

Assessment of the influence of physical abuse on Christian marriage stability in Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya

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Abstract- This study sought to determine how domestic Violence influences Christian couples' ability to maintain stable marriages in Kenya's Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County. Albert Bandura's social learning theory served as the basis for the investigation. The study was based on descriptive and correlational research designs. 1781 married people made up the study's target population. The accessible population was 1000 respondents from four churches in Nyali sub-county, Mombasa County. The churches include St. Francis Assisi Catholic Church (350), Crossroads Fellowship (300), Nyali Baptist Church (200), and Anglican Church of Kenya (150). The couples who will participate in the study were chosen from the four chosen congregations using a proportionate and easy random sampling method. The sample size was estimated using Yamane's formula from 1967, and 286 respondents were added to the sample. The findings of the study revealed that physical abuse had a negative, statistically significant influence on marital stability ($= -0.666, p=0.000$). Data on the strategies employed by Christian couples in Nyali sub-county to mitigate the impact of domestic violence on marriage stability were assessed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The study found that physical abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse, had an influence on marital stability. According to the objectives of the study, thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data from the interview schedule, and the findings were faithfully reported. According to the report, institutions that arrange marriages should require couples to receive professional counseling in order to establish mutual understanding and boost marital stability.

Index Terms- Christian Marriage, Domestic violence, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Financial Abuse

I. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence, often known as family abuse, is the mistreatment of members of the same family, including cohabiting couples or married people. Intimate partner violence, which can occur in heterosexual or homosexual relationships and is an assault between people in intimate commitments, has also been referred to as domestic violence on occasion (Howe, 2012). In a broader perspective, domestic assault further incorporates cruelty against kids, youth, parents, or the old members in a family

(Lloyd, 2018). Domestic violence occurs in various dynamic like; physical, verbal, emotional, economic, and sexual (Flury & Nyberg, 2010). Domestic violence can occur among individuals of all ages, gender, and social class. However, women, children, and low social class are associated with increased levels of family abuse (Larsen, 2016). One in four women worldwide who have been in an intimate relationship between the ages of 15 and 49 have at least once been the victim of physical or sexual abuse by their husband. The lifetime prevalence of domestic violence is projected to be 22% in high-income nations in Europe, compared to 25% in the WHO regions of the Americas, 20% in the Western Pacific, 31% in the WHO countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, and 33% in the WHO South-East Asian regions. According to the WHO (2020), 38% of all murdered women worldwide pass away as a result of their intimate relationships. The majority of people who experience domestic and sexual violence are men. Women make up the vast majority of domestic abuse victims in Kenya. This view is especially evident in the article by Kimuna and Djamba (2008), where the authors point out that over 40% of women who are married in Kenya report being victims of either sexual abuse or domestic violence.

Statement of the Problem

Domestic violence is still a big problem global even though huge part of resource have been spent to try curb it. Researches has revealed that there are high levels of domestic/ Intimate partner violence (IPV) in various nations (WHO, 2020; Martin, et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2019). The threat to family unity, especially marriage, is one of the main influences of the rise in domestic violence. Stable marriages are defined by peace, respect for one another, commitment, acceptance, communication and listening. Past researchers have already examined the link between domestic violence and marital stability. According to studies (Shortt et al., 2010; Razera, et al., 2016; Wagman, et al., 2016), Intimate partner violence (IPV) causes relationship and marriage disruption. Studies on domestic violence against women have, however, primarily focused on Kenya's prevalence and contributing causes. Few research has been conducted in Kenya that examine the link between domestic violence and stable marriages.

The aim of the study was to assess the influence of physical abuse on Christian marriage stability in Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya and bridge the aforementioned gap.

Influence of Physical Abuse on Marital Stability Among Couples

Mbwirire (2017) investigated the causes of divorce in traditional and contemporary churches in the Domboshava region of Zimbabwe. Approximately 4,200 Christians and 1860 church administrators were among the group being surveyed for the study, which used a descriptive research approach. The sample size incorporated 111 church members and leaders. 104 Christians were engaged in nine focus group discussions and seven church leaders were interviewed. The study's findings suggested that both man-made and natural factors could contribute to marital difficulties. The findings also revealed that marital issues weaken the marriage bond.

Odhambo and Maito (2012) used the Anglican Diocese of Maseno North as a case study to assess issues surrounding marital strife in Kenya. Descriptive statistics were used to assess the information that the researchers obtained through focus group discussions and interviews. The findings demonstrated that a variety of elements, including socioeconomic, sociocultural, personal characteristics of a spouse, domestic family life factors, and structural inequality factors, were considered as the root causes of destructive marital conflict. The results showed that psychological and physical violence was rampant and employed by both partners. The findings also revealed that about a third of ladies were victims of physical abuse but kept their abusive marriages due to social, cultural, and economic difficulties.

Njoroge (2017) looked on the connection between couples' marital stability and regulated methods of dispute settlement in Kenya's Kiambu County. A descriptive-correlation study methodology was utilized to gather data from 96 married adults aged 18 utilizing a structured questionnaire. The findings indicated that most disputes could be settled. According to descriptive data, the majority of respondents used models of regulated marital conflict resolution, with validating techniques being the most frequently used, followed by volatile and avoidant strategies. The researcher came to the conclusion that while controlled conflict resolution techniques were necessary, they did not guarantee marital stability.

Kubai (2012) investigated on causes and consequences that come about to men who go through an occurrence of domestic violence in Mukurweini Nyeri. Data from 22 men was comprised of 59.1% were married, 18.2% were separated and 4.5% were divorced. The study used semi-structured questionnaire. The study indicated that 45% of the interviewee strongly agreed that domestic violence predisposed men to physical injuries. The study further investigated the level of awareness whether men who experience domestic violence in their marriages with 95% agreeing with the research question.

Kigaya (2021) investigated domestic abuse against men in Kenya. the study explored physical violence against men by their intimate partner. The sample size was 3,288 men who were married at the time of research and those who were previously married. The study results were that 33.5% experienced physical abuse while they were in marriage. In addition, 48.3% of the respondents revealed that they had been exposed to physical

violence while growing up as children by witnessing their fathers beat up their mothers. The study further assessed physical abuse severity by the spouse or the partner action of burning, strangling, and using weapons against the man. 163 respondents reported to have less severe physical violence more than 94% were still married while 6% were no longer living together with their partners.

The Kenya Demographic Health Survey of (2022) details facts from the survey. Their findings indicate that women between age of 15 and 49 had experienced physical violence within the last 12 months before the survey. 25% of the women in the same age group in Mombasa County also experienced violence by the age of 15. The study further reveals Up to 31% of women within the same age set who have had an intimate partner or married have experienced physical violence committed by recent partners. Only 10% of women in this age group have not experienced intimate partner violence of any form. The report detail that the most reports perpetrators of physical violence against women is their current intimate partner or spouse.

The above studies on the influence of physical abuse on marital stability among couples have revealed that physical abuse and conflicts in marriages are major causes of divorce, broken marital bonds, and unstable marriages. There isn't many research on these topics in Kenya, and the ones that are there don't explicitly connect physical violence to stable marriages. Furthermore, there are no studies on the relationship between physical abuse and stable marriages in Nyali Sub- County. This study aimed to fill the aforementioned research gap.

Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura's social learning theory from 1977 was utilized in the research. Albert Bandura is the proponent of Social Learning Theory that is premised on the influence of the social environment on the development of behavior. As such, Bandura argues that individuals learn best within their environment through modelling and imitation. Role models are important in shaping how various members of society behave for this reason. Using the same concept, it is evident that society plays a significant role not only on children, but also on adults (A. Bandura, 1977). For this reason, couples ought to take into consideration the type of social environment that they expose themselves to in relation to their interaction and media influence. Domestic violence forms the best example of the application of Bandura's concept of Social Learning Theory as well as the cognitive functions that are associated with the belief systems of individuals through their association with their environment. Instead of understanding the importance of thinking through problems as opposed to resulting into physical fights, violent partners result to the latter as ways of solving problems. Social learning theory also shows the importance of developing collaborative relationships that are premised on mutual trust and fairness. This in turn builds the capacity of couples being able to develop problem solving skills through imitating the behavior of married couples who use adaptive problem-solving skills that do not involve violence. Behavior that is learnt through imitation forms the premise of Albert Bandura's theory of Social Learning. The couple's belief systems are also challenged based on the fact that they learn new information and compare it with what they knew before. This leads to cognitive development and thereby married couples are able to associate better with their

partners. The development of problem-solving skills also incorporates the action of thinking through the best decisions to make, which is an aspect of cognition. This theory details the progress and relationship interactions in terms of the stability that marriages have and the adverse influence that domestic violence brings about to the family set up.

Material and Methods

Both descriptive and correlational research designs were used in the study. When illustrating how domestic violence influence the stability of relationships between spouses, correlational research methodology was beneficial. This design provided a valuable description of the approaches taken to address the influence of domestic abuse on marital stability. The research was carried out in Kenya's Nyali Sub-County of Mombasa County. The Sub-County was purposively selected as it comprises of both Urban and Rural settings and thus it enabled the researcher to get a diverse sample size that can be generalized to the entire County population. It targeted a total of 1781 married people from the records of eight churches in the Nyali Subcounty of Mombasa County, Kenya, made up the study's target group. The Accessible population was 1000 married individuals from the four main churches in Nyali sub-county, Mombasa County, Kenya. The four churches were purposively selected due to the high number of married persons worshipping in the churches and are among the oldest established churches in the sub-county. The four churches were; Nyali Baptist Church (200), Anglican Church of Kenya St Peters (150), Crossroads Fellowship (300) and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church (350). Interview schedule respondents were the pastors in charge of couple's ministry in the churches, each church had only one pastor in charge of the couple's ministry.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure.

The study sample size was established using the Yamane (1967) formula as follows:

N=Population of study

K=Constant (1)

e=degree of error expected

n=sample size $n = \frac{N}{K+N(e)^2}$

$$n = \frac{1000}{1+1000(0.05)^2} = \frac{1000}{1+2.5000000000000004}$$

$$=285.7 \\ \approx 286$$

Using the aforementioned formula, a sample of 286 married people took part in this study. First, the proportionate sampling method was used to select a sample size that represented each of the four congregations in order to create the sample of 286 participants. After that, a simple random sample procedure was used to choose the study's real participants. Percentage proportion was calculated to ascertain actual number of respondents to be apportioned for each church.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative information was gathered systematically using a questionnaire. The following five sections made up the questionnaire: Section A contained demographic data, while Section B had items that addressed Goal 1 on Physical Abuse, section C had items answering objective 2 on financial abuse, section D items answering objective 3 on emotional abuse, while section E had questions on what strategies are employed in addressing domestic abuse. This enabled the researcher to capture quantitative data to be used in testing the study hypotheses and research question.

To acquire in-depth data, a structured interview was utilized. Five questions made up the five sections of the structured interview. The first four questions were written in a way that addressed the first three objectives, which dealt with physical abuse, financial abuse, and emotional abuse, while the fifth question was written in a way that addressed the fourth objective, which dealt with the methods used to resolve domestic violence. This enabled the researcher to capture qualitative data.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data were examined using SPSS version 24 because it is a data management and statistical analysis program with a very versatile data processing capability. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences is known as SPSS. The questionnaire responses were grouped and looked over. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Demographic characteristics were evaluated using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. The study hypotheses were investigated using inferential statistics in the form of linear regression. By using linear regression to determine the variance in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by the independent factors, the researcher was able to determine the degree of influence. Data on the strategies employed by Christian Couples in Nyali sub-county to mitigate the impact of domestic violence on marriage stability were assessed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. Tables and charts were used to show quantitative data. Thematic analysis and verbatim presentation of qualitative data.

Findings

The results of a study on the impact of domestic abuse on marital stability among Christian couples in Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya are presented and discussed in this chapter. The demographic results are presented first, then descriptive and inferential analyses of the research data are presented.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Out of the 286 people who were sampled for the study, 272 participants responded, representing a 95% response rate. Gender, age, years of marriage, and employment status were among the demographic traits. The subsections that follow include the results. The distribution of the participants by gender is presented in figure 2.

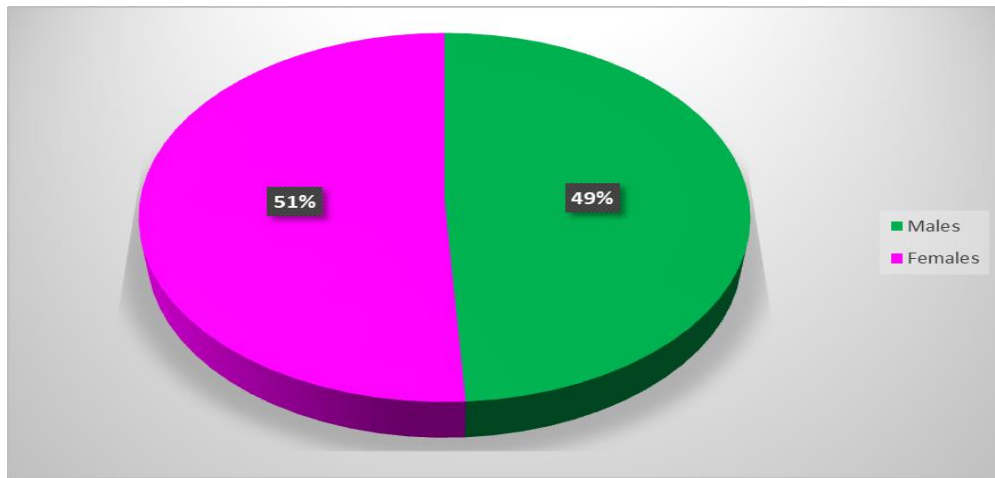


Figure 1: Participants Gender

Figure 2 shows that 51% of the participants were women and 49% were men. The findings on gender gave a good representation of both males and female participants.

4.2.2 Respondents Age Category

Table 5 displays the distribution of responses by age group.

Table 1: Participants Age Category

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
25-30 years	40	14.7
31-35 years	95	34.9
36-40 years	63	23.2
41-45 years	10	3.7
46 years and above	64	23.5
Total	272	100.0

According to table 5, 34.9% of participants were between the ages of 31 and 35, 23.5% were 46 or older, and 23.2% were between the ages of 36 and 40.

4.2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Years in Marriage

Table 6 shows the distribution of responders by years of marriage.

Table 2: Participants Years in Marriage

Years in Marriage	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	64	23.5
6-10 years	86	31.6
11-15 years	58	21.3
Over 15 years	64	23.5
Total	272	100.0

Table 6's data reveal that 31.6% of the participants had been married for between six and ten years, while 23.5% had been married for between zero and five years and more than fifteen years, respectively.

4.2.4 Distribution of Respondents by Employment Status

The distribution of respondents by employment status is seen in Figure 3.

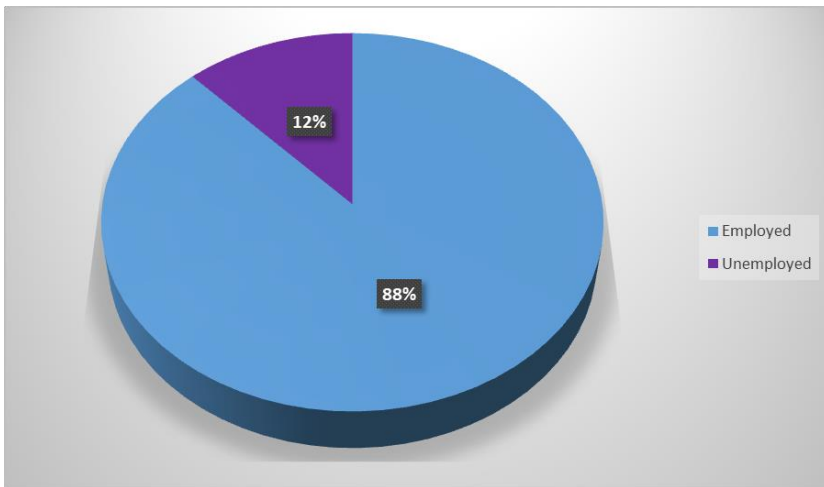


Figure 2: Participants' Distribution by Employment Status

From the findings on figure 3, majority of the participants (88%) were employed, while 12% were not employed.

Influence of Physical Abuse on Marital Stability Among Christian Couples in Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya

The first goal was to determine how physical abuse influence the stability of Christian marriages in Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya. The following subsections show the findings related to the study's goals.

Descriptive Analysis on Level of Physical Abuse

In order to assess the severity of physical abuse in marriage, participants were given a list of 8 statements concerning it. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). The results are briefly shown in Table 7.

Table 3: Frequencies on Level of Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
I have never experienced physical abuse in my marriage	40	50	24	63	95	3.45	1.485
I cannot imagine being in abusive marital relationship	24	87	81	40	40	3.81	1.305
If my partner ever abuses me I will quit my marriage and never return	24	87	81	40	40	2.94	1.188
I have experienced physical violence in my marriage at least once since I got married	102	80	18	48	24	2.31	1.361
My partner is very abusive physically	112	88	16	40	16	2.12	1.257
I have physically abused my partner at least once since we got married	110	82	16	56	8	2.15	1.238
I occasionally abuse my partner physically	152	80	8	24	8	1.74	1.068
I cannot quit my marriage because of physical violence, have to endure for various reasons	122	87	31	24	8	1.93	1.086

As shown on table 7, participants agreed that they cannot imagine being in abusive marital relationship as shown by a mean of 3.81, the participants disagreed that they occasionally abuse their partner physically as shown by a mean of 1.74, while participants further disagreed that their partner is very abusive physically as shown by a mean of 2.12.

The scale was transformed into levels so that the severity of physical abuse could be evaluated further. The maximum possible score for the eight elements was forty (8x5), while the minimum possible score was eight (8x1). Higher scores represented more severe physical abuse. The sum of a person's cumulative scores for each statement was used to determine their overall score. The favorable language-containing items were reverse-coded. Scores between 8 and 20 indicated mild levels of physical abuse, 21 to 27 indicated moderate levels of physical abuse, and 28 to 40 indicated significant levels of physical abuse. The results were then separated into three levels. On table 8, a summary of the results is displayed.

Table 4: Level of Physical Abuse

Level of Physical Abuse	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	184	67.6	8	30	18.04	5.786
Moderate Level	80	29.4				
High Level	8	2.9				
Total	272	100.0				

According to table 8, the majority of individuals (67.6%) reported experiencing only low to moderate levels of physical abuse, whereas just 2.9% reported experiencing severe physical abuse. The lowest score possible was 8, and the highest score possible was 30. The individuals' average level of physical abuse was low, as indicated by the mean score of 18.04 (SD = 5.786) for level of physical abuse. From the interview schedule, the respondents were asked whether physical abuse is reported to them and how it influences marital stability. Key informant (KI1) said,

“Physical abuse is reported among married couples in our church and that definitely influences the stability of marital relationship”

Key informant (KI2) Stated,

“cases of a spouse abusing the other physically and also cases of where spouses were in a disagreement and physical violence ensued have been reported among our members”

Key Informant (KI3), said,

“Physical violence cases in marriage, sad as it may be have been reported among our members some where we are called in as pastors or church leaders like our elders to intervene having escalated to the authorities’ police in many cases”

key informant (KI4), stated.

“Hitting one another, and injuries caused by such domestic violent actions in a marriage have been reported in our marriage and family department by our church members, thus physical violence has been experienced in marriages in this church”

4.3.1.2 Hypothesis Testing

The following null hypothesis was being tested in the investigation.

H01: In Nyali Sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya, physical abuse has no statistically significant impact on couples' ability to maintain their marriages.

To investigate the impact of physical abuse on marital stability, a linear regression was conducted. The tables that follow give a summary of the results.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.446 ^a	.199	.196	7.753	2.323

a. Predictors: (Constant), Physical Abuse

b. Dependent Variable: Marital stability

According to the modified R square value in Table 9, physical abuse was responsible for 19.6% of the variation in marital stability.

Table 6: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4029.762	1	4029.762	67.041	.000 ^b
	Residual	16229.411	270	60.109		
	Total	20259.173	271			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital stability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse

As shown in table 10, the regression model was a good predictor for marital stability from physical abuse, $F(1, 270) = 67.041, p < 0.05$.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	37.341	1.542		24.222	.000	34.306	40.376
	Physical abuse	-.666	.081	-.446	-8.188	.000	-.827	-.506

a. Dependent Variable: Marital stability

The findings in Table 11 demonstrate that physical abuse had a negative influence on marital stability ($= -0.666, p=0.000$); this influence was significant because the p-value was under the cutoff for significance (0.05). The statistics show that an increase in physical abuse will have a 0.666 negative influence on marital stability. The alternate hypothesis was accepted in light of the results, while the null hypothesis was rejected. These results support earlier research findings that physical violence has a major influence on marital stability. In a study by Mbwirire (2017), which looked at the causes of divorce in traditional and contemporary Christian churches in the Domboshava region of Zimbabwe, it was shown that marital problems, such as physical abuse, damage the marriage bond. The findings of this investigation corroborate those of a 2012 study by Odhiambo and Maito. Initiating a case study with the Anglican Diocese of Maseno North, these researchers examined marital conflict issues in Kenya and found that around a third of women in violent marriages did so because of social, cultural, and economic challenges. The results of earlier studies demonstrate that physical violence is pervasive in marriages and has a significant influence on marital stability, particularly outside of a Christian context.

These results concur with those of some earlier studies that discovered low levels of physical violence among married couples. For instance, married couples in Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe, only experienced 17% of the physical violence that unmarried couples did, according to a study by Diki, Makochehanwa, Moyo, and Mhloyi (2022) that examined the experience of intimate partner violence among married couples. Men were found to be more prone than women to mistreat their spouses, according to the study. The likelihood that a partner will experience physical abuse increased with her income. The study also found that strategies such as couple's therapy and other forms of psychosocial support could work for men who experienced abuse. On the other hand, some researchers disagree with the current findings by finding high levels of physical abuse among married couples. For example, a study conducted by Areshtanab, Vaseai, Ebrahimi, Bostanabad, and Hosseinzadeh (2021) on 547 patients treated at Marand's health centers revealed that the prevalence of domestic violence was high, with both men (98.3%) and women (98.5%) reporting having been the victims of violence. The study found that domestic violence was an extension on already existing conflicts and often started with negotiation before extending to physical violence. Women experienced more physical violence compared to men.

The study by Mbwirire (2017) hits much closer to this current research as it investigates the causes of marital conflicts in

a church setting. However, the study does not identify physical abuse as one of the destabilizing factors in a marriage, which makes it less consequential to the issue of physical abuse in marriage. Odhiambo and Maito (2012) carried out in a church-based setting. This study, on the other hand, revealed that physical violence was meted mostly by husbands in an attempt to show their power and masculinity while women resorted to psychological abuse in marriage. The study also highlights how social constructs and traditional stereotypes have shaped how men and women view marriage and the roles of the genders in the institution, which leads to different types of conflicts within the family setup.

In a 2017 study, Njoroge looked into the relationship between couples' ability to resolve conflicts in a healthy way and their marital stability. The researcher discovered that most marital issues may be resolved with the appropriate tactics, therapy being one of them.

None of these studies specifically address the influence of this type of domestic violence on the stability of marriage, despite the fact that they do indicate significant patterns linked to physical abuse in the context of marriage. On the other hand, this study shows that Christian families had low rates of physical abuse. However, the people facing physical abuse in marriages may have to endure because of lack of a better choice. The key informants also revealed that physical abuse was an issue that influenced the stability of marriage among members of their churches.

These results support the social learning theory, which served as the study's theoretical framework and contends that changes in the social environment influence behavior. When the marital environment changes from love to physical abuse, then marital stability is threatened, and this is the reason the study has found that physical abuse reduces marital stability among married couples.

Conclusion

The majority of the individuals according to the results, had only mild physical abuse. The individuals' average level of marital stability was further determined to be moderate. The findings of a linear regression analysis showed that physical abuse had a negative, statistically significant influence on marital stability. According to the survey, marriages between Christian couples in the Nyali Sub- County were generally stable.

The study confirmed the existence of domestic violence among married Christian couples in Nyali Sub- County. As a result of the study's findings, which showed mild physical abuse, moderate financial abuse, and moderate emotional abuse, this

conclusion was drawn. As per the findings, it is okay to conclude that married Christian couples in Nyalı Sub- County experienced moderate levels of domestic violence.

Recommendations

The study recommended that married couples should take the personal initiative to seek marital counseling from time to time to address issues that might result in domestic abuse and hence maintain their marital stability.

The study also recommends to the married couples to attend couples retreats and other planned activities for couples so as to gather helpful information on subjects tackled by professionals in the interest of marital stability.

Couples should also identify confidants who they can feel free to share with when matters on domestic violence come up in their marriage

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