

**INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG  
COUPLES IN INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGES IN  
KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **Declaration**

This study is my original work, and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other institution.

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## Abstract

Marital Satisfaction is fundamental in sustaining a marriage. Conversely, couples in intercultural marriages experience unique challenges that influence their marital satisfaction (MS), for instance, language and ethnicity among many others. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by four specific objectives. These were; to determine the level of MS, to find out the influence of language on couples' MS, to find out the influence of ethnicity on couples' MS and to determine the mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. The theories guiding the study were the Bowen Family System Theory and the Cognitive Behavioral Theory. The study used mixed methods research design. The target population of the study was 11,028 individuals in intercultural marriages with a sample size of 99 participants, who were statistically determined. Quota sampling and Snowball sampling procedures were used to collect data from 67 participants in Kikuyu urban and 32 respondents in Limuru urban. Data collection methods involved adapting some relevant items from The Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32), The Five Love Languages Test (FLL) and Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire (MHCQ). Reviewing and comparing literature on similar studies was essential to improve validity of the instrument. Further, vigorous continued consultations with professional psychology supervisors augmented instrument validity. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was applied to determine the reliability of the instrument. The scale on MS had a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.828, language had 0.835 and ethnicity had 0.783, implying that the items met the threshold 0.7 internal consistency reliability. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics involving measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. Inferential statistics involved linear and multiple regression computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. The quantitative finding of the study showed that majority (76.8%) of the participants had high levels of MS. The regression model revealed that language had a direct positive contribution (adjusted  $r^2 = 0.69$ ) on MS. The study established that language had a positive, significant influence on MS ( $\beta=0.872$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Ethnicity had a direct positive contribution (adjusted  $r^2 = .033$ ) on MS. The study revealed that ethnicity had a positive significant influence on MS ( $\beta=0.402$ ,  $p=0.040$ ). Qualitative findings supported quantitative findings as majority (76.8%) of respondents were satisfied with their marriages. Respondents descriptions showed that language and ethnicity played a big role to influence MS. The study is valuable to researchers for further studies on related field. It is beneficial to professionals in mental health practice, churches and religious organizations involved in marriage and family dynamics, individual families and couples with relevant information for effective marital engagement. The study recommends policy makers to develop a strategy that increases awareness of the significance of mental health services. The study further recommends that mental health professionals conduct further research on the influence of varied cultural influences on marriages including language and ethnicity to enhance comprehensive information and understanding.

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### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

|         |                                                            |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| AAMFT   | American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy       |
| BFST    | Bowen Family System Theory                                 |
| CBT     | Cognitive Behavioral Theory                                |
| CGK     | County Government of Kiambu                                |
| CSI-32  | The Couples Satisfaction Index                             |
| CT      | Cognitive Therapy                                          |
| DHS     | Demographic and Health Survey                              |
| DoS     | Differentiation of Self                                    |
| FLL     | The Five Love Languages Test                               |
| KCPA    | Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association            |
| KNBS    | Kenya National Bureau of Statistics                        |
| LGBTQ+  | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others      |
| MHCQ    | Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire                     |
| MS      | Marital satisfaction                                       |
| NACOSTI | National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation |
| NCPD    | National Council for Population and Development            |
| REBT    | Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy                          |
| SDF     | Socio-demographic factors                                  |
| SPSS    | Statistical Package for Social Sciences                    |
| USA     | United States of America                                   |

### **Definition of Terms**

- Culture:** Common ethnic, linguistic, racial and family of origin (Renalds, 2011). In this study indicates common family of origin involving ethnicity and language, which may or may not include race.
- Ethnicity:** Refers to a cultural group of people with a common heritage and share common values and customs (Nelson, 2015). In this study refers to a couple's family of origin that includes, historical experiences, beliefs, values, practices, behavioral and cultural characteristics.
- Intercultural marriage:** Marriage between partners from different racial, ethnic backgrounds (Skowronski et al. 2014). In this study defines the union between a man and woman who come from different cultural backgrounds, who may or may not be interracial couples.
- Language:** Dissimilarities in couple's mother tongues with influence on each partner's thought process and the language couples use in communication with each other and family members (Tien, 2013). In this study indicates a tool of communication and intimate expression.
- Marital satisfaction:** MS is a subjective feeling of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure experienced by a couple in all aspects of their marriage (Yoruk, 2016). In this study marital satisfaction, marital contentment and marital happiness refer to a global evaluation of personal marriage demonstrating functioning and fulfilment.
- Marriage:** Culturally and legally acknowledged union between a man and woman (Kapure, 2015). In this study refers to heterosexual, legal monogamous union between a man and woman.

Urban: Refers to major towns whose main activities involve trade, commerce and industry among many others (Masua, 2016). In this study urban refers to major towns of sub-counties in Kiambu County.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction and Background to the Study**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter one of this study provides an overview of the background of the study, which is the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. It further includes the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, assumptions of the study, justification for the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and the chapter summary.

#### **Background to the Study**

Marriage is considered vital by different cultures and has a fundamental role of linkage to the family (Stinson et al., 2017). Ngazimbi et al. (2017) add that there are benefits accrued from healthy marriages by a couple, such as, fewer mental and behavioral health problems, provision of support, a feeling of togetherness and satisfaction in shared activities. Definition of marriage differs across cultures but predominantly it is a union of a man and woman, each with a distinct background and spouses having an intimate interpersonal relationship (Kapure, 2015). Dobrowolska et al. (2020) indicate that marital satisfaction (MS) is generally considered to be a key predictor of marital well-being. According to Tavakol et al. (2017), there are diverse factors that influence couples' MS, such as, conflicting ethnic practices, couples' expectations, intimacy, social support and language among many others. Lee (2021) observes that couples' divergent affection language may affect their level of MS. Zaheri et al. (2016) point out that intercultural marriages are unions among people who originate from dissimilar cultural backgrounds. Sabbe et al. (2019) state that intercultural obstacles among couples are shaped by multifaceted dynamics that have close association with ethnicity.

Segami and Eeden (2020) observed that there are different types of marriages, for instance, monogamy, polygamy, polygyny, polyandry, arranged marriages, intercultural marriages. Veldhuis (2022) notes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and others (LGBTQ+) among many others. This study is interested in MS in monogamous, heterosexual type of marriage among couples from divergent cultural backgrounds, who are legally joined together in matrimony. Skowronski et al. (2014) define the term intercultural marriage as a union between partners from dissimilar racial, ethnicity or religious backgrounds. Silva et al. (2012) state that an intercultural couple refers to the union between two people of different nationalities, which may or may not include differences in race, ethnicity, religion and language.

It is essential to have an understanding of the global upward trend of intercultural marriages. Renalds (2011) notes that intercultural marriages are on the rise. Livingston and Brown (2017) indicate that United States of America (USA) has gained a steady increase from 6.7%, in 1980, 14.6% in 2008 to 17% in 2015 of all new marriages. According to Moses and Woesthoff (2019), Canada's inter-ethnic marriages in 2001 was 3.1% and 3.9% in 2006, while in 2016 census shows 4.6% of all marriages. Asian context of marriages with cultural differences in 1970 was approximately 4.4%, in 2000 was 12% and another 8% increase from 2000-2010 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2011).

According to Dulani et al. (2018), there is lack of systematic organization of data across Africa on rates of inter-marriages and MS. Crespín-Boucaud (2019) indicate that overall average percentage of interethnic marriages in Sub-Saharan Africa is 20.4%. Bandyopadhyay and Green (2018) state that inter-ethnic marriages across Africa's average rate is 22.3%. Kibuthu (2016) indicates that East, Central and Southern Africa reveal a low degree of inter-ethnic and inter-racial marriages. Conversely, Dulani et al. (2018) indicate that there is high prevalence of inter-marriages across Africa with median rate of 21%

however, with later born partners. Malawi's rate is 36%, while Kenya's is at 13% as indicated in Appendix III. Intercultural marriages come with their own challenges that may influence couples' MS. For instance, couples' dissimilar languages and ethnicity that may conflict and influence MS. Consequently, lack of systematic organized data on intercultural marriages and MS across Africa including Kenya indicated a need for this study to enhance database and understanding of inherent challenges.

MS is indicated as the perception of a spouse with regards to the level in which personal needs in marriage are accommodated (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015). Tegegne et al. (2015); Zaheri et al. (2016) define MS as a broad evaluation of the condition of a personal marriage that divulges marital functioning and contentment, which was adopted by this study. This definition indicates that MS is achieved when the needs of each partner in a marital relationship are achieved. These needs may be personal, for instance, the need to experience marital expectations of intimacy and supportive companionship or collective needs, such as, fulfilling societal assigned roles successfully. Sharaievska et al. (2013) indicate characteristics essential for MS, such as, mutual values, respect, support, intimacy, spending time together, communication and agreement on expression of affection, among many others. Tavakol et al. (2017) observe that MS is a multidimensional idea, which is influenced by many factors, such as, age at marriage, personal characteristics, emotional intelligence, parenting styles, religious beliefs, educational status, family's financial situation, presence of children, among many others. In view of the importance of MS to marital well-being there was a need to address issues that influence MS, which is essential for comprehensive conclusive information.

Sorokowski et al. (2017) indicate that diverse factors influence MS in western and non-western countries. For instance, Renalds (2011) observes that intercultural partners hold diverse values, beliefs, expectations, raising children practices and language that may conflict

and influence MS. Partners' behaviors and communication are heavily influenced by values stemming from their diverse cultures including ethnicity. Odhiambo et al. (2021) indicate that globally long term marital relationship is considered a crucial indicator of a successful marriage and well-being of couples. According to Ndirangu et al. (2019), globally there are diverse studies that are based on MS. Kepler (2015) indicates that 93% of Americans acknowledge that having a happy marriage is significant in their lives. Skowronski et al. (2014) indicate that inter-marriages have dissimilar values, beliefs and expectations inclined to conflict, which may influence couples' MS. Sharaievska et al. (2013) observe that relationships between spouses of different cultural backgrounds may be more challenging emanating from differences in values, negative effects of poor language, differences on marital expectations with influence on MS. Miles (2018) observes aspects that influence interethnic marriages which include conflicting values, relationship expectations and lack of support among many others that lower couples' MS.

Ngazimbi et al. (2017) state that marriages in USA portray low MS. Horowitz et al. (2019) indicate that only 40-50% marriages experience marital success. Acosta (2020) observes that couples' family of origin have great impact on couple's communication. Therefore, what a partner experiences in family-of-origin becomes a behavioral pattern in spousal interaction that may influence MS. Canadian statistics show that 4.4 per 1,000 people get married in Canada however, half of them, which is 2.11 per 1,000 do not succeed signifying low MS. Mol and Valk (2016) contend that relationship satisfaction of European binational couples in the Netherlands indicate higher MS than Dutch individuals in marriages.

Akpadago (2020) indicates low level of MS in Ghana. Adzovie (2020) asserts that married Christians in Accra Metropolis of Ghana are relatively satisfied in their marriages. Addai et al. (2015) observe that extended family continues to referee marital procedures in

Ghana. Strong extended family ties and beliefs that exist discourage passionate relationships. They are viewed with contempt and perceived as a threat to traditional marriages' values and beliefs inclined to influence couples' MS. This points to differing conclusions of couples' MS in Ghana, which showed a need for more research on influence of couples' MS to realize comprehensive understanding.

According to Mohlabane (2022), South Africans support prominence of marriage and preference of marital stability, which are essential for MS, however, diverse factors influence couples' MS. For instance, Segami and Eeden (2020) indicate significance of marital symbols in South African marriages, which may influence couples' MS. Tegegne et al. (2015) indicate that in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia only 28% of couples showed high MS, which is an indication of low MS and hence the need to understand factors that influence couples' MS. Kalai (2016) states that intercultural relationships portray partners in such relationships face an increased number of constraints, for instance, misunderstanding in communication, differences in values, beliefs and practices including negative familial reactions. Bustamante et al. (2011) note intercultural marriages are more susceptible to relationship conflict and marital disconnect. There was a need to conduct this study and understand the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction.

Ndung'u (2021) observes that spousal communication is more than words as it involves establishing an intimate link. Poor spousal communication may lead to disagreement, lack of mutual relationship, conflict, among many others. Kibuthu (2016) states that marriages across cultures in Kenya experience challenges, such as, cultural expectations, managing in-laws, communication and parenting inclined to influence MS. According to Infotrack (2010) and Omoro (2018), 60% of Kenyans are unhappily married. Kariuki (2018) adds that a demographic survey conducted in Kenya revealed that more than half of the respondents specified weakened MS between Kenyan couples. Aseka et al. (2021)

indicate that there exists low level of MS among couples in Kenya. In Kiambu County MS is significantly low compared to other national rates as 4.5% marriages do not attain marital success, which is 1.5% above national rate (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2014). This information portrays differing data of couples' MS in Kenya which includes Kiambu County that point to a need for further study to attain conclusive findings. Kamatu and M'arimi (2017) observe that young marriages of couples between age range of 20 to 35 years old at Ruiru in Kiambu County experience low MS leading to alarming rate of separations shortly after marriage. This has created a need for the study to realize factual information of the factors that influence MS among intercultural couples in Kiambu County, Kenya.

According to Karney and Bradbury (2020), last ten years' research work on MS revealed that, previous assumptions about marriage were either incomplete or misleading. The assumptions were that majority of couples' MS does not decline over time, but remains relatively stable for long. Further, negative communication between spouses can be difficult to change, and does not necessarily lead to more satisfying relationships when it changes. Research of the past 10 years showed that the task of understanding and promoting MS are more complex than earlier understood. This pointed to continued research for conclusive findings. Dobrowolska et al. (2020) contend that despite the importance of MS in predicting relationship endurance, there are few empirical studies examining predictors of MS outside the western context. Sorokowski et al. (2017) assert that marital relationships are heavily guided by culturally determined norms, customs and expectations causing distinct challenges to intercultural couples. It is with this background information that this study sought to find out the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya, which is essential for couples to perfect their marriages.

Language is significant in a marital relationship as a tool of communication and expression (Salija et al., 2018). Language and emotions indicate that language communicates ideas, thoughts, opinions and emotional expressions (Buarqoub, 2019). Consequently, when partners express their ideas, wishes and intimacy differently, then understanding each other gets complicated and may influence their marital satisfaction. Miscommunication emanates from sending or interpreting messages based on specific cultural codes (Crippen, 2011). According to Tili and Barker (2015), partners in a marital relationship from dissimilar cultural backgrounds face constraints from ineffective language usage that may influence MS.

According to Bystydzienski (2011), language and meanings may create miscommunication, as each cultural group has its own way of defining words, such as, marriage, which conveys its own values, beliefs and practices and is passed on through generations. For instance, marriage in one culture may be defined by the number of children a couple has while in another culture may mean companionship, intimacy, expression of affection, words of affirmation and enjoyment in a marital relationship, which may cause misunderstandings and negatively influence couples' MS.

Language is important to express thoughts and emotions. However, cultural norms may be affected by other factors, such as, educational level of individuals. Fager (2018) argues that even couples who speak the same language face challenges to comprehend what the other partner is expressing even after many years of marriage. Tien (2013) indicates that there is paucity of information that provides necessary understanding of language influence on couple's MS. Consequently, this study was conducted with the aim of expanding understanding of the influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction, which is essential for marital well-being.

Another factor which could influence MS that was of interest to this study was ethnicity. According to Nelson (2015), ethnicity refers to a group of people with a common heritage and share common cultural values and customs. Suyemoto et al. (2020) add that ethnicity is a multifaceted, dynamic concept that advances and supports relations through communities coming together around cultural connections. Miles (2018) asserts that inter-ethnic marriages include subsets, for instance, inter-racial and inter-national marriages, among others. Crespin-Boucaud (2019) adds that inter-ethnic marriages are on the rise. Koos and Neupert-Wentz (2020) note that demographically separated communities or tribes have their own set of cultural or traditional values. Miles (2018) indicates that inter-ethnic couples have less MS because of their expectations disparity, such as, supportive spouse and in-laws' relationships. Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) indicate that lack of support is the root cause of many challenges in marriages that may influence MS. Couples from two cultures are prone to experience increased constraints in their family interactions amplified by differing practices. Consequently, relating with extended family members may create misunderstandings, which may impede couples' happiness, intimacy and marital contentment. For instance, a couple from a dissimilar cultural practices could be accommodating a number of extended family members in their small house, which could be viewed by one partner as an intrusion of their privacy. The other partner may view the extended family members as a form of acceptance and support, which may cause misunderstandings and conflict with influence on their MS.

Crippen (2011) states that numerous cultural values remain hidden until couples become parents then issues emerge concerning which values on parenting to adopt. One main issue prone to influence couples' MS is defining the ethnic practices, such as, child rearing. For instance, individualistic cultures view child rearing as the responsibility of immediate family members, that is the nuclear family. While the other partner, from collectivist culture views child-rearing as the responsibility of the entire family, which includes extended family

members that is prone to conflict and influence couples' marital satisfaction. Kibuthu (2016) observes that marriages across cultures are characterized by lack of approval from parents and relatives, dissimilar cultural expectations, managing in-laws, communication and intimacy challenges, which could influence MS. Consequently, Kenyan marriages across different cultures are no exceptions, as they experience marital challenges. This formed the basis for more studies on the influence of ethnicity on MS among couples to improve their understanding and management.

Rebello et al. (2014) argue that it is not only intercultural marriages that experience challenges. However, Skowronski et al. (2014) contend that intercultural marriages are predisposed to high risks of cultural differences that may conflict and lower MS. For instance, unmet marital expectations of intimacy, affection and a blissful marriage emanating from husband's or wife's perception of unsupportive behavior may cause frustrations and conflicts that influence couples' marital contentment. Rebello et al. (2014) note that MS is a complex multidimensional concept, which is based on socio-cultural aspects, such as, culturally inherited values and practices among many others. According to Daniels (2015), differences among couples in marriage present both synergy and conflicting elements in their relationship. However, when couples are unaware of their differences and unique marital experiences then deliberate efforts to change to healthy functioning and attain MS is limited. Therefore, these arguments pointed to the need for this study to attain a better understanding of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural marriages. Acquired information is essential to broaden literature on the area of study for comprehensive understanding and enhancing couples' MS.

Bayle et al. (2017) states that diverse variables influence couples' MS including existence of differences in urban and rural set-ups. For instance, in Kiambu, County 40% of population live in rural areas, while 60% live in urban centers (National Council for

Population and Development (NCPD), 2013). Urban centers refer to regions where diverse people converge on a daily basis for different needs, such as, shopping, banking, employment among many others. The urban set-ups serve not only the urban residents, but also populations in the peripheries and even beyond. Consequently, more intercultural marriages are bound to be found in these settings of Kiambu County, Kenya.

Miles (2018) observes that available data on inter-ethnic couples is scarce and inconsistent, which indicated a need for more studies in this area for conclusive information. Similarly, there is paucity of data on inter-ethnic marriages and marital satisfaction in Kenya including Kiambu County. Dobrowolska et al. (2020) state that majority of cultural variables on MS have previously been examined however, research has basically neglected non-western countries. Further, Dulani et al. (2018) observe the need of standard approaches to measure and document ethnicity and related concepts, such as, MS in Africa. Skowronski et al. (2014) stress that intercultural marriages have unique constraints and show lower rates of MS, which called into question the inherent threats and couples' understanding of their vulnerable position. There was a need to identify empirically defended interventions for couples and family to alleviate couples' MS. Consequently, there was a need for this study to establish influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural marriages in Kiambu County.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Bustamante et al. (2011) indicate that intercultural marriages are more susceptible to relationship conflict that lower MS. Kalai (2016) states that intercultural relationships portray partners in such relationships experience increased number of constraints, such as, misunderstanding in communication, differences in values, beliefs, practices and negative familial reactions which may influence MS. Miles (2018) observes aspects that influence interethnic marriages that include conflicting values, relationship expectations and lack of

support MS. Renalds (2011) state that intercultural partners hold diverse expectations, raising children practices and language that may conflict and influence MS. In Kenya, Kibuthu (2016) observes that marriages across cultures are on the rise, but they have not been fully accepted by diverse ethnic groups. They are characterized by diverse challenges that include, lack of approval by parents and relatives, cultural expectations, adjusting to spouse's culture, managing in-laws, communication and intimacy, which could lower MS. Aseka et al. (2021) indicate that there exists low level of MS among couples in Kenya. In Kiambu County, MS is significantly low as, 4.5% of marriages do not attain marital success, which is 1.5% above national rate (KNBS, 2014). Kamatu and M'arimi (2017) add that marriages at Ruiru in Kiambu County experience low MS with alarming rate of separation soon after marriage. In view of the stated challenges, the study investigated the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. The study identified mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages, which was vital for marital management to realize MS.

## **Research Objectives**

### **General Objective**

General objective of this study was to find out the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **Specific Objectives**

- i. To explore level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya
- ii. To assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya
- iii. To find out the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

- iv. To suggest mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya?
- ii. What is the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya?
- iii. What is the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya?
- iv. What are the effective mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

Assumption made in this study was that, there was influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. Findings of the study revealed that language had a positive, significant influence on MS ( $\beta = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The study also showed that ethnicity had a positive significant influence on MS ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ). Another assumption made was that, participants would be honest in their responses and not feel pressured into taking part in the study. Participants were assured anonymity by concealing their identities with code names. They were further assured that their responses were confidential and would be secured, which resulted to good participation with 100% response rate.

### **Justification of the Study**

There was a need to conduct this study to attain empirical information on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in monogamous, heterosexual,

intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. According to Karney and Bradbury (2020), last ten years' research on MS showed that previous assumptions on marriage were either incomplete or misleading. This showed a need for further research to attain comprehensive information, on MS, which this study aimed to achieve. According to Tien (2013), there is paucity of information that is essential to understand language influence on couples' MS. Consequently, proceeding with this study was to expand information and comprehension of the influence of language on MS among intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. Dobrowolska et al. (2020) observe that majority of cultural variables on MS had been examined in western countries, which showed a need for more studies in non-western world, such as, Kenya and Kiambu County. Miles (2018) asserts that inter-ethnic couples have less MS because of their expectations disparity. Crespín-Boucaud (2019) adds that inter-ethnic marriages are on the rise, which indicated a need for the study to gain more information of the influence of ethnicity on intercultural couples in Kiambu County.

Kiambu County is strategically located and highly developed, which attracts diversity and gives it a cosmopolitan setting. For instance, Kiambu County is well endowed with all types of businesses and mega stores, financial institutions, health facilities, good roads and rail network, 98% electricity connection, 98% mobile network coverage and education institutions (County Government of Kiambu (CGK), 2018). This development and its proximity to Kenya's capital city, Nairobi, makes Kiambu County a conducive place to live for people from different parts of Kenya and beyond. This population was found suitable to yield useful information for this study. Kibuthu (2016) observes that marriages across cultures are on the rise, but they have not been fully accepted by diverse ethnic groups. They are characterized by lack of approval by parents and relatives, cultural expectations, adjusting to spouse's culture, managing in-laws, communication and intimacy challenges, which could lower MS. MS has been shown to be significantly low in Kiambu County compared to other

national rates (KNBS, 2014). For instance, Ruiru Sub-County, which is within Kiambu County, shows low level of MS that leads to an alarming rate of couples' separations soon after marriage (Kamatu & M'arimi, 2017). Therefore, there was a need to conduct this study to attain a comprehensive understanding of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. Rationale for selecting Kiambu County Urban centers as the location of the study was that 60% of Kiambu County is urban while 40% is rural (NCPD, 2013). Therefore, most of the intercultural marriages were more likely to be found in urban centers, which would yield desired data for the success of the study.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages is significant to provide researchers with expanded information for further research on related field. Further, developed knowledge on influence of language and ethnicity on MS would contribute immensely to the scientific world as literature which was considered substantive for the improvement of couples, families and entire society's well-being. In addition, contribution of Bowen Family System Theory and Cognitive Behavioral Theory in this study was significant for future application with diverse cultures in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Professionals in the area of mental health, specifically counselling psychologists and marriage and family therapists would gain from the study by broadening their existing literature on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages, which was regarded essential for improved service delivery. For instance, professionals would be able to expand information vital in developing specific services in

communication and counseling appropriate to couples from diverse backgrounds, such as, the ones with low education, the non-academic and non-reading couples in intercultural marriages.

Families would gain from the research with increased comprehension of the influence of language and ethnicity on couples' MS, which would improve their wellbeing. Increased understanding of these influences on families are essential for improved health management through seeking intervention that enhances family's relationships. Couples would benefit from the findings of the study through sensitization on the complexity of the influence of language and ethnicity on their marital happiness. This would be essential for effective marital management to realize their desired marital contentment.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in monogamous intercultural marriages in Kiambu County excluded all other marriages, such as, polygamous and LGBTQ+, that could be experiencing different challenges. The study was located in Kiambu County, which has diversity from Kenya and beyond, giving it a cosmopolitan setting. This made it an ideal location for the study to yield desired data. Kiambu County has 9 urban centers namely, Gatundu, Githunguri, Juja, Limuru, Kiambu, Karuri, Thika, Ruiru and Kikuyu (CGK, 2018). Therefore, participants of the study were purposively selected from Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers. According to Masua (2016), urban centers refer to major towns with major activities, such as, trade, commerce and industry among many others. The selection of these urban centers was necessary because most intercultural couples were likely to be found there. There was scarce information of a similar study conducted at Kikuyu and Limuru. Further, rural set-ups in Kiambu County could have been facing different challenges that might have influenced results of the findings.

Participants of the study were individuals who were or had been married for a duration of between 5 to 22 years and age range of 25 to 51 years old. This population was essential in this study because they had adequate experiences in marital life to provide the desired information. The study was guided by Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), to conceptualize the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples from differing cultural backgrounds.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Limitations refer to the constraints of the study based on the methodology and design (Miles & Scott, 2017). For instance, in this study limitation was recognized of identification of participants in intercultural marriages. Further, respondents provided subjective perceptions about personal MS, whereby the researcher was limited to participants' subjective responses. The study was limited to time constraint as the research involved both quantitative and qualitative data, which required more time. This led to a constraint of collecting needed data and in time. This study was limited to participants age range of 25 to 51 years old and marital age of 5 to 22 years. The participants were in different stages of life and marital ages and could be facing divergent constraints in their marriages. The study involved monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples, who could have had cultural practices that hindered them from disclosing their marital issues with strangers, which was a limit to the study.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations refer to the researcher's imposed restrictions to the study which improves focus on research problems (Terrell, 2016). For instance, this study was delimited to purposive, quota and snowball sampling techniques and excluded all other sampling techniques. Snowball sampling technique was found essential to overcome limitation of identification of participants in intercultural marriages. In snowball sampling one identified

voluntary participant in intercultural marriage led the researcher to another known participant until the sample size of 99 participants was realized. The study was delimited to mixed methods research design seeking both qualitative and quantitative data. The mixed methods research design was significant for triangulation of data to confirm or disconfirm results and beneficial to overcome the limitation of participants' subjective responses.

This study delimited itself to a period of one month for data collection. Four research assistants were included in the study which enhanced data collection task and in time. The study was delimited to participants marital age between 5 to 22 years and age range of 25 to 51 years old, and excluded all other ages in intercultural marriages. The inclusion was beneficial to the study as participants had wide range of experiences in marital life to yield desired data for the success of the study. There was inclusion in the study of ethical concerns of informed consent, whereby participants were briefed on enhanced confidentiality to protect their information and identity. This was essential to mitigate against limitation of couples' divergent cultural practices pertaining to disclosure of personal information.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter one included background of the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. This revealed that globally, couples' MS is indicated as being influenced by diverse factors including language and ethnicity. Then, problem statement was included which showed that intercultural marriages are on the rise and are exposed to unique challenges that influence couples' marital satisfaction. Objectives of the study and research questions were covered. Justification of the study was included indicating that there was a need for this study aimed at gaining comprehensive understating of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among monogamous, heterosexual couples in intercultural marriages. Significance of the study was indicated which revealed the importance of expansion of the information on the influence of

language and ethnicity on MS as it is vital for effective marital management that improves couples' MS. Finally, chapter summary was included. The next chapter presents literature review, theoretical framework and conceptual framework of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter contains a review of literature on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. Further, theoretical framework that guides the study is included. Conceptual framework is included and identified gaps from diverse studies that have been carried out related to the topic of study are revealed. Chapter two concludes with summary of the chapter.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) observe that literature review should be rigorous and comprehensive to establish current state of knowledge on the topic of study. Therefore, literature review in this study is substantial, relevant and covers what other researchers have studied to fully comprehend the topic under study. Further, the literature demonstrates the existence of gaps in previous studies, which this study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages sought to fill. Literature is organized according to the objectives of the study and every variable is exhaustively studied.

#### ***Concept of Marriage***

This study explored the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. Therefore, it was important to fully comprehend the term marriage. According to Tegegne et al. (2015), marital institution is broadly regarded as universal and is found in different communities. Kasapoglu and Yabanigul (2018) indicate that marital life is regarded as a basic human relationship through which partners may satisfy their biological, psychological and social needs. Ansa-Hughes et al. (2015) indicate that matrimony is an overtly acknowledged bond between partners, which establishes rights and responsibilities between a couple. Segami and Eeden (2020) add that common theme in all

definitions of marriage, is the solemnization of an intimate relationship, which defines roles, legal commitment and a permanent bond between partners.

In the global front, long term marital relationship is considered a significant indicator of a successful marriage and well-being of the couples (Bundgaard-Nielsen & O'Shannessy, 2019; Odhiambo et al., 2021). Yazdanpanah et al. (2015) state that marriage is an essential, shared and legal institution that provides support to stable marital relations. The unions involve two individuals each with a distinct background and a combination of different experiences (Tavakol et al., 2017). For instance, dissimilar cultural practices may conflict and influence couples' marital satisfaction.

Being in a satisfying intimate marriage provides specific benefits, such as, better health (Vecker, 2012) and greater life longevity (Parker, 2019). Gottman and Gottman (2017) indicate that people in happy, stable committed marriages are healthier physically, psychologically and, live longer. Kepler (2015); Parker (2019) reveal that there are benefits realized from matrimonial relationships, such as, longevity of life and better mental health. Ngazimbi et al. (2017) indicate that substantial benefits accrued from marriages include longer life, fewer mental and behavioral health problems, intimacy, support, contentment in shared activities and greater level of sexual satisfaction. Omolayo et al. (2013) add that marriage is significant in human relationships and offers the main structure to form a family and rearing the upcoming generation.

Robles (2015) analysis on marriages concludes that being in a happy marriage is related to better psychological and physical health. Kasapoglu and Yabanigul (2018) note that emotional and physical benefits are demonstrated in married people who are happier, healthier and better off financially than the unmarried however, the happiness is determined by the success and health of personal marriage. Consequently, marital relationships are significant and primary source of support for most couples and acts as protective factor

against physiological and psychological afflictions. Consequently, marital institution is substantial in individual, couple and family's health and lives and should be comprehensively understood to realize its benefits, which this study intended to achieve.

Brown and Wright (2017) argue that, there is negative health outcome associated with marital turbulences challenging the view that marriages provide psychological and collective benefits. Li and Fung (2011) add that there are many stable but unsatisfactory marriages. Treas et al. (2015) indicate that the belief that married people are happier has waned as evidenced by cohabitations and other forms of marital relationships. Harris et al. (2019) add that the increase in cohabitation intensifies interrogations whether marriages have valuable effects. Segami and Eeden (2020) argue that marriages do not increase happiness and marital satisfaction, but those who were satisfied with their lives in general may achieve great benefits. Kamau et al. (2021) indicate that marital institution is at crossroads from waning contentment between couples emanating from diverse factors. This contradicts the findings that marriage has benefits of physical, emotional and psychological support. Therefore, there is a need for continuous research to comprehensively understand the elements that influence MS, which this study aimed to address.

Segami and Eeden (2020) indicate that there are different types of marriages, such as, monogamy, polygamy that involves polygyny or polyandry, intercultural. Veldhuis (2022) LGBTQ+ among many others. Agyemang et al. (2020) observes that monogamy involves a marriage between one man and one woman. Polygamy refers to marriages involving more than one partner at a time. For instance, polyandry is the marriage where a woman is married to more than one man, however, this is illegal in Kenya (Kenya Law, 2023). Polygyny involves a man who is married to more than one wife. Gates (2015) states that there has been a substantial increase in legal recognition of LGBT marriages in USA. However, LGBT forms of marriages remain illegal in Kenya (Kenya law, 2023). This study is focused on

monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural marriage that involves one man and one woman who are legally married and from divergent cultural backgrounds.

### ***Intercultural marriages***

Culture is defined as a construction with informally organized and related features involving meanings and practices and offers information and knowledge to adeptly guide an individual in life (Campos & Kim, 2017). This definition of culture indicates reflections of internal processes within an individual, that is, psychological processes and can affect behavior. For instance, the unmet expectation of emotionally supportive spouse's behavior eventually influences marital satisfaction causing unhappiness and conflicts, which may pose a threat to marital satisfaction.

Diverse cultures consider marriage as a central relationship in the family (Stinson et al., 2017). Culture has patterns of ideas and interaction that reflect people's thoughts, feelings and behavior (Markus & Conner, 2014; Markus & Kitayama, 2010). Culture indicates specific collective group's values, expectations, meanings and patterns of behavior as normal and acceptable while others are regarded as not normal (Wood, 2015). Family relationships are carriers of such culture-specific practices (Kim & Lawrie, 2017). Yoruk (2016) indicates that cultural dissimilarities influence predictors of marital satisfaction. Consequently, cultural concerns inevitably develop in marriages of couples from divergent cultures because each partner embraces separate understanding of the world and the way it works, which may bring misunderstandings that influence marital satisfaction.

The importance of marriage to a couple is its success and satisfaction of marital relationship (Tavakol et al., 2017). However, attaining satisfaction in marriage may pose a challenge to couples (Parker, 2019). Silva et al. (2012) observe that intercultural couples are at high risk of encountering adjustment challenges in their marriages. According to Kibuthu (2016), couples experience challenges of adaptation to new cultural practices, managing in-

laws and intimacy. Kalai (2016) adds that intercultural couples are more vulnerable to encounter challenges because they enter into marriage with great cultural differences and higher potential for misunderstandings, which may influence their marital satisfaction. This becomes more likely with different languages, communication styles, familial dynamics and divergent views on relationships (Bustamante et al., 2011).

It is important to comprehend global upward trajectory of inter-cultural marriages, which is substantial in this study on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. Livingston and Brown (2017) observe that in 1967 when laws on intercultural marriages were overturned in United States of America 3% of all newly-weds were either in inter-racial or inter-ethnic marriages. Miles (2018) states that interethnic and to be more exact interracial marriages were illegal in some states in USA until the Loving versus Virginia case in 1967 when laws against mixed marriages were determined unconstitutional. Since then intercultural marriages have taken an upward trend, for instance, in 1980 interethnic marriages were 6.7%, in 2008 were 14.6% and in 2015 were 17% of all new marriages in USA (Livingston & Brown, 2017). Cohn and Caumont (2016) indicate that currently 14% of the USA has experienced substantial escalation in ethnic diversity and the forecast is that by the year 2055 there will not be a single ethnic majority. This portrays an ascending inclination in interethnic marriages with divergent beliefs, values and practices. Miles (2018) observes that marriages prior to Loving versus Virginia case were perceived to be more stable with less conflicts resulting in marital success. Research conducted after legalization of intercultural marriages revealed couples experienced lower relationship quality and high rates of marital failure. Partners had fewer shared values and weak social support stemming from couples divergent conflicting cultures (Miles, 2018). The study was carried out in USA which indicated a need to conduct similar research in Kenya to understand ethnic influence on MS.

Canada's intercultural marriages represent 2.6% of all married couples in 1991, 3.1% in 2001 and about 4% between 2001-2006 (Skowronski et al., 2014). Moses and Woesthoff (2019) add that Canada's interethnic marriages in 2001 was 3.1% and 3.9% in 2006, while 2016 census shows 4.6% of all marriages. These figures' sight demonstrates an increasing tendency of interethnic marriages in Canada.

Dulani et al. (2018) indicate that there is lack of organized data across Africa on rates of inter-marriages. However, estimation from a large sample of 23 African countries portray that the median country-level of inter-marriage is 21%. These inter-marriages across Africa have dissimilar cultural practices and are more prevalent with later born partners than older generation. Malawi ranges between 31 to 36%, between year 2000 and 2015. Bandyopadhyay and Green (2018) reveal that interethnic marriages across Africa's average rate is 22.3%. According to Crespín-Boucaud (2019), random shares of inter-marriages that involve diverse contexts is 80% across 15 Sub-Saharan Africa countries. Conversely, observed inter-ethnic marriages across the 15 Sub-Saharan Africa countries shows 20.4% of marriages. Kibuthu (2016) indicates that East, Central and Southern Africa reveal a low degree of interethnic and interracial marriages.

Interracial marriages of non-Kenyans represent 4.2% men and 1.2% women with differing beliefs, values and cultural practices inclined to influence marital satisfaction. Dulani et al. (2018) add that 13% of marriages in Kenya are inter-marriages. In view of differing data sight, which portray widespread and escalation of interethnic and interracial marriages that bear unique challenges, created a need to comprehensively understand them. This would provide expanded knowledge of their influence on marital satisfaction among couples in Kiambu County, which this study sought to attain. Further, Dulani et al. indicate the need of standard approaches to conceptualize ethnicity and related concepts, for instance, marital satisfaction in Africa. This is essential in realization of a better reflection of the

prevailing realities across many parts of Africa, including Kenya and Kiambu County, which this research sought to achieve.

Most of the studies on marriage and marital satisfaction have been carried out in developed countries. Therefore, there is scarcity of data on intercultural marriages in Africa and Kenya including Kiambu County. Considering the important position of marriage and marital satisfaction in people's lives and the inherent benefits, there was a need to conduct this study to establish the factors that influence heterosexual, intercultural couples' marital satisfaction in Kiambu County. Further, the diverse views contrast with the observation that marriage fosters happiness, showed a need for continued research to fully understand factors that influence couples' marital satisfaction. It was in view of these marital challenges that formed the basis to examine the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among heterosexual, intercultural couples. This was necessary to realize comprehensive understanding of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **Marital Satisfaction among Couples in Intercultural Marriages**

Objective number one of this study was to explore the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Therefore, it was paramount to fully understand the term marital satisfaction. Tavakol et al. (2017) define the concept as a feeling of happiness, satisfaction and joy experienced by a couple in view of all aspects of their marriage. Sharaievska et al. (2013) indicate that marital satisfaction is an individual's subjective evaluation of the overall nature of matrimony that indicates the degree to which marital expectations are demonstrated in a personal marriage. Zaheri et al. (2016) state that marital contentment may also be defined as a global evaluation of the state of a personal marriage that reflects marital functioning and happiness. According to Tegegne et al. (2015), marital satisfaction is used to assess success, stability of marriage, individual marital

fulfilment and well-being. This infers that satisfaction in marriage is a subjective evaluation, which is achieved when each spouse's needs are met in a marital relationship. For instance, need to experience intimacy, companionship and playing assigned societal roles (Mutai, 2019). Heshmati et al. (2016) indicate that one of the most significant objective of marriage is the yearning to attain marital satisfaction (MS). This indicates significance of marital satisfaction for marital well-being.

MS is the most significant concern in couples' marital life and has the highest effect on the strength of a marriage (Heshmati et al., 2016). Majhi and Panda (2015) indicate that MS is a vital component of perceived happiness. The notion indicates a state in which, both husband and wife are satisfied and pleased with each other and their marriage. Yoruk (2016) asserts that MS is a significant example of a healthy marriage and a vital concept in predicting marital success. Therefore, MS acts as a major foundation of social backing for couples and also guards against both psychological and physiological afflictions (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015). Couples who are fulfilled with each other and their marriage are able to reduce or even overcome conflicts in their marriage (Rika, 2012). This concept involves thoughts, feelings and behaviors related to personal relationship with a partner (Dobrowolska et al., 2020). Renanita and Setiawan (2018) indicate that one of the indicators of a successful marriage involves marital satisfaction of both husband and wife. According to Segami and Eeden (2020), satisfaction is a complex process, which is influenced by many factors for instance, education, culture, socio-economic status, marital commitment, communication, gender, length of marriage, presence of children, sexual relations and the division of labor.

Spence (2011) examined factors that pose a challenge to marital satisfaction in Canada at Ottawa Seventh-day. Findings in the study revealed that among 12 participating couples, only one indicated MS. The study identified miscommunication challenge caused by

sending or interpreting messages based on specific cultural codes. This study was conducted in Canada which formed the basis for a similar study in Kenya.

Namulanda (2013) states that intercultural marriage gets painful when everyone who is important in the family or partner's family rejects your partner. The study located in Nairobi County, Kenya, sought to find out marriage relationship in terms of the racial origin of participants, parental acceptance of matrimony and other factors that influence MS. Findings revealed that marriages from different ethnic communities or race do not live up to their expectations, and in most cases, end up in separations or divorces unlike couples from the same cultural backgrounds who live up to their expectations due to shared cultural values and beliefs (Namulanda, 2013). This study was carried out in Nairobi County, Kenya, which formed the basis to conduct a similar study in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Dillon and Beechler (2010) indicate that the conditions of MS may differ greatly based on one's larger cultural background. Therefore, there was a need to conduct this study to attain a better understanding of the influence of language and ethnicity on monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples' marital contentment.

Asoodeh et al. (2010) carried out a study in Iran to identify factors of successful marriages. Marriage ages were between 15 and 31 years. Couples ages were between 22 and 56 years old. Findings indicated that successful couples trust, consult each other, are honest, believe in God, make decisions together, are committed to each other and have friendly relationship. This study was carried out in Iran which is outside Kenya showing a need to carry out a similar study on couples' MS in Kenya. This was essential to achieve a better understanding in Kenyan context, which formed the basis for this study.

According to Karney and Bradbury (2021), between 60% and 85% of spouses' experience minimal declines in their MS between 2.5 to 4 years. MS is commonly expected to follow a U-shape pattern over the marital life with a decline after the birth of the first

child and an increase when the last child leaves the house. However, there is a differing view indicating that marital satisfaction follows a linear course with steep decline in the earliest and the latest years of marriage. Lavner and Bradbury (2010) contend that not all couples follow the same pattern of marital contentment, indicating a need for continuous research on couples' MS to attain deeper understanding, which this study intended to fulfil.

Haris and Kumar (2018) indicate that marital satisfaction is a subjective appraisal of an individual's experience in marriage. Therefore, the subjectivity of MS makes it difficult to identify a set of characteristics required of a spouse for the marriage to be considered satisfactory. Sharaievska et al. (2013) observe that researchers on marital satisfaction experience several challenges, such as, the fluidity and subjective nature of the concept of MS. For instance, contemporary marriages view MS as an intimate relationship involving close friendship, intimacy, emotional expressions and significant value dimensions. While traditional marriages are organized and practiced according to the customs of a specific cultural group, which may conflict and influence marital satisfaction.

In Kenya, Wamue and Njoroge (2011) conducted a study on cultural practices with regards to gender roles that have influence on couples' MS in Kiambu County. In 70% of homes surveyed, male adults indicated marital stress. Husbands' needs were neglected and were denied basic things, such as, food, shelter and sex. In such situations levels of MS is low, which called for intervention to come up with remedy to the status of marriages in Kiambu County. This study was based in Kiambu County to understand the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages and identify effective mitigating measures.

According to Rebello et al., (2014), marital satisfaction of each spouse may depend on how well specific marriage responds to personal expectations. Helms et al., (2014) state that while couples may gain from one another's contrasting cultural practices, they also face

unique challenges, such as, differing cultural practices. One partner may bring into marriage concepts and practices which are unfamiliar and incomprehensible to the other partner with influence on marital satisfaction. Factors, such as, communication may vary among intercultural couples, for instance, one partner may hold belief about open expression while the other partner may expect open communication, which may conflict and influence marital satisfaction. Couples in these marriages face unique constraints about how to conduct marital responsibilities (Nelson, 2015). This infers that higher rates of intercultural couples are vulnerable to intrinsic unique challenges from unfulfilled marital expectations that may influence marital satisfaction. This is an indicator that more research is crucial to realize comprehensive understanding of influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages, which this study sought to achieve.

### ***Marital expectations***

Marital satisfaction can be identified as the degree of fulfilment of spouses' expectations towards marriage (Yoruk 2016). Marital contentment is based on the expectations that one has and how they match with experiences (Nympha et al., 2015). Marital satisfaction is attained when couple's marital bond is consistent with their initial expectations (Sayehmiri et al., 2020). According to Helms et al. (2014), misunderstandings may occur from differing expectations. Couples may have diverse expectations in their marriage for instance, marital support and intimacy that may have influence on marriage when they are not actualized. This indicates that couples may experience marriages differently and there is a need to do further research on marital satisfaction to have a better understanding of diverse influences, for instance, language and ethnicity on marital contentment which this research sought to achieve.

Zaheri et al. (2016) examined the factors that influence marital satisfaction in perspective of Iranian women and men. Findings showed that there are diverse factors that influence marital satisfaction, such as, mental health, spiritual, religious, communication and interaction skills, sexual and interpersonal factors. Conclusion indicated that studies on some factors influencing marital satisfaction, such as, communication and intimacy is limited, that indicates a need to carry out more research, which this study sought to fulfil.

Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) indicate that a common understanding is that spousal support affects marital relationship. Supportive spousal's actions are regarded important and averts mental and emotional events that might trigger conflicts in marital relationships and influence marital happiness. Kapure (2015) asserts that support is a component of satisfaction within a marital life. The extent of shared support specifically by spouse assists to process marital difficulties and struggles and results in improved health outcomes. Spousal support indicates an intimate marital environment and atmosphere, which produces feelings of care in a healthy and happy marital relationship. For instance, husband's support in parenting or domestic activities, which may culturally be regarded as wife's domain, in some cultures, may communicate feelings of care. However, when marital expectation of marital support is not met, may cause frustrations with influence on couples' marital satisfaction.

Aseka et al. (2021) examined relationship between spousal support and marital satisfaction among Christian couples. Findings showed a statistically significant strong positive correlation between marital satisfaction and spousal support. This indicates that spousal support is significant in couples MS.

Davoodvandi et al. (2018) indicate that couples' intimacy is a significant component in marital satisfaction. The concept refers to means of exchange and mutual satisfaction of emotional and psychological needs in an acceptable and anticipatory approach. Intimate relationships between couples strengthens emotional relationship and subsequently, marital

satisfaction. In marital intimacy, couples experience affection, self-confidence and couples have shared activities (Rika, 2012). Ubando (2016) indicates that relationship contentment is entrenched in intimacy. Nympha et al. (2015) point out that intimacy in marital relationship comprises feelings of closeness and connectedness towards each other. Intimacy eliminates psychological restrictions between couples and brings out the desire to share one's world, which is essential in marital satisfaction. Hull et al. (2010) indicate that changes in intimacy is a substantial cause for concern because deterioration in lifelong marriage has corresponding consequences of disrupted families. Yoo (2013) indicates subjectivity of intimacy, which is an individual's experience of closeness and connectedness to a partner. Couples from dissimilar cultures may experience constraint because of divergent expectations concerning intimacy (Tien, 2013).

Mbunga (2010) examined marital satisfaction with 40 couples in Kenya, to explore their levels of marital satisfaction. Findings showed lack of time spent together, the manner problems are solved in the family and sexual intimacy influence marital satisfaction. The research was done on couples who attended church, which showed a need to replicate the study however, with diverse populations in Kenya. Therefore, this study was located in Kiambu County at Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers.

Yoruk (2016) argues that none of married couples share entire similar cultural backgrounds, each partner desires trust, affection, respect and support, which point towards couples' struggles regarding MS. Marital satisfaction and its associates have predominantly been investigated in Western world. Therefore, this study sought to carry out a study to explore influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kenya, Kiambu County.

### ***Marital adjustment***

Mutai (2019) indicates that a good marital relationship may be attained through a well-adjusted process between spouses that creates intimacy and promotes marital satisfaction. Couples enter into marriage with different expectations, which may be difficult to fulfil and may require adjustment, otherwise may influence their MS. Partners may require to make psychological adjustments and become accustomed to each other and the new term of being a spouse. Marriage is a complex relationship that may need physical adjusting to be together as a couple and at the same time learn to be an individual.

There are different behaviors and practices in marriages, which may pose challenges to couples without proper adjustments, for instance, practices in traditional marriages and contemporary or egalitarian marriages (Semenya, 2014). Traditional marriages are practiced according to customs of a specific cultural group. Conversely, contemporary or egalitarian marriages are unions in which emotional relationship is the foundation of the bond and individual's satisfaction is more prioritized. Kariuki (2018) indicates that contemporary matrimonies are more prevalent within the educated and urban elites. Therefore, in situations where one partner is inclined to traditional marriage while the other partner is inclined to contemporary marriage, then there may be a challenge in the marital relationship with influence on marital contentment.

Lata (2017) indicate that marital adjustment is essential for couples' marital relationship. Marital adjustment refers to adaptive couples' behaviors through which partners meet their needs. Spouses learn how to co-operate with each other in different areas over time and adjust within prevailing circumstances. A successful union in marriage is viewed as experiencing adjustment, interaction, sharing and partners accepting associated responsibilities anticipated of them (Campos & Kim, 2017). Family adjustment is another area that may influence couples' marital contentment. Married couples are two individuals

from divergent cultural practices with different values, expectations and languages. It is essential for relationships with in-laws to be negotiated, agreed upon and relating boundaries be determined. This adjustment is essential and assists to accommodate both members of extended families, which is vital for a harmonious relationship that promotes couples' marital satisfaction.

Genc and Baptist (2018) carried out a study to explore the nature of conflicts between parents-in-law and couples among Muslims in Turkey. Findings indicated that conflicts with parents-in-law seemed gendered. They stemmed from unmet marital expectations and family roles. Daughters-in-law tendered to remain silent to overcome conflicts. Conversely, sons-in-law took the blame to circumvent conflicts. In-laws of opposite sex appeared to have a more contemptuous relationships compared to in-laws of the same gender. This shows a necessity for appropriate decisions and adjustment for couples to deal with extended members of their newly formed families to attain their yearnings of marital happiness. Genc and Baptist study was carried out outside Kenya among Muslims in Turkey, which showed a need to carry out a similar study in Kenya at Kiambu County, which this study sought to attain.

Sharaievska et al. (2013) indicate that each spouse brings into marriage issues from family of origin including relationships, sociocultural factors, such as, age at marriage, education, income, occupation and gender. According to Reezeck et al. (2010), friends, language and ethnicity may influence couples' marital contentment. Therefore, it may be necessary for couples from diverse cultural backgrounds to make continuous adjustments in their marital relationships and accommodate their unique differences to realize marital satisfaction. Conversely, there is a need for continuous research on influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages to have a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence couples' MS, which this study sought to achieve.

## **Language and MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages**

The second objective of this study was to establish influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Previous published literature on the same area of study was significant in this study to provide relevant information on what had already been established and existing gaps.

The four variables of interest in language and marital satisfaction included miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and affirmation language. Miscommunication may occur between intercultural couples through divergent verbal and non-verbal language usage that may conflict and influence MS (Sharaievska et al., 2013). Intimacy is essential in couples' marital relationship and develops through their interaction using familiar language (Okonkwo et al., 2019). Sue (2013) points out that partners from dissimilar backgrounds may have divergent ways of expressing emotions, which may influence MS. Uwom-Ajaegbu et al. (2015) observe the significance of affirmation language in a marital relationship. Misunderstanding may occur through injecting personal meaning into a message passed across from a spouse as judgmental. Thus, miscommunication may occur due to cultural differences, divergent interests and inadequate time among many others, which may cause negative emotions with influence on MS.

According to Salija et al. (2018), language is substantial in a marital relationship as a tool of communication and expression. Buarqoub (2019) observes that language is the most significant shared tool of communication. It supports people to build bridges of relationships, such as, couple's relationship. At the same time, language may act as a destroyer of bridges of relationships, as it can separate people, including couples, from each other through miscommunication. Language is therefore, substantial in effective communication within an intimate relationship (Renalds, 2011).

### ***Miscommunication***

The normal attribute of communication between couples from the same cultural group may be a constraint among intercultural couples. For instance, a slight difference in tone and word usage may be a challenge to couples causing miscommunication with influence on marital satisfaction (Sharaievska et al., 2013).

Buarqoub (2019) conducted a qualitative study with an aim to explore the factors that cause language barriers, their categories, their influence on effective communication and methods to make people cognizant of the importance of overcoming them. The study established that the accent emanating from words or phrases of people belonging to diverse places or regions may differ in meanings and interpretations, even if their language is the same, which may lead to miscommunication and conflict that influence couples' MS.

Sayer (2013) indicates that language comprehension is not a straight forward process, there is a close relationship between language comprehension and misunderstandings. In this study concerning the influence of language on couples' MS, partners not only communicate in different languages, but they also communicate in different cultural contexts to express their emotions. This may involve symbols, gestures, dialects and group's shared meanings and everything they apply to exchange meanings with each other in verbal and non-verbal language (Tien, 2013). Uwom-Ajaegbu et al. (2015) states that communication can either use verbal language through speech or non-verbal through facial expressions, body language or gestures, which may carry different meanings between couples and cause misinterpretation and miscommunication with influence on marital contentment. Communication can determine the realization or disappointment of a marriage because it is the creation, exchange and interpretation of meaningful messages using language as a means of communication. Meaningful conversation involves exchanging information effectively between spouses, for instance, indicating where one is, intellectually, emotionally and physically. Thus, effective

language usage connects couples through shared thoughts, feelings, experiences, dreams and challenges and partners would know where one is physically, emotionally and intellectually (Uwom-Ajaegbu et al. 2015), which is essential for MS.

According to Tien (2013), intercultural unions are normally more difficult and challenging for a couple because of their dissimilar languages. DeVito (2013) indicates that interaction between two cultures may follow different rules of communication, which results in misunderstandings, unintentional insult, inaccurate judgments and a multitude of other miscommunications. Communication between couples from dissimilar cultures may miss about 50% of information. Therefore, a couple from divergent cultural backgrounds in an intimate relationship may experience struggles in their daily marital life. Beins and McCarthy (2012) indicate that language involves more than different words of communication, as culture may influence the way people think or express their ideas. Therefore, when partners think differently and expresses their wishes and emotions differently, because of language dissimilarities, then, understanding each other gets complicated and poses a challenge to couple's marital satisfaction.

According to Segami and Eeden (2020), symbols in conversing could be conceptualized as anything that could be indicated in form of language and may differ from culture to culture. Symbols are frequently used as a form of communication, interpretation of meanings, and is promoted through collective interactions. Similarly, symbols depict meanings of phenomena that are represented and based on culture. They often serve as a source of guidance among people and may conflict among couples from different cultures influencing their marital satisfaction. Couples' communication using familiar verbal or non-verbal language to express and converse emotions and intimacy is significant and boosts marital satisfaction while ineffective couples' conversations causes frustrations and may lead to conflicts which hinder happiness, joy and marital satisfaction (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015).

Renalds (2011) carried out a qualitative study to examine the phenomenon of intercultural marriages and features that influence communication and conflict within marriages. Results established the significance of effective communication for marital satisfaction in couples' relationships. However, further findings indicated that although intercultural marriages can have particular constraints to overcome, they also can experience benefits than other marriages, for instance, expanding learning from different cultures. This study was carried out with a population dissimilar from African couples, indicating a need to do more research in Africa, Kenya and Kiambu County, which was the location of this study.

According to Esere et al. (2014), discussions using language as a tool of communication between spouses promotes harmonious marital relationship. Tili and Barker (2015) add that partners in a marital relationship from dissimilar cultural backgrounds may experience miscommunication challenges from ineffective language usage that can influence marital satisfaction. For instance, a couple may not be conversant with partner's language of communication. So, in the process of engaging each other on a certain issue may send a message which does not carry the intended message, causing miscommunication with influence on marital contentment.

Tomuletiu et al. (2014) examined the importance of communication in the management of relationships, which uses language as a channel of communication. Findings indicated that communication level established in a relationship influences good marital relationship. However, the percentage of couples' participants whose level of communication was positive was very low at 12.5% of all couples who participated. While the percentage of couples with negative communication level was very high at 50%. It takes language to communicate effectively, which showed a need to thoroughly understand the influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction.

## ***Intimacy***

Intimacy consists of different meanings based on age, gender, education and culture. Intimacy may be defined as an individual romantic or emotional communication that demands knowledge and understanding of a partner to express thoughts and feelings (Kardan-Souraki et al., 2016). Zakhirehdari et al. (2019) state that the depth of intimacy that people create in their relationships, for instance couples, depends to a great extent on their ability to communicate accurately, effectively and responsibly with their thoughts, feelings, needs and desires. Adequate verbal communication, such as, eye contact can bring about a great intimacy in couples' marital relationship to enhance MS.

Okonkwo et al. (2019) indicate that intimacy develops through couples' interaction and communication using verbal and non-verbal language. Where partners do not understand each other or what each of them believes in due to verbal and non-verbal language challenges, then their relationship may be faced with serious constraints with influence on MS. According to Maigallo (2019), intimacy refers to feelings of closeness and connectedness in couples' marital relationship. Tavakol et al. (2017) indicate that relationships between spouses are formed on the basis of four basic types of relationships, emotional relationship, cognitive or intellectual relationship, economic relationship and sexual relationship. Therefore, couples who use familiar languages are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs with each other and can accept and comprehend each other's emotional state to experience greater understanding that is essential for intimacy in marital satisfaction.

Language contributes to developing a meaningful relationship. It increases chances of engaging in daily activities as a couple which plays a major part to enhance couples' marital satisfaction (Yoruk, 2016). Tien (2013) indicates that eating meals away from home, as a couple may be a simple intimate activity to share. However, couples who speak dissimilar

languages, needs for daily enjoyment may require serious discussions, which may be a challenge with cultural differences and language deficiency and may influence marital satisfaction.

Couples who spend more time together create more opportunities for communication through language, which is essential for intimacy and affection. Couples who spend more leisure time together and have shared hobbies and engage in emotional communication experience heightened marital satisfaction. Stolarski et al. (2016) indicate that individual differences between spouses as regards to time spent together may influence marital satisfaction. Partners differing in their time perspectives may be much more susceptible to lack of mutual understanding and conflicts. Couples may have different perception of what quality time means. This may be an issue when one partner believes they are spending quality time together, while the other has a totally different meaning of spending quality time together. Lee (2021) observes that a probable premise could be that one partner's primary love language is spending quality time together, while the other partner does not comprehend the necessity for spending quality time, which may conflict and influence MS.

Johnson and Anderson (2013) carried out a study on relationship between marital confidence, time spent together and marital satisfaction. Findings showed that couples who spend more time together report higher levels of marital satisfaction than those who do not spend as much time together. This study was carried out outside Kenya and created a need to replicate the study in Kenya, Kiambu County, which this study pursued to fulfil.

Esere et al. (2014) examined the obstacles and solutions to effective communication in marriage in Nigeria. The findings of the study indicated that getting home late frequently, harsh tone of voice during conversation, bringing up memories of past events, which points to ineffective language usage being an obstacle to effective communication. The study found a need to sensitize the community on the importance of effective communication which would

create awareness. In relation to the findings the study recommended couples' need to discuss their differences amicably with effective language of communication to realize healthy marriages (Esere et al., 2014). Consequently, language is vital in couples' marital contentment, which created a need for a similar study to expand information on the influence of language on marital satisfaction in Kiambu County. Further, most studies on language and marital satisfaction have been conducted in Western cultures. There was a need to conduct more research on influence of language on marital satisfaction in Kenya including Kiambu County.

### ***Emotional expression***

According to Plooy and Beer (2018), affection in marital relationships can be defined and expressed differently through verbal and non-verbal languages. For instance, the concept of an intimate relationship differs from one partner concerned with financial, a partner raising a family, one founded on emotional support, another concerned with forming a deep relationship and the one sharing intimate time together. Appropriate language is substantial to communicate personal needs and feelings and experience suitable response, attention and affection, which is crucial in couples' marital contentment. Therefore, it is important to fully understand the influence of language on couples' MS, which this study sought to attain.

Chapman (2015) proposed basic reasons for couples' relationship constraints that emerge from speaking dissimilar love languages. Each person has a main love language, which is their desired way of being valued. According to Chapman, the five love languages include words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service and giving gifts.

Hughes and Camden (2020) study applied Chapman's proposed five love languages. The study findings support hypothesis that a partner's perception of using preferred love language would enhance love which indicates increased intimacy and marital satisfaction. Chapman's study was carried out in USA, and there was a need to carry out a similar study

on language and couple's marital satisfaction in Kenya, Kiambu County, which this study on the influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction sought to achieve.

Sue (2013) indicates that couples convey their emotions through facial expressions and tone of voice. Therefore, miscommunication in language may be caused by misunderstandings from misinterpreting and injecting unintended meaning into a message from spouse (Uwom-Ajaegbu et al., 2015). According to Yedirir and Hamarta (2015), emotional expression is part of language of communication this shows that emotion is a great communicator. Sue (2013) notes about emotions that "it swirls within our bodies and flows out, whether we want it or not and signals to others. It spurs our own behavior and conveys our deepest needs to others as well as theirs to us" (p. 61).

### ***Affirmation language***

According to Emanuel et al. (2016), spontaneity in affirmation is associated with heightened levels of happiness, hopefulness, subjective health including less anger and sadness. Cohen and Sherman (2014) observe that people have a basic need to maintain self-integrity and an over-all sense of personal adequacy. However, language of communication that is viewed by one partner as criticism due to cultural differences, may lead to integrity threat, arouse stress and self-protective defenses with influence on MS. Conversely, self-affirmation reduces stress, increases well-being and makes people more open to behavior change, which may enhance couples' MS. Sherman, (2013) indicates that self-affirmation is a successful attribute for a person's ability to broaden personal global perspective that reduces the effect of negative emotions that may emanate from partners' miscommunication. However, lack of awareness may make it challenging for couples to introspect on their dissimilar life experiences. This may complicate the process necessary for self-affirmation experiences, which is favorable for couples' MS.

Creswell et al. (2013) examined self-affirmation as buffer for stress. Participants were exposed to a difficult problem-solving situation. Results showed that self-affirmation improved problem-solving performance in under-performing chronically stressed individuals. Therefore, self-affirmation is crucial in couples' MS, however, miscommunication may occur with dissimilar couples' affirmation language. This study sought to investigate the influence of language on MS among couples in intercultural marriages and identify essential mitigation measures for language influence on couples' MS.

Fager (2018) argues that couples who speak the same language face challenges getting to understand what the other partner is expressing even after many years of marriage showing a divergent view that not only couples from dissimilar languages miscommunicate. Tien (2013) states that couples who speak the same language often have challenges hearing what each other is actually expressing. Hence, it gets more difficult for partners who speak different languages and processes information in dissimilar ways to comprehend what a partner is expressing. Lavner et al. (2016) assert that contented couples engage in effective communication while distressed couples display more negative communication behaviors, which is contrary to the view that language differences cause miscommunication.

Choudhuri et al. (2012) argue that, language and culture do not reflect each other as there are many English speaking individuals with a combination of different cultures although they are monolingual. Tien (2013) points out that not much literature has examined and provided adequate comprehension of the role of language differences in couples' relationships. In view of the differing arguments on influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction, point to a need for continuous research to attain a broader understanding and conclusive findings. Further, most of the studies on language and marital satisfaction have been done in other parts of the world which showed a need to carry out this study in Kenya, Kiambu County to attain factual details.

### **Ethnicity and MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages**

Objective three sought to establish the influence of dissimilar ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. To be able to fully comprehend the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction, it was essential to understand what other researchers have identified and the existing gaps. Beins and McCarthy (2012) indicate that ethnicity is a concept related to a person's identification with a particular group of people, often based on ancestry. Zaker and Boostanipoor (2016) state that behaviors regarded challenging have their backgrounds in cultural norms and practices. This means that practices and behaviors considered maladaptive in one culture are considered normal in another culture, which can be a significant source of constraint to couples from divergent cultural backgrounds with influence on marital satisfaction. According to Pereira (2020), ethnicity refers to a collective group that shares a common and distinctive culture and language. It also refers to a person's ethnic background, allegiance and association. Suyemoto et al. (2020) further observe that ethnicity affects behavior through learned experiences of cultural values and practices that have effect on individuals and groups' self-view, thinking, emotions and behavior.

Indicators of inter-ethnic marriages portray that people have become more diverse worldwide in terms of race, ethnicity and culture than it has ever been before (Bystydzienski, 2011). For instance, technology advancement and emergence of internet have rapidly developed and become essential parts of people's lives. This has generated a healthy ground for people to mingle and create relationships that lead to inter-marriages among divergent cultures (Tien, 2013). Kalai (2016) noted that such partners experience constraints from their differences in values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. This makes couples vulnerable to misunderstandings as they enter into marital relationships with greater differences that influence marital contentment. Ruiner et al. (2011) indicate that since twentieth century,

couples' lives have immensely changed as ethnic marriages have spiked cultural diversity across countries. Gaily (2017) observes that ethnic differences have taken an ascending trend in today's world.

### ***Ethnicity and In-laws***

Zaker and Boostanipoor (2016) indicate that couples have learned to identify with cultural values and biases of their families of origin, which may have a significant bearing on marital satisfaction. A partner who emerges from divergent ethnic group has unique challenges that may develop from adjusting to a partner from a differing background (Dewi et al., 2019). Couples' unique cultural upbringing and specific family of origin beliefs, values and practices may influence couples' relationship and interfere with their marital satisfaction (Bystydzienski, 2011).

Definition of family differs concerning who is involved and extent of boundaries around the relationships between family members. However, there are two main kinds of families across diverse cultures, that may have influence on couples' marital satisfaction, that is, nuclear family and extended family (Tien, 2013). Individualist culture views family as a nuclear entity, which includes father, mother and children while collectivist culture embraces extended family members such as, siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and in-laws from family of origin, as part of a couple's marital relationship. Individualist value aspect has the tendency to prioritize the needs of the individual over the group, while collectivist value dimension subordinates the individual's desires to those of the group (Cohen & Kitayama, 2019). Therefore, practices of couples from divergent cultures may conflict and influence marital satisfaction. Parker (2019) indicates that individualism and collectivism framework assist to conceptualize how culture influences thought patterns. Individualism values

independence and individuality whereas collectivism emphasizes responsibility to the group and maintaining harmony. Therefore, couple's behaviors from the two divergent structures are prone to conflict, which may influence marital contentment.

Renalds (2011) points to the diverse beliefs, practices and expectation differences in intercultural marriages, which each partner holds that may conflict and lower levels of marital bond, which is a risk to marital contentment. Semenya (2014) notes differing cultural practices as one partner may emerge from traditional marital practices that embraces extended family members. While the other partner is inclined to a conventional or egalitarian marital practices that supports nuclear family. The two divergent cultural practices are inclined to conflict and may influence marital satisfaction. Therefore, having an increase on interethnic marriages with divergent cultural practices shows that there is an increase of couples who are experiencing divergent expectations that may influence their marital satisfaction. This calls for interrogation of interethnic marriages to attain a better understanding of their influence on marital satisfaction, which formed the basis for this study.

According to Goldstein (2015), intrusion is a major complaint among couples in a marital relationship with regards to in-laws and it influence MS. Mother-in-law has been singled out as the most troublesome in-law for both husbands and wives. Further, problems between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law have been identified. The interference on couples' MS is mediated by perceived boundaries that husbands set for their mothers. However, research that examines couples' relationships with their in-laws is relatively scarce and conflicting which calls for continued research. This concern formed part of the current study. Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) state that lack of support is the root cause of many challenges in marriages, while supportive behavior averts the escalation of marital conflicts

Tavakol et al. (2017) add that positive support from family members is essential for stability of couples' marriage to realize marital satisfaction. Supportive family relationships take a central position in couples' marital satisfaction however, this depends on partners' cultures of origin.

Miles (2018) examined interethnic marriages in United States with marital challenges. Findings indicated factors that influence interethnic marriages, such as, conflicting values, relationship expectations and lack of social support among others. Recommendations of the study were that more studies be carried out on interethnic marriages to understand them better because of their unique challenges. Miles study was carried out in USA and there was a need to carry out a similar study in Kenya. The acquired information would provide a better understanding of the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in Kiambu County, which was essential for marital management.

Goldstein (2015) indicates two models, support and interference, that explain in-laws' influence on couples' MS. In support model outside actions help couples to build a satisfying marriage. For instance, positive remarks that the spouse's partner is good and loving. Emphasizing that the couples are able to work things out together, which exerts strength effect on couples. Conversely interference model exerts destructive effect on the couples' relationship. The influence is experienced through directly or indirectly criticizing a spouse's partner, persuasion that the partner is a bad person and dangerous. Suggestions that only coercion, threats or abandoning the partner can solve marital problems influences couples' MS.

Tien (2013) indicates that when partners from dissimilar cultures decide to commit to each other, they may expect their families to bless their marriage. However, this may differ with practices in the two cultures from nuclear and extended families. For instance, a partner from a culture that embraces extended family, acceptance by all the members of spouses'

family is very substantial. While a partner from a culture that embraces nuclear family does not expect family members to participate much in his or her marriage. This may create disharmony within the couples' marital relationship. Further, disharmony may outspread to the extended family members' relationships causing strained marital relationships that may influence couples' marital satisfaction.

Dewi et al. (2019) carried out a study aiming to define cultural practices that affect the lives of the Minangkabau ethnic women in West Sumatra, Indonesia, who marry men from divergent ethnic groups. Findings indicated that a man from a different ethnic background had to practice the woman's traditions as a requirement for marriage. The culture demands the woman to be the educator of children, bear household responsibility and be a role model to the community. This study was conducted outside Africa and there was a need to do a study on ethnic practices that influence couples' marital satisfaction in Kenya and Kiambu County. Further, the study was carried out with only female participants, which created a need to carry out a study on ethnic practices that involved both men and women to achieve unbiased conclusions which this study sought to attain.

According to Ngazimbi et al. (2017), there are significant variances between marriages in USA-born and Sub-Saharan African immigrants. USA marriages are based on love and individual satisfaction while the Sub-Saharan African marital unions despite being based on love encompass marriage negotiations and family commitments in form of dowry settlements. USA married couples depend on each other for emotional support, while Sub-Saharan African couples include extended family members for emotional support. However, USA marriages and Sub-Saharan African marriages, both anticipate marital happiness (Ngazimbi et al., 2017). Partners from the two dissimilar cultural practices are inclined to conflict with influence on their MS.

Mutai (2019) indicates that marriages in Kenya are largely between families more than individuals, therefore, there are different expectations on partners from both sides of the extended family members. Couples from the two cultures may experience challenges in their relationships, which may influence marital contentment. This indicated a need to determine the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu county.

Ng'ang'a' (2010) carried out a research on the changes of traditional practices among urban Agikuyu in Nairobi. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approach with 100 participants. The study showed divergent practices between Kenyan urban elite bearing contemporary marital practices. The practices differ from rural traditional marital practices and may conflict and have some influence on couples' marital satisfaction. For instance, bride gift practice among Agikuyu is a valued practice and has been in existence for many generations. However, this has changed as life is more individualist among urban elite families than collectivist in traditional rural families, which may be the situation in Kiambu County. The two divergent practices are inclined to conflict among partners from urban contemporary families with individualist preferences and rural traditional families with collectivist preferences, which may influence couples' marital satisfaction.

Kamatu and M'arimi (2017) study at Ruiru sub-county in Kiambu County, Kenya, used mixed methods research on married couples' parental influence on marital relationship. Findings indicated that parents strongly contribute to their children's low levels of MS through physical interference and their philosophies. Kamatu and M'arimi's study recommended further research on the same topic in the County of Kiambu to confirm their findings.

Skowronski et al. (2014) argue that diversity enriches marital relationships and benefits couples in intermarriages to gain different perspectives of other people. Diversity in marital relationships further encourages partners to discover more of their individual cultures and also develop a sense of belonging in partners' cultures. Therefore, diversity may be supportive to couples in interethnic marriages to attain marital satisfaction. This differs with the view that couples from differing ethnic groups experience challenges that influence marital satisfaction. According to Inmam et al. (2011), diversity enhances marital relationship as it assists couples gain different perceptions about other people and their backgrounds. Miles (2018) adds that available literature on interethnic couples is scarce and inconsistent signifying a need for further studies.

### ***Ethnicity and Child-rearing***

Marital support can be in many forms, such as, partner's physical and emotional support during demanding situations in child rearing. Marital support is one of the concepts that is highly correlated with psychological well-being and plays a pivotal role during stressful life events. Increased emotional support from a spouse predicts increased wellbeing of the other partner, which results in increased marital satisfaction (Yoruk, 2016). Zaker and Boostanipoor (2016) indicate that there are cultural differences in the patterns of marital and family relationships. A couple's ethnicity involves unique practices, such as, parenting and a feeling of ethnocentrism. Divergent beliefs of cultural common bonds, may cause distress in couples' marital relationship. For instance, in the African set-up a child belongs to the community, implying that the child may never go hungry because there are many care-givers around. However, currently educated people get employment in urban centers and get acculturated. According to DeVito (2013), acculturation indicates that the original culture becomes influenced by host culture and progressively values, beliefs and ways of behaving of the urban culture overtakes rural culture. This indicates that urban couples move away from

traditional practices and are inclined to individualistic practices (DeVito, 2013). This may lead to conflict of divergent urban and rural cultural practices that may influence couples' MS.

Child rearing practices in nuclear and extended families may conflict and influence couples' MS. For instance, a child from urban parents may be restricted to visit rural grandparents or other extended family members, with the belief that the child might get inadequate care which may cause tension in the family with influence on couples' MS. Tien (2013) states that child raising practices in individualist and collectivist cultures may be an issue and may cause tension in couples' marital relationship. Child rearing in collectivist cultures involve extended family members, for instance, grandparents may play a significant role in naming a child and performing other traditional new-born rituals. While in individualist cultures extended family members are never given much attention with regards to couples' relationships. This indicates that couples' and their families in the two cultural practices are predisposed to tension that may influence couples' marital contentment. This calls for more studies to conceptualize the magnitude of child-rearing influence on couples' MS, which formed the basis for this study.

### ***Mitigation Measures for the Influence of Language and Ethnicity on MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages***

The fourth objective of the study was to identify effective mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Corey (2016) asserts that there are diverse therapeutic approaches that are helpful in psychotherapy, however, not all are supportive in all situations. This called for a need in this study to identify specific approaches that support mitigation for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. It was found necessary to review previous published literature on similar studies to understand

what had been identified as effective measure to alleviate influence of language and ethnicity on MS. Further, theories that were used in similar studies, were considered beneficial to expand understanding of effective mitigation measures. Two models were identified BFST and CBT as having relevant strategies and therefore, effective to mitigate against the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. The two theories were equally significant in providing guidance in this study, so, relevant and essential with appropriate strategies beneficial to couples in intercultural marriages.

In this study mitigating measures could bring awareness of influence of language and ethnicity to intercultural couples. Mutai (2019) asserts that counseling aims to assist couples make constructive changes in any aspect of their lives that they could be going through, in a caring relationship. Counseling helps couples acquire necessary skills, such as, effective communication and knowledge that promotes awareness suitable for enhancement of MS.

**Self-awareness.** It is essential for couples in monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural marriages to gain awareness of differing cultural and ethnicity intergenerational transmissions that influence MS. According to Kalai (2016), partners in intercultural marriages may self-identify with their cultural backgrounds. Conversely, couples may not be aware that their marital discord emanate from their cultural differences. Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) is significant to facilitate awareness of how the emotional system functions. Bowen (1978) therapist builds three generation genograms and lists the couples' issues, such as, conflicts, mental illnesses among many others. Genogram assessment tool in BFST is substantial in awareness provision and helps intercultural couples to conceptualize influence of language and ethnicity on MS. Self-awareness may lead couples to attain self-differentiation and de-triangulation.

**Communication.** According to Kepler (2015), factors behind marital challenges include lack of communication, disagreements on child-rearing styles, expectation

differences among many other issues. It is essential for heterosexual, intercultural couples to communicate with each other in languages that show their deepest feelings and underlying needs to attain fulfilling marital relationships (Kariuki, 2017). Communication refers to the process of sending and receiving information and it can only take place when partners receive messages sent to each other in a way it was initially intended (Munyiri, 2018). Couples' effective communication is significant because it aids to clear misunderstandings (Omor, 2018). It is essential for couples to have appropriate communication skills to converse their differing ethnic practices that conflict and influence their MS. Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) may be applied to teach intercultural couples appropriate communication skills. This facilitates partners to acquire skills to communicate affection language, intimacy and to affirm each other using languages partners easily understand, which is essential for MS.

**Counseling.** Couples experience marital conflict from inability to fulfill each other's diverse needs (Tolorunleke, 2014). Counseling intercultural couples is essential as it equips partners with knowledge to navigate through their differences (Kalai, 2016). Odhiambo et al. (2021) state that marital counseling is essential to improve communication issues within an intimate relationship. According to Yoo and Bartle (2012), empowering heterosexual, intercultural couples with effective communication skills is necessary to enhance their emotional stability and intimacy, which is essential for MS.

Nasir et al. (2012) examined effects of demographic variables on MS. Findings indicated significant differences in marriages based on marital age. Suggestions recommended marital counseling with emphasis on promoting couples' awareness to address marital challenges. McLeod (2015) observe that REBT goal of therapy is to change irrational beliefs to more rational ones. The approach helps couples to identify their irrational beliefs and persuade couples to challenge their false beliefs, which is essential to realize MS. Zakhirehdari et al. (2019) states that CBT in working with couples aims to increase

empowerment and positive exchange communication skills, modifying intellectual patterns and problem solving methods. The realization of this ultimately leads to increased intimacy and improved marital functioning. Cognitive behavioral therapy intervention for management of couples' issues has been found effective (Kariuki, 2017). Consequently, application of CBT can be helpful to enhance MS in heterosexual, intercultural couples. Marriage and Family therapists counsel couples to resolve their conflicts and attain their initial objectives for which they entered their marriage (Omor, 2018).

### ***Socio-Demographic Variables***

Socio-demographic factors (SDF) in this study referred to extraneous variables, which include couples' educational level, age, marital age, gender and religion. SDF in this study were assumed to play a role of extraneous variables, which could have influence on dependent variable of couples' marital satisfaction. According to Mutai (2019), extraneous variables affect dependent variable as they are part of everyday life. This depends on intercultural couples' interaction with them, which may affect their perceptions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), with extraneous variables there is no causal link in a study between independent and the dependent variable. The dependent of MS may independently be influenced by extraneous variables.

Priyadharshini and Gopalan (2020) carried out a study to determine the relationship between age of marriage and socio demographic variables. Findings showed relationship between length of marriage and education in India. Indicating that the higher the education the lesser the duration of marriage. Further, on the relationship between income and age at marriage on duration of marriage showed that other factors, such as, couples' psychological state should be considered for conclusive results.

Ndung'u (2017) carried out a mixed design research on couples' level of marital satisfaction and marital infidelity in Nairobi, Kenya. Results showed that the duration of

marriage plays a major role in marital satisfaction. Gender, age and level of education also play a major role in marital satisfaction. Recommendation was to create awareness on marriage and marital satisfaction to improve marriage institution, which this study sought to do.

**Educational level.** Kariuki (2018) indicates that dynamics of culture, such as, educational level helps to shape the standards of what is regarded as essential to form an emotional intimacy. Higher levels of couples' education may enhance their marital satisfaction because of their better understanding, which enhances cultural and intellectual merging (Zaheri et al., 2016). For instance, couples with conflict and better understanding, may resolve to seek intervention through therapy. Education accomplishment is associated with marital satisfaction from improved relationships and better understanding of reality of life for the highly educated (Miles, 2018; Tavakol et al., 2017). According to Haefner (2014), Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) concept of differentiation postulates that differentiated person is able to function autonomously and make self-directed choices. Considering BSFT, an educated couple may have a better reasoning to attain understanding of self-directed choices, and still remain connected to their families of origin. At the same time, when there are issues pertaining to self-differentiation, educated couples may have a better understanding to seek marital therapy.

Higher education connects with higher incomes, while low level of education and unemployment experiences are constraints to marital satisfaction (Zaheri et al., 2016). Couples who are well educated have better opportunities in the job market. Financial capabilities allow the couple to have an improved standard of living. This creates chances for the couples to have extra time for leisure which favors marital satisfaction. However, some studies show that educational level does not have significant influence on couples' marital satisfaction (Zare et al., 2014). Zaheri et al. (2016) argue that lack of high level of education

does not mean couples' incompatibility and lack of understanding because such factors are interpreted by each couple differently. This study sought to shed light on the role couples' educational levels play on marital satisfaction.

Barongo et al. (2015) carried out a study to establish association between level of education and marital satisfaction in Kisii, Kenya. Findings indicated that majority of those with higher education were more satisfied with their marriages.

**Age and MS.** Age is defined as the chronological number of years of a person since birth. However, age may also include age at marriage, age of marriage and age gap between a couple. Marriage age below 18 years for women and 20 years for men is linked with less marital satisfaction. As a person matures there is an achievement of better understanding of marital bond (Zaheri et al., 2016).

Decline in marital satisfaction in middle aged couples is associated with increased responsibilities of children and financial challenges from increased demands. In old age when children leave home marital satisfaction may be observed (Tavakol et al., 2017). Further, it is considered that as people age they lower their earlier marital expectations on religion, ethnicity, age and education and settle for a suboptimal match (Miles, 2018). A differing view indicates that young and old couples may be dissatisfied with their marriages. Even though, discontent may be higher with younger couples, suitable marriage age is determined by couples' cultures (Zaheri et al., 2016). Undifferentiated couples from families of origin may not change with couples' age or marital age, since it is an intergenerational transmission (Haefner, 2014). Bridge (2019) observes that differentiated couples are capable of supporting each other, make their own decisions, even with language and ethnic differences, and at the same time, experience connection with family of origin at any age. However, age may interact with other factors with influence on marital satisfaction, such as, race, ethnicity, language and gender among many others.

Khezri et al. (2020) indicate that later marriage leads to increased marital survival. Age of marriage is a significant factor in couples' marital satisfaction as most people have a high level of marital satisfaction at the time of marriage, but after a while their satisfaction diminishes (Tavakol et al., 2017). Zaheri et al. (2016) indicate that lack of agreement in raising children, financial challenges and relationship with relatives in the middle of marital life may lower marital satisfaction. Different cultures differ in age expectations between couples (Tavakol et al., 2017). Therefore, age is significant in marital contentment and this study sought to assist in understanding the role couples' ages play on marital satisfaction.

**Religion and MS.** Religion refers to a set of beliefs and devotion to some organized faith. Religious couples are more dedicated to their relationships therefore, achieve marital satisfaction through common beliefs. Regardless of language and ethnic differences, partners in marriage who agree on issues have better relationships, which is essential for marital satisfaction (Zaheri et al., 2016). Khezri et al. (2020) indicate that religion and spirituality have a positive relationship to one's marital satisfaction. According to Bridge (2019), in BFST differentiated people make self-directed decisions, such as, balancing religious time, intimate time and other responsibilities like parenting, which may be essential for marital satisfaction. However, undifferentiated religious couples may experience intergenerational transmissions that may influence their marital relationships. At the same time, triangling other members of religious group may happen when dealing with marital conflicts with influence on couples' relationships. Miles (2018) indicate that marital satisfaction of religious couple is achieved when both partners are guided by the same religious values. However, different values in some religious practices in intercultural marriages accept polygamous marriages (Zaker & Boostanipoor, 2016) with influence on MS. Tien (2013) indicates that partner's decision to hold a wedding celebration of their commitment to each may be the most meaningful event in a couples' relationship. Conversely, it may involve a big challenge

for partners in making major decisions when their religious backgrounds differ, which may influence their relationship. This study sought to assist in understanding the role couples' religion play on marital satisfaction.

**Gender and MS.** Henrich et al. (2010) indicate that gender has been recognized as a predictor for marital contentment. Bulanda (2011) study on the factor of gender and marital satisfaction indicated men having higher marital satisfaction than women. Ubando (2016) adds that communication differences between genders may influence marital satisfaction. Bowen (1978) explains that well-differentiated individuals make their own decisions using their rational judgements. In their emotional life they can experience intimacy and marital satisfaction without fusion. According to Sue et al. (2019), there are dissimilarities of genders in their perceptions. Wood (2016) adds that there are inequities in expectations of different genders. However, traditional marital practices with husband being the bread-winner and wife as the housekeeper including the role of childcare provider, have been shifting as gender roles transform (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). This study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages sought to bring out roles that gender, educational level, age and religion played on MS.

### **Theoretical Framework**

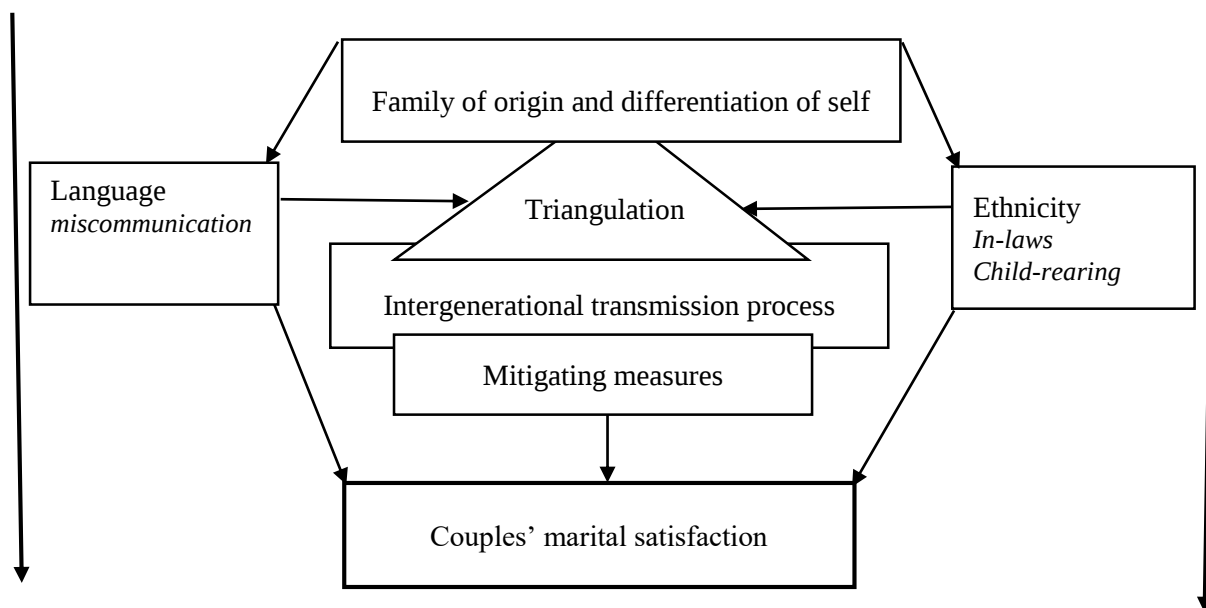
This study was guided by two theories, namely; the Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) developed by Murray Bowen. The Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT), which was advanced by several theorists, such as, Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck.

#### ***Bowen Family System Theory***

Murray Bowen (1913-1990) was the proponent of Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST). The theory was developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s and published in 1966. One of the most useful concept in BFST refers to an individual's life functioning that reflects level of differentiation (Bowen Theory Academy, 2023). Hall (2013) states that BFST is a

model of human behavior that views a family, which includes couples, as an emotional unit. BFST advances that an individual's functioning should be understood in the context of his or her relationships. Family members affect each other's thoughts, feelings and actions (Bowen, 1978). Goldenberg et al. (2017) observe BFST's view of driving force underlying all human behavior and emphasize the significance of past family relationships on an individual. Thus, partners in a marital relationship are likely to repeat behaviors handed down through generations, for instance, couples interactions in this study of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

BFST conceptualizes the family as an emotional unit with a network of eight interlocking concepts which are; DoS, triangles, nuclear family emotional system, family projection process, multigenerational transmission process, sibling position, emotional cutoff and societal regression. Bowen (1978) postulates that DoS denotes the ability of a person to distinguish self from the family of origin on a personal and intellectual level. Erdem and Safi (2018) observe that DoS manifest at intra and interpersonal levels. Bridge (2019) states that triangles involve a three-person relationship that can stabilize a two-person bond. Nuclear family emotional system highlights that a family responds to stress that is also transferred from past generations to future generations. Emotional cutoff indicates the separation and isolation from the family of origin in order to escape from clash. Family projection process is the process where parents pass along their emotional problems to a child. Multigenerational transmission process emphasizes the transfer of behaviors, such as in relationships, to other generations through family projection process. Sibling position includes sibling profile for each position in a functioning family. Societal regression demonstrates the link between family system and society (Bridge, 2019). BFST concepts that are of interest in this study include DoS, triangles and multigenerational transmission process see Figure 1.

**Figure 1***Bowen Family System Theory and MS*

Source: Author, 2023

**Differentiation of self.** Brown (2010) indicates that differentiation of self is the capacity of an individual to function autonomously by making self-directed choices, while remaining emotionally connected to the intensity of a significant relationship. A self-differentiated monogamous, intercultural couple as found in this study, may be able to fully function separately as individuals, while being emotionally connected to each other in an intimate relationship. Self-differentiated spouses make self-directed decisions on language of communication and ethnicity within their marital relationships to maintaining a harmonious marital relationship that boosts MS.

Bowen (1978) BFST postulates that differentiation is the ability to balance the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions of the self. Intrapsychic level of functioning, differentiation refers to the extent in which a couple can be able to separate their emotional (feelings) and intellectual (thinking) spheres, and make choices of which of the two takes priority in a given situation. High levels of differentiation at the intrapsychic level, have the capacity to allow both the emotional and intellectual systems function appropriately.

Goldenberg et al. (2017) observe that BFST reflects the extent to which a partner is able to distinguish between the intellectual process and the feeling process of experiences. DoS is demonstrated by the degree to which a partner can think, plan and follow his or her own values or convictions without the behavior being automatically driven by the emotional cues of prevailing dissimilar languages. Such people are aware and in control of both their thinking and feeling and can distinguish them. They express their emotions freely and spontaneously, and even when they experience strong emotions, they are not consumed by them. This indicates that well differentiated intercultural couples at intrapsychic level are able to generate alternative ways of thinking and being when needed. Their actions and choices pertaining to the divergent languages of communication and ethnicity are guided by gathering of relevant facts, logical reasoning and well thought ideas which are helpful in their marriages to enhance MS. Bridge (2019) notes that in BFST marital conflict originates from lack of self-differentiation from family of origin and transmitted to marital relationship, which produces powerful tension between couples. Likewise, in this study, divergent ethnicity that includes in-law relationships and child rearing practices are inclined to differ generating tensions that influence MS.

At the intrapsychic level couples' emotional system take control of their actions. They are emotionally reactive and much of their energy is geared towards experiencing and expressing their feelings. Being emotionally depended on others and can scarcely think, feel or act for themselves. This shows that undifferentiated couples with conflicting dissimilar languages and divergent ethnicity may be stuck and not able to resolve their challenges. When they act they do not take time to consider facts or realities of the situations they are in, which may hurt their relationship and negatively influence MS. Poorly differentiated people are usually overwhelmed by their emotions, and find it difficult to remain calm in response to the emotions of other people because they are trapped in an emotional world (Bowen, 1978).

In this study intercultural couples are exposed to more language and ethnicity differences. Partners' situations require balancing of emotions and intelligences, and realities of their prevailing situations to select appropriate choices to realize MS.

Duch-Ceballos et al. (2020) examined the relationship of differentiation of self with emotional self-regulation and anxiety and the variances in these variables grounded on the sex and age of the participants. Results showed that differentiation of self is related to emotional regulation and anxiety. Differences in differentiation of self, emotional self-regulation depended on sex and age were also observed. Thus DoS is essential in this study to attain more understanding of couples' emotional situations that influence MS.

Interpersonal aspect of differentiation indicates a person's ability to clearly distinguish self from others. Differentiated individuals are able to be simultaneously autonomous and relational (Bowen, 1978). They maintain a sense of self even in intense emotional relationships or in the middle of uncertain circumstances, for instance, uncertainty from dissimilar intimacy languages. Hence, in this study, intercultural couples who have attained interpersonal aspect of differentiation are able to maintain their positions calmly, while enjoying meaningful and intimate relationships. Differentiated spouses make decisions of preferred language of communication and acceptable child-rearing practices within their relationship, while maintaining cordial relationships with their in-laws, which supports MS.

Lampis et al. (2019) indicate that DoS is fundamental to a partner's capacity to achieve intimacy and mutuality in marriage. Differentiation construct describes emotional, relational and behavioral patterns of distance regulation within couple and families. This infers that each partner's dyadic adjustment, as in this study, is affected by personal level of differentiation that may influence MS. Couples with low levels of differentiation at the interpersonal level, are overly involved or fused in their close relationships, such as, spouses. They are easily affected by the opinion, feelings, thought and behaviors of others. They react

easily to perceived demands of others without thinking through the choices or consulting others (Bowen, 1978). Low differentiated couples can easily give up their opinions in favor of the opinion of others. Other times they may be dogmatic and intolerant of others, to a point of wanting to impose their values on other people. A spouse's level of differentiation is believed to be significantly impacted by the general level of differentiation in one's family of origin.

Erdem and Safi (2018) indicate that there is a cultural context that may cause conflicts among couples and family members emanating from needs for connectedness and autonomy. For instance, in this study influence of ethnicity on MS among monogamous intercultural couples emanating from divergent ethnicity that may have some tension relating with in-laws. Bridge (2019) states that BFST demonstrates that DoS is vital for a longtime intimate relationship. This is because differentiated couples are capable of supporting their spouses without experiencing identity lost. Bowen (1978) observes that people who are highly differentiated tend to have better psychological adjustment, such as, in an intercultural marriage. They enjoy relationships without losing themselves in them. These people can break down when there is sufficient pressure, such as, language miscommunication, but they recover quickly. On the other hand, less differentiated people become easily dysfunctional under stress, and suffer more psychologically and physically, which is inclined to negatively influence MS.

Krycak et al (2012) examined relations among stress, emotional support and differentiation of self from the family of origin as predictors of psychological distress. Findings showed that differentiation of self is significant on effects of psychological distress. Emotional support was found to partially mediate the relationship between differentiation of self and psychological distress. This signifies that DoS and mutual spousal and family support in marriage, as found in this study, are essential for couples' MS.

Bowen (1978) maintained that estimating a person's level of differentiation is influenced by factors, such as, stress levels, individual differences and the degree of contact individuals have with their extended families. Further, differentiation is a long life process and that total differentiation is not possible to attain. This shows the significance of DoS in couples' relationship to appropriately comprehend the influence of language and ethnicity on MS.

Lampis et al. (2017) examined a model in which codependent behaviors were predicted by dyadic adjustment in couple relationship and differentiation of self. Results indicated the importance of considering the dynamics and outcomes of the process of DoS both with individuals, couples and families of origin.

Lampis (2016) indicates that studies on DoS have been conducted in diverse countries, such as, United States, Spain, Asian countries, such as, Korea, Middle Eastern Countries, such as, Iran and Israel. Findings showed that fusion with other features seemed to be affected by cultural context. This indicated appropriateness of BFST in this study to comprehend status of DoS and couples' MS in Kenya and Kiambu County.

Kaletka (2014) examined whether differentiation mediated the relationship between marital satisfaction and stress perceived by women. Findings showed greater marital satisfaction with better DoS. Lower levels of differentiation were significantly associated with higher feelings of stress. Differentiation of self further intervened the linkage between MS and stress perceived by women. Hence, DoS was significant to understand influence of language and ethnicity on MS and necessary for couples MS.

**Triangles.** Bowen (1978) used triangling to describe the shifting of alliances from two people to other parties outside the relationship, for instance, in this study extended family members. Haefner (2014) states that the triangles take place when tension in intercultural marital relationship of two increases, then triangulation emerges by introducing a third

person, for instance, an extended family member to lower the tension. According to Corey (2016), triangulation may lessen the emotional tension between couples however, if underlying conflict is not addressed, then in the long run worsens the situation influencing couples MS. Consequently, the monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couple may never be able to solve their language and ethnicity marital challenges without the third person, which may influence MS.

Papero et al. (2018) indicate that triangling appears in a relationship when tension develops between two individuals, for instance, intercultural couples' miscommunication emanating from divergent couple's languages or conflicting divergent ethnic practices see Figure 1. The tension surpasses one or both partners' ability to maintain differentiation of self to make intelligent decisions rather than emotional decisions that may influence MS. Consequently, one or both partners may move to involve an extended family member to calm the marital stressful situation. Goldenberg et al. (2017) observe that two-person system may be unstable and forms a three-person system under stress, as each partner creates a triangle in order to reduce tension in their relationship. In the situation the stress is so great and the three-person triangle can no longer contain the tension, then distress may spread to others in the family. As more people become involved the system may become a series of interlocking triangles in some cases amplifying the very problem the triangulations sought to resolve. Consequently, the greater the fusion in a relationship, such as in couples, the more difficult it is to find a stable balance satisfying to both (Goldenberg et al., 2017).

Goldstein (2015) observes that a relationship between couples and their in-laws can best be viewed in terms of BFST triangles. Triangling may be common in Kenya including Kiambu County, considering that collectivism is commonly practiced in Africa, Kenya and Kiambu County. Consequently, tension emanating from divergent ethnicity beliefs and practices in intercultural marriages may bring in extended family members causing

triangulation within couples' marital relationship. For instance, couple's tension caused by conflicting languages or child rearing practices may be the reason to bring in a family member to reduce the tension, which may in the long run influence couples' MS.

Hu et al. (2014) examined how couples interdependently influence relationship between family-of-origin triangulation and marital satisfaction. Findings showed that family of origin triangulation was strongly negatively associated with MS across two family life stages with cross-cultural consistency. Couples who lived with their parents or in-laws indicated less affectional expression than those who lived on their own. Relationship between family-of-origin triangulation and MS are complex phenomena rooted in culture therefore, the study recommended therapists to pay closer attention to intergenerational relationships.

Willis et al. (2021) examined the processes of triangulation and differentiation as postulated in BFST. Results from an actor-partner interdependence model showed that husbands' differentiation predicted subsequent triangulation, but the relationship was not significant among wives. Findings recommended additional research to explore gender differences. The study was carried out outside Africa, creating a need for continued research on BFST triangulation and self-differentiation to comprehend the situation in Kenya, Kiambu County, which was significant in this study.

**Multigenerational Transmission Process.** Bowen (1978) posits that individuals are likely to repeat behaviors handed down through generations unless examined and rectified. Multigenerational transmission process signifies transfers of patterns of behaviors (Brown, 2010). Goldstein (2015) asserts that experiences in the family of origin are significant for later marital well-being because of the interpersonal practices they form in the individuals as children. Interpersonal behaviors and practices, such as, conflicting language of communication, ethnicity including child rearing practices learnt from family of origin, seem to be a vessel by which experiences from husbands' and wives' families of origin are carried

forward with influence on MS see Figure 1. According to McGoldrick (2011), counsel to go home again and dig into family secrets and stories to gain a better understanding of a person, is an acknowledgement of family of origin impact on individual's behavior that may influence couples' marital satisfaction as "family will inevitably come back to haunt" (p. 22). Bowen (1978) proposes that people usually marry people of similar differentiation levels. Nelson and Kohli (2017) observe that among diverse issues to be considered in intergenerational process include decision-making and culture. For instance, in this study, language of affirmation, affection and child-rearing practices are learnt from each spouse's family of origin and are transferred to monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples' relationship, which may influence MS. Erdem and Safi (2018) add that this tendency explains an orderly and anticipated relationship process that connects the functioning of each intercultural partner in marital relationship across generations, which may influence couple's marital contentment.

***Significance of Bowen Family System Theory to the Study.*** BFST was found relevant to guide this study. Bowen (1978) BFST defines family both as a relationship system and an emotional system where family members influence and are influenced by each other at an individual, couple, systemic and intergenerational levels. According to Erdem and Safi (2018), BFST is a transgenerational model, consequently, useful in this study to conceptualize couples' families of origin influence on couples' MS as captured in Figure 1. For instance, language used by couples to express affection and to affirm each other may differ across different cultures, which may send conflicting messages that influence monogamous, intercultural couples' MS. Further, childrearing practices may not be similar in all cultures, they may conflict, thus influencing intercultural couples' MS.

Krycak et al. (2012) observe that individuals with lower levels of DoS experience higher psychological distress. Erdem and Safi (2018) state that lower DoS experience daily

stress. DoS has been linked with psychological adjustment and relational well-being and satisfaction. High DoS predicts better interpersonal functioning and higher MS. Thus, DoS is significant in this study to understand couples' differentiation of self and MS.

BFST is empirically supported. For instance, a study in South Korea (Kim et al. 2014) examined the association between the BFST idea of DoS, emotional reactivity and family adaptability and cohesion in family functioning. Conclusions of the study supported the premise that high levels of DoS are associated with high levels of family functioning, greater family satisfaction and positive family communication, which includes couples' relationships in this study.

Lampis et al. (2019) indicate that BFST is a category of family models that provide an account of how the internalization of life experiences within the family of origin promotes development of the ability to maintain a distinct self while also making intimate connections with a partner. Thus, BFST provided potential to comprehend marital functioning of a couple beyond the focus of the individual to the operation and influence of family of origin in three generations (Papero et al., 2018). For instance, in this study, the way couples expected and managed their intimacy and the language they used to express their affection, may mirror earlier family patterns.

Holman and Busby (2011) carried out a research assuming that a complex relationship exists between family of origin variables as they influence adult marital relationship. Results supported the assumptions and suggested the usefulness of Bowen's theory for understanding family of origin processes in couples, that carry forward through differentiation of self, into quality of couples' marital relationship. Haefner (2014) indicates that (BFST) concepts of differentiation of self, triangles, multigenerational transmissions help to comprehend family of origin influences on couples MS.

***Challenges of the BFST to the Study.*** McGoldrick (2011) argues the universality of BFST theory's concepts with regards to different cultures. This is because empirical support for BFST concepts was derived from studies conducted in USA. Corey (2016) notes that the process of differentiation occurs in most cultures, however takes a different shape due to cultural norms. Thus, BFST could have taken a different form to fully guide the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among intercultural marriages as the research was conducted in Kenya at Kiambu County. Hofstede (2017) indicates that United States, Canada and Germany are cultures of separateness but vary significantly in their levels of individualism. Erdem and Safi, (2018) observe that there are mixed findings regarding differentiation of self-construct, particularly blending with others in non-USA context. This may have been the same situation in this study and the levels of differentiation could have differed from the initial theory participants as respondents in this study were from Kenya, Kiambu County and not from USA. Other findings that were considered contrary to BFST conclusions on DoS include a study in Italy with community samples of adults, which established that fusion with others was associated with high dyadic adjustment (Lampis, 2016). This results are similar to Kenya situation as it embraces extended family members as support system. Hence, could have differed with wholesome classification of DoS connectedness and separateness.

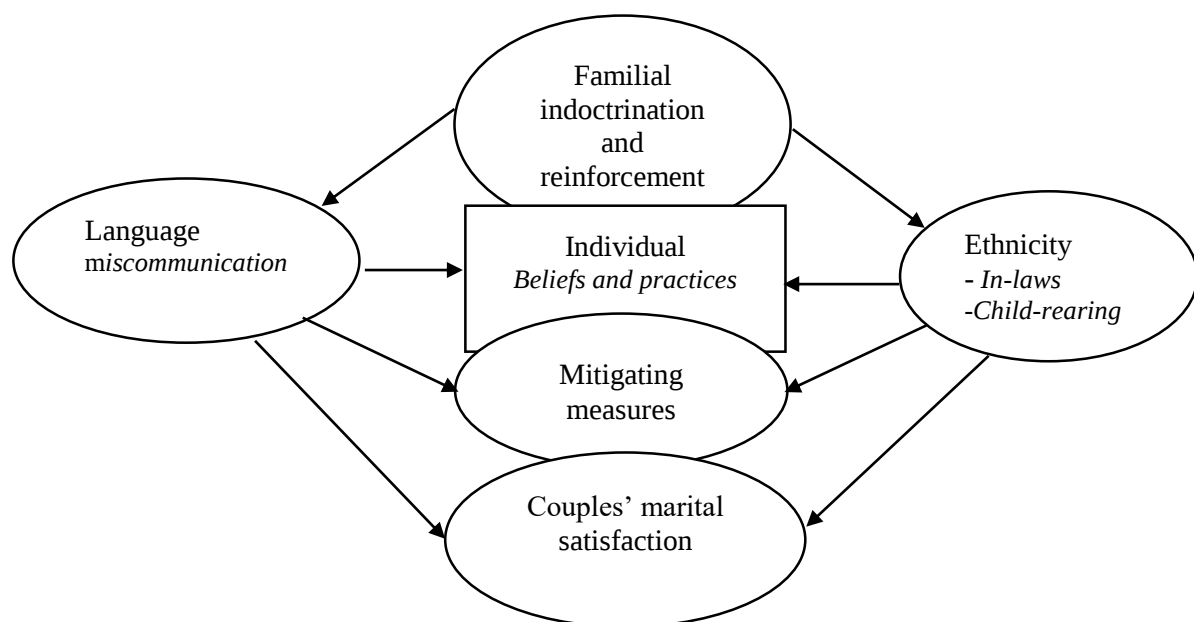
### ***Cognitive Behavioral Theory and MS***

Goldenberg et al. (2017) observes that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) was developed by several theorists. Two leading proponents of CBT include Albert Ellis (1913-2007) and Aaron Beck (1921-2021). Bhattacharya et al. (2013) indicate that CBT can be viewed as an umbrella term applied to refer to a group of related therapies but with theoretical basis in behavioristic learning and cognitive psychology. Bhardwaj (2016) asserts that CBT is grounded on the ideas that how we think (cognition), how we feel (emotion) and

how we act (behavior) all interact together. Epstein and Zheng (2017) observe that CBT recognizes the interplay between monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples' cognitions, behaviors and emotional responses. Intercultural couples learn and attain beliefs and practices early in life from their families of origin. For instance, use of language of emotional expression is learnt early in life and there is continuous reinforcement by its daily usage. Children observe and learn about family interactions and childrearing practices from their families of origin, which are daily observations, then they are applied in couples' marital relationship as indicated in Figure 2. Therefore, early indoctrination and repetition keep learnt cultural practices alive and operative within monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural partners. The differing intercultural couples' learnt beliefs and practices may conflict in a marital relationship with influence on couples' MS.

**Figure 2**

*Cognitive Behavioral Theory and MS*



Source: Author, 2023

The presumption in this study was, how intercultural couples learn from their family of origin, think and belief about their differing language of affection and ethnicity (cognitive), how they feel (emotion) and act (behavior) interact and may influence MS.

Partners' ethnic backgrounds profoundly affect their everyday experiences. It is a fundamental determinant of how families establish and reinforce acceptable values, beliefs, attitudes, behavior patterns and modes of emotional expression through daily experiences, which may finally influence couples' MS. Bhardwaj (2016) observes two forms of CBT, which are REBT and CT.

Albert Ellis developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) in the 1950s. REBT is a major cognitive behavior approach. REBT is based on the assumption that cognitions, emotions and behaviors interact and have a reciprocal cause-and-effect relationship. REBT's postulates that emotions stem mainly from beliefs, evaluations, interpretations and reactions to life situation. People have a biological and cultural tendency to continue thinking irrationally and get disturbed (Corey, 2016). For instance, an intercultural partner may have unrealistic expectations about their marriage, catastrophizing a commonplace disagreement and making negative evaluations that may influence their MS. This points to the hypothesis that couples' emotions stem mainly from their beliefs, evaluations, interpretations and reactions to their dissimilar languages of communication and ethnicity in their marital situations that may influence their MS.

REBT is based on the idea that people originally learn irrational beliefs from significant others during childhood. However, repetition of early indoctrinated irrational thoughts keeps dysfunctional attitudes alive and operative within individuals (Corey, 2016). People including couples learn and invent disturbing beliefs and remain being disturbed (McLeod, 2015). For instance, couples learn from their family of origin how to relate with in-laws and child rearing practices. The dissimilar beliefs a couple may have retained could be irrational, with potential to disturb them and influence their MS.

Aaron Beck was another proponent of CBT and developed Cognitive Therapy (CT) in the 1960s. The cognitive model postulates that a person's experiences are active processes

that result in cognitions. Cognitive therapy (CT) hypothesizes that clients' feelings and behaviors are influenced by the way they perceive issues and not the situation they are in (Beck, 1964). CT posits that cognitions that involves perceptions and beliefs, mediates one's emotions, behavior and physiological reactions in response to the environment. Hays (2019) observes that dysfunctional cognitions are believed to significantly contribute to maladjustment, whereas functional cognitions contribute to healthy adjustment. Couples may possess a set of beliefs and expectations which are rigid, unrealistic and negative about self. For instance, a couple's belief that "my language is perfect and I cannot change it". This infers that divergent couples' perceptions and beliefs about their divergent languages of emotional expressions, affirmation and child rearing practices may conflict eliciting emotions and behaviors that influence MS.

Bhardwaj (2016) states that a person's reaction to specific upsetting thoughts may contribute to abnormality, which Beck calls unbidden cognition's automatic thoughts. This points to a couple's reaction to conflicting divergent language of communication and ethnicity, which may contribute to cognitions and behavior that influence MS. Hays (2019) supports that cultural influences are interwoven with beliefs and values about acceptable coping behaviors and forms of emotional expression that affect people's perceived choices. For instance, a couple in this study may maintain unrealistic beliefs and high expectations about their spousal support that may not be realized thus influence MS.

According to Corey (2016), families generate, indoctrinate and reinforce its members with long-life influences. Therefore, indoctrinated and reinforced beliefs on childrearing practices, in-law relating behaviors and practices and expectations of marital intimacy from family of origin of each partner may differ in marriage and conflict with influence on couples' MS.

**Significance of CBT.** Corey (2016) observes that CBT emphasizes on cognition, emotions and behavior interactions among couples and family members. This was vital in this study to understand couples' divergent beliefs, emotions and behaviors pertaining to the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among intercultural couples. Bhardwaj (2016) observes that CBT can be used to treat people with a wide range of mental health problems, which includes intercultural couples. CBT is active and focuses on present situations and emotions in real time, hence helpful with intercultural couples' current challenges. Naeem et al. (2019) observe that CBT is adaptive and relevant with diverse cultures, which includes intercultural couples. According to Bhattacharya et al. (2013), CBT is derived from scientifically proven theoretical models. Creswell et al. (2013) note that CBT is empirically supported, therefore, was beneficial to guide this study.

Zakhirehdari et al. (2019) study sought to investigate the effectiveness of CBT on improving marital functioning and marital intimacy of couples. Results revealed that CBT is effective in improving marital functioning and marital intimacy. Bhardwaj (2016) notes that CBT possesses strength by its emphasis on the uniqueness of an individual, which meets the needs of each partner in a marital relationship. The large eclectic range of cognitive behavioral techniques provide the tools for diverse adaptations in a couple relationship. CBT views couples as being in control of their thoughts and emotions thus able to make changes themselves. Hence, in recognition of clients' expertise CBT empowers couples to apply newly learnt skills independently in future situations. Such respect for couples' abilities and understanding of their situations contributes to a collaborative relationship, whereby cultural differences are appreciated rather than negated.

**Challenges of the CBT.** There are some constraints considered in this study with regards to CBT and its application with influence of language and ethnicity on MS among intercultural couples. CBT is a process of teaching, coaching and reinforcing positive

behaviors (Goldenberg et al., 2017). The therapy is very active by nature thus the intercultural couples may be expected to take a proactive role within therapy including completing tasks at home. This may be a challenge to intercultural couples who may be experiencing severe language and ethnicity problems that could interfere with their cognition and hinder their full participation. CBT approach is directive, time-limited and structured (Fenn & Byrne, 2013). Consequently, intercultural couples with cherished cultural practices pertaining to interdependence may not respond well. For instance, couples from collectivist child rearing practices, as found in Kenya, may find it a challenge to respond positively to forceful methods of persuasion to view constructively partners' divergent practices. Further, CBT was considered narrow in scope in this study since thinking is a component of a human mind, while other factors in couples' lives needed to be considered, for instance, lack of couples' self-differentiation, triangulation and Multigenerational transmission process.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Kivunja (2018) asserts that a conceptual framework is the logical master plan for the entire study. Conceptual framework was significant in this study to help attain comprehensive understanding of the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Independent variables in this study comprised of language, ethnicity and mitigating measures. The dependent variable was marital satisfaction, which was influenced by the independent variables language, ethnicity and mitigating measures. Extraneous variables in this study comprised of socio-demographic variables, which included; couples' age, marital age, gender and religion among others. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), extraneous variables refer to those factors that affect the outcome of a study. Consequently, together with independent variables of language and ethnicity could have had influence on dependent variable of couples' MS. Thus, this study was conducted within well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as, inclusion

of couples' age range and marital age range to minimize influence of extraneous variables.

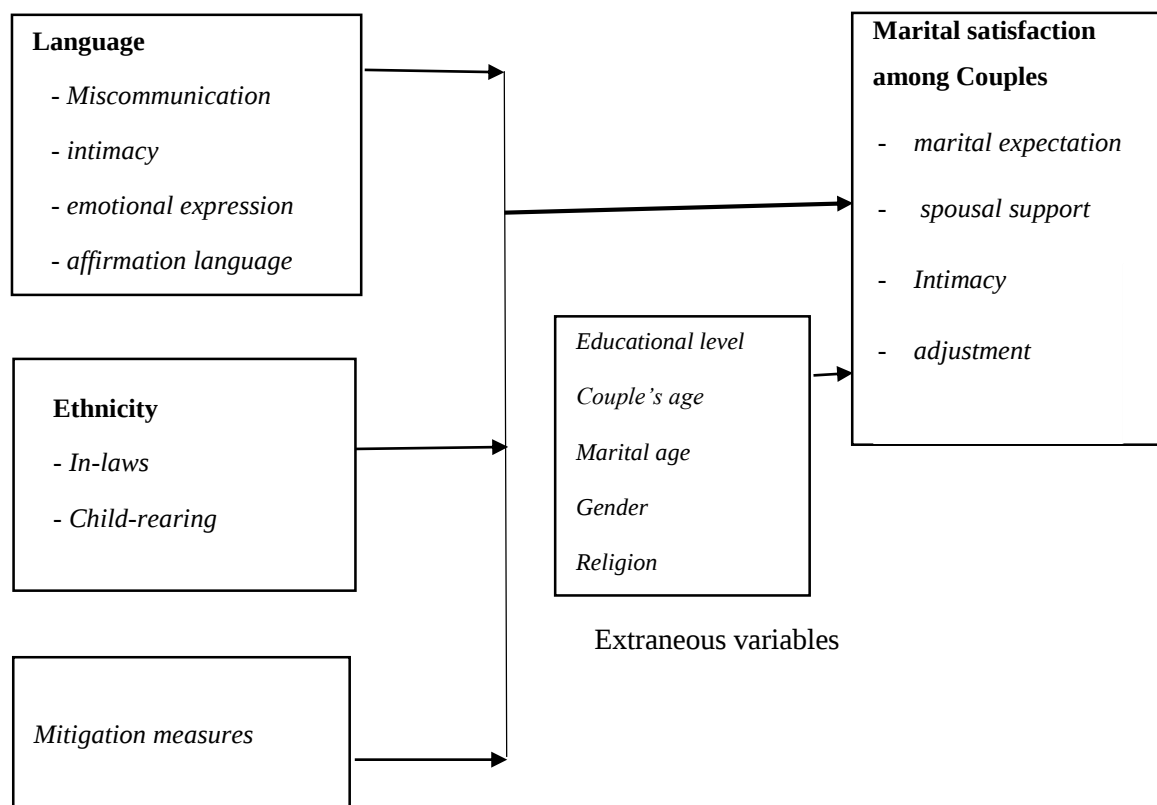
Further, regression model is significant in identifying the portion other factors play to influence dependent variable This was beneficial in this study to control extraneous variables influence.

### Figure 3

#### *Conceptual Framework*

Independent variables

Dependent Variable



### Research Gaps

There were several gaps identified in the reviewed literature, which this study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages sought to fill. For instance, most of the previous studies were based in western world. This study aimed to shed more light on the situation in Kenya at Kiambu County.

Majority of participants in past studies were obtained from developed countries, such as, USA. This study was based in Kenya, Kiambu at Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers and one required characteristic of participants was being a resident. There was scarcity and inconsistency of information on influence of language and ethnicity on couples' MS in intercultural marriages in Africa, Kenya and Kiambu County, location of the study. Therefore, this study attained information in intercultural marriages relevant to Kiambu County. Data on the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Africa, Kenya and area of study was scarce. This study established and documented level of couples' MS in intercultural marriages in urban centers of Kiambu County.

Finally, had been identified to address influence of ethnicity and language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kenya at Kiambu County. These marriages were on ascending mode and their challenges were unique. This study provided essential information on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kenya at Kiambu County for improved understanding and management.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter two provided empirical literature on studies related to influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. These were studies that had been reviewed by peer and accepted as having credible information. Literature review was organized according to the objectives of this study. Further, theoretical framework that guided this study which involved BFST and CBT were included. Conceptual framework was also provided. Research gaps that were identified by researcher in accessed

literature were included and finally chapter summary is provided. The next chapter presents research methodology. The research design adopted in the study is included, population of the study, sample size, sampling methods, data analysis, ethical considerations and chapter summary are provided.

## Chapter Three

### Research Methodology

#### Introduction

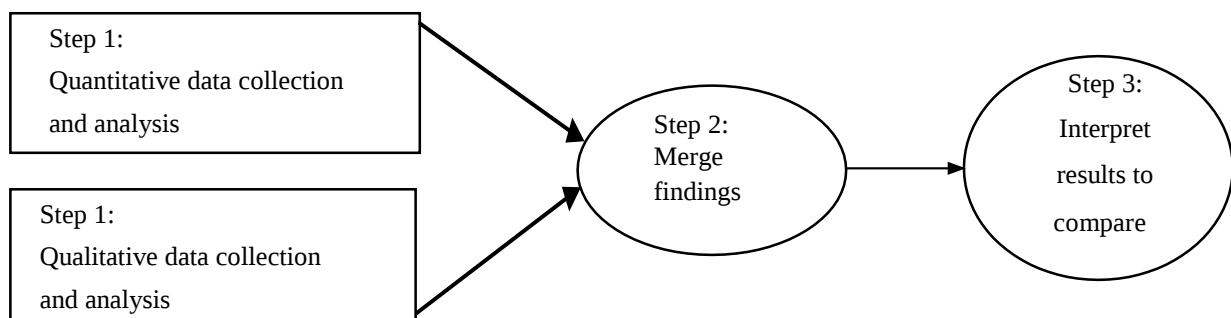
This chapter includes the research design adopted in the study, location of the study, the study population, sample size, sampling methods, type of data and data collection methods including procedures, reliability and validity and pre-testing instruments. Finally, data analysis, ethical considerations and chapter summary are provided.

#### Research Design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a research design denotes types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches and provides precise direction for procedures in a study. Coolican (2013) defines research design as the overall structure and strategy of the study. The research design adopted in this study was parallel convergent mixed methods design.

**Figure 4**

#### *Convergent Mixed Methods Design*



Source: Creswell and Creswell (2018)

Step 1 in the rectangles in Figure 4, parallel convergent mixed methods design indicates concurrent quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Step 2 in the middle circle shows stage for converging both data findings. Step 3 the final circle indicates

interpretations of merged results that was essential to confirm or disconfirm results that was useful for the study's conclusions. According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017), both quantitative and qualitative data in convergent mixed methods design is collected concurrently (QUAN + QUAL), which was applied in this study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that convergent design in mixed methods research is essential. For instance, in this research neither quantitative nor qualitative data, each by itself was adequate to effectively address influence of language and ethnicity on couples' marital satisfaction. Therefore, quantitative approach was crucial to generalize findings of the study to the target population of Kiambu County urban centers. Mohajan (2018) indicates that in qualitative approach, the researcher is able to collect descriptions of participants' experiences. For instance, in this study participants described experiences of influence of language and ethnicity on their marital satisfaction. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), convergence of both data sets is crucial to enhance credibility of the research findings and therefore, was essential in this study.

### **Location of the Study**

The study was located at Kikuyu and Limuru Urban Centers in Kiambu County. Republic of Kenya has forty-seven counties and Kiambu County is one of them (see Appendix II). Kiambu County is located in the central part of Kenya and borders Nairobi and Kajiado Counties to the South. Machakos in the Eastern, Murang'a in the Northern and North Eastern, Nyandarua in the Northwest and Nakuru on the Western side. On the other hand, Kiambu County has 12 sub-counties (CGK, 2018).

Kiambu County is endowed with diverse public and private health institutions spread across the County. The County has governmental and about 38 non-governmental organizations and wide-ranging educational institutions. Consequently, the County provides

employment to people from all parts of Kenya and beyond, which made it a favorable location for the study due to the different cultural groups resident in the county.

Kiambu County is 40% rural and 60% urban (NCPD, 2013). Consequently, this study on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages was located in urban centers, where most of the population lives. These marriages have homogeneity in characteristics to yield desired information for the study. Therefore, two urban centers Kikuyu in Kikuyu Sub-county and Limuru in Limuru sub-county were purposively selected for the study.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) state that purposive sampling refers to a sampling technique which allows a researcher to select respondents that would provide the required information with regards the objectives of the study. In this study purposive sampling was considered to select location of the study where majority of respondents were likely to bear required characteristics.

Kikuyu and Limuru sub-counties are strategically located with close proximity to Kenya's capital Nairobi. This makes it a conducive place for people to live therefore, attracts population from different parts of Kenya and beyond. This population comprises of diverse cultures, which was found beneficial to yield the required data for the success of the study. Limited research had been done in these areas, which showed a need to conduct the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

## **Population**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), population refers to a complete set of individuals or objects with some common observable characteristics. A particular population has characteristics, which differentiates it from other populations. For instance, target population in this study involved any individual male or female, who had been in or still was in an intercultural marriage between 5 to 22 years and had age range of 25 to 51 years old.

This population provided a sample that had appropriate expertise in marital life to identify personal issues pertaining to the influence of language and ethnicity in their marital satisfaction.

KNBS (2014) states that there are 141,357 monogamous marriages in Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers. Kikuyu has 96,388 while Limuru has 44,969 monogamous marriages. Dulani et al. (2018) indicate that 13% of marriages in Kenya are inter-ethnic (see Appendix III). NCPD (2013) shows that 60% of Kiambu is urban while 40% is rural. Population of interest in Kiambu had homogeneity in characteristics as they were exposed to similar challenges, though they differed in the total figures of intercultural marriages. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, determination for the rates of intercultural marriages in Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers was necessary. Determination of strata for intercultural marriages was beneficial to realize accurate information on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Stratification of individuals in Intercultural Marriages*

| <b>Sub-County</b> | <b>Monogamous marriages</b> | <b>60% monogamous marriages in urban</b> | <b>13% intercultural marriages in urban</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Kikuyu            | 96,388                      | 57,833                                   | 7,518                                       |
| Limuru            | 44,969                      | 27,000                                   | 3,510                                       |
| Total             | 141,357                     | 84,833                                   | 11,028                                      |

Column one (see Table 1 above) shows Kikuyu and Limuru Sub-counties. Column two shows 96,388 individuals in monogamous marriages in Kikuyu and 44,969 in Limuru (KNBS, 2014). This makes a total of 141,357 marriages. Column three indicates 57,833 which is 60% rate of urban monogamous marriages in Kikuyu and 27,000 in Limuru total being 84,833. Column four shows 13% of intercultural marriages in Kikuyu as 7,518 and Limuru 3,510 which gives a total of 11,028 individuals in intercultural marriages in Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers. Consequently, the target population for this study in Kikuyu and

Limuru urban centers was 5,514 couples in intercultural marriages. However, the study considered working with individuals in intercultural marriages to attain authentic and unprejudiced responses as couples emerge from divergent cultural practices. This would further capture contributions from those who were separated, divorced and widows/widowers who had relevant information on monogamous intercultural marriages useful for the success of this study.

### **Sample Size**

Govindan (2014) indicates that whatever form of integration is involved in the study, sampling in mixed methods is confined to the basic quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), qualitative researchers generate very little new information after interviewing 20 participants. Parker et al. (2019) add that qualitative sampling terminates once either a target sample size is realized or saturation point has been reached. Saunders et al. (2018) indicate that saturation is the point at which further data do not lead to any new emergent theme. According to, Renjith et al. (2021) saturation gives the idea that the researcher has captured all possible information about the phenomenon of interest. This shows that, qualitative research does not provide a fixed figure for interviews, but depends on type of study.

In contrast, Glen (2013) indicates that there are diverse set approaches to determine quantitative sample size, such as, using census for small populations, imitating sample sizes from similar studies and using published tables or applying formulas. The researcher in this study intended to generalize findings to all intercultural marriages in urban centers in Kiambu County, which is within quantitative research. Therefore, the researcher found it essential to adopt Nassiuma (2000) formula to attain an analytical representation of the population. The formula was appropriate to calculate sample size and provided basis to achieve a quantitative

sample size. Further, the formula was found simplified and relevant to provide ratio for each urban center.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N - 1)e^2}$$

Where;

n is the sample size,

N population size – 11,028 individuals in intercultural marriages

C coefficient of variation 50% (0.5)

e is margin of error 5% (0.05)

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2 + (N - 1)e^2} = \frac{11,028(0.5)^2}{0.5^2 + (11,028 - 1)0.05^2} = 99$$

This study had a sample size of 99 participants. The researcher found a need to calculate each urban center's ratio because each had its own rate of intercultural marriages.

**Table 2**

*Sample size*

| Urban Centre                  | No. of intercultural marriages | Strata to total | Sample Size |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Kikuyu                        | 7,518                          | 0.681           | 67          |
| Limuru                        | 3,510                          | 0.318           | 32          |
| Total intercultural marriages | 11,028                         |                 | 99          |

Table 2 second row second column shows 7,518 intercultural marriages in Kikuyu urban center, see Table 2. Second row third column indicates 0.681 which was ratio for Kikuyu's urban center sample size. Second row fourth column indicates 67 which was the sample size for Kikuyu urban center. Third row column two shows 3,510, see Table 1. Limuru's target population who were in intercultural marriages. Third row column three shows 0.318 ratio for Limuru's urban center sample size, while third row column four shows

32 Limuru's urban center sample size. Fourth row second column indicates 11,028 target population for the study and fourth row fourth column shows 99 total sample size.

## **Sampling Technique**

### ***Quota Sampling***

Bhattacharjee, (2012) states that quota sampling technique involves segmenting population into mutually exclusive subgroups as in strata see Table 1. Quota sampling is a way of attaining sample size purposes. Proportional quota sampling was applied where sampling was done with regards to the proportion of the population of interest. Proportion of respondents in each subgroup of Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers matched the entire population of 99 participants see Table 2. Then a non-random observation was considered to select from each sub-group.

Iliyasu and Etikan (2021) observe that quota sampling is the most likely to accurately represent the population particularly in proportional quotas in Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers in this study. Quota sampling helps to avoid over or underrepresentation. It creates a sample that is more likely to match the entire population of the study.

### ***Snowball sampling***

Accessing participants in this study was found a challenge as they could not be easily identified. Consequently, Snowball sampling was further considered to be able to reach and collect necessary data for the success of the study. Snowball Sampling refers to selecting a subset from population of interest (Taherdoost, 2020). In snowball sampling an identified voluntary participant in intercultural marriage led the researcher to another known participant. This referral continued until the sample size of 99 participants was attained.

Snowball sampling is a technique applied to select a small size of key participants from a large population essential for a study (Coolican, 2013). According to Naderifar et al. (2017), Snowball sampling is applied when samples with the desired characteristics are not

easily recognizable. For instance, couples in intercultural marriages were not easily identifiable. Hence, it was not possible to easily access them, which could have hindered completion of this study as planned. According to Govindan (2014), early sample members identify and refer other people who meet the eligibility criteria. The researcher in this study requested early participants to make referrals to other study participants in intercultural marriages. Further, identified participants in turn led the researcher to further participants in intercultural marriages for inclusion as respondents.

Snowball sampling has the benefits of quick accessibility to participants, who may not be easily identified. Early participants are essential in referral as they may be familiar with others who share the same characteristics. It is cost effective as referrals are easily obtained from a primary data source and therefore, conveniently accessed. It overcomes sample hesitant subjects, who may not be willing to participate as many participants are accessed through referrals by familiar individuals. According to Simkus (2022), current participant refers other participants, then bias is likely to manifest. Further, a participant who is more sociable however, with less information is more likely to be recruited and omit a less sociable participant, who may be having more information for the study.

### **Types of Data**

Sources of data can broadly be categorized into two; primary and secondary data. Primary sources of data in this study refer to quantitative and qualitative information collected directly from participants. On the other hand, secondary data refers to any publication, that is written by an author who was not a direct observer or participant in the occurrences mentioned (Creswell, 2014). In this study of influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages, the researcher considered primary data sufficient to collect required information directly from participants in intercultural marriages at Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers in Kiambu County.

### ***Primary Data***

The researcher utilized both quantitative and qualitative primary data obtained from participants in intercultural marriages in Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers. Demographic part of the instrument provided participants' personal information. Different items from three standardized tools were adapted to provide more information according to the objectives of the study. Quantitative and qualitative data were directly collected concurrently QUAN + QUAL. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), information from primary sources are more reliable as opposed to data from secondary sources, which may be altered by writers.

### ***Data Collection Methods***

Data collection methods specify clearly specific steps that took place during the period of data collection. Established procedure enables an independent researcher to follow steps of the original researcher (Beins & McCarthy, 2012). The key researcher and four research assistants held a meeting prior to data collection for deliberations on appropriate days and timings for the exercise at Limuru and Kikuyu urban centers. All the items in the questionnaires were discussed to avoid any confusion of the real data collection period. All ethical part of the exercise was agreed upon particularly attaining informed consent from the participant to participate. Research Assistants were paired in twos to collect data, while the key researcher was to oversee the implementation. The procedure of the exercise would start by one pair of researchers introducing themselves to the potential respondent, then explaining about the exercise and seeking informed consent from identified participant. The session would take about 30 minutes and end by debrief to address any fear or exercise fatigue that participants may have experienced. On daily basis, the group would meet briefly in the morning and at the end of the exercise to deliberate on the day's progress and address any concern. On daily basis, the key researcher would collect all the responded questionnaires for sorting and keying in the computer. The exercise ran smoothly in both places Limuru and

Kikuyu urban centers and participants were very cooperative. However, more females were open to participating than males. The whole exercise took one month and there was 100% response rate.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Data collection tools in research refer to instruments designed to obtain data from participants by a researcher (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). According to Paradis et al. (2016), questionnaires are useful to obtain data. In this study, the researcher used questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaires contained open and closed-ended questions, specific enough to yield coherent responses from respondents. Closed-ended questions helped to collect quantitative data while open-ended questions were useful in qualitative data. Creswell (2014) indicates disadvantages of questionnaires emanating from questions that are not well structured because they may confuse respondents about the nature of the needed information.

Items in the questionnaire of this study on influence of language and ethnicity on couples' marital satisfaction were organized in sections, which enabled the researcher to administer the instrument easily and accurately. For instance, first section of the questionnaire began with socio-demographic questions. This was followed sequentially by items relevant to the other objectives of this research.

Demographic part of the questionnaire was useful to the researcher to gather participants' personal information related to the study, such as, age of respondents, age of marriage, gender, job status, educational level and religion. This section provided details of the participants, which were relevant to understand extraneous variables that could have some effect on the outcome of the study. Another purpose of the demographic part of the questionnaire was to ensure that the participants met desired characteristics for this study. Socio-demographic questions were also useful to create an opportunity for the researcher and

the respondents to interact at a personal level, which was vital in building a closer working relationship.

According to Samani et al. (2018), a variety of tools have been developed and are suitable to assess many aspects, such as, couples' MS. The researcher in this study, reviewed existing literature to attain more understanding on questionnaires used in previous similar studies. Adaption of some items from standardized rating tools was considered. The adapted items were appropriate to collect both quantitative and qualitative data consistent with the objectives of this study. For instance, relevant items were adapted from the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-32) (Funk & Rogge, 2007) for objective one, to assess level of MS in Kiambu. County. Items for objective two were adapted from the Five Love Language Test (FLL) (Chapman, 2015). Appropriate items were adapted from the Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire (MHCQ) (Henriksen et al., 2007) for objective three. The researcher in discussions with peer counseling professionals and consultations with senior psychology supervisors constructed items for objective four on mitigating measures.

### ***The Couples Satisfaction Index***

CSI-32 tool was developed by Funk and Rogge (2007). The scale had 32 items and the authors specified that the scale could safely be shrunk to a 4 item format depending on a researcher's needs. Therefore, relevant items from the CSI-32 were adapted for this study to collect data for objective one on MS. The items in CSI-32 were on a 6-point scale, while items adapted in this study required participants to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale. Further, it was necessary to categorize scores into 3 levels to attain levels of MS. Hence, scores ranging between 12 to 30 indicated low level of MS, scores between 31 to 41 indicated moderate levels of MS while scores between 42 to 60 revealed a high level of MS (Siyana & Vithanage, 2015).

Sorokowski et al. (2017) indicate that marital satisfaction scale is vital in understanding participants' degree of marital satisfaction. Therefore, CSI-32 scale was found sufficient in this study as a guide to understand monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples' marital satisfaction. According to Siyana and Vithanage (2015), CSI-32 has undergone cultural validation, therefore was considered relevant in this study on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

According to Rusu et al. (2016), items from the CSI-32 were adapted and translated for Couple Satisfaction Index-Romanian Version. Results depicted internal consistency for both men and women. CSI-Romanian version was developed within the context of a study examining the psychometric properties of the Romanian version of Dyadic Coping Inventory. Findings indicated substantial correlation with Dyadic Coping Inventory supporting evidence of convergent validity.

### ***The Five Love Languages Test***

The Five Love Language Test (FLL) was developed by Chapman in 2015. Some items were found relevant to understand the influence of language on MS among intercultural couples, which was objective two of this study. According to Chapman (1995), every spouse has an emotional love chamber that fills when partners learn how to speak each other's affection language. Intercultural couples in this study originated from divergent backgrounds with divergent languages. Therefore, they acquired their languages of communication from each family of origin. According to Bunt and Hazelwood (2017) an individual could have greater marital satisfaction when they practice a language that makes each partner feel more appreciated. Researcher in this study did not adopt the whole instrument but adapted only relevant items from FLL scale for objective two on language and marital satisfaction.

The items that were adapted from FLL were modified to collect data relevant to this study. For instance, FLL includes "language of spending time together", while in this study

spending quality time together was considered as couples' intimacy. FLL uses the first person language, such as, "I need your words of affirmation daily". While in this study applied inclusive language for both partners, for instance, "my spouse and I value words of affirmation". Respondents in this study answered each item on a 5-point Likert scale while FLL has paired items.

Couples from divergent cultures had divergent languages of communication they learnt from their families of origin, which could conflict and influence MS. Therefore, Chapman's scale was found useful in this study to bring out status of couples' languages that differed and influenced MS. Suriyah and Septiarly (2016); Hughes and Camden (2020) supported Chapman's scale. Lee (2021) examined how acknowledging a partner's love language by Chapman can affect couples' level of MS. Findings showed that acknowledgement of spouse's language of intimacy is positively related with higher levels of MS. FLL is a straightforward tool and can be completed easily within a short time, therefore, was found suitable for this study.

### ***The Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire***

The Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire (MHCQ) was developed by Henriksen et al. (2007). The tool was found useful to understand influence of ethnicity on MS among monogamous, heterosexual, intercultural couples, on objective three of this study. MHCQ is a revision and extension of the Interracial Couple Questionnaire(ICQ) occasioned by a need for a broader interview strategy. ICQ was developed to assist in identifying perceptions of interracial relationships from each spouse's family of origin. Couples completed ICQ independent of each other (Watts & Henriksen, 1998). ICQ revision reflected changes from interracial couples to embrace multiple heritage couples which includes, interracial and intercultural couples as well as interethnic marriages. MHCQ has 8 items and the researcher adapted some items for objective three on ethnicity. Items adapted from MHCQ were

modified to collect data relevant to this study on ethnicity. For instance, item 5 on family context was considered useful in relation to in-laws, which was one of the ethnicity components. Item 7 was equally considered useful in relation to childrearing which was a component of ethnicity. MHCQ items were considered essential in this study to conceptualize how divergent ethnicity influence couples' MS.

Henriksen et al. (2007) indicate that MHCQ questionnaire be given to each partner separately, so as to be responded independently. Consequently, participants in this study responded separately on how specific cultural differences influence individual marital satisfaction, for instance, child-rearing practices and in-law relationships. According to Tien (2013) the questionnaire has been used before and found reliable. MHCQ is a valuable research tool to gather empirical data. The questionnaire helps couples and counselors to understand the role multiple-heritage experiences play in couple's marital relationships (Henriksen et al., 2007).

Items for objective four were developed by the researcher. This was achieved through consultations with peer counseling professionals, literature on previous similar studies and guidance by senior psychology supervisors. This helped to understand whether the items were comprehensive enough to collect the needed information. Further, whether the instrument resembled other questionnaires used in prior similar studies, which facilitated revising of the items accordingly. The contents focused on items that would provide effective strategies respondents would apply to mitigate against the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. The items consisted of open and closed ended questions. Respondents marked against a personal preference from a provided list of mitigating measures. The items also provided an understanding of the influence of family of origin on MS. Open ended questions were to provide detailed descriptions of their mitigating

measures and their effectiveness. The responses were graded according to participants' preferences to compare their usage and effectiveness.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) observe that questionnaires have advantages as format of a good questionnaire facilitates speedy data collection, entry and analyses. Development of a good questionnaire ensures that the researcher generates valid and reliable data for the study significant for study's success.

### ***Data collection***

The researcher was the key interview guide assisted by 4 research assistants. The research assistants were fully trained to attain a full understanding of the research process. The team administered instruments ensuring full completion of the items and return of tools as planned.

**Recruitment and Training.** Collection of the necessary data could not have been successful without training research assistants first. Recruited research assistants were familiar with the area of study and had mental health knowledge. They had proficiency and fluency in both English and Kiswahili, which enabled them to communicate effectively with participants to collect desired data.

To be able to familiarize with study site, researcher and research assistants visited the study sites before data collection began. This helped to enhance working relationship and confirmed that there were no barriers to impede data collection exercise. According to Gatara (2010), rapport creation is significant to yield reliable information. Further, research assistants were sensitized on the importance of providing informed consent to participants to willingly participate in the study. Deliberations were held between researcher and research assistants on all the items in the instrument. Plans were put in place for data collection process, such as, convenient dates, timings and duration of data collection.

Time-frame for data collection was agreed to be four-weeks. On daily basis, before collecting data, sessions were held to find out if there were issues of concern among the team, for instance, anxiety or sickness. Research assistants were paired in twos, to collect data together. This was essential to enable one research assistant to interview respondents, while the other was coordinating the session and taking record of any information relevant to the study. There were one-hour meetings at the end of every-day, between research assistants and researcher during the month of data collection. This was essential to capture progress of the day, tally participants' responses, plan for the following day, and clear any other concern. For instance, interested respondents who missed participating were rescheduled. Further, updates on current issues, such as, challenges of the day, incidences of Cholera outbreak or Corona virus disease, 2019 (Covid-2019) (Calistri et al., 2021). Finally, as data was collected, it was simultaneously recorded and keyed in a computer for analysis purposes.

### **Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

Qualitative researcher's discourse is about trustworthiness of findings. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), the four criteria against which qualitative researcher's conclusions are evaluated include credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Mohajan (2018) indicates that evaluative measures for qualitative studies are necessary to judge vigor and truthfulness of the study findings. Consequently, there was continued supervision by two professionals in the course of development of the instrument. This was substantial to determine accuracy and quality of the data for the study. Pre-testing the instrument before the real study was essential to improve validity and reliability by adjusting items of the instrument accordingly. Convergent mixed methods research design was significant in this study to establish validity. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data sets is significant to establish validity.

## **Validity**

Validity refers to the capacity of an instrument to measure the properties of the construct under study (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) add that validity is significant as it establishes the relationship between the data and the construct of interest. Validity was considered significant in this study to measure quality of data generated by research tools. Validity that was considered significant in this study included face validity and content validity.

**Face validity.** Face validity refers to the degree a measurement method appears “on its face” to measure the construct of interest (Price et al., 2015). For instance, in this study on influence of language and ethnicity on MS among heterosexual intercultural couples, one would expect to find intimacy and marital adjustment in MS. Consequently, the researcher included in the instrument items on intimacy and marital adjustment to attain good face validity. This was realized through intensively reviewing and comparing literature involving prior similar studies. Further, continuous consultations with peer professional researchers was highly considered for the face and content validity to improve instrument validity.

**Content validity.** Content validity refers to the extent in which an instrument “covers” all relevant parts of the construct of interest (Price et al., 2015). This is important because if irrelevant aspects are included or some aspects are missing from an instrument then validity is threatened. Content validity provides initial evidence on construct validity of an instrument. Further, if an instrument lacks content validity, then it is impossible to establish reliability of a tool (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). The researcher in this study considered domain of indicators relevant to contain all possible items to be used in measuring relevant concepts. This was achieved through reviewing and comparing literature of previous similar studies. For instance, MS variable and marital expectation, spousal support, intimacy and marital adjustment as indicators of MS were essential for content validity of the tool.

Further, vigorous continuous consultations with professional senior psychologist supervisors were done to ascertain content validity of the instrument.

### ***Reliability***

Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of an instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Different types of consistency reliability include test-retest reliability, internal consistency reliability and inter-rater reliability. This study considered internal consistency reliability.

**Internal Consistency Reliability.** According to Price et al. (2015), internal consistency refers to the consistency of participants' responses across the items on a multiple-item measure. All the items on a measure are supposed to reflect the same underlying construct. Therefore, participants' scores on the items are correlated with each other. Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) add that internal consistency refers to the degree the sets of items on an instrument behave the same way.

Internal consistency was facilitated through collecting and analyzing data. Therefore, the researcher considered pre-testing the instrument before embarking on the real study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), pilot testing is essential in provision of an initial evaluation of the internal consistency of the items. A score obtained in one item is correlated with scores attained from other items in the instrument. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is then computed to conclude how items correlate among themselves. For instance, in this study, The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was applied to determine the internal consistency of the items in the instrument. Creswell and Creswell (2018); Taber (2018) indicate that threshold of 0.7 is regarded acceptable in most Social Sciences research. Consequently, the researcher in this study considered instrument's reliability acceptable when the computation yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above. Below is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient formula that determined whether scores attained from the instrument demonstrated acceptable internal

consistency reliability.

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

Where:

- N = the number of items
- $\hat{c}$  = average covariance between item-pairs
- v = average variance

The pilot test consisted 10% of study's sample size of 99 participants, which was 10 participants. In this study the reliability of the instrument was ascertained by using SPSS Version 25.0 software to determine Cronbach's Alpha coefficient as indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients*

| Scale                | Cronbach Alpha Coefficient | Number of items |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Marital Satisfaction | 0.828                      | 12              |
| Language             | 0.835                      | 12              |
| Ethnicity            | 0.783                      | 6               |

From Table 3, the scale on marital satisfaction had a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.828, language had 0.835 and ethnicity had 0.783, implying that the items had internal consistency, therefore reliable.

### ***Pilot-testing***

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) indicate that in pilot testing a study's questionnaire is administered to participants who are similar to the intended sample of the actual study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) a pilot study sample should be 10% of the sample projected for the main study. Therefore, the pilot test for this study was 10% of sample size of 99, which was 9.9 and rounded up to provide 10 participants. Participants had similar characteristics as for the real study, for instance, individuals' males and females were or had

been in intercultural marriages between 5 to 22 years and had age range of 25 to 51 years old and were living in Kiambu County urban centers.

Pilot testing for this study was based in Ruiru urban center in Kiambu County. Rationale behind carrying out pilot testing in Ruiru urban center in Kiambu County was because of the similarity of population characteristics in Kiambu County urban centers. Carrying out pilot testing in Ruiru urban center overcame the mistake of repeating the same participants in the real study at Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers of Kikuyu and Limuru sub-counties respectively. There were benefits achieved from pilot testing as it ensured that the tools applied were reliable (Creswell, 2014). Researcher learnt and gained experience of conducting a mixed methods' research before the actual study. Further, researcher and research assistants familiarized themselves with the administration of the tools. Pilot-testing tools ensured that items in the instrument were clearly stated and conveyed the same meaning to all participants. The researcher was alert to items that were unclear, sensitive and confusing and modified them accordingly prior to the actual study. Participants and information attained in pilot-testing did not form part of the sample of the main study.

### ***Data Analysis Plan***

Renjith et al. (2021) indicate that there are various strategies utilized by researchers to analyze data in qualitative research, however, they differ according to the type of inquiry. One major issue to consider in mixed methods research is the type of design used (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). This study's design is convergent mixed methods research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, quantitative and qualitative data set was collected concurrently, analyzed separately and then results were compared to understand convergence or divergence of the findings.

**Quantitative data.** Quantitative data was systematically organized and coded to facilitate analysis. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), descriptive statistics is essential in summarizing research data. Consequently, quantitative analysis in this study applied descriptive statistics computed from respondents' data. For instance, measures of mean scores, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages were used. Inferential statistics deals with inferences about the target population based on results attained from samples (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). For instance, in this study, inferring sample size of 99 participants' results from Kikuyu and Limuru urban centers to the entire population of Kiambu County urban centers. Regression analysis involves identifying and evaluating relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables (Zaid, 2015). Therefore, linear and multiple regressions were applied in this study to identify and evaluate relationships between dependent variable of MS and independent variables of language and ethnicity. Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) observe the model for multiple regression as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

|               |                                                                                                    |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| $\beta_0$ –   | The constant or intercept                                                                          |
| $\beta_1$     | Regressions coefficients, change in Y with one unit change in each X where<br>i = 1, 2, 3, ..... n |
| Y =           | The dependent variable                                                                             |
| $X_1$ =       | The independent variable where i = 1, 2, 3, ..... n                                                |
| $\varepsilon$ | The error term                                                                                     |

Advances in technology have simplified the process of data analysis. Cronk (2020); Rahman and Muktadir (2021) Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) software is considered one of the most applied statistical analysis package. It is user friendly, fast, efficient and has high accuracy in data analysis, hence, SPSS version 25.0 was considered in

this study. Findings were presented in terms of distribution tables of frequencies, percentages and charts.

**Qualitative data.** Qualitative data was analyzed by first sorting and reading thoroughly participants' responses from descriptions of their marital life experiences in the open ended questions. Codes were then generated according to shared themes to form categories that corresponded with the objectives of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative data is interpreted thematically according to participants' responses and study's objectives. Therefore, qualitative data in this study was interpreted thematically according to participants' descriptions and study's objectives. Then a report was produced in terms of participants' descriptions using direct quotations. The researcher compared both quantitative and qualitative results to check whether data confirm or disconfirm the influence of language and ethnicity on couples' MS. Interpretations of the results was done to facilitate conclusions of the findings on influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County.

### **Ethical Considerations**

It was unethical for the researcher in this mixed methods study not to respect participants' diverse cultures, for instance, ethnicity, gender, religion and other differences as stipulated (Kenya Counselling and Psychological Association (KCPA) Code of Ethics, 2015); (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics, 2015). According to Guthrie (2010), permission to conduct research comes in two parts. Authority to conduct a study is required from different institutions and Government. The other permission is required from the participants pertaining to informed consent.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), researchers need to have their research plans reviewed by an institutional review board (IRB). Consequently, the researcher sought for this study to be reviewed by Pan Africa Christian University Review Board. IRB as a regulatory body assessed potential risks to participants in the study. Authority was equally

sought from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and Kiambu County Government for the research permit of the study.

**Informed Consent.** KCPA Code of Ethics (2015); AAMFT Code of Ethics (2015) states that ethical standards refer to the rules of practice that a counsellor and family therapist is obliged to and judged. KCPA 7(3) includes informed consent. AAMFT Standard 1(1.2) refers to the informed consent, indicating that the respondents must be appropriately enlightened. Informed consent discusses what is expected of participants, what they are going to do, and understand the nature of the research with clear and effective language. Beins and McCarthy (2012) indicate that participants should express their consent to participate in the study voluntarily without coercion. Consequently, participants of this study were made aware of possible risks, such as, inclusion of data in the final report. However, they were assured that their identities were protected. Participants were further notified about their right to pull out of the study at any time they wished indicating that participation was voluntary. Participants consented to participate by inserting a given code in the study's instrument.

**Confidentiality.** In this study maintaining confidentiality safeguarded participants' information. KCPA Code of Ethics (2015) 7(3); AAMFT Code of Ethics (2015) Standard 11 indicates that confidentiality should be followed, for instance, guarding participants' identities. Therefore, this study confidentiality was highly regarded and participants' identities were protected by substituting their real names with specific given codes.

**Debrief.** According to Beins and McCarthy (2012), debriefing refers to informing research participants at the conclusion of a research study of the purpose of the research and providing an opportunity for participants to ask questions concerning the study. The purpose of debriefing in this study was to eliminate any misconceptions and anxiety that participants may have been caused by undertaking the exercise. Participants were debriefed to eliminate negative feelings, such as, fear that their identities could be identified in the public domain.

Consequently, the researcher revisited the issue of confidentiality to the participants and the significance of codes in the instrument. The codes did not bear participants' identities, which guaranteed participants confidentiality. Respondents were finally debriefed on exercise fatigue to attain awareness, as it may manifest after participating in a study.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter three has detailed the research methodology of collecting data from participants, the study location, population of the study, sample size and sampling methods. Types of data, primary and secondary are indicated. Data collection methods, data collection tools, validity and reliability in quantitative and qualitative research are discussed. Data analysis plan, ethical consideration and finally chapter summary are presented. Chapter four that follows presents the findings and discussions of the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. First, the demographic findings of the respondents who participated in the research are presented, followed by descriptive and inferential analysis of the research findings. Then analysis of the themes that emerged from the findings is done in accordance with the following study objectives:

- i. To explore the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- ii. To assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- iii. To find out the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.
- iv. To suggest effective mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Quantitative analysis involved use of questionnaires responses from participants. There were closed-ended items in the instrument for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data analysis involved participants' descriptions in the open-ended items of the instruments. Qualitative analysis was done according to the emergent themes. SPSS software was utilized to analyses data, which was found fast with accurate presentation and interpretation.

## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

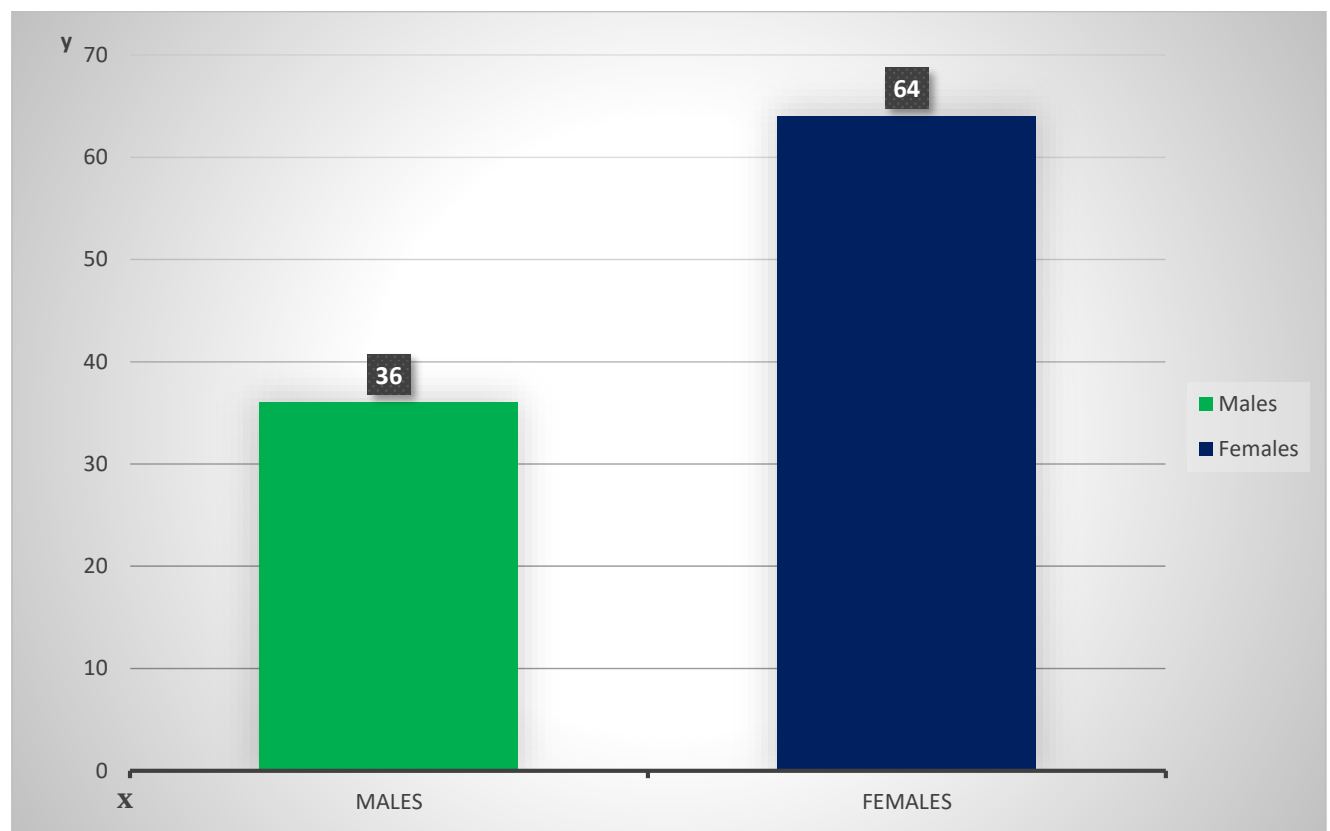
All the 99 participants sampled to take part in the study responded to the questionnaires indicating a 100% response rate. The demographic characteristics were sorted according to their distribution by; gender, age, marital status, years in marriage, highest level of education, employment status and religion. The results are presented in the subsections that follow.

### *Gender of Respondents*

The study sought to establish gender of the participants. The distribution of the responses by gender is presented on Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*Participants Gender*



As presented in Figure 5, 64% of the participants were females, while 36% were males. The findings showed that there were more females than males willing participants in this study,

which indicated gender disparity. The findings concurred with Sue et al. (2019) that there are gender differences in perception, for instance, perception of participating in this study. This indicated that females are likely to be more receptive to opening up to matters concerning their private lives compared to males.

### ***Age Category of the Respondents***

The study sought to establish participants' ages as one of the characteristics to qualify for participation in the study. Distribution of respondents by age category is presented on Table 4.

**Table 4**

### ***Age Distribution of the Respondents***

| <b>Age Category</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 25-33 years         | 38               | 38.4           |
| 34-42 years         | 45               | 45.5           |
| 43-51 years         | 16               | 16.1           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>   |

As presented on Table 4, 45.5% of the participants were aged between 34 to 42 years, 38.4% were aged 25 to 33 years, while 16.1% were between 43 to 51 years. The findings showed that 34 to 42 years old were the majority followed sequentially by those between 25 to 33 and 43-51 years old. This showed that the study's participants were drawn from all age categories, the young as well as the older, therefore the views of all age groups were captured and represented. Further, the highest number of participants in the study were most likely to have attained DoS, and could therefore make personal choices. The findings concurred with Bridge (2019) that differentiated couples are capable of supporting each other, make their own decision, even with language and ethnicity differences. They also balance connection with family of origin at any age, inferring that between 34-42 were the most with DoS and made personal decisions to participate in the study.

### ***Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status***

The researcher sought to establish participants' marital status. Distribution of respondents by marital status is presented on Table 5.

**Table 5**

#### ***Marital Status of the Respondents***

| <b>Marital Status</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Married               | 84               | 85                |
| Separated             | 8                | 8.0               |
| Divorced              | 4                | 4.0               |
| Widow/Widower         | 3                | 3.0               |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

As shown in the findings in Table 5, majority of the participants (85%) were married, 8% separated, 4% were divorced, 3% widow/widower. This showed that most of the respondents were married. It was most likely that majority of the married participants were still in intercultural marriages. Therefore, they had current experiences and information of what the researcher was investigating, that is, the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

### ***Distribution of Respondents by Years in Marriage***

The study sought to establish participants' years in marriage. Distribution of respondents by years in marriage is presented on Table 6.

**Table 6**

#### ***Years in Marriage Distribution***

| <b>Years in Marriage</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 5-10 years               | 60               | 60.6           |
| 11-16 years              | 22               | 22.2           |
| 17-22 years              | 17               | 17.2           |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>   |

From Table 6, majority of the participants (60.6%) had been married for 5 to 10 years, 22.2%

had been married for 11 to 16 years, while 17.2% had been married between 17 to 22 years. The findings showed a linear progression of years in marriage of willing participants. Participants between 5-10 years in marriage were more willing to participate as they were most likely in the process of adjusting to their intercultural marriages. This made them open to learning and participating in the study. Respondents between 11-16 years in marriage followed and those between 17-22 years in marriage had low participation. The low levels of participation could indicate that the participants had most likely adjusted to challenges in their intercultural marriages because of their long marital age and as a result, they may not have had the interest to participate in the study. This was in line with Nasir et al. (2012) study that showed significant differences in marriages based on marital age.

#### ***Distribution of Respondents by Highest Level of Education***

To establish the background characteristics of participants, the study sought to find out the participants' level of education. Distribution of respondents by highest level of education is presented on Table 7.

**Table 7**

#### ***Distribution of Level of Education***

| <b>Level of Education</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Primary                   | 12               | 12.1              |
| High School               | 38               | 38.4              |
| University Degree         | 42               | 42.3              |
| Postgraduate              | 4                | 4.1               |
| College                   | 3                | 3.1               |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

As shown in the findings in Table 7, 42.3% of the participants were university graduates, 38.4% were high school participants, 12.1% had primary education, postgraduates were 4.1%, while college participants had 3.1%. The majority of participants had university degree, which portrayed them as people who were educated and most likely broadminded with better understanding and flexible towards the study as compared to the less educated.

This resonated with Zaheri et al. (2016) that couples with higher level of education have better understanding, which enhances their cultural and intellectual merging. The findings also agreed with Barongo et al. (2015) study that found that majority of those with higher education were more satisfied with their marriages because of their intensified intellectual understanding. However, the least participants had postgraduate level of education, which could indicate that the highly educated participants are generally few in numbers, consequently, yielded limited participants.

### ***Employment Status of Respondents***

The study sought to establish participants' employment status. Distribution of respondents by employment status is presented on Table 8.

**Table 8**

#### *Employment Status of Respondents*

| <b>Employment Status</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Employed                 | 47               | 47.5              |
| Unemployed               | 12               | 12.1              |
| Self-employed            | 40               | 40.4              |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |

From the findings in Table 8, 47.5% of the participants were employed, 40.4% were self-employed, while 12.1% were unemployed. This shows that the highest number of participants were employed, followed by participants who were self-employed. People who are employed or self-employed are more likely educated too. This is in agreement with Zaheri et al. (2016) that higher levels of couples' education may enhance their marital satisfaction because of their better understanding which enhances cultural and intellectual merging. This concurs with Zare et al. (2014) that couples who are well educated have better opportunities in the job market. The financial capabilities allow them to have improved standard of living and extra time for leisure which is favorable for MS. However, the findings were contrary to Haefner (2014) who indicates that the BFST differentiation concept shows that a differentiated person

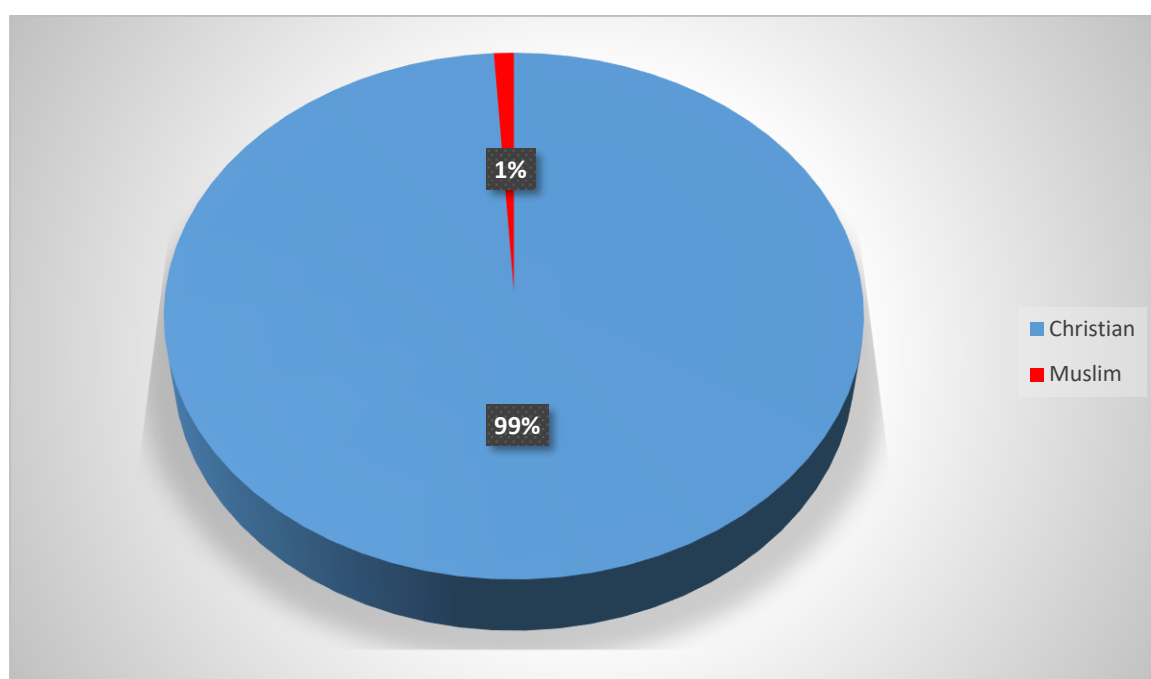
is able to function autonomously and make self-directed choices. This inferred that the most participants were self-differentiated and able to make self-directed choices to participate in the study.

### ***Distribution of Respondents by Religion***

Distribution of respondents by religion is presented on Figure 6.

**Figure 6**

*Distribution by Religion*



As shown in Figure 6, majority of the participants (99%) were Christians, with only 1% being Muslim. This showed that majority of the residents in Kikuyu urban and Limuru urban areas of study bear the same characteristic of Christian faith. It may also be that the first known participant referred the researcher to another known Christian in an intercultural marriage and the trend of referrals continued. This was supported by Govindan (2014) that early sample members in Snowball sampling identify and refer other people who meet the eligibility criteria. The findings were also in line with Simkus (2022) that known participants, who in this study were Christians, referred other known participants. This could be the more likely reason for sampling more Christians than other divergent faiths, such as, Muslims.

## **Level of MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages in Kiambu County,**

### **Kenya**

The first objective sought to establish the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### ***Levels of MS***

The level of marital satisfaction was measured using items adapted from CSI tool developed by Funk and Rogge (2007). To determine the level of marital satisfaction, participants were provided with a list of 12 statements assessing their satisfaction in marriage. The participants were required to rate their level of marital satisfaction on a 5 point Likert scale (1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes 4- Most of the time, 5- Always). The scale was further transformed into levels to analyze the levels of marital satisfaction. Since there were 12 items, the highest possible score was 60 (12x5) and the lowest possible score was 12 (12x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of marital satisfaction. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 12 to 30 indicated low level of marital satisfaction, scores between 31 to 41 indicated moderate level of marital satisfaction and scores between 42 to 60 indicated a high level of marital satisfaction (Siyana and Vithanage, 2015). The summary of findings is presented on Table 9.

**Table 9**

*Marital Satisfaction of the Respondents in Intercultural Marriages*

| <b>Level of Marital Satisfaction</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Low Level                            | 11               | 11.1              | 12         | 60         | 46.57       | 12.504                |
| Moderate Level                       | 12               | 12.1              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                           | 76               | 76.8              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |

From Table 9, majority of the participants (76.8%) had a high level of marital satisfaction,

12.1% had a moderate level of marital satisfaction, while only 11.1% had a low level of marital satisfaction. The minimum score attained was 12, while the maximum score attained was 60. The marital satisfaction mean score was 46.57 (SD = 12.504), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of marital satisfaction. From Table 9, identified minimum mean score was 12 while maximum score was 60, therefore, mean score of 46.57 from a possible maximum score of 60 revealed that participants had high level of MS.

**Table 10**

*MS by Respondents Descriptions*

| <b>Marital Satisfaction</b>          | <b>Responses</b> | <b>%</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Always satisfied with my marriage    | 76               | 76.8     |
| Sometimes satisfied with my marriage | 12               | 12.1     |
| Rarely satisfied with my marriage    | 11               | 11.1     |
| Total                                | 99               | 100      |

From Table10. majority of respondents (76.8%) revealed that they were always satisfied with their marriages. 12.1% of respondents indicated that they were sometimes satisfied with their marriages while 11.1% revealed that they were rarely satisfied with their marriages. All the responses confirmed quantitative findings, which showed majority of respondents had high (76.8%) MS. As described by a respondent: “He means everything to me. I found a friend and someone who understands me most. He embraces me when I am down. With him I feel complete” FKK20.

The description showed that the participant had high MS and her husband fully understood her including her emotions. This was in line with Ngazimbi et al. (2017) argument that benefits accrued from marriages include fewer mental and behavioral health problems, intimacy, support and contentment. It also resonated with Kasapoglu and Yabanigul (2018) claim that emotional and physical benefits are demonstrated by married people who are happier and healthier.

The findings revealed that majority 99% of participants were Christians. Couples who profess Christian faith are more dedicated to their relationships that yield MS. For instance, a respondent described that:

My wife comes from Kikuyu culture but with a good Christian background.

Therefore, Kikuyu culture does not affect our marital satisfaction in a big percentage. Let me say that we are affected 15% mainly when it comes to dowry issues in the Kikuyu culture and burial issues in Luhya culture.

(Participant, MKK15)

The response inferred that Christianity played a big role in overcoming challenges in marital relationship, resulting in high MS. This resonated with Sorokowski et al. (2017) that religious people are happier with their marriages. It also concurred with Khezri et al. (2020) who note that belief and devoutness lead to a positive relationship towards individual marriages, which strengthens couples MS.

However, there were dissenting participants 12.1% who indicated that sometimes they do not attain MS. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “I am fairly satisfied as my spouse sometimes doesn’t support me. I am rarely satisfied with affection and unmet original expectations” (Participant, FLM33).

Other participants 11.1% rarely experienced MS, for instance, a respondent indicated that: “I am not satisfied but I have no choice. My marriage rarely meets my expectations. Am not happy in this marriage” (Participant, MLM31).

These descriptions showed partners who seemed to be trapped in marriages and did not experience MS from unmet expectations and lack of support. The findings were supported by Aseka et al. (2021) study that found out that there exists low level of MS among couples in Kenya. This was in line with Omoro (2018) observation that 60% of Kenyans are unhappily married and Kiambu County is located in Kenya and therefore the same applies. The

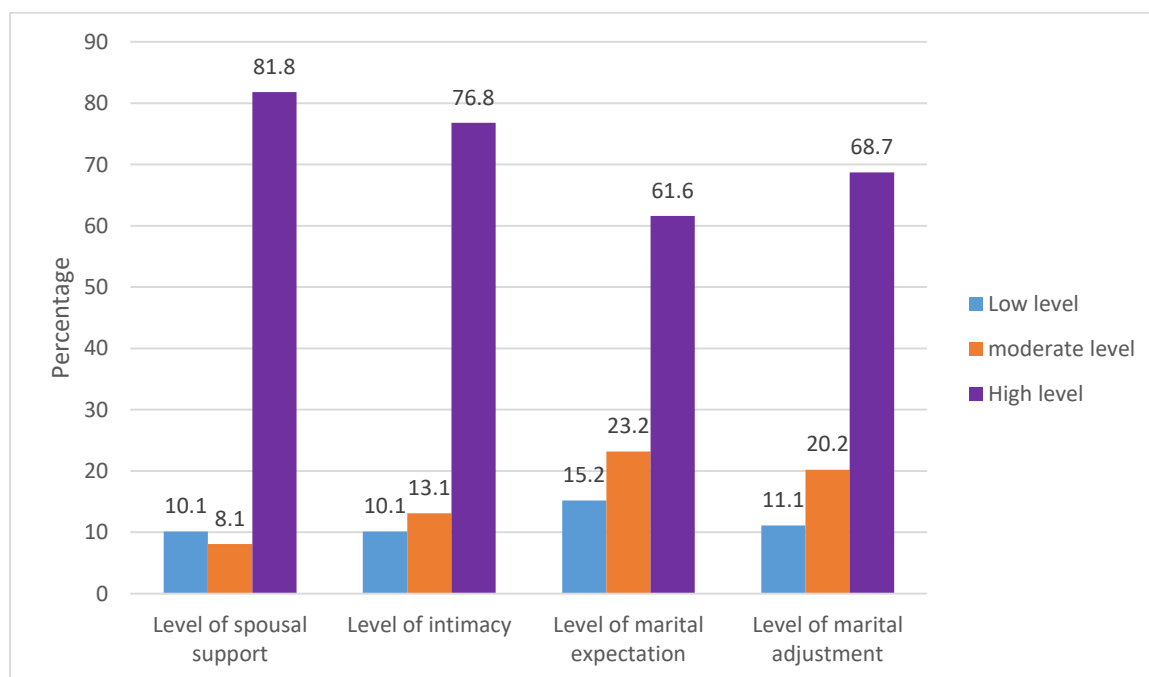
findings, further, concurred with Kamatu and M'arimi (2017) that marriages at Ruiru in Kiambu County experience low MS with alarming rate of separation soon after marriage.

### ***Levels of MS Sub-scales by Respondents in Intercultural Marriage***

The scale on marital satisfaction was further analyzed by its components, including; spousal support, intimacy, marital expectation and adjustment. Since there were 3 items in each sub-scale, the highest possible score was 15 (3x5) and the lowest possible score was 3 (3x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of each component. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 3 to 7 indicated low level of satisfaction, scores between 8 to 10 indicated moderate level of satisfaction and scores between 11 to 15 indicated a high level of satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented on Figure 7 and Table 11.

**Figure 7**

### ***Level of MS Subscales***



As indicated on Figure 7, majority of the participants (81.8%) had a high level of spousal

support, 76.8% had a high level of marital intimacy, 68.7% had a high level of marital adjustment, while 61.6% had a high level of marital expectation.

**Table 11**

*Levels of MS of the Respondents in Intercultural Marriages*

| <b>Level of Spousal Support</b>     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Low Level                           | 10               | 10.1              | 3          | 15         | 11.81       | 3.043                 |
| Moderate Level                      | 8                | 8.1               |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                          | 81               | 81.8              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Intimacy</b>            | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                           | 10               | 10.1              | 3          | 15         | 11.99       | 3.340                 |
| Moderate Level                      | 13               | 13.1              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                          | 76               | 76.8              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Marital Expectation</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                           | 15               | 15.2              | 3          | 15         | 11.15       | 3.590                 |
| Moderate Level                      | 23               | 23.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                          | 61               | 61.6              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Marital Adjustment</b>  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                           | 11               | 11.1              | 3          | 15         | 11.62       | 3.463                 |
| Moderate Level                      | 20               | 20.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                          | 68               | 68.7              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |

From Table 11, the minimum score attained for spousal support was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The spousal support mean score was 11.81 (SD = 3.043), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of spousal support. The minimum score attained for marital intimacy was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The marital intimacy mean score was 11.99 (SD = 3.340), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of marital intimacy. The minimum score attained for marital expectation was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The marital expectation mean

score was 11.15 (SD = 3.590), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of marital expectation. The minimum score attained for marital adjustment was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The marital adjustment mean score was 11.62 (SD = 3.463), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of marital adjustment.

**Table 12**

*MS by MS Subscales Descriptions*

| <b>MS</b> | <b>Spousal support</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Intimacy</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Expectation</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Adjustment</b> | <b>%</b> |
|-----------|------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| Always    | 81                     | 81.8     | 76              | 76.8     | 61                 | 61.6     | 68                | 68.7     |
| Sometimes | 10                     | 10.1     | 13              | 13.1     | 23                 | 23.2     | 20                | 20.2     |
| Rarely    | 8                      | 8.1      | 10              | 10.1     | 15                 | 15.2     | 11                | 11.1     |
| Total     | 99                     | 100      | 99              | 100      | 99                 | 100      | 99                | 100      |

From Table 12 majority of respondents (81.8%) were always satisfied with their spousal support. 10.1% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their spousal support while 8.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with their spousal support. Majority of respondents (76.8%) were always satisfied with their marital intimacy. 13.1% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their marital intimacy while 10.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with their marital intimacy. Majority of respondents (61.6%) were always satisfied with their marital expectations. 23.2% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their marital expectations while 15.2% of respondents were rarely satisfied with their marital expectations. Majority of participants (68.7%) of respondents were always satisfied with their marital adjustments. 20.2% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their marital adjustments while 11.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with their marital adjustments.

The qualitative responses supported quantitative findings, which showed high levels of marital spousal support (81.8%), high marital intimacy (76.8%), high marital expectations (61.6%), and high marital adjustment 68.7%. This is in line with Renanita and Setiawan

(2018) finding that one of the indicators of a successful marriage involves MS of both husband and wife. For instance, description on spousal support by a respondent indicated that: “Fulfilled in our marriage. My spouse is always available and supportive. Our marriage is rewarding and meet our needs” (Participant, MKK57). Respondent on intimacy discussed that: “We enjoy going on trips. I feel safe to express my feelings towards my spouse” (Participant, MKK19). On marital expectations a respondent described that: “I am satisfied. We support each other, my marriage met my expectations” (Participant, FLM23). A respondent on marital adjustment described that: “My spouse and I believe we were meant for each other and this gives us a lot of satisfaction. I would choose him again and again because I see a lot of destiny in our relationship” (Participant, FKK59). The findings were supported by Rika (2012) that couples who are fulfilled with each other and their marriages are able to overcome other conflicts in marriage. It concurred with Ngazimbi et al. (2017) that there are benefits accrued from marriages, such as, intimacy, support and contentment in shared activities. It also resonated with Nympha et al. (2015) that MS is based on individual’s expectations and how they match with experiences.

On the other hand, there were dissenting responses from participants, which showed that they experienced high MS without marital support. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “I am satisfied with my marriage, but sometimes he is not available for support” (Participant, FKK24). Consequently, this finding showed that the participant was satisfied with her marriage however, the spouse was not available for support. According to the researcher this participant lived in an ideal situation of experiencing MS, but not in the reality of her marriage that lacked spousal support, which influenced MS. The findings concurred with Sharaievska et al. (2013) who note that MS is an individual’s subjective evaluation of the overall nature of marriage. This was supported by Dobrowolska et al. (2020) claim that MS involves thoughts, feelings and behaviours related to personal relationship with a partner.

This concurred with Epstein and Zheng (2017) that CBT recognises the interplay between intercultural couples' cognitions, emotional responses and behaviours. Therefore, each spouse was likely to have a subjective evaluation of personal marriage.

On intimacy there were participants that described their marriages as satisfying however, they would prefer to experience more time alone without spousal company. For instance, a respondent described that: "I am satisfied with my marriage however, there are times I long being alone. I am satisfied but I don't like long trips" (Participant, FKK30). The findings on this response on intimacy showed that the participant was satisfied with her marriage, however, preferred individuation as opposed to being fused with the spouse. The findings further showed that, it was likely that participant's spouse had low DoS. The respondent may have been seeking for a balance of individuation and togetherness in her marital relationship. This was supported by Keleta (2014) that DoS indicates the ability to moderate affect, maintain a clear sense of self and balance intimacy and autonomy in significant relationships. This concurred with Lampis et al. (2019) that DoS is fundamental to a partner's capacity to realise intimacy and mutuality in marriage.

There were other descriptions of decrease in marital fulfilment from the initial experiences. For instance, a respondent discussed that: "I was very satisfied and we did things together, however expectations were unmet and there was no fulfilment, so we separated" (Participant, MLM11). This description showed that the participant felt satisfied at the commencement of marriage and the couple did things together, however, the husband encountered unmet marital anticipations prompted by divergent cultural backgrounds, which caused separation. The finding was in line with Crippen (2011) that numerous cultural values remain hidden until couples become parents then issues emerge concerning which values to adopt on parenting. The finding also concurred with Karney and Bradbury (2021) that between 60% and 85% of spouses' experience minimal declines in their marital satisfaction

in early marriage. This inferred that the participant was among the 15% that experience decline in MS during early marital period.

Divergent description showed that there were participants who were not fully satisfied with their marriages but submit for the sake of peace in marriage. For instance, on marital adjustment a respondent described that: “let me say I am satisfied with my marriage at 85%, that is because when it comes to some cultural differences we tend to disagree, so one has to come down in the name of peace” (Participant, MKK15). The findings showed that the participant had not attained 100% adjustment in his marriage. There were divergent conflicting cultural practices, but he made it intentional to cope with intercultural challenges by giving in for the sake of establishing harmony. This is in line with Silva et al. (2012) claim that intercultural couples are at a high risk of encountering adjustment challenges in their marriages.

Another dissenting description of MS identified stemmed from infidelity in the name of cultural practices. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “The cultural diversity is strong and one time after going out of marriage he said his culture allows them to marry many. No connection at all as per now, it is draining” (Participant, FKK50). The response showed that the participant had challenges emanating from conflicting cultural practices and not yet adjusted to her intercultural marriage. The respondent’s spouse seemed not to have attained DoS to make self-directed decisions and refrain from retrogressive intercultural sexual behaviours to remain committed to his marriage. This is in line with Dewi et al. (2019) observation that a partner who emerges from divergent culture has unique challenges that are likely to emerge from adjusting to a partner from a dissimilar culture.

Other adjustment factors that were identified from participants’ responses with influence on their MS included level of education and food. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “My wife is more educated than me, which at times brings stress in the family,

but I earn more than her. So we are still working on our marriage” (Participant, MLM10). The findings showed that the respondent had not yet adjusted to his marriage as a result of differences in education as wife had a higher level of education than him, which influenced their MS. This concurred with Kariuki (2018) argument that dynamics of culture, such as, educational level helps to shape the standards of what is regarded as essential to form an emotional intimacy. Other adjustment challenges that included food were disclosed. For instance, a respondent described that: “Sometimes the things we do in our home is not what they do, and that brings confusion in our marriage. Sometimes what we eat or drink is not what they eat or drink” (Participant, FKK16). The findings showed that the participant had not yet adjusted to spouse’s divergent food and drinks, which brought confusion with influenced MS. This is in line with Zaheri et al. (2016) that partners in marriage who agree on issues have better relationships, which is essential for MS. So when partners do not make decisions on differences of food in their intercultural marriage then confusion emerge with influence on MS.

### ***Summary of Overall Level of MS among Intercultural Marriages***

The findings of the study revealed that majority of participants (76.8%) had a high level of MS. The MS mean score was 46.57 (SD = 12.504), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of MS. Qualitative findings revealed that majority of respondents (76.8%) were always satisfied with their marriages, which confirmed quantitative findings. In conclusion, this study revealed high level of MS among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County.

## **Influence of Language on MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya**

The second objective was to assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings of the study's objective are presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

### ***Levels of Satisfaction with Marital Language***

The influence of language on MS among couples in intercultural marriages was assessed by adapting some items from the Five Love Language Test developed by Chapman (2015). Subsequently, to determine the level of satisfaction with marital language, participants were provided with a list of 12 statements assessing their interaction in marriage through various aspects of language. The participants were required to rate their interaction on a 5 point Likert scale (1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes 4- Most of the time, 5- Always). The scale was further transformed into levels to analyze the levels of satisfaction with marital language. Since there were 12 items, the highest possible score was 60 (12x5) and the lowest possible score was 12 (12x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 12 to 30 indicated low level of satisfaction with marital language, scores between 31 to 41 indicated moderate level of satisfaction with marital language and scores between 42 to 60 indicated a high level of satisfaction with marital language. The summary of findings is presented on Table 13.

**Table 13***Distribution of MS with Language*

| <b>Level of Satisfaction</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Low Level                    | 13               | 13.1              | 12         | 60         | 46.28       | 11.931                |
| Moderate Level               | 17               | 17.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                   | 69               | 69.7              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |

From Table 13, majority of the participants (69.7%) had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language, 17.2% had a moderate level of satisfaction, while 13.1% had a low level of satisfaction with marital language. The minimum score attained was 12, while the maximum score attained was 60. The marital language mean score was 46.28 (SD = 11.931), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language.

**Table 14***Language with MS Descriptions*

| <b>Language Satisfaction</b>                                | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Always satisfied with the language we use in my marriage    | 69                 | 69.7       |
| Sometimes satisfied with the language we use in my marriage | 17                 | 17.2       |
| Rarely satisfied with the language we use in my marriage    | 13                 | 13.1       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                | <b>99</b>          | <b>100</b> |

From Table 14, participants' descriptions of personal marital experiences showed that majority of respondents (69.7%) were always satisfied with language of communication in their marriages. 17.2% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with language of communication in their marriages while 13.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with language of communication in their marriages. The qualitative responses supported quantitative findings, which showed high (69.7%) level of language of communication. Participants descriptions revealed high satisfaction with language. For instance, a respondent discussed that: "As a husband I know that my wife likes going out and that is mostly our

language of affection. I enjoy it because it makes her happy and this keeps our marriage strong” (Participant, MLM25). The findings showed the importance of spouses’ awareness of each other’s uniqueness and needs, for marital management, which is essential to attain MS. This is supported by Daniels (2015) that differences among couples in marriage present both synergy and conflicting elements in the relationship. However, when couples are unaware of their differences, deliberate efforts to change to healthy functioning in marriage is limited.

Language of affection is supported by Buarqoub (2019) claim that language is the most significant shared tool of communication and supports to build bridges of relationships in couples’ marital bond. For instance, a respondent explained that: “Our language of affection is giving each other gifts as appreciation to each other. We also go for holidays together” (Participant, FLM34). The findings of this respondent showed that both partners were from divergent cultural backgrounds. However, they formed their individual marital language of communication. Consequently, they were familiar with their individual needs and used personal marital language of communication that kept their marriage functioning. This was supported by Renalds (2011) that language is substantial in effective communication within a couple’s marital relationship. It was also in line with Kariuki (2017) who argues that it is essential for intercultural couples to communicate with each other with languages that show their deepest feelings and underlying needs to attain fulfilment in their personal marital relationships.

However, there were dissenting responses from participants who described their divergent languages had brought them closer to each other. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “My partner’s love language is different from mine, but this has brought us closer to each other and we value our time together and we enjoy physical touch. We have learnt to appreciate each other in our own way” (Participant, FLM30). The findings showed that participant’s spouse was from a different cultural background with language that differed

from hers. The participant and spouse formed their own effective language of communication. Consequently, she said that their divergent marital language had played a role in strengthening their marital relationship. The findings contradicted with Tien (2013) that intercultural unions are normally more difficult and challenging for a couple because of their dissimilar languages. The descriptions also showed that language in an intercultural marriage is not the main contributor of challenges, there is likely to be other factors involved, such as, couple's age or marital age.

The study showed that progression of language of communication in marriage is not linear and is likely to oscillate, from being high at times and low in other times. For instance, a respondent described that:

I can say that our marital language of affection used to be so high in our early years of marriage, then now where we are, is over 20 years. We seem to be so used to each other, sometimes we are high and other times we are just fine with each other. (Participant, MKK15)

According to the findings respondent experienced MS early in marriage, however, it is not the same after 20 years. This was in line with Tavakol et al. (2017) that age of marriage is a significant factor in couples' MS as most people have a high level of MS at the time of marriage then after a while MS diminishes. From the response of this participant different factors could have contributed to the decline in MS, for instance, couples' age, marital age or finances may have affected the couples' marital language and prompted fluctuations that influenced their MS. This concurred with Zaheri et al. (2016) observation that diverse factors, such as, raising children, financial challenges and relationship with relatives in the middle of marital life may prompt MS fluctuations. For instance, a respondent discussed that: "Our marital language is okay because we both want the best for each other, though when in disagreement on issues to do with finances, the marital language is silent" (Participant,

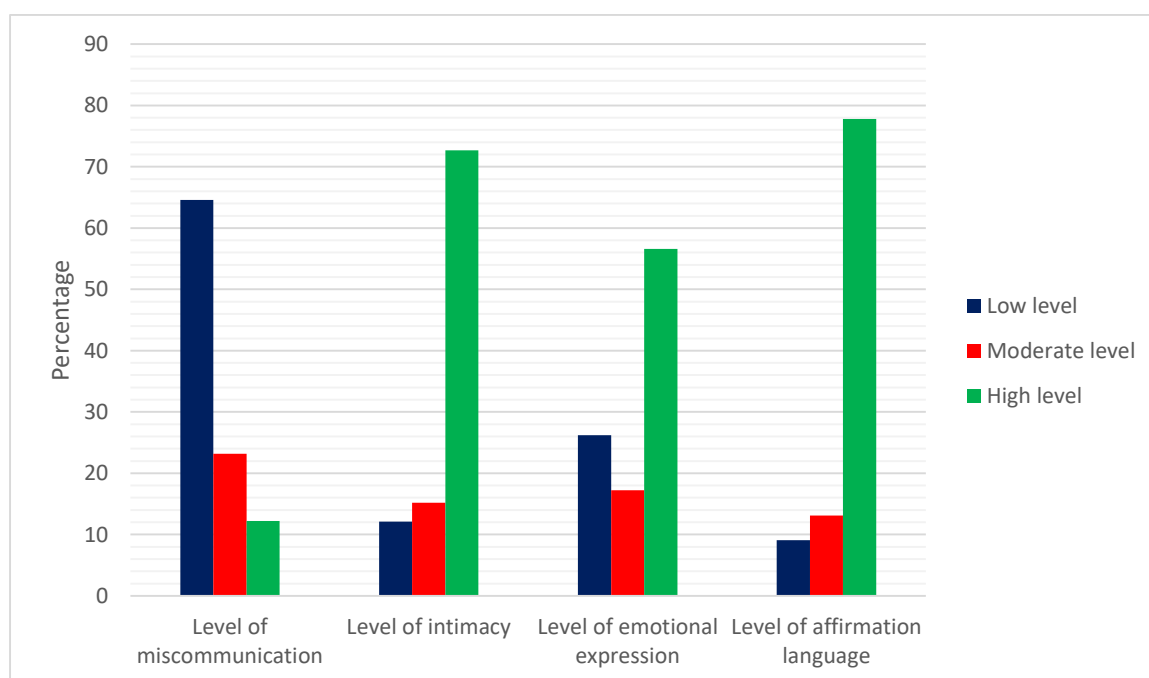
FKK1). The response by this participant showed that their main challenges to their MS were finances and not language, even though, they were from divergent cultures. This was in line with Tien (2013) claim that not much literature has examined and provided adequate comprehension of the role of language differences in couples' MS.

### ***Levels of Satisfaction with Language Subscales by Respondents in Intercultural Marriages***

The scale on satisfaction with marital language was further analyzed by its subscales which included; miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and affirmation language. Since there were 3 items in each sub-scale, the highest possible score was 15 (3x5) and the lowest possible score was 3 (3x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction with each sub-scale. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 3 to 7 indicated low level of satisfaction, scores between 8 to 10 indicated moderate level of satisfaction and scores between 11 to 15 indicated a high level of satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented on Figure 8 and Table 15.

**Figure 8**

*MS with Language subscales*



From Figure 8, majority of the participants (77.8%) had a high level of affirmation language, 72.7% had a high level of intimacy language, 64.6% had a low level of miscommunication, while 56.6% had a high level of emotional expression.

**Table 15**

*Distribution of Level of MS and Marital Language Subscales from Respondents in Intercultural Marriages*

| <b>Level of Miscommunication</b>     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Low Level                            | 64               | 64.6              | 3          | 15         | 6.81        | 3.306                 |
| Moderate Level                       | 23               | 23.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                           | 12               | 12.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Intimacy</b>             | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                            | 12               | 12.1              | 3          | 15         | 11.44       | 3.111                 |
| Moderate Level                       | 15               | 15.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                           | 72               | 72.7              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Emotional expression</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                            | 26               | 26.2              | 3          | 15         | 10.47       | 4.006                 |
| Moderate Level                       | 17               | 17.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                           | 56               | 56.6              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Level of Affirmation language</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
| Low Level                            | 9                | 9.1               | 3          | 15         | 12.28       | 3.308                 |
| Moderate Level                       | 13               | 13.1              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                           | 77               | 77.8              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |

As shown on Table 15, the minimum score attained for miscommunication was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The miscommunication mean score was 6.81 (SD = 3.306), indicating that on average, the participants had a low level of miscommunication. The minimum score attained for language intimacy was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The language intimacy mean score was 11.44 (SD = 3.111), indicating that on average,

the participants had a high level of language intimacy. The minimum score attained for emotional expression was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The emotional expression mean score was 10.47 (SD = 4.006), indicating that on average, the participants had a moderate level of emotional expression. The minimum score attained for affirmation language was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The affirmation language mean score was 12.28 (SD = 3.308), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of affirmation language.

**Table 16**

*Language with MS Subscales Descriptions*

| Language satisfaction | Miscommunication | %    | Intimacy | %    | Emotional expression | %    | Affirmation language | %    |
|-----------------------|------------------|------|----------|------|----------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| Always                | 12               | 12.1 | 72       | 72.7 | 56                   | 56.6 | 77                   | 77.8 |
| Sometimes             | 23               | 23.2 | 15       | 15.2 | 26                   | 26.3 | 13                   | 13.1 |
| Rarely                | 64               | 64.7 | 12       | 12.1 | 17                   | 17.1 | 9                    | 9.1  |
| Total                 | 99               | 100  | 99       | 100  | 99                   | 100  | 99                   | 100  |

From Table 16 majority of participants (64.7%) rarely had any miscommunication in their marriages. 23.2% of respondents sometimes had miscommunication while 12.1% always had miscommunication in their marriages. Majority of respondents (72.7%) were always satisfied with intimacy language in their marriages. 15.2% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with intimacy language in their marriages while 12.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with intimacy language in their marriages. Majority of respondents (56.6%) were always satisfied with emotional expression language in their marriages. 26.3% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with emotional expression language in their marriages while 17.1% of respondents were rarely satisfied with emotional expression language in their marriages. Majority of respondents (77.8%) had high satisfaction with affirmation language in their marriages. 13.1% were sometimes satisfied with affirmation language in their marriages while 9.1% were rarely satisfied with affirmation language in their marriages. These findings

supported quantitative findings which revealed majority of respondents 64.6% had low level of miscommunication in their marriages, high 72.7% intimacy language, moderate 56.6% emotional expression language and high 77.8% affirmation language in their marriages.

The majority of participants who disclosed low levels of miscommunication shared that divergent marital language had least possible source of miscommunication in their marriages. For instance, a respondent discussed that:

Our love language is somehow different. My wife appreciates gifts, acts of service and spending time together and words of affirmation. I prefer quality time together, touch, acts of service. These are things we have discussed in our early marriage. (Participant, MKK73)

The response from the participant showed that the intercultural couple had dissimilar languages in their marriage, however, they were open to learning from each other their divergent languages. At the same-time they discussed and agreed early in marriage individual's preferred language of communication, which was essential to attain MS. This was supported by Salija et al. (2018) that language is significant in a marital relationship as a tool of communication and expression. It also resonated with Esere et al. (2014) that discussions using language as a tool of communication between spouses promotes harmonious marital relationship.

There were some dissenting responses from participants, which showed that divergent languages caused miscommunication in their marriages with influence on MS. For instance, a respondent discussed that: "We do not share birthday gifts. I got tired of buying her gifts. Our culture does not allow us to hold hands in public" (Participant, MKK42). The discussion from the participant showed that he got tired of buying his wife gifts indicating that the intention of buying gifts was not well understood which pointed to miscommunication. This response was supported by Ajaegbu et al. (2015) that miscommunication in marriage may be caused by

misunderstandings and injecting unintended meaning into a message from a spouse, for instance, this participant had been buying gifts to the wife, which had never been reciprocated. This is likely to have made the participant conclude that the gesture was not appreciated. On the other hand, most likely the wife was not aware of the husband's symbol of affection. This was supported by Bystydzienski (2011) that language and meanings may create miscommunication, as each cultural group has its own way of defining words.

Participants' descriptions showed high levels of satisfaction in their intimacy languages in their marriages. For instance, respondent's description that: "We value spending quality time together. Taking walks and talking of our journeys, our achievements and our pitfalls. It was never like this in the beginning. It has grown with time and it becomes better and better. We love touching each other" (Participant, FKK35). The respondent response showed that intimacy is not constant but a process that increases with time. The findings were in line with Okonkwo et al. (2019) that intimacy develops through couples' interaction and communication using verbal and non-verbal language. This was equally supported by Johnson and Anderson (2013) study on relationship between time spent together and MS.

On the other hand, there were dissenting responses on couples' intimacy language and MS. For instance, a respondent disclosed that: "We are at a place of re-learning one another from a place of very high dissatisfaction. So far our satisfaction is better than where it has been for years" (Participant, FKK33). The findings showed that this participant's language of intimacy had been low. However, the couple got awareness of its significance in marriage and agreed to put their concerted efforts for their intimacy amelioration. This most likely occurred in a counselling session that is significant in collaborating with couples to acquire awareness of marital challenges and relevant mitigation measures. This was in line with Odhiambo et al. (2021) observation that marital counselling is essential to improve communication issues within an intimate relationship. This is further supported by Tavakol et

al. (2017) that relationships between spouses are formed on the basis of four basic types of relationships, emotional relationship, cognitive or intellectual relationship, economic relationship and sexual relationship. The moment couples get awareness of the need in their personal marital relationship then MS enhancement occurs.

Participants descriptions showed that respondents had high levels of satisfaction in emotional expressions in their marriages. For instance, a respondent discussed that: “My marital language of affection with my partner is very satisfying and we adore it” (Participant, MLM17). The findings showed that the participant was satisfied with his marital language, which enhanced their MS. This is in line with Chapman (2015) that the basic reasons for couples’ relationship constraints emerge from speaking dissimilar love languages. This is also supported by Hughes and Camden (2020) study that a partner’s perception using preferred intimate language enhances couples’ relationship.

There were divergent responses that showed gender differences in affection language. For instance, a respondent indicated that: “Our language is fine but sometimes I feel that my culture restricts us because men are not taught to be affectionate” (Participant, FLM21). The findings indicated that this female respondent was not fully satisfied with partner’s affection language and blamed it on culture. It is most likely that the differences in their language of affection was prompted by their divergent cultures and gender differences. This is in line with Wood (2016) claim that there are inequities in expectations of different genders. It is also supported by Ubando (2016) that communication differences between genders may influence MS.

There were dissenting responses from participants that showed language of emotional expression resulted in challenges in their marriages. For instance, a respondent described that: “We rarely give each other gifts. We don’t go for trips. We also have a problem of expressing our feelings because of our cultural differences. I fear annoying her” (Participant, MKK45).

The findings showed that this participant was not familiar with spouses' language of emotional expression. He was also unable to express his feelings towards the spouse occasioned by cultural differences and feared disclosing, as it may create marital disharmony. This is in line with Lavner et al. (2016) that contented couples engage in effective communication, while distressed couples display more negative communication behaviors. It is also supported by Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) that emotional expression is part of language of communication. Consequently, absence of emotional expression as a result of cultural differences is likely to cause disharmony in a marital relationship.

Participants responses in the study indicated high levels of satisfaction with affirmation language. For instance, a respondent's description that: "I value words of affirmation so does my partner, which helps us. In the long run we are able to grow as one and it contributes to our marital satisfaction" (Participant, FLM1). The findings showed that the respondent and partner were familiar with individual affirmation language. The respondent and spouse valued words of affirmation and applied it in their marital relationship, which contributed towards their MS. This was line with Emanuel et al. (2016) who indicated that spontaneity in affirmation is associated with increased levels of happiness.

However, there were other divergent responses, for instance, a respondent described that: "Words of affirmation and touch are important to me, but for my spouse it's acts of service and quality time, so we try" (Participant, FKK65). The findings showed that the participant preferred words of affirmation while the spouse differed as a result of divergent cultures. The respondent described that they were aware of their divergent preferences, which they were working on to overcome. This was in line with Dillon and Beechler (2010) that the conditions of marital satisfaction may differ based on cultural background. Consequently, awareness is key to identifying divergent languages of communication and applying what works in a personal marriage. Further, self-affirmation was equally significant in

consideration with couples' words of affirmation. This is supported by Sherman (2013) that self-affirmation is a successful attribute for a person's ability to broaden personal global perspective to reduce negative emotions. Therefore, lack of self-affirmation may make it challenging for couples to introspect on dissimilar cultures and form their own, which works for them. This is further supported by a study by Creswell et al. (2013) on self-affirmation, where results showed that self-affirmation improves problem-solving.

### ***Inferential Statistics***

A linear regression was computed to determine the influence on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. The summary of the findings is presented in the subsequent tables.

**Table 17**

#### ***Model Summary<sup>b</sup>***

| <b>Model</b> | <b>R</b>          | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> | <b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b> | <b>Durbin-Watson</b> |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1            | .832 <sup>a</sup> | .693            | .690                     | 6.966                             | 1.667                |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Language

b. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

From Table 17, language accounted for 69% of the variation in marital satisfaction as shown by the adjusted R square value, while the other percentage could be accounted for by other factors.

**Table 18***ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 10615.601      | 1  | 10615.601   | 218.775 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 4706.722       | 97 | 48.523      |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 15322.323      | 98 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Language

As shown in Table 18, the regression model was a good predictor for marital satisfaction from language,  $F(1, 97) = 218.775$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This implies that the regression model was a better predictor of the influence of language on marital satisfaction than the mean as indicated by the level of significance.

**Table 19***Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

| Model        | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B |             |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|---------------------------------|-------------|
|              | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      | Lower Bound                     | Upper Bound |
| 1 (Constant) | 7.064                       | 2.761      |                           | 2.559  | .012 | 1.584                           | 12.543      |
| Language     | .872                        | .059       | .832                      | 14.791 | .000 | .755                            | .989        |

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

A linear regression was conducted to determine if language had a significant influence on marital satisfaction. There existed a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variable as confirmed by the visual inspection of the scatter plot, there were no outliers as all the cases had a standardized value of less than 3, there was homoscedasticity as indicated by the visual inspection of the scatter plot and there was normality of residuals as indicated by visual inspection of the Normal P-P Plot. The findings in Table 19 indicate that language had a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

The influence was considered significant since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings imply that an increase in marital language will positively influence marital satisfaction by 0.872.

The following regression equation was computed;

$$Y = 7.064 + 0.872X_1$$

Y= Marital satisfaction;  $X_1$ = Language

From the above equation it is observed that when language is held to a constant zero, the variable will significantly influence marital satisfaction as shown by constant value of 7.064.

A multiple regression was further computed to determine the influence of language subscales on marital satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented in the subsequent tables.

**Table 20**

*Model Summary<sup>b</sup>*

| <b>Model</b> | <b>R</b>          | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> | <b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b> | <b>Durbin-Watson</b> |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1            | .856 <sup>a</sup> | .733            | .722                     | 6.598                             | 1.816                |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression, affirmation language

b. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

As shown in Table 20, miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and affirmation language explained 72.2% of the variation in marital satisfaction as indicated by the adjusted R square value while the other percentage could be accounted for by other factors.

**Table 21***ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

| <b>Model</b> |            | <b>Sum of Squares</b> | <b>Df</b> | <b>Mean Square</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig.</b>       |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1            | Regression | 11230.204             | 4         | 2807.551           | 64.492   | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|              | Residual   | 4092.119              | 94        | 43.533             |          |                   |
|              | Total      | 15322.323             | 98        |                    |          |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), affirmation language, miscommunication, emotional expression, intimacy

From Table 21, the regression model was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction from the components of language,  $F(4, 94) = 64.492$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 22***Multiple Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

| Mode | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T     | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B |             |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------------|-------------|
|      | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      | Lower Bound                     | Upper Bound |
| 1    |                             |            |                           |       |      |                                 |             |
| 1    | (Constant)                  | 9.748      | 5.185                     | 1.880 | .063 | -.547                           | 20.044      |
|      | Miscommunication            | -.284      | .289                      | -.075 | .328 | -.858                           | .290        |
|      | Intimacy                    | 1.098      | .373                      | .273  | .004 | .358                            | 1.838       |
|      | Emotional Expression        | .265       | .253                      | .085  | .297 | -.237                           | .768        |
|      | Affirmation language        | 1.906      | .360                      | .504  | .000 | 1.190                           | 2.621       |

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

Multiple regression was conducted to determine the influence of subscales of language on marital satisfaction. The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, unusual points and normality of residuals were met.

From the Coefficient, the following regression equation was computed:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \text{ Yields}$$

$$Y = 9.748 + 1.098X_1 + 1.906X_2 \text{ Where;}$$

$$Y = \text{Marital satisfaction}$$

$$X_1 = \text{Intimacy}$$

$$X_2 = \text{Affirmation language}$$

The above regression equation indicates that intimacy and affirmation language held to a constant zero; the variables will significantly influence marital satisfaction as shown by constant value of 9.748. From the findings intimacy statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 1.098$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). This implies that intimacy had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in intimacy resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.098.

Affirmation language statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 1.906$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This implies that affirmation language had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in affirmation language resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.906. However, the influence of miscommunication and emotional expression on marital satisfaction was not statistically significant,  $p > 0.05$ . Hence, the findings supported the study on the influence of language on marital satisfaction, since there was influence from intimacy and affirmation, which statistically significantly influenced MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

### ***Summary of language with MS among Intercultural Marriages***

The findings of the study revealed that majority of participants (69.7%) had high satisfaction with language. The regression model revealed that language had a direct positive contribution (adjusted  $r^2 = 0.69$ ) on MS. The study established that language had a positive, significant influence on MS ( $\beta = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The influence was considered significant

since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings imply that an increase in satisfaction with language will positively influence marital satisfaction by 0.872. Qualitative findings revealed that majority of respondents (69.7%) had high satisfaction with language. In conclusion, this study revealed that majority of participants had high satisfaction with language in their marriages. Thus, language had a positive, significant influence on MS.

### **Influence of Ethnicity on MS among Couples in Intercultural Marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya**

The third objective sought to find out the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings on the study objective are presented in the subsequent sub-sections.

#### ***Ethnicity on Marital Satisfaction***

The influence of ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages was established by adapting some items from the Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire developed by Henriksen et al. (2007). Consequently, to determine the level of satisfaction with marital ethnicity, participants were provided with a list of 6 statements assessing ethnicity issues in marriage. The participants were required to rate their agreement with the statements on a 5 point Likert scale (1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes 4- Most of the time, 5- Always). The scale was further transformed into levels to analyze the levels of satisfaction with marital ethnicity. Since there were 6 items, the highest possible score was 30 (6x5) and the lowest possible score was 6 (6x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction. The negative worded statements were reverse coded. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 6 to 15 indicated low level of satisfaction with marital ethnicity, scores between 16 to 20 indicated moderate level of

satisfaction with marital ethnicity and scores between 21 to 30 indicated a high level of satisfaction with marital ethnicity. The summary of findings is presented on Table 23.

**Table 23**

*Ethnicity and Marital Satisfaction of Respondents in Intercultural Marriages*

| <b>Level of Satisfaction</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> | <b>Min</b> | <b>Max</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Low Level                    | 26               | 26.3              | 6          | 30         | 20.08       | 6.433                 |
| Moderate Level               | 19               | 19.2              |            |            |             |                       |
| High Level                   | 54               | 54.5              |            |            |             |                       |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>99</b>        | <b>100.0</b>      |            |            |             |                       |

From Table 23, 54.5% of the participants had a high level of marital satisfaction with ethnicity, 26.3% had a low level of satisfaction, while 19.2% had a moderate level of satisfaction with ethnicity. The minimum score attained was 6, while the maximum score attained was 30. The marital ethnicity mean score was 20.08 (SD = 6.433), indicating that on average, the participants had a moderate level of satisfaction with their marital ethnicity.

**Table 24**

*Ethnicity and MS by Descriptions*

| <b>Ethnicity Satisfaction</b>                               | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Always satisfied with divergent ethnicity in my marriage    | 54                 | 54.5       |
| Sometimes satisfied with divergent ethnicity in my marriage | 26                 | 26.3       |
| Rarely satisfied with divergent ethnicity in my marriage    | 19                 | 19.2       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                | <b>99</b>          | <b>100</b> |

From Table 24, participants' descriptions of individual marital experiences revealed that majority of respondents (54.5%) were always satisfied with their divergent marital ethnicity. 26.3% of respondents were sometimes satisfied with their divergent marital ethnicity while 19.2% were rarely satisfied with their divergent marital ethnicity. The qualitative findings confirmed quantitative findings which showed moderate (54.5%) satisfaction with divergent marital ethnicity. The findings were in line with Bystydzienski

(2011) that people have become more diverse in ethnicity and culture than ever before. For instance, a respondent described that:

My spouse has not introduced much of cultural practices to our relationship. We have agreed on charting our culture forward. We have agreed on how far we bring in cultural practices like burial rites that to me are not extreme. My spouse and I have taken time to explore the differences in our cultures and chosen to move with what is positive and leave out the negatives. (Participant, FKK59)

The findings showed that the participant had embraced spouse's divergent culture, which she agreed was not extreme. The respondent and spouse explored their divergent cultures. Therefore, gained awareness of their different cultural practices and decided to form one that worked in their marital relationship. This is supported by Gaily (2017) that ethnic diversity has taken an ascending trend in today's world, which portray that individuals have acknowledged its existence. The findings further showed DoS in this marriage. Participant and the spouse decided to chart their individual culture in their marital relationship. This was supported by Brown (2010) that DoS is the capacity of an individual to function autonomously by making self-directed choices. However, there were dissenting participants' responses which supported Zaker and Boostanipoor (2016) that couples have learned to identify with cultural values and biases of their families of origin, which are likely to have significant bearings on couples' marital satisfaction. For instance, respondent discussed that:

Cultural practices will always be with us especially being with our old parents.

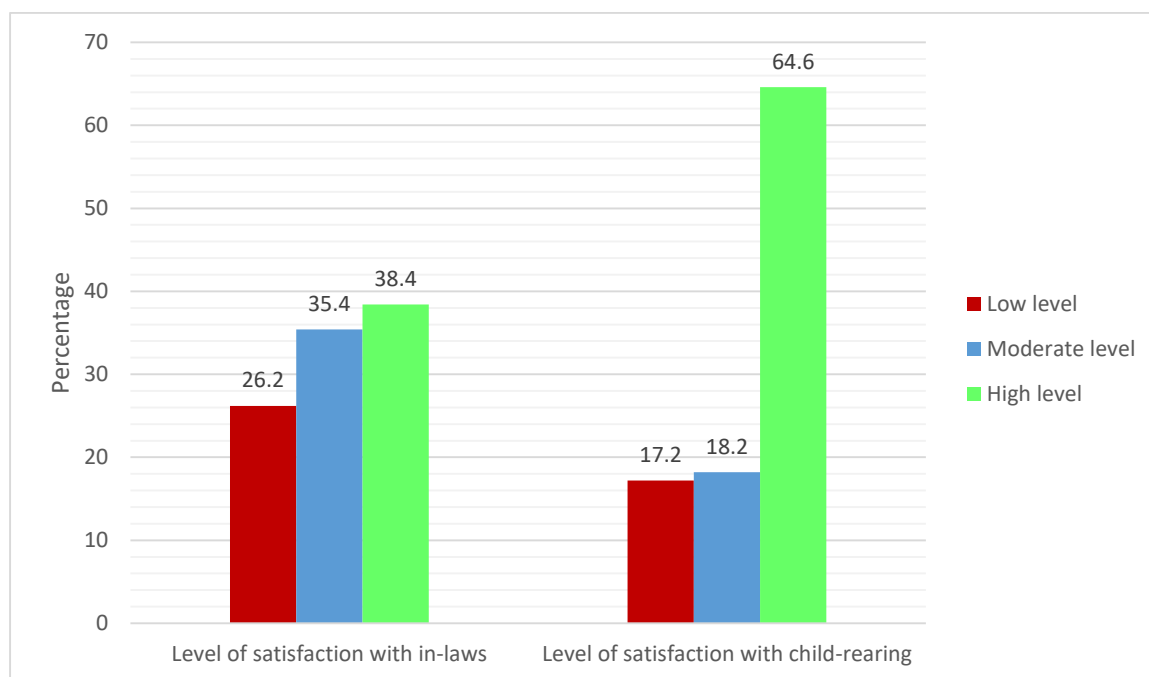
At some point my spouse being the head, I chose to agree not to cause too much conflict with our parents. However, I don't agree with my parents shaving our children and has caused so much conflict and misunderstanding, at some point marital satisfaction just fades away and get too crowded by the extended family.

(Participant, FKK2)

The participant's response showed that divergent practices in ethnicity were influencing her MS. For instance, parents shaving grandchildren's hair caused conflicts and misunderstandings with influence on MS. There was an indication of conflict of individualism versus collectivism practices in the marriage, as participant narrated that her marriage was crowded by the extended family. This was in line with Cohen and Kitayama (2019) that individualist value aspect prioritizes individual needs, while collectivist value dimension subordinates the individual's desire. The findings were supported by Suyemoto et al. (2020) that ethnicity affects behavior through learned experiences of cultural practices with influence on individuals and groups' thinking, emotions and behavior. This was also in line with Miles (2018) that interethnic marriages may experience lower levels of marital bond with a risk to marital contentment.

#### ***Levels of Marital Satisfaction with Ethnicity by Subscales***

The scale on satisfaction with marital ethnicity was further analyzed by its subscales, including; in-laws and child-rearing. Since there were 3 items in each sub-scale, the highest possible score was 15 (3x5) and the lowest possible score was 3 (3x1). An individual's total score was derived from the addition of the total scores for all the statements, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction with each subscale. The scores were then categorized into 3 levels, where scores ranging between 3 to 7 indicated low level of satisfaction, scores between 8 to 10 indicated moderate level of satisfaction and scores between 11 to 15 indicated a high level of satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented in Figure 9 and Table 25.

**Figure 9***MS with Ethnicity Subscales*

From Figure 9, 38.4% of the participants had a high level of satisfaction with in-laws, while 64.6% had a high level of satisfaction with child-rearing.

**Table 25***Distribution of Marital Satisfaction and Ethnicity Subscales*

| Level of Satisfaction with In-Laws       | Frequency | Percentage   | Min | Max | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----|-----|-------|----------------|
| Low Level                                | 35        | 35.4         | 3   | 15  | 9.16  | 3.263          |
| Moderate Level                           | 26        | 26.2         |     |     |       |                |
| High Level                               | 38        | 38.4         |     |     |       |                |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>99</b> | <b>100.0</b> |     |     |       |                |
| Level of Satisfaction with Child-rearing | Frequency | Percentage   | Min | Max | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
| Low Level                                | 18        | 18.2         | 3   | 15  | 10.92 | 3.658          |
| Moderate Level                           | 17        | 17.2         |     |     |       |                |
| High Level                               | 64        | 64.6         |     |     |       |                |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>99</b> | <b>100.0</b> |     |     |       |                |

As shown on Table 25, the minimum score attained for satisfaction with in-laws was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The mean score was 9.16 (SD = 3.263), indicating

that on average, the participants had a moderate level of satisfaction with in-laws. The minimum score attained for satisfaction with child-rearing was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The mean score was 10.92 (SD = 3.658), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of satisfaction with child-rearing.

**Table 26**

*Ethnicity with MS Descriptions*

| Ethnicity subscales | In-laws | %    | Child rearing on MS | %    |
|---------------------|---------|------|---------------------|------|
| Always              | 38      | 38.4 | 64                  | 64.6 |
| Sometimes           | 35      | 35.4 | 18                  | 18.2 |
| Rarely              | 26      | 26.2 | 17                  | 17.2 |
| Total               | 99      | 100  | 99                  | 100  |

From Table 26, majority of participants (38.4%) were always satisfied with in-laws in their marriages. 35.4% respondents were sometimes satisfied with in-laws in their marriages while 26.2% were rarely satisfied with in-laws in their marriages. Majority of participants 64.6% were always satisfied with child-rearing practices in their marriages. 18.2% were sometimes satisfied with child-rearing practices in their marriages while 17.2% were rarely satisfied with child-rearing practices in their marriages. The findings confirmed quantitative findings which revealed majority of participants had high 38.4% satisfaction with in-laws and also high 64.6% child-rearing practices.

Qualitative descriptions of individual marriages revealed that majority (38.4%) of participants were always satisfied with in-laws. For instance, a respondent described that:

My parents and in-laws have been good friends, hence I learnt that they even schooled together. They have been good friends. Can't complain about naming our children because we agreed on how to do it. We have family gathering mostly, so we meet and enjoy together. We agree in every decision making.  
(Participant, FKK20)

The participant's response showed that the couple had embraced each other's cultures. They had also invested in making agreed upon decisions, which overcame eminent divergent cultural conflicts. The findings were supported by Skowronski et al. (2014) that diversity enriches marital relationships that benefit intercultural marriages. The respondent showed acquired curiosity to learn the origin of parents' friendship. This resulted in encouragement in marriage by discovering that both parents were old school mates, that enhanced a sense of belonging in partner's divergent culture. This resonated well with Inmam et al. (2011) that diversity enhances MS as it assists couples gain divergent perspectives about other cultures. The respondent brought out good relationship between in-laws, which was an indicator that they were supportive. This is in line with Tavakol et al. (2017) that positive support from family members is essential for stability of couples' marriages to attain MS.

However, there were respondents that had differing experiences and indicated that ethnicity influenced their MS. For instance, a respondent's description that:

My wife's family are always in our family trying to solve our small differences. They want my wife and I to attend to all their functions, which exhausts me. If we do not take our children to stay with them over holidays becomes war in my house. (Participant, MKK42)

The findings showed that most likely there was triangulation in this marital relationship. The reason being that in-laws from spouse's family were always in respondent's marriage trying to solve couple's marital issues. This is in line with Papero et al. (2018) who indicate that triangulation appears in a relationship when tension develops between two individuals then a third person is introduced to reduce the tension. This is further supported by Hu et al. (2014) study which showed that family of origin triangulation was strongly negatively associated with marital satisfaction. The findings concur with Goldstein (2015) that interference is a major complaint among couples in marital relationships with regards to

in-laws that influence MS. Mother-in-law was singled out as the most troublesome in-law for both husbands and wives. However, research that examine couples' relationships with their in-laws is relatively scarce.

Qualitative descriptions from participants showed high (64.6%) levels of satisfaction with child-rearing practices. For instance, description of a respondent indicated that: "Our cultural practices sometimes may affect our marriage, but since we live in town areas it doesn't affect us that much. Decision to take our children to 'shugs' does not please me" (Participant, FLM20).

The findings showed that the participant's lives were inclined to individualism than collectivism cultures. Consequently, family of origin seemed not to have major influence on their child rearing practices. This allowed participant and the spouse to make personal decisions in own marital relationship, which brought them closer to each other resulting in enhanced MS. This concurred with Ng'ang'a (2010) study on the changes of traditional practices among urban Agikuyu in Nairobi. The findings showed divergent practices between Kenyan urban elite who had contemporary marital practices and rural traditional marital practices. This resonated with DeVito (2013) assertions that acculturation takes place when the original culture becomes influenced by host culture and progressively values, beliefs and ways of behaving of the urban culture overtakes rural culture.

However, there were dissenting participants' responses that showed that their experiences with child rearing practices influenced MS. For instance, discussion from a participant indicated that:

The most contagious issue is the naming process, which has affected our relationship because I didn't name our girls according to their culture. To me a child's name is a determining factor of how/who they will turn out to be and I cannot name a toxic person to make them happy at the expense of my children's

long-term happiness. Character is key to me. (Participant, FKK52)

The findings showed an indication of conflicts between individualism and collectivism cultures. The participant preferred selecting names for her children while the family had their practice of naming. This was in line with Tien (2013) that child raising practices in individualism and collectivism cultures may be an issue and may cause tension among couples' marital relationship. Further, child-naming rites appeared to be an intergenerational practice, which indicated a trans-generational issue. This is supported by Nelson and Kohli (2017) that among diverse issues to be considered in intergenerational process include decision-making and culture. Child rearing is likely to be learnt from the family of origin and transferred to intercultural couples' relationship, which may need discussions and agreement between couples to realise MS.

### ***Inferential Statistics***

A linear regression was computed to determine the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented in the subsequent tables;

**Table 27**

*Model Summary<sup>b</sup>*

| <b>Model</b> | <b>R</b>          | <b>R Square</b> | <b>Adjusted R Square</b> | <b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b> | <b>Durbin-Watson</b> |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1            | .207 <sup>a</sup> | .043            | .033                     | 12.297                            | 1.628                |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ethnicity

b. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

From Table 27, ethnicity accounted for 3.3% of the variation in marital satisfaction as shown by the adjusted R square value, while the remaining 96.7% could be explained by other factors.

**Table 28***ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 653.933        | 1  | 653.933     | 4.324 | .040 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 14668.390      | 97 | 151.221     |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 15322.323      | 98 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ethnicity

As shown in Table 28, the regression model was a good predictor for marital satisfaction from ethnicity,  $F(1, 97) = 4.324$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 29***Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

| Model        | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T     | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B |             |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------------|-------------|
|              | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      | Lower Bound                     | Upper Bound |
| 1 (Constant) | 38.502                      | 4.070      |                           | 9.460 | .000 | 30.424                          | 46.580      |
| Ethnicity    | .402                        | .193       | .207                      | 2.080 | .040 | .018                            | .785        |

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

A linear regression was conducted to determine if ethnicity had a significant influence on marital satisfaction. There existed a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variable as confirmed by the visual inspection of the scatter plot, there were no outliers as all the cases had a standardized value of less than 3, there was homoscedasticity as indicated by the visual inspection of the scatter plot and there was normality of residuals as indicated by visual inspection of the Normal P-P Plot. The findings in Table 29 indicate that ethnicity had a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ); the influence was considered significant since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings imply that an increase in satisfaction with marital ethnicity

will positively influence marital satisfaction by 0.402.

The following regression equation was computed;

$$Y = 38.502 + 0.402X_1$$

Y= Marital satisfaction;  $X_1$ = Ethnicity

From the above equation it is observed that when ethnicity is held to a constant zero, marital satisfaction will be at a constant value of 38.502.

A multiple regression was further computed to determine the influence of ethnicity subscales on MS. The summary of findings is presented in the subsequent tables.

**Table 30**

*Model Summary<sup>b</sup>*

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | .286 <sup>a</sup> | .082     | .063              | 12.106                     | 1.652         |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Child-rearing, in-laws

b. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

As shown in Table 30, satisfaction with child-rearing and in-laws explained 6.3% of the variation in marital satisfaction as indicated by the adjusted R square value.

**Table 31**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 1252.086       | 2  | 626.043     | 4.271 | .017 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 14070.237      | 96 | 146.565     |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 15322.323      | 98 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Child-rearing, in-laws

From Table 31, the regression model was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction from the components of ethnicity,  $F(2, 96) = 4.271$ ,  $p < 0.05$

**Table 32***Multiple Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>*

| Mode | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T     | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B |             |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|---------------------------------|-------------|
|      | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      | Lower Bound                     | Upper Bound |
| 1    | (Constant)                  | 38.920     | 4.012                     | 9.701 | .000 | 30.956                          | 46.884      |
|      | In-laws                     | 1.435      | .546                      | .374  | .010 | .352                            | 2.518       |
|      | Child-rearing               | -.504      | .487                      | -.147 | .303 | -1.470                          | .463        |

. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

Multiple regression was conducted to determine the influence of subscales of ethnicity on marital satisfaction. The assumptions of linearity, independence of errors, homoscedasticity, unusual points and normality of residuals were met. Findings from the multiple regression established that satisfaction with in-laws statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 1.435$   $p = 0.010$ ). This implies that satisfaction with in-laws had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in satisfaction with in-laws resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.435. The influence of child-rearing on MS was not statistically significant,  $P > 0.05$ . The findings supported the study on the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction, since there was

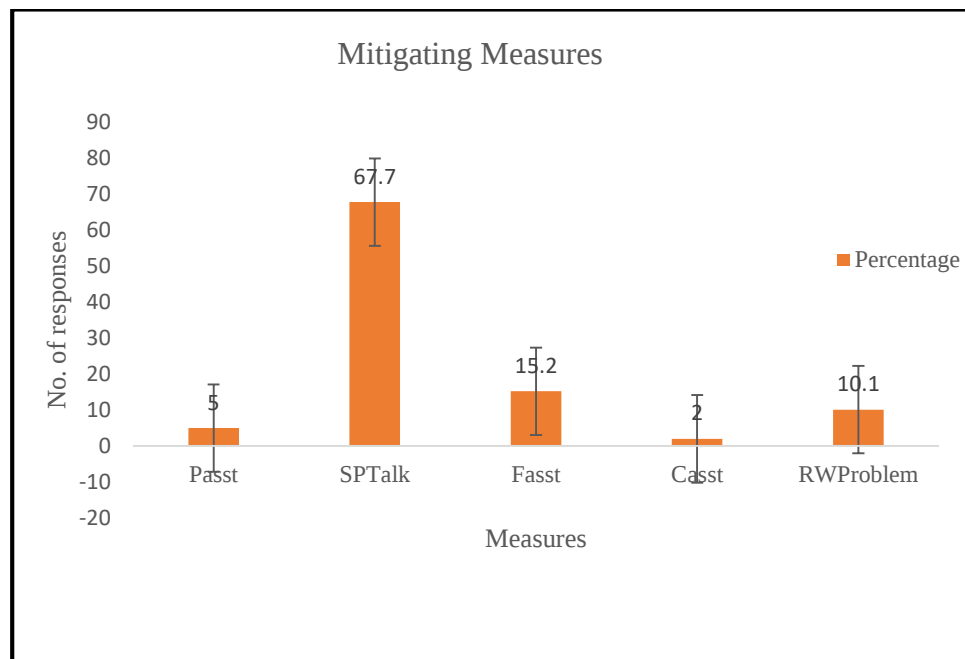
influence from in-laws, which statistically significantly influenced MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

### **Summary of Ethnicity with MS among Intercultural Marriages**

The findings of the study revealed that majority of participants (54.5%) had high satisfaction with ethnicity. The regression model revealed that ethnicity had a direct positive contribution (adjusted  $r^2 = .033$ ) on MS. The study revealed that ethnicity had a positive significant influence on MS ( $\beta=0.402$ ,  $p=0.040$ ). The influence was considered significant since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings imply that an increase with ethnicity satisfaction will positively influence MS by 0.402. Qualitative findings revealed that majority of respondents (54.5%) had high satisfaction with ethnicity. In conclusion, this study revealed that majority of participants had high satisfaction with ethnicity. Ethnicity had a positive, significant influence on MS.

### ***Mitigating Measures for the Influence of Language and Ethnicity on MS***

Objective four sought to suggest mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. The researcher in consultation with senior psychology supervisors and review of previous literature on similar studies developed items for objective four. To answer the objective, the participants were required to indicate a measure that they employed from a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on mitigating measures. The summary of findings is presented on Figure 10 and Table 33

**Figure 10***Participants' Types of Mitigating Measures*

From Figure 10, there were different types of mitigating measures that were applied by the participants. There is significant outstanding evidence that 67.7% of respondents indicated they talk through their challenges with their spouses, as a mitigating measure from the influence of language and ethnicity. This could be explained by partners' DoS, as couples who are differentiated are able to support each other and make appropriate decisions in their marriages. This concurs with Lampis et al. (2019) that DoS is fundamental to a partner's capacity to achieve intimacy and mutuality in marriage. Partners could also be able to rationally discuss and effectively communicate their differences to each other. This concurs with Corey (2016) that repetition of early indoctrinated irrational thoughts keeps dysfunctional attitudes alive and operative within individuals, which includes partners in marriage. Family assistance followed at 15.2% and remaining with problems at 10.1%. Professional assistance was at 5% and community assistance at 2%.

**Table 33***Mitigating Measures for the Influence of Language and Ethnicity*

| <b>Measure</b>                  | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Seek professional assistance    | 5                | 5.1               |
| My spouse and I talk through it | 67               | 67.7              |
| My family's assistance          | 15               | 15.2              |
| My community's assistance       | 2                | 2.0               |
| Remain with the problem         | 10               | 10.1              |
| Total                           | 99               | 100.0             |

From the findings in Table 33, majority of the participants (67.7%) indicated that they talked with their spouses as a mitigating measure, 15.2% indicated that they sought family assistance, 10.1% remained with the problem, 5.1% sought professional assistance while 2% sought their community's assistance.

The findings from participants' responses showed that majority of the participants talked their issues through with their spouses. Most likely, majority of the participants had appropriate communication skills to mitigate their differing ethnic practices. On the other hand, most likely, participants were self-differentiated from their family of origin, such that, they were able to make self-directed decisions. For instance, description from a participant indicated that:

I am free to talk out with my spouse the challenges I experience in terms of language and ethnicity in my marriage. For me being aware of the differences that come with intercultural marriages has challenged me to learn much of my partners' language and this has brought me closer to my spouse. I am inquisitive and I desire to learn as much about his language and ethnicity, so that I can continue getting in as much as possible. We have embraced our different ethnicities and this also bring a lot of good. For me anything is possible if we look at its good side and mitigate the bad side. (Participant, FKK59)

The respondent indicated that she freely talks with her spouse on challenges that she encounters in her marriage from language and ethnicity. Participant discussed that she was quite aware that intercultural marriages had their own challenges and applied personal intelligence to learn much of spouses' language. This signifies that she acquired a better understanding of her spouses' language. The findings concurred with Kariuki (2017) that it is essential for intercultural couples to communicate with each other in languages that show their deepest feelings and underlying needs. The findings also agreed with Kim et al. (2014) study that examined the association between the BFST idea of DoS, emotional reactivity and family adaptability and cohesion in family functioning. Consequently, findings of the study supported the premise of BFST that high levels of DoS are associated with high levels of family functioning, greater family satisfaction and positive family communication that enhances couples' MS.

Resolving marital language and ethnic issues through family's assistance followed. For instance, response from a participant indicated that: "I will definitely solve problems with my family's assistance simply because I can't handle some issues alone" (Participant, FKK1). The findings showed that the participant had either adequate family support or most likely lacked DoS from family of origin necessitating seeking family's assistance. The findings are in line with Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) that lack of support is the root cause of many marital challenges that may influence couples' MS. Consequently, family support is significant as it enhances couple's MS. Participant's DoS from family of origin was equally essential for the participant to be able to make personal decisions. This finding concurs with Kalai (2016) that partners in intercultural marriages may self-identify with their cultural backgrounds. However, they may not be aware that their marital discords emanate from their cultural differences. The findings portrayed an element of triangulation as the participant responded that she cannot handle some issues alone. This is in line with Haefner (2014) that

triangulation takes place when tension in intercultural marital relationship surpasses couple's ability then an extended family member is introduced to calm the stressful marital situation. Consequently, the couple may never be able to solve their marital challenges without the third person as is the case with the respondent with the assertion that she cannot handle some issues alone.

Response from a participant who sought to remain with marital issues concerning language and ethnicity differences described that:

I decide to remain with the problems I face concerning my marriage as people have negative feedback when we share. So it's better that we remain with our own problems than share and get criticised for the decisions we make.

(Participant, MLM17)

According to the above marital experience, there was an indication of a belief that inferred that there was no support achieved by sharing personal issues apart from negative feedback and criticism. The findings agreed with Corey (2016) that families generate, indoctrinate and reinforce its members with long-life influences. The findings were also in agreement with Bowen (1978) that individuals are likely to repeat behaviors handed down through generations unless examined and rectified. This further concurred with Kalai (2016) observation that counselling intercultural couples is essential as it equips partners with knowledge to navigate through their differences.

Conversely, a low margin of respondents confirmed awareness of seeking professional assistance with issues that originated from language and ethnicity. For instance, response from a participant indicated that: "Most of the time we talk through our marital issues. In the event of a situation that requires further assistance we go for professional assistance. I am fully satisfied with my marriage" (Participant, FKK4). The findings showed that the participant was fully aware that there were issues that were likely to be beyond them and

required professional assistance and they therefore sought counselling. However, it was most likely that most of the participants were not aware of their needs for counselling services for their intercultural issues. On the other hand, it was most likely that marriage and family counselling services were not readily available and were therefore, not used when needs arose. Awareness of marital counselling is significant and effective in addressing intercultural couples' challenges. This was in line with Odhiambo et al. (2021) assertion that marital counselling is essential in improving couples intimate relationship. This concurred with Omoro (2018) that Marriage and Family therapists counsel couples to resolve their conflicts and realise their initial objectives for which they entered their marital relationship. It was also in agreement with Kariuki (2017) that Cognitive behavioural therapy intervention for management of couples' issues has been found effective in helping couples manage their differences.

The other respondents in the sequence of responses described their experiences in mitigating language and ethnicity issues through community's assistance. For instance, description from a participant indicated that: "We talk through our issues and due to our different cultures there's assistance from the community leaders when it comes to naming our children and raising them too" (Participant, FKK3). The findings showed that most likely the experiences were prompted by divergent practices in collectivism cultures. On the other hand, it was most likely that the respondent had low DoS to make personal decisions on issues pertaining to child rearing, therefore continued consulting community leaders. This was supported by Brown (2010) that DoS is the capacity of an individual to function autonomously by making self-directed choices, while continuing being emotionally connected to significant relationships. The practices may likely have been reinforced by

continued experiences of naming and raising children from family of origin. This concurred with Corey (2016) that families generate, indoctrinate and reinforce its members with enduring influences.

Findings from the study on objective four showed that high number (70%) of spouses talk through their challenges that originate from the influence of language and ethnicity. Participants descriptions indicated that majority (67.7%) of partners talk through their challenges. However, from the review of past studies and theories that guided this study, BFST and CBT, identified and recommended couples' professional counselling to be able to mitigate challenges that emerge from the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter four has presented the findings and the discussions of the study. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is presented in accordance with the objectives of the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Chapter summary is also presented. The next chapter presents summary of the findings of the study and conclusions reached.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings and conclusions reached, recommendations, implications and areas warranting further research. The information is based on the findings in Chapter four.

#### **Summary of the Major Findings**

The main purpose of the study was to find out the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. The summary of the findings are organized according to the objectives of the study namely; to explore the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya, to assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya, to find out the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya, to establish effective mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

The findings of the study revealed that participants' gender was 64% females and 36% males. Participants' ages were 45.5% between 34 to 42 years, 38.4% were between 25 to 33 while 16.1% were between 43 to 51. Participants marital status showed that 83.8% were married, 8.1% were separated, 4% divorced, 3% widow/widower. The study showed that 60.6% had been married between 5 to 10 years. 22.2% had been married between 11 to 16 years while 17.2% had been married between 17 to 22 years. The findings of the study showed that the highest level of education for the participants was university degree with 42.3%, followed by high school participants with 38.4%, primary education level was 12.1%, postgraduate participants were 4.1% while college participants were 3.1%. The study showed

that 47.5% of participants were employed, 40.4% were self-employed while 12.1% of participants were unemployed. Religion status of participants revealed that 99% were Christians while 1% was Muslim.

The first objective of the study was to explore the level of marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. The findings on the first objective established that majority of the participants (76.8%) had a high level of marital satisfaction.

The second objective of the study was to assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. The findings on the second objective established that majority of the participants (69.7%) had a high level of satisfaction with language. Results established that language had a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

The third objective of the study was to find out the influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County. The findings on the third objective established that 54.5% of the participants had a high level of satisfaction with their marital ethnicity. Results of the study established that ethnicity had a positive significant influence on marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ).

The fourth objective of the study sought to establish effective mitigating measures for the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. The findings on the fourth objective established that professional counseling is effective as mitigating measures for influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction, however, majority of the participants 67.7% preferred talking with their spouses as a mitigating measure.

## Conclusions

In conclusion the study revealed that most of the participants had high (76.8%) level of MS. Majority of participants had a high (69.7%) level of satisfaction with their language. Language had a positive, significant influence on MS ( $\beta = 0.872$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The study revealed that majority of the participants had high (54.5%) level of satisfaction with ethnicity. The study Showed that ethnicity had a positive significant influence on MS ( $\beta = 0.402$ ,  $p = 0.040$ ). On mitigating measures majority (67.7%) talked issues through with their spouses as mitigating measures. However, the study recommended professional counseling as the best mode of mitigating measures to resolve language and ethnicity issues in a marital relationship.

Therefore, the new findings in this study provide factual data and relevant information to the field of research in mental health. The study also provides baseline information as a reference material for future studies in the location of the study, that is, Kiambu County, Kenya. The scientific evidence provided will be beneficial for use in projections and modeling in similar studies conducted in future in Kenya, Africa and globally. In conclusion the new evidence based information expands database relevant for improvement of mental health services. Couples and families have new information that is beneficial for improvement of marital management that boosts MS.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study on the influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages, the study recommends involvement of different stakeholders such as, policy makers, Ministry of health, faith based institutions and mental health professionals to embark on vigorous campaigns that are essential to create awareness on the significance of professional counseling for mitigation of mental health.

i. *Policy Makers*

Intercultural marriages were found to be rising steadily, however, there were few participants who sought professional counseling for the influence of language and ethnicity in their marriages. Therefore, the study recommends policy makers to create awareness and put in place visibility of mental health services, to intensify awareness and availability.

ii. *Ministry of Health*

The study recommends that Ministry of Health be in the front line with concerted efforts to increase counseling services awareness. This should cascade down, to disseminate information in Kiambu County concerning the significance of professional counseling, which would enhance intercultural couples' marital satisfaction and boost couples' mental health.

iii. *Faith based institutions*

Majority of participants in this study were Christians and a few Muslims. However, influence of language and ethnicity among intercultural couples were identified. Consequently, the study recommends leadership of faith based institutions to recognize the need for professional counseling and equip their members with the relevant information through securing mental health professionals in their institutions.

iv. *Mental health professionals*

The study recommends that mental health professionals do further research on the influence of varied cultural factors on marriages, for instance, language and ethnicity to attain comprehensive information and understanding.

## **Implications**

### **Theoretical**

Bowen Family System Theory (BFST), was significant in this study with its supportive cultural lens to understand its implications across diverse cultures. However, some participants in this study embraced continuous support by in-laws for child rearing support and to resolve their marital cultural differences. This may slightly differ with total lack of DoS from family of origin, but inclination to collective cultural practices. In conclusion, the theory was found beneficial for use in future with similar studies in Kiambu County, Kenya. Cognitive Behavioral Theory was equally helpful to understand the significant part mind plays through daily experiences and belief of family of origin cultural practices that influence MS. However, CBT approach is directive, time-limited and structured. Consequently, intercultural couples with cherished cultural practices pertaining to interdependence may not respond well. In conclusion, CBT was found useful to guide similar studies in future in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### **Proposed further Studies**

The scope and scale of this research was limited to heterosexual, monogamous, intercultural marriages in Kiambu County in urban centers. Therefore, it is recommended for a similar study that compares urban and rural influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County.

A further recommendation is to carry out a similar study across all counties of Kenya to understand influence of language and ethnicity on couples' MS in Kenya.

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## Appendices

### **Appendix I Questionnaire for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages**

My name is Zipporah Chomba, a PhD student in Marriage and Family Therapy at Pan Africa Christian University(PACU). I am conducting a study on “Influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County” as part of requirements for my degree work.

I will use a questionnaire to get your opinions on your marriage which will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. Your decision to participate is voluntary and independent. In order to protect your privacy, do not disclose your identity. To maintain your confidentiality, the questionnaire will be coded and information will be utilized for research purposes only. Further, the research is for academic purposes, and has no monetary disbursements. The results of the study will be presented in the dissertation and accessed by the university. The completed questionnaires will be destroyed within six months after graduation.

The study will be beneficial to heterosexual, intercultural marriages, couples, families, researchers and professionals in mental health. The study will enhance information and understanding of influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction. Further, the study will identify mitigating measures essential for couples’ marital management.

**Consent:** I have read and understood the purpose of the study and I have answered all questions voluntarily.

Participant’s Code .....Date.....

Investigator’s name.....Date.....

(Instructions: *Select one answer that fits your situation*)

**Demographic Questionnaire**

1. Gender

Male.....

Female.....

2. Age in years

(25-33)

(34- 42)

(43-51)

3. Marital status

married...

separated...

divorced...

widow/widower.... Estranged.....

4. Number of years in marriage

(5-10)

(11-16)

(17-22)

5. State your highest level of education

Primary.....

High School.....

University degree .....

Postgraduate.....

Others Specify.....

6. Employment status

Employed...

Not employed....

Self-employed...

Retired...

Others specify.....

7. Indicate your religion

Christian.....

Muslim.....

Traditional.....

Hinduism.....

Others specify.....

(Instructions: *Select one answer that fits your situation with explanation at the bottom*)

**A. Marital satisfaction**

| Code |                                                              | Always<br>5 | Most of<br>the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| A1   | I feel like part of a team with my spouse                    |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A1   | My spouse is always available when I need his/her support    |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A1   | I look forward to working together with my spouse            |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A2   | I feel a strong connection with my spouse                    |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A2   | Our lives are fulfilled because of each other                |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A2   | I love spending time with my spouse                          |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A3   | I am totally satisfied with the affection my spouse gives me |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A3   | My spouse meets my needs                                     |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A3   | My marital relationship has met my original expectations     |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A4   | I have a comfortable relationship with my spouse             |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A4   | My marital relationship makes me happy                       |             |                          |                |             |            |
| A4   | My relationship with my spouse is rewarding                  |             |                          |                |             |            |
|      | Describe how satisfied you are with your marriage.           |             |                          |                |             |            |

*(Instructions: Select one answer that fits your situation with explanation at the bottom)*

**B. Language**

| Code |                                                                                      | Always<br>5 | Most of<br>the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| B1   | My spouse and I feel loved when we give each other gifts                             |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B1   | Visible symbols of love (gifts) are very important to my spouse and I                |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B1   | My spouse and I feel loved when we celebrate our birthdays with gifts.               |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B2   | Spending quality time together with my spouse is special to both of us               |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B2   | My spouse and I enjoy extended uninterrupted trips together                          |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B2   | My spouse and I feel close when we are talking or doing things together              |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B3   | My spouse and I feel loved when we hug and touch each other                          |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B3   | My spouse and I like to hold hands and enjoy close companionship                     |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B3   | We feel safe to express all our true feelings to each other                          |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B4   | Words of acceptance are important to my spouse and I                                 |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B4   | My husband/wife and I treasure encouraging each other                                |             |                          |                |             |            |
| B4   | My spouse and I value words of affirmation                                           |             |                          |                |             |            |
|      | Discuss more about your marital language of affection and your marital satisfaction. |             |                          |                |             |            |

(Instructions: Select one answer that fits your situation and provide explanation at the bottom)

**C. Ethnicity**

| Code |                                                                                                   | Always<br>5 | Most of<br>the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| C1   | My spouse and his/her family members are too dependent on each other                              |             |                          |                |             |            |
| C1   | The way my spouse deals with in-laws to resolve marital conflicts affect our marriage.            |             |                          |                |             |            |
| C1   | There are strict consequences for breaking in-law's roles and rules in our marriage               |             |                          |                |             |            |
| C2   | The role my partner and extended family play on issues for our child's naming affect our marriage |             |                          |                |             |            |
| C2   | My spouses' family members spend too much time with our child                                     |             |                          |                |             |            |
| C2   | The decisions my partner and his/her family take in our child-raising process affect our marriage |             |                          |                |             |            |
|      | Explain more your spouses' cultural practices and your marital satisfaction.                      |             |                          |                |             |            |

(Instructions: *Select one answer that fits your situation and provide explanation at the bottom*)

***D. Mitigating Measures***

I deal with the influence of language and ethnicity on my marital satisfaction through:

|                                                                                                             |                                     |                             |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| i. Professional assistance                                                                                  | ii. My spouse and I talk it through | iii. My family's assistance | iv. My community's assistance | v. Remain with the problem |
| <p>Explain more how you deal with the influence of language and ethnicity on your marital satisfaction.</p> |                                     |                             |                               |                            |

Thank you.

## Appendix 1A Code Book

A – A4 assesses level of marital satisfaction.

B – B4 assess influence of language on marital satisfaction.

C – C2 assesses influence of ethnicity on marital satisfaction.

D – D Identifying mitigating measures

| Code | Variable             | Indicator            |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A    | Marital satisfaction |                      |
| A1   |                      | Spousal support      |
| A2   |                      | Intimacy             |
| A3   |                      | Marital expectation  |
| A4   |                      | Adjustment           |
| B    | Language             |                      |
| B1   |                      | Miscommunication     |
| B2   |                      | Intimacy             |
| B3   |                      | Emotional expression |
| B4   |                      | Affirmation language |
| C    | Ethnicity            |                      |
| C1   |                      | In-laws              |
| C2   |                      | Child-rearing        |
| D    | Mitigating measures  |                      |

## **Appendix 1B Interview for the influence of language and ethnicity on MS among couples in intercultural marriages**

*(Instructions: Provide a detailed description on the following items)*

### **A. Marital Satisfaction**

Explain more how satisfied you feel in relation to your marriage

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Language**

Describe more about your marital language of affection and your marital satisfaction

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Ethnicity**

Discuss more about your spouses' cultural practices. For instance, relationship with your in-laws and divergent childrearing practices

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **Mitigation Measures**

B. Explain more how you deal with the influence of language and ethnicity on your marital satisfaction. For instance, your method of solving conflicts that emerge from language and ethnicity differences.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix IC Adapted items

### Some of adapted items from CSI-32

| Code | MS Indicator        | Item                                                     | Always<br>5 | Most of the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| A1.  | Spousal support     | I feel part of a team with my spouse                     |             |                       |                |             |            |
| A2.  | Intimacy            | I feel a strong connection with my spouse                |             |                       |                |             |            |
| A3.  | Marital expectation | My marital relationship has met my original expectations |             |                       |                |             |            |
| A4.  | Adjustment          | I have a comfortable relationship with my spouse         |             |                       |                |             |            |

### Sample of adapted items from FLL

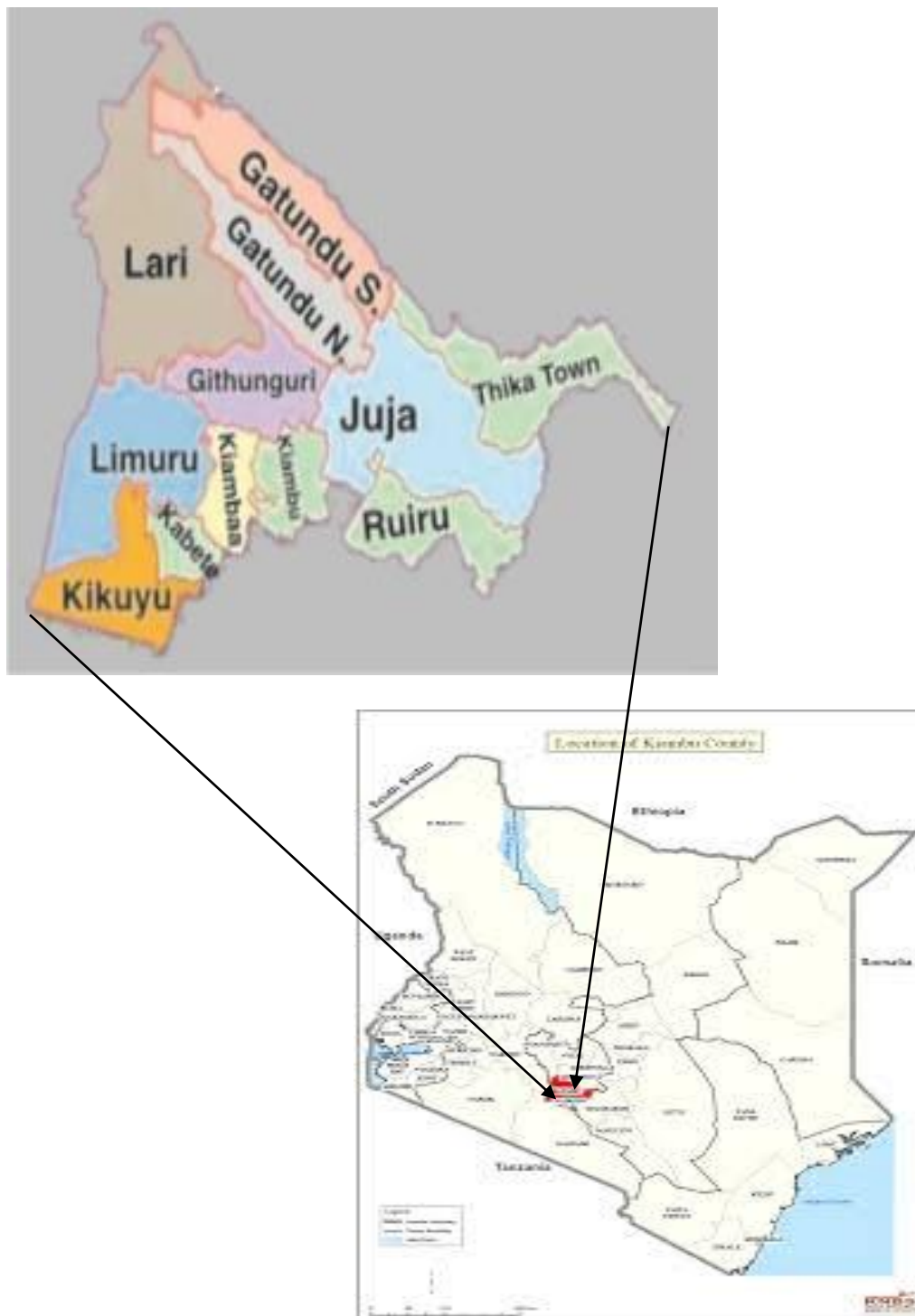
| Code | Language indicator   | Item                                                                   | Always<br>5 | Most of the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| B1.  | Miscommunication     | Visible symbols of love (gifts) are very important to my spouse and I  |             |                       |                |             |            |
| B2.  | Intimacy             | Spending quality time together with my spouse is special to both of us |             |                       |                |             |            |
| B3.  | Emotional expression | We feel safe to express all our true feelings to each other            |             |                       |                |             |            |
| B4.  | Affirmation          | My spouse and I value                                                  |             |                       |                |             |            |

|  |  |                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | words of affirmation |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

**Sample of adapted items from Multiple Heritage Couple Questionnaire**

| Code | Ethnicity indicator | Item                                                                                              | Always<br>5 | Most of the time<br>4 | Sometimes<br>3 | Rarely<br>2 | Never<br>1 |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| C1.  | In-laws             | There are strict consequences for breaking in-laws' roles and rules in our marriage               |             |                       |                |             |            |
| C2   | Child-rearing       | The decisions my partner and his/her family take in our child-raising process affect our marriage |             |                       |                |             |            |

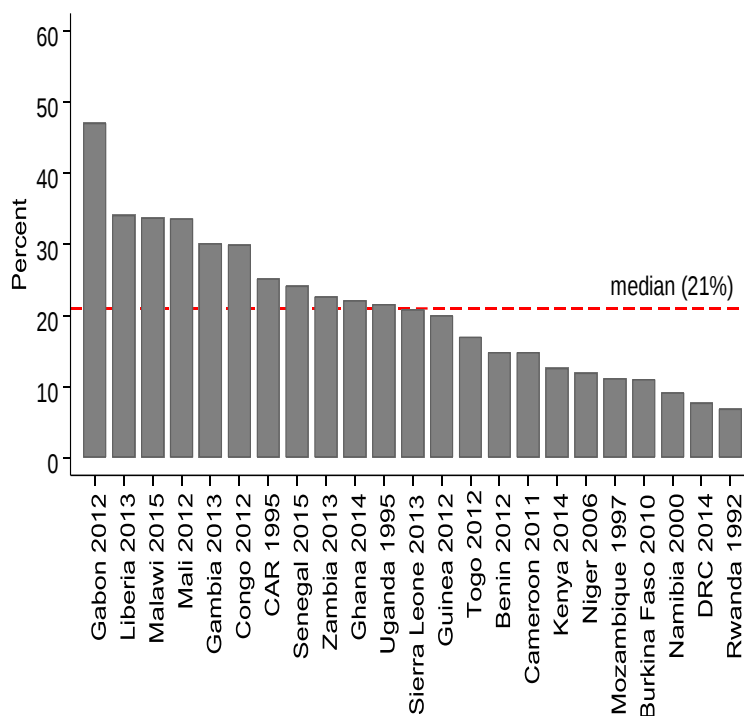
## Appendix II Map of Kiambu County



Source: County Government of Kiambu (2018)

### Appendix III Inter-marriages across Africa

#### Inter-marriage Rates, DHS Surveys (most recent years)



Source: Dulani, Harris, Horowitz and Kayuni (2018)

Appendix III indicates inter-marriage rates across 23 African countries. The median country-level inter-marriage rate is 21%, and Kenya shows 13%.

## Appendix IV Institutional Research Clearance

17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,



P.O. Box 56875 - 00200  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu  
off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd  
Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050  
Email: [enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke](mailto:enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke)  
website: [www.pacuniversity.ac.ke](http://www.pacuniversity.ac.ke)

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION & ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FOR  
CHOMBA ZIPPORAH NDUTA REG. NO: PMFT/8535/0/16**

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Marriage and Family Therapy.

She is at the final stage of the programme and is preparing to collect data to enable her finalise on the Dissertation. The dissertation title is ***"Influence of language and ethnicity on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages, Kiambu County, Kenya"***.

We kindly request that you allow her obtain a research permit so as to proceed and conduct research amongst selected couples in intercultural marriages, Kiambu County, Kenya.

Warm Regards,

*Lilian Vikiru*

Dr. Lilian Vikiru

Registrar Academic Affairs

Pan Africa Christian University

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PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
**REGISTRAR**  
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NAIROBI, KENYA



## Appendix VA Nacosti research license

**THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013 (Rev. 2014)**  
Legal Notice No. 108: The Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014

**The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation**, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

### CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way:
  - i. Endanger national security
  - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
  - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
  - iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
  - v. Adversely affect the environment
  - vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
  - vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
  - viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

National Commission for Science, Technology and  
Innovation(NACOSTI).  
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## Appendix VI Government Research Authorization



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**COUNTY COMMISSIONER, KIAMBU**

Telephone: 066-2022709  
Fax: 066-2022644  
E-mail: [countycommkiambu@yahoo.com](mailto:countycommkiambu@yahoo.com)  
When replying please quote

County Commissioner  
Kiambu County  
P.O. Box 32-00900  
**KIAMBU**

Ref.No: **ED.12/1(A)/VOL.V/161**

**26<sup>th</sup> October, 2022**

**Ms.. Zipporah Nduta Chomba,**  
Pan Africa Christian University,  
P.O Box 66393-00800  
**NAIROBI, KENYA**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Reference is made to National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation Letter Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/22/21315** Dated **25<sup>th</sup> October, 2022**.

You have been authorized to conduct research on "**INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG COUPLES IN INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGES, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**" The data collection will be carried out in **Kiambu County** for a period ending **25<sup>th</sup> October, 2023**.

You are requested to share your findings with the County Education Office upon completion of your research.

  
**Festus Kimeu**  
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
**KIAMBU COUNTY**

Cc National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
**NAIROBI**

County Director of Education  
**KIAMBU COUNTY**

All Deputy County Commissioners  
**KIAMBU COUNTY**

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*"Our Youth our Future. Join us for a Drug and Substance free County".*