.05	F(3, 94) = 1.811, p>.05	F(3, 94) = 6.189, p<.05
Education level	Junior Secondary (Grade 6)	1.80	2.01	1.91
	Primary school (Class 8)	1.83	2.32	2.08

Secondary school	2.04	2.68	2.36
Significance	F (2, 95) = 32.740, p<.05	F(2, 95) =4.646,p < .05	F(2, 95)=44.667,p<.05

The results revealed that the level of physiological and psychological coping strategies and psychological wellbeing of the girls, as measured by the mean scores increased with current age (when the study was conducted), age at time of marriage and level of education. This implied that older girls are better at adopting stress coping strategies and had higher psychological wellbeing compared to younger girls. The study further tested whether the differences in physiological coping strategies, psychological coping strategies and psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages based on their demographic characteristics. The study established that the differences by current age were statistically significant at 5% significance level for the three variables; physiological coping strategies (F[4, 93] =42.436, p<.05), psychological coping strategies (F[3, 93]=2.806, p<.05) and psychological wellbeing (F[4, 93] =228.335, p<.05). These results concurred with those by Hajihassani and Sim (2019) who noted that age is an important factor in coping to stress as well as psychological status of girls in early marriages.

These results show that there were statistically significant differences in the level of physiological coping strategies (F[5, 92] =26.053, p<.05) and psychological wellbeing (F[5, 92] =50.024, p<.05) based on the age at which the girls got married. However, with respect to psychological coping strategies, the study established that there were no statistically significant differences across the age at marriage (F[5, 92] = 0.928, p>.05). This therefore implied that the girls who got married at an older age had higher scores for physiological coping strategies and a higher score in psychological wellbeing compared to the girls who got married at a lower age. In addition, the results indicate that the age at marriage did not alter the level of psychological coping strategies and thus all the girls coped in the same way despite the age at marriage. This is contrary to Iris Group (2021) who noted that girls who were married at a tender age tend to experience more stress and low psychological wellbeing compared to those married at relatively higher age who are able to cope better with stress emanating from marriage challenges.

Comparison of the mean scores by years in marriage revealed significant differences in physiological coping strategies (F [3, 94] = 4.895, p<.05) and psychological wellbeing (F [3, 94] = 6.189, p<.05). However, the differences in number of years in marriage did not result to significant differences in the psychological coping strategies (F[3, 94] = 1.811,

p>.05). This implies that number of years in marriage affects physiological coping strategies and psychological wellbeing among girls in early marriages. However, the number of years in marriage did not affect psychological coping strategies of the girls. This is contrary to Said (2019) who noted that the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages reduced with the increase in the number of years in marriages.

Further, the results indicated that there were significant differences in physiological (F[2, 95] = 32.740, p<.05) and psychological (F[2, 95] = 4.646, p<.05) stress coping strategies, and psychological wellbeing (F[2, 95] = 44.667, p<.05) by level of education of the girls in early marriages. This implied that increase in the level of education resulted into increase in the level of physiological coping strategies, psychological coping strategies and psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. These findings are in line with those of Neetu et al. (2019) which revealed that increase in age increases emotional, psychological and physiological stability of girls in early marriages.

4.7 Influence of Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

The first objective of the study sought to establish the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. With respect to this, a simple linear regression was performed and whereby Table 15 shows the model summary for the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing.

Table 15:

Model Summary for Influence of Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.650	0.422	0.416	0.16918

The study established that there was a moderate correlation between the predicted and observed values of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County. This is evidenced by the r value of .650. This implied that the regression model provides a good fit for the data in the context of girls in early marriages. The study further noted that 42.2% of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages can be explained by physiological coping strategies as shown by R Square value of .422. When adjusted for non-significant predictors, the study revealed that 41.6% of the variance in psychological wellbeing is accounted by changes in physiological coping strategies (Adjusted R

Square=.416). This regression model was found to have a high precision due to a standard error of estimate of 0.16918 which is less than 1.0.

The study however sought to establish whether the regression model as a whole was statistically significant and whose results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16:

Model of regressing Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	2.008	1	2.008	70.168	.000
Residual	2.748	96	.029		
Total	4.756	97			

The regression predicting the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing was found to be statistically significant $F(1, 96) = 70.168, p < .05$. This therefore implied that the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing did not occur by chance. Table 17 shows the sensitivity of the predictor variables on the predicted variables based on beta coefficients.

Table 17:

Coefficients of regressing Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Unstandardized		Standardized	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients				
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.137	.137		8.300	.000
Physiological Coping Strategies	0.573	.068	.650	8.377	.000

The study revealed that physiological coping strategies was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing as shown by $t = 8.377$ and $p < .05$. Based on the unstandardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.573$), a unit increase in the physiological coping strategies would lead to 0.573 units increase in psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages with other variables held constant. When variance has been assumed to be one, a unit increase in physiological coping strategies would lead to 0.650 units increase in psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the first hypothesis; H_{01} : There is no statistically significant influence of

physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya, was rejected at 5% significance level. The study therefore concluded that there was statistically significant influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. These findings were in line to those by Muring'u et al. (2021) who established that there was significant influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing.

4.8 Influence of Psychological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

The second objective of the study sought to find out the influence of psychological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study performed simple linear regression to predict psychological wellbeing using psychological coping strategy as the predictor variable. Table 18 shows the model summary.

Table 18:

Model Summary for Influence of Psychological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826	.682	.679	0.12542

The study found out that there was a strong correlation between the observed and predicted values of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages as shown by R value of .826. This is an indication that the model provides a good fit for the data. The R Square value of .682 implied that 68.2% of the variance in psychological wellbeing is attributable to the variance in stress coping strategies. The adjusted R Square value of .679 on the other hand implied that significant predictors of the model contribute 67.9% of the variance in the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The model attained a high precision since the standard error of the estimate was 0.12542 (below 1.0).

The study further sought to find out whether the model as a whole was statistically significant and whose results are shown in Table 19.

Table 19:

The ANOVA results of regressing Psychological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	3.246	1	3.246	206.340	.000
Residual	1.510	96	0.016		
Total	4.756	97			

The results indicated that the model provided a better fit for the data than a model with zero predictors as shown by $F(1,96) = 206.340$ and $p < .05$. The results further implied that the model was significant in predicting psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. Table 20 shows the model coefficient in the influence of psychological stress coping strategies on psychological wellbeing for every unit change in psychological stress coping strategies.

Table 20:

Model Coefficients regressing Psychological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Unstandardized		Standardize	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients		d		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	0.890	0.097		9.148	.000
Psychological Coping Strategies	0.540	0.038	0.826	14.365	.000

The study revealed that psychological stress coping strategies was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing as shown by $t = 14.365$ and $p < .05$. The study further revealed that for every one unit increase in psychological stress coping strategies, psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages increases with 0.540 units, with other factors held constant. With variance assumed to one, for every unit increase in psychological stress coping strategies, psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages increases with 0.826 units. Therefore, the second hypothesis was rejected at 5% significance level. The study therefore established that there was statistically significant influence of psychological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County.

Marais-Opperman (2020) revealed that psychological stress coping strategies is a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing. In addition, Niewiadomska and Szot (2021) noted in their study that there was a high preference of psychological stress coping strategies and helped individuals in improving their psychological wellbeing.

4.9 Influence of Physiological and Psychological Stress Coping Strategies combined on Psychological Wellbeing

Further analysis was done to find out the influence of physiological and psychological stress coping strategies combined on the psychological wellbeing of the girls in early marriages. The aim of this additional analysis was to establish which of the two factors had a higher impact on the outcome. The multiple regression procedure was used to determine the relationships. The model summary of the test are in Table 21.

Table 21:

Model Summary for Influence of Psychological and Physiological Stress Coping Strategies combined on the Psychological Wellbeing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.337	.114	.095	.35386

Table 21 show that the psychological and physiological stress coping strategies combined were related ($r = .337$). The results also show that the two explanatory variables explained 11.7% ($R^2 = .144$) variance in the outcome. The ANOVA output of the multiple regression procedure was used to determine whether the impact of the factors was statistically significant (Table 22).

Table 22:

The ANOVA results of regressing Physiological and Psychological Stress Coping Strategies combined on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	1.525	2	.763	6.091	.003
Residual	11.895	95	.125		
Total	13.421	97			

The outputs of the ANOVA indicates that the model fitted the data and physiological and psychological stress coping strategies were significant predictors of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages.

The model coefficients were used to establish which of the two factors had a higher impact on the outcome. The model coefficients are in Table 23.

Table 23:

Model Coefficients regressing Physiological and Psychological Stress Coping Strategies combined on the Psychological Wellbeing

Scale	Unstandardized		Standardize	t-value	p-value
	Coefficients		d		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.177	.376		3.134	.002
Physiological coping strategies	.129	.144	.087	.895	.373
Psychological coping strategies	.348	.107	.316	3.256	.002

Table 23 reveal that the unstandardized coefficient of psychological stress coping strategies (B = 348) was higher than that of physiological coping strategies (B = .129). This implied that psychological stress coping strategies has a higher impact on wellbeing of girls in early marriage compared to physiological strategies. The table also reveals that psychological stress coping strategies ($\beta = .316$, $t = 3.256$, $= .002$) was a significant predictor of the wellbeing of girls in early marriage while physiological coping strategies ($\beta = .087$, $t = 895$, $= .373$) was not. This was in line with Marais-Opperman (2020) who revealed that psychological stress coping strategies had a great impact on the psychological wellbeing.

This meant that girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub- County did not employ emotional disclosure, distraction and counselling as their key psychological strategies thus, most of them had low psychological wellbeing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major study findings, conclusions reached by the study and recommendations of the study made for both practice and policy. The chapter concludes by making suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study aimed at establishing the influence of selected stress-coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. The study found out that psychological stress coping strategies had the greatest influence on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County in Baringo County. In this section, major findings with respect to the purpose and objectives of the study were made.

5.2.1 Influence of Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

The study established that there was a moderate correlation between the predicted and observed values of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub- County. The study further noted that 42.2% of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages can be explained by physiological stress coping strategies. The regression predicting the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing was found to be statistically significant. A unit increase in the physiological coping strategies would lead to 0.573 units increase in psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages with other variables held constant. Therefore, the first hypothesis; H_{01} : There is no statistically significant influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya, was rejected at 5% significance level.

5.2.2 Influence of Psychological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing

The study found out that there was a strong correlation between the observed and predicted values of psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. The study further revealed that 68.2% of the variance in psychological wellbeing is attributable to the variance in stress coping strategies. The study revealed that psychological stress coping strategies was

a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing. The study further revealed that for every one unit increase in psychological stress coping strategies, psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages increases with 0.540 units, with other factors held constant. Therefore, the second hypothesis; H_{02} : There is no statistically significant influence of psychological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya, was rejected at 5% significance level.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The following conclusions were reached from the study findings:

- i. Physiological stress coping strategies significantly influenced the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. The study further revealed that physiological coping strategies was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing.
- ii. Psychological stress coping strategies significantly influenced the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. Thus, there was a need to enhance these strategies among the girls. It was also established that psychological stress coping strategies was a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The study makes the following recommendations:

- i. The study findings confirmed that physiological stress coping strategies had a direct impact on the psychological wellbeing of the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. The study recommends that family members and husbands of girls in early marriages should employ the physiological stress coping strategies such as games, recreational activities, enough food, good health among others to improve the psychological wellbeing of the girls in marriages.
- ii. The findings from the study further noted that psychological stress coping strategies affected the psychological wellbeing of the girls in early marriages in Silale Ward, Tiaty Sub-County. The study therefore recommends that community organizations that deal with girls in early marriages, rescue centres and schools with girls in early marriages should offer psychological stress coping strategies such as professional guidance and counselling services for the girls with a view of encouraging them not to give up but have hope that they will excel in life despite their unfortunate state of

early marriages. The counsellors should encourage the girls to have time to meditate and reflect on their dreams and aspirations in life. This will help them to change their negative attitudes and perceptions about life and their marriage status as well as improve their psychological wellbeing.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the scope of the current study and its findings, the following suggestions for further studies were made:

- i. A study may be done to establish the influence of psychological wellbeing on educational participation of girls in early marriages.
- ii. A further study may be done to establish the nexus between socio-economic background and prevalence of early marriages.
- iii. A study may also be done to establish the influence of religion and sociological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

My name is Peter Orwenyo Mose, a master's student at Egerton University undertaking a study to establish the influence of stress coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. I therefore request your help in filling the following questionnaire. The study is solely for academic purposes and undertakes to adhere to all ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, voluntary participation and informed consent. In respect to this, your participation in the study will be on voluntary basis and therefore if you are unwilling to take part in the study you will be opted out without victimization. You will be required to provide any identifying details and therefore your anonymity will be guaranteed. The information you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for the academic purposes of the study. Feel free to fill the questionnaires at your own privacy without your feedback being compromised.

Upon reading the consent form, do you agree to take part in this study?

Yes, I agree

No, opt me out

Appendix B: Minor Assent Form

Thesis Title: Influence of Selected Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

Researcher: Peter Orwenyo Mose

I am doing a research study to establish the influence of selected stress-coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. Permission has been granted to undertake this study by the Board of Postgraduate Studies of Egerton University and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). This research study is a way to learn more about stress-coping strategies and psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. At least 106 children will be participating in this research study with you. There are some things about this study you should know. These are: Participation in the study will be on voluntary basis and therefore anyone unwilling to take part in the study will be opted out without victimization; No respondent will be required to provide any identifying details and therefore anonymity of the respondents will be guaranteed; The information provided by the respondents will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for the academic purposes of the study; and respondents will fill the questionnaires at their own privacy without compromising their feedback. Not everyone who takes part in this study will benefit. A benefit means that something good happens to you. One of the benefits might be improving your psychological wellbeing. When the study is finished, the researcher will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after you begin, that's okay too. Your parents/husbands know about the study too. If you decide you want to be in this study or otherwise, please indicate below;

Yes, I agree

No, opt me out

Appendix C: Girls Questionnaire

Introduction

My name is Peter Orwenyo Mose, a master's student at Egerton University undertaking a study to establish the influence of stress-coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. I therefore request your help in filling the following questionnaire. The study is solely for academic purposes and undertakes to adhere to all ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, voluntary participation and informed consent. Be as honest as possible since your feedback will be treated as utmost truth.

Section I: Background Information

Please give the following background information as honest as possible by ticking in the provided braces.

1. Your present age

13 [] 14 [] 15 [] 16 [] 17 []

2. At what age were you married?

Less than 13 years [] 13 [] 14 [] 15 [] 16 [] 17 []

3. For how long have you been married?

Less than 1 year []

Between 1-2 years []

More than 2 years []

4. Education level

None []

Informal Education []

Primary school []

Secondary school []

Section II: Physiological Stress Coping Strategies

Please rate how you use physiological stress coping strategies using the five-point Likert scale where; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5).

S/N	ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1	I participate in physical exercises or games					
2	I get enough food to eat					
3	I get enough time to sleep					
4	I get enough time to relax					
5	I am able to receive good health care					
6	I give myself a break from normal activities when tired					
7	I involve myself with watching movies					
8	I read story books					
9	I involve myself in recreational activities					
10	I involve myself with family chores					

Section III: Psychological Stress Coping Strategies

Please rate how you use psychological stress coping strategies using the five-point Likert scale where; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5).

S/N	ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1	I seek psychological counselling.					
2	I get personal time for meditation.					
3	I blame myself for getting married as a child					
4	I maintain positive attitude through it all					
5	I have given up trying to make things better					
6	I have accepted that I am a wife not a girl					

7	I keep wishing I was not married					
8	I keep trying to forget everything that happen to me					
9	I have hope that I will excel in life					
10	I find meaning in everything that has happened to me					

Section IV: Psychological Wellbeing

Please rate your current state of your psychological wellbeing using the five-point Likert scale where; Strongly disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5).

S/N	ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
1	Maintaining close relationships has been easy for me.					
2	People would describe me as a person willing to share my time with others.					
3	I have experienced warm relationships with others.					
4	I like most parts of my personality.					
5	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.					
6	In many ways I feel encouraged by achievements in life.					
7	I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.					
8	I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from those of others.					
9	I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of others.					
10	For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growing.					
11	I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.					
12	I did not give up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life.					
13	The demands of everyday life do not often get me down.					
14	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.					
15	I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.					

S/N	ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
16	Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.					
17	I live life one day at a time, not really thinking about the future.					
18	I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.					

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The information you give in this interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. Kindly give your honest response to each of the questions.

Questions

- 1) What are evident characteristics do girls in early marriages exhibit as a result of psychological challenges they face?

.....
.....
.....

- 2) What physiological stress coping strategies do girls in early marriages use to improve their psychological wellbeing in Silale Ward?

.....
.....
.....

- 3) What psychological stress coping strategies do girls in early marriages use to improve their psychological wellbeing in Silale Ward?

.....
.....
.....

- 4) What other suggestions can you make towards improving the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages?

.....
.....
.....

End

Thank you for your feedback.

Appendix E: Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis on Physiological Coping Strategies and Challenges

Theme	Codes	Reference
1.0 Physiological Challenges	1.01 Health Problems (70%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a lot of work, maybe domestic chores the same time when one is already pregnant then operated on, then they want to take care of this child, the husband maybe drinking alcohol and arriving home late and no one is helping her so it may result to health problems.• These health problems may also result when giving birth, maybe when she is being operated on and may be caused by other diseases maybe like cancer or many others.• STDs. You find that husbands maybe` having other wives. Remember this is early marriage. It's not planned marriageso one can get married when person is already ill, so the disease may get the girl without knowing because maybe the husband is having other wives as well.• They will have health problems like this typical of anyone but when put in a situation they don't like, they tend to fall ill from small illnesses to major ones.• I think most of the time they experience complications during pregnancy since they are young and they are aso giving birth.• Yeah, of course their bodies are not fully developed to maybe carry the pregnancy

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>to terms or to carry it properly as it should be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These girls get to have sexually transmitted diseases due to their husbands having multiple partners
	1.02 Domestic Violence (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being beaten by their husbands. Maybe the husband is drinking alcohol, maybe he cannot provide for the family, he cannot provide for the needs of the wife and the child.. Maybe when the wife asks the husband for things like basic necessities, she is beaten by the husband, that one can bring torture. ● They are beaten up, so they get marks on their bodies ● They are beaten up by their husbands mostly because they see them as young children
1.1 Physiological Coping Strategies	1.11 Games and Exercises (100%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in games – games makes one to freshen up, it makes one to interact together with other people, so it will end those stresses. ● Traditional ones. Playing music, dancing and playing hide and seek. But the main one is music and dancing. ● Swimming in the rivers – when they go to the river to swim you find out that their stresses are going to be relieved. You also find that you are not going alone, you are going with people. ● Engage in activities such as cooking, training – those physical activities tend to

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>take away the stress of the person and they can have a safe haven for themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical exercises as like jumping and running a bit, these tend to help them cope and improve. ● Reciting some traditional songs and singing them. This they use as a physiological way to cope with stress. ● They engage in community games such as traditional ones, that is, singing, dancing ● They participate in recreational activities such as swimming in rivers, ● so they can go there and swim to improve their mental wellbeing ● They involve themselves in mental engagement such as having traditional songs, they go out to sing and dance to improve their mental wellbeing
	<p>1.12 Fleeing marriage (60%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Withdraw from marriages – some of the girls abandon their husbands ● Running away for refuge in a school- you find the refuge have a safe place where they are provided, they are just being together, they are just okay ● Run to schools or seek refuge from their marriage. ● They run away from their marriages and seek refuge maybe in schools, churches, wherever they may feel that they are comfortable and safe ● They withdraw from marriages – they move out of that marriage instead of

Theme	Codes	Reference
		suffering what they are going through
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They run to school to seek help – they go back to school to seek the education that they didn't get.
	1.13 Socialization (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting friends and sharing their problems • Babysitting, interacting with other babies
	1.14 Domestic Chores (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in activities such as taking care of animals. Let's say you engage yourself to be busy. • Taking care of animals and such like relaxing activities that are intended to rejuvenate them. • Involvement in activities such as herding animals, searching for water, cooking food, yeah, they engage in those activities so that they can forget about the torture they go through
	1.15 Family Support (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from families and friends. You are assisted by friends and families, so with that you are going to cope with the challenges. • They get support from friends to keep them move on in their marriage
	1.15 Education (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving some technical vocational training

Qualitative Data Analysis on Psychological Coping Strategies

Theme	Codes	Reference
2.0 Psychological Coping Strategies	2.01 Counselling (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They seek advice from their friends, they seek company, and they seek counselling

2.02 Meditation (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking meditation, when you have a problem, you just seek meditation. ● I mean, maybe you have a problem, and then you share your problem maybe with your counsellor or a guider, and then you have the solution. Maybe you will be alone you set aside your retreat, so it can also work. ● They give themselves a time to meditate, to relax their mind, and at least to forget what they are going through.
2.03 Deep breathing (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some do and to others it just happens by chance, but some do by taking time by pursuing them twice a day, in the morning and evening when they are having an argument. ● They take deep breath to ease their tension, to release that tension from inside, so once they get that deep breath, it goes away.

Qualitative Data Analysis on Psychological Challenges

Theme	Codes	Reference
3.0 Psychological Challenges Nges	3.01 Depression (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You see that most girls are depressed because maybe they get married early, some of them are beaten by their husbands, then after that they are beaten, they see that they are no longer useful in their lives. ● These people exhibit depression as evidence of the result of early marriages. These people are depressed from the life that they are having from these early marriages.
	3.02 Low esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The girl married early may feel that

(30%)	<p>shyness, I'm getting married, and so there is that shyness you are not able to be with other people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These people exhibit low self-esteem ● They lack self-esteem because they have the fear of being beaten up by their husbands
3.03 Anxiety (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You are just afraid to do something and to say something. ● Experience anxiety on different occasions. This is because how they process and see things affect how they relate to the environment.
3.04 Isolation (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These people are isolated from the community ● they isolate themselves ● they don't want to meet people– this is due to harassment they go through in marriage
3.05 Lack of autonomy (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They have limited control over their life. This people have little to say about whatever happen in their lives They are not the decision makers in their lives, so whatever comes is whatever goes or whatever they are told is what they will do.
3.06 Suicidal thoughts (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I think this people tend to have suicidal thoughts. ● Most girls in early marriages they tend to think about committing suicide.
3.07 Neglect (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● most men neglect them after marrying them as their first wives, so if they have the habit of marrying and letting them go,

so they marry again

- these husbands tend to abandon their wives and they move to the next, maybe someone tends to marry another wife, so the first wife is abandoned
-

Suggestions towards Improving the Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages

Theme	Codes	Reference
4.0 Suggestions	4.01 Guidance and counselling (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Putting up counselling centres for guidance and counselling. You see when they have centres where girls can share their problem, they can go there and share their problems.● Counselling should be initiated to these people so we can deal with the issue progressively.● The community should set up guidance and counselling centres to improve the wellbeing of these young girls
	4.02 Health Facilities (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Increase health institutions● We can increase key health institutions in this area● Girls should be encouraged to seek specialized health

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>services – the girls should seek health services due to sexually transmitted diseases. So, if you find out that you have it seek help from the health centres and you get treated and you are good to go</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The government should come in to help the community to set up the health centres so the girls can get the health services over there. Not only having that one health centre of which if there is more population that are going to seek the health service, there's going to be the challenge of some people not getting the treatment, so they go back home, they lose hope, they go day one, day two, you are not getting help, so they will lose hope. If the government gets in, and they set up the health centres, it will be easy to deal with those issues of health.

Theme	Codes	Reference
	4.03 Women Chiefs (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employing more women to be chiefs. – when we see a woman working and having salaries, living in a good standard it will motivate other girls also to work hard in their studies.
	4.04 Education (50%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educate girls to know their rights. Remember they should know the 2010 constitution, the rights of a woman. What are your rights? You are free from being discriminated and they need to be protected from any slavery. Through educating girls to know about their rights it's going to improve them. ● Increase the access to education. These people will have knowledge on how to tackle these critical issues that we have, and school will equip them during the years they will be there, they will keep them or fight early child marriages. Through

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>education they will know the pros and cons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● equip the girls to know their rights to deal with early marriages ● The girls should be taught the importance of education and also the community. So, the girl child should get the education that she needs provided having the education she has the knowledge of how to cope up with things, marriage and also to improve her mental awareness and how to deal with things ● Education will help because if she is in school, she will not think about marriage. So, she will be thinking about her dream, what she wants to be, what she wants to do in future and not thinking that I don't have education and I have nothing to do, I don't have a career so I should get myself into a

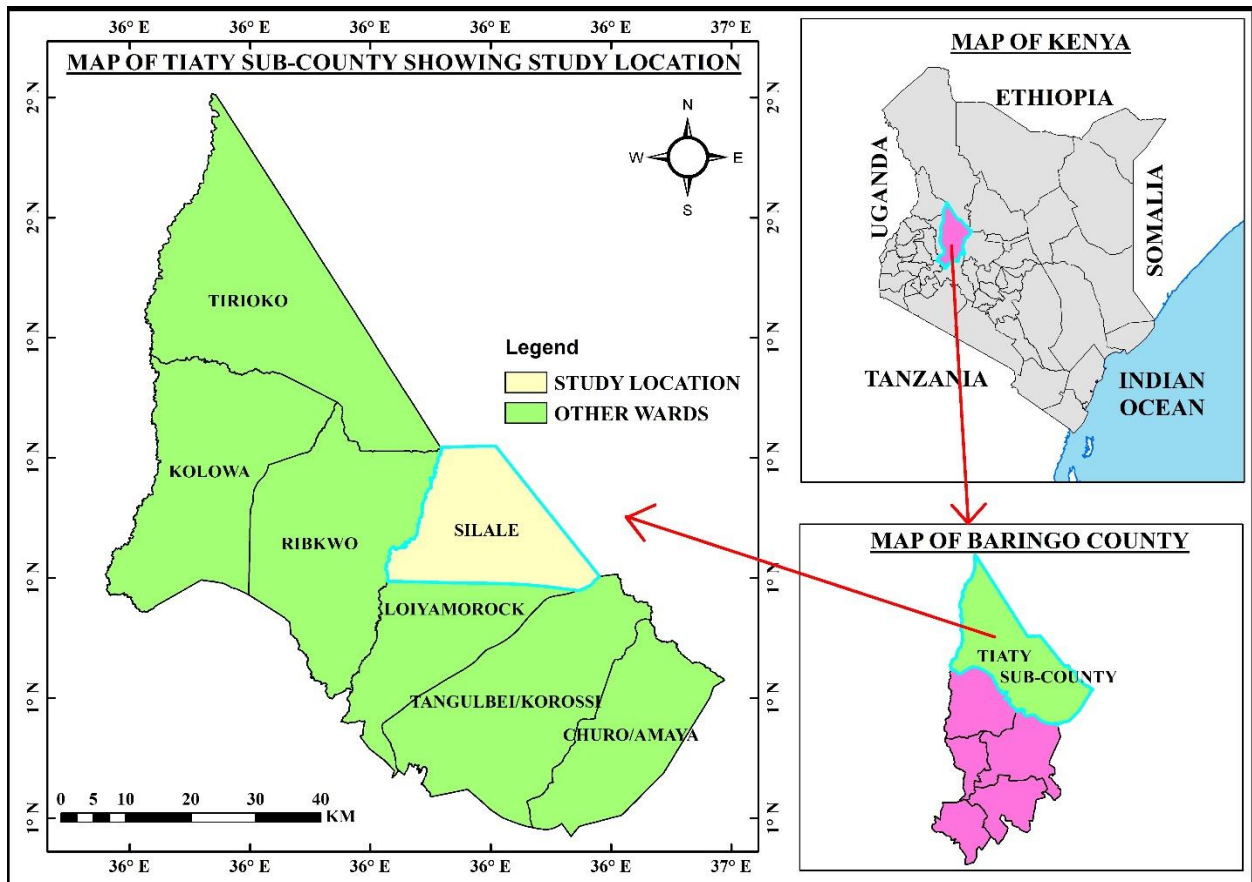
Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>marriage. But if they have the education, they will not have the time to think about that, they have the time to think about their future.</p>
	<p>4.05 Livelihood (60%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You are taught to be self-reliance – teach them about practical things that will give them money for example, how to make clothes, how to make maybe pots. ● You see according to this area even a necklace is a cloth, so you can teach them on how to make a necklace. ● something that can help them generate income so that they cannot be depended on their husbands ● Self-reliant activities to be taught for example knitting, I mean, cooking and other vocational training that is going to help them. ● In a way we say maybe through self-reliant activities they are able to

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>maneuver around and not to be so much dependent on their husbands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage the girls to be self-reliant, they should not rely on their husbands only, they should rely on themselves, so they should get something to do so that they can support themselves not only relying on their husbands.
	<p>4.06 Community Sensitization (50%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The community should be sensitized on the effect of early marriages ● By sharing the effect, the negative effect of early marriages with them. This will change their thinking around early marriages. ● Community awareness on gender equality. So, the community should be educated about gender equality so they should not only favour one side, they should treat them equally, the girls and men the same way. ● Educating the community on gender equality. We

Theme	Codes	Reference
		<p>tell the community to educate both girls and boys and treat them equally because we are all equal that is according to creation. So, boys and girls should be treated equally. Also, in terms of opportunities they should be given equally to avoid gender disparity, you favour one side than the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sensitize the community about gender equality. It will work, just sensitize them, these people they will change certainly. It is challenging but as far as they have the awareness that there is no one who should be above someone else
	<p>4.07 Religious Interventions (20%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage them to participate in religious activities. This will reduce their stress and they will have a let out ● We can encourage churches to visit the area, have crusades and start even churches around that

Theme	Codes	Reference
		is what I think. We can encourage people and investors to invest in churches in this area so as we increase the number of churches.

Appendix F: A Map Showing the Study Location



Appendix G: Letter from Egerton University

EGERTON

Tel: Pilot: 254-51-2217620
254-51-2217877
254-51-2217631
Dir. line/Fax: 254-51-2217847
Cell Phone



UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 536 - 20115
Egerton, Njoro, Kenya
Email: bps@egerton.ac.ke
www.egerton.ac.ke

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

EM16/13064/21
Ref:.....

29th June, 2023
Date:.....

The Director General
National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation,
P. O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT – MR. PETER ORWENYO
MOSE REG. NO. EM16/13064/21**

This is to introduce and confirm to you that the above named student is in the Department of Psychology and Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education and Community Studies, Egerton University.

He is a bona-fide registered M.Sc. student in this University. His research topic is **“Influence of Selected Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya”**

He is at the stage of collecting field data. Please issue him with a research permit to enable him undertake the studies.

Your kind assistance to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


29 JUN 2023


Prof. George M. Ogendi, Ph.D
DIRECTOR, BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

GMOwg

“Transforming Lives Through Quality Education”

Appendix H: Research Permit from NACOSTI

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 767288	Date of Issue: 17/July/2023
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr.. PETER ORWENYO MOSE of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Baringo on the topic: INFLUENCE OF SELECTED STRESS COPING STRATEGIES ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF GIRLS IN EARLY MARRIAGES IN TIATY SUB-COUNTY, BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 17/July/2024.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/23/27598	
767288 Applicant Identification Number	 Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Verification QR Code 	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix I: Research Permit from the Ministry of Education



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department for Basic Education

Our Email: countyedubaringo@gmail.com

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
BARINGO COUNTY
P.O. BOX 664
KABARNET

REF: CDE/BAR/EDU 8/11 VOL 2/48

09/08/2023

Mr. Peter Orwenyo Mose
EGERTON UNIVERSITY

RE : RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to research license No. NACOSTI/P/23/27598 dated 17/July/2023

Authority is hereby granted to you to carry out research on: ***"Influence of selected stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub County, Baringo County,"*** for a period ending 17th/July/2024.

Masibo J. Kituyi
County Director of Education
BARINGO COUNTY

Appendix J: Research Permit from the County Commissioner



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

Telephone. 053-21285
Fax. (053)-21285
E-Mail: baringocountycommissioner@gmail.com

COUNTY COMMISSIONER,
BARINGO COUNTY,
P.O. BOX 1 - 30400
KABARNET.

When replying please quote:

REF.NO.ADM.18/2 VOL.III/135

3RD AUGUST, 2023

The Deputy County Commissioner
Tiaty West Sub County
P.O. Box 1
NGINYANG

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to letter Ref.No.767288 dated 17th July, 2023 from the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) on the above mentioned subject.

This is to confirm that **Mr. Peter Orwenyo Mose** of **Egerton University** has been authorized to conduct research in your Sub County on the topic: **Influence of selected stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub County** for the period ending **17th July, 2024.**

Please accord him the necessary support.

S. N. WASIKE
For: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
BARINGO COUNTY

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
BARINGO COUNTY

P O. Box 1 - 30400, KABARNET

Cc:

Mr. Peter Orwenyo Mose
EGERTON UNIVERSITY

Appendix K: Journal Publication

Journal of Education and Practice

ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online)

Vol.15, No.1, 2024

www.iiste.org



Influence of Physiological Stress Coping Strategies on the Psychological Wellbeing of Girls in Early Marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya

Peter Orwenyo Mose¹, Prof. Teresiah Njonge², Dr. Jane N. Gacohi²

1. Master of Education Degree Student in Guidance and Counselling of Egerton University
 2. Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Counselling and Educational Foundations, Egerton University
- *Email: morwenyo@gmail.com

Abstract

Positive psychological wellbeing is linked to happiness, enjoyment, pleasure and fulfillment in life as well as potency in regard to coping, emotion regulation and healthy problem solving skills. Negative psychological wellbeing on the other hand leads to dysfunctional thought patterns, emotional disorders, and behavioral challenges that may lead to significant distress that is considered aberrant in that person's culture or society. Tiaty Sub-county experience high prevalence of early marriages at 27% of all girls below 18 years resulting into psychological challenges such as chronic stress, depression, trauma, social phobia and anxiety disorder. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of physiological stress coping strategies on psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. The accessible population was 530 girls in early marriages between the age of 13 years and 17 years who are registered in educational or rehabilitation programs in Tiaty Sub-county. The study used snow-ball sampling techniques to select a sample size of 106 girls in early marriages in Tiaty Sub-county. The study used questionnaire adopted from Ryff's Scales of Psychological Wellbeing to collect data from the girls in early marriages. The study revealed that there is statistically significant influence of physiological stress coping strategies on the psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages. A unit increase in the physiological stress coping strategies would lead to 0.573 units increase in psychological wellbeing of girls in early marriages with other variables held constant. The study recommends girls in early marriages to engage in physiological stress coping strategies such as physical exercises, games, food, enough sleep, good health care, reading story books and engaging in recreational activities in order to improve their psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Physiological Stress Coping Strategies, Psychological Wellbeing, Early Marriages

DOI: 10.7176/JEP/15-1-13

Publication date: January 31st 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Early marriage refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 years and an adult or another child (UNICEF, 2018). According to UNICEF (2020), 720 million women alive were married before 18 years and 12 million girls get married every year before they attain the age of 18 years. The report indicates that 40% of girls in developing countries get married before they attain 18 years while 12% before they attain 15 years (UNICEF, 2020). Despite numerous initiatives against early marriages and ratification of international and regional policy frameworks as well as development of laws, conventions, treaties, and international agreements that criminalize early marriages; early marriages is still a dominant vice in several regions and communities in Kenya. In Kenya and according to a 2017 UNICEF study, 64% of all married women of Pokot origin got married before reaching the age of 18, followed by 54% of Rendille women, 38% Somali women and 28% of Maasai women. In addition, 38% of Pokot men and 14% of Somali men got married before reaching the age of 18. Tiaty Sub-County and especially in Silale Ward, is dominantly occupied by the Pokot tribe who practice both FGM and early marriage and thus the choice of the study area (Wambu, 2018).

Girls in early marriages experience high prevalence of negative psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is defined as the level of enjoyment, pleasure (hedonic) and extent of fulfillment and meaning in life (eudaimonic) and happiness, as well as resilience in life such as ability to cope with different situations, ability to regulate emotions as well as having healthy problem solving skills (Gao, 2018). According to the Six-factor Model of Psychological Well-being by Carol Ryff, psychological wellbeing is measured in terms of purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance and positive relations (Gao, 2018). High prevalence of early marriages in Tiaty Sub-County necessitates girls to develop stress coping strategies in order to improve their psychological wellbeing. Physiological coping strategy is one of the strategies used to cope with stress. The physiological stress coping strategies refers to bodily activities adopted to master, tolerate or minimize the impact of stress such as physical exercises, recreational activities and games, meals, sleep, and relaxation (Okeke *et al.*, 2019).

Appendix L: Ethical Approval

EGERTON

TEL: (051) 2217808
FAX: 051-2217942



UNIVERSITY

P. O. BOX 536
EGERTON

EGERTON UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

EU/RE/DIR/009

Approval No. EUISERC/APP/245/2023

8th June 2023

Peter Orwenyo Mose
Address Box 938 - 20100,
Nakuru.
Telephone: 0720379391
E-mail: morwenyo@gmail.com

Dear Peter,

RE: ETHICAL APPROVAL: INFLUENCE OF SELECTED STRESS COPING STRATEGIES ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF GIRLS IN EARLY MARRIAGES IN TIATY SUB-COUNTY, BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA

This is to inform you that *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *EUISERC/APP/245/2023*. The approval period is *8th June, 2023 –9th June, 2024*

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. You are required to adhere Institutional Experimental Animals Use and Care policy.
- iii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee*.
- iv. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours of notification
- v. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *Egerton University Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours.

“Transforming Lives through Quality Education”