

**PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF DIVORCEES IN RELATION TO CHURCH
POLICY ON DIVORCE IN SELECTED EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN NAKURU
COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award at any other University.

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ABSTRACT

The spirit and purpose of Church policy on divorce should lead affected parties towards reconciliation and fellowship with God and man, and guide the Church to conduct itself towards divorcees with Christ likeness. Yet, divorcees continue to experience social stigma even in the church, with potentially adverse implications on their psychosocial wellbeing. This study examined divorcees' mental, social and spiritual well-being in relation to Church policy on divorce in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County. The study also assessed whether the relationship between Church's policy on divorce and well-being is mediated by stigma of divorce and moderated by coping style. The bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model was used as an all-encompassing theoretical lens for the study, with social well-being theory serving as a supplementary theory. Pragmatist philosophy, which adopts a mix-methods research design, was used. The target population was divorcees who were members of evangelical churches found across the 11 Sub-Counties of Nakuru County. A snowball sample of 121 divorcees were recruited as participants. A semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interview guide were used. The instruments were pre-tested on 10 respondents in an Evangelical Church in Kiambu County and found to be valid and reliable ($\alpha > 0.7$). Quantitative data was analysed using linear regression technique in SPSS version 23 while qualitative data was analysed using thematic technique. Ethical clearance was obtained from PAC University's Scientific Ethical Review Committee. Results showed that Church policy on divorce had no statistically significant influence on the divorcees' psychosocial well-being ($R^2 = 0.16, p > .05$). However, stigma had a negative and statistically significant influence on divorcee psychosocial wellbeing ($r = -.255, p < .05$) but did not significantly mediate the relationship between church policy on divorce and wellbeing of divorcees ($B = -.230, t = -1.326, p = .188$). Coping style also did not significantly moderate the relationship between church policy on divorce and wellbeing of divorcees being ($r = .151, p > .05$). Thematic analysis showed that the rigorist standpoint and the legislative perspectives were the most salient themes underpinning Church policy on divorce. Church leaders should therefore consider taking counselling courses or participating in counselling seminars to equip them to better minister to the divorced members in church.

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DEDICATION

To all my late parents, Mr. Benjamin Chebon Sumukywo and Mrs. Julia Targok Chebon. Your constant assertion that integrity, genuineness, kindness, and honesty are important to an individual's character and are worth pursuing uncompromisingly for duration of one's life – thus, upholding Christian beliefs and values. I abide in this till I see the face of my saviour and Lord Jesus Christ in Glory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ERB	Ethical Review Board
NACOSTI	National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Church policy: This is an agreed upon, and an officially accepted Church administrative guideline predicated on a principle of consistency, toward guarding against imposition, impropriety and injustice (Walker & O'Reggio, 2012). In this study, the term was used to refer to no divorce policy; no divorce with exceptions; and liberal divorce policy.

Coping style: This refers to strategies people use to manage the adverse consequences of life stressors (Kreyenfield & Trappe, 2020). In this study, the term was used to refer to styles such as spirituality, religiosity, travel, exercise and deflection.

Divorce: This refers to the legal termination or dissolution of a marital union (Gould, 2016; Meier, 2017). In this study, the definition was expanded to mean permanent separation whether through divorce court or mutual annulment. This is to accommodate customary marriages that were never formalised through civil registration.

Evangelical churches: These are Christian religious organizations that emphasize the importance of personal conversion through faith in Jesus Christ (Ama, 2018). In this study, the term was used to refer to evangelical churches in Nakuru County.

Liberal divorce policy: This is a divorce policy that supports divorce as the least evil decision among multiple options which are not ideal (Lagat, 2018). In this study, the term was used to refer to a situation where by cruelty, desertion or deprivation of sex can be used as grounds for annulment of marriage.

Mental well-being: This refers to positive feelings of happiness and satisfaction and a positive attitude towards one's responsibility to self and to others (Galderisi et al., 2017). In this study, the term was used to refer to inner harmony and thought independence.

No divorce policy: This is a policy that maintains that a marriage cannot be dissolved and, therefore, divorce is not acceptable (Meier, 2017). In this study, the term was used to refer to the rigorist standpoint that stipulates that the Church does not accept or allow divorce for any reason whatsoever.

No divorce with exceptions: This is a policy which grants divorce on account of adultery - based on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:32 and desertion based on the teaching by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 (Lagat, 2018). In this study, the term was used to refer to the legislative perspective whereby divorce is only accepted on grounds of marital unfaithfulness or desertion.

Social well-being: This refers to the social connectedness of an individual based on feelings of a sense of meaningfulness, belonging, social participation, support, happiness, and social acceptance that an individual has with their immediate community (Hobbs, 2016). In this study, social well-being is a five-dimensional construct comprising of social acceptance, social actualization, social attribution, social coherence and social integration.

Spiritual well-being: This refers to the positive relationship one has with themselves, their God, their community and their environment in a way that make them feel nurtured and whole (Roux, 2019). For the purpose of this study, spiritual well-being was indicated by sense of purpose and connectedness with God.

Well-being: This refers to an individual's evaluation of their life satisfaction based on feelings, moods and emotions elicited by their assessment of the social, psychological, and spiritual facets of life (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015; Canha et al., 2016). In this research, the term was used to refer to mental well-being, social well-being and spiritual well-being.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This section presents an overview of Church policy on divorce and well-being of divorcees; starting from the global picture and narrowing down to the local perspective and explains the related concepts and key variables. The problem of the study is then stated, along with the purpose to be achieved, the specific objectives and research questions. An explanation of the rationale and significance of the study is provided and a discussion of the scope, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study is discussed.

Background to the Study

Divorce is the word given to marital dissolution (Meier, 2017). Underneath this simple definition, however, is a complex web of processes and events with devastating physical, psychological, economic and social implications on marital parties and their allied communities (Fura, 2018). The process of divorce entails difficult decisions and choices related to negotiation of custody of children, sorting through financial responsibility, and confronting new living arrangements (Koppejan-Luitze et al., 2021). It also entails dealing with co-parenting issues, navigating through the conflict that frequently characterize the process, experiencing post-divorce stigma and enduring the emotional burden that comes with it (Koppejan-Luitze et al., 2021). Investigations into parental life course after divorce and separation in Europe, compiled by Kreyenfield and Trappe (2020), provide a glimpse into the distress marital parties experience during and after separation, with a note that social policies can either perpetuate or ameliorate the vagaries of divorce.

The causes of divorce are numerous (Eyo, 2018). These include: religious reasons such as change of one's faith or denomination, financial difficulties, domestic violence, sexual mismatch, extra-marital affairs, childlessness, addiction, change in social status and

unrealistic expectations of each other (Eyo, 2018). According to Apostolou et al. (2018), divorce could also be triggered by interference of a marriage by in-laws. Other reasons documented in literature include lack of appreciation of each other, jealousy, sexual rejection and poverty (Canales, 2021; Winking & Koster, 2021).

Divorce undermines the institution of marriage (Hu, 2020). It is called an institution because it is not just about the living together of a man and a woman as husband and wife. It is one with rules that govern and require the couple to set themselves apart from their previous identities (Iraki, 2021). This institution is regarded in many cultures as an important one as it forms the foundation of a family, which is the basic unit of society, a culturally accepted path to procreation and a springboard for future generations (Jarnkvist, 2018). Divorce often leads to a myriad of losses to divorced parties and their relations (Canales, 2021). Included in the long list of divorce consequences are drug abuse, children dropping out of schools, rise in crime and immorality, economic depression, disruption of social networks and increased role demands occasioning lowered physical and mental health (Damota, 2019).

Incidences of divorce have become so prevalent among Christian marriages in spite of the many counselling programs that are conducted for prospective spouses by their respective Churches (Abalos, 2018; Ama, 2018). A research done by Barna (2013) in America, for instance, found that the percentage of born-again Christians who divorced exceeded the national average by two points. Yet divorce is one of the most traumatic situations in one's life, having the furthest reaching implications of all life events (Blum, 2018). According to Dane (2007), divorce creates an entire world of problems that continue long after one has divorced. The experiences of divorcees suggest that divorce can have debilitating and life-changing effect on the lives of couples, with many divorcees reporting that divorce is worse

than death of a spouse, because of the stigma associated with it and lack of social support that is usually accessible to widows or widowers (Hille, 2017).

According to Ama (2018), divorce is a life shattering experience, not to mention that it is a violation of the will of God and a frustration of His purpose besides the pain of rejection and disillusion that the parties undergo. Studies have indicated that divorcees are significantly more likely to be treated for mental illnesses than the average person (Hille, 2017). Literature reports poor mental health outcomes associated with a struggle at the end of marriage, including a 23 percent higher mortality rate (Blum, 2018). For Christians, Church policy on divorce can either worsen or reduce the negative implications of divorce on well-being of divorcees (Meier, 2017).

Like every other institution, Churches put in place policies to govern their affairs. A policy is defined as “an agreed upon, and an officially accepted organizational administrative guideline predicated on a principle of consistency, toward guarding against imposition, impropriety and injustice” (Walker & O’Reggio, 2012, p. 75). There are several perspectives that have been put forth on the issue of divorce (Lagat, 2018). One of them is the rigorist standpoint, which maintains that a marriage cannot be dissolved and, therefore, divorce is not acceptable. Critics to this policy on divorce argue that the meaning of divorce has been lost in translation (Meier, 2017).

According to Kirimi (2019), Catholic Church policy is such that once a couple has received the sacrament of marriage, it can never be ended in God’s eyes. Even if the said person got a civil divorce, the Catholic Church assumes that they are still married. Further, Catholics believe that human beings lack the authority to put asunder what God has joined together. The Church, therefore, takes a stern stand on the matter by instituting punitive disciplinary measures that range from disbarment from receiving Holy Communion to

excommunication from the Church (Jenkins, 2020). This has potential implications on the social and spiritual well-being of divorcees.

The no-divorce policy, however, is not shared with all Christian Churches across the denominations, as there are some denominations that make exception to the no-divorce policy on the strength of the proclamation by Jesus in Matthew 5:23, implying that he made exception where there is evidence of adultery. Jenkins (2020) observed that some Churches, like the United Methodist Church, while not favouring divorce, do recognize its inevitability in some cases. However, the exception in the case of adultery did not begin with this Church. Doxiadis (2020) argue that the Greek Orthodox world has consistently accepted in principle the possibility of divorce. He documents that in the Byzantine Empire, the Church recognised various grounds for divorce, which apparently favoured husbands over their wives, though not entirely prohibiting wives from seeking divorce. This discrimination may portend differential effects on the social and emotional well-being of divorcees.

The second way is the legislative perspective which grants divorce on account of adultery - based on Jesus' teaching and desertion based on the teaching by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 (Lagat, 2018). Styles (2014) drew from the teachings of Jesus to explicate that the grounds for divorce among Christians was adultery. Lagat (2018) further observes that there have been theological arguments in favour of divorce that takes this legalistic based on precedence. From a theological standpoint, some Churches have held that God set precedence on this matter by divorcing his wife Israel due to unfaithfulness. Thus, human beings are in order to imitate God and divorce their spouses on grounds of infidelity as implied in Jeremiah 3:8.

Meier (2017) faults misinterpretation of the term adultery which some Churches have used as an exception and expands the definition further by suggesting that, even spousal abuse can pass for adultery and provide grounds for divorce. His policy on the issue of

divorce is that, while it is a painful experience, “sometimes it is the key out of prison that allows personal healing to begin” (Meier, 2017, p. 58). In such a case, Kostenbeiger (2004) argues that separation should be allowed and a determination can be made to dissolve a marriage that has been violated by adultery, and where restoration of the marriage has been difficult. In the United Kingdom (UK), Holmes (2018) documented the history of the Church of England’s policy response to the issue of divorce and observed that for a long time, the Church only allowed for adultery as the only ground for divorce and resisted any legislative attempt to expand the grounds. This is in line with Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19:9 as hitherto discussed. Subsequently, Kostenbeiger (2004) takes the position that the innocent party should be treated as if single or unmarried.

Another approach is the double standard way, which put more restrictions of grounds for divorce to Christians than it does to non-Christians based on 1 Corinthians 7:11,15, which has been referred to by some scholars as the Pauline Privilege (Jackson, 2018, as cited in Lagat, 2018). In this case, couples who are believers are not permitted to divorce each other, but in the case where one spouse is an unbeliever and decides to leave the marriage, then divorce under such ground is permissible (Ajay, 2016).

Lagat (2018) talks of the lesser evil approach that is akin to the liberal approach. In this approach, the lesser of two evils is taken. This is where by cruelty, desertion or deprivation of sex can be used as grounds for annulment of marriage. It has also been argued that Christians have been called to peace. Parallels have also been drawn with Old Testament teaching in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which implied that, divorce was permissible on grounds of indecency. Some Churches try to strike a balance between the letters of Jesus teaching with its spirit by appealing for grace (Jackson, 2018). Jenks (2018) examined divorce among Christian Jews from four Protestant denominations: the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Southern Baptist Church, and the Mennonites. The first two

represented the more liberal Protestant denominations and the latter two were more conservative in their approach to family issues. The study established that, United Methodist Church was certainly not in favour of divorce but it recognized its inevitability in some cases.

According to Magampa (2016), the duty of the clergy is to offer pastoral care of the divorcee. The author proposed a pastoral model to facilitate post-divorce coping for divorcees. The study focused on the implications of Church policy on divorcees and identified that divorce is not an option among Catholics. The study further observed that for Catholics, marriage is a sacred covenant and therefore divorce is explicitly forbidden. This observation is explained by Sinclair (2018) who observes that, the Catholic religious instruction explicitly justifies its teaching against divorce by making reference to the teaching of Jesus, when he said that divorce facilitates adultery (Matthew 19:9-10). Thus, the Catholic Church has been specifically identified as having instituted policies that prohibit divorce, among them, that divorcees are forbidden from receiving Holy Communion (Heale, 2015).

The Church is important in creating social support systems that make post-divorce ministries accessible to divorcees, and in making the environment conducive for divorcees to utilize counselling programs (Konieczny, 2016). Christians must still reach out to divorcees irrespective of the circumstances under which divorce took place, as no magic bullet solution to the problems of humans exist (Meier, 2017). Most often than not, people tend to create answers and demand conformance from others as a command from God (Muriithi, 2018). The Biblical position on divorce may worsen the guilt and shame associated with divorce and this may make them reject any outreach effort towards them, or, if they are members of the Church, leave the Church altogether (Hille, 2017). Meier (2017) made contribution to the discourse on the Church's policy to divorce in an attempt to rectify what he argues, "is an

injustice done in the name of Christ and inflicted upon people already suffering a devastating loss in their lives” (Meier, 2017, p.1).

Divorcees are often stigmatized by the Church, which is seen to be out of step with the reality of society with regards to its policy on divorce (Hille, 2017). Styles (2014) examined the history, repercussions, and policy on divorce in the Christian world. The intention of the study was to offer guidance to couples on the verge of divorce by drawing their attention to the aetiology and consequences of divorce and offering them a prescriptive model for strengthening their marriage bond. Findings from historical reviews suggest that the Church has never taken divorce favourably (Dane, 2007). Doxiadis (2020) further recounts that under Ottoman rule, Orthodox Christians were often able to expand their options to dissolve unwanted marriages by appealing to Islamic courts, forcing the Orthodox Church to progressively loosen the restrictions on divorce. However, Doxiadis (2020) argues that, the ease of divorce came under increasing attack from moralists and early feminists dramatically changed the tide, leading to a reintroduction of restrictions of grounds for divorce.

Conservative Christians, especially, disseminate strong messages against divorce through sermons at the pulpit, in a manner that makes an already bad situation worse for divorcees (Stokes & Ellison, 2010). A study of religion and attitude towards the laws, regulating divorce, among United States (US) citizens undertaken by Stokes and Ellison (2010), for instance, found that Church attendance and understanding of the Bible as the inspired word of God, was a strong predictor for strictness regarding matters of divorce. Citing a survey of US Churches, Konieczny (2016) reported that, just a quarter of divorcees reported being reached out to by the Church during or after divorce. A study undertaken by Li et al. (2018) among US nurses suggested that, the Church’s policy increased the likelihood of healing among the widowed but not among the divorced or separated.

In the African context, so many religious communities favour a strict stance on divorce, regarding it as an abomination (Nyathi, 2017). Anaana et al. (2019) investigated the issue of divorce and the Christian Church in Nigeria. The findings showed that Christians in the country believed that Christ's teaching on marriage and divorce is unquestionable, and therefore all Christians should embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ on marriage and divorce and use it as a model. From their interpretation, it was found that majority of the respondents held that, Christ disapproved divorce and therefore all Christians should follow the footsteps of their Master and embrace the institution of marriage with sacrificial love and total commitment with one another thereby, avoiding divorce at all cost.

The strict stance policy on divorce has also been reported in Nigeria where Ademulika (2019) observed that while “many Nigerian Christians find themselves in problematic marriages from which they would want to be freed; their Churches and a host of preachers declare divorce unbiblical” (p. 846). Similar observations were made among Churches in Nigeria whereby by Elijah and Yusufu (2020) advanced the idea that the Church should not impose their will on divorcees (Elijah & Yusufu, 2020). Cherchye et al. (2021) investigated the issue of divorce in Malawi and found, however, that there was no significant association between Church policy and divorce within the Church membership, suggesting that there were context-specific determinants of divorce and its outcomes.

In Kenya, the matter of divorce is regulated by the African Christian Marriage and Divorce Act Chapter 151 Laws of Kenya and the Matrimonial Causes Act Chapter 152 (National Council for Law Reporting, 2012). The Act grants that whenever any person already married by custom desire to convert that marriage to a Christian marriage, they may contract such a marriage before a licensed minister in a place of worship. However, the Act also grants the licensed minister absolute discretion to refuse to witness such a marriage contract. The Matrimonial Causes Act Chapter 152 restricts petitions for divorce on grounds

of infidelity, neglect, cruelty or where the spouse is of incurable mental impairment. This policy has never changed much among Kenyan Churches, with some present day religious leaders maintaining that the institution of marriage is ordained by God, to last till death (Oladipo, 2015).

Tsuma and Atony (2019a) studied the effects of divorce and strategies adopted the Africa Inland Church in addressing the issue of divorce in Kenya. Results showed that the Church adopted intervention strategies like marriage counselling but noted that, there were no strategies in place to provide support for divorced people. From this finding, it can be deduced that the Church pays no attention to the plight of divorcees as members of the body of Christ. This lack of mechanisms, for providing support to divorcees, signals the Church's unwritten policy on divorce, one that is insensitive to the negative impact of divorce on the spiritual, mental, emotional and social well-being of divorced members.

The state of well-being of divorcees has been the subject of a plethora of empirical studies (Al Ubaidi, 2017; Bourassa et al., 2015; Christine, 2018; Mecheser, Al-naqeeb, & Obaid, 2014; Schaan et al., 2019; Yeshiwork et al., 2019; Zineldin, 2019). The general literature on well-being, make reference to the World Health Organization's definition and conceptualization of well-being as a multifaceted construct comprising of social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions rather than the mere absence of infirmity (Hernandez et al., 2018; Sfeatcu, et al., 2014). The concept of well-being is indicated by an individual's evaluation of their life satisfaction based on feelings, moods, and emotions elicited by their assessment of the social, psychological, and spiritual facets of life (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015; Canha et al., 2016).

Research on the aetiology of well-being of divorcees; highlight a number of antecedents and variables, such as coping strategies, stigma, social support, and the quality of marriage before divorce (Lee, 2018). Divorcees experience social stigma manifesting in the

form of social exclusion, distancing, devaluation and shaming, treatment with suspicion, and hostility – with negative ramifications on their well-being (Lee, 2018). The relationship between social stigma and well-being of divorcees is well implied (Caarls & De Valk, 2018; Konstam et al., 2016; Lee, 2018; Thadathil & Sriram, 2019). For instance, divorcees are likely to be shunned by both relatives and friends as well as in a social setting, such as the Church community (Olofsson, 2019). Many divorcees experience social distancing, disapproval, teasing, labelling, and stereotyping in society (Afroz, 2019; Lee, 2018). According to Nagaria (2016), society often treats divorcees with disgust, fear, pity, anger, scorn, loathing, and contempt. Such forms of stigma make divorcees feel embarrassed to socialize and this escalates their loneliness that is detrimental to their well-being (Benedicta et al., 2017). Thadathil and Sriram (2019) add that, because divorcees are stigmatized, they also face emotional insecurity, which adversely affects their well-being.

A wide range of coping styles, used by divorcees, exists with varying degrees of effectiveness for their well-being. Coping styles are strategies or patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaviour that people adopt to deal with stressors in life (Kreyenfield & Trappe, 2020). Broad categories of coping styles have been identified, namely: emotion-focused coping, such as, emotional expression and denial; problem-focused coping whereby people cope through problem solving and support seeking; and disengagement which is characterized by cognitive avoidance, social withdrawal or problem avoidance (Paysnick, 2015). These broad categories of coping can be reclassified into positive coping (adaptive coping) if they weaken the impact of post-divorce stressors on well-being and negative coping (maladaptive coping) if impacts on well-being are strengthened (Monahan, 2018). This means that strategies of dealing with post-divorce stress can either facilitate adjustment and well-being of divorcees or worsen the situation (Kolodziej-Zaleska & Przbyta-Basista, 2016).

This study examined divorcee mental, social and spiritual well-being in relation to Church policy on divorce in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County. There is a known connection between divorce, well-being, and mortality (Christine, 2018). In light of this, Church policy has the potential to either worsen or alleviate the risks of low well-being for individuals who have gone through a divorce. Studying the influence of Church policy on the well-being of divorcees in Kenya and exploring how divorcees manage their situation can offer valuable insights into whether Church policies regarding divorce contribute to or diminish the likelihood of psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of Church policy on divorce and well-being of divorcees continue to receive limited research attention, despite the growing cases of divorce among Christian couples. The spirit and purpose of Church policy, on divorce, should lead affected parties towards reconciliation and fellowship with God and men, and guide the Church to conduct itself towards divorcees with Christ-likeness (Walker & O'Reggio, 2012). It is thus expected that Church policy should promote the well-being of divorcees by helping them heal by the power of the word of God, which is restorative and fosters compassion. However, the Church is often seen to be unhelpful to divorcees as they are often at the forefront in condemning those undergoing divorce (Hille, 2017). With 23 percent higher mortality rates being recorded among divorcees as compared to the general population, and the established inter-relationship between divorce, well-being and mortality, Church policy can either exacerbate or mitigate the risks of poor well-being for divorcees (Christine, 2018).

Research on the impact of Church policy on the well-being of divorcees in Kenya and how divorcees cope, can provide the much needed evidence on whether Church policy on divorce increase or reduce the risk of spiritual, poor mental, social and emotional well-being of divorcees. In a study undertaken by Kahindi (2018), which investigated Christian response

to single-parenthood in selected Churches in Nairobi County, it was found that the response was discriminatory, with widows being the most tolerated while divorcees least tolerated. This potentially portends negative implications on the mental, social and spiritual well-being of divorcees. However, the study did not investigate the role of Church policy on this unfavourable attitude of the Church towards divorcees.

Adopting a mixed-methods research design, this study addressed the knowledge gap on wellbeing of divorcees by exploring how Church policy impacts on their psychosocial wellbeing. The contextual gap was addressed by focusing on selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County in Kenya, hence providing a non-western perspective of the nexus of stigma and coping style at the intersection of church policy on divorce and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

Objectives of the Study

This study examined Church policy on divorce in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya, and investigated its relationship with well-being of divorcees. The following are the specific objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' mental wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.
2. To investigate the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' spiritual wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County Kenya.
3. To evaluate the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' social wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya
4. To assess the extent of divorce stigma on divorced members in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.
5. Examine the coping styles adapted by divorced members in regard to Church Divorce Policy in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Research Questions

The researcher attempted to address five research questions:

1. What is the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' mental wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya?
2. What is the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' spiritual wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya?
3. What is the relationship between Church Divorce Policy on divorcees' social wellbeing in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya?
4. To what extent does Church Divorce Policy contribute to divorce stigma among divorced members in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya?
5. What are the coping styles adapted by divorced members in regards to Church Divorce Policy in selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya?

Assumptions of the Study

The study made the following assumptions:

1. There were divorcees within the congregations of the selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County. This assumption was proven true as participants in this study were divorcees.
2. Each Evangelical Church in Nakuru County had its own written or unwritten policy on the matter of divorce, which governed how it handled divorcees in its midst. This assumption was affirmed by the observation that most churches maintained an unwritten policy on divorce.
3. Church policy on divorce significantly affected spiritual and social well-being of divorcees. This assumption was disproved as no statistically significant influence was found between church policy and spiritual or psychological wellbeing.

4. The responses that were obtained were an accurate reflection of the facts concerning the Churches' policy on divorce and its influence on divorcees' psychosocial well-being. This was confirmed true since the qualitative results corroborated the results of quantitative analysis.

Rationale of the Study

Empirical literature on the relationship between Church policy on divorce and holistic well-being of divorcees is relatively underdeveloped. Most studies have delved on the respective Church policy stances with respect to divorce, but have not examined the well-being outcomes of divorcees resulting from Church policy (Doxiadis, 2020; Jenkins, 2020; Lagat, 2018). The extant literature has focused on the doctrinal aspects of the Church and divorce, whereas, the well-being implications of Church policy on divorce is not adequately investigated. Furthermore, where such empirical literature exists, they were predominantly western, with barely any literature in existence in Africa (Ademulika, 2019). This provided grounds for empirical inquiry on the nexus between church policy on divorce and divorcees' well-being in a non-western context.

Divorce among Christian couples is a growing reality confronting the Church in Kenya and across the world, with potential negative ramifications on the holistic well-being of divorcees. Church policy on divorce is important in shaping not just members' decisions concerning whether to divorce or not, but also how the Church community responds to and treat divorcees among their ranks. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate the impact of Church policy on well-being of divorcees in Kenya. The output of such an assessment can provide valuable insights and feedback that the Church can use to develop policies and practices that promote the holistic well-being of divorcees. However, knowledge on the policy of Churches in Kenya and related implications on the well-being of divorcees is sparse.

Significance of the Study

The study led to practical recommendations that can be implemented by Church leaders as it illuminated in depth how their policies, messaging and actions or inactions affect the well-being of divorcees and their families. The recommendations emanating from this study offer a basis for policy reviews in order to effectively minister to and reach out to members impacted by divorce.

Christian counsellors can also draw from this research work to inform their approach to counselling practice towards clients experiencing divorce. The research contributes to better insights into the issues divorcees face in the Christian community and how their experiences of stigma affect their well-being. This background knowledge can be useful for designing counselling programs that take into account the Christian community as a social system.

Through their participation in the study, the research potentially contributes to greater awareness by the Christian community, as well as the general public, on how policy-induced stigma impacts the divorcees mentally, socially, and spiritually. This awareness can lead to greater sensitivity and thoughtfulness when interacting with divorcees.

Similarly, academicians and scholars wishing to advance research on the subject of social, mental, and spiritual well-being of divorcees may find the report valuable as a repository of knowledge. The research empirically tested the efficacy of the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model in explaining the impact of Church policy on well-being of divorcees. This could lead to advancement of the theory within a Christian community.

Scope of the Study

The study entailed a critical examination of the Church's policy on divorce. It focused on the impact of Church policy on the mental, spiritual, and social well-being of divorcees and how divorcees cope with the effects of Church policy on them. The study, was

geographically, focused on Evangelical Churches in the eleven sub-counties in Nakuru County in Kenya. This is because Nakuru County is one of the counties in Kenya with rising cases of divorce, with records maintained at the Nakuru Law Courts indicating that the number of divorces had risen by 33 percent between the year 2018 and 2020 (Kenya Law, 2022). Evangelical Churches have been selected because they account for the majority of the Church population in Nakuru County (Li et al., 2020). The analysis relied on self-reports gathered from divorcees and Church ministers.

Limitations of the Study

This study was faced with two limitations in the process of undertaking this research. Firstly, divorcees were a hard-to-reach population because determining a definite population of divorcees from which to draw a sample was not possible. For this reason, snow-ball method was used to recruit study participants into the sample. This was potentially because of the stigma associated with divorce; thus, a database of divorcees did not exist. Language barrier was also a limitation as some respondents were not conversant with the English language. To mitigate this, the researcher employed a research assistant conversant with the local language in order to translate questions into the language of the respondent. Self-report data was another limitation. This was mitigated by keeping the participation of the respondents' anonymous and avoiding leading questions.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to selected Evangelical Churches to represent a cross-section of the various Church denominations in the 11 Sub-Counties of Nakuru County. Although there are Churches across the Country, the Churches outside the County were excluded from the study due to logistical constraints of gathering data in other counties. The research was conceptually delimited to psycho-social well-being of respondents as most of the wellbeing

issues were psychosocial in nature. As such, physical well-being of divorcees was not investigated.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a background overview of the research and discussed the key concepts of the study. It has stated the problem and explained the knowledge gap to be filled. The chapter has further outlined the purpose, objectives and research questions. It has equally presented the rationale, assumptions, significance and scope as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study. The next chapter reviewed pertinent theoretical and empirical literature as well as the conceptual framework used. This included a critical review and synthesis of the research gaps.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter evaluates literature on Church policy on divorce and various dimensions of well-being of divorcees. The chapter is organized into four major sections. The first section presents a critical review of empirical literature presented according to the specific objectives of the study. The second section discusses the theoretical framework to be used. The third section describes the conceptual framework. The last section summarizes the chapter and identifies the key literature gaps.

Empirical Literature Review

This sub-section presents a critical review and discussion of past research, along with findings in order to draw out existing gaps in knowledge.

Church's Policy on Divorce

Nyathi (2017) explored the issue of divorce and remarriage in a Church in Bulawayo Central in Southwest Zimbabwe. Data was collected using questionnaire, focus group interview, and individual interview. This mixing of data collection methods assures methodological comprehensiveness, which is suitable for the present research. The study showed that in one Pentecostal Church, there were inconsistencies in applying the Holy Scriptures and Church rules to handle divorce in the Church. While in principle, divorce remains unacceptable, there was evidence of continued engagement in divorce among Church members, implying that the policy was not implemented to the letter.

Similarly, Comfort and Chinyeaka (2018) examined divorce tendency between Pentecostal and Orthodox Church members in Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted of 300 married men and women drawn from selected Pentecostal and Orthodox Churches. As in the present research, data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The study established that divorce tendency was higher among Orthodox Church members than

Pentecostals. The authors conjectured that the Orthodox Church may have been lax in prohibiting divorce, thereby encouraging members to consider it as quick options. This argument implies that the church in question took a liberal policy. However, the research was not carried out in Kenya thus creating a contextual gap which this study filled by investigating church policy on divorce in selected evangelical churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Odoi (2015) studied the problem of divorce occurring within Christian couples in selected Churches in Kumasi, Ghana. The study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the issue of divorce among Christians in the Kumasi Metropolis and how the Church responded to it. Interviews were done with 14 participants who were all congregants of the Grace Baptist Church, Amakom. The study established that, the Church was affected by divorce as couples ended up divorcing while others faced severe marital strain. This signals the possibility that the Church took a liberal policy on divorce and, consequently, did not take adequate measures to mitigate it. The relevance of this finding to the present study is that, this tolerance for divorce may impact the mental and social well-being of divorcees in Church. The study was however not undertaken in Kenya where, although the divorce rates are noted to be on the rise among Christians, limited studies have been done to investigate the issue of divorce from a Church policy perspective. This was a contextual gap that this study sought to fill.

Research on divorce in the Church, within the Kenyan context, has investigated the causes and impact of divorce. Tsuma and Atony (2019a) investigated the role of the Church in addressing divorce at the African Inland Church, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was undertaken within a slum context. Data was gathered using a questionnaire comprising of both structured and unstructured questions. It was found that divorce by Church members extremely affected the functioning of the Church, which suggests that the Church did not

maintain a strict policy on divorce. This was implied in the finding which revealed that a significant percentage of respondents observed that the Church had no strategies to support divorced people, though the leadership expressed commitment to reduce divorce cases through counselling and seminars. However, the study did not focus on Church policy in terms of no divorce policy, no divorce with exception, the Pauline privilege, the lesser evil principle, and the liberal approach. This presented a conceptual gap that was filled in this study.

Church's Policy on Divorce and Mental Well-being of Divorcees

Mental well-being refers to positive feelings of happiness and satisfaction and a positive attitude towards one's responsibility to self and to others (Galderisi et al., 2017). The concept of mental well-being has six facets. These are: self-acceptance – which is the knowledge and acceptance of one's strengths and personal limitations; positive relations – which is the depth of supportive relationship one has with important others; personal growth – which is the personal development and progress as a person; purpose in life – which is the pursuit of goals that give meaning to one's life; autonomy – which is a sense of independence in thought and action; and environmental mastery – which depicts the ability to navigate complex environmental issues and harness them to work in favour of oneself in accord with one's needs and values (Lijadi, 2018).

A study by Mulovhedzi (2017) based on unstructured interviews found that, as a result of Church policy following divorce, individuals experience a flurry of emotional challenges including feelings of suicidal tendencies, stress, withdrawal, anger, worry, sadness, anxiety, depression, bitterness, confusion, isolation, sorrow, and grief. This finding suggests that Church policy on divorce was detrimental to the mental well-being of divorcees. The gap in the study was that it utilized a purely qualitative approach hence the relationship between church policy and emotional wellbeing of divorcees was not examined in terms of

effect size. The current study bridged this methodological gap by adopting both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

A study by Jurma (2015) utilising a structured questionnaire established that solitude and depression are more frequent among those who experienced a divorce than among other populations, with many divorcees reporting inability to cope. These findings have significant implications for understanding the psychological well-being of divorcees. The study highlights the need for adequate support systems and interventions to address the emotional challenges faced by individuals who have experienced divorce. By recognizing the higher incidence of solitude, depression, and coping difficulties among divorcees, appropriate measures can be implemented to provide them with the necessary assistance and resources to promote their mental health and overall well-being. The study however did not demonstrate the role of church policy in the experience of solitude and depression among divorcees hence creating a conceptual gap. This gap was filled in this study by empirically testing the link between church policy and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees in Kenya.

Familusi (2019) argues that when divorce becomes inevitable, the Church must not reject and condemn those who are involved. In his view, the issue of salvation and eternity goes beyond divorce and therefore, instead of excommunicating divorcees as if those who sins are unpardonable, they should be at the forefront helping divorcees recover from the psychological trauma associated with the divorce itself. This argument finds support from an empirical study by Mulovhedzi (2017) who investigated the challenges confronting divorcees in Church, found that divorcees who are rejected by the Church may think of taking their own lives. One divorcee in the study by Mulovhedzi, for instance, disclosed that he considered suicide as a result of lack of pastoral care in Church following his divorce, a stand arguably traceable to the Church policy. Literature is inadequate (about 3 paragraphs. Your constructs

for mental wellbeing were inner harmony and thought independence which have not been discussed.

Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being of Divorcees

The concept of spiritual well-being draws from the notion of spirituality which is conceptualized as “the search of ultimate meaning, purpose and significance, in relation to oneself, family, others, community nature, and the sacred, expressed through beliefs, values, traditions, and practices” (Saad et al., 2017, p.2). As such, people find meaning in the way they connect to a transcendent being as well as to nature, which includes fellow humankind. People in good spiritual state have a positive self-concept, believe in a transcendent God, are optimistic about life, give unselfishly, have a high moral compass, are satisfied with their own self-identity, and have a high sense of purpose (Saad et al., 2017).

Fisher (2011) developed a theory of spiritual well-being that categorizes spiritual well-being into four domains. These domains are: personal, which entails interrelating with oneself to one’s purpose and meaning in life; communal, which is about the relationship between oneself and his or her community; environmental, which is about achieving harmony with one’s environment; and transcendental, which is the state of relationship with oneself and God or a cosmic force (Phenwan et al., 2019).

Mulovhedzi (2017) documented multiple challenges that divorcees experience, which have links to Church policy and which have implications on spiritual well-being. They include challenges of religious commitment, disbarment from Holy Communion, lack of Church support, spiritual devastation, lack of fellowship, rejection and isolation by the Church, lack of pastoral support, and inability to focus on God. From these findings, it can be deduced that Church policy affects the spiritual well-being of divorcees negatively. This is because each mentioned challenge has an element of communion or fellowship that each

human being, as a social as well as spiritual being, earnestly yearns for. However, the study was not anchored on primary research.

Platovnjak (2015) studied whether divorce cut a divorced couple's ties to Christ and the Church. In contrast to the challenges of divorcees that are listed by Mulovhedzi (2017), the results of Platovnjak's (2015) survey showed that divorce stimulated most of the divorced persons to grow spiritually. This is to say that divorce yielded some positive benefits to divorcees. The survey finding of Platovnjak (2015) also contradicts the review by Hille (2017) who noted that divorce leads to spiritual alienation. Hille (2017) proceeded to report that 20 percent of those who divorced stop participating in their Church, with other researches indicating that divorced people were significantly less likely than intact couples to attend Church. Arguably, divorce is one of the experiences for which an individual would want a strong support system which, apparently, seems not to be found for divorcees. The cited studies did not investigate how no divorce policy, no divorce with exceptions and liberal divorce influence divorcees' wellbeing thus providing a conceptual gap. Thus study filled the identified gap by investigating the nexus between the different church policy on divorce and spiritual, emotional, and social wellbeing of divorcees in evangelical churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Relationship between Church Policy on Divorce and Social Well-being

Konieczny (2016) made reference to reports in the US indicating that, although almost half of congregations in a study report offering marriage counselling and post-divorce ministries, only 25 percent of divorced families report experiencing clergy help or congregational outreach while divorcing or post-divorce. It can be speculated that, Church policy makes the environment unfavourable for providing a strong support system for couples suffering from divorce.

Hille (2017) discussed about development of an effective divorce rescue program called divorce recovery ministry. Perspectives of congregants revealed that members were very reluctant to support a Christian response to hurtful situations that divorcees experience. Many respondents the study believed that divorcees were not repentant, and that divorcees invited stigma on themselves since the emphasis of the Church is on strong and functional marital unions. The argument often put forth by many congregants, according to Hille (2017), is that it would be more worthwhile directing energy in promoting marital stabilities as opposed to trying to heal disintegrated ones because the disintegration was a result of choice. Additional results from his study showed that respondents felt that, by recognising the needs of those experiencing divorce might legitimize divorce in society at the expense of the sanctity of marriage.

Konieczny (2016) analysed data from 26 Northern Indiana Congregations Study Christian Churches of different traditions, in order to identify the characteristics of congregations that successfully offer outreach to families in crisis. Data was collected by conducting qualitative interviews. A comparative analysis of congregational cultures undertaken by the author found that, congregations with successfully offered outreach exhibit three bundled cultural characteristics not found in those without: realistic confidence among pastors regarding solving marital problems, lay empowerment, and discourses transforming individualized marriage religiously. In this way, the researcher contributed to the understanding of the nexus between divorce and social well-being of divorcees. The present study sought to establish if the same applied to Evangelical Churches in Kenya and specifically in Nakuru County.

Church Policy on Divorce and Stigma of Divorcees

Stigma is a characteristic that sets an individual apart from other members of the population, resulting into being treated with suspicion or hostility (Lee, 2018). Stigma of

divorce manifests in two variants: public stigma and self-stigma (Canfield & Cunningham, 2018; Kostram et al., 2016). Public stigma, also referred to as the social dimension of stigma, refers to the negative beliefs and attitudes that society has towards divorce and divorcees. This is contrasted to self-stigma which results when divorcees internalize prejudice against them, leading to diminished sense of self-worth (Canfield & Cunningham, 2018). It has been argued that the social context of divorce, rather than the divorce itself, leads to stigmatization of divorcees (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Social stigma of divorce is also a subject that has remained a salient issue documented in several studies (Afroz, 2019; Mendoza et al., 2019; Sheykhi, 2020; Soukayna, 2018). Among some communities, the stigma of divorce is considered worse than the divorce itself (Mendoza et al., 2019). This is due to the shunning, disapproval, isolation, and discrimination that divorcees often experience in most societies (Benedicta et al., 2017; Olofsson, 2019; Nagaria, 2016). Stigma is characterized by the way divorce is shamed and disgraced in the Church.

In a qualitative interview research undertaken by Nagaria (2016), it was found that divorcees contribute to stigma by blaming themselves or having a sense of guilt and shame. Whether stigma emanates from society or is self-inflicted, the implications on the well-being of divorcees are potentially adverse; with research documenting that it is a fundamental problem in coping with divorce (Pirak et al., 2018). Makidon (2013) undertook a study exploring the experiences of 25 women who divorced in their late life using an in-depth interview tool. The study indicated that divorcees face stigma though this varied by region, whereby divorce was more stigmatised in Mexico than United States.

In the study by Mulovhedzi (2017), it was revealed that divorcees who occupy leadership positions in the Church are not given support by the congregation, are challenged to lead by example, and are disbarred by Church doctrine, simply because of being divorcees.

Molvhedzi (2017) further observed that divorcees are also treated with suspicion, especially in mingling with other married members of the congregation. The author noted that some participants no longer attended Church service during Holy Communion days. Respondents in Molvhedzi's (2017) study expressed feeling like an outsider and an outcast in their own Church. Others felt that their spiritual life was muzzled by the Church. As a result, the study found that some divorcees stopped going to Church altogether. These results suggest that stigma has a debilitating effect on divorcees' well-being and this is exacerbated Church policy, which emboldens members of the congregation to disgrace the divorced member. Consequently, Magampa (2016) notes that divorcees lack self-worth due to rejection, that is associated with being divorced and this is made worse by rejection by the Church.

Highlighting the likelihood of societal humiliation at Church, Hille (2017) argue that divorcees may struggle with embarrassment and guilt over ways in which they recompensed for their marital breakdown. Hille further postulate that divorcees may also become bitter and unforgiving of their ex-spouse, a sense of neglect by God, and disenchantment with the incapacity of their conviction or their Church to avert or respond to the divorce. For instance, many respondents in Mulovhedzi's (2017) study reported experiencing debilitating loneliness. This was as a result of stigma, they felt separated from the Church, like lepers in the name of wanting to reduce the number of divorcees. They felt rejected by the Church that took a policy stand on indissolubility of marriage without due regards to the divorcee's peculiar circumstances.

In a study of the role of African American Church on meeting mental health needs of its parishioners, undertaken by Sutton (2020), stigma was found to play a salient role in determining the mental well-being of parishioners. Interviews with respondents revealed that some people felt ashamed and were looked at differently by Church members. These results mean that divorcees may harbour further feelings of rejection, and these challenges can be

traced back to Church policy. Church policy may be unwritten but reflects in the behaviours and attitudes towards divorcees.

O'Neil (2017) examined the issue of divorce in Church scripturally and then observationally through the studies of other pastoral individuals, through interviews of local Church leaders, and through a nationwide survey. The study sought to establish respondents' Church's position on divorce. Results showed that all the participants held the view that, the Church should see divorce as a serious problem and take measures to discourage it more than the Church is doing today. This finding suggests that the society is not tolerant of divorce and may not be sympathetic to divorcees. Therefore, there is a possibility that many divorcees may be more exposed to depressive symptoms because of this lack of social support. For instance, Mulovhedzi (2017) studied the challenges of divorcees in the reformed Churches of South Africa, within the Vhembe District and considered the implications for pastoral counselling. He observed that divorcees experienced many challenges and the pastors were neither equipped nor doing enough to address them. However, the contribution of Church policy to the inaction by the pastors was not demonstrated in the study, thus presenting a knowledge gap.

Adam (2015) explored policies charismatic Churches hold on the subject of divorce and the kind of support given to divorcees in the Churches, by applying a qualitative study approach to facilitate the development of the researcher's in-depth understanding on issues of divorce. The study found that, divorce was an issue of concern in charismatic Churches because many of their congregants were divorcing without their pastors knowing, because of the stigma of divorce. Again, most charismatic Churches do not have a documented stand on divorce, never warn their congregants on the perils and signs that suggests that one may experience divorce. The study was based on Harvest Chapel International in Ghana. Therefore, the research results were not generalizable to the Kenyan context hence creating a

knowledge gap which was filled in this study by carrying out the research in Nakuru County in Kenya.

Rathi and Pchauri (2018) explored the problems faced by divorced women in Meerut District in their pre and post-divorce period. They interviewed 38 divorced women who shared their various experiences. In their study, stigma was found to be a constraint to mental well-being, with some participants confessing that they tried to commit suicide as a result of social stigma they experienced as divorcees. The research therefore underscored the debilitating effect of divorce stigma on women. However, the research scope did not include an investigation of church policy on divorce, hence the current study.

The Relationship between Church Policy and Social Stigma of Divorce

A number of studies have explored social stigma and its relationship to post-divorce stressors and well-being (Caarls & De Valk, 2018; Konstam et al., 2016; Lee, 2018; Thadathil & Sriram, 2019). Caarls and Devalk (2018) studied the determinants and patterns of divorce in Turkey, where they tested the assumption that acceptance of divorce in society decreases the stigmatization of divorcees, which in turn impacts their well-being. This suggests that, stigma potentially contributes to the relationship between a policy of acceptance and well-being outcomes of divorcees. The research was carried out in Turkey whose social system may not be similar to the social system in Kenya since Turkey is a largely Muslim nation while majority of Kenyans are Christians. This necessitates the present research.

Konstam et al. (2016) explored the experiences of divorce-related stigma among young adult women. The study conducted qualitative interviews with divorcees. The study identified that stigma had a role on the effect of religion on mental well-being of divorcees. However, this varied by the divorcees' perception of blame and feelings of embarrassment. It can be surmised from their research that as an instrument of religion, a Church that maintains

a no divorce policy may increase stigma towards divorcees, which may in turn affect their mental, social or spiritual well-being. This means that, stigma may explain the relationship between Church policy and well-being of the divorcees. This assumption was tested in the current study.

A review of research on the stigma of divorce in India undertaken by Thadathil and Sriram (2019) showed that divorcees suffered from social and health-related problems, linked to the stigmatization of divorce by the society's conservative social system. Given that Church policies serve as a regulator of the social system, it can be hypothesized that some Church policies on divorce may be stigmatizing to divorcees and can lead to rejection and exclusion by the society which may be detrimental to their well-being.

The literature on stigma is consistent that, stigma potentially explains the relationship between Church policy and mental well-being of divorcees. However, although the empirical evidence suggests that divorcees adopt various coping styles, the finding on the effect on their well-being is inconsistent. In the next section, the theoretical framework is explained.

The Effect of Coping Styles on the Relationship between Church Policy on Divorce and Well-being of Divorcees

Reviewing literature under this section calls for the division of the review of literature into two sequential parts. The first part critically reviews the relationship between Church policy on divorce and coping style of divorcees. The second part looks at the relationship between coping styles and well-being of divorcees.

Relationship between Church Policy on Divorce and Coping Style of Divorcees

Research on Church policy on divorce, in relation to how divorcees cope with the adverse effects of divorce, is attracting a growing body of scholarly input (Familiusi, 2019; Odoi, 2015; Wells, 2019). Perry (2019), for instance, conducted the influence of Church policy on divorce on the coping style of divorced Americans attending Churches affiliated to

a conservative Protestant tradition of Church strictness on divorce. The study argued that divorcees felt pressure within themselves to frame their marital split in a manner that deflected blame as a style of coping.

In contrast, Wells (2019) investigated the matter of Church policy on divorce by interviewing Church leaders on the Church's position on divorce and how they respond to the issue in comparison to the perspectives of divorcees, with a view to detect attendant ministerial gaps if any. The investigation was based on a case study of Cornerstone Church, a small congregational Church that adopted a policy of acceptance and reconciliation of divorcees to Christ. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview tools. The study found that the policy led to the development of programs that helped divorcees to cope effectively with divorce. This finding suggests that a policy of love and acceptance of divorcees can have an impact on how divorcees cope with divorce.

Within the African region, one of the researches on this subject was conducted by Odoi (2015) who studied the problem of divorce among Christians in Kumasi, Ghana and investigated the Church's policy on the matter. The study entailed interviewing divorcees, married individuals and counsellors from the Great Baptist Church. It was found that there was no program for divorcees. This form of policy-induced conduct of the Church towards divorcees may have an influence on how divorcees coped with the adverse effects of divorce. This was demonstrated in a study conducted by Mulovhedzi (2017), who explored the challenges divorcees in the Reformed Churches of South Africa, experienced in coping with divorce. The study, which utilized qualitative interviews to elicit the personal experiences of divorcees, associated no divorce policy of the Church to rejection of divorcees. Their rejection was found to be a risk factor for effective coping with the adverse effects of divorce on their well-being.

Another study was done in Nigeria by Familusi (2019) who undertook a socio-ethical analysis of divorce among Christians in Nigeria. The research was based on oral interviews with clergy, divorcees and married couples. The study documented confusion about the Church position on divorce in the light of present day realities. Results of the study revealed that there were Churches that, even when there has been a separation and there is no physical contact, the marriage was still intact whereas on the other hand, were Churches that by their actions or inactions, seemed to project a liberal stance on the issue of divorce. This was found to narrow down the options of divorcees for moving on with life after the experience of divorce.

Tsuma and Odek (2019a) explored the role of Church policy on divorce with implications on coping among divorced members of Africa Inland Church in Nairobi County in Kenya. The study was a perception survey that elicited views of Church members on the policy response of the Church towards the issue of divorce among Christians. Data was gathered using questionnaires. The study established that, the policy took a compassionate stand towards divorcees as signalled by the existence of various initiatives, such as, seminars and forums for talking with and providing assistance to both married and divorced people. By implication, divorcees are able to access social support systems that broaden their coping resources and increase their chances of positive coping with the adverse effects of divorce.

Relationship between Coping Style and Well-being of Divorcees

Coping styles are strategies people use to manage the adverse consequences of life stressors (Kreyenfield & Trappe, 2020). Coping styles have been found to reduce or worsen the effects of post-divorce stressors on well-being of divorcees (O'Hara et al., 2019). Explaining how this happens, Paysnick (2015) suggest that, positive coping styles act as a buffer against the negative effects of post-divorce stressors on mental well-being, such as,

policy-induced profiling that divorcees may experience within the Church community, while negative coping styles worsens the impact of divorce on well-being of divorcees. Several studies have documented the role of coping styles on well-being outcomes, following negative life events such as divorce (Gungor, 2016; Monahan, 2018; Soulsby & Bennett, 2015; Yaacob et al., 2019). These studies suggest that, coping styles depend on coping resources, some of which are innate while others can be learned, thereby providing opportunity for psychosocial intervention that may necessitate a rethinking of Church policy.

Divorcees deploy several styles in an attempt to cope with their divorce and attendant challenges that is associated with such a status. Simonic and Klobucar (2016) argued that religion or spirituality can be very helpful for experiencing stress related to their divorce. Beck, Harris, Crabtree, Allen and Roberts (2017) examined the role spirituality play in the actual decision to divorce or stay married. Findings from 30 qualitative interviews indicated that interviewees mentioned, without prompting, the role of spirituality in their divorce decision-making process. The impact of spirituality as a coping style yielded four themes: staying married is “morally right,” the dilemma of religious beliefs, heavily influenced by religious social network, and religious practices inform the decision-making process. These results depict spirituality as a positive coping strategy.

Brown (2014) studied how spirituality contributed to how well divorcees coped with divorce. The researcher interviewed 12 divorcees so as to elicit their personal experiences of the transition to divorce. The study found that spirituality as measured by attendance of Church services by the divorcee, Bible reading and prayers was a major coping strategy used by most of the participants after divorce.

Simonic and Klobucar (2016) study aimed to explore how divorcees experience the weight of divorce and along with it the relationship with God (within Catholic tradition) as a source of positive support in coping with divorce. Findings from 11 semi-structured

interviews indicated that experiencing the burden of divorce, which is related to experiencing the relationship with God and the ways of spiritual coping with divorce, and experiencing the effects of religious coping with divorce. The study was not done in Kenya, thus, necessitating the current study.

Jenkins (2016) drew insights from qualitative interviews with 75 divorced individuals, some of whom were recently divorced while for others, the dissolution occurred decades ago, to provide a narrative that allows the reader to navigate the struggles, trials, and triumphs of individuals as they search to find meaning post-divorce. Results showed that religion is an enable of therapy. It can be surmised from this finding that religiosity can be an effective coping style that can mitigate the impact of Church policy on divorce.

Tuttle and Davis (2015) used data from the panel study of Marital Instability over the Life Course with a sample of 763 participants to address knowledge gaps on the nexus between religiosity on marital divorce among couples married for at least 12 years. Questionnaires were administered to the participants. Their finding revealed that the effect of religiosity on the likelihood of a subsequent divorce was complicated. There was an indirect reducing effect of religiosity on the likelihood of a subsequent divorce. This means that religiosity has predictive effect on mental well-being.

Perry (2018) investigated how religion influences the way divorcees frame their divorce experience. He theorized that highly religious Americans or those who affiliate to conservatism in keeping with the protestant norm, most likely emphasize the role of their former spouse in the divorce more than they do theirs. The researcher used data from a sample of divorced Americans in the 2014 Relationships in America survey. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. It was found that, those who go to Church more frequently, were more likely to say that their former spouse wanted the divorce more than they did. This suggest that they coped by blaming their divorce to external causes. The author

used the prevalence of stigma against divorce to argue that, divorcées in such communities potentially feel internal pressure to account for their divorce in ways that deflect blame.

In his study, Brown (2014) asked participants about what kinds of coping strategies they used to cope with divorce. The research was based on qualitative interviews. Four of the participants reported that, exercise, attending Church, and drinking were what they felt helped them to deal with their divorce. These findings suggests that, in addition to religiosity, some divorcees turned to positive coping styles like exercise, whereas others turned to negative coping strategies. It can be speculated that, the choice adopted by divorcees may affect their well-being. The current study sought to test this assumption.

A review of literature undertaken by VanderWeele (2017) established that, a large body of research has emerged suggesting that, religious participation is strongly associated with numerous health and well-being outcomes. From his observation, religious service attendance is associated with greater longevity, less depression, less suicide, less smoking, less substance abuse, better cancer and cardiovascular disease survival, less divorce, greater social support, greater meaning and purpose in life, greater life satisfaction, more charitable giving, more volunteering, and greater civic engagement. From this finding, Church policy may reduce divorcee's religious attendance, thereby exposing them to adverse mental well-being outcomes.

Similarly, respondents in a study by Jenkins (2020) had varying degrees of investment in marital bonds anchored on religion, with most of the respondents perceiving their marriages as a sacred union and relived memories of religious ceremonies and spiritual hopes that were foundational to their marital union. As a result, most of the research participants turned to individual spiritual and community practices to help guide their transition and ease feelings associated with social shame. This led to the conclusion that family religious beliefs

and practices as well as practices crafted by divorce ministries and clergy, held powerful emotional sway in their stories.

Other coping styles as documented in a study by Jurma (2015) is that, divorcees coped with their situation by travelling long journeys and getting effective support from the community. It can be theorized that, divorcees resort to long journeys to get away from painful reminders of their status within the vicinity. Mulovhedzi (2017) also identified reading books as a coping style deployed by respondents. Books can act as distractions. The effectiveness of these coping styles for maintaining mental well-being in light of Church policy on divorce has not been adequately studied, thus, the need for this study.

A part from initiatives which divorcees have greater control over, Makidon (2013) point out that social support is a protective factor during the post-divorce adjustment period; what is unknown is whether and where divorcees accessed social support for post-divorce adjustment in light of stigma they are exposed to in the Church.

Coping styles can increase or reduce the impact of policy-induced profiling on well-being of divorce as suggested in several studies (Gungor, 2016; Soulsby & Bennett, 2015; Yaacob et al. 2019). The study by Gungor (2016) investigated the effects of optimism, hope, and gratitude on the relationship negative life events and psychological distress, whereby divorce was characterized as a negative life event. The study found that positive coping styles, such as, being optimistic, having hope, and being grateful for life, significantly reduced participants' psychological distress. By implications, this means that coping style can mitigate the impact of post-divorce stressors, such as, profiling on the well-being of divorcees. The present study sought to establish whether such coping mechanisms mediated the relationship between stigma and psycho-social wellbeing of divorcees.

Soulsby and Bennett (2015) examined the role of perceived social support as a resource on the influence of divorce on psychological well-being. The data revealed limited

evidence of the effect of perceived social support on the relationship between post-divorce stressors on psychological well-being. The finding, therefore, seems to contradict the idea that coping styles is a factor as implied in the study by Gungor (2016). The literature suggests that the empirical evidence is mixed, which signals the need for continued research on the role of coping style in the relationship between stigma and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

Like the study by Gungor (2016) and Yaacob et al. (2019), investigated the effects of coping strategy on the impact of negative life events on mental health problems. The study sampled 480 divorced families in Malaysia. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data. The results showed that both adaptive and maladaptive coping, significantly influenced the relationship between post-divorce stressors and mental health, whereby adaptive coping reduced the adverse impact and maladaptive coping increased the adverse impact that divorce-related stressors had on the mental well-being of research participants. The present study sought to determine whether similar results would be obtained among divorcees in Kenya, and whether coping mechanisms moderated the relationship between stigma and psychosocial wellbeing of the divorcees.

Theoretical Framework

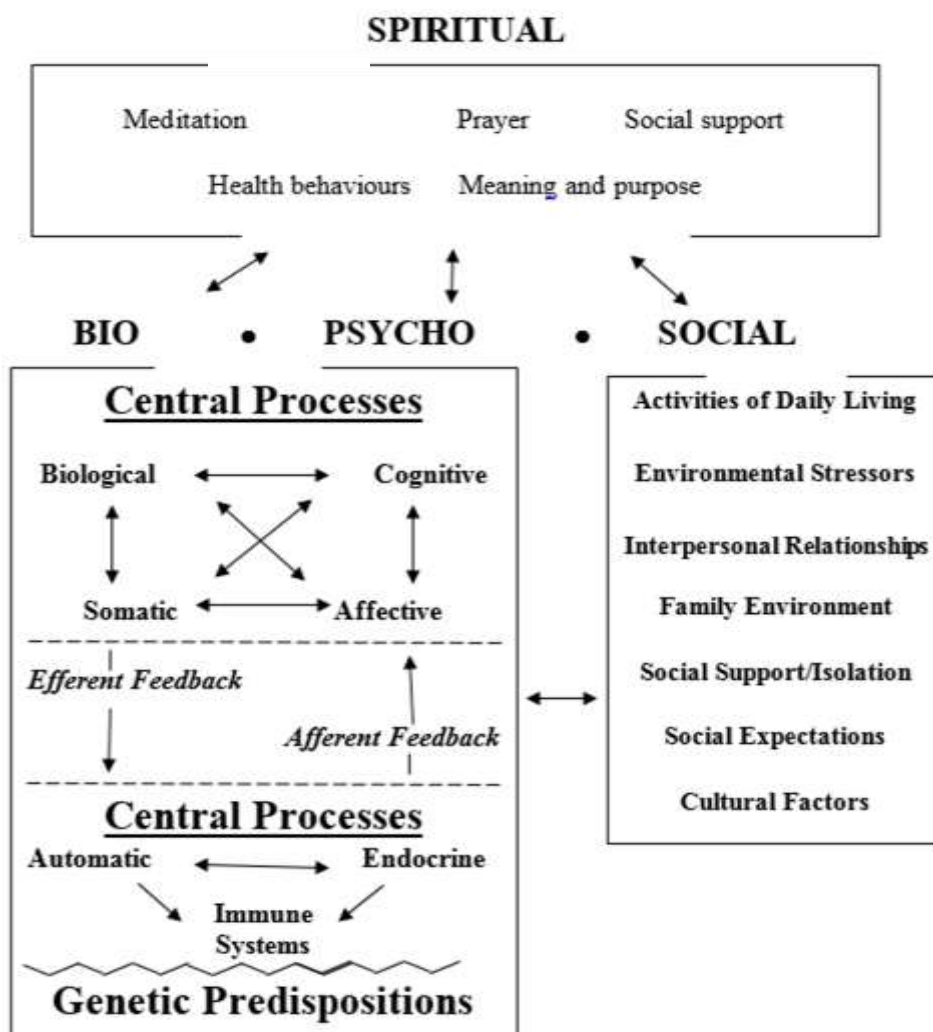
Two theoretical lenses were used in the conduct of this study. These are: bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model and social well-being theory.

Bio-Psycho-Socio-Spiritual Model

The bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model was used as an all-encompassing theoretical lens for the study. The model is traced back to the 1900s to an American medical doctor known as George Engel who theorized that all three levels namely; biological, psychological, and social, must be considered when dealing with the issue of mental health (Saad et al., 2017). Hatala (2013) illustrated this relationship in a diagrammatic form as shown in figure

2.1. The figure shows how the spiritual, the biological, the psychological, and the social aspects of health interact with each other to influence overall well-being of a person. Of importance from the model is that, spiritual resources such as meditation, prayer, social support, meaning and purpose and health behaviours serve as protective factors of well-being. The figure also identifies environmental stressors and social expectations (which in this case, manifests in the form of Church policy), interpersonal relationships, family environment, social isolation, social expectations (all of which represents forms and sources of stigma) as salient features of the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model (Hatala, 2013).

Figure 2.1: *Bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model*



Source: Hatala (2013, p. 269).

Hailed as an integrative approach to healing and counselling in the Church context, the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model is a recent development in an attempt to address gaps in earlier approaches that focused exclusively on biological factors to explain well-being (Roux, 2019). The basic assumption of the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model is that, an individual is considered as part of the sum total of a whole system and because of this, interactions with oneself and one's family and the community impacts one's well-being and cannot be examined in isolation. This model broadens the horizons of earlier models by integrating psychological, social, and spiritual factors as important determinants of well-being. These mean that social and spiritual context and status have an effect of one's mental well-being. The theory is considered most suited for the current study because it integrates all the variables of interest that potentially explain the relationship between Church policy and well-being of divorcees. The variables emanating from the model that are useful for the current study are: spirituality (a coping style) and environmental stressors (such as policy-induced stigma as indicated by social isolation, social expectation and interpersonal relationships in Church).

Agreeing with the foregoing perspective, Linton (2017) conceptualized well-being as a multi-dimensional quality of one's life composing of both objective and subjective aspects. This model views humans as a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual being, and therefore takes into account all aspects of health, which is defined as an optimum state of wellness. Among its definitive features and common themes, from a counselling perspective, include "healing and companionship in the search of meaning" (Roux, 2019, p. 199).

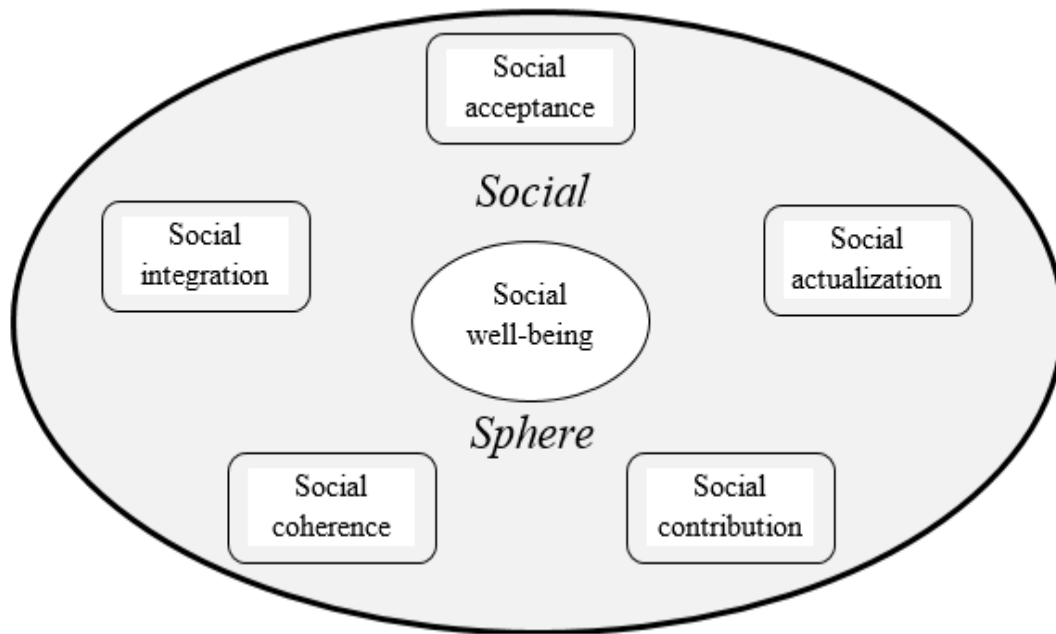
The bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model was applied successfully by Steiner et al. (2015) who studied the consequence of unfaithfulness, initiator position, and spiritual well-being on men's divorce adjustment. The study sampled 103 divorced men in the United States using the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale, Spiritual Well-Being Scale, and a

participant questionnaire. Results indicate that spiritual well-being predicted 21 percent of the divorce adjustment in men. This finding signifies the importance of spirituality for treating well-being issues related to divorce and provides a basis for its application in the current study. However, the research was conducted in the US where divorce is more accepted in society as compared to the African situation which is still more resistant to divorce.

In this study, the model was used to explain the relationship between Church policy on divorce and the psychological, social and spiritual well-being of divorcees and the various coping styles promote or worsen the well-being of divorcees in the Church. The spiritual factors such as meditation, prayer, social support, health behaviours and meaning and purpose were used in this study as coping resources and give an impression on spiritual well-being of divorcees. The social aspects of the model such as activities of daily living, environmental stressors, interpersonal relationships, family environment, social support/isolation, social expectations and cultural factors were used to explain how Church policy affects well-being of divorcees.

Social Well-being Theory

Social well-being refers to the social connectedness of an individual based on feelings of a sense of meaningfulness, belonging, social participation, support, happiness and social acceptance that an individual has with their immediate community (Hobbs, 2016). The theoretical underpinnings of social well-being draw from the works of Keyes (1998). According to Keyes (1998), the structure of social well-being has five facets as shown in Figure 2.2. These are: social acceptance – a feeling that one is accepted just as he or she is; social actualization – a sense of comfort with one's society; social contribution – a feeling that one is valuable and competent; social coherence – feeling that one has a handle on the social world; and social integration – which is a sense of belonging in a community (Teghe & Rendell, 2005).

Figure 2.2: *Social well-being Facets*

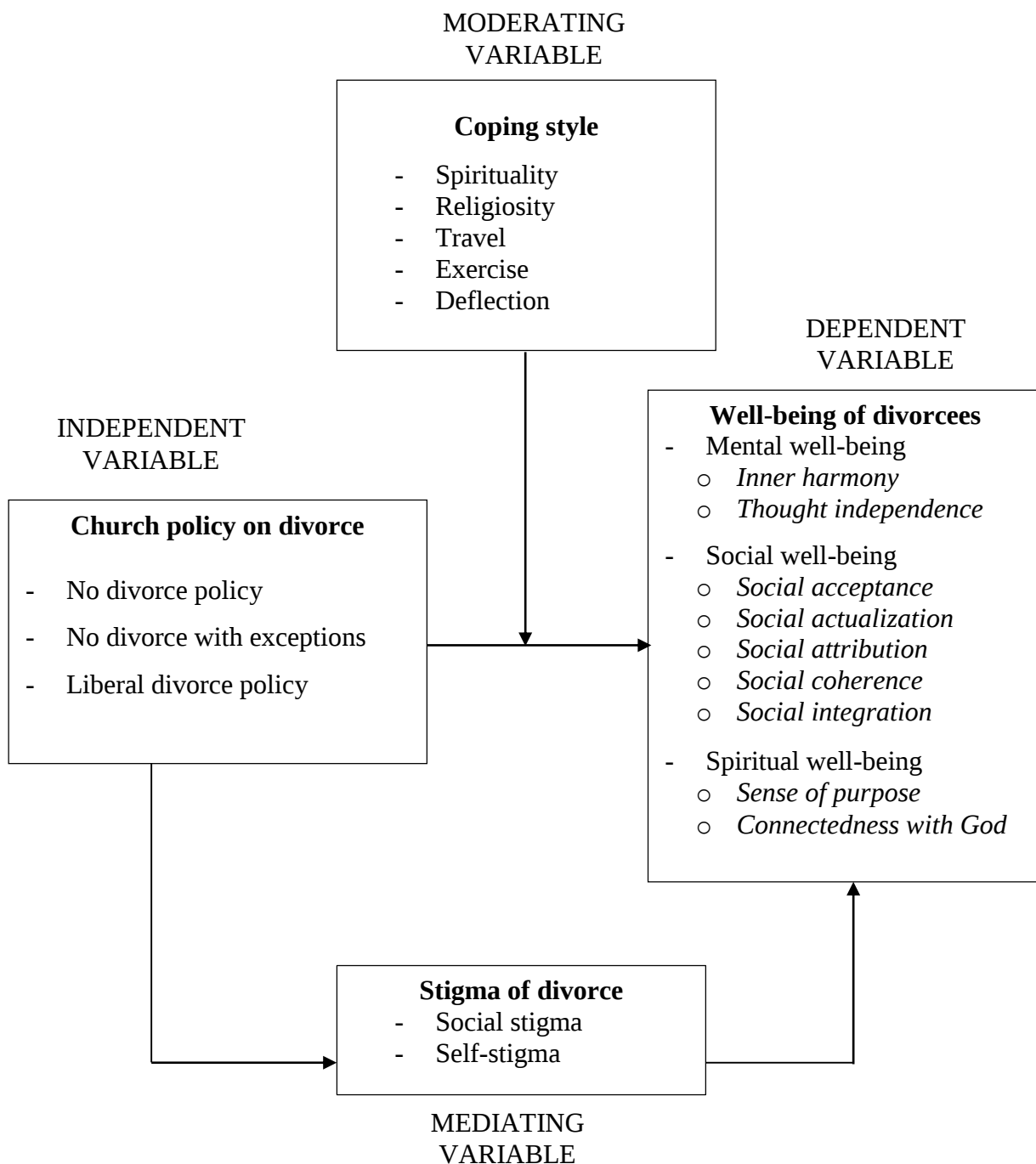
Source: Keye (1998)

The premise of Keye's (1998) theory is that when individuals feel socially integrated, close to or derive comfort from members of the community, they feel a sense of vitality and health. The theory underscores the notion of human beings as social beings that desire positive social interaction and derive their well-being from the totality of that interaction. The absence of positive social interaction generates unpleasant emotions, such as, boredom and anxiety which adversely affects their overall state of health (Tov, 2018). In this respect, community membership and participation is an important determinant of individual health and wellness (Michalos, 2014). In the context of the present study, membership of the Church community and integration potentially confers a sense of acceptance and belonging that can serve as protective factors against the negative impact of divorce on the well-being of divorcees. The theory is, therefore, relevant for the investigation of Church policy in relation to divorce and social well-being of divorcees in Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County. The five facets of social well-being were explored in light of Church policy and its effect on divorcees' well-being.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatic illustration of the hypothesized relationship between the study variables (Adom & Hussein, 2018). For the purpose of this study, the conceptual framework as per Figure 2.3 was used.

Figure 2.3: *Conceptual Framework*



The framework depicts Church policy on divorce as the independent variable. Church policy is classified into three sub-types: no-divorce policy, no divorce with exception policy, and liberalized divorce policy. The dependent variable is well-being which is a multi-dimensional construct comprising of mental well-being, social well-being, and spiritual well-being. The arrows show the proposed impression of the influence relationship. Stigma is presented as mediating variable and coping style as the intervening variable. The coping style levels include: spirituality, religiosity, travel, exercise and reflection.

Research Gap

The literature on stigma of divorce within the Church and the implications on the well-being of divorcees are well developed. Within this stream of literature, there is consistent notion that social stigma, fuelled by Church policy, is an enduring problem that divorcees have to contend with among the Christian community (Caarls & De Valk, 2018; Hille, 2017; Konstam et al., 2016; Lee, 2018; Mulovhedzi, 2017; Olofsson, 2019; Thadathil & Sriram, 2019). Much of the empirical evidence linking Church policy to the stigma of divorce is however implied.

In comparison, the literature production on the influence of Church policy on divorce on mental, spiritual and social well-being of divorcees is still nascent. The established literature dwells on the difference Church policy stances on the matter of divorce with little examination of the influence of such policy on well-being outcomes for divorcees (Doxiadis, 2020; Gould, 2016; Jenkins, 2020; Kirimi, 2019; Kostenbeiger, 2004; Lagat, 2018; Meier, 2017; Magampa, 2016). This thriving body of literature has approached the issue of divorce from a doctrinal viewpoint without much regard to the well-being implications of Church policy on divorcees. Thus, a psychological approach to Church policy on divorce remains an under-researched area.

Further, current empirical research on the subject matter is dominated by western thinking, which may not take into account the experiences in non-western contexts. While a number of studies are beginning to emerge in Africa, there is limited literature on the subject of Church policy on divorce as an influential factor in the well-being outcomes of divorcees within Christian communities in Kenya (Ademulika, 2019; Mulovhedzi, 2017; Odoi, 2015). This necessitates ongoing knowledge on this front through empirical research. Give the name of the author. Explain the relationships among

Chapter Summary

This chapter has critically reviewed theoretical and empirical literature. The chapter has examined existing knowledge on Church policy in relation to well-being of divorcees whereby, dimensions of well-being, such as, social well-being, mental well-being and spiritual well-being have been explored. The chapter has also discussed the theoretical framework and described the conceptual framework. In the next chapter, the methodology to be adopted is explained.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the methodology to be followed in conducting the study. It comprises choice of research paradigm, research design, population and sampling design, types of data and data collection methods, research instrument to be used, measures to be taken for reliability and validity, the plan for analysing the data, and the ethical considerations that were made.

Research Paradigm

Research paradigm refers to a mental viewpoint or pattern of thought that anchors a study on a specific philosophy of explaining social phenomena (Aliyu et al., 2015, Khatri, 2020). A paradigm defines for the view holder, what the world is and the potential interrelationship inherent in its constituent parts (Aliyu et al., 2015). It determines the researcher's perspective of the world and shapes comprehension of the connection between variables. This ultimately is said to have an influence on one's research practice.

Locating a study within a research paradigm is important because it influences “what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 26).

Proponents of pragmatism believe that a mix of worldviews resolves the positivists' de-contextualization of reality from subjective social experiences and value judgements without disregarding their empirical orientation (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Okesina, 2020). This offers a comparably more comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Da Silva et al., 2018). However, its detractors highlight the difficulty of marrying the positivists' deductive approach to reasoning with interpretivists' inductive stance to logic, for the two are known to be polar opposites (Hafsa, 2019). In the current study, pragmatism is picked because of the

need to test for mediation and moderation effects and at the same time, analyse salient themes regarding Church policy and divorcees' well-being. Each of these experiences is situated within a social context.

Research Design

Different research designs are open to researchers depending on the research paradigm adopted. For pragmatists, mixed-methods design characterized by the combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques of collecting and analysing data were used (Asenahabi, 2019). This research design has gained increased attention in the scholarly world: this integration of methods and techniques thereby leveraging the strengths and compensating the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches in isolation (Bahadur, 2018). It offers flexibility in deciding what to integrate and at what stage to integrate different data collection or analysis techniques (Reening, 2020). A key feature of mixed methods is the integration of numeric data with non-numeric data, thus, allowing for a multi-dimensional view, interpretation and representation of a phenomenon under study (Hafsa, 2019). This blending of data facilitates clarification of facts and a comprehensive elaboration of study results (Coy, 2019).

In this study, the design was applied because it allows for triangulation of data by enabling the merging of data during the analysis and interpretation stage, thereby enabling the identification of potential points of connection or divergence between different types of data, leading to a better and more robust comprehension of research phenomenon (Kivunja, 2017). The research design has been adopted successfully in multiple well-being studies and research on divorce and the Church (Doyle et al., 2016; Hess et al., 2018; Fredrickson et al., 2015; Tsuma & Antony, 2019a). Similarly, in the present study, the research design enhanced

validity of the study findings through cross-validation of quantitative data with qualitative data (Bracio & Szarucki, 2020).

Population

Population is defined as the entire set of subjects about which the researcher seeks to extract a sample (Taherdoost, 2016). The population for this study was divorcees who attend Churches in all the 11 Sub-Counties of Nakuru County. These are: Nakuru Town East, Nakuru Town West, Njoro, Molo, Gilgil, Naivasha, Kuresoi North, Kuresoi South, Rongai, Subukia, and Bahati. However, the number of divorcees cannot be quantified or estimated because divorcees are a hidden population in the society due to stigma that is often associated with divorce (Crawford et al., 2018). The term “hidden population” is used to refer to populations that are difficult to find and disenfranchised and are called so because they feel stigmatized and hence seek to conceal their identity (Vershina & Rodionova, 2011). Further, documented divorce statistics may mask the real numbers in society, due to the high cost of engaging in a formal divorce. It is, therefore, possible that many divorcees may not be formally divorced but consider themselves permanently divorced nonetheless. In this study, the research included those who were formally divorced as well as those mutually divorced.

Sample Size

A sample is simply a small portion of members of a population, who are recruited to participate in a study in order to draw conclusions about that population (Etikan & Babatope, 2019). Sample size decisions are guided by the research purpose and the statistical operations to be carried out on the data that is obtained (Majid, 2018). For the purpose of this study, and because the research adopts a mixed-method approach that triangulates qualitative data

methods with quantitative methods, the sample size was determined using Gill and Johnson's (2010) formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{P(1-P)Z^2}{E^2}$$

Where:

N= required sample size.

P= proportion of occurrence of a condition.

E=maximum error allowed, typically ranging from 0.01 to 0.1 margin of error. Therefore, the researcher accepted 0.1 error margin.

Z= z value indicating the required confidence level, usually 95% (z=1.96).

P(1-P)= variance of proportion; whereby 0.5 is used to estimate P in order to yield the maximum possible sample size. Using the formula, the sample size "n" is computed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{0.5(1-0.5)1.96^2}{0.1^2} \\ &= 97 \end{aligned}$$

In order to account for potential non-responses and incomplete data, 24 additional cases were added to the sample. The sample size was distributed evenly across Churches in the 11 Sub-Counties, in line with disproportionate sampling approach as provided in table 3.1. Thus, the final sample was adjusted to 121. This is whereby the population is disregarded when determining stratum sample size in the case where the researcher suspects the existence of high variability between population strata (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Thus, the sample size per stratum was determined by dividing the sample size by the number of sub-counties as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Stratum sample size} &= \frac{121}{11} \\ &= 11 \end{aligned}$$

Table 3.1: *Sample Distribution*

Stratum	Sample Size
Nakuru Town East	11
Nakuru Town West	11
Njoro	11
Molo	11
Gilgil	11
Naivasha	11
Kuresoi North	11
Kuresoi South	11
Rongai	11
Subukia	11
Bahati	11
Total	121

Sampling Method

Sampling method is the procedure followed to recruit research participants for a study (Etikan & Babatope, 2019). With respect to hidden populations like divorcees, non-random sampling strategies such as snowball sampling, where the first study subject recruit future subjects among their network until the desired sample is attained, have been proposed (Cheng et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2017). In the current study, this sampling method is the one that was adopted.

Types of Data

Primary data were collected. This is whereby first-hand information is collected directly from the research subjects as opposed to using pre-existing or recorded data (Thyer, 2010). This entailed the gathering of both quantitative data and qualitative data using appropriate research tools in keeping with mixed-methods approach. This facilitated the corroboration of quantitative data on church policy on divorce in relation to psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees with qualitative information gleaned from the divorcees.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using a researcher-developed semi-structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. It was be divided into five sections comprising of items generated by the researcher.

Section A: Demographic Information

The first section contained 10 questions for eliciting demographic information such as gender, age, level of education, type of divorce (whether formal or informal), number of years since being divorced, cause of divorce, salvation status, Church membership status, and number of years in membership of the Church.

Section B: Church Policy on Divorce

The second section sought respondents' views on the existence, or lack thereof, of their Church's policy on divorce, whether the policy is implicit or explicit, and their perception about the policy, whether written or not. In total, 9 items were used. The items represented the different classifications of Church policy as summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: *Church Policy on Divorce Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
9	a) I am aware of the Church's policy on divorce.	Gould (2016)
	b) My Church has a written policy on divorce.	Lagat (2018)
	c) My Church has an unwritten policy on divorce.	Kostenbeiger, (2004)
	d) My Church does not accept or allow divorce for any reason whatsoever.	Jackson (2018)
	e) My Church only allows divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness only.	Jenks (2018)

The items were scored by transforming the scores into dichotomous form whereby scores above 3 on a 5-point scale meant the policy in question is practiced and scores of 3 or less means the policy is not practiced in the Church.

Section C: Church Policy on Divorce and Mental Well-being Items

Church policy and mental well-being comprised of 6 items. Examples of statements for this dimension are as provided in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: *Church Policy on Divorce and Mental Well-being Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
6	a) I question rather than accept my strengths as a human being.	Keyes (1998)
	b) I focus on my personal development as a divorcee.	
	c) I pursue goals that give meaning to my life.	

A composite mean index was generated through simple aggregation of the sub-scales to represent a measure of mental well-being construct. High scores represented high effect of Church policy on the mental well-being dimension and low scores meant limited effect on the dimension.

Section D: Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being Items

Church policy and spiritual well-being sub-scale comprised of 3 items as shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: *Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
3	a) I have a sense of purpose in life.	Fisher (2011)
	b) I feel at peace with members of my local Church community.	
	c) I feel a close connection with God.	

The items were scored using a composite mean index. High scores represented high effect of Church policy on the spiritual well-being dimension and low scores meant the opposite.

Section E: Church Policy on Divorce and Social Well-being Items

Church policy and social well-being sub-scale was made up of 8 items as summarized in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: *Church Policy on Divorce and Social Well-being Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
8	a) I feel accepted in church just as I am.	Keyes (1998)
	b) I feel comfortable being a part of the Church community.	
	c) I feel valued and have a sense of worth in church.	

The five items reflected the five facets of social well-being according to Keyes (1998) theory. These are: social acceptance, social actualization, social contribution, social coherence, and social integration. In terms of scoring, a composite mean index was computed to provide general measure of social well-being construct. High scores represented high effect of Church policy on the social well-being dimension.

Section F: Church Policy on Divorce and Stigma Items

The instrument also entailed researcher-generated items assessing the subject of stigma of divorce in the Church and perceptions about whether and how Church policy contributes to stigma. This was a 5 item Likert scale comprising of statements such as provided in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: *Church Policy on Divorce and Stigma Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
5	a) The way the Church talks about divorce makes an already bad situation even worse.	Author (2021)
	b) I feel that divorcees have been neglected by my Church.	
	c) I feel excluded, devalued and shamed in church.	

The items were reverse-coded to curb response bias (Suarez-Alvarez, Pedrosa, Lozano, Garcia-Cueto, Cuesta, & Muniz, 2018). A composite mean index was determined to represent a global measure of mental stigma construct. High scores represented high effect of Church policy on stigma of divorce, whereas low scores denoted low effect.

Section G: Church Policy and Coping with Divorce Items

The instrument also included 5-item Likert scale for measuring coping style as proposed in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: *Church Policy on Divorce and Coping with Divorce Items*

Number of items	Sample items	Source
5	a) I often turn to the Bible for comfort whenever the effects of divorce take a toll on me.	Brown (2014)
	b) I attend Church services regularly in order to cope with divorce.	Jurma (2015)
	c) I regularly commit my situation to God whenever I feel depressed due to the divorce.	Mulovhedzi (2017)

A composite mean index was determined to represent a global measure of coping construct. High scores represented positive coping, whereas low scores denoted low negative coping.

In-depth Interview

In-depth interviews were held with the pastor in charge of each Church represented in the study. A total of 16 pastors participated in the interviews. An interview guide was used for this purpose as detailed in Appendix D. The interview guide covered the four study variables as per the research objectives. These are: Church policy on divorce, coping style, stigma, and well-being of divorcees. The interview guide had a total of 7 questions. Sample questions to be probed further included: how is the Church policy on divorce communicated to the Church community? What would you say about stigma of divorce in relation to Church policy? What are the ways in which you help divorcees cope with divorce within the Church? This was used to elicit in-depth insights from the clergy in respect to Church policy on divorce and how it affects divorcees.

Instrument Validity

Instrument validity refers to the degree or extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (De Souza et al., 2017). An instrument is considered valid if the items in the instrument represent the latent construct, that is, there should be a convergence of items towards the same construct (Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, construct validity of the instrument was assured by ensuring that all possible dimensions of each construct are reflected in the Likert scale items by anchoring the dimensions on the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual model (Saad et al., 2017) and social well-being theory (Keyes, 1998). The constructs used were clearly defined and operationalized in the definition of terms. Subsequently, multiple indicators were used for each construct and items that represent each indicator constructed using Likert scale. The full range of the constructs under investigation were represented in both content and scope in the Likert scale.

Instrument Reliability

Instrument reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency with which the same results can be obtained over repeated trials (Korsjen & Moser, 2018). In this study, instrument reliability was determined statistically by running Cronbach's alpha test. Alpha coefficients of 0.7 and above are considered to signify instrument reliability (De Souza et al., 2017). Table 3.3 shows the reliability statistics. The table shows that all the variables had an alpha coefficient >0.7 , implying that the instrument was reliable.

Table 3.8: *Reliability Statistics*

Variable	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Mental wellbeing	6	.715
Spiritual wellbeing	3	.705
Social wellbeing	8	.853
Stigma	6	.805
Coping	6	.728

Instrument Pre-testing

To pre-test an instrument is to try it out on a small number of subjects sharing similar characteristics with the target population (Edlund & Nichols, 2019). This process is important because it enables researchers to detect any potential problems with the research tool such as ambiguity of words, whether the tool conveys the intended message and to gauge future receptivity of the research (Suarez-Alvarez et al., 2018). For the purpose of this study, the instrument was pre-tested on 10 respondents in an Evangelical Church in neighbouring Kiambu County. This represents 10 percent of the sample as proposed by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) who submit that 10 percent is an adequate sample size representation. The

10 respondents included three pastors and 7 divorcees. The results of pre-testing were analysed to get a general impression of the relevance of the data obtained. Reliability analysis was done to determine the appropriateness of the items. The instrument was also examined for consistency of responses and any potential ambiguities. This also gave the researcher an opportunity to fine-tune any defects and errors on the instrument before administering the final instrument. The reliability results showed that none of the items had Cronbach alpha coefficients below 0.7 thus no change was made on the instrument (Bonett & Wright, 2014).

Data Analysis

The process of analysing the data entailed a number of distinct stages; beginning with entry of data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Morgan et al., 2011). The data was then be checked for errors by looking at the minimum and maximum values to determine whether the limits set were exceeded in order to make it useable, reliable and valid (Morgan et al., 2011). As part of this process, the data were examined for missing data and normality of the dataset. This was achieved through visual inspection of the distribution of the dataset by observing the histogram, stem and leaf plot and normal probability-probability plot (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Descriptive statistical techniques, such as, percentage frequencies, mean, standard deviation, and skewness were run to determine the location, spread and shape of the dataset (Mao, 2015). These was presented using visual diagrams such as histograms, charts, graphs, and scatter plots.

In order to determine the relationship between study variables, various inferential techniques such as Chi-square, correlation and regression analysis were performed. Chi-square technique was used to determine whether divorcees' well-being vary significantly by type of Church policy. Spearman's rank correlation technique was employed to determine the direction and significance of the relationship between Church policy composite score and

well-being composite scores. Moderated regression analysis was used to analyse the influence of the coping style (Jose, 2013). The following regression equation was used:

$$WBD = \beta_0 + \beta_1CPD + \beta_2CSL + \beta_3CPD \times CSL + e$$

Where;

WBD = Well-being of divorcees

β_0 = Well-being of divorcees without the effect of predictor variables

CPD = Church Policy on Divorce

CSL = Coping Style

β_{1-3} = Regression Coefficients

e = Error term

The equation tested the main effects of, both Church policy on divorce and coping style of divorcees, as well as, the interaction effect of Church policy and coping style on the predictive power of Church policy on divorce on mental well-being of divorcees. However, the obtained regression coefficients were not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Therefore, the regression model had no predictive power on wellbeing of divorcees.

In order to test the mediating effect of Stigma on the relationship between Church policy on divorce and well-being of divorcees, the following equations were used to conduct Sobel test (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021):

$$STG = \beta_0 + \beta_a CPD + e \quad (i)$$

$$WBD = \beta_0 + \beta_b STG + \beta_c CPD + e \quad (ii)$$

$$P_{STG} = \frac{a \times b}{a \times b + c} \quad (iii)$$

Where;

STG = Stigma of divorce

P_{STG} = The mediating effect of stigma of divorce

a, b & c = Regression coefficients.

In line with Sobel test, stigma was assumed in this study to play a mediatory role if three conditions are met (Meule, 2019). Firstly, there is a significant variation in well-being of divorcees attributed to Church policy on divorce (Path *a*). Secondly, change in stigma of divorce significantly causes change in well-being of divorcees (Path *b*). Lastly, upon controlling for Paths *a* and *b*, the statistical significance that initially existed in the relationship between Church policy on divorce and well-being of divorcees disappears, whereby full mediation manifests when Path *c* is zero (Abu-Bader & Jones, 2021). The results obtained showed that the first condition was not met as there was no statistically significant variation in the wellbeing of divorcees due to church policy on divorce ($p > .05$). Accordingly, there was no need to proceed to equation (ii) and (iii). The computed equation for model (i) was as follows:

$$\text{STG} = 1.718 + .323\text{CPD} + e$$

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews were subjected through a process of thematic analysis (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The five-step procedure proposed by Gibson (2017) was used. This entailed: arranging the data by overall theme, insight and actual questions; identifying the emergent themes, frequently mentioned words and word phrases; grouping common themes into overarching theme; triangulating the data with quantitative results to confirm their veracity; and, summarizing the themes. In this study, thematic analysis began with transcribing the raw data and converting them into electronic data. The data was then assigned colour codes the data and a code file were maintained for audit trail. Similar codes were then merged together to generate themes and sub-themes in tabular format (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are important aspects of any research process and the current study was not an exception (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017). The researcher adhered to ethical principles that govern scientific research such as transparency and integrity; protection of the dignity of research participants; keeping their participation anonymous; respecting their rights to privacy; and securing their voluntary participation (Comstock, 2013). According to Beckmann(2017), researchers need adhere to three principles of using human subjects for research, which forms the bedrock of research ethics: protecting participants' autonomy and according them courteous and respectful treatment; maximizing their benefit and minimizing any potential harm from their participation in the study; and acting with justice and fairness with respect to matters, such as, administration of the cost and benefits to participants by ensuring non-discrimination and non-exploitation of the participants.

The ethical measures in this study were detailed in an informed consent form, which detailed the purpose of the study and disclose how the data was used, so not to infringe on participants' freedom of choice (Beckmann, 2017). The purpose of the study and implications of the study to research participants were explained prior to obtaining their informed consent. The form also outlined the data protection measures, that were taken and the treatment of the data once the study is completed. Participants were granted the opportunity to withdraw their participation at any point, before or during the data collection process. This, however, lapsed once the data collection process has been completed.

Throughout the research process, the researcher upheld the do no harm principle (Favaretto et al., 2020). As such, the researcher kept the participation of the respondents strictly confidential, and they were required not to disclose their identity anywhere on the instrument. The data collected was kept in safe custody of the researcher in a locked cabinet.

Any converted into electronic form, were password protected. Codes were also assigned to verbatim responses as a further measure of participant protection. Any identifying names were replaced with pseudonyms to keep these confidential (Allen & Wiles, 2015). Thus, neither the participant's identity nor the name of their Church were disclosed anywhere in the report. The analysis limited itself to general descriptive data, such as, gender, age, level of education, type of divorce, number of years since being divorced, cause of divorce, salvation status, Church membership status, and number of years in membership of the Church, solely for the purpose of enabling replication of the research in future.

Ethical clearance was obtained from PAC University Ethical Review Committee (Appendix E). As part of ethical compliance, a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) was also obtained to ensure the research is legally compliant (Appendix F). In addition, the researcher obtained official permission from each of the six selected Churches after obtaining research authorization from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration (Appendix H). Further assurance to them was granted by signing a non-disclosure agreement via an informed consent form (Appendix A).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described in detail the overall research methodology used. As the chapter has revealed, the study adopted a pragmatic approach to research. Thus, mixed methods research design was used. The chapter has described the population and sample as well as the sampling method and data collection plan. The chapter has also detailed measures to ensure reliability and validity of the research as well as the data analysis plan and ethical considerations taken.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to examine Church policy on divorce in Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya, and investigate its relationship with the psychosocial well-being of the divorcees. This chapter involved data presentation, analysis, interpretation, and discussions of the results. This chapter has five sections. The first section presents a descriptive analysis of the response rate and the demographics of the respondents. The subsequent sections are organized according to the specific objectives. Accordingly, the second section of this chapter constitutes the presentation and discussion of the relationship between Church policy on divorce and the divorcee's mental well-being. The third section presents and discusses the relationships between the Church policy on divorce and the respondents' spiritual well-being. The fourth section constitutes the findings of the relationship between the Church policy on divorce and the social well-being of the respondents. Accordingly, the fifth section presents the results on mediating role of the stigma on the effects of Church policy on divorce on the divorcees' psychosocial well-being. Lastly, section six presents and examines the moderating influence of coping style on the relationship between Church policy and the well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. The last section presents a summary of the chapter.

Response Rate and Demographic Analysis

This sub-section comprises the descriptive analysis of the response rates and their nature and distribution by other factors such as gender and age. The descriptive research shows the general picture of the data distribution by measuring the frequencies and percentages.

Response Rate

The study performed a descriptive analysis of the response rate of the participants. Table 4.1 shows the number of respondents contacted with the questionnaires for the study and the number that participated in the survey.

Table 4.1: *Number of Respondents*

Number of Respondents	Responses	Percentage
121	121	100

All the respondents successfully filled in the questionnaires, delivered them before, and returned them, as shown in Table 4.1. After the application of the non-randomized snowball sampling as recommended in such cases of sensitive populations of divorcees, as was suggested by Etikan and Babatope (2019), the questionnaires were given to the respondents who were members of the Evangelical Churches in Nakuru.

Gender of Respondents

The study investigated the gender demographics of the respondents using descriptive statistics. Table 4.2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents and the respective percentage from the number of respondents for each gender.

Table 4.2: *Gender Distribution of Respondents*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	36.1
Female	77	63.9
Total	121	100.0

As shown in Table 4.2, all 121 respondents filled out the questionnaire of the 121 respondents, 36.1% were males, and 63.9% were females. This vast difference is potential

because most Church attendees are females. That the high percentage of female respondents surpasses that of males by almost 50%, is potentially because of a proportionately higher population of females in church (Li et al., 2018). The trends in the data, especially the disparity between the females and males in the number of respondents are due to the logical high possibility of women being more religious than men. Benedicta et al. (2017), held that the Church often scorn, judge, and alienate divorcees and women have been found to suffer the most devastating effects of divorce. However, contrary to the findings, women still formed the greatest part of the respondents which is possibly due to the concept of trade-off and opportunity cost. While women suffer scorn and harsh judgments which could deter their rates of going to church and taking part in their activities, more divorced women, despite their susceptibility to judgment and rejection could still go to Church in larger numbers than men because the Church brings them some of other emotional benefits and encouragement which are worth more than the trials that they go through.

Age of Respondents

The study sought to establish the age groups of the respondents through descriptive analysis. Table 4.3 shows the age brackets of the respondents.

Table 4.3: *Age of the Respondents*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	10	8.2
26-35 years	47	39.3
36-45 years	34	27.9
46-55 years	13	10.7
56-65 years	13	10.7
Over 65 years	4	3.3
Total	121	100.0

The respondents aged 18-25 accounted for 8% of the respondents, those aged 26- 35 made up the 39.3%, which suggested that majority of the divorcees were in that age bracket of the respondents, the respondents aged 36-45 made up 27.95% of the respondents, the

respondents aged 46-55 and those aged 56-65 comprised 10.7% each of the total respondents and lastly the respondents aged 65 years above contributed the least percentage of the respondents at 3.3%.

The largest percentage of respondents were 26-35 years which suggested that most of the divorcees in Nakuru County was in this age bracket, followed by those aged 36-45 years (27.95%), and the other significant group which took part in the study was those aged 46-55 years and 56-65 years (10.7%). The data shows that the churches from where the respondents came, were mainly populated by youths or middle-aged divorcees. The churches can generally be considered youthful. There are multiple possible reasons why these churches can be this youthful. One of the reasons a church can be youthful is due to the prioritization of the contemporary style of worship and dynamic, relevant messages which speak to the experiences and challenges which face young and middle-aged people (Li et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Churches may be incorporating creative elements such as technology, social media, and popular culture into their services and outreach efforts (Nyabwari & Kageema, 2017). Lastly, another possible reason why the evangelical churches have such high percentages of divorcees is placing a strong emphasis on community building and peer relationships as well as social justice and activism while including the vibrant community where these young men can connect with God (Nyabwari & Kageema, 2017).

Number of Respondents' Children

Using descriptive statistics, the study sought to unearth whether the participants had any children during their divorce and if they did how many. Table 4.4 shows the number of respondents with children from the total sample.

Table 4.4: *Number of the Children of the Respondents*

Strata	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	109	90.2
No	12	9.8
Total	121	100.0

All the 121 respondents responded to the question of whether they had children. Of the 121 of them 90.2% responded in the affirmative, while the remaining 9.8% responded, “No” indicating that they did not have any children at the time that they took the questionnaire. The data shows that most of the respondents had children during their times of divorce. This fact possibly added to the stakes and the stressors which came with their divorce because the children and issues such as co-parenting arose. According to Monahan (2018), children are often under extreme stressors during and after divorce they often predispose divorcees to maladaptive coping. The involvement of the high number of children in the divorce which was recorded in the research gave logical reasons to speculate that most of the respondents have adopted negative coping styles because they have extreme stressors; their children.

Nature of Respondents’ Divorce

The distribution of respondents by nature of divorce is presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: *Nature of the Divorce*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
Formally	25	21.9
Informally	89	78.1
Total	114	100.0

Table 4.5 indicates that only 114 of the 121 respondents responded to the question on which type of divorce they went through. For this question, formal divorce refers to going through the court system to get a divorce. In contrast, informal divorce is just quitting the marriage without litigation or any legal proceedings involved. Of the 114 who responded to this question, 21.9% went through the formal system to divorce, while 78.1% just had informal divorces. The higher percentage of informal divorces is perhaps due to the fact that the residents from Nakuru, Kenya are possibly less litigious compared to those from the more democratically advanced parts of the world like Europe and America (Li et al., 2018).

Respondents' Type of Marriage

To understand the kind of marriage which the respondents were involved in before their divorces, the study conducted a descriptive analysis of their types of marriage. Table 4.6 shows the type of marriage the respondents were in before they divorced their spouses. Civil marriage in the study was used to mean court-officiated marriage, customary marriage referred to the kind of marriage officiated culturally, and then come we stay marriage denoted the marriage officiated by the arrangement between the two parties.

Table 4.6: *Nature of the Divorce*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
Civil	10	8.2
Customary	37	30.3
Church	21	17.2
Come we stay (common law)	53	44.3
Total	121	100.0

As per the findings in table 4.6, 97.5% of the total respondents responded to this question. Of the 119 who responded to the question, 44.5% were in a common law marriage, 31.1% were in customary heterosexual marriages, 16.8% were in church marriages, and only 7.6% were in a civil marriage. The high rates of common law heterosexual marriages are

because of the Kenyan or African culture which is less litigious and treats marriage as a more of union and less of an obligation. The data is relevant because it supports the findings by Lee (2018) that the stigma and coping strategies are connected to the quality and the type of marriage in which the divorcees were involved.

Breadwinner among the Respondents

The study performed descriptive statistical analysis to determine who was breadwinner before there was divorce among the respondents. Table 4.7 shows the breadwinner in the marriage in which the respondents were involved it reveals whether they were the breadwinner, their spouse or both of them.

Table 4.7: *Breadwinner among the Respondents*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
Myself	44	36.9
My spouse	31	25.4
Both of us	46	37.7
Total	121	100

Table 4.7 shows of the results of the respondents' reaction to the probe sought to unearth who was the breadwinner before they divorced. Of the 121 who responded to the question of who was the breadwinner when they divorced, 36.9% were the sole breadwinners, 25.4% had their former spouses as the primary breadwinner before they divorced, and those the number who shared the breadwinning responsibility between them and their spouses had the highest percentage at 38%. From the data, it is essential that those with the shared responsibilities of breadwinning scored the highest in divorce rates.

Respondents' Religious Status

The study used descriptive statistics to investigate the Christianity status of the respondents as at the when they were divorcing. Table 4.8 shows the respondents religious

status during divorce. Christianity and its values play a crucial role in marriage and the convictions the spouses and couples hold. Furthermore, Christians have their set principles that either discourage, deter, condemn, or frown upon the concept of divorce or the practice of it because it goes against some of the fundamental beliefs.

Table 4.8: *Christianity Status of Respondents*

Strata	Frequency	Percent
Yes	112	92.6
No	9	7.4
Total	121	100.0

Table 4.8 shows the respondents' reactions to whether they were religious when they divorced. The number of respondents who answered "yes" to affirm that they were Christians or born again during their time of divorce was 92.6%, and those that responded in the negative made up 7.4% of respondents. Therefore, the data shows that the number of those who divorced while born again is higher than those who got divorced while not born again. The study suggests that perhaps fundamental religious differences might be a ground for divorce among the respondents, which is in line with the findings of the study by Li et al. (2018) who posited that religious differences can have the input into divorces.

Status in Church

The respondents' status or role in Church during the time of divorce was investigated using descriptive analysis. Table 4.9 shows the respondents status in Church during the time of their divorce.

Table 4.9: *Respondents Status in Church*

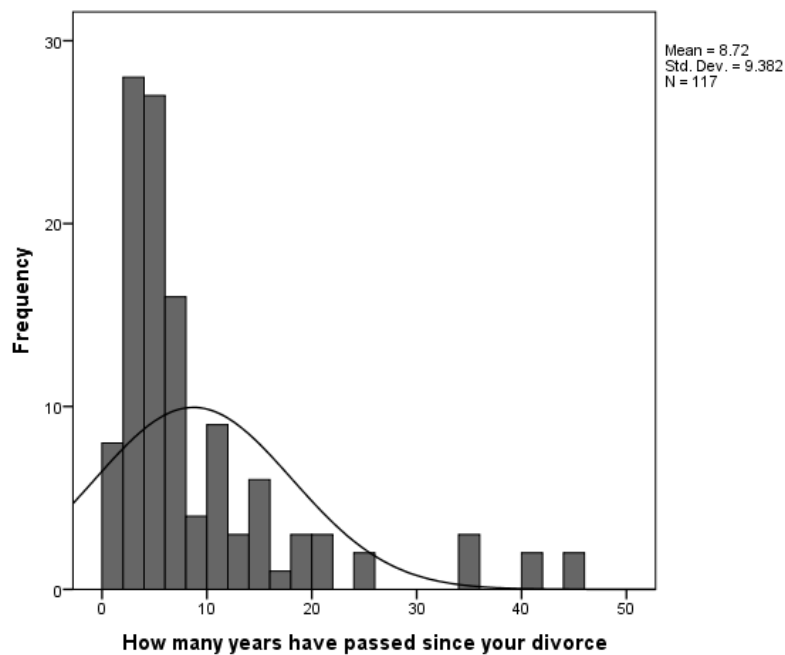
Strata	Frequency	Percent
Member	82	68.6
Worker	13	9.9
Church leader	26	21.5
Total	121	100.0

As shown in table 4.9 all the 121 respondents agreed to disclose their status, positions, or roles in the church at the time of the divorce. Members of the congregation contributed 68.6% of the divorcees who participated in the study. Church leaders followed with a percentage of 21.5%, and lastly, the church workers contributed to 9.9% of the respondents. As shown by the data above, if there are any issues regarding divorce in the Church policy, they are most likely to affect the regular members than any other group of people who work or are employed in the Church. The distribution of the respondents in the status of either membership, leadership, or employee of the Church in their respective percentages is logical considering that members are the largest population compared with the leaders and the workers. The high number of females is consistent with the findings by Makidon (2013) which suggested that while the 26 people were studied after divorce, the women were more exposed to the stigma which came from their divorces.

Years Passed Since Divorce

The number of years which have passed since the respondents had their divorce was investigated using descriptive statistics. Figure 4.1 shows a histogram representing the years which have passed by since the respondents got divorced. The histogram in figure 4.1 above has a mean of 8.72 and a standard deviation of 9.382, implying that the data is highly dispersed and has a wide range of values. This distribution is often referred to as a positive skew, where the tail extends to the right of the mean. This type of distribution often indicates that there are outliers or extreme values that are skewing the data. The histograms indicate that most people have not spent time in church after their divorces. This indication is also consistent with the Nyathi (2017) conclusion which looked supposed that the Church does a lot to condemn or to illegalize divorce but does not provide the solutions to the very troubling core issues which often lead to divorces among the church members. If the members are not reconciled, then it will push them away from being part of the same congregation.

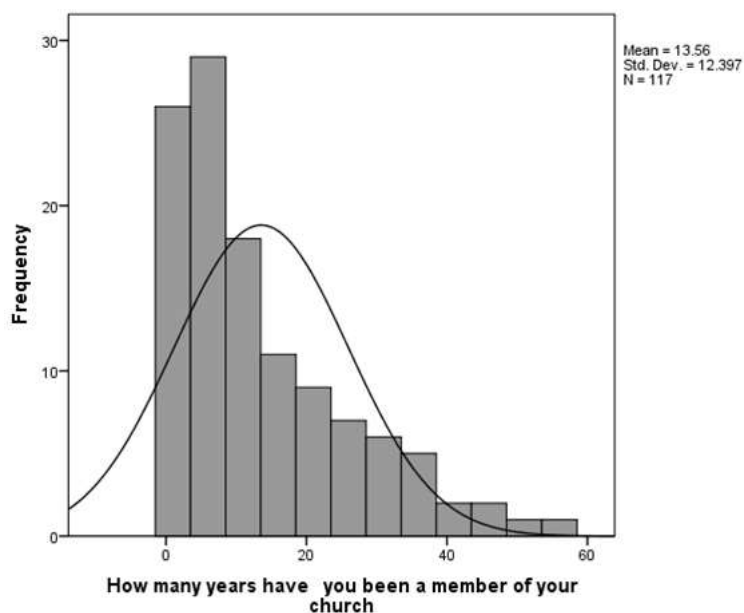
Figure 4.1: *Histogram for the Years Passed since Divorce*



Years of Church Membership

The study also investigated the duration for which the respondents had been members of the respective Churches. Figure 4.2 shows a histogram of the number of years that have passed with respondents being members of the respective churches.

Figure 4.2: *Histogram of the number of years in Church Membership*



From figure 4.2, the mean (13.56) is larger than the standard deviation (12.397), even though it is also evident that most of the data is clustered around the mean value. The data shows a relatively normal distribution which makes it easier to relate the connection between church policy and divorce among the respondents.

Relationship between Church's Policy on Divorce and Mental Well-being

The first objective of the study was to determine the relationship between Church's policy on divorce and mental well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. This section of the results and discussions begins by descriptive findings on church policy on divorce as well as respondents' mental wellbeing in terms of individual item scores and composite scores. It then presents results of assumptions tests, and finally proceeds on to discuss the findings of inferential analysis. Thematic analysis of qualitative data is also presented to corroborate the quantitative findings.

Descriptive Analysis of Church Policy on Divorce

Before computing the composite score or Church policy on divorce, descriptive analysis was done on the individual items. Table 4.10 shows the descriptive statistics of the Church policy on divorce. It shows the minimum and maximum values, the means and standard deviation of the responses relation to Church policy on divorce.

Table 4.10: *Descriptive Statistics of Church policy on Divorce Measures*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am aware of Church's policy of divorce	121	1	5	3.16	1.474
My Church has a written policy on divorce	121	1	5	2.83	1.364
My Church has an unwritten policy on divorce	121	1	5	2.73	1.292
My Church does not allow or accept divorce for any reason	121	1	5	3.25	1.364
My Church allows divorce in case of marital unfaithfulness only	121	1	5	3.14	1.311
In my Church, divorce between a believer and non-believer is accepted, but divorce between two believers is not allowed	121	1	5	2.14	1.255
My Church accepts people who have been divorced against their will	121	1	5	2.74	1.384
My Church does not encourage divorce but accepts people who opt to divorce on the grounds of cruelty, abuse, and fear for their life	121	1	5	4.00	1.286
My Church does not encourage divorce but accepts people who opt for divorce due to abandonment, desertion, or irreconcilable differences	121	1	5	3.46	1.285

Table 4.10 shows the descriptive statistical analysis of the Church's policy on divorce. The results of the study, strongly suggest that most respondents were acutely aware that their Churches have well-established policies against divorce. Regarding the statement, "I am aware of Church's policy of divorce," the table shows that on average most of the respondents were aware of the Church policy on divorce ($\bar{x}=3.16$, $\sigma_x=1.474$, $N=121$). Furthermore, considering the analysis's mean and standard deviation, it is clear that most of the respondents' Churches have written policies on divorce but on average, the respondents were aware of such policy and this can be shown by their response to the statement, "My Church has a written policy on divorce" ($\bar{x}=2.83$, $\sigma_x=1.364$, $N=121$).

Qualitative analysis showed that various sub-themes such as seminars, teachings, and preaching supported the theme that the church policy on divorce was only communicated through the church leadership. The results that the church leadership is heavily involved in the communication of their divorce policy to the community agrees with the findings by Tsuma and Atony (2019a) which showed that the Church is often committed to reducing the rates of divorce and thus they often involve themselves in expressing their stance and view on matters divorce so openly so that the members can understand.

It is logical to surmise that the actions of leadership taking it upon them to make known their divorce policies to the people and community, in general, is impactful on how the members of the Church see the policies and the amount of weight which they put upon such policies. The assumed logical results are different from the findings of the two authors because unlike the results yielded by the research involving the Africa Inland Churches of Kenya, it reveals the interests of the Church leadership in divorce policy and focuses on the potential of having strict policies on divorce on the member divorcees' well-being.

The Church leadership evidently has a lot of influence on the kind of policy which governs divorce in the churches and this is appreciated even by the respondents. For instance, when asked about how their Church communicates its policy on divorce, respondent 7 commented as follows;

“The communication is clear to Church leaders and the affected couples (during incident time).”

From the response such as the one by respondent 7, it is logical to speculate that the intricate details of the Church policy on divorce are not open to the congregants hence the reason why the respondent does not know of it but definitely knows that the leaders have to communicate it between them and the divorcees at the very time when they divorce. Simonik and Klobucar (2016) found that (specifically Catholic) Church leaders focus so much on the

traditions of the church and render some of the judgments like termination from partaking of the Holy Communion, actions that Mulovhedzi (2017) found to make the divorcees feel like outcasts in their own churches because they are isolated from the rest.

From the set precedence that the church leaders play a role in strictly reinforcing the church policy on divorce, it is safe to surmise that they directly or indirectly add to the negative effects of church policy on the divorcees' well-being because the effects of their strictness can possibly pile on the trauma, exacerbating the already-dwindling divorcee psychosocial well-being. Such a finding raises questions on whether the Evangelical Churches in Nakuru, Kenya are intentional with their divorced members and whether they take any measures to ensure that their well-being is protected if not improved. However, in the Nakuru Kenya context, there are various factors that could contribute to the level of influence that Church leaders have on the Church policy on divorce and consequently on the divorcees' well-being.

One of these reasons could be the existence of possibly stronger religious traditions among the African Churches. Thomas (2015) held that many African cultures have strong religious traditions that shape the members' views on marriage and divorce. For such a reason, Church leaders in Africa are possibly often seen as moral authorities and their teachings on highly vexed matters such as divorce carry more weight than the other regions. With such knowledge from Thomas (2015), it is logical that the level of moral authority given to these leaders by the strong religious tradition, exposes the divorcees in these Churches to negative psycho-social well-being, which are shaped by the unfavourable Church policy on divorce, made under the authority of the leaders.

The second possible reason why the church leaders sway much power in the formation and the execution of the Church policy which negatively affects the divorcees' well-being is the conservative rules. Many African societies tend to have and hold

conservative values when it comes to family and marriage. As such, these leaders use these values, reflecting them and becoming resistant to changing Church policy on divorce. The resistance and the resultant church policy on divorce negatively affect the divorcees' well-being in such contexts. Lastly, socio-cultural factors can also possibly affect the gauges. They are so significant that respondent 14, in appreciation of the significance of cultural effects on the way divorce is communicated responded as follows; "Not openly communicated because they have not witnessed divorce. Cultures play a huge role in divorce, in some cultures, divorce is not allowed."

Odoi (2015) held that the rates of divorce in Africa were on the high rise despite the generally low rates of divorce in Africa compared to the rest of the regions in the world. Even though the researcher was not focusing on the influence of culture on divorce, it is logical to infer that since the cultural difference is the only differentiating Africa and the rest of the world when it comes to the context of divorce, culture plays a huge role in the formation of the Church policies on divorce.

On average the respondents appreciated the fact that some of the Churches had unwritten policy on divorce. Their stance is visible from the way they reacted to the statement, "My Church has an unwritten policy on divorce" ($\bar{x}=2.73$, $\sigma_x=1.292$, $N=121$). On average the table shows higher awareness for the written Church policy on divorce more than the unwritten policies which could also be just the respondents choosing which ones to recognize because the nature of the question investigated their individual cognition of the rules.

Regarding the statement, "My Church does not allow or accept divorce for any reason," on average the respondents were aware that their Churches did not have or give any room for divorce for any reasons whatsoever ($\bar{x}=3.25$, $\sigma_x=1.364$, $N=121$). Due to the value of

the mean and standard deviation, compared to the previous statements regarding the written and unwritten policy, it is logical to conclude that even the respondents who knew that there were no written or unwritten policies recognized that their Churches did not accept divorce on any grounds. This is consistent with the rigorist standpoint in line with Meier (2017) who observed that according to the rigorists, a marriage cannot be dissolved and, therefore, divorce is not acceptable.

The most recurrent theme from the analysis of qualitative data was the rigorist standpoint, which maintains that a marriage cannot be dissolved and, therefore, divorce is not acceptable. Biblical authority proved a central point in the same. The first issue to be discussed is the presence, nature, and source of the Church policy on divorce. The analysis entailed the codes and grouping of the codes into themes. Biblical authority was the single overarching theme throughout the dataset. The theme was in line with the suggestions by Muriithi (2018) who held that the Biblical position on divorce is one of the paradigms on which most churches use to base their arguments even when setting their policies on divorce.

Conservatism was one of the two latent themes which emerged in the thematic analysis of the changes which should be made to Church policy on divorce. Themes emerged in the sub-themes such as the Biblical authority of the Church policy on divorce, unwillingness to compromise, desire to preserve marriages, the inerrancy of the Bible, and the lack of human authority to review the sayings of the Bible on the topic of divorce. The respondents who supported the conservatory view on the issue of divorce held the ground that the Church policy was based on the utterances of the Bible and since the Bible was the ultimate authority in the Christian faith, there was no way whatsoever to change or to go around such rule and to make it more ‘favourable’ to anyone, even for the divorce. Respondent 1 commented as follows;

“(1) Not in my power/ I am not ready to compromise. Let the Church go back to the basics of life (2) it’s not a mediation subject on policy.”

The rigorist stance is depicted in the attitude of not seeking to change anything on the Church policy on divorce no matter the effects. The respondents seem to be unfazed about their stern stance that they will not change and they are not willing to make adjustments when it comes to issues of divorce because God has spoken about it and it matters not whether some other factors like the stigma of divorce can mediate the well-intended policy to negatively affect the divorcees’ well-being. Another respondent, respondent 7, who also took the rigorist stance on the matters regarding the changes which should be made to church policy on divorce respondents as follows;

“I cannot change anything because the policy is derived from the word of God which is not subjected to human review or change.”

The response above shows the degree of rigidity and stiffness with which some of the respondents were resistant to any kind of change on the matters of Church policy on divorce without an ounce of thought to the pervasive repercussions of resisting change to these policies. The respondents rest their sole argument against any change to be made to the Church policy on divorce on their full confidence that the Bible is inerrant and has the final authority on matters of divorce and thus whatever the Bible has said on the matter should be final. Supposing that the Bible is inerrant and it is true that God seeks the good of people in His words, it is an unfortunate coincidence to the divorcees who end up as the casualties of the Bible-based Church policies on divorce, which potentially pose a severe danger to their psycho-social well-being. With such standings, Jenks (2018) revealed that the conservative view on family issues leads to the inevitability of severe psycho-social well-being issues. If the Churches are to go the conversation way of keeping the Church policies on divorce as

they are without any change, they have to be prepared for the possible severe well-being issues, especially among the divorcees who congregate in the Church for worship.

There are potential theological, traditional, and Biblical reasons which on close examination guarantee the validity of the argument against compromising when it comes to matters Church policy on divorce. A close examination of the Bible, especially Matthew 19:9-10, which according to Sinclair's (2018) study was deemed by Christians to promote adultery reveals that the Biblical teaching has been always against divorce. Secondly, in the Christian Church, marriage does not only show a union in which God delights but it has a greater significance because it symbolizes the relationship between the Church (the bride) and its groom (Jesus Christ) and to break it reflects so negatively on one of the unions out of which the whole Church, much less the religion gets its identity, assurance, and convictions. Therefore, while the different groups of people, including psycho-social well-being experts might possibly consider the stance to conserve the views and the convictions of the Church, which lead to the unfavourable psycho-social well-being outcomes on the divorcees, it is a legitimately Biblical issue in Christianity which needs deeper thinking through to change, modify, alter or even compromise.

The issue of divorce is a complex and contentious one within the Christian Church, and there are a number of reasons why many churches may be reluctant to change their policies on divorce. One other reason why the Church might be reluctant to make changes to the existing policies on divorce is the fear that, everything might descend into anarchy when it comes to matters of divorce. Some Church leaders may worry that changing policies on divorce could lead to a slippery slope of compromising on other traditional teachings and practices. They may fear that if divorce is seen as more permissible, it could lead to a breakdown of traditional marriage and family structures, which they see as fundamental to

society. The Church is one institution which is run by the rules which are instituted by the transcendent being; God and the Church members and leaders might not have the power or authority therefore to amend any rules or commandments or laws, regarding anything and thus they might fear that taking the power and responsibility to change any of the tenets of the Bible would mean that they have violated the voice of God Himself speaking to them through the Bible (Jenks, 2018).

Lastly, the Church leaders might fear the supernatural punishment from God who is the author of the laws which guard marriage and consequently divorce in the Church's context. The Church members might not consider the divorcees' well-being in their choice of obedience towards God and not man. However, even if they did consider the possible outcomes which these unfavourable Church policies on divorce have on the divorcees, they would have to wrestle with very challenging issues before they make their decisions on whether to banish some of these laws, which now appear as retrogressive to so many people, or to stick with them and in so doing obey the voice of God. It is the logical assumption that the Christian's allegiance is first to God and then everything else follows and so does the priority (Tlharihani & Olehile, 2021). With such an assumption, it is important to know that the Christian's first desire is to please God above everything else even if they harm other beings indirectly, pleasing and obeying God is their priority and that has been demonstrated in the way a considerable portion of the respondents held closely to the banishment of the divorce, even if it means that some of the fellow members are suffering grievous psycho-social well-being effects in the process.

The theme of reformation was contributed by the group of respondents who desired that there were changes which should be made in matters relating to the Church policy on divorce. The theme was strongly supported by some other key sub-themes including properly

informing Church leaders on how to handle the matters pertaining to divorce and divorcees, regulating all the different aspects of the divorce such as the policy, counselling the divorcees, training the Church leaders who are heavily involved in dealing with the divorcees on how to handle the issues such as the divorcees and how to speak the policy to the divorcees without harming their psycho-social well-being in the process of so doing. From the general feeling that the previous qualitative analysis had revealed that there is strong evidence to show that the church policy has negative effects on the divorcees' well-being, it is logical that a group of the respondents would lean towards changing or reforming some of these policies for the good of those who have the divorcees who are often affected.

A portion of the respondents greatly appreciated the dire need for the reformation of the church policy, especially in the space of dealing with divorcees they expressed matching zeal or necessity for the changes. An example of such respondents was respondent 10, who responded as follows: "Talk to the board members to accept divorcees/separation in the Church and allow them to take part in some Church activities."

Jenkins (2020) held that divorcees suffered different effects from the Church policies on divorce which went further than disbanding from receiving the Holy Communion. Other divorcees even get into ex-communication, which negatively affects the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. The reformation will be important so that the divorcees are not ostracized so that they cannot have the negative effects of which the Church policy on divorce has been posing on them, as had been revealed by this study. Church policy on divorce in Africa, like in other parts of the world, is usually based on religious teachings and principles that guide the institution of marriage. In Africa, the Church has historically been a central part of many people's lives and has played a significant role in shaping social norms and values. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Church has taken an interest in divorce and has developed policies around it.

One of the reasons why there is a need for Church policy on divorce in African Churches is because of the high value placed on marriage in many African societies. Marriage is often seen as a sacred union that should not be taken lightly, and divorce is sometimes viewed as a failure or a betrayal of the commitment made to one's spouse and to God. As a result, the Church seeks to provide guidance to its members on how to navigate marital difficulties and work towards reconciliation rather than simply giving up on the marriage and seeking a divorce. Another reason why there is a need for Church policy on divorce in African churches is the changing social and cultural landscape. With increasing urbanization, globalization, and exposure to different cultures and ideas, African societies are experiencing new challenges that were not present in the past. For example, the prevalence of domestic violence, infidelity, and other forms of marital discord has increased in some areas. Church policies on divorce aim to address these new challenges and provide guidance on how to deal with them in a way that is consistent with Christian principles (Cherchye et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, even though change is inevitable, change has to be well thought through, planned, and executed for the highest good of the people and groups involved. Similarly, even though sentiments like the one given by respondent 4, "They should be lenient." Insinuates the need for some sort of flexibility, there is no telling the extent to which giving such rooms can affect or even derail the Church of its doctrines and morals. Furthermore, the need for the reformation of the stringent Church policy on divorce should not blind psychology, and marriage and family therapy experts should recognize that the Church is independent of the factors around it, and it has the need to form its own policies based on their convictions and Biblical doctrines, which presumably inform how the Church policies on divorce are formed. The reformation of the Church policy on divorce to reduce the stigma will most likely improve the divorcees' meaningfulness, belonging, social participation,

support, happiness and social acceptance that an individual has with their immediate community as discussed by Hobbs (2016) in his exploration of social well-being theory.

Therefore, even though there is an apparent proposal and need for the reformation or change of the Church policy on divorce for the betterment of the divorcees' well-being, Christians, especially the church leaders might find it logically difficult to do that because there are other factors which control the policies. The African Church, like any other religious institution, is a complex organization with diverse opinions and perspectives. While some members of the Church may be in favour of changing the policy on divorce, others may be opposed to it for various reasons. For some members of the African Church, divorce is seen as a violation of traditional values and principles that are central to the Christian faith. They may argue that changing the policy on divorce would be a departure from biblical teachings and a betrayal of the values that the Church has upheld for generations.

Some members of the African Church may believe that the traditional interpretation of Biblical teachings on divorce is the only valid one and that any attempt to change the policy on divorce would be a deviation from the truth. They may see any reinterpretation of the biblical text as a threat to the authority and integrity of the Church. Another reason why there could be a strong push back to the proposition of the changes to the Church policy on divorce is family. The family is highly valued in African culture, and divorce is often seen as a threat to the stability and integrity of the family unit. Some members of the African Church may be hesitant to change the policy on divorce because they believe that it would undermine the sanctity of the family and lead to the breakdown of society.

Further findings show that most of the respondents disagreed that their churches did not give any provisions for divorce, even on the basis of unfaithfulness. Most of the respondents expressed their recognition of the fact that their Churches considered unfaithfulness a legitimate reason to divorce that even though they did not have the

permissive policies for divorce, they allowed it based on the allegations of divorce. This can be shown by the respondents' reaction to the statement, "My church allows divorce in case of marital unfaithfulness only." On average they recognized that their Churches consider infidelity in marriage a legitimate ground for divorce ($M=3.14$, $SD=1.311$). This is consistent with the legislative perspective which grants divorce on account of adultery - based on Jesus' teaching and desertion based on the teaching by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 (Lagat, 2018).

The theme of legislative perspective, which grants divorce on account of adultery - based on Jesus' teaching and desertion based on the teaching by Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:15 (Lagat, 2018), was recurrent. Unfaithfulness was one of the most salient themes which the respondents used as their basis for settling on the Biblical authority as the basis for disallowing divorce. Unfaithfulness was a common factor that heralded the many statements that most of the respondents made in favour, of the biblical stance against divorce. For instance, respondent 7 responded as follows when asked if they knew of their church policy on divorce. "Attached is the scripture that divorce is only acceptable on grounds of Infidelity." Furthermore, respondent 12 also shared the same view, responding as follows; "Do not encourage/ no matter the policy on divorce but on unfaithfulness."

The results however indicate that on average, most of the respondents have concurring ideas on the different aspects of how their churches view divorce between believers and non-believers. From their response to the statement, "In my Church, divorce between a believer and non-believer is accepted, but divorce between two believers is not allowed," it is evident that on average most of the respondents disagreed that their churches accepted people divorce between a believer and a non-believer ($\bar{x}=2.74$, $\sigma_x=1.384$, $N=121$). This means that their churches did not subscribe to the double-standard way, also known as

the Pauline Privilege which, according to Lagat (2018), put more restrictions of grounds for divorce to Christians than it does to non-Christians based on 1 Corinthians 7:11,15.

From the heralding comments given by the respondent on whether their churches have any policies on divorce, it could be surmised that the Church has a stern pushback attitude against divorce but gives some leeway when the divorce has to occur based on the accusations of divorce, and this makes them base their attitude and responses on divorce based on the Biblical principles safeguarding it. These respondents' sentiments are consistent with the findings by Jenks (2018) that throughout history the Church has been quick to discourage divorce but is often quick to support it when it comes to the sanctity of the marriage institution. Even with the issues of unfaithfulness, the respondents appealed that it is the basis that the divorces, could have Biblical permission to divorce. The attachment with which the respondents use unfaithfulness or infidelity in marriage to give the Biblical permission for divorce was probably due to the conviction that they have and the possible belief that the Bible has the overall opportunity over every matter.

Biblical authority was a significant issue among the different respondents. Even the major sub-theme of unfaithfulness had its origins in the fact that it was rooted in the Bible because even though God generally hates divorce, as per the stances of most of the respondents, the Bible allows it in cases of marital infidelity. It is noteworthy that the respondents accepted that they did not have any written or formal Church policy on divorce and in such circumstances, they used the Biblical authority on divorce, which as they said turned out to be against divorce and in the end affected the divorcees' well-being. The lack of written or formal Church policy on divorce in most cases (which possibly led to the overreliance on Biblical authority) is probably due to the fact that the African Church, like

the African society, is less litigious and can easily use the implied rules from the Bible as the authority to guide divorce in the Church.

Furthermore, the strong connection between the church policy and unfaithfulness clears the different projections which have been made that the Church has centred on the specific issues of unfaithfulness to help them fight divorce whenever they are not for it and its practice. It would be inaccurate to suggest that the Church uses unfaithfulness as a weapon to determine divorce cases. While some churches may consider infidelity as a legitimate reason for divorce, this is not universally true and is not the primary purpose or approach of the Church in handling divorce cases. In many religious traditions, including Christianity, marriage is viewed as a sacred covenant between two individuals and God. As such, divorce is often discouraged and considered a last resort. However, most religious traditions recognize that divorce may be necessary in certain circumstances, such as when the marriage has irretrievably broken down or when one party has acted in a manner that violates the terms of the marriage covenant.

Even though the respondents knew that their Churches did not have the permissive view to the concept and practice of divorce, most of them, on average showed cognisance to the fact that the Church accepted and embraced all the members who were divorced against their wills. Furthermore, respondents had confidence that even though their churches did not have any room for divorce, the churches accepted people who had been divorced due to cruelty, abuse, and fear for their life and this can be shown by their reactions to the statement, “My Church does not encourage divorce but accepts people who opt to divorce on the grounds of cruelty, abuse, and fear for their life” ($\bar{x}=4.00$, $\sigma_x=1.286$, $N=121$). This is in line with the lesser evil principle, which draws parallels from Old Testament teaching in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 which implied that, divorce was permissible on grounds of indecency.

Lastly, on average, more respondents averred with the statement, “My Church does not encourage divorce but accepts people who opt for divorce due to abandonment, desertion, or irreconcilable differences” that their churches did not accept divorce but had room for those who opted for divorce due to abandonment, desertion or irreconcilable differences ($\bar{x}=3.46$, $\sigma_x=1.285$, $N=121$). The trends of the responses in this section are in agreement with (Jackson, 2018, as cited in Lagat, 2018) which holds that the Church often gives leeway for some issues while allowing or facing the inevitability of divorce, even though it sternly maintains its stance against it. Furthermore, it also supports the findings by Lagat (2018) that the lesser evils and liberal approaches which have been taken by the African Church in cases where they have to stand for or against divorce. These results are contrary to the finding of the study by (Saad et al., 2017) which showed that marriage was a sacred selfless union and no Church should be willing to break it based on any grounds. The results might be due to growth of the liberalism in the Church regarding matters divorce.

Qualitative results showed that in cases where unfaithfulness is cited as a reason for divorce, the Church's approach is usually to investigate the claim and evaluate the circumstances before making a determination. The Church may seek to mediate the situation, provide counselling or support for the parties involved, and work to promote forgiveness and reconciliation where possible. In some cases, divorce may be permitted by the Church, but only after careful consideration of the circumstances and in accordance with religious teachings and values. It is worth noting that the Church's role in divorce cases can vary widely depending on the religious tradition, the local context, and the individuals involved. Some churches may take a more lenient or permissive approach to divorce, while others may be stricter or conservative. Ultimately, the Church's goal in handling divorce cases is to

promote healing, forgiveness, and spiritual growth, rather than to use unfaithfulness as a weapon or a means of determining divorce cases.

Descriptive Statistics for Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score

A composite score for Church policy on divorce was computed and analysed using descriptive statistics. The Table shows the descriptive statistics of the Church policy on divorce composite scores. Table 4.11 shows the descriptive analysis of Church policy on divorce composite score.

Table 4.11: *Descriptive Statistics of Church policy Composite Score*

		Statistic	Std. Error
Composite Score	Mean	3.0489	.04017
	95% Confidence Interval for Lower Bound	2.9694	
	Mean Upper Bound	3.1284	
	5% Trimmed Mean	3.0597	
	Median	3.0556	
	Variance	.197	
	Std. Deviation	.44368	
	Minimum	1.78	
	Maximum	4.11	
	Range	2.33	
	Interquartile Range	.56	
	Skewness	-.248	.219
	Kurtosis	.385	.435

Table 4.11 shows how the respondents who have been members of their churches for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 55 years respond to the Churches' policies on divorce ($\bar{x}=3.0489$, $\sigma_x=0.4468$). The data also shows a negative skewing. The skewing indicates that most of the data lie on the left side of the mean, while others lie on the right. This type of distribution often suggests that the data includes outliers or extreme variations affecting the central tendency of the data.

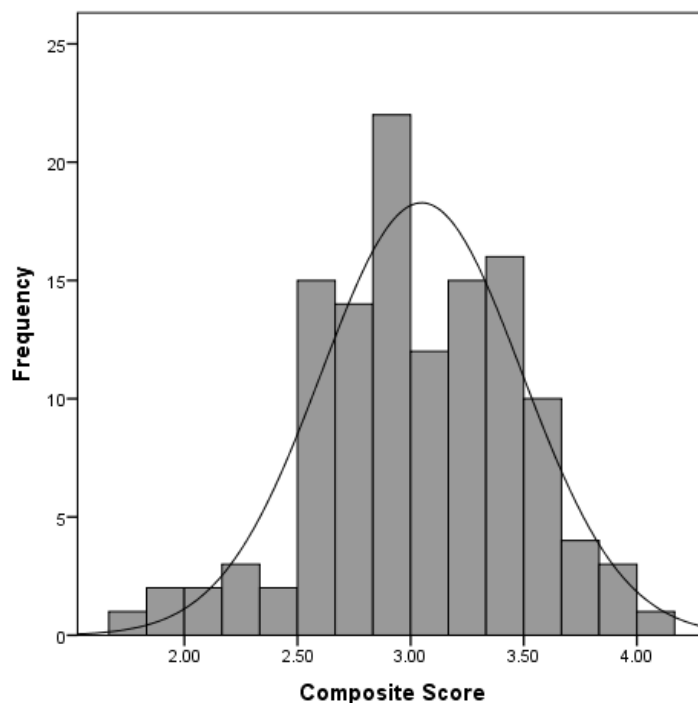
The presence of outliers suggests that most of the respondents do not agree with most of the Church divorce policy dimensions. Such a trend in the data is indicative of the fact that

most of the Church in some regions especially in Africa have no well-laid, known and disseminated principles on divorce even though the members are acutely aware that it is against divorce. This finding is supported by Magampa (2016) who holds even though the Catholic Church specifically has zero tolerance for divorce, the principles and policies are not clear for the members.

Histogram for Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score

Descriptive analysis was done to investigate the normality of the data in Church policy on divorce. The histogram in figure 4.3 below shows the distribution of the respondents' reactions to prompts on church policy on divorce.

Figure 4.3: *Histogram of Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score*



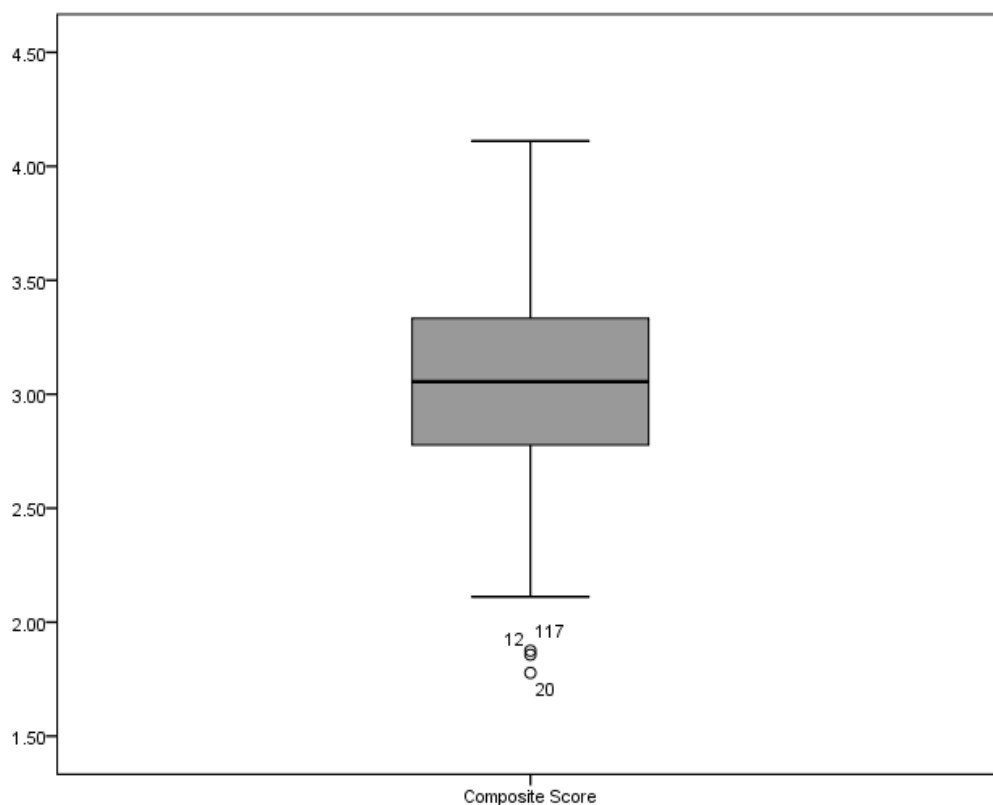
The histogram in figure 4.3 shows the distribution of the composite scores of Church policy on divorce. It suggests that there was a skewing of the data towards the left; thus, the data were not normally distributed, which prompted the treat of the data using the natural log transformation. The skewing also could potentially mean that while most people know

definite church policies regarding divorce, some might disagree or be oblivious to such policies.

Boxplot for Church Policy Composite Score

Outlier test was used to test of the presence of outliers in data of Church policy on divorce. Figure 4.4 shows boxplot which was used to carry out the outlier test for the Church policy on divorce composite score.

Figure 4.4: *Boxplot for Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score*



The boxplot in figure 4.4 shows the composite score data for the church policies of divorce among the respondents. It was used to check for outliers in the number of responses that the respondents provided. The Outliers were detected at the lower end of the scale, which guaranteed the violation of the assumption of the absence of outliers. Thus, treatment was applied using log transformation.

Descriptive Statistics for Mental Well-being

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the items about the mental well-being of the respondents. Table 4.12 shows the descriptive statistics of the mental well-being measures.

Table 4.12: *Descriptive Statistics of Mental Well-being Items*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I question rather than accept my strength as a human being	121	1	5	3.38	1.373
I focus on my personal development as a divorcee	121	1	5	4.11	1.228
I pursue goals that give meaning to my life	121	1	5	4.48	.895
I have a sense of independence in thought	121	1	5	3.82	1.248
I face challenges in life	121	1	5	4.13	1.134
I navigate my environment in a way that agrees with my values	121	1	5	3.94	1.002

Table 4.12 shows the descriptive statistics of the measures of mental well-being. The measures considered of a 5-point scale in which the respondents were asked questions and 1 which was the minimum score represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree. The results of the study, as represented in the table showed that on average most respondents took it upon themselves to pursue goals which gave meaning to their lives as a person, despite having been divorced and this can be shown by how they responded to the statement, “I pursue goals that give meaning to my life” ($\bar{x}=4.48$, $\sigma_x=.895$, $N=121$).

Furthermore, most of the respondents also submitted that they have a sense of independence as persons. Furthermore, some of the mental well-being measuring statements which scored

highly among the respondents include healthy navigation of the environment in ways that agrees with the divorcees' values, having independence of thought and facing life's challenges. The measure that scored the lowest among all the 121 respondents was the measure of how they questioned rather than accepting their strength as human beings. The score indicated that the divorcees mostly had low self-esteem which stood out because they felt coherent in all measures of their mental well-being.

Regarding the statement, "I question rather than accept my strength as a human being." The results revealed that most of the respondents doubted their strength as human beings ($\bar{x}=3.38$, $\sigma_x=1.373$, $N=121$), which shows that most of the divorcees suffer from lack of self-acceptance, even in their areas of known strengths. Furthermore, on average, most of the respondents focus on their personal growth and this can be shown by how the table reveals they reacted to the statement, "I focus on my personal development as a divorcee," concurring to their intentionality on growing as divorcees ($\bar{x}=4.11$, $\sigma_x=1.228$, $N=121$). Regarding the statement, "I navigate my environment in a way that agrees with my values" the results revealed that on average most of the respondents navigated their environment in ways that were consistent with their values and worldviews ($\bar{x}=3.94$, $\sigma_x=1.002$, $N=121$).

These results regarding the reflection of low self-esteem among the divorcees is consistent with the findings by Canfield & Cunningham (2018) which showed that divorce can be crucial in that it leads to self-stigma; a situation where the divorcee judge themselves and thus have a feeling of reduced self-worth. In the context of Nakuru, Kenya, and Africa, there are various reasons why divorcees can show more signs of self-stigma. According to a study conducted by Adam (2015), in Africa, divorce is often stigmatized and those who go through it can face negative consequences, such as social isolation, discrimination, and even violence. This stigma can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of

divorcees, including higher rates of self-stigma. There are several reasons why divorcees in Africa may experience higher levels of self-stigma. Cultural and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward divorce in Africa (Familusi, 2019). In many African societies, divorce is still viewed as taboo and socially unacceptable, and those who go through it may be viewed as immoral or sinful. This cultural and religious belief can lead divorcees to internalize these negative attitudes and develop self-stigma.

Furthermore, divorce can be a traumatic experience, and social support is essential in helping individuals cope with the emotional and psychological impact. However, in many African societies, divorced individuals may face social exclusion and stigma, leading to a lack of social support (Blum, 2018). This lack of support can further reinforce negative attitudes and beliefs, leading to higher rates of self-stigma. There are also legal and financial implications associated with divorce in some African countries, such as loss of property, custody battles, and financial insecurity (Mohlatlole et al., 2018). These implications can lead to feelings of shame and guilt, which can contribute to self-stigma. Women in Africa may face higher rates of self-stigma due to the gender inequality that exists in many societies.

According to Olofsson (2019), women who initiate divorce may be viewed as transgressing traditional gender roles and may face greater social sanctions, including stigmatization. Women who are divorced may also face greater economic insecurity and limited employment opportunities, further reinforcing self-stigma. Mental health resources may also be limited in many African countries, and there may be a lack of awareness and understanding about mental health issues, including self-stigma. This can make it difficult for individuals to access the support they need to address self-stigma and other mental health challenges (Canfield & Cunningham, 2018). All these factors or some might come into play

and negatively affect the mental well-being of the respondents and thus impact their psychosocial well-being negatively.

Descriptive Statistics for Mental Well-being Composite Score

A composite score was computed for all the items measuring the well-being and Table 4.13 gives the descriptive statistics of the mental well-being composite score. It helps understand and compare the scores for different responses that the respondents gave on the 5-point mental well-being measuring items.

Table 4.13: *Descriptive Statistics for Mental well-being Composite Score*

		Statistic	Std. Error
Composite Score	Mean	3.9733	.06251
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		
	Lower Bound	3.8495	
	Upper Bound	4.0971	
	5% Trimmed Mean	4.0008	
	Median	4.1667	
	Variance	.473	
	Std. Deviation	.68765	
	Minimum	2.20	
	Maximum	5.00	
	Range	2.80	
	Interquartile Range	1.00	
	Skewness	-.623	.220
	Kurtosis	-.315	.437

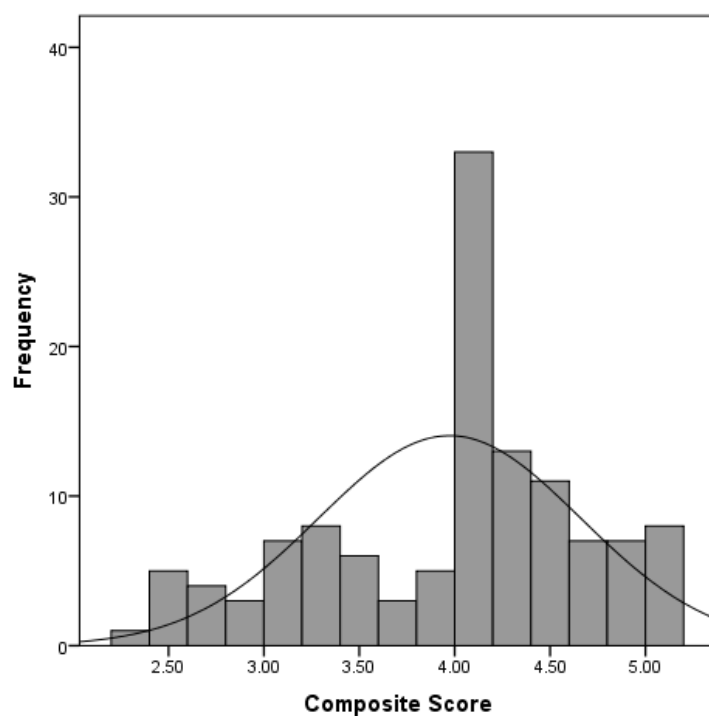
The composite score ($\bar{x}=3.9733$, $\sigma_x=0.68765$) shows that the people's reactions to the prompts of their response due to the huge difference between the mean and median but that can be due to the fact that mental well-being has an individuality aspect, which manifests as the respondents answer the questions about their well-being. Such proposition is consistent with the initial proposals by Lijadi (2018) which considered mental well-being a complex and

multifaceted issue with sic facets of psychological functioning including self-acceptance, positive relations, personal growth, purpose in life and environmental mastery which all contribute to the one big complex entity; mental-being (Bodeker et al., 2020).

Normality Test Mental Health Composite Score

The histogram in figure 4.5 was used to determine the normality of the composite score of the normality of mental health composite score. There was negative skewing which led to the violation of the normality assumption (Mishra et al., 2019).

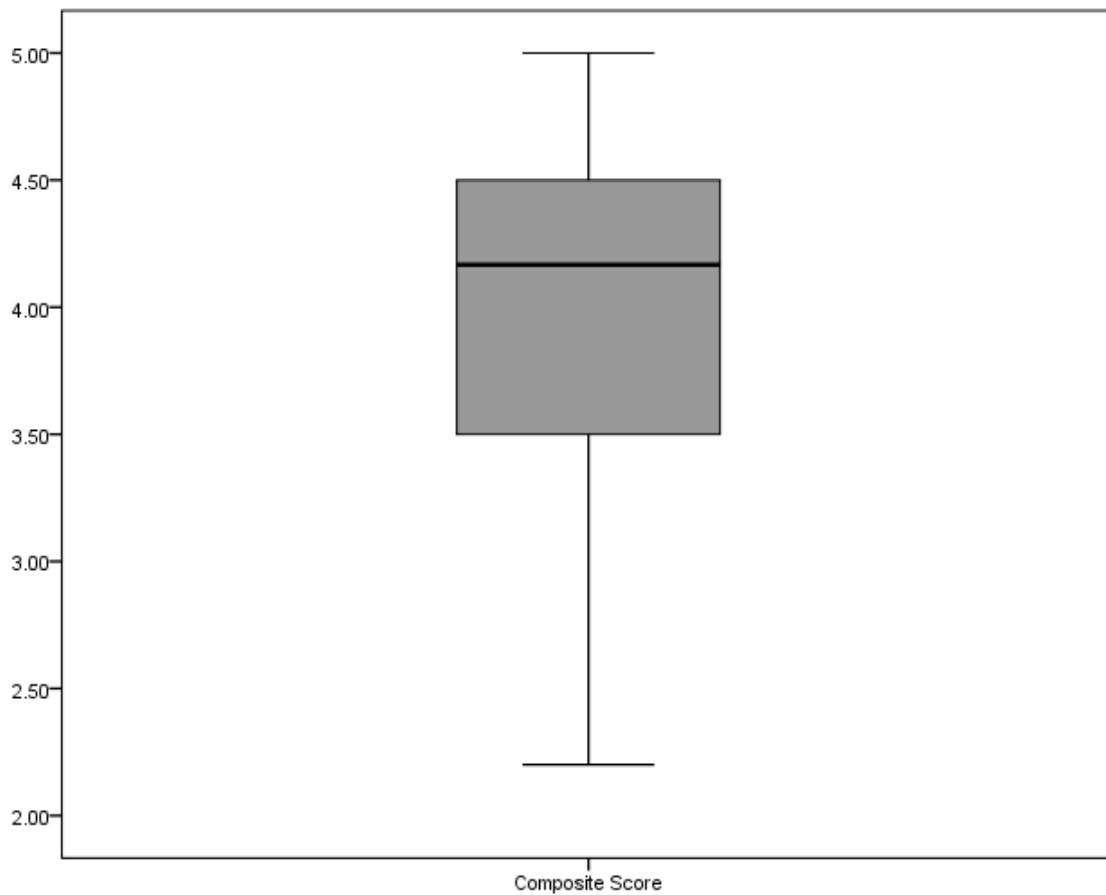
Figure 4.5: *Histogram for Mental Health Composite Score*



Outlier Test for Mental Health Composite Score

A composite score was computed for the mental health items descriptive statistics was used to test for the presence of outliers. Figure 4.6 is a boxplot which was used to test for any outliers in the mental health composite score.

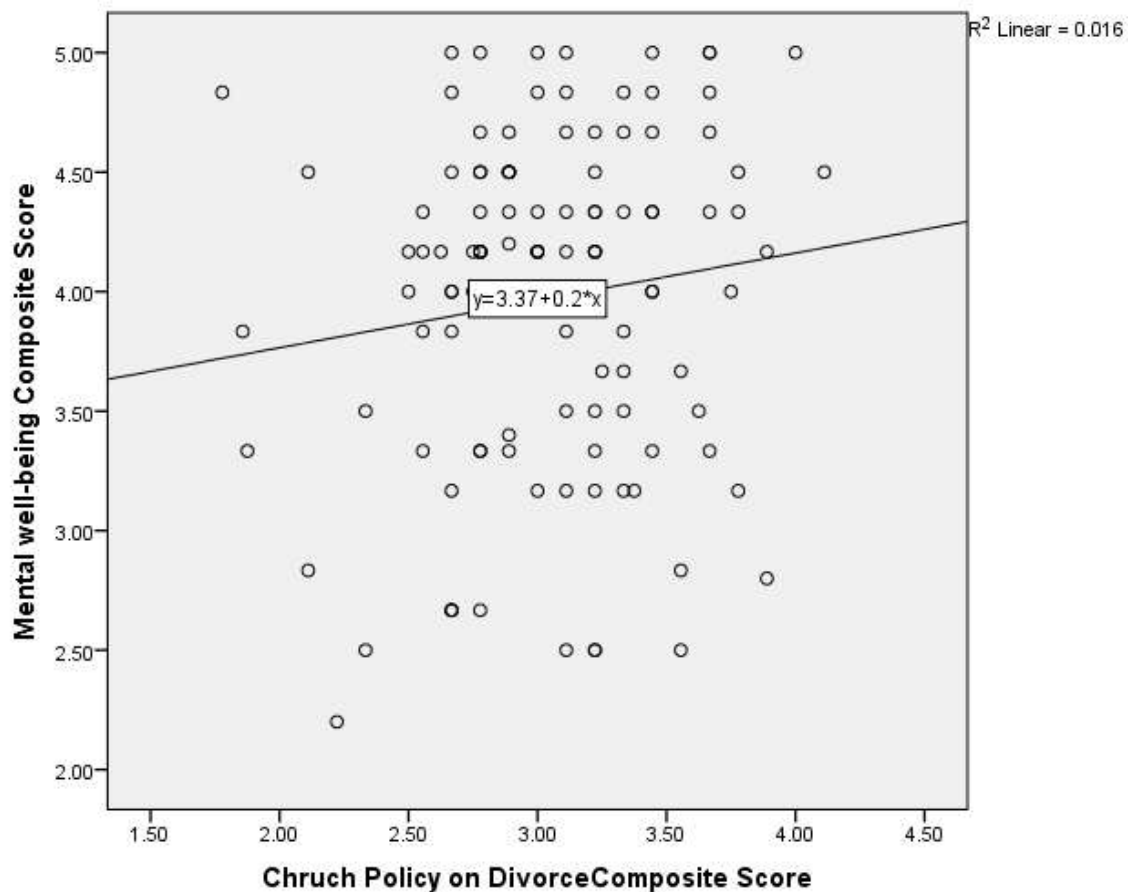
Figure 4.6: *Boxplot for Mental Well-being Composite Score*



Linearity test for Mental Health

To investigate linearity of the mental health data, the composite score was analysed using descriptive methods. Figure 4.7 is a scatterplot used to test the linearity of the composite score of mental well-being. The linearity assumption was tested by generating a scatterplot of the relationship between the Church divorce policy composite score and the mental health composite score.

Figure 4.7: Scatterplot of Mental Well-being Composite Score



The figure depicts that the data was scattered away from the line of best fit.

Furthermore, from the figure, the data generally shows a linear trend, which does not violate the assumption of linearity. The linearity shows that there is a direct connection between the Church policy on divorce and mental well-being. The results agree with findings by Damota (2019) who posed that divorce leads to the deterioration of physical and mental health. It also supports the sad reality which was posed by Hille (2017) that divorcees are significantly more likely to be treated for mental health issues than the average person.

Tsuma and Atony (2019b) found that many of the Church policies often do not support or help divorcees, based on its unwritten divorce policies which often negatively impact the divorcees spiritually, mentally, emotionally and socially. Kolodziej-Zaleska and Przbyta-

Basista, (2016) also had findings which support that the divorcees' mental, social and spiritual well-being are sometimes detrimentally affected by the Church policies.

Regression of Mental Wellbeing on Church Policy on Divorce

Regression analysis of mental well-being and Church policy on divorce and mental well-being composited scores was conducted to investigate the effects of Church policy on divorce on the divorcees' mental well-being. Table 4.14, table 4.15 and table 4.16 the results of the regression analysis of mental well-being in the Church policy on divorce.

Table 4.14: *Regression of Mental Wellbeing on Church Policy on Divorce*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.128 ^a	.016	.008	.68483
a. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score				

Table 4.15: *ANOVA output for Mental well-being On Church Policy on Divorce*
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.934	1	.934	1.992	.161 ^b
	Residual	55.809	119	.469		
	Total	56.744	120			
a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score						

Table 4.16: *Regression Coefficients for Mental Well-being on Church Policy in Divorce*

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	B	Std. Error	Beta		
		3.369	.433		7.785	.000
	Composite Score	.198	.140	.128	1.411	.161
a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score						

Mental well-being composite score was regressed on Church policy on divorce composite score using a bivariate modelling technique. Tables 4.14, 4.15 and 4.16 shows the

model summary, ANOVA output, and coefficients. The tables show that there is no significant effects of Church policies on divorce on the divorcees' well-being ($R^2 = 0.16$, $F(1)$, $p \geq .05$). The results indicated that there was no significant effect that the Church policies on divorce had on the divorcees' well-being. Jenkins (2020) held that the Church had some overly irrational and unwarranted policies regarding divorce and these policies brought with severe consequences on the divorces in manners which could affect their well-being. The results of this analysis contradict such suggestions by showing that Church policy on divorce affects accounts for only 1.6% of the employee well-being. Furthermore, these results contradicted the findings by Jenks (2018) that Protestant Churches had the high likelihood of deteriorating their divorcee members' well-being by imposing draconian policy regarding divorce on these members.

Relationship between Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being

The second objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between Church's policy on divorce and spiritual well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. Accordingly, this section of the chapter presents descriptive analysis of spiritual wellbeing of the respondents, followed by assumption testing, and finally presents inferential results. The chapter also integrates thematic analysis of qualitative data and discusses the findings in light of extant literature.

Descriptive Statistics for Spiritual Well-being

Spiritual well-being items were analysed using descriptive statistics to determine the measure of the individual items on the spiritual well-being. Table 4.17 shows the results of the analysis. It shows the minimum and maximum values in the responses, the mean and standard deviation.

Table 4.17: *Descriptive Analysis of the Spiritual Well-being*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have a sense of purpose in life	121	1	5	4.10	1.221
I feel at peace with members of my Church community	121	1	5	3.98	1.060
I feel connection with God	121	1	5	4.36	.999
Valid N (listwise)	121				

Table 4.17 shows the descriptive statistics of the spiritual well-being measures. The spiritual well-being was measured using a 5-point scale where 5, the maximum value showed the respondents strongly agreeing with the proposed measures, and the minimum value of 1 was representative of strong disagreement with the proposed spiritual well-being measure. The spiritual well-being of the respondents, as can be shown by the table, was extremely excellent because even though the proposal statement measuring this aspect of their well-being was limited to three, they scored means of 4 and above, showing that at the respondents felt that they agreed with the strongly agreed with the statements.

Regarding the statement, “I have a sense of purpose in life,” the study revealed that on average the respondents recognized that they had a sense of purpose in their lives ($\bar{x}=4.10$, $\sigma_x=1.221$, $N=121$). Secondly, on average most of the respondents averred that they feel at peace with members of their Church community and this can be seen by their responses to the statement, “I feel at peace with members of my Church community,” ($\bar{x}=3.98$, $\sigma_x=1.060$, $N=121$).

Lastly, regarding the statement, “I feel connection with God,” most respondents on average confirmed through their response that they felt in-depth connection with God ($\bar{x}=4.36$, $\sigma_x=.999$, $N=121$). The expression of the lack of peace with their Church community could be due to the reasons given Molvhedzi (2017) that the Church is often

involved in the propagation of the stigma of divorce that some of the divorced members in the Church sometimes feel like they are outcasts in Church. Such actions can lead to negative outcomes on the divorcees' well-being. However, divorce is a personally devastating thing that affects people, even pushing them to self-stigma and thus the distrust in their Church community might be just of the many coping mechanisms of the divorcees shielding themselves from the judgment and depression which come with the stigma of divorce which might come from their Church community.

Descriptive Statistics for Spiritual Well-being Composite Score

A composite score was computed for spiritual well-being and analysed using descriptive statistics. Table 4.18 shows the results of the descriptive analysis of the spiritual well-being composite scores.

Table 4.18: *Descriptive Statistics of Spiritual well-being Composite Score*

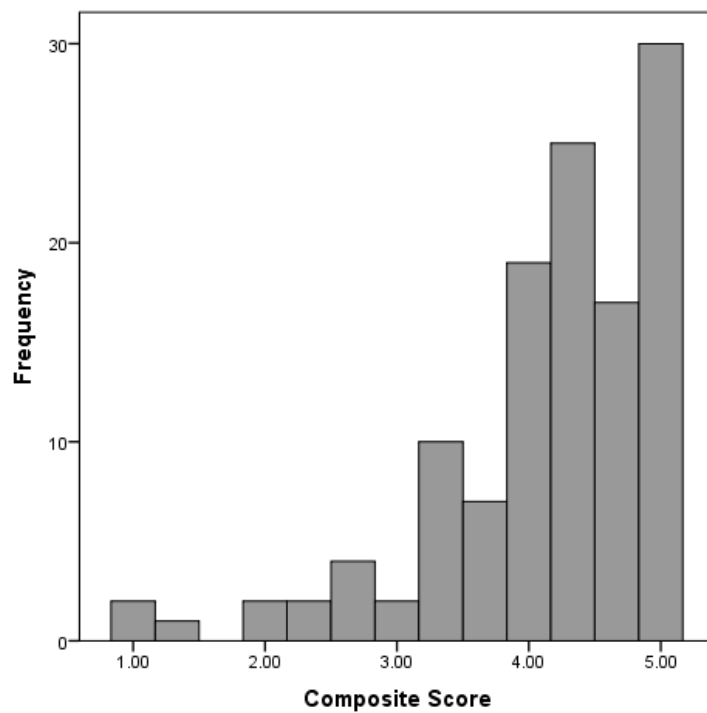
		Statistic	Std. Error
Composite Score	Mean	4.1433	.07910
	95% Confidence Interval for Lower Bound	3.9866	
	Mean Upper Bound	4.2999	
	5% Trimmed Mean	4.2360	
	Median	4.3333	
	Variance	.757	
	Std. Deviation	.87011	
	Minimum	1.00	
	Maximum	5.00	
	Range	4.00	
	Interquartile Range	1.00	
	Skewness	-1.497	.220
	Kurtosis	2.515	.437

The data on spiritual well-being was collected from all 121 respondents. They gave their responses about the practices which constitute spiritual well-being on a 5-point scale ($\bar{x}=4.1433$, $\sigma_x=.87011$). The median point at which most of the people responded was 4.3333. The range of point-response in the sample was 1 to 5. The skewness was -1.497, indicating a slight negative skew in the data. The kurtosis was -0.5, indicating that the data had lighter tails than a normal distribution (Mishra et al., 2019). These results provide a basic understanding of the distribution of spiritual well-being composite scores in the sample population and can be used to make inferences about the population. The explanation is consistent with the Fisher (2011) theory of spiritual well-being which focuses on personal, communal, environmental, and transcendent aspects of human beings' lives. The skewness is probably because not all the respondents can agree on all four aspects of the complex spiritual well-being.

Linearity Test for Spiritual well-being

Normality test was performed on the spiritual well-being composite score. Figure 4.8 is a histogram that was used to test the normality of the composite score of the normality of spiritual well-being composite score. There was negative skewing which led to the violation of the normality assumption (Cain et al., 2016). The negative skewing is pointing to the fact that most respondents agreed on the measures of their spiritual well-being.

Figure 4.8: *Histogram for Spiritual Well-being Composite Score*



Outlier Test for Spiritual Well-being

Descriptive analysis was used to test for the presence of outliers in the spiritual well-being composite score. Figure 4.9 is a boxplot showing the results of the outlier test.

Figure 4.9: *Boxplot for Spiritual Well-being Composite Score*

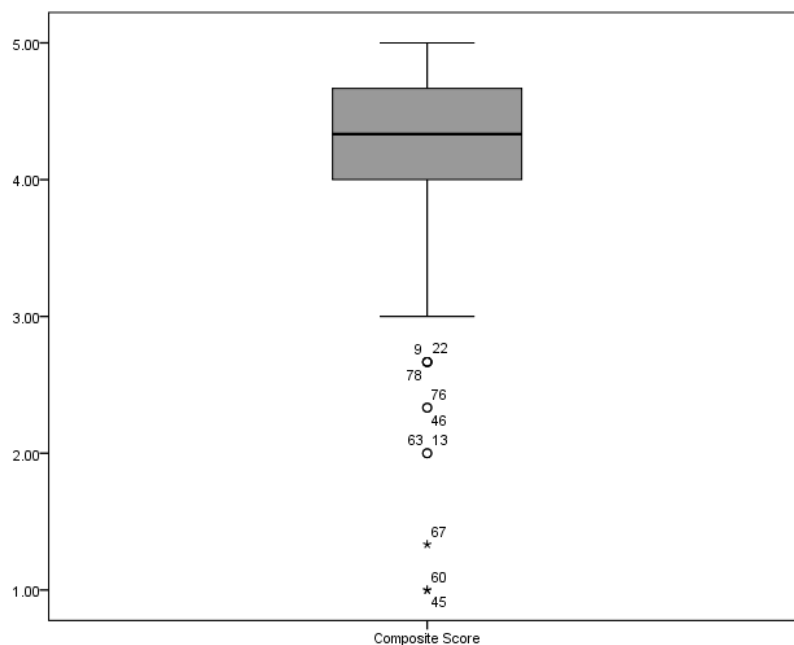
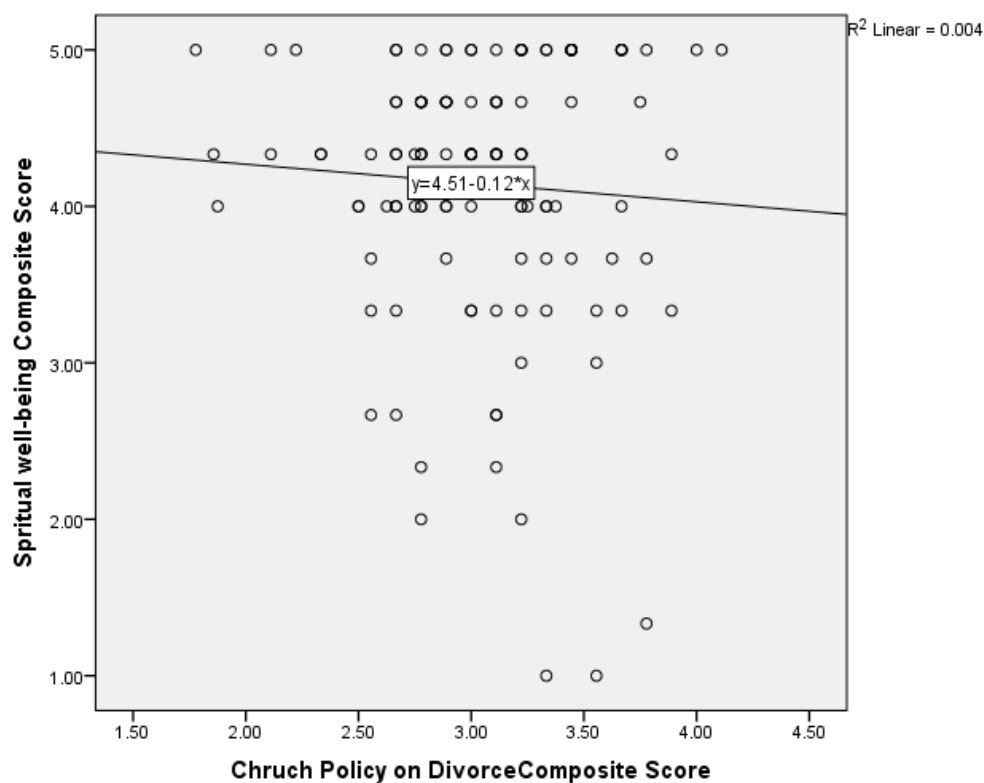


Figure 4.0 depicts that the outliers were detected at the lower end of the scale, which was a violation of the assumption of the absence of outliers, hence the data was log-transformed.

Linearity Test for Spiritual Well-being

Figure 4.10 is a scatterplot used to test for the linearity of correlations between church divorce policy and the spiritual well-being of the respondents. The linearity assumption was tested by generating a scatterplot of the relationship between the church divorce policy composite score and the spiritual well-being composite score.

Figure 4.10: *Scatterplot for Spiritual Well-being Composite Score*



The figure depicts that the data was scattered away from the line of best fit. Furthermore, from figure 4.9, the data generally shows a linear trend, which does not violate the assumption of linearity. The linear trend in the scatterplot indicates that most respondents are aware of their church's divorce policies and believe that it has a direct impact on their

spiritual well-being. The findings support the findings by Mulovhedzi (2017) showing that the divorcees experience multiple challenges which have links to Church policy on divorce and these can affect their spiritual well-being. The links between Church policy on divorce and could be due to the external or internal stigma which the respondents might feel from the Church or from themselves.

Regression Analysis of Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being

To investigate effects of Church policy on divorce on the spiritual well-being of the divorcees, Church policy on divorce composite score was regressed on the spiritual well-being composite score. Tables 4.19, 4.20 and 4.21 show the results of the regression analysis of Church policy on divorce and the Spiritual well-being. It shows the model summary, ANOVA and the coefficients. The tables present the model summary, ANOVA output, and the coefficients. The table shows that the church divorce policy composites explained 0.4% of spiritual health, $R^2 = .004$, $F(1) = .451$, $p > 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, hence the stance that the spiritual is not significantly affected by the Church policy on divorce. Such findings reject the suggestion by Mulovhedzi (2017) that Church policy on divorce deteriorates the divorcee's spiritual well-being. Furthermore, it contradicts the research findings by Platovnjak's (2015) Church policy on divorce and divorce itself steered the Church members who are divorcees to have stimulated growth in their spirituality. Such significant contradictions can be due to the huge difference in the set of beliefs and practices in spirituality between the African context and Europe.

Table 4.19: Model summary for *Regression Analysis of Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.061 ^a	.004	-.005	.87210

a. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score

Table 4.20: ANOVA output for the regression Analysis of Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.343	1	.343	.451	.503 ^b
	Residual	90.507	119	.761		
	Total	90.850	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score
b. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score

Table 4.21: Regression Coefficients for Regression Analysis of Church Policy on Divorce and Spiritual Well-being

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	4.510	.551		8.183
	Composite Score	-.120	.179	-.061	-.672

a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score

Relationship between Church's policy on Divorce and Social Well-being

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the relationship between Church's policy on divorce and social well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. This section presents the results and findings of descriptive findings, assumption testing, and inferential analysis.

Descriptive Statistics for Social Well-being

Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the individual items describing social well-being. Table 4.22 shows the results of descriptive statistics of the social well-being of the respondents. It shows the minimum and maximum values, mean and the standard deviation.

Table 4.22: *Descriptive statistics of social well-being*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel accepted in Church just as I am	121	1	5	3.75	1.149
I feel comfortable being a part of the Church community	121	1	5	3.89	1.060
I feel valued and have a sense of worth in Church	121	1	5	3.61	1.157
Life feels less overwhelming	121	1	5	3.13	1.096
I feel a sense of belonging in Church	121	1	5	3.72	1.139
I feel accepted as a member of the community	121	1	5	3.52	1.137
I feel a sense of belonging in my family	121	1	5	3.65	1.054
I feel valued by my friends	121	1	5	3.30	1.138

Table 4.22 shows the descriptive statistics for social well-being. The social well-being was measured using a 5-point scale where 5, the maximum value showed the respondents strongly agreeing with the proposed measures, and the minimum value of 1 was representative of strong disagreement with the proposed social well-being measure. On average most of the respondents agreed with statement, “I feel comfortable being a part of the Church community,” about social well-being with which most of the respondents agreed most was the one which proposed that they felt comfortable being part of the Church community, ($\bar{x}=3.89$, $\sigma_x=1.060$, $N=121$).

Another statement with which most of the respondents agreed with, on average, was one which proposed that they are accepted in Church just as they are, “I feel accepted in Church just as I am,” ($\bar{x}=3.75$, $\sigma_x=1.149$, $N=121$). On average most of the respondents

agreed with the statement which accrued sense to belonging to Church, “I feel a sense of belonging in Church,” ($\bar{x}=3.72$, $\sigma x=1.139$, $N=121$) also had a mean agreeability of 3.72 while the one with the last score was life was less overwhelming. The statement about the dependency of the acceptance by friends also scored lower compared to the rest of the statements ($\bar{x}=3.30$, $\sigma x=1.138$, $N=121$). The table shows a trend indicating that the respondents depended on Church and the Church community and felt socially accepted by their Church community more than the community they had outside the Church.

These findings totally contradict the suggestions by Magampa (2016) who argued that divorcees lack self-worth due to rejection, that is associated with being divorced and this is made worse by rejection by the Church. Divorce is often stigmatized in many parts of Africa, and divorced individuals may face social disapproval, discrimination, and exclusion from certain religious communities. Furthermore, it is inconsistent with the finding of the study by Jenkins (2020) who suggested stigma of divorce does not only affect the divorcees during the divorce but it also persists so long as they are around the Church or people associated with the Church who do not approve of their actions.

Furthermore, the findings also contradict the results of the study by Rathi and Pchauri (2018) which found that the stigma of divorce affected the well-being of the divorcees to the point that they felt unaccepted by their Churches. However, some divorcees may feel more accepted by the Church despite the stigma of divorce for different reasons. One reason for this is that religious doctrine may emphasize forgiveness, second chances, and redemption. Divorced individuals who turn to the Church for support and guidance may find a welcoming community that values their spiritual journey and encourages them to seek healing and reconciliation. In some cases, the Church may even provide counselling or other services to help individuals cope with the emotional and practical challenges of divorce (Li et al., 2017).

Another factor that may contribute to greater acceptance of divorcees in the Church is the influence of Western culture and globalization. As African societies become more diverse and cosmopolitan, traditional norms and values may be challenged or reinterpreted in new ways. The Church, as a global institution, may be more open to adapting to changing social realities and may be less judgmental of divorcees than more conservative or insular religious communities. Lastly, it is worth noting that not all churches or religious groups may have the same attitudes toward divorce. Some may be more accepting or affirming of divorced individuals, while others may be more judgmental or exclusionary. Ultimately, the experience of divorcees in the Church will depend on a variety of factors, including their individual circumstances, the specific church or religious community they belong to, and the broader social and cultural context in which they live (Li et al., 2017).

Qualitative analysis showed that the most prominent theme which came out in the quest to know from the respondents which was the best way to help the divorcees within the Church was support. The latent theme of support however manifested in two important sub-themes; acceptance and counselling. Hobbs (2016) held that social well-being encapsulates the aspects such as meaningfulness, belonging, social participation, support, happiness, and social acceptance within the individual's immediate community. The Church is an immediate community to the members, including the divorcees, and thus they should be able to have the level of support described by Hobbs (2016) to ensure that the social and other aspects of their psycho-social well-being are impacted positively. The examination of the respondents through the use of the questionnaires revealed that they all had a strong feeling that they were willing to support the divorcees through their challenging journey of divorce.

However, the respondents were divided into two major groups which depicted the major themes of counselling and acceptance. The first groups just wanted to accept the fact

that they can coexist and worship together with the divorcees without interfering in their activities but they were not willing to do anything material in terms of action that was going to benefit the divorcees. Respondent 10 was a representative of this group which only wanted to act to the level that they ensure that the divorcees are accepted, and their response reads as follows; “Allow them to open up and encourage them to have hope in life. Because of the fear of what people are talking about them, talk to them and with them to feel included in the Church.”

The respondents had a general attitude of accepting the divorcees among them and allowing them to be part of the congregation without either of the groups interfering with one another. There are various reasons, however, why these people would want to give the least form of support needed, acceptance, without having to help materially or socially. Some of the possible reasons would be personal reasons can include personal reasons, strong religious traditions, and apathy. As it has been established throughout the study, divorce rates are relatively lower in Africa compared to the rest parts of the world, and thus the relatively sterner stances against divorce and thus the stigma.

Therefore, the portion of the respondents who rise only to the point of offering the least support of acceptance and nothing more could be doing that because they have their unresolved personal opinions which make them not want to support the divorcees in Church even if they know that the actions have potential negative impacts on the divorcees in the Church. Secondly, as had been disclosed, the African Church has relatively stronger religious traditions which make most of the members stand against divorce and be predisposed to involve themselves in the stigmatization of other members who are divorcees. Therefore, the greater number could possibly be maintaining the traditions as they seek on ways to help the divorcees among them, and thus, they offer the least that they can in terms of mere acceptance, even if it poses a great danger to the divorcees’ well-being. Lastly, a portion of

respondents could only be apathetic and not at all concerned with what is going on in the divorcees' lives and so they choose to maintain that, if they can be accepted and they do not have any obligations to help or make any contributions to their positive well-being, they are satisfied, even if doing nothing to help the divorcees further would mean a deterioration of their well-being.

The second portion of the respondents showed a different attitude and predisposition from the first. Unlike the first group the portion of the respondents which only wanted to offer the least support of acceptance to the divorcees and leave it at that, the second portion wanted to expend resources, skills, time, and themselves in supporting the divorcees among them. An example of the representative of this group is respondent 6 and respondent read respectively as follows;

- “(1) support system-connect them to lawyers and those with similar experiences
- (2) Counselling to enable them to accept the situation to move on in life.”
- “Form groups with them. Give them the freedom to get involved in Church activities. Hold regular Bible study with them. Encourage them to mingle with other Church members.”

The concept of support to this second group of respondents is not just having the heart of grace to accept the divorcee congregants, because they are part of the Church community, it means taking a step actually contribute to the well-being of the divorcees who worship among them. The group could have different reasons for wanting to support the people. One of the reasons is the bias that they want to be seen as pious people because they are in the context of the Church. Secondly, these people might be feeling the moving effects of the different suffering which the divorcees are prone to and they are deciding to be the hands and

feet of Jesus to reach out and help these people by counselling, engaging in programs together with them and encourage them as they treat them as members of the Church and allow them to participate in the Church activities.

Lastly, perhaps the Christian principles which require that love their neighbours (in this case the divorcees) as they love themselves, might have gotten into them and convinced them which makes them want to treat the divorcees with dignity despite the unfortunate reality of divorce which these people have gone through. This kind of support is needful, it requires the wilful separation of the divorcees (whom the Bible has not condemned) from divorce (which the Bible says clearly that God hates) and love the divorcee to the point of not only accepting them unconditionally as crucial members of the church community but also be willing to support them through their needs, by counselling them and engaging them in topics and discussions that encourage them and this, has a great potential of improving the positive effects of their well-being.

Hatala (2013) demonstrated that divorcees suffer a lot of challenges including having to deal with the emotional separation, social stigma, and the mental turmoil which comes from the process of divorce itself and thus they require different aspects of support to be able to recover from the debilitating effects of the same. Even though Teghe & Rendell (2005) found that social inclusion and community were very integral parts of the community, they did not match the standards set by Keyes (1998) which include that social well-being which the Church affects so much includes social acceptance, social actualization, social contribution, social coherence and social integration which are all contained by the proposition by the second group which seeks to go out of their ways to support the divorcees in all manners which are required. Even though their motives for wanting support for the divorcees might not necessarily be for the sake of their well-being, the quantitative data and a

lot literature have shown that the positive support will most likely have a positive impact on the divorcees' psychosocial well-being.

The Church should be able to stand up and reclaim its space as the source of positive support for those who are coping with divorce in their congregation, as was found by Simonic and Klobucar (2016). Taking such standards will be leading to better psycho-social well-being of the divorcees who are members of the Church. Support can be extremely challenging to quantify, especially because the quantity or quality can only be recognized by the recipient, and thus the importance of the support in terms of acceptance will be far-reaching just as much as that of willingness to reach and offer to counsel the divorcees. Furthermore, social support has also been found by Soulsby and Bennett (2015) to be effective in positively influencing divorcees' well-being. Therefore, one of the ways to help divorcees who have gone through the debilitating process of divorce is by offering support. Support has to be offered despite the kind of way or manner, because literature has shown that these people need more support than they can ask for, so that they can survive if not recover from the effects of divorce.

Descriptive Statistics for Social Well-being Composite Score

A composite score was computed for the social well-being items. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed for the composite score. Table 4.23 shows the descriptive statistics of the composite scores of the social well-being of the respondents.

Table 4.23: *Descriptive Analysis of Social Well-being Composite Score*

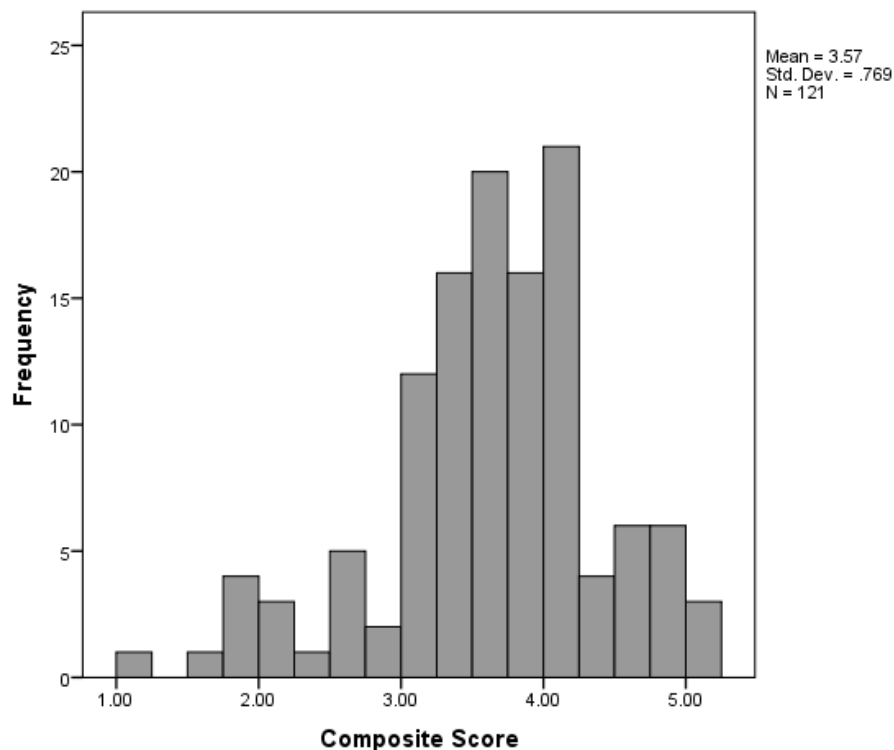
		Statistic	Std. Error
Composite Score	Mean	3.5722	.06987
	95% Confidence Interval for Lower Bound	3.4338	
	Mean Upper Bound	3.7105	
	5% Trimmed Mean	3.6044	
	Median	3.6250	
	Variance	.591	
	Std. Deviation	.76854	
	Minimum	1.00	
	Maximum	5.00	
	Range	4.00	
	Interquartile Range	.75	
	Skewness	-.694	.220
	Kurtosis	.908	.437

The data on social well-being were collected from all 121 respondents. They gave their responses about the practices which constitute social well-being on a 5-point scale ($\bar{x}=3.5722$, $\sigma_x=.76854$). The median point at which most of the people responded was 4.3333. The range of point-response in the sample was 1 to 5. The skewness was -.694, indicating a slight negative skew in the data. The kurtosis was 0.908, indicating that the data had lighter tails than a normal distribution. These results provide a basic understanding of the distribution of social well-being composite scores in the sample population and can be used to make inferences about the population. The level of skewness shows that most people agree on matters regarding their social well-being. The difference is also potentially due to the personal aspects of the social well-being of the respondents, as suggested by Konieczny (2016) after investigating 26 Northern Indiana Congregations Study Christian Churches of different traditions.

Normality Test for Social Well-being

A normality tests was performed for the social well-being composite score. Figure 4.11 is a histogram which shows the results of the normality test of the composite score for the social well-being which was provided by the respondents. The figure indicates a negative skewness which led to the violation of the normality assumption. The negative skewing is pointing to the fact that most respondents most of the respondents have different responses when it comes to the 5-point, 8-issue measure of their social well-being. The skewing is potentially due to the fact that most of the respondents view their social well-being differently and there is no standardized manner to measure a meter that is closely connected to their emotions as well.

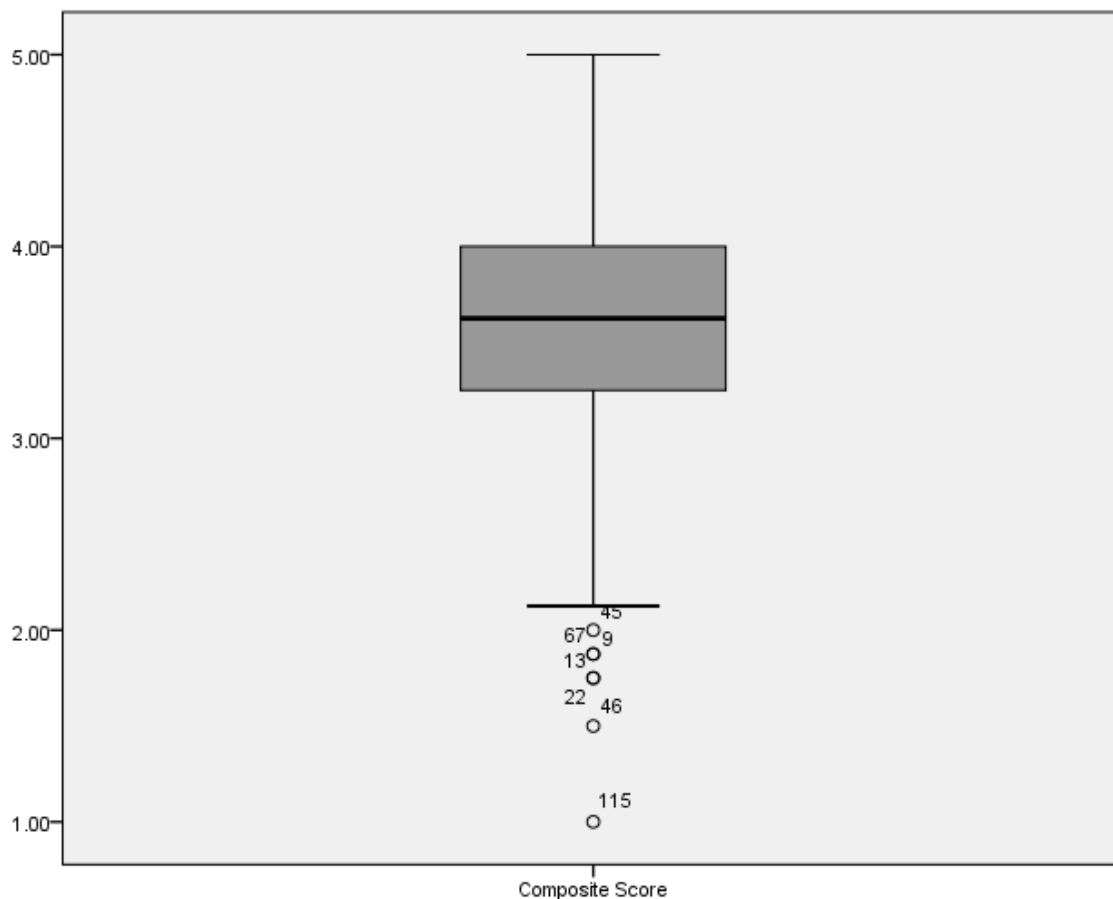
Figure 4.11: *Histogram for Social Well-being Composite Score*



Outlier Test for the Social Well-being Composite Score

An outlier test of the social well-being composite yielded a boxplot output. Figure 4.12 is a boxplot for the test for the presence of outliers in the social well-being composite score. The figure indicates that there are outliers at the lower end of the scale which violated the assumption that there were no outliers in the composite score of social well-being. The presence of outliers in the social well-being composite score is potentially due to the disparity or responses on matters which touch their social well-being. The outlier was treated using transformation.

Figure 4.12: *Boxplot for Social Well-being Composite Score*

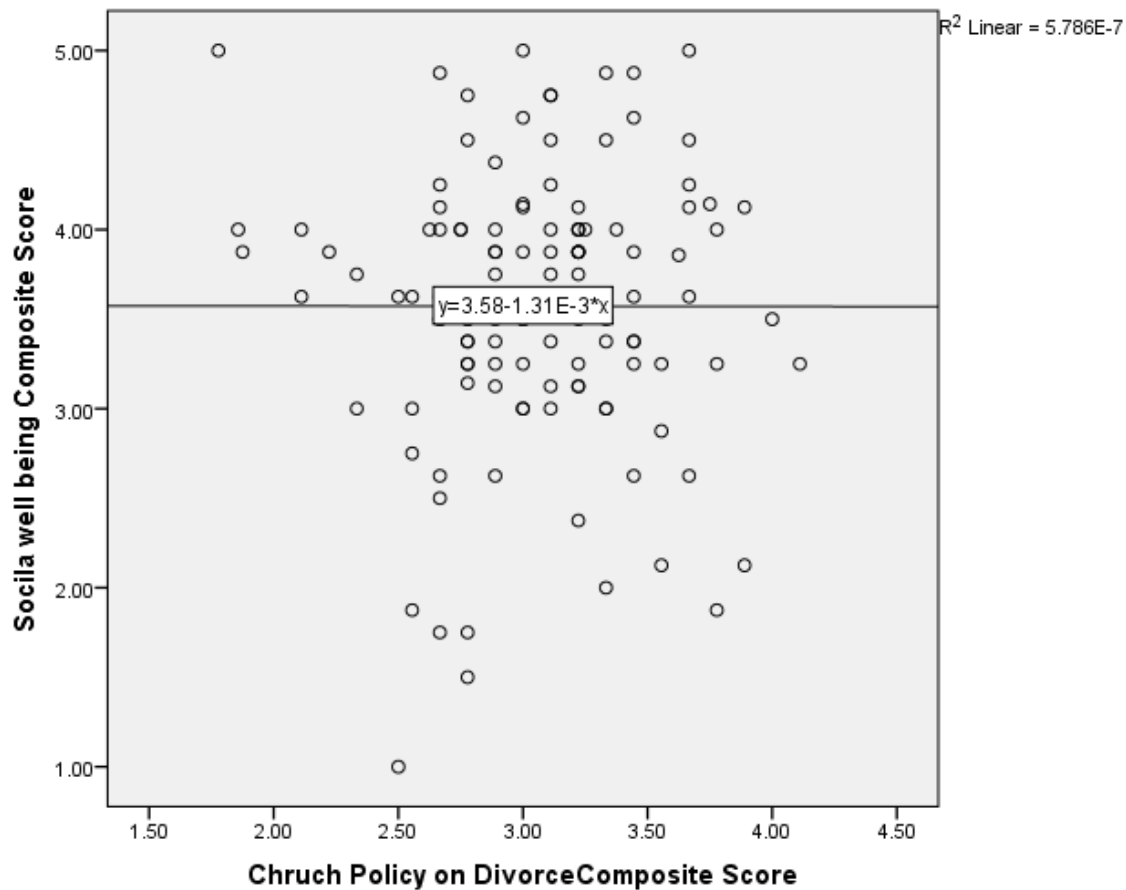


Linearity Test for Social well-being

Linearity of the social well-being data was investigated through performing descriptive analysis of the social well-being composite score. Figure 4.13 is a scatterplot

showing the linearity of the composite scores for church policy against social well-being. The linearity assumption was tested by generating a scatterplot of the relationship between the Church divorce policy composite score and the spiritual well-being composite score.

Figure 4.13: *Scatterplot for Social Well-being Composite Score*



The figure depicts that the data was scattered away from the line of best fit. Furthermore, from figure 4.13 above, the data generally shows a non-linear trend, which violates the assumption of linearity. The linear trend in the scatterplot indicates that most respondents are aware of their church's divorce policies and believe that it has a direct impact on their social well-being. These findings are contradictory to the findings by Konieczny (2016) who suggested and speculated that Church policy makes the environments unfavourable for the clergy to provide support to divorces, which could lead to the deterioration of their social well-being. Such findings were corroborated by Hille (2017) who

proposed the development of an effective divorce rescue program due to the immense social problems faced by divorcees facilitated by the Church policy on divorce. Nonetheless, Hille (2017) mentioned just a few social problems such as shame, guilt, and rejection which the divorcees go through which can negatively impact their social well-being but these groups might be exposed to worse social problems in the African context. Divorce is a challenging experience for anyone, regardless of where they live. However, divorcees in Africa may face unique social problems that are not common in other parts of the world. The social, cultural, and economic context of divorce in Africa can exacerbate the challenges that divorcees face.

Regression of Social Well-being on Church Policy on Divorce

Social well-being composite score was regressed on Church policy on divorce composite score to investigate the effects of Church policy on divorce on the social well-being of the divorcees. Table 4.24, table 4.25 and 4.26 present the results of the regression analysis of the effects of Church policy on divorce on the respondents' social well-being.

Table 4.24: *Regression of Social Wellbeing on Church Policy on Divorce*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.001 ^a	.000	-.008	.77176

a. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score

Table 4.25: ANOVA output for Regression of Social well-being On Church Policy on Divorce

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.000	1	.000	.000	.993 ^b
	Residual	70.878	119	.596		
	Total	70.878	120			

a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score

b. Predictors: (Constant), Composite Score

Table 4.26: *Regression Coefficients for the Regression of Social Well-being on Church Policy on Divorce*

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	3.576	.488		.000
	Composite Score	-.001	.158	-.001	.993

a. Dependent Variable: Composite Score

Tables 4.24, 4.25 and 4.26 present the model summary, ANOVA output, and the regression coefficients. The table shows that the church divorce policy composites explained none of the social well-being composites, $R^2=.000$, $F(1)$, $p>.05$). The results suggest that Church policy on divorce did not have a statistically significant effect on social well-being, which potentially explains the overall non-statistically significant effect of church policy on divorce on overall psychosocial well-being of divorcees in the study sample. An examination of the coefficients reveals that a unit change in the Church policy on divorce ($B = -.001$, $p>.05$) was only associated with a .001 decrease in the social well-being of the respondents. The results are in agreement with the findings by Cherchye et al. (2021) who concluded that there are no specific links between church membership and divorce. The study also suggested that there were context-specific determinants of divorce and its outcomes which include post-divorce social well-being which was analysed among the respondents. The results, however, contradict the findings by Ademulika (2019) which suggested that Church policy on divorce especially those that took a stern stance against divorce because it was unbiblical continuously deteriorate the health of the church members.

Stigma, Church Policy on Divorce and Mental Well-being

The fourth objective of the study was to assess whether the relationship between Church's policy on divorce and well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in

Nakuru County, Kenya, is mediated by stigma of divorce. The first condition was to test whether there was a significant influence of church policy on stigma of divorce.

Descriptive Statistics for Stigma of Divorce

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the items of the stigma of divorce to establish the measure of each item of stigma of divorce. Table 4.28 shows the results of the descriptive analysis of the stigma of divorce.

Table 4.27: *Descriptive Statistics for the Stigma of Divorce*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The way the church talks about divorce makes an already bad situation worse	121	1	5	2.94	1.463
I feel like divorcees have been neglected by the church	121	1	5	2.88	1.170
I feel excluded, devalued and shamed in Church	121	1	5	2.50	1.316
I feel embarrassed interacting with other church members	121	1	5	2.53	1.272
The way I am treated by the church makes me feel enthusiastic about attending church service altogether	121	1	5	3.56	1.244
Sometimes I treat own-self as an unworthy person	121	1	5	2.60	1.320

The table shows that regarding the statement, “The way the church talks about divorce makes an already bad situation worse,” most of the respondents agreed that they believed that the Church viewed divorce in a manner which made an already bad situation worse ($\bar{x}=2.94$, $\sigma_x=1.463$, $N=121$). This finding is consistent with the findings of the study by Lagat (2015) which showed that the stigma of divorce which is often propagated by the Church towards the divorced members exacerbate their feelings of guilt, shame and loneliness. Furthermore, the finding is also in agreement with the findings of the study conducted by Afroz et al.

(2019) who held that the public stigma of divorce is common for the divorcees despite context in which they are; whether religious or non-religious. Nonetheless the heightened levels of divorce among the Evangelical Churches of Nakuru could be due to the possible conservativeness of African which might be overlapping into the Church.

Furthermore, regarding the statement, “I feel like divorcees have been neglected by the church,” on average most of the respondents neither agreed or disagreed that they felt that divorcees had suffered neglect from the Church ($\bar{x}=2.88$, $\sigma x=1.170$, $N=121$). The study showed that the respondents were probably not aware of any instances where the Church acted with contumacious disregard to the needs of the divorcees. The findings were inconsistent of the study by Mendoza et al. (2019) who held that the stigma in Church is common that no one considers it as vice anymore. Nonetheless, the differences in the current finding compared to the literature could be due to the edification of the Nakuru Churches, which make them treat the divorcees in light of the love of God rather than the divorce, which they have gone through.

Regarding the statement, “I feel excluded, devalued and shamed in Church,” the results revealed that on average, neither agreed or disagreed with the statement which proposed that the divorcees in the Evangelical Churches of Nakuru were excluded, devalued and shamed in Church ($\bar{x}=2.50$, $\sigma x=1.316$, $N=121$). The findings are inconsistent with suggestions by various researchers in their studies who have held that divorce leads to different forms of stigma which are often perpetuated by the Church on the divorcees (Mendoza et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is also not in line with the findings of the study by Olofsson (2019) who held that the Church perpetuates the stigma of divorce by shaming and disgracing the divorcees in the Church. Nevertheless, since Makidon (2013) held that the stigma of divorce varies with different regions, it would be logical to portend that the

disparity of the stigma of divorce in Evangelical Churches of Nakuru could also be due to regional factors.

Furthermore, regarding the statement, “I feel embarrassed interacting with other church members,” most of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal made by the statement that they felt embarrassment when interacting with other members of the Church ($\bar{x}=2.53$, $\sigma_x=1.272$, $N=121$). The studies indicate that the members of the Church did nothing to stigmatize the divorcees by embarrassing them during their interactions. The finding is not in line with the findings of the study by Molvhedzi (2017) which showed that the Church members often treat the divorced congregants with suspicions and exclusion to the embarrassment of the divorcees. However, the members might not be aware of their divorce statutes or they might not show their stigma openly to the divorcees to notice because of the shame which is rampant in Africa concerning matters such as divorce (Lagat, 2015).

Regarding the statement, “The way I am treated by the church makes me feel enthusiastic about attending church service altogether,” most of the respondents on average agreed that they were treated in Church in a way that gave them enthusiasm to want to go to Church services ($\bar{x}=2.56$, $\sigma_x=1.244$, $N=121$). This finding implies that unlike what was proposed by the findings of the study by Magampa (2016) that the Churches exacerbate the feelings of guilt and self-blame among the divorcees even to the point of hindering their going to Church, the Evangelical Churches of Nakuru County are welcoming and they increase the feeling of wanting to go to Church even among the divorced members.

Lastly, regarding the statement, “Sometimes I treat own-self as an unworthy person,” most of the respondents agreed that they often treat themselves in an unworthy manner ($\bar{x}=2.60$, $\sigma_x=1.320$, $N=121$). The finding implies that on average most of the respondents practiced self-stigmatization. The finding is consistent with the suggestions by Canfield and

Cunningham (2018) that one of the major effects of divorce is the self-stigma which makes people view themselves in light of the divorce and reduce their own self-worth. The stigma might also be because of the social contexts which affects the stigma of divorce, as the divorcees begin to think of how the society view them in light of their experience with divorce.

Descriptive Statistics for Stigma of Divorce Composite Score

A composite score was computed for the stigma of the divorce items to give the general view of the respondents on the stigma of divorce. Table 4.29 shows the descriptive statistics for the stigma of divorce composite score. It shows the mean, standard deviation, median, maximum and minimum values and median.

Table 4.28: Descriptive Statistics for Stigma of Divorce Composite Score

			Statistic	Std. Error
Stigma of Divorce Composite Score	Mean		2.6554	.08448
	95% Confidence	Lower Bound	2.4881	
	Interval for Mean	Upper Bound	2.8226	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.6266	
	Median		2.5000	
	Variance		.864	
	Std. Deviation		.92931	
	Minimum		1.00	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		4.00	
	Interquartile Range		1.33	
	Skewness		.614	.220
	Kurtosis		-.553	.437

The table shows that on average there was moderate prevalence of stigma among the divorcees in Evangelical Churches of Nakuru ($\bar{x}=2.6554$, $\sigma_x=0.08448$). The table indicates that the respondents in the middle of the sampled agreed with the prevalence of the stigma of divorce in the Evangelical Churches of Nakuru County (IQR=1.33). Furthermore, it shows that there was negative skewing (Skn= -.553) which means most of the respondents responded “Agree” and below. The finding of this study supports the findings of the study by

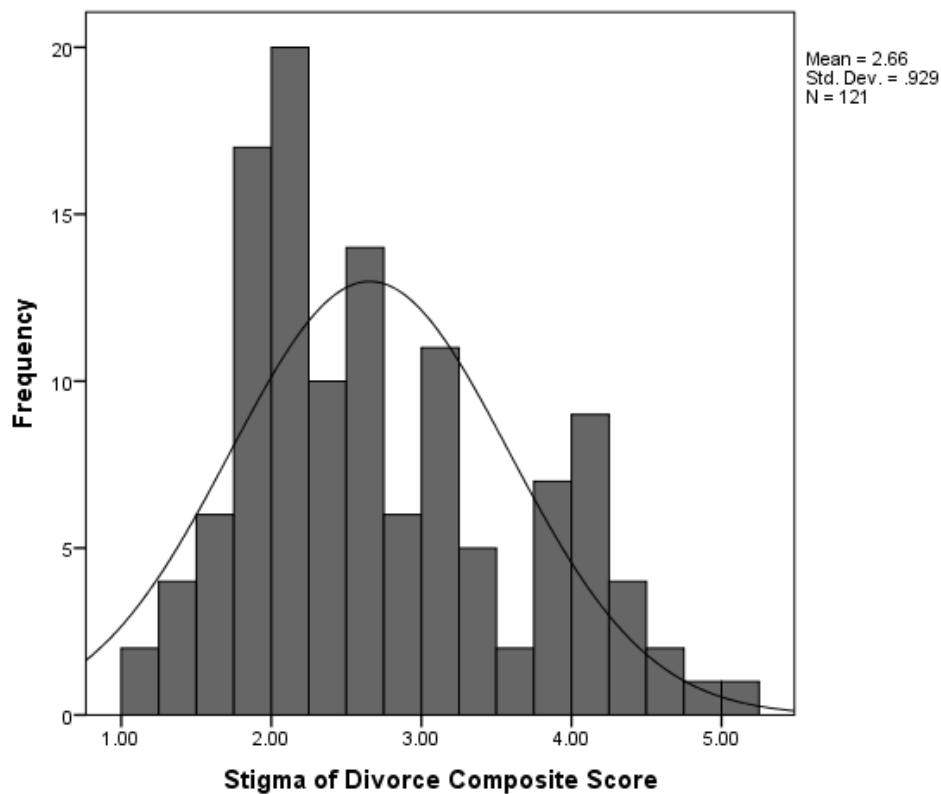
Kostram et al. (2016), which indicated that stigma of divorce is rampant in Churches specifically because of a feeling of superiority. Nonetheless, Churches in Nakuru might frown upon divorce just mainly because they believe it is not in line with the Biblical requirements of Christianity.

From the heralding discussion therefore, it is plausible to suppose that church leaders play a critical role in divorcees' well-being because, from the respondents, it is clear that they are heavily involved in the formation and execution of the Church policy on divorce which has been found by Nelson-Coffey (2018) to directly positively or negatively impact the divorcee well-being. It is possible from these findings that while the church members often look at the church leaders as the sole custodians of the church policy on divorce, it is arguable that they are using the Bible whose authority they invoke when they make the stigmatizing Church policy on divorce as a smokescreen when they consequently contribute to stigma and therein worsen the divorcees' well-being. There is a need to investigate further the roles that Church leaders play in the mental well-being of their divorcees.

Normality Tests for Stigma of Divorce

Descriptive statistics was performed on the stigma of divorce composites score to determine the normality of the data. Figure 4.14 shows a histogram which helps tests the normality of the distribution of the data in stigma of divorce composite score.

Figure 4.14: *Histogram for Stigma of Divorce composite Score*

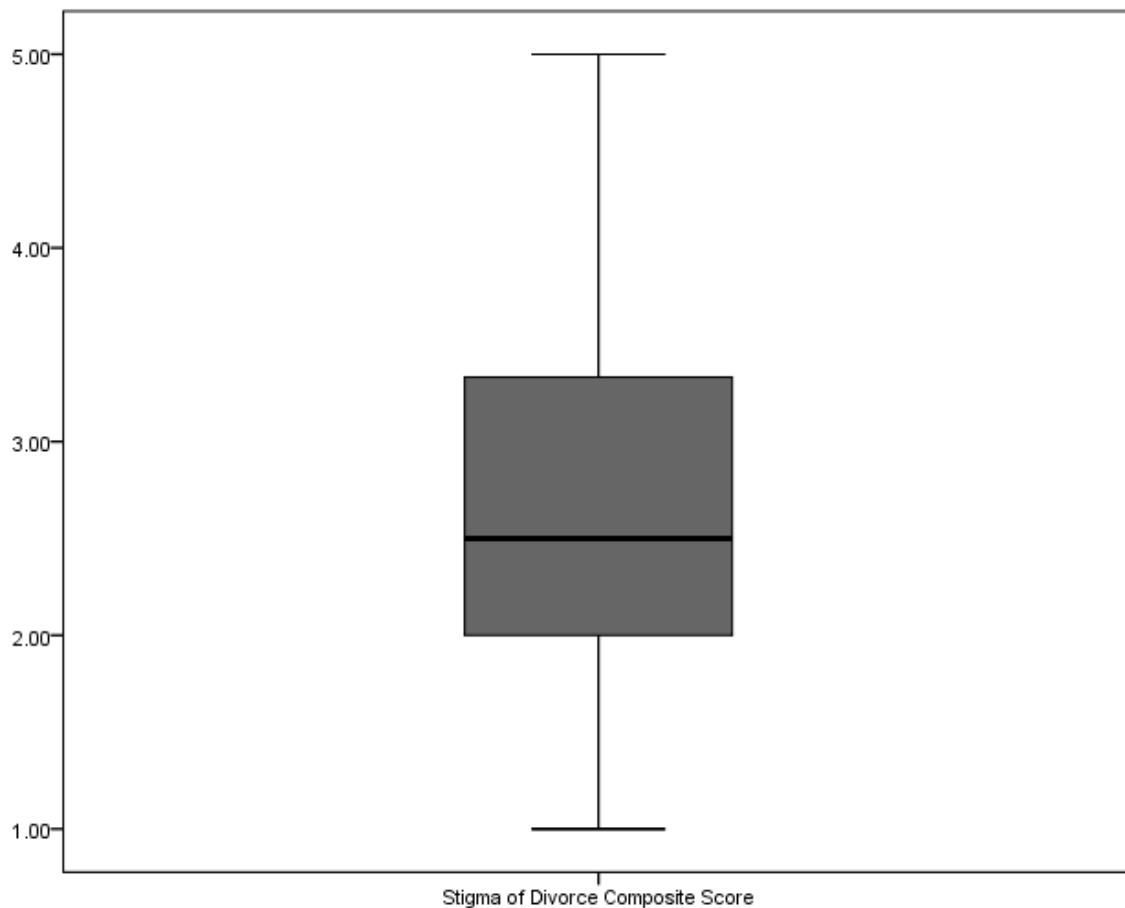


The figure shows that data in the stigma of divorce composite score was normally distributed thus it did not violate the normality assumption.

Outlier Test for Stigma of Divorce Composite Score

The stigma of divorce composite score was tested for outliers using explorative descriptive statistics. Figure 4.15 is a boxplot which shows the results of the tests for outliers.

Figure 4.15: *Boxplot for Stigma of Divorce Composite Score*



The figure shows that there were not outliers in the distribution of the data for the stigma of divorce composite score. This did not violate the assumption for the absence of outliers which was made before the analysis.

Regression of Stigma of Divorce on Church Policy on Divorce

To investigate the explanatory power of Church policy on divorce on stigma, stigma of divorce was regressed on the Church policy on divorce. The tables 4.29, table 4.30 and table 4.31 show the results of the regression analysis. As per the model summary, the model explained 2.2% of the variance in stigma ($R^2=.022$). The statistics in table 4.29 indicate that church policy did not have a statistically significant explanatory power on stigma; $F(1)=$

2.344, $p > .05$. This means that the first condition for mediator analysis was not met, leading to termination of the test.

Table 4.29: *Model Summary for Regression of Stigma on Church Policy*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.148 ^a	.022	.013	.91210

a. Predictors: (Constant), Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score

Table 4.30: *ANOVA for Regression of Stigma on Church Policy*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.950	1	1.950	2.344	.129 ^b
	Residual	86.520	104	.832		
	Total	88.470	105			

a. Dependent Variable: Stigma of Divorce Composite Score

b. Predictors: (Constant), Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score

Table 4.31 presents the regression coefficient after regressing stigma on church policy.

Table 4.31: *Coefficients for Regression of Stigma on Church Policy*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.718	.648		2.650	.009
	Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score	.323	.211	.148	1.531	.129

a. Dependent Variable: Stigma of Divorce Composite Score

From table 4.31, it is evident that church policy on divorce was not a significant predictor of stigma experienced by respondents in the church ($B = .323$, $t = 1.531$, $p = .129$). The results suggest that church policy on divorce does not predict stigma. The obtained equation was: $\text{Stigma of Divorce} = 1.718 + .323 * \text{Church Policy on Divorce}$. The finding contradicts the finding of a study by Blum (2018) that church policy perpetuated stigma of divorce. This implies that policy-induced stigma was potentially context-specific, whereby in the case of evangelical churches represented in this study, church policy was not a significant factor. For

instance, while some may view divorce as morally unacceptable or discourage it, others may adopt a more compassionate and understanding stance. The stance taken by a specific church or religious community may not reflect the broader societal attitudes or the individual beliefs of its members.

It is also instructive to note that church policy is a formal guideline set by the institution, but individual churchgoers may have their own personal beliefs and attitudes towards divorce. Thus, level of stigma associated with divorce can vary among individuals within the same religious community based on their personal experiences, understanding of scripture, and cultural factors. Furthermore, as societal norms change and a greater understanding of divorce and its complexities emerges, churches may adapt their teachings and policies to reflect a more compassionate and supportive approach towards individuals who have experienced divorce. Some evangelical churches have already revised their policies to be more inclusive and understanding of divorce.

Table 4.32 presents the inter-correlation between church policy on divorce, stigma of divorce, and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

Table 4.32: *Inter-correlation between Church Policy on Divorce, Stigma of Divorce and Mental Wellbeing of Divorcees*

		1	2	3
1. Psychosocial well-being	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
2. Church Policy	N	121		
	Pearson Correlation	.018	1	
3. Stigma	Sig. (2-tailed)	.845		
	N	121	121	
	Pearson Correlation	-.255**	.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.290	
	N	121	121	121

The finding in table 4.33 reveal that whereas church policy and stigma were not significantly correlated ($N=121$, $r=.097$, $p>.05$), there was a statistically significant negative

influence of stigma on psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees ($N=121$, $r= -.255$, $p<.05$). This finding is an indication that psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees did reduce with increase in stigma in the church. This finding is in concurrence with a study undertaken by Thadathil and Sriram (2019) in India, which linked poor psychosocial health of divorcees to the stigmatization of divorce by the society's conservative social system. This finding suggests that social stigma was a potential risk factor in the church policy-divorcee wellbeing nexus.

Coping Style, Church Policy on Divorce and Divorcee Well-being

The fifth objective of the study was to determine the moderating influence of coping style on the relationship between Church policy on divorce and well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. This section begins by presenting descriptive analysis of coping style of respondents. It then presents the results of inferential output on the relationship between copying style, Church policy on divorce, and divorcee well-being.

Descriptive Statistics of Coping style for Divorce

Descriptive analysis was performed on the coping styles of divorce items to see the power of each item. Table 4.33 shows the descriptive analysis of the responses on the coping styles of divorce and shows how the different respondents favoured the different coping styles which were presented in the study. Table 4.33 shows the descriptive statistical analysis of the responses given by the respondents about their coping styles of divorce. The measurement of the coping styles was a five-point scale with 5 being the maximum use of the specific coping styles and 1 being the least measure of the use of the coping style. The results, as shown in the table suggest that many of the respondents used their turning to the Bible as a coping mechanism whenever the effects of divorce took a toll on them ($\bar{x}=4.39$,

$\sigma=0.833$). From the study, respondents resorted to the Bible as a source of comfort and solace when they were overwhelmed by the effects of divorce.

Table 4.33: *Descriptive Statistics of Responses on coping styles of Divorce*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I often turn to the bible for comfort whenever the effects of divorce take a toll on me	121	1	5	4.39	.833
I attend church services regularly in order to cope with divorce	121	1	5	3.76	1.218
I regularly commit my situation to God whenever I feel depressed due to the divorce	121	1	5	4.36	.815
I cope with post-divorce stress by traveling a lot	121	1	5	2.94	1.266
Whenever I feel depressed due to my divorce status, I go for a walk or other form of exercise	121	1	5	3.57	1.251
I try to find ways to distract myself from thoughts about my divorce	121	1	5	3.96	1.128
Coping with Divorce Composite Score	121	1	5	3.83	.71312

Another commonly used style of committing the issues to God, which probably means prayer. The results showed that on average, most of the respondents used prayer as a means of coping with their depression which results from their feelings of divorce, as shown by their response to the statement, “I regularly commit my situation to God whenever I feel depressed due to the divorce,” ($\bar{x}=4.36$, $\sigma=0.815$, $N=21$). Other coping styles which were more favoured than the rest include distractions ($\bar{x}=3.96$, $\sigma=1.128$, $N=121$) and attending Church services to cope with the divorce ($\bar{x}=3.76$, $\sigma=1.318$, $N=21$).

The last mechanism which the respondents did not favour much as their methods of coping with divorce include traveling ($\bar{x}=2.94$, $\sigma=1.266$) and engaging in physical exercise to take their minds of the often-debilitating effects of their divorce. The general analysis of the different aspects of coping styles revealed that the Church and everything concerning

religiosity took preference in the coping styles of the respondents. They favoured every coping style which had the aspects of religion compared to those that did not have religion. For instance, while turning to the Bible and committing the depressive effects of divorce to cope, took preference over traveling and participating in physical exercise which seem to be religiously neutral scored the lowest, which points that the preference of religion-related coping over the rest of the coping styles, which did not involve any form of religiosity. The results however corroborate the findings by Kreyenfield and Trappe (2020) which showed that there are plethora of copings styles and the divorcees often tend to choose their most preferred one whether emotion-focused or problem-focused to deal with the negative feelings that they are having about their divorce and the experiences surrounding it.

Nonetheless, there are various reasons why the Christian divorcee may over-rely on the Religion of Faith-based coping styles for to maintain the negative effects of the divorce. For many Christians, divorce is viewed as a sin and something that should be avoided at all costs. As a result, when faced with the stress and emotional turmoil that comes with divorce, Christians may turn to their faith as a means of coping. However, there are several reasons why Christians may over-rely on faith-based coping styles when it comes to divorce.

Religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping how Christian's approach divorce. Some may believe that divorce is a sin and therefore something to be avoided at all costs. In such cases, relying on their faith can provide a sense of comfort and direction, helping them navigate the difficult process of separation and the emotional turmoil that follows (Gungor, 2016). Moreover, some Christian communities may not provide adequate support for individuals going through a divorce. Christians may feel like they have no choice but to turn to their faith for comfort and guidance, especially when there is a lack of understanding or judgment from their community.

Some Christians may also fear being judged by others in their community if they seek professional help or use secular coping methods. This fear of judgment can lead to an over-reliance on faith-based coping styles, which can limit the effectiveness of other coping mechanisms. Moreover, in some Christian cultures, there may be an expectation that individuals should be able to handle all of life's challenges solely through their faith. This can create pressure for individuals going through a divorce to rely solely on their faith to cope, rather than seeking other forms of support (Wells, 2019). Lastly, some Christians may have limited knowledge about available coping methods and resources, leading them to rely solely on their faith for guidance.

However, it is important to note that while faith-based coping styles can be helpful for some individuals going through a divorce, they should not be the only coping methods utilized. Seeking professional help, utilizing social support networks, and engaging in self-care practices can all be beneficial for individuals going through a divorce, regardless of their religious beliefs. It is essential to understand that seeking help and support is not a sign of weakness, but rather a step toward healing and recovery (Monahan, 2018). Such thought processes may help them not over-rely on the Church/Religion-based coping styles and seek other ways to improve their psychosocial well-being.

Correlation of Coping Styles, Church Policy on Divorce, and Well-being

To establish if there was a significant relationship between coping styles of divorce and Church policy and well-being, a correlation analysis was performed the composite score of the three variables. Table 4.34 shows the results of the correlation analysis conducted to determine if the coping styles moderate the effects of Church policy on divorce on the respondents' well-being.

Table 4.34: *Correlation Analysis of Coping styles in Relation to Church Policy on Divorce and Wellbeing of Divorcees*

		1	2	3	4
1) Psychosocial Wellbeing	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	121			
2) Copying Style	Pearson Correlation	.151	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.120			
	N	121	121		
3) Church Policy	Pearson Correlation	.086	-.004	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.378	.969		
	N	121	121	121	
4) Interaction Term	Pearson Correlation	.155	.763**	.633**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.110	.000	.000	
	N	121	121	121	121

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.34 shows that church policy on divorce did not significantly affect the well-being of the respondents ($N= 121$, $p>.05$, $r = .086$). Since most of the literature which have been published show that there are negative effects that the Church policy has on the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees outside Kenya, the difference in the results was possibly due to the different contextual determinants, which the results of the study by Cherchye et al (2021) conducted in Malawi, which yielded that there were the context-specific determinants of divorce among the divorcees which affected divorce and its outcomes, apart from the Church policy on divorce. The findings were contradictory to the findings by Hatala (2013) which held that Church policies on divorce could negatively affect not only the divorcees' psycho-social well-being but also their ways of coping with the divorce.

Furthermore, the table also shows that coping styles did not significantly affect the divorcees' well-being ($N= 121$, $p>.05$, $r = .151$). Some of the possible reasons why the coping styles might not have had any positive significance in affecting the divorcees' psycho-social well-being were the possibility of the other outlets or external systems already affecting the psycho-social well-being that the effects of the coping styles became infinitesimal. Such

possibilities are corroborated by the thoughts posed by Perry (2019) who concluded having studied the Americans attending Churches affiliated with a conservative Protestant tradition that divorcees go through an array of mixed emotional, social, and psychological consequences that they sometimes use even blame as a coping style.

However, the results shown in table 4.35 is consistent with suggestions made by O'Hara et al (2019) that coping styles could reduce or worsen the effects of post-divorce stressors on the well-being of divorcees. Those findings had been posted by Paysnick (2015) posing that depending on whether the coping styles are positive or negative, they acted as buffers against the negative effects of the post-divorce stressors on mental well-being such as the policy-induced profiling that the divorcees experienced or worsen the impact of the divorce and its outcomes of the divorcees.

Regression of Copying Style on the Relationship between Church Policy on Divorce and Psychosocial Wellbeing of Divorcees

Moderated regression was performed to establish the explanatory power of copying styles on the relationship between church policy on divorce and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees. Table 4.35 presents the model summary for the moderator analysis, table 4.36 shows the ANOVA results, and table 4.37 provides the regression coefficients.

Table 4.35: *Model Summary for the Moderating Effect*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.216 ^a	.047	.019	.50987

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction Effect, Church Policy, Coping Style

As per the model summary, the regression model explained 4.7% variability in psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees. An examination of the p-value in table 4.37 suggests that the regression model was not statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 4.36: *Coefficients for the Moderating Effect*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.311	3	.437	1.680	.176 ^b
	Residual	26.777	103	.260		
	Total	28.087	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Psychosocial Wellbeing

b. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction Effect, Church Policy, Coping Style

The regression coefficients for the moderator analysis is presented in table 4.38.

Table 4.37: *Coefficients for the Moderated Regression*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.652	1.957		.333	.740
	Church Policy	.949	.647	.777	1.467	.145
	Coping Style	.812	.524	.982	1.550	.124
	Interaction Term	-.230	.173	-1.085	-1.326	.188

a. Dependent Variable: Psychosocial Wellbeing

The results of the moderated regression analysis in table 4.38 indicate that the interaction term between church policy and copying style was not a significant predictor of the psychosocial wellbeing of respondents ($B = -.230$, $t = -1.326$, $p = .188$). The finding implies that coping style did not moderate the relationship between church policy on divorce and psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

The foregoing finding suggest that copying styles such as religiosity, travel, exercise, and/or deflection did not significantly moderate the adverse effects of church policy on the psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees in the selected Evangelical churches in Nakuru County.

The finding is in contrast to the notion that religion can provide a valuable source of support and guidance for individuals going through a divorce, but there are cases where religion may not be beneficial to the well-being of the divorcees. In some religious communities, divorce is stigmatized, and divorcees may be judged, ostracized, or subjected to social pressure to reconcile with their former spouse, regardless of their personal circumstances or feelings. This can be emotionally and psychologically damaging and can prevent individuals from seeking the help and support they need (Soulsby & Bennett, 2015). Moreover, some religious traditions have strict rules and regulations surrounding marriage and divorce, and may not provide much flexibility for individuals seeking to end their marriage. This can be particularly challenging for divorcees who may be facing financial or logistical challenges, such as property division, child custody, or relocation. In some cases, religious rules may also conflict with legal or ethical considerations, making it difficult for divorcees to navigate the process effectively.

In addition, some religious communities may not have the resources or expertise to provide adequate support for divorcees. This can include counselling, legal assistance, or financial support. In some cases, divorcees may feel isolated or unsupported by their religious community, which can exacerbate feelings of loneliness, depression, or anxiety. It's important to note that in cases where divorce is the result of abuse or trauma, religious teachings or practices may be harmful to the well-being of the divorcees (Odoi, 2015). This can include victim-blaming, invalidation of their experiences, or pressure to reconcile with the abuser. Religious leaders may not have the training or expertise to provide appropriate support for individuals dealing with abuse or trauma, which can exacerbate their trauma and prolong their healing process.

While religion can be a source of comfort and support for divorcees, it is important to be aware of the potential challenges that may arise within one's religious community.

Individuals going through a divorce should seek out resources and support that align with their personal values and needs to ensure their well-being during the divorce process. Like in the rare cases where religion and its tenets do not work together for the psychosocial well-being of the divorcees, the analysis yield that at some time in the life of divorce, especially those who responded in the study sit may not be for their benefit (Yacob et al., 2018).

However, religion is not independently contributing to the well-being of divorcees but it does that through intermediaries, one of which is the Church leaders.

Regression of Church Policies on Divorce on Coping Styles

Coping styles was regressed on church policy on divorce to establish whether the two variables were related. Table 4.38 shows the results of the linear regression analysis of the moderating effects of the coping styles on the Church policies on divorce effects on the divorcees' psychosocial well-being. The finding in table 4.38 indicates that there was a non-statistically significant association between the Church's policy on divorce and psychosocial well-being; $R^2=.075$, $F(2)$, $p>.05$. The results indicated that Church policy on divorce only accounted only for 7.5% of the negative effects on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. The small causative relationship between the Church policy and respondents' psycho-social well-being could possibly be due to the many other context-specific issues in the divorce which affect the divorcee's well-being and even end up overshadowing the effects caused by the Church policies on divorce.

Table 4.38: *Regression Analysis of Coping styles and Church Policy on Divorce*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.273 ^a	.075	.051	.61867		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Coping with Divorce Composite Score, Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.086	.505		8.087	.000
	Church Policy on Divorce Composite Score	.188	.141	.132	1.331	.186
	Coping with Divorce Composite Score	-.089	.081	-.101	-1.107	.271

a. Dependent Variable: Psychosocial well-being composite score

Furthermore, even though insignificantly, the coping styles negatively affected the divorcee psycho-social well-being. These findings are contradictory to the findings by Brown (2014) suggesting that apart from religiosity, coping styles affected the psycho-social well-being of the individuals. However, since Brown also speculated that the nature of the coping style had a factor to play in determining the kind of effect which the coping style would have on the divorcee, it is possible and logical to say that in this case most of the coping styles involved were negative, hence the negative effect on the respondents; psycho-social well-being. The results, however, are coherent with the suggestions that coping styles can increase or reduce the impact of policy-induced profiling on the well-being of divorce as suggested in several studies (Gungor, 2016; Soulsby & Bennett, 2015; Yaacob et al. 2019).

The Church has based its faith and practices on encouraging the sanctity and purity of marriage that even if it was not the best thing ever, the Church probably would be willing to defend it as they have done in the past. The history of the Church in defending the sanctity

and purity of marriage is a concept which can be corroborated by the findings by Doxiadis (2020) which showed that even during the Ottoman Rule, the Church was already known to be anti-divorce, which forced its members to seek help with divorce from other denominations. Furthermore, the Bible as many respondents maintained throughout the qualitative analysis of the respondents, has clearly set principles which stand against divorce and provides small windows for the same in cases of unfaithfulness. Despite the small window which the Church and believers hold that the Bible provides for divorce, the general tone is on which condemns divorce by all means possible. The interpretation of stance of the Church towards divorce potentially fuels stigma which negatively implicates the seemingly harmless Church policy on divorce negatively as affecting the psychosocial well-being of the divorcees who are members of the Church.

Empathy

Empathy was a salient theme from the interviews on the relationship between the stigma of divorce and Church policy on divorce was stigma and it magnified in three interrelated sub-themes, namely; stigma, segregation, and equality. A portion of the respondents when asked about their view about the stigma of divorce in relation to Church policy were very held that stigma was affecting the Church policy on divorce to worsen the divorcees' well-being. Stigma came out as a significant impact of the interaction between Church policy on divorce and the divorcees' well-being. Stigma was one of the most contributing sub-themes which strongly supported the latent theme of empathy. One of the respondents, respondent 5, responded to the question as follows;

“The stigma is there since after divorce a Church member is made to stop receiving communion for some time. This course stigma to the divorced.”

Even though the Church has always been the place to go for consolation and encouragement since the olden days, the Church, from the sentiments of these respondents has fallen to the very ways that seek to make people worst. Respondent 5's sentiments for example show that the Church policy has done nothing to reduce the rates of stigmatization of the divorced members of the Church. The Church in this case even though is supposed to be the strong tower to which the divorcees run and get mercy and grace, especially at this time when they are suffering like going through or recovering from a divorce. The argument is consistent with the findings by Molvhedzi (2017) that most Church members after their divorce felt like they had been cast out of their own Churches and the Church was using their suffering to exacerbate their worse situations. In this way, therefore, the Church worsens the stigma of divorce on the divorcees using the Church policy on divorce. Nonetheless, the high rates of the stigma of divorce in the Church as affected by Church policy on divorce might also be due to external factors, especially the African culture which might affect the stigma of divorce in the church.

A second sub-theme that supported the latent theme of empathy is segregation. Segregation was strongly interlinked with stigma to make the respondents know that empathy was the best way to treat the divorcees in the Church. The segregation rates were common among the respondents. Respondent 2, when asked about the relationships between church policy and the stigma of divorce said responded as follows;

“Because they are not allowed to even take Holy Communion or hold leadership positions. Therefore, they leave Churches and join others where they are accepted.”

The respondents recognized that even though their Church specifically did not allow divorcees and either did it allow the divorcee to partake of the Holy Communion. From this

precedence, it is arguable that the negative effects of stigma painted Church policy on divorce negatively, influence the well-being of the divorces in these Churches that they end up going to other churches where they feel better accepted and encouraged and where they are less judged because of their divorces. To protect their well-being, the Church members are willing to seek other gates to escape the scolding effects of the stigma which has been piling in the church, as has been observed by a large portion of the respondents. Heale (2015) held that the Catholic Church specifically had been identified and known to institute policies that prohibit divorce and one of the outstanding of these policies segregated against the divorced when it came to receiving Holy Communion. The same kind of segregating treatment with which the Catholic treats the divorcees was also common in the case of the respondents because they knew that their churches did not allow divorcees to receive the Holy Communion. One of the potential dangers of the open segregation with which the churches treat the different divorcees is pervasive because it does nothing more to try and reduce the stigma which is already piling on the divorcees because of their culture but they make it worse, which makes the effects of the same on the divorcees' psychosocial well-being even worse.

Segregation in the context of the interview in this research is interconnected and it emanates from the stigma of divorce which potentially makes the Church policy on divorce to worsen the well-being of the divorcees who are already going through tough times. Most of the respondents felt that there was too much judging and unequal treatment of the divorces, so that they fought for more grace and empathy for them and get them to be better even though they have been battered by the effects of the divorce. The respondent had a general feeling that the Church community and not just the leadership, should change the way they treat the divorcees. Respondent 4 for instance gives the following answer;

“The Church community should embrace divorcees and not treat them as outcasts.”

Respondent 4’s utterance presupposes that the Church does very little to embrace the divorcees and is very quick to judge and treat them as outcasts even though they are already going through suffering with the issues of divorce and other issues which arise from it, including the challenges of divorce including the pressure of co-parenting as held by Perry (2019). The Church, therefore, ought to hold strongly on embracing the divorcees and empathizing with them so that they positively impact the divorcees’ well-being. Examining the responses from the respondents has revealed evidence that empathy is a highly needed response from the Church when dealing with divorcees. Segregation, inequality, judgment, and segregation all have been the effects of the stigma-mediated Church policy on divorce. However, the effects of these are potentially detrimental on the already wounded divorcees in the Church and this justifies the strong need for empathy which was a common feeling among the respondents.

Therefore, if the Church is to maintain the positive well-being of the divorcees among its members, they have to be able to form non-stigmatizing Church policies on divorce, which separate the divorcee from the act of divorcing and allows them to fellowship like the rest of the Church members without infringing on their religious rights, or freedoms, or segregating them in the participation of the Biblical ordinances such as Holy Communion, an action which potentially has a terrible impact on their well-being.

Sensitization

Apart from empathy, another portion of the respondents also felt that there was need to sensitize the Church and its members to know how to treat and interact with the divorced members without stigmatizing them and hence endangering their psycho-social well-being.

Reducing the stigma of divorce in the Church has been designated a necessity being that, the previous evidence has shown that it has a great potential of either positively or negatively affect the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees in the Church. When the respondents were asked to give their opinions on one of the ways that the stigma of divorce can be reduced in the Church, the most prominent theme was sensitization.

The theme manifested through different sub-themes which included education, seminars, and acceptance, all of which pointed to the great need and the gap of information they felt needs filling when it comes to the stigma of divorce in the Church. Mendoza et al. (2019) held that in some communities, the stigma of divorce is considered to be worse than the divorce itself. Such strong sentiments about the abstract aspects which surround divorce imply that there are multiple institutions, including the Church should have mechanisms and ways to ensure that they keep all their members psychosocially well, despite their marital status. Unfortunately, the Church has not got to the point of sensitization where all the members feel more accepted and less stigmatized.

The effects of insensitivity on matters divorce logically affect the well-being of the divorcees because unlike the rest of the populations who have not gone through traumatizing experience of divorce, they know the pains and suffering experientially. The insensitivity of the Church on matters divorce, Church policy on divorce and its effects on the divorcees; well-being are greatly with the Church leaders because earlier findings revealed that Church leaders are heavily involved in the formulation and communication of the Church policy on divorce. The possibilities on matters of insensitivity as they relate to the stigma of divorce and the effects of Church policy on divorce on the divorcees' well-being are either the leaders themselves are not sensitive in their communications of these matters, leading to the negative effects on the divorcees' well-being, or they have not taken time to teach and train the rest of the non-divorced Church population on the best ways to see, accept, encourage and support

the divorcees' among them so that their well-being can be impacted positively by the existing Church policy on divorce. In appreciation of the need for sensitization of the Church and recommending what should be done to reduce stigma of divorce in Church, the following was respondent 6's take;

“(1) Right teaching on divorce to members, teaching each gender separately (2) Empower both men and women in focus groups.”

It is important for the Church to sensitize its members on how to treat divorcees because divorce is a reality that affects many people, including members of the Church. While the Church has a stern policy against divorce, it is also important to acknowledge that divorce happens for a variety of reasons, and individuals who have gone through a divorce may be in need of emotional, spiritual, and practical support. Divorce can be a painful and traumatic experience, and divorcees may experience feelings of guilt, shame, and isolation (Hille, 2017). They may also face stigma and discrimination from their community, including their fellow church members.

Sensitizing Church members on how to treat divorcees with compassion, kindness, and understanding can help to reduce this stigma and create a more supportive and inclusive community. Furthermore, the Church's teachings on forgiveness, compassion and loving one's neighbour are central to its message, and these values should be extended to divorcees as well. It is important to remember that divorcees are not defined by their past experiences and that they are valuable members of the Church community who deserve to be treated with dignity and respect (Jenkins, 2016). Therefore, as suggested by some of the respondents the Church could leverage the right doctrinal preaching, seminar, and programs that encourage healthy communication of the Church policy on divorce without stigmatizing the divorcees

among them and thereby reducing the potential negative effects the unhealthy policies, communication of the policies and stigma of divorce have on the divorcees.

The stigma affects the well-being independently of the Church policy and this is possibly because of the African context where people are aware of the intimate details of one another's lives and they are willing to weigh in their opinions about the same. The results, however, agreed with the conclusions made by Koppejan-Luitze et al. (2021) suggesting that stigma is one of the greatest and most troubling outcomes of divorce aside from co-parenting and emotional burden.

Mendoza et al. (2019) also held that the context of divorce exposes it to the possibility of stigmatization, which agrees with the speculation that the African context of the respondents' divorce increased the stigma of their divorce. The findings were also consistent with the findings by Hille (2017) who argued that even in the Church, divorcees are often stigmatized and this can negatively affect their well-being. The suggestions speculate that any increase in the stigma of divorce can lead to the deterioration of the divorcees' well-being. The speculation was supported by the findings by Thadathil and Sriram (2019) who held that divorcees are stigmatized and which makes them face emotional insecurity and adverse effects on their well-being.

Divorcees may face worse adverse psycho-social well-being issues from stigma than the average person, and this can have long-lasting impacts on their mental and emotional health. In the context of divorce, stigma can take many forms, including social exclusion, disapproval, and even shame. Divorcees may feel stigmatized by society, friends, and even family members who may hold negative attitudes towards divorce. The stigma can be particularly challenging for individuals who come from cultures or religions that place a significant emphasis on the sanctity of marriage.

The impact of stigma on divorcees' psycho-social well-being can be significant. Divorcees may experience feelings of guilt, shame, and self-doubt, which can lead to negative emotions such as anxiety and depression. They may also feel isolated and unsupported, as they may be reluctant to disclose their divorce to others due to fear of judgment or rejection. This can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and can lead to social isolation, which can further negatively impact their mental health.

The stigma associated with divorce can also have an impact on divorcees' economic and social status. Divorce can result in financial instability, particularly for women who may have been financially dependent on their spouse. The stigma can make it more challenging for divorcees to find employment or housing, as some employers or landlords may hold negative attitudes towards divorced individuals (Konstam et al., 2016). This can further exacerbate feelings of insecurity and anxiety.

Another factor that can contribute to the adverse psycho-social well-being issues that divorcees face is the perceived loss of social identity. Divorce can lead to changes in an individual's social network, with some friends or family members choosing to distance themselves from the individual. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and a loss of social support. Divorcees may also feel a sense of loss regarding their role in society, particularly if they had identified strongly as a spouse or parent. This can lead to a sense of purposelessness and can negatively impact their self-esteem.

The adverse psycho-social well-being issues that divorcees face from stigma can be particularly challenging for individuals who have experienced high-conflict divorces. High-conflict divorces are characterized by significant emotional distress, conflict, and acrimony between the parties involved. The stigma associated with divorce can exacerbate the negative impact of a high-conflict divorce on the individual's mental and emotional well-being.

Individuals who have experienced high-conflict divorces may be more likely to internalize the stigma associated with divorce and to blame themselves for the breakdown of the marriage. This can lead to significant emotional distress and may increase the risk of developing mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety (Thadathil & Sriram (2019).

The adverse psycho-social well-being issues that divorcees face from stigma can have long-lasting impacts on their mental and emotional well-being. The current has shown that divorced individuals are at higher risk of developing mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. They are also at increased risk of suicide. Stigma can exacerbate these risks, leading to more severe mental and emotional health outcomes. Divorcees may feel guilty and ashamed due to the stigma associated with divorce, especially if they believe that their church views divorce as a sin as supposed by Lagat (2015). This guilt and shame can further exacerbate negative feelings, leading to lower psychosocial well-being. O'Neil (2017) held that isolation and lack of social support were some of the reasons that divorcees felt stigma from the Church and this led to the deterioration of their psychosocial well-being.

Divorce is a topic that has long been stigmatized in many societies, and the African Church is no exception. In many African cultures, marriage and family are highly valued, and divorce is often seen as a failure to uphold these values. This cultural belief can be difficult to change, and it often leads to judgment and ostracism of those who have divorced. The African Church places a high value on the sanctity of marriage, and divorce is often seen as a violation of this value. The Church's teachings on marriage and divorce are based on scripture, and many Church members believe that divorce is a sin. As a result, those who divorce are often viewed as morally corrupt or sinful. Many people in African societies are

not properly educated about divorce and its causes. This lack of education can lead to misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards those who divorce. The African Church has a responsibility to educate its members about divorce and to provide support for those who are going through it (Tlharihani & Olehile, 2021).

Furthermore, those who divorce often face stigma and judgment from their families, friends, and communities. This lack of support can be isolating and can make it difficult for people to move on from the experience. The African Church has a responsibility to provide emotional and spiritual support to those who are going through a divorce. The stigma of divorce in the African Church is a complex issue that is rooted in cultural and religious beliefs, as well as a lack of education and support. While attitudes towards divorce are slowly changing in African societies, it will take a concerted effort from the Church and the community as a whole to finish the stigma and provide support and acceptance for those who have gone through divorce. By providing education, support, and acceptance, the African Church can help to create a more inclusive and compassionate community for all its members. The complexities of the relationship between the stigma of divorce, divorce, and Church policy on divorce were evident in the qualitative analysis as well.

Despite the evidence which both the qualitative and quantitative analysis have yielded that there is a complex relationship between Church policy on divorce, stigma of divorce and the negative psycho-social well-being of divorcees, it is a relationship which is potentially daunting to solve and guarantee better psycho-social well-being to the divorced Church members. The thematic analysis of the changes which should be made to the Church policy on divorce manifested in two contradicting themes; conservation and reformation. Some of the respondents felt strongly that the Church policy should be changed to be kinder and more accommodating, especially to the Church members who are divorcees (Opiyo et al.,

2018). However, the other group was strongly bent on keeping things as they are even if that meant that the well-being of the divorcees would be negatively affected in the process. The two contradicting themes are discussed in-depth to justify the rationale that the respondents gave for them.

Chapter Summary

The chapter's focus was performing data analysis and presenting and discussing the major findings of the study. Regression analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant influence of Church policy on divorce on mental well-being. Further, there was not significant effect of Church policy on divorce on the spiritual well-being of divorce members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. Church policy on divorce did not have statistically significant effect on the respondents' social well-being. Qualitative analysis revealed that the liberalist and rigorist standpoints were the major views of the respondents regarding divorce. Increasing the stigma of divorce reduced the mental well-being of the respondents. There was no significant mediating effect of coping styles of divorce on the relationship between Church policy on divorce and the divorcees' well-being. In the next chapter, a summary of the major findings is presented as a basis for drawing final conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This study aimed to contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating examining the connection if there is any between the stigma of divorce, Church policy on divorce, and the effect of these on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. This final chapter summarizes and presents the major findings of the study and discusses the practical and theoretical implications. It also draws recommendations and future research directions suggested. Lastly, the main conclusions of the study are dawn.

Summary of Key findings

The first objective of the study was to determine the relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the mental well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. The six-item scale descriptive analysis showed that most of the respondents did not have any serious mental health issues. The mean score on the five-point scale was 3.9733 showing that they did have any significant mental health issues. The skewness of the data was -.623. The respondents had above-average scores on issues about mental well-being. The results of the regression analysis yielded that there was no significant effect of Church policy on divorce ($R^2 = 0.16, p > .05$). It showed that the effects that the Church policy posed on the mental well-being of the divorcees were not significant because the Church policy on divorce accounted for only 1.6% of the mental well-being issues that affect the divorcees.

The second objective of this research study was to investigate the relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the spiritual well-being of divorced members of

Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study used different kinds of statistical analyses to investigate this relationship. Before investigating the relationship between the Church's policies on divorce, descriptive statistics performed on the composite index of spiritual well-being revealed that most of the respondents scored significantly above average when it came to the 5-point spiritual well-being scale. Regression analysis indicated that the Church's policy on divorce had insignificant effects on spiritual well-being. It showed that only 0.4% of the spiritual well-being issues were attributable to the Church's policy and this justified the above-average scores which most of the respondents depicted in the descriptive analysis. There was no statistically significant relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the divorcees' well-being.

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the social well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. The descriptive statistical analysis of social well-being showed that more than half of the respondents scored more than average in their scores on the social well-being scale. The regression analysis showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the social well-being of the divorcee members in the churches. Furthermore, the same analysis revealed that none of the social well-being issues can be attributed to the Church's policy on divorce.

The fourth objective of the study was to assess whether the relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and the well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya, is mediated by the stigma of divorce. The combination of the regression analysis and the performance of the Sobel test showed that there was no mediation effect of stigma of divorce on the Church's policy on divorce on the divorcees' well-being. However, stigma had a direct and adverse effect on the psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

This was corroborated by the qualitative analysis which showed that respondents pointed out stigma main factor affecting divorcee's psychosocial wellbeing.

The last objective of this research study was to determine the moderating influence of coping style on the relationship between Church policy and the well-being of divorced members of Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya. Correlation analysis showed that there was an insignificant negative moderation effect between the coping styles of divorce on the Church policy on divorce.

Qualitative data analysis revealed that the majority of the respondents were aware of the Church policy on divorce. It further revealed two salient themes in the propagation of the Church policy on divorce namely the rigorist and the liberalist standpoints. Furthermore, Church leadership was found to be the major propagators of the stigma of divorce while seeming to reinforce the Church policy on divorce. Furthermore, to reduce the stigmatic effects of Church policy on divorce the support and empathy were themes required among the respondents and the members of their congregations.

Implications

The findings of this study, as summarized in the foregoing section portend multiple implications for practice and theory. The main implications of the study are discussed in this sub-section.

Practical Implications

Quantitative analysis revealed that while Church policy alone has no statistically significant effect on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being, and stigma did not mediate this relationship, stigma was the main factor underlying the psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees. The finding presented a divergent view compared to the one proposed by Hille (2017) that

Church policy poses negative effects on the well-being of the divorcees. Nonetheless, it is consistent with the suggestions by Nagaria (2016) that stigma associated with divorce has negative effects on the divorcee well-being. The findings pointed to a whole new way of thinking about Church, policy. It illuminated the amoral nature of Church policy of divorce as stigma of divorce was not related to church policy though stigma itself did adversely affect psychosocial wellbeing of divorcees.

The presence of stigma, according to the evidence presented by the qualitative analysis, has implications on actions taken by Church leaders and the rest of the members of the Church congregation against the same, to make better ways for the flourishing of the well-being of the members who are divorced. For instance, this was apparent in the views of respondent #16 when asked to comment on ways in which the stigma of divorce can be reduced in the Church. The respondent implored Church members and leaders not to stigmatize divorcees and those who were separated as they may not understand the circumstances that necessitated divorce or separation. Furthermore, the finding was also consistent with the findings of the study by Sheykhi (2020), which showed that the Church and congregants exacerbate the situation of divorcees by stigmatizing them.

Throughout the qualitative analysis of the responses given the respondents on the matters of divorce and its practice and all other issues surrounding it, especially in the line of how Church policy affects the well-being of the divorcees, the Church leaders have proven a very important link between the therapists and the divorced Church members. Since Church leaders handle most cases of divorcees, the findings imply that they are an indispensable resource to marriage therapists, when engaged correctly.

Quantitative analysis revealed that coping styles of divorce did not moderate the Church policy on divorce. The salient implication from this finding is that there are other

factors either within or without the Church the aspects which this study has investigated which moderate the divorcee well-being. Unearthing such factors is important for the better management of the well-being of the divorcees within the Church.

Theoretical Implications

Several implications are attributable to the study findings. One of the salient implications is that Church policy on divorce contrary to the suggestions by Lagat (2018), does not negatively affect the member divorcees' mental well-being. This means that despite the overwhelming research which has shown that the Church policy can affect mental well-being negatively, it is not a significant effect that can be detected or shown on the psycho-social mental well-being measurement scale. It shows that while it can be easy to use the Church policy and blame all the mental illnesses that the divorcees suffer from, there are other factors aside from the Church policy on divorce which significantly affect the mental well-being of the divorcees negatively. To get to the point of really helping to positively impact and improve the mental well-being of the divorcees in the Church, therapists have to do an in-depth analysis of the other factors in and out of the Church, which affect the mental well-being of the divorcees and target them with their interventions.

Another implication of the findings is that, there is an insignificant relationship between the Church's policy on divorce and spiritual well-being, a finding which was against the postulations made by Konieczny (2016) that Church policy negatively affects divorcee well-being. Even though the Church policy plays a huge role in the way the members interact in the Church and the different pursuits that they are allowed to do in the Church, there are various other factors, which might be Christian practices that affect their spiritual stands and well-being. The spiritual well-being of the divorcees must be things that have to be outside of the Church policy on divorce and until when there is a determination of these factors and how

they relate with the Church's policies on divorce, there is no determining that they affect one another to deliver the better results of spiritual well-being among the divorcees.

Another implication is that positive coping styles can buffer against the negative effects of post-divorce stressors on mental well-being, such as, policy-induced profiling that divorcees may experience within the Church community (Paysnick, 2015). Even though it was consistently shown that the Church policy on divorce has no significant effect on the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees when it is moderated by the coping styles, which the different divorcees use to go through their divorce. It can be argued that, the Church policy on divorce is not harmful to the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees, but the danger or the potential harm only comes to the divorcees when there is an external factor that moderates the Church policy on divorce. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a need for divorcees and their marriage and family therapists to watch their coping styles because depending on their details and their nature, they can moderate the set Church policies that can negatively affect the divorcees' psycho-social well-being.

The mediator analysis between the stigma of divorce and the Church policy on divorce showed a significant relationship with the negative effect on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. The Church policy on divorce proved that, it did not significantly negatively affect the divorcees' well-being. However, when combined with stigma of divorce, the effects were potentially negative and it affected a larger percentage of the negative effects that were caused to the well-being of the divorcees. Such implication is consistent with the suggestions made by Caarls and De Valk, (2018) that stigma can interact with different issues such as Church policy on divorce to negatively affect the divorcees' well-being. The stigma of divorce is, therefore, an important contributing factor to the negative effects on the well-being of divorcees. The stigma of divorce is a compelling factor

in determining the sources of the negative effects of the Church policy on divorce on the divorcees' well-being.

Qualitative analysis showed that the stigma of divorce was one of the most concerning or discomforting to a large portion of the respondents. Stigma does not only come as an independent factor and begins to negatively impact the divorcees' well-being. However, in the qualitative analysis stigma presented itself in complex inter-webbed issues which eventually posed negative effects on the divorcees' well-being. The stigma of divorce manifested mainly as being encouraged and propagated by the Church leaders. However, the church leaders also maintained that they are not the people in the authority to handle the Church policy on divorce resulting in a negative psycho-social well-being of the divorcees. The major claim by the Church leaders is that, all the Church policies on divorce are based on the Bible, which is consistent with the view posed by Kostenberger (2004) which looks marriage from a Biblical perspective and gives it meaning within those boundaries. After setting all the responsibility for the Church policy on divorce in the Bible, there a second issue came to light. The Church leaders claimed that the Bible states expressly its stance on the matter of divorce and its practice and since the Bible is, according to their and their convictions an inerrant, word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, they are only custodians and enforcers of the Church policy and cannot compromise the absolute authority of the Bible which has stated those laws on divorce.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis unearthed that there was a deep need for change in Church policy on divorce and how divorcees are treated. The change from the deep sense that they had they wanted the divorcees to be treated better, without stigmatization so that they can feel like part of the congregation. However, so many complexities arise from this. On the surface level, it could be easier to conclude that the laws which the Bible set on

divorce which then, according to the Church leaders affect the well-being of the divorcees, are not the problem and the problem is the human beings, like the Church leaders who fuel and continue to castigate and treat the divorcees as outcasts. However, such an argument would be misleading because if they are certain and convinced that they are just custodians, they would not be the right people to address or approach when there is a need to change some of the Church policies and make stigma less for the betterment of the divorcees' well-being. If anything, Church leaders believe that by denying people the right to divorce, they are carrying out a God-given mandate (Muriithi, 2018). This implies that the connection between the Church's policy on divorce, Church leaders, Biblical authority, the stigma of divorce, and the well-being of the divorcees is strong and complex, that needs a lot of thinking to effectively find a solution that favourably addresses all the entities.

Another implication of the study was that sensitization in the Church is necessary to fully address matters of Church policy on divorce and its effects on the divorcees' well-being. The truth of such an implication can be seen in a response such as the one which was given by respondent 13 who commented as follows, when asked to give their thought on how the stigma of divorce can be reduced; "Sensitizing the Church to accept the divorce or those going through a divorce. Help the divorced to heal by creating activities to support them emotionally, spiritually, and emotionally." Since the respondents felt so strongly that sensitization could help reduce the stigma, it can be argued that, sensitizing the Church leaders and congregants, can help finish the negative effects that the Church's policy on divorce poses to the divorcees' well-being, when mediated by stigma. Styles (2014) examined the history of Church and divorced and unveiled that stigma of divorce has been a part of the Church in connection with its policy on divorce.

The qualitative analysis yielded that there is a complex interconnection between the Church policy on divorce, the stigma of divorce, Church leaders, and their effect on the well-being of the divorcees. At the time of the study, there was no clear indication of the causative process in which there was one leading to the other and how that eventually led to the negative effect on the well-being of the divorcees. While most of the respondents pointed to the fact that there was an intrinsic negative mediatory connection between the stigma, of divorce and the Church policy on divorce, there was no clear indication that the Church leaders caused it, or encouraged it. Tuttle and Davis (2015) held that, religiosity and the Church has a huge role in the well-being of the divorcees who are members. Therefore, the therapists of the divorced Church members, need to utilize their knowledge and study this relationship more and yield the best framework in which the Church leaders would cease to be the encouraging factor on the well-being of the divorced members, and make them useful in the process of healing of the divorced.

Biblical authority was an inseparable issue from the Church leaders in the role that they played in the worsening of the well-being of the divorcees. However, it was a complex issue because the Church leaders fail to budge, bend or compromise because they acknowledge that, at least to the best of their knowledge, they are serving a greater purpose by enunciating and enforcing the tenets of the Bible, which have been passed to them from the omnipotent God. Theologians and family and marriage therapists should do further in-depth research into the latent or abstract relationship between the Biblical authority on divorce matters and how it affects the well-being of the divorcees in the Church, especially the Church whose leaders insist on using Biblical guidelines to determine their stance on divorce. Such a study can help harmonize the theological and doctrinal dilemmas which the Church leaders feel might arise from the abandonment of the Biblical directions on matters of

divorce and being a bit relaxed to facilitate the improvement of the well-being of the Church members who are divorced.

Recommendations

In light of the objectives of the study, recommendations are made as follows:

- i) Regression analysis demonstrated that Church policy on divorce has no statistically significant effect on the divorcees' well-being. The analysis showed that Church's policy on divorce had no statistically significant effect on social, mental, and spiritual well-being. Therefore, marriage and family therapists should shift their attention from investigating or using the Church policy as a reason for the different factors which affect the well-being of the divorcees and focus on other factors which negatively impact the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. Educating divorcees about coping styles can help them better understand their emotions and behavior during and after the divorce. Divorce is a complex and emotionally-charged process, and it can be difficult for individuals to know how to manage their emotions in a healthy way. Learning about coping styles can help them identify negative coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse or avoidance, and learn healthier ways of managing stress, such as mindfulness or problem-solving. Moreover, understanding coping styles can help divorcees better communicate with their ex-partners, children, and other family members. Divorce can often involve high levels of conflict and tension, and individuals may struggle to communicate effectively with those around them. Educating divorcees about coping styles can help them better understand their own communication style and learn techniques for effective communication with others. Having effective communication with others is most likely to improve their psychosocial well-being.

- ii) The quantitative analysis indicated that while the Church policy on divorce has no statistically significant negative effect on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being, the mediating effect of the influence of the stigma of divorce posed a negative effect on the divorcees' well-being. Therefore, therapists and theologians all should come together to find the most amicable religious and psychological ways to deal with the stigma of divorce in the Church. Apart from organizing seminars in which both of these important groups can discuss and resolve how to collectively handle the stigma of divorce, they should collaborate in the counselling of the divorcees to ensure the continued betterment of their psycho-social well-being both in and outside the Church. There is a need, therefore, for marriage and family therapists to focus on the stigma of divorce as the force which negatively affects the well-being of the divorcees through the Church policy on divorce and thus devises better ways of dealing with it, instead of having an illusion that the Church policy plays a significant role in negatively affecting the well-being of the divorcees. Furthermore, therapists should make the divorcees aware that the only factor which they are affecting their well-being is the stigma of divorce and not the Church policy so that they can be able to know which ways to devise better-coping mechanisms to deal with the negative effects of their divorce. Divorce is a major life event that can have significant emotional, psychological, and practical impacts on those going through it. It is essential to educate divorcees about coping styles to help them navigate the challenges and changes that come with this process. Coping styles are the ways in which individuals manage the stressors in their lives, and they can have a significant impact on how individuals adjust to and cope with the stress of divorce.
- iii) The Church, in collaboration with the marriage and family therapists, should organize programs in which they share and sensitize the rest of the Church members on how to

interact with the divorced members of the Church, without negatively influencing their psycho-social well-being. These two groups also need to have a training session with the Church members, coaching them on how best they can interact with the divorced members without making them feel like outcasts or outsiders. Furthermore, it will help them to easily separate the divorcee from the divorce, which will most likely improve their level of empathy and reduce the stigma, of divorce towards the divorcees. Such collaboration will most likely undo the seemingly antagonistic effects, where the therapists seek to make the divorcees feel improvement in their psycho-social well-being, but the Church through its members is making matters worse.

- iv) Biblical authority was a latent issue in the qualitative analysis. Marriage and family therapists, theologians, and Church leaders should engage in deep examinational studies of the Church policy on divorce and how the Bible's perspective of divorce contributes to it. Furthermore, they should settle on which are the important issues in this aspect of the Bible that cannot be abandoned and which can be abandoned so that collectively they can work something out regarding Biblical authority, and the doctrinal issues about divorce and harmonize it so that the therapists do not seem to antagonize the Church leaders (who strongly claim to rely on the Biblical authority to form Church policy on divorce) when they say that the Church policy interacts with some aspects, such as, the stigma of divorce and coping styles, to negatively affect the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. The harmonization of these grounds will reduce the presumed tension between the seemingly antagonistic Biblical authority and the psychological evidence to help the divorcees have synergistic counselling which will have better effects on their well-being.

- v) Church leaders proved to be a crucial aspect of the divorced Church members' well-being. Despite having the authority to interpret the Bible on what it says about divorce and communicate that to the congregants of which the divorcees are a part, they also serve as the counsellors of the divorcees in the Church setting. Therefore, concurring with the opinion of a respondent who said, "i. Counseling (Pastoral and professional) ii. Pastoral refresher courses to be aware of their responsibility..." The Church leaders should be offered psychology and especially marriage and family counseling skills so that they can be better placed to handle the different issues which are affecting the divorcees. Such training will help the Church leaders appreciate not only the debilitating effects of divorcees which the divorcees are already enduring but also the corresponding need for help, which better predisposes them to speak to the rest of the members of the Church who are divorced on how to treat the divorcees as one of them and reduce the stigma of divorce in Church. As demonstrated by the quantitative analysis, reduction of the stigma of divorce is most likely to improve the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees in the Church as they interact with the rest of the members.
- vi) Quantitative analysis revealed that the coping styles did not moderate the Church policy on divorce to make it have a statistically significant negative effect on the well-being of the divorcees in the Church. Therefore, therapists should work with the divorcees, training and guiding them on the best coping styles to use. They should help the divorcees to identify the best coping styles to use in different situations and contexts so that they can have the best outcome when facing hostile external circumstances such as the stigma of divorce which negatively influence their well-being. Knowing their coping styles and using them appropriately will help the divorcees to form systems that work to improve their well-being despite the outside

environment. Divorce can be a difficult and stressful experience, and using the appropriate coping style can be important for several reasons, including emotional health, psycho-social well-being, and physical well-being. Coping styles that are adaptive and healthy can help a divorcee maintain good mental and emotional health during and after the divorce. This is especially important as divorce can be a traumatic experience that can lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

Adopting the right coping styles can help the divorcees to move on, which helps them heal after the divorce process. Coping styles that are adaptive and healthy can help divorcees move forward with their life after the divorce. By using coping strategies that allow them to process their emotions and focus on the future, they can avoid getting stuck in feelings of anger, resentment, or sadness. Furthermore, coping styles can also affect how a divorcee interacts with others, including their children, family members, and friends. Using healthy coping strategies can help maintain positive relationships with others and avoid behaviors that may damage these relationships.

- vii) Stigma has been demonstrated to be a pertinent issue affecting divorcees' well-being. Even though this study only focused on stigma in the Church context and how it interacts with the Church policy on divorce, there is a high possibility that the stigma of divorce is and could be worse outside the Church context. Marriage and family therapists should work and collaborate with the Church, governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to sensitize the members of the Church and the rest of the society on the dangers of stigma on the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees who are part of the Church and the community at large. Such initiatives should help to change the worldview of the African society, which is so knitted by their love and quickness to embrace traditions; to know that even divorcees are part of the society and they are just like the rest of them and should be treated with care and

love like they do everyone without prejudice and stigma, and such can help reduce the stigma of divorce and its negative effects on the divorcees' psycho-social well-being. There is a need for marriage and family therapists to organize programs and seminars in which they sensitize the Church leaders on the dangers which the stigmatization of the divorcees in the Church poses to the divorcees' health. Furthermore, they should be trained to separate the divorcee from the divorce, or the sinner from the sin, so that they can accept the divorcees in the Church without agreeing with their actions of divorce if they insist on following the alleged Biblical stance against divorce. Church members as well. Through the sensitization seminars and programs should understand that they are any different than the others who have gone through the horrific process of divorce, if anything they should learn to empathize with them and accept them as members.

- viii) Quantitative analysis revealed that coping styles of divorce did not moderate the Church policy on divorce. Therapists should instruct and train the divorcees on the best coping styles to use after their divorce and how best to use them to ensure it does not add to the list of all the other factors, which synergistically lead to the negative well-being of the divorcees. Training them will help them, not to be a danger to themselves or let others be a danger to them and their process of recovery. They can adopt either a problem or emotion-focused coping style. Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing and trying to solve the problems that are causing stress. For divorcees, this may involve seeking legal counsel, setting goals for the future, and finding ways to support themselves financially. This approach can help people feel more in control and empowered and can reduce feelings of helplessness and anxiety. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, involves managing the emotions associated with a stressful situation. This may involve seeking emotional support from

friends and family, practicing self-care, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation. This approach can help people feel more emotionally balanced and resilient and can reduce feelings of sadness, anger, and other negative emotions. Both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies can be helpful for divorcees in improving their psycho-social well-being. By using a combination of these strategies, divorcees can address both the practical and emotional challenges of divorce, and develop a greater sense of self-efficacy and resilience. It is important to note that coping styles are highly individual, and what works for one person may not work for another. Therefore, it is important for divorcees, with the help of their therapists, to find coping strategies that are effective for them and that they feel comfortable using.

- ix) Since the qualitative analysis revealed that Church leaders are an important player in the well-being of the divorcee members' well-being, they should be sensitized to such needs. After sensitization of the Church leaders, the marriage therapists need to create a collaborative relationship with them so that they can both help the divorcees steer toward the right direction to recovery. This, as per the evidence availed by the study, the Church leader can do by reducing the stigma of divorce and counselling the divorced members. Collaboration between Church leaders and therapists can have several potential benefits for improving the well-being of divorcees. One of the benefits of such a collaboration could be a holistic approach to the solution of psycho-social well-being issues. Collaboration between Church leaders and therapists can provide a more holistic approach to helping divorcees cope with the emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of divorce. Church leaders can offer spiritual guidance and support, while therapists can provide evidence-based interventions to address emotional and psychological issues. Furthermore, it can avail the numerous

resources which are needed to deal with this complex issue. Church leaders and therapists can work together to connect divorcees with resources and services that can help them navigate the challenges of divorce. Church leaders may have access to community resources and support networks, while therapists can offer counselling and therapy services. It can also help reduce the stigma of divorce because collaboration between Church leaders and therapists can help reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health services. Church leaders can help to normalize the use of therapy and encourage their congregations to seek help when needed. Such initiatives can also lead to improved outcomes because collaboration between Church leaders and therapists has been shown to improve outcomes for individuals seeking mental health services. Studies have shown that incorporating spirituality and religion into therapy can lead to better mental health outcomes, including reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety. Working together, Church leaders and therapists, can provide divorcees with a greater level of support than either could provide alone. By working collaboratively, they can offer a more comprehensive and tailored approach to meeting the needs of divorcees.

Areas for Further Research

Although the study objectives have been achieved, several gaps have been identified in retrospect. These gaps present the opportunity for future studies as hereby discussed:

- i) The present study demonstrated that a large portion of the aspects of psycho-social well-being was not explained by the Church policy on divorce. Due to the robust and complex issue that is psycho-social well-being, it is recommended that other factors within the Church that are not accounted for by the Church policy on divorce, should

be studied to determine how they interact with other issues such as stigma and church leadership to affect the divorcees' well-being.

- ii) The study also unearthed that, Church leaders play a critical role in the well-being of the divorcees who are members of their churches. However, the study did not explore the details of why and how Church leaders contribute largely to the well-being of the divorcees in the Church. Therefore, further research should be done to determine how Church leaders, independently or in collaboration with other factors, like church leadership and biblical authority affect the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees in the Church.
- iii) The study also determined that Biblical authority does not only provide the laws most of which are incorporated into the Church policy on divorce, but it also determines to what extent these laws are applied, the levels of flexibility which the Church and the leaders can afford in determining the factors of stigma, which might arise from the policies. Therefore, further research should be done to investigate the connection and relationship between Biblical authority and the psycho-social well-being of divorcees.
- iv) The study demonstrated that the stigma of divorce did not mediate between Church policy on divorce and psycho-social well-being. However, stigma negatively impact the divorced members' well-being. Therefore, since psycho-social well-being is a multifaceted, complex issue, further studies should be conducted to see if there are other issues such as leadership and biblical authority in the Church setting which can be mediated by stigma to pose negative outcomes on the divorcees' well-being.

Conclusion

The study has contributed to the body of knowledge by investigating the relationship between the Church policy on divorce and the psycho-social well-being of the divorced members of the Church. It has also investigated and assessed the mediating effect of the stigma of divorce on the Church policy on divorce and the moderating effect of the coping styles on the Church policy on divorce and the effects the mediation and the moderation have on the divorcees' well-being. The main conclusion, which can be drawn from the findings of the study, is that, even though Church policy on divorce does not negatively affect the psycho-social well-being of the divorcees in the Church, stigma adversely affected their well-being. These findings are significant for counselling interventions that they do not address the effects of Church policy on divorce but in relation to other modifying factors, which can be within or without the Church and its contexts. The findings can also help the Church, society and marriage therapists to better handle divorcees, in light of the exacerbating effects of stigma on their psychosocial well-being. Nonetheless, due to the complex nature of the psycho-social well-being of divorcees, stigma and coping styles and their interaction with Church policy on divorce, cannot be singled out as the only factors affecting this multifaceted issue. Therefore, the findings can only be applied as one of the many factors which are contributing to the well-being of the divorcees in Church.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear respondent,

My name is Martha Teriki J. Chebbet. I am a student conducting research for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marriage and Family Therapy at Pan Africa Christian University. The topic of my study is *“Psycho-social well-being of divorcees in relation to Church Policy on Divorce in selected Evangelical churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.”* The purpose of the study is examine Church policy to divorce in Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya and investigate its influence on the spiritual, mental, and social well-being of divorcees.

To keep your participation private, all the responses gathered during this research will be and will be kept confidential and the findings will be used for academic purposes only. As part of this requirement, kindly do not reveal your identity anywhere on the questionnaire.

For further concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me on 0722 241 430.

Statement of Informed Consent:

I understand that I am participating in this study voluntarily and that I can withdraw my consent any time before or during the data collection process. My refusal or withdrawal to participate will not cause any harm to me. I have been granted the chance to seek clarification about the study and obtained answers to my satisfaction. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Respondent

Date

APPENDIX B: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Dear

My name is Martha Teriki J. Chebbet, a student conducting research for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marriage and Family Therapy at Pan Africa Christian University. The topic of my study is: *Psycho-Social Well-being of Divorcees in Relation to Church Policy on Divorce in Selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya*. All ethical protocols will be observed. By my signature, I hereby commit to take every necessary measure to protect your confidentiality in accordance with the guidelines of the University Ethics Committee and all applicable laws in Kenya.

Signature of the Researcher

Date

SECTION B: CHURCH'S POLICY ON DIVORCE

11. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements about the policy on divorce in your Church on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree, by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

Item	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Awareness of policy</i>					
f) I am aware of the Church's policy on divorce.					
g) My Church has a written policy on divorce.					
h) My Church has an unwritten policy on divorce.					
<i>Rigorist standpoint</i>					
i) My Church does not accept or allow divorce for any reason whatsoever.					
<i>Legislative Perspective</i>					
j) My Church only allows divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness only.					
<i>Pauline Privilege (Double Standard Way)</i>					
k) In my Church, divorce between a believer and a non-believer is accepted but divorce between two believers is not allowed.					
<i>Lesser Evil Principle</i>					
l) My Church does not encourage divorce but may accept people who opt for divorce on grounds of cruelty, abuse and fear for their life.					
<i>The Liberal Approach</i>					
m) My Church does not encourage divorce but accept people who opt for divorce due to abandonment, desertion or irreconcilable differences.					
n) My Church accepts people who have been divorced against their will.					

12. If you were to change one thing about the Church policy on divorce, what would it be?

SECTION C: MENTAL WELL-BEING

13. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements related to mental wellbeing. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1= Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 4=Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
d) I question rather than accept my strengths as a human being.					
e) I focus on my personal development as a divorcee.					
f) I pursue goals that give meaning to my life.					
g) I have a sense of independence in thought.					
h) I face challenges in my life.					
i) I navigate my environment in a way that agrees with my values.					

SECTION D: SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

14. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements about concerning your spiritual well-being on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1= Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
d) I have a sense of purpose in life.					
e) I feel at peace with members of my local Church community.					
f) I feel a close connection with God.					

SECTION E: SOCIAL WELL-BEING

15. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements concerning your social well-being on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1= Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
d) I feel accepted in church just as I am.					
e) I feel comfortable being a part of the Church community.					
f) I feel valued and have a sense of worth in church.					
g) Life is feels less overwhelming.					
h) I feel a sense of belong in church.					
i) I feel accepted as a member of my community					
j) I feel a sense of belonging in my family					
k) I feel valued by my friends					

SECTION F: STIGMA OF DIVORCE IN CHURCH

16. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements related to stigma of divorce on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree, by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1= Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
d) The way the Church talks about divorce makes an already bad situation even worse.					
e) I feel that divorcees have been neglected by my Church.					
f) I feel excluded, devalued and shamed in church.					
g) I feel embarrassed interacting with other Church members.					
h) The way I am treated by the Church makes me feel less enthusiastic about attending Church service altogether.					
i) Sometimes I treat my own-self as an unworthy person					

17. In your view, what could be done to reduce stigma of divorce in the Church?

SECTION G: COPING WITH DIVORCE

18. In this section, please rate your opinion on the following statements about ways in which people cope with divorce on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree and 5=Strongly agree by ticking the appropriate box.

KEY: 1= Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neither agree nor disagree; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree

Item	1	2	3	4	5
d) I often turn to the Bible for comfort whenever the effects of divorce take a toll on me.					
e) I attend Church services regularly in order to cope with divorce.					
f) I regularly commit my situation to God whenever I feel depressed due to the divorce.					
g) I cope with post-divorce stress by travelling a lot.					
h) Whenever I feel depressed due to my divorce status, I go for a walk or other form of exercise.					
i) I try to find ways to distract myself from thoughts about my divorce.					

19. Please list any other ways in which you have been coping with divorce?

Thank you for your time and cooperation

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE TO CHURCH LEADERS

1. What is your Church policy on divorce?

2. How is the Church policy on divorce communicated to the Church community?

3. What would you say about stigma of divorce in relation to Church policy?

4. In your view, what could be done to reduce stigma of divorce in the Church?

5. What are the ways in which you help divorcees cope with divorce within the Church?

6. If you were to change one thing about the Church policy on divorce, what would it be?

7. What are your final thoughts on the subject of Church policy on divorce?

APPENDIX E: PAC UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



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
 website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

26TH OCTOBER, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

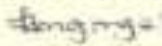
RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION & ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER FOR CHEBBET MARTHA TERIKI J REG. NO: PMFT/10092/0/17

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 finalize on the Dissertation. The dissertation title is ***"Psycho-Social Wellbeing of Divorcees in Relation to Church Policy on Divorce in Selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya"***.

We kindly request that you allow her obtain a research permit so as to proceed and conduct research amongst selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Warm Regards,



Dr. Lillian Vikiro
Registrar Academic Affairs
Pan Africa Christian University
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu, off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
Tel: +254 730-955306/+254734400694
Email: registrar.aa@pacuniversity.ac.ke
Web: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
REGISTRAR
P.O. Box 56875 - 00200
TEL: 0721 932050 0734 400694
NAIROBI KENYA

APPENDIX F: NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 489142	Date of Issue: 07/November/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr. Martha Teriki Chobot of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2015 (Rev.2014) in Nakuru on the topic: PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELLBEING OF DIVORCEES IN RELATION TO CHURCH POLICY ON DIVORCE IN SELECTED EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 07/November/2023.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/22/21623	
Applicant Identification Number 489142	Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Verification QR Code 	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions	

**APPENDIX G: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION RESEARCH
AUTHORIZATION LETTER**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Basic Education**

Telegrams: "EDUCATION",
Telephone: 051-2216917
Fax: 051-2217308
Email: cdenakurucounty@gmail.com
When replying please quote
Ref. NO. CDE/NKU/GEN/4/1/21/VOL.VIII/80



COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU COUNTY
P. O. BOX 259,
NAKURU

21st December, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – MS. MARTHA TERIKI CHEBET –
J REG NO.PMFT/10092/0/17**

Reference is made to letter NACOSTI/P/22/21623
dated 7th November, 2022.

Authority is hereby granted to the above named to carry out research
on *"Psycho-Social Wellbeing of Divorcees in Relation to Church Policy
on Divorce in Selected Evangelical Churches in Nakuru County
Kenya"* for the period ending 7th November, 2023.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.



**G. KIMANI
FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU COUNTY**

Copy: The Principal
Pan Africa Christian University
P. O. Box 56875-00200
NAIROBI

**APPENDIX H: MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**



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

Email: cnakurucounty@yahoo.com
cnakurucounty@gmail.com

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAKURU COUNTY
P.O. BOX 81
NAKURU

When replying please quote:

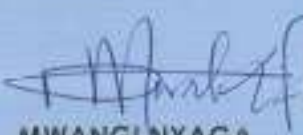
Ref No. CC-SR. EDU 12/1/2/VOL.V11/26 21st November, 2022

Deputy County Commissioners
NAKURU COUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – MS. MARTHA TERIKI CHEBET

This is to confirm that the above named person of Pan Africa Christian University has been authorized to carry out research on ***Psycho-Social Wellbeing of Divorcees in Relation to Church Policy on Divorce in Selected Evangelical Churches*** in Nakuru County for a period ending 7th November, 2023.

Please accord her all the necessary support to facilitate the success of her research.


MWANGI NYAGA
 FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAKURU COUNTY

