

**FACTORS INFLUENCING COHABITATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN MCK
KAAGA CIRCUIT, MERU COUNTY, KENYA.**

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**A Research Thesis submitted to the School of Education and Social Sciences, in partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the conferment of a Master of Arts Degree in
Counseling Psychology of Kenya Methodist University.**

OCTOBER, 2019

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university / college for academic credit.

Signature Date

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MCO – 3 – 0905 – 3 / 2015

Declaration by the Supervisors

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DEDICATION

This research thesis is dedicated to my parents Mr & Mrs Muriira that has always offered a shoulder to lean on and for their immense support. Your warmth and support was overwhelming.

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ABSTRACT

Cohabitation is on the upward trend globally, especially among young adults. Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga circuit, Meru, has recorded a decline in church weddings in recent years, with cohabitation being the main alternative. The purpose of the study was to analyze factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of financial ability, family of origin, peer pressure, premarital pregnancy and premarital counseling on cohabitation among young people. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The study target population was 780 participants where a sample of 251 was realized using stratified random sampling and simple random sampling. The sample comprised 235 young adults, 11 youth counselors and 5 church ministers. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants while an interview schedule was administered to church ministers and youth counselors. A pilot study was conducted in MCK Kinoru Circuit, targeting 25 young adults, 2 church ministers and 2 youth counselors. The data was analyzed through SPSS and presented in percentages frequency tables and figures. The study established a strong and positive relationship between financial background and cohabitation among young adults ($r=0.747$, $p<0.01$); family of origin had a moderate positive influence on cohabitation ($r=0.548$, $p<0.01$); peer pressure had a moderate strong positive influence ($r= 0.634$, $p<0.01$); premarital pregnancy had a moderate positive influence on cohabitation, and premarital counseling had a weak negative influence on cohabitation ($r=-.19$, $p=0.03$). The study established that lack of financial ability specially to solemnize a wedding was the major cause of cohabitation among the young adults. further, family context influenced young adults to cohabit when they decide to form family unions; the more peers of young adults were cohabiting the higher the likelihood of young adults cohabiting and vice versa; premarital pregnancy was a key contributor to cohabitation as the welfare of the child had to be secured, and the church's premarital counseling program had little influence in controlling cohabitation. The study recommended a sliding and deciding psycho-education approach to counselling, engagement of young adults in income generating project, (MCK) Kaaga Circuit to ensure church weddings are affordable to young people by carrying out mass weddings, counseling program should be revised to include contemporary issues that contribute to cohabiting among young adults. The findings of this study will be of critical importance to young Christian adults, church ministers, youth counselors, youth development experts and the academic fraternity, particularly experts in counseling and marriage issues.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GOK	: Government of Kenya
MCK	: Methodist Church in Kenya
IBM SPSS	: International Business Machines Statistical Package for Social Sciences

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The study sought to establish factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in Kaaga circuit, Kaaga Synod. This chapter therefore gives an introduction of the study by outlining the meaning of cohabitation, enlisting the factors that led to this phenomenon. It further discussed the role of counseling in addressing the issue of cohabitation. The background of the study was based on the global, regional and local information.

There has been a gradual shift in the quest towards stable families in recent decades. This is attributed to many young people opting to cohabit before marriage, Litcher and Qian, (2008). The late teens and the period between 20 and 25 years of age are considered the most likely time for young people to enter into unofficial heterosexual live-in relationships. Moreover, as Tomka, (2013), observes, multiple cohabitation before marriage is becoming the norm. Incidentally, cohabitation is viewed by some cohabitants as an experimental time, during which to prepare the marriage, hence the need to understand motivations behind this practice.

Globally, Waggoner, (2016) in his book youth and cohabitation asserts that marriage is declining at a time when cohabitation is on the increase. He further observes that from 2001 to 2010, the American population increased by 9.71%, during which time official marriage increased by 3.7% compared to cohabitation which grew by 41.4%. In the year 2010, a study conducted in America by Strong and Cohen, (2016) indicated that 39% of American Christians majority being Protestants felt that marriage was becoming obsolete, yet only 28% volunteered similar answers in the 1970s.

Currently, there are more children born in cohabiting families than those born in single-parent homes, indicating a steady increase and preference for cohabitation. Kohm and Groen, (2005) corroborate this information, asserting that cohabitation is on the increase in the American society. The trend emerged in the 1970s and has gradually become acceptable among many Americans. Apparently, Americans are not opposed to official marriage but certain circumstance predispose some, especially low-income earners and people with little education, to cohabitation.

The United Kingdom (UK) was found to have 2.3 million cohabiting couples in the year 2006 according to the Office of National Statistics, (2007). This trend occurred alongside other related issues like increase in divorce cases, delayed entry into matrimony; delayed childbearing and increase in extra-marital abortion. Morgan, (2000) attributes the rise in cohabitation to the increase in individualism, selfishness, deterioration of the institution of marriage and entrenched pervasive nature of democracy. However, even though society is generally in flux, the proliferation of cohabitation vis-à-vis marriage in the UK is anomalous considering the Christian orientation of the populace (Kohn & Groen, 2005).

Regionally, cohabitation has been found to be growing in popularity among young people in many African cities according to a research conducted by Bocquier and Khasakhala, (2009). Additionally, Calvès, (2016) underlines the universality of marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa, but observe that marriage has undergone major changes in the last couple of decades in the region. Dodoo and Klein, (2007) observe that there is a thin line between marriage and cohabitation in Sub-Saharan Africa. While union formation is not uniform across the region, marriage cannot be reduced to a single event. Further, culture and tradition take precedence over Christian marriage

unions. The existence of polygamy makes cohabitation all the more permissible. In a study carried out among university students in Nigeria, Ojewola and Akinduyo, (2017) concluded that cohabitation was prevalent among learners. The practice was especially rampant among non-residential students, considering those who resided within learning institutions were subject to strict rules and regulations that prohibited cohabitation. Calvès, (2016) observed that among Burkinabe youth, in Burkinafaso cohabitation was on the upward trend, and many children were exposed to cohabitation in the formative years.

Locally, Kenya, like elsewhere in Africa, marriage is not an event but a process, Bocquier and Khom, (2005). Cohabitation is often regarded as part of the process of marriage. Once a traditional marriage is conducted, a couple may begin living together as husband and wife even before civil or religious rites are conducted. In essence, cohabitation is condoned and accepted as part of marriage. In a study carried out in Kenya to investigate factors that influenced union formation by Mureithi, (2013), further, established that union formation is near-universal, irrespective of whether the unions are Christian marriages or cohabitations. The study also found out that informal unions decreased with age, which implies that young people are more likely to cohabit than older ones. Moreover, the study further indicated that cohabitation is often a stepping stone to marriage as opposed to being an alternative to the latter. The study concluded that in Nairobi, Christian marriage had become the exception with cohabitation being the norm. These findings are buttressed by assertions made by (Strong & Cohen, 2016).

Cohabitations are colloquially referred to as ‘come-we-stay’ marriages in Kenya as Pike, Mojola and Kabiru, (2016) asserts. It is estimated that 87% of males and 72 percent of females of ages 25

to 34 years are in cohabitations. This is in contrast to 8% of men and 19% of women in the same age groups who are in Christian marriages Pike, Mojola and Kabiru, (2016). Chigiti, (2012) and Mureithi, (2013) both reported efforts from various sectors of the Kenyan society to legalize cohabitations. These attempts attest to the prevalence and popularity of cohabitation in Kenya, a nation that is steeped in religion to the extent that about 80% of the population is said to be Christian. Considering the Methodist Church in Kenya and Christianity in general, are antagonistic to cohabitation, it is ironical that young adults from Christian backgrounds are engaging in the practice.

Some noteworthy studies that bear detached similarities to the proposed study include those by Muriithi-Kabaria, (2006), who carried out a similar study in Kenyatta University, Kenya; and Khom, (2009) who researched on cohabitation and marriage in Nairobi. Both studies focused on cohabitation and young adults which makes it necessary for this study to borrow from them. Cohabitation has been a major concern in MCK Kaaga circuit with number of young adults opting for it other than formalizing their marriages. No study on cohabitation among young adults had been conducted within the MCK Kaaga Synod, thus validating the need for this study.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

The institution of marriage is considered and upheld as the foundation of the family and the cornerstone of the society. It is now threatened by cohabitation, a form of union that entails heterosexual relationships and coexistence devoid of religious formalization. Present reality indicates that the Christian Church, an advocate of chastity before marriage, marital fidelity and aversion to divorce, is recording a decline in church weddings among young adults alluding that cohabitation is becoming more preferred. The MCK Kaaga Circuit experienced a reduced number

of weddings for young adults; recording 10, 6 and 4 weddings in 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively against a total of 750, 753, and 757 respectively registered young adults in the circuit (Kaaga synod statistical returns, 2017). In an effort to curb this, the Church engages in much advocacy for formal Christian marriages through, counseling seminars, and ladies' /men mentorship sessions conducted by invited counseling professionals, and biblical teachings. However, despite these efforts, cohabitation among young adults is on the rise. Verbal communication with MCK Kaaga circuit leaders and ministers indicated that 93 young adults were cohabiting (L. Murangiri, personal communication, May, 5th,2019). Those that choose Christian marriages are likely to remain married and enjoy marriage bliss and thus productive in marital life. Therefore, in view of this, it was pertinent to ask how cohabitation among church attending couples can be mitigated. This study therefore was critical to establish the factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit and propose a model of counseling as a mitigating measure.

1.3.Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing cohabitation among church attending young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit and aimed at proposing mitigating measures.

1.4.Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine the extent of influence of financial status of a couple on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.
- ii. To establish the extent to which family background in influences cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.

- iii. To examine the extent of influence of peer pressure on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.
- iv. To investigate the extent of influence of premarital pregnancy on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.
- v. To establish the extent of influence of counseling in addressing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit.

1.5. Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the influence financial status of the couples on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit?
- ii. How much does the family background influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit?
- iii. To what extent does peer pressure influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit?
- iv. How does premarital pregnancy influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit?
- v. To what extent does counseling address cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit?

1.6. Justification of the study

It waters down the sanctity and fidelity of marriage taught and encouraged by the society and religious leaders. In view of this therefore, Church is the primary institution with which young

adults can be helped to see the need of officiating their marriages. The efforts by the Church have not been exhaustive in addressing cohabitation. In view of this therefore the Church can be seen in part as a failure in addressing this problem. In addition, the locally reviewed literature has not suggested any mitigating measure and therefore the study would add new knowledge to the existing corpus of information. The study therefore, was necessary to establish factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit and propose a counselling model that is evidence based as a mitigating measure for cohabitation.

1.7. Significance of the Study

This findings of the study may be of critical significance to the Kaaga Circuit Church administration as it seeks to prepare its young congregants for marital life by providing material for seminars. Secondly, the findings of the study will be of help to experts and practitioners in church ministry to understand the cohabitation problem among the young adults and take the necessary mentorship programs for them. The findings may also enlighten marriage counselors who conduct pre-marital and marital counseling, to equip them with knowledge to handle cohabitation related issues. The study's findings will also help in youth development since it may offer some additional knowledge for addressing cohabitation among the youth and in addition to creating room for discourse on young adult and cohabitation. Additionally, the findings may augment the existing corpus of information on cohabitation. Cohabitation is increasingly challenging the marriage institution yet not many studies have been carried out on the former topic. Further, it is important to study cohabitation among young people in the Circuit, considering the Christian upbringing and the fact that cohabitation is not acceptable within the church context.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

The main Limitation of this study emanated from some respondents who were suspicious of the purpose of the study and therefore unwilling to participate. Additionally, this study was limited within Kaaga circuit and therefore this may not be a representation of the entire Kaaga Synod and other youth. The fact that the study considered five factors namely; financial status, premarital pregnancy, peer pressure, and family background, limited the study because there are other factors that could have been considered. Furthermore, the study was limited to young adults aged 18-35 thus leaving out the adults above 35 years who could have more information about cohabitation.

1.9. Delimitation of the Study

The study was carried out in MCK Kaaga circuit in Kaaga Synod, Meru County, Kenya among young adults aged between 18 and 35 years who were members of the eleven churches of Kaaga Circuit, of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK). The study respondents were composed of 11 youth counsellors, 5 youth ministers and 764 young adults. The young adults of 18-35 years were considered since this is a critical stage where most are looking for partners and engaging in intimacy and 93 were already cohabiting. Other ministers in the circuit were not involved since the youth counsellors were considered to have much information about the youth. The key variables of the study were financial status, family of origin, peer pressure, premarital pregnancy and counseling within the context of cohabitation among young adults

1.10. Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that permission and all research authorizations would be given by the University, NACOSTI and the Church and they indeed they were granted. Furthermore, the study was based on the assumption that the respondents would cooperate and offer unbiased responses to the research questions.

1.11. Operational Definition of Terms

Circuit:	A group of local Methodist churches operating in a common geographical area under a Superintendent Minister within the MCK hierarchy
Cohabitation:	The practice of young adults living together and having sexual relations before religious solemnization.
Cohabitants:	Young adult partners in a cohabitation arrangement.
Family background:	Familial influences and examples that may influence the type of union formation a young adult is likely to adopt.
Financial status:	A young adult's ability to cater for his or her own basic financial needs, which influences union formation decisions.
Marriage:	The union of a man and wife in holy matrimony under the guidance of the church
Peer Pressure:	The express or covert influence of fellow young adults and their union formation decisions on other young adults' decisions on union formation
Counseling:	Structured guidelines and advice given to the young adults by the religious leaders.
Premarital pregnancy:	Situation in which a young female adult conceives before getting married officially.
Synod:	A group of MCK circuits operating under a bishop in the MCK hierarchy

Union formation: The coming together of a male and a female adult to live together, either within a Christian marriage arrangement or cohabitation.

Young adults: Young people aged between 18 and 35 years, who have not entered into a Christian marriage.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Introduction

This chapter contains a review of relevant literature based on the objectives of the study. Information is derived from both primary and secondary sources. The main sections covered include cohabitation versus marriage, financial ability and cohabitation, family background and cohabitation, peer pressure and cohabitation, premarital pregnancy and cohabitation, and counseling and cohabitation. In addition, this chapter also describes the theoretical framework to be applied in the study, and presents the conceptual framework for the study.

2.2.Cohabitation versus Marriage

Cohabitation is defined as living together as (or like) husband and wife without being married, or living together in an intimate relationship in the manner of a husband and wife according to Statsky, (2014). Parties in cohabitation are referred to as cohabitants. Cohabiting is often juxtaposed and defined in relation to marriage since the former is either perceived to be antecedent to, a threat to, or an alternative to the former. According to Oxford Dictionary.com, (2017) cohabitation is having intimate relationships between unmarried heterosexuals who live together. Statsky, (2014) further observes that, divorce, remarriage, single-parenthood and step-families are partly to blame for the erosion of the marriage institution. Cohabitation is, therefore, considered part of a raft of practices that have distorted union formation in many societies across the world.

Marriage is the union of two adult heterosexuals to establish a family. Companionship and procreation are some of the reasons for getting married, and also it is often a societal affair that involves more than the couple. Consequently, the success or failure of a marriage is of concern

to the spouses as well as the community they live in. According to Strong and Cohen (2016) marriage entails assuming new privileges and obligations within the confines of the society. In return, society confers respect on formally married people.

A christian marriage legitimizes social status and creates a set of legitimately recognized rights and duties. In essence, marriage is a communal affair, especially in African societies, and every community has its own obvious and subtle definitions of this institution. Pike, Mojola and Kabiru, (2016) however, argue that the practice of marriage is not uniform across societies though there are numerous commonalities. Some societies are predominantly monogamous; others practice polygamy, while a mixture of the two is also common in some communities. Polyandry is permitted in some communities. Payment of dowry is principally by the groom, but in some societies the bride pays to get a husband. Societies steeped in culture frown upon open courtship and do not expect women to make the first move in courtship.

The decline of religious belief to a cultural climate is found to be favoring cohabitation. Tomka, (2013) a study conducted in USA among 13,000 young adults found that people without any religious preference and Jews highly approved cohabitation than any other group. Episcopalians were followed by Roman Catholic Church and Presbyterians respectively while all the other fundamentalist groups were found to score lower than average in approval of cohabitation. The research further revealed that young women who frequent church services several times a week have a 14% rate only on cohabitation, those who have attended once a month were more than three times as likely to cohabit as those who attended once a week. Religious people are exposed to strong negative sanctions against cohabitation. Additionally, a research conducted among the Roman Catholics in France revealed that 50% of those who attend church (regular and irregular) entering first unions cohabited first, as compared to 70% of those that do not attend. This revealed that the Catholic young adult at odds with the Roman

Catholic official teaching. Cohabitation is a public affair that attracts censure from many Christians. The direct approach from singleness to marriage elicits religious approval while on the other hand cohabitation is strongly associated with less religious people (Litcher, 2008).

The motivation behind the decision to get married also varies from individual to another Morgan, (2000). Some cite emotional, financial, legal, social and religious reasons. The decision on whom one marries, and whom they expect to live with for an entire lifetime often boils down to personal desire, parental influence, social rules and predetermined marriage rules and regulations. Further, the younger generation's attitude towards and view of marriage is to a large extent a product of the examples portrayed by older members of the society.

Marriage is a contract, recognizable by the government of respective states, social organization and religious groups. Civil unions are formalized under a country's marriage laws as stipulated in the constitution, in the absence of any religious interventions Bocque & Khasakala, (2009). Civil marriage has widespread acceptance because they involve minimal preparation and expenditure. Moreover, it is worthwhile to note that marriage becomes meaningful when there is the mutual approval of the new status acquired by the couple, accompanied by the fresh rights, obligations, and sacrifices. Marriage also implies that the rest of the society ought to recognize and accept the new status acquired by the newlyweds in the society.

Marriage and cohabitation share similarities, a quality that makes the latter appealing to young people. Such resemblances include pooling of resources by partners, sexual exclusivity and division of labor based on gender. The disparities, on the other hand, include the fact that cohabitation is structural variation of family relationships. Specifically, fewer children are born in cohabitation relationships as opposed to marriage. Further, cohabiting partners tend to be younger than married couples, thus cementing the notion that cohabitation is often the stepping stone to marriage. Moreover, Cohabitations are said to most likely last for shorter periods than

conventional marriages, according to Long, (2014). Another significant difference between marriage and cohabitation is that the latter is less acceptable in society, considering religious dogmas and cultural norms that hold marriage in high regard. In addition, in most countries, marriage is recognized by the state while cohabitation is not sanctioned (Rhoades G.K. 2009).

Cohabitation has no known or definite origins. However, theorists like Haskey, (2001) opine that increase in secularist practices must have eroded the high regarded with which marriage was held thus creating room for cohabitation to thrive. Another critical contributor to cohabitation is said to be increase in women in labor, with the traditional role of the husband or man as a provider being threatened, and women realizing they could have a greater role in union formation. The rise of cohabitation is also attributed to the diverse meanings that are traditionally assigned to marriage, particularly the fact that the perception of marriage as a social-cultural function has been on the decline. Other reasons that may have spawned cohabitation include the reduction of risks associated with marriage, erosion of kinship and the gradual decline of the link between sex and procreation. Coast, (2009) opines that attitudes towards cohabitation have over the years shifted gradually, from utmost rejection of the practice to the point of being normative in modern society.

Posel, Rudwick and Casale, (2011) observe that despite the increase in cohabitation among the youth in Africa, there is a dearth of research studies on this issue. There is also a glaring lack of distinction between marriage and cohabitation among researchers. Demographers gloss over the fact that values and perceptions of marriage among the youth are rapidly changing. As Cole and Thomas, (2009) observe, young African urbanites are the most likely people to disregard societal and religious norms and engage in sexual unions before marriage. Consequently,

having become part of public discourse and social order, cohabitation cannot be ignored as a research issue.

2.3. Influence of Financial Status of the Cohabitants on Cohabitation

Economic hardship is a key reason for cohabitation, Doodoo and Klein, (2007). In addition, financial necessity is a critical motive for cohabitation. Cohabitants tend not to pool their incomes, opting to contribute the agreed share of co-existence. Moreover, cohabitations may arise from the need by one cohabitant to have someone support them financially. Such arrangements expose cohabiting couples to the vagaries of economic fluctuations in the long run. Another perspective of the influence of finances on cohabitation is advanced by Edin and Reed, (2005) who carried out a study in USA to investigate low Christian marriage rates among the poor, with particular interest in social and economic barriers. This study established that while many of the respondents valued marriage, they were reluctant to commit permanently to the union due to financial constraints related to marriage. Men, particularly, with low earnings, perceived it barrier to christian marriage. Cohabitation was perceived, therefore, as an arrangement that allowed participants to enjoy companionship and conjugal rights without the economic constraints associated with marriage, especially for men.

Religious beliefs are said to be associated with certain financial attitudes among the cohabitants. A study conducted by Catholic Church Diocese of Phoenix, (2011) in USA found that America's five million Christian couples live together to save money. This is despite the fact that the church advocates for Christian matrimony while emphasizing the doctrines of the church that marriage should never be pegged on financial needs and desires. Marriage is meant to be for companionship and therefore it should never be influenced by the financial ability of a person. Additionally, a study conducted in South Africa by Mashal, (2011) affirms that low

income Christian workers shun formal Christian matrimony in favor of cohabitation due to the financial implication of the process. They consider prioritizing other financial needs over pursuing matrimony in church. The research further established that some middle income Christian workers and high income workers engage in Christian matrimony whereas others prefer cohabitation as they consider the Christian matrimony as a 'no pay back' affair.

Maag, (2015) observe that marriage is on the decline particularly among people with lower incomes, thus corroborating the views of (Edin and Reed, 2005). While marriage is associated with better incomes, improved living conditions and future prospects for children, efforts by Western governments to promote marriage have not been successful. Young people, especially those with financial constraints, opt to cohabit instead of entering the more socially acceptable marriage arrangement. According to Musick and Michelmore, (2014), cohabiting couples are more likely to break up than married ones. However, despite facts pointing to that fact, young people with low incomes tend to favor the latter.

In a study carried out in the USA by Waggoner, (2016), it was established that majority of cohabiting couples were often poor, less educated and younger, with the likelihood of having children from multiple partners. Many cohabitants were either barely surviving or were living in abject poverty. Some cohabiting couples could eventually transform the relationship into marriage but that was not guaranteed. The study also established that white, working class people were more likely to be married than people of color.

Some scholars, however, differ with the notion that financial ability is the most critical factor in determining whether youth will cohabit before marriage. Calvès, (2016) assert that in Burkina Faso, cohabitation is mostly preferred by the young adults who consider it as a way of taking care of the hard economic times. Instead of being considered the poor person's version

of marriage, cohabitation is viewed as a convenient option for persons who want to enjoy sexual relations while avoiding marital norms and familial responsibilities. Mureithi, (2013) in his study presents another angle of disagreement with economic power being the principal factoring cohabitation by asserting that in Nairobi, Kenya, men with no stable economic background tended to put off marriage until their economic situations improved. Employment status was a critical determinant of the time to enter into marriage or cohabitation for men, hence explaining why many students did not enter into unions before completing studies.

Cognizant of the role of financial factor in influencing the decision to cohabit among Kenyatta University students (Kenya), Muriithi-Kabaria, (2006) recommended that students from poor families should be considered for increased funding. This emanated from the fact that young women from poor families were vulnerable to cohabitation as a strategy of meeting their financial needs. Government provided loans were inadequate to cater for all the needs of students, and those unable to afford additional money were susceptible to richer students who would lure them to cohabitation, especially when the needy female students conceived, following premarital sex.

2.4. Family background and Cohabitation

Family influence on children's attitudes to marriage issues are extremely significant. Research has shown that experiences in families of origin, particularly parental distress and divorce, can have significant effects on young people's future relationship attitudes and experiences (Cherlin, 2009). Hamilton, Martin and Ventura, (2011) further opine that poor Americans did not consider marriage as a prerequisite for child-bearing. That unmarried couples often had children from previous relationships and this was considered normal.

Religious schemas often associate attitudes towards marriage to the values learnt from the family of origin. This means that a child raised in a family of cohabiting parents and even other family members most likely learn from them. The family of origin instills values and mostly the young adults raised in such a family are likely to exhibit the learnt values. This association has been attributed to both doctrinal aspects of the Christian tradition and social and institutional aspects of Churches (Cohen, 2010).

According to Hamilton, Martin and Ventura, (2011) 41% of the children born in the US in 2011 were from unmarried parents. Lichter (2012) observed that almost 60% of these children were from cohabitations. Kohm and Groen (2005) opine that children who are born or have lived in cohabiting families are likely to accept cohabitation and adopt it later in life. In a study carried out in USA by Waggoner, (2016), established that cohabitation was not the preferred form of union formation among Christians. Respondents in the study (including those in cohabitations) expressed their desire to one day get married formally.

Family background affects marriage and union-formation decisions of young people. Children from families that had undergone divorce were likely to value the role of mother above that of a wife, thus predisposing them to either remaining unmarried or cohabiting. Female children from divorced families were also apprehensive of marriage, fearing they might end up divorced like their parents. Young college students from divorced families also tended to place less value on marriage. The study in Burkina Faso conducted by Calvès, (2016), established that early exposure of children to cohabitation predisposes them to the practice when they become young adults of marriageable age.

Family background influences the views of children and youth on marriage and cohabitation as opined by Manning, Cohen and Smock, (2012). Such influence is exerted through social

modeling, parental advice, religious values and control of finances within the family. Cherlin, (2009), argue that overt or covert approval of cohabitation by parents contributes significantly to the decision to cohabit among young adults. Parental communication of approval or disapproval towards cohabitation is another critical factor in determining whether young people will cohabit or not. Further, religious teachings from parents to children play a socializing role, which implies that religious parents who frown on cohabitation are likely to influence their children to eschew the practice in adulthood.

Reviewed literature, while delving into the role of family background in determining cohabitation decisions and practices, fails to connect cohabitation to young people, especially in the context of Christianity. Further, the African young Christian adult, while growing up learning church teachings, also operates within the context of a powerful cultural influence which may be amenable to cohabitation. While the church is unequivocal in condemnation of cohabitation, young people emanate from family backgrounds that value the cultural approach to marriage more than what the church prescribes. Consequently, it was important to investigate the extent to which family background influences the youth in deciding whether to cohabit.

2.5. Influence of peer Pressure on Cohabitation

A close link between peer socialization and formation of attitudes towards sex and marriage issues, Mashal, (2011). Young adults even those who are in church are influenced by social networks when deciding the type of person to date and whether to cohabit before marriage. Considering that cohabitation is not marriage in the real sense of the word, and society and religious groups tend to support christian marriage more than cohabitation, many cohabitants, or those who intend to venture into the arrangement, rely on the approval of their peers for comfort. Rindfuss, (2004) carried out a study on cohabitation in Japan and established a close

link between having a positive disposition towards cohabitation and knowing people who were in similar arrangements. The study also established that there were a significant number of people who favored cohabitation due to the influence of people they knew were cohabiting. It was evident that Japan was undergoing gradual transformation in union formation that could impact the demographic framework. On the other hand, the fact that there were high rates of separation among cohabiting couples in cohabitation also discouraged about 40% of the respondents in the study from the practice. In essence, peer networks had both positive and negative impacts on the perceptions of respondents towards cohabitation.

Additionally, Coast, (2009) carried out a study among the Christians in the UK that established that young adults who approve of cohabitation have a high likelihood of entering into this kind of union formation in future. When 11 to 15-year-olds were asked to indicate their opinions on whether cohabitation was wrong, their responses were ambivalent, with about a third of them neither for nor against the statement, hence suggesting that cohabitation was a likely option in future. Calves, (2016) found that early exposure of children to cohabitation predisposes them to the practice when they become of marriageable age. In essence, the Community and peers exert indirect influence on young people to cohabit, since the practice is acceptable in the society. Manning, Cohen and Smock, (2012) in their research on the influence of peer pressure on cohabitation among the youth observed peer pressure is a critical determinant of whether a young adult will cohabit or not.

A study conducted among South African Christians by Mashal, (2011) indicates that majority of the young adults that indulge in cohabitation do so because of peer pressure. Despite abstinence and sanctity of marriage teachings given in church seminars and sermons, the young adults look at their peers and give in to the cohabitation temptation because ‘everyone does it’.

They get into this act despite the church teachings to avoid being laughed at and to gain affirmation from peers. This influences acceptance in a particular age group.

In agreement with the research carried out by Mashal and Litcher, (2012) further argues that pressure from the society is likely to coerce young people irrespective of their religious affiliations to venture into union formation before undergoing critical preparation. Muriithi-Kabaria, (2006) also established that peer pressure was a critical factor influencing cohabitation decisions and practices among Kenyatta University students (Kenya). The study established that there was a cohabitation prevalence rate of 27.4%, which is relatively high for a learning institution, and which was likely to make cohabiting appear normal and desirable to other students. The Kenyatta University study and the one by Ojewola and Akinduyo, (2017) carried out in Nigeria indicate the rising popularity of preference for cohabitation among university students of various religious afflictions in Africa, a suggestion that peer pressure is a significant factor when young adults make the decision to cohabit.

While the reviewed studies examined young people's attitudes towards cohabitation in relation to peer pressure, there was a gap to be filled in relation to youth within the Methodist Church of Kenya, Meru County. The study sought to collect data from youth who attend the Methodist Church in Kaaga Circuit, and the young adults were drawn from all walks of life, not just institutions of higher learning. Peer pressure and cohabitation among young people were investigated from the context of a specific denomination in specified geographical location.

2.6. Influence of pre-Marital Pregnancy on Cohabitation

Recent decades have witnessed a significant shift in the marriage and courtship process to the extent that young adults delve into premarital relationship as a precursor to marriage. Cohabitation is presently considered to be the normal pathway to matrimony. In essence, dating

is succeeded by cohabitation then marriage (Cherlin, 2009). Young adults who follow this path have to contend with the possibility of the girl conceiving, thus complicating the process of the envisioned marriage. As Lichter, (2012) asserts, pregnancy is pivotal in the decision to cohabit both for young adults and couples that are already cohabiting.

A research conducted by Catholic Church in USA found that the vast majority of single pregnant young adults do not form a union before the birth of their child. However only 22% cohabit and 5% marry yet majority of those who get pregnant eventually cohabit which is against the church teachings on sanctity of marriage (Dearce & Thornton, 2007).

The emphasis of Christian teaching is abstinence and marriage in church. The teachings of the Catholic Church discourage pregnancies before marriage. However, they have associated young adult's cohabitation with early childbearing. In as much as the young adults would not be planning to live together, the situation changes when they realize that pregnancy has come thus forcing them to settle down without the blessing of the church in a holy matrimony.

A study carried out in Nairobi, Kenya by Mureithi, (2009) to establish the determinants of union formation, concluded that where a child is born before marriage, fathers were more likely to enter into cohabitation with the mother of the child than in cases where no child had been conceived. Men were likely to take responsibility of Children they sired within a cohabitation relationship. For women, the study established that the first pregnancy was more likely to lead to union formation than subsequent ones. In essence, such women were likely to enter into cohabitation for the sake of the child or to ward of stigma from the society. It was concluded that marriage was the exception, while cohabitation was the norm in Nairobi.

High prevalence of cohabitation in Kenyatta University was also due to premarital sex. Considering university students were young adults and a large number lived off campus, sexual activity was rampant, leading to pregnancy and unplanned for children. This made the pregnant students to opt to get married to the fathers of their children for material and moral support. Owing to the large numbers of pregnant students and owing to their vulnerability to cohabitation after giving birth, the study recommended that the university should build special hostels for female students who were either pregnant or had given birth while undergoing studies Muriithi-Kabaria, (2006). The young adults who find themselves carrying pregnancies before marriage then cling to those that are responsible for it so that they can bring up the child together though it was unplanned. All these research carried out point at premarital pregnancy as a factor that to a great extent influences young adults to cohabit.

The reviewed literature investigated various aspects of premarital pregnancy and how it influences young people to decide to cohabit. However, while one of the studies assessed premarital pregnancy within the Catholic Church in the US, none delved into the same issue within the Methodist Church, especially not within MCK Kaaga Circuit, Meru. The study sought to establish the issue how young people within the circuit were making decisions to cohabit or not based on the probability of the female partner conceiving before marriage.

2.7.Counseling and Cohabitation

A critical factor in proliferation of marital problems, which in turn contributes to increase in divorce for young people, is absence of counseling for young people Connaway, (2010). Counseling sessions before entering into matrimony have been established to reduce marital conflicts significantly. In a study carried out by Haskey, (2001) to compare the effect on premarital counseling in cohabiting and non-cohabiting couples, it was established that couples that successfully underwent counseling before marriage had more fulfilling relationships than those who did not. In addition, the study also found out that counseling benefitted the individual

independently, not just the couple. Counseling was also a significant factor in reduction of future divorce.

Generally, counseling is an ongoing process. As children grow up, they receive information on marriage and pertinent responsibilities from various sources. Counseling is availed directly or indirectly to young people who come from stable families and those who are active in their respective religious faiths, where it is mandatory to be counseled before marriage. In religious settings, premarital counseling is often mandatory before a couple is allowed to have a wedding. With the advent and prevalence of HIV/Aids, some religious organization requires people intending to get married to undergo a mandatory test as a precaution (Pullum & Staveteig, 2013). These practices are part of the process of getting married, which cohabiting couples are not privileged to undergo. For most of the young people, however, mass media and social media are the key sources of information and examples on successful marriages. Arguably, the latter two are barely the best source of information for stable marriages, going by divorce rates among celebrities and premarital sex scenes in movies, to name a few.

Following a study on prevalence and practice of cohabitation among Kenya University (Kenya) students, Muriithi-Kabaria, (2006) concluded, from the recommendations of the students (respondents) that counseling needed to be up scaled in the university. This followed findings that most cohabitants lacked guidance on life and marriage issues from home. Moreover, being an environment that valued and encouraged freedom, the university was not conducive for the moral development of some of the students. The study also recommended involvement of religious leaders and concomitant teachings in the lives of university students to deter cohabitation. It is evident that since cohabiting couples rarely undergo counseling before marriage, the quality of their relationships is likely to be low, with high chances of separation.

Cohabiting couples are considered to be ‘living in sin’, thus negating the possibility of benefiting from such crucial counsel.

Counselling has several approaches for the purposes of averting cohabitation. Sliding versus deciding counselling approach seems the best to be employed because it guides the much needed empowerment through education to the young people (S. M. Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006). This study recommends this approach.

2.7.1 Christian teachings influence on Cohabitation

The Church teaches that the more the image of God is realized in a person's life, the more a person becomes what God intended him or her to be. In agreement Manning, W. D. Cohen. J. A. and Smock P. J. (2012), argues that the sanctity of marriage is found in God’s original purpose for marital institution. Therefore, understanding of God’s intention for marriage is key to making decisions regarding any form of relationship. These teachings are grounded in various biblical principles; “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4. Further, it’s actually the will of God that people solemnize their weddings (Schröder, 2008). *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Many more verse in the bible are against cohabitation, *“...It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.”* 1 Corinthians 7:1-2.. *“But I say to the unmarried and the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry (Manning, Cohen, & Smock, 2011). For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”* 1 Corinthians 7:8-9.

The Methodist Church in Kenya too engages in educating the young adults on the importance of Christian marriages as opposed to Cohabitation. Seminars, mentorship sessions, fellowships,

preaching and open forums are held so as to mold both the spiritual and moral dimension of the young adults in regards to the issue of marriage (Wendy D., Cohen, & Smock, 2009)

Cohabitation however, has become socially acceptable even amongst some Christians, although it is contrary to the most fundamental teachings of the Christian faith.

(Mashal, 2011). Observes that the silence of the church in addressing cohabitation correlates with the secular view that no one should pass judgement in this regard. The individual is said to have the right to determine his or her own moral standards, and no one including the bible has the right to say anything about cohabitation. In this case therefore, the church may choose to remain silent on such matters (Chigiti, J. 2012). This study therefore came up with a sliding and deciding psychoeducation model for relationships as a mitigating measure for cohabitation.

2.7.2 Sliding & Deciding Education for Relationships

This is a psychoeducation model on relationships, mainly focusing on; associations with relationship quality, commitment, and infidelity. It was propagated by (Stanley, M., Rhoades, K. & Owen, J. 2006). This approach focusses initially on education with individuals after which groups can be focused on. According to Stanely et al, (2011) this approach is aimed at sharing knowledge with couples who are in some serious relationships but also with those intending to get into relationships. Women are considered more committed in pre-engagement cohabitations and therefore they are more likely to have big losses financially and through pre-marital pregnancies Adams (Adams, Jones,1997). This approach therefore targets women more with education for relationships that is individual based. Additionally, men benefit a great deal through group approaches (Murrow, Shi, 2010).

Sliding and deciding approach includes teaching on communication skills with the aim of helping the young adults clarify their expectations in this relationships. Owen J. and Fincham, (2010) is in agreement that the communication skills gained facilitates clear communications

among the cohabiting partners and among the prenuptial cohabiters and testers about their relationship commitment levels, discussion about their future, the meaning and challenges of cohabitation visa- a-vis christian marriage. All these helps the youngsters make informed decisions in regard to their relationship.

Sliding and deciding suggests that the best time to offer this education to the youth is when they are in college and also out of school in the churches Owen, (2011) since meting them at such venues and avenues, none of them is identified as a cohabitant. The training offered includes exploration of reasons for or against cohabitation and Christian marriage. Additionally, the training focusses on fears of assuming each other's responsibilities and baggage, and also the experiences that each would like to have in their marriage relationship (Barta,& Kiene, 2005).

Additionally, relationship education curricula include issues related to commitment, expectations, and future directly to help cohabiting couples to determine the direction of their relationship, (Stanely, & Rhoades, 2010). Parenting and co- parenting is another aspect of training included in this approach. It helps the youth realize the folly of getting pregnant for the partner without clarity about their future together and moreover being parents together (Waite et al ,2002). The strength of this counselling approach is indicated through studies and practice e.g.

Penke, (2008), in his study on beyond social sexual orientations asserted that it is paramount to help the youth explore their own expectations in regards to cohabitation, as well as how it may or may not change their relationships and eventually influence future relationship goals. Further in agreement, Sabourin et al, (2005) in their research about psychological assessment, concluded that the trainer may need to help the youth consider how cohabitation may affect their commitment levels, plans for the future, and power dynamics., Loving, (2007) in his study on behavior, physiology and outcomes of relationships, alluded to the fact that, teaching the

youth about the connection in romantic relationships may help them become aware of their physiological response to stressful experiences. This helps them learn some strategies, such as mindfulness, in order to help them regulate their heart-brain response to stressful triggers in relationships and additionally perhaps even share, their emotions and stress states of their partners. When one person in a relationship is stressed or upset, the other member of that relationship often feels such emotions as well. I recommend this psychoeducation approach to the Methodist Church in Kenya to help avert cohabitation among the youth. See appendix F for the training manual.

2.8.Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the two theories: The psychosocial theory of Development by Erik Erikson and Ecological systems theory by Urie Broffener.

2.8.1 Psychosocial Theory of Development

This study was guided by psychosocial theory of Development developed by Erik Erikson. According to Akhtar, (2009), Erikson's psychosocial theory of Development was partly influenced by the works of Sigmund Freud. However, while there are similarities in the ideas espoused by the two scholars, Erikson concentrated on the ego while Freud was more concerned with the Id. Erikson asserted that society and culture play critical roles in shaping human personality. He identified eight phases of psychosocial development, spanning infancy to maturity or adulthood. The eight stages are predetermined and successive; a principle he called 'epigenic'. Each stage has a crisis that must be resolved for a person to develop. Negotiating one stage successfully predisposes one to success in the next phase.

Akhtar, (2009) assert that stage six of this theory occurs between 18 and 35 years and affects young adults. The major conflict on this stage revolves around forming intimate and loving relationships. This is where young adults begin to share intimacy with others. It's a stage where

exploration of relationships that can lead to lasting commitments happen. When this stage is completed successfully, it leads into a long term commitment with someone else from another family. Isolation, loneliness and depression can be as a result of avoiding intimacy and fear of making commitments. This study revolves around this stage. Young people desire to have intimate relations, the absence of which is isolation from the rest of the peers (Gold, 2012). This is the phase at which young people get married and start families as they seek for companionship and love. Therefore, it is critical to this study since it establishes the role of the society in building personality and concomitant decisions. Marriage and cohabitation are significant unions that reflect the influence of society on an individual. The objectives under study (financial ability, family background, peer pressure, premarital pregnancy and counseling) are critical activities or events within the society that shape the individual's ideals and attitudes towards union-formation. In essence, individuals who choose to cohabit are a reflection of the societal processes that shaped them from infancy (Mao, Danes, Serido, & Shim, 2017).

This theory is limited to the development of stages of a human without explicitly showing the influence of the environment where someone grows and hence the need for the second theory to clearly show the influence of the environment to a growing individual.

2.8.2 Ecological systems Theory

The second theory underlying this study is the Ecological Systems Theory advanced by Urie Bronfenbrenner. According to Shaffer, (2008) Bronfenbrenner's theory sought to explain the development of young people within an ecosystem, implying that there are various factors that shape the worldview of individuals. This theory identifies five layers of factors that influence a human being from birth. These are: microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, microsystem and chronosystem. The immediate environment that surrounds the child and which influences him

or her directly is the microsystem. It includes the nuclear family, learning institutions, religious systems, neighbors and playmates. A child's attitude towards marriage or cohabitation is likely to be influenced by the values espoused in the family, church or neighborhood.

Shaffer and Kipp, (2010), observe that the second layer in the child development ecosystem is the mesosystem, the way in which microsystems are connected and how this affects the child's growth. For example, how teachers interact with parents and how one family relates to its neighbors will shape the way a child views life. The third level is the exosystem, which entails the impact of social settings in which a child is not directly involved. For instance, when a parent is transferred to a different work station, this may affect the child and pertinent relationships within the community. The macro system has a direct impact on this study because it denotes the culture within which a child is brought up. A young person's view of marriage and cohabitation will be affected by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, value, heritage and identity of the community within which he or she is brought up. This is because macro system is about shared values that shape attitudes, beliefs and practices. For instance, a child who is brought up in a community that does not frown upon cohabitation is likely to view the practice favorably, and vice versa.

Shaffer, (2008) observes the chronosystem refers to the effect of transitions and life changes over time on the development of a young person. While the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem will continue to have varying effects on youth, life will bring about changes that alter one's beliefs and attitudes. For instance, when parent divorce, the child may have a negative attitude towards marriage and opt for cohabitation. Similarly, hard economic times may result in cohabitation even in young people who may have preferred Christian marriage.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

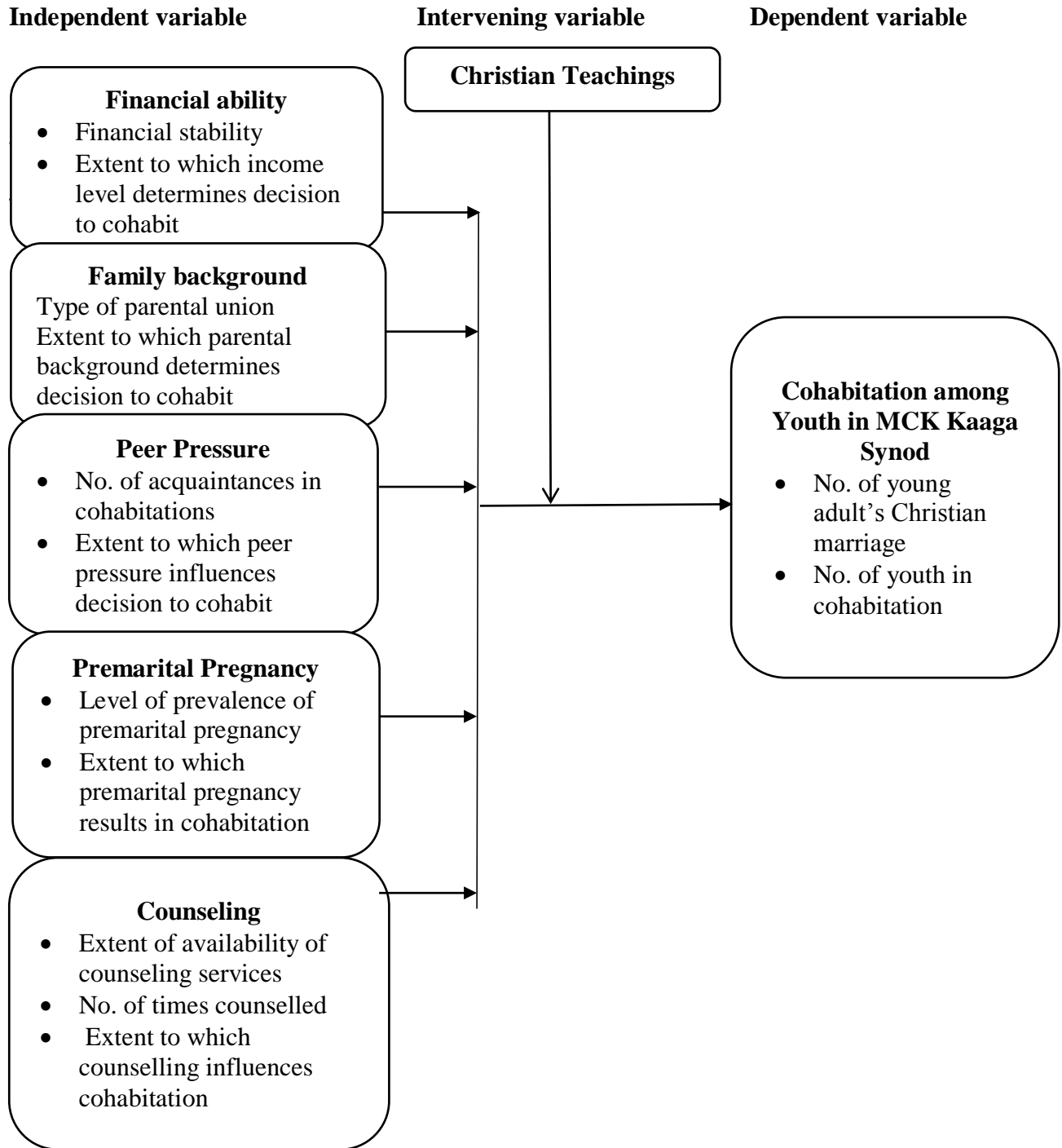


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework

In this study, the dependent variable is cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The five independent variables are financial ability, family background, and peer pressure, premarital pregnancy and counseling. The intervening variable is Church teachings.

These teachings are geared towards shaping the both the morality and spirituality of the young adults. They include; biblical teachings, seminars and mentorship. The independent variables, such as family background, influence young people to cohabit before marriage or indefinitely. The intervening variable (church teachings) can affect the direction of the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable since the Church does not legally recognize cohabitations as marriage. For instance, while MCK Kaaga Circuit serves Christians, the same individuals may subscribe to cultural beliefs that stipulate that once dowry is paid for a woman, it is permissible to cohabit, whether or not the cohabitants decide to formalize their union through establish legal / religious avenues.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.Introduction

This chapter elaborates how the study was carried out from the onset to culmination. It consists of the research design, target population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, methods of data collection, operational definition of variables, and methods of data analysis.

3.2.Research Design

This study adopted a Descriptive survey design, cross-sectional in nature. According to Mertler, (2006). A cross sectional survey design was appropriate for this study since data was collected one point in time and not over the years. Cohabitation phenomena was described without attempting to manipulate the results. Since descriptive studies present information as was collected from the respondents.

This approach has both quantitative and qualitative aspects. The study sought to analyze factors that influence cohabitation among young people in Kaaga Circuit, thus rendering itself amenable to a descriptive survey design study collected and analyzed data from the youth, ministers and counsellors, described and presented the findings on cohabitation without any attempt to manipulate them. Additionally, this design was appropriate for this study because the study aimed at obtaining descriptive, and self-reported data from the young adults, youth ministers and youth counsellors.

3.3.Location of the study

This study was carried out in MCK Kaaga circuit. It is one of the 27 circuits within Kaaga synod. It comprises of 11 Congregations. The congregations are namely; Kaaga church, Nkoune, Kambakia, Mwanika, St Lukes, St Stephen, St Andrews, Chabuene, Kiruai, Wesley and Kienderu. Kaaga Circuit headquarter is Meru- Maua road. Kaaga Circuit was purposively

selected because of its high number of membership in all the congregations. It was thus selected for this study also due to a huge number (764) of the youth distributed in all the Churches. A number of girls/boys secondary schools are within the circuit and therefore they come to worship in various congregations thus increasing the number of the youth in the circuit. Additionally, there is a university and a national polytechnic within the circuit which as well increases the number of the youth in the circuit because some of the students worship with the Kaaga Circuit congregations.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of the study was, 764 young adults (18-35 years), 5 ministers and 11 youth counsellors who are members of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) Kaaga Circuit. This is because Kaaga circuit has recorded a decline in formal young adult marriages and an increase in cohabitation. Secondly, church ministers and youth counselors were treated as secondary informants. While each church has a youth counselor, church ministers are fewer with some handling a number of churches. Table 3.1 summarizes the population of the study.

Table 3.1
Population of the Study

S.No.	Church	No. of Young People	No. of Youth Counselors	No. of Ministers
1.	Kaaga	112	1	1
2.	Kambakia	86	1	
3.	St. Andrews	56	1	
4.	Nkoune	75	1	1
5.	Mwanika	110	1	1
6.	St. Lukes	55	1	
7.	Chabuene	90	1	1
8.	St. Stephen	35	1	
9.	Kiruai	65	1	
10.	Wesley	30	1	
11.	Kienderu	50	1	1
Total		764	11	5

Source – MCK Kaaga Synod (2017)

3.5. Sampling Procedures

Sampling procedure is the process of deriving a representative sample from the population to make the study manageable and convenient (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). All items in the sample must be representative of the other items of the population. This study adopted stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and census sampling to derive the sample from the population. To begin with, the churches in MCK Kaaga circuit each constituted a stratum. Secondly, based on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who assert that a sample of population of 10% - 30% is adequate for descriptive studies, a sample of 30% was derived from each stratum. On the other hand, due to small number of youth counselors and ministers, the study adopted census sampling to include all (5 ministers and 11 counselors) in the study. Simple random sampling was used to obtain a total of 235 young adults from a total of 764 young adults in the circuit.

Table 3.2.
Sampling Matrix

S.No.	Church	No. of Young Adults	Sample (30%)	No. of Youth Counsellors (100% of population)	No. of Ministers (100% of Population)
1.	Kaaga	112	34	1	1
2.	Kambakia	86	26	1	
3.	St. Andrews	56	17	1	
4.	Nkoune	75	23	1	1
5.	Mwanika	110	33	1	1
6.	St. Lukes	55	17	1	
7.	Chabuene	90	30	1	1
8.	St. Stephen	35	11	1	
9.	Kiruai	65	20	1	
10.	Wesley	30	9	1	
11.	Kienderu	50	15	1	1
Total		764	235	11	5

Source – MCK Kaaga Synod (2017)

The total population for the study, therefore, was 235 young adults. 5 ministers and 11 youth counselors were secondary informants.

3.6. Instrumentation

The researcher developed structured questionnaires for data collection from the young adults. Both open-ended and closed ended questions were used in the questionnaires for the study. The first part of the questionnaire was used to gather demographic data of the respondents. Focused group discussions were also used to collect more data from young adults. The researcher used interview schedules to collect data from the Church ministers and youth counselors.

3.6.1. Questionnaire

Data was collected by use questionnaires for young adults. (see appendix B). A questionnaire was appropriate for this study because it helped to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaires also collect consistent data across the target population because the same instrument is administered on the sample population (Connaway & Powell, 2010). The questionnaire had both open and close-ended questions to elicit different types of data. The instrument had six sections. Section one collected demographic information; the next four collected data on each of the objectives, while the last section elicited information on the dependent variable. It focused on getting data on the role of family background on cohabitation, the role of financial status of the cohabitants, the role of peer pressure, the role of premarital pregnancy and the role of counseling in addressing cohabitation.

3.6.2. Interview schedule

Data from church ministers was collected using unstructured interview schedule, (see appendix D). This was appropriate for the two groups of respondents because they are few compared to adult youth, and the instrument allows for in-depth interrogation of respondents. The response rate is also faster and youth counselors who may not have been well-versed with English were comfortable volunteering their answers to the interviewer. Questions in the interview schedule were arranged thematically to ensure the same materials was collected from informants and the information can be analyzed conveniently.

3.6.3. Focused group discussion

The young adults were subjected also to focused group discussions to enable the researcher get more information on the subject of study that could be left out in questionnaires. This was to encourage an in-depth study of the research topic under focus. The data derived from this was

to enhance the data collected by use of questionnaires. Questions for probing were arranged thematically to ensure consistency.

3.7 Piloting of research instruments

Pilot testing is defined as the preliminary study conducted with an aim to investigate the feasibility of crucial components of main study (Mertler, 2006). The researcher conducted a pilot test of the interview schedule by administering it to two church ministers, two youth counselors and 15 young adults from MCK Kinoru to measure both validity and reliability of respective questionnaire. The interview schedule was also pilot tested in the neighboring Kinoru Circuit. Any omissions and complications realized in the instruments during piloting were addressed in refining the final instrument to be used in actual data collection in MCK Kaaga Circuit.

3.7.1. Validity of the Research Instruments

According to Mertler (2006), for a questionnaire to collect the right data consistently, it has to have validity and reliability. Validity is the ability of the instrument to measure the variables it was constructed to measure. To ensure validity of the questionnaire, the instrument was constructed thematically - based on respective objectives / variables of the study. Secondly, construct validity was ensured, whereby the research worked with the supervisors (as experts) to ascertain the strengths and areas of weaknesses in the questionnaire, with the suggestions being utilized to improve the instrument before it was administered on the pilot population. Questions in the interview schedule were arranged thematically to ensure the same materials was collected from informants and the information were analyzed conveniently. The researcher conducted a pilot tested the research instruments to measure both validity and reliability of respective questionnaire

3.7.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

Reliability, on the other hand, is the measure of consistency in the manner in which the instrument performs its work. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the data derived from the pilot study was tested using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The acceptable measure for the questionnaire to be considered appropriate for the main study was a Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha above 0.7 (Andrew et.al, 2011). Such an outcome indicated consistency in the items in the questionnaire.

3.8. Data collection Procedures

The researcher sought permission to conduct research and collect data from various authorities. To begin with, the research sought for authorization from the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU), following successful defense of this proposal. Secondly, permission was sought from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to issue a research permit. Thirdly, the researcher approached the Bishop of the MCK Kaaga Synod to get written permission to collect data from young adults in Kaaga Circuit. Further authorization was sought from the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, through the office of the Deputy County Commissioner, Imenti North, Meru County. The researcher trained the research assistants on the research concept, questionnaire content, how to ask questions, and how to interact with respondents. Research assistants helped the semi-illiterate respondents in filling questionnaires. Research assistants were graduates, well-versed in Swahili and Kimeru, to enable them interact with and collect data from young people, church ministers and youth counselors in respective churches. Data was collected in a span of two weeks.

Once the synod Bishop authorized that, the researcher sought an appointment with the superintendent minister of MCK Kaaga circuit to seek permission to carry out this research in

her area of jurisdiction. With permission granted, the researcher together with the research assistants visited the churches on Sundays. With the letter from the Bishops office, the research assistants reported to the churches early and introduced themselves to the church leaders of their respective churches and engaged them about the assignment of the day. The research assistants were introduced to the church members during the service, and after the service the youth were requested to remain behind. The researcher and research assistants engaged the young adults to familiarize with them and thereafter, young adults were selected randomly, and issued with questionnaires to fill and organized with the leaders on the collection. After receiving back, the questionnaires, the researcher and the research assistants met to review the process as they hand in the filled questionnaires. The same was done the following Sundays with the remaining churches. The researcher sought an appointment with the circuit ministers for interview.

3.9. Data Analysis Procedures

Data derived from the questionnaires was cleaned, coded arranged thematically according to the objectives of the study and the main sections of the questionnaires. Data was entered in SPSS Statistics version 21. In the first research question, the independent variable “financial status’ was analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages to ascertain the degree of influence to the dependent variable – cohabitation. The study also employed inferential statistics such as Pearson correlations and regression analysis to test relationships and associations between the dependent variable and the independent variable. Family background, the second independent variable was also analyzed quantitatively by use of descriptive statistics to establish its influence to cohabitation. To establish the influence of peer pressure on cohabitation among young adults, peer pressure was analyzed quantitatively and its influence with cohabitation measured. The fourth independent variable – premarital pregnancy – was similarly subjected to quantitative analysis to ascertain its relation

with cohabitation. Finally, counseling, the fifth independent variable underwent quantitative analysis to measure the strength of its relationship with cohabitation.

Pearson r was used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables, in this case each of the independent variables on one hand, and the dependent variable on the other.

The following is the formula for calculating Pearson r is:

$$r = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum \frac{(x_i - \bar{X})(y_i - \bar{Y})}{s_x s_y}$$

Where;

r =correlation coefficient

n =sample size

x =observations of the independent variables

y =observations of the dependent variables

\bar{x} =mean of sample observations of independent variables

\bar{y} =mean of sample observations of dependent variable

S_x = standard deviation of x observations

S_y =standard deviation of y observations

The value of r ranges between +1 and -1. table 3.3 summarizes the interpretation of Pearson r results.

Table 3.3.

Table for Interpreting Pearson r

Strength of Association	Coefficient r	
	Positive	Negative
Weak	0.1 to 0.3	-0.1 to -0.3
Moderate	0.3 to 0.5s	-0.3 to -0.5
Strong	0.5 to 1.0	-0.5 to -1.0

Source: *Research data*

In addition, qualitative data in open-ended questions, interview schedule and focus group discussions was analyzed thematically. Frequency tables were used to present data for discussion.

Table 3.4.
Methods of Data Analysis

S /No.	Research Question	Type of Variable	Type of Analysis	Type of Statistical Method
1	How does financial ability influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit, Kaaga Synod?	Independent: Financial Ability	Qualitative & Quantitative	Pearson Product Moment Correlation (<i>r</i>)
2	To what extent does family background influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit, Kaaga Synod?	Independent: Family Background	Qualitative & Quantitative	Pearson Product Moment Correlation (<i>r</i>)
3	How does peer pressure influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit, Kaaga Synod?	Independent: peer pressure	Qualitative & Quantitative	Pearson Product Moment Correlation (<i>r</i>)
4	How does premarital pregnancy influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit, Kaaga Synod?	Independent: Premarital Pregnancy	Qualitative & Quantitative	Pearson Product Moment Correlation (<i>r</i>)
5	How does premarital pregnancy influence cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit, Kaaga Synod?	Independent: Premarital Counseling	Qualitative & Quantitative	Pearson Product Moment Correlation (<i>r</i>)

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher also ensured that the study adheres to ethical principles of the host society. To begin with, research was conducted when all the relevant authorization was obtained. The researcher got cleared by the ethics committee of Kenya Methodist University, followed by the

NACOSTI clearance to show that the researcher had been cleared for research. Additionally, the Bishop of MCK Kaaga Synod gave an introduction letter to the superintendent minister, leaders and members of the churches where research was conducted. Secondly, research assistants were sensitized on the language to use when collecting data and the behavior to exhibit. Further, the researcher indicated in the questionnaires the nature of the study (academic) and inform respondents not to volunteer any information that would lead to personal identification. Additionally, the researcher sought for informed consent from the respondents. The research purely was based on voluntary participation. No respondent was coerced to give their response. The data obtained was treated with utmost confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter contains the results of data analysis. Findings are presented in tables and figures followed by pertinent explanations, description and interpretation. The purpose of the study was to analyze factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.

4.1.1 Reliability statistics

The study found a Cronbach's alpha of 0.818, hence the instrument was considered consistent and reliable.

Table 3.1

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	n
.818	30

Source: *Research data*

4.2. Respondents' Biodata

The study requested for personal details of respondents, and respective findings are presented in respective figures and tables.

4.2.1. Gender of Respondents

Participants in the study were required to indicate their gender especially because the study was on cohabitation and both genders have a key role to play. Further, it was critical to understand the distribution of ministers and youth counselors according to gender. Table 4.1 present the findings.

Table 4.1***Gender of Respondents***

Gender	Young Adults		Ministers and Counselors	
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Male	108	47.6	8	50.0
Female	119	52.4	8	50.0
Total	227	100.0	16	100.0

Source: *Research data*

It is evident from Table 4.1 that majority of the young adults 52% (119) were female, with an almost similar number of males. Further, of the 16 counselors and church ministers, 50% were women and 50% men. This indicates the general trend in the Kenyan population dynamics where there are almost equal numbers of males to females. Further, the percentages were likely to impact the findings of the study positively because both male and female are participants in the practice of cohabitation.

4.2.2. Age of Respondents

The study sought to establish the age distribution of both young adults and church ministers and counselors. Table 4.2 presents the findings.

Table 4.2***Age of Respondents***

Age (years)	Young Adults		Age (years)	Ministers and Counselors	
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)		Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
18-25	76	33.5	30-40	9	56.3
26-30	80	35.2	41-50	7	43.8
31-35	71	31.3			
Total	227	100.0	Total	16	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.2, while most of the young adults 35.2%, (80), were aged between 26 and 30 years, there were relatively comparable numbers across the three age brackets. This trend augured well with the study because the data collected was likely to be credible and representative of the youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit. In addition, among the youth counselors and church ministers, a slight majority 56.3%, (16) were between 30 years and 40 years with the remainder falling within the 41 years to 50 years' bracket. This implies that youth counselors and church ministers were relatively youthful and likely to understand issues facing young adults in contemporary society, and which could contribute to cohabitation.

4.2.3. Marital Status of Respondents

The study further sought to establish the marital status of respective respondents. Their responses are summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Marital Status

Marital Status	Young Adults		Ministers and Counselors	
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Single	69	30.4	3	18.8
Married	44	19.4	12	75.0
Separated	25	11.0	1	6.3
Divorced	17	7.5		
Widowed	5	2.2		
Cohabiting	67	29.5		
Total	227	100.0	16	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.3, majority of young adults 30.4%, (69) were single followed closely by 29.5% (67) who were cohabiting. It is evident that the rate of cohabitation among young people in MCK Kaaga Circuit is relatively high considering the religious and dogmatic background of

the youth in the church. Among youth counselors and church ministers, 75%, (16) were married hence likely to be role models to young adults intending to form marital unions within the church. It was instructive that majority of youth counselors and church ministers 56.3%, (16) indicated that cohabitation was moderately prevalent among youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit, thus buttressing findings that cohabitation among young adults was an issue to contend with for the church hence boosting the credibility of the study and its findings.

4.2.4. Respondents' Occupations

The study also sought to know the employment status of respondents. Their responses are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Employment Status of Young Adults Respondents

Responses	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Unemployed	35	19.33
Formally employed	94	59.93
Self-employed	52	28.73
Total	181	100.0

Source: *Research data*

As indicated in Table 4.4, 41.4% (94) of the respondents were formally employed. Cumulatively, 64.3% were in employment. This indicates that majority of the youth were likely to have financial ability to get married within the Methodist Church of Kenya doctrines. 15.4% (35) were unemployed and this implied that they were more likely to cohabit for lack of funds to conduct christian marriages. Additionally, 20.3 % (46) were students. The likelihood of this category cohabiting was high as it was a way of cost sharing due to financial constraints. This result was found similar to that of Britt-Lutter, Dorius, and Lawson, (2019) who noted that cohabiters have lower net worth and financial asset accumulation than married respondents.

4.2.5. Young Adults' Status in Local Churches

Additionally, the study sought information on the status of young people in their respective local churches in Kaaga Circuit. Table 4.5 summarizes their responses.

Table 4.5

Young Adults' Status in Local Churches

Church attendance	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Active member	103	45.4
Churchgoer	62	27.3
Occasional attendants	62	27.3
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.5, majority of the young people in MCK Kaaga Circuit 45.4% (103) were active church members. Apparently, such individuals would be expected to eschew cohabitation and opt for church weddings, but previous findings on marital status indicate that the most popular form of family union was cohabitation. This is indicative of disconnect between church profession and dogmas and actual practice among youth, suggesting that youth are influenced by issues beyond the religious environment when making decisions on union formation.

4.2.6. Reasons for Current Status of Church Attendance

The study further probed respondents on the church attendance status indicated in Table 4.5.

Their responses are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6
Reasons for Current Status of Church Attendance

Responses	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
I am too busy to attend church	12	5.3
I prefer to be less involved in church matters	21	9.3
I understand the benefits of active participation in church	104	45.8
There is a lot of hypocrisy in the church	67	29.5
Churches thrive on exploiting members financially	23	10.1
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.6, majority of the respondents 45.8%, (104) indicated that they understood the benefits of regular church attendance. On the part of those who did not attend church regularly, 29.5%, (67) indicated that hypocrisy was prevalent in church hence discouraging attendance.

4.3. Financial Status and Cohabitation among Young Adults

The first objective of the study was to investigate the role of financial status of a couple in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The study posed several questions to the respondents in this regard.

4.3.1. Adequacy of Income

The study required young adults to indicate the adequacy of their monthly incomes. The responses are summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7***Adequacy of Monthly Income***

Adequacy of monthly income	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Adequate	82	36.1
Barely Adequate	78	34.4
Inadequate	54	23.8
More than Adequate	13	5.7
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.7, 36.1%, (82) considered their monthly incomes adequate. Only 5.7% (13) regarded their income as being more than adequate. Cumulatively, 58.2%, (95) considered their incomes as being barely adequate or inadequate. While Table 4.4 had indicated that majority of the youth were in employment, it is evident that their earnings were not adequate, hence raising the possibility of cohabiting instead of conducting the more-expensive church wedding. This was supported by counsellor 3 who alluded that ‘*Youth may cohabit due to financial constraints.*’ This is in contradiction to minister c who argued that ‘*Cohabitation is not as a result of lack or inadequate resources but a personal decision.*’ However, the youths argued that, “*weddings are very expensive and we cannot afford*”. However, Mureithi (2013) in his study observed that the high cost of the weddings emerged significant. This was found to be the major reason favoring cohabitation among the youths. In the current generation cohabitation has become a trend and people who stay together yet not married seem to be comfortable and not worried about the trend. This finding is supported by the study of Halliday Hardie and Lucas, (2010) who noted that economic hardship affects the quality of relationship especially for the young adults. He further noted that as a consequence youths fear the expense of a Christian marriage. Most young adults are not interested in more permanent relationships, “*due to lack of funds we decided to have what we call no strings attached relationship to avoid conflict about finances in case we part.*” This implies that financial insecurity aids to more

short-term relationships. This finding is consistent with that of Britt-Lutter, Dorius, and Lawson, (2019) That implies that perhaps lack employment among many youths may be a major contributor to low incomes and the likelihood of cohabiting. A respondents was quoted saying that *“we came to stay together so that we can save cost, actually the bible says two are better than one”* This implies that the young adults were struggling to raise rent and food as most of them are in college, they therefore opted to cohabit to save cost. Similarly, Addo, (2014) in agreement with this finding observed that marital life is unaffordable therefore and cohabitation is considered as an alternative. This finding is also consistent with that of Marri, (2019) who found that financial inadequacy was a contributor to cohabiting young adults. Additionally, Addo, (2014) noted that credit card debt was a contributor to delayed marriage among women who end up in cohabitation. Other young adults argued that; *“we can live together –opposite sex, just to cost share without having any sexual contacts”* and this seems to be practically not justifiable and looking from bird’s eye even the society will judge a man and woman living in the same house as husband and wife.

In a study among university students in Kenya, indicated that even when young men have stable jobs, they are likely to seek for greater economic stability while cohabiting in the hope that they can marry later. Another dissenting opinion is by Calvès (2016) who asserts that in Burkina Faso, cohabitation is viewed as a convenient option for persons who want to enjoy sexual relations while avoiding marital norms and familial responsibilities, not simply because such partners lack finances to conduct a wedding.

Financial challenges are real in life especially to young adults where most of them have young businesses, lower grade jobs or no income at all. Yet despite all the financial challenges to attain financial stability, Psychosocial Theory of Development comes into play-where the young adults seek intimate relationships to evade loneliness and social exclusion (Wendy D. et al., 2009). Therefore cohabitation has become acceptable in our generation and does not seem

a sin anymore. However, the question of morality is very essential in this subject since the way cohabitation is viewed by the young adults is totally different from biblical suggestions and from the way the older generations view it (Schneider, 1994). Moral erosion is the inability to follow the correct expected ways of marriage by the society at large. Sin is sin even if it is justified as relative (Tayade, 2019).

4.3.2. Financial Indicators for Cohabitation

The study required young adults to rate a number of statement on financial incentives for cohabitation on the following scale: 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Undecided, 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly Disagree. Table 4.8 presents the responses.

Table 4.8.

Financial Indicators for Cohabitation

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	I would cohabit if I did not have adequate funds for wedding.	26	11.5	53	23.3	17	7.5	81	35.7	50
I would cohabit if I realized I would not have enough money to raise a family after the wedding.	16	17.0	52	22.9	21	9.3	73	32.2	65	28.6
I would cohabite as we raise money for a church wedding.	15	6.6	73	32.2	42	18.5	53	23.3	44	19.4
Cohabitation is good because it helps save money for a wedding.	47	20.7	50	22.0	19	8.4	48	21.1	63	27.8

Source: *Research data*

Table 4.8, delved into four possible reasons why young people were likely to cohabit. On the probability of cohabiting due to lack of funds to conduct a church wedding, a cumulative majority of respondents 57.7%, (131) were not likely to enter into cohabitations solely because they lacked funds for weddings. In essence, cohabitation among MCK Kaaga Circuit youth could not be exclusively attributed to financial ability. These findings are in tandem with those by Dodoo and Klein (2007) who observed that cohabiting couple share the financial burden equally, finding this a cheaper alternative to marriage. In essence, since the two are not formally married, payment for bills and upkeep is shared. This is also consistent with the study by (Addo, 2014; Halliday Hardie & Lucas, 2010).

Secondly, young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit were asked to indicate whether they would cohabit in case they realized that if they conducted a church wedding, they would have no funds to raise a family afterwards. According to Table 4.8, a cumulative majority of the young adults (60.8%, (138) would not choose to cohabit in the event that they lacked funds to raise a family. This implies that cohabitation is not informed by cost-sharing motives only as supported by respondent 7 who argued that *“I did not choose to cohabit due to cost sharing, but also to have companionship with my friend.”* Loneliness therefore above other factors explained the reason why most young adults engaged such relationships. A study by Edin and Reed (2005) in USA had established that cohabitation among low-income earners was viewed as a strategy of enjoying conjugal rights without the feeling that one had to shoulder the financial burden of raising a family, this especially in relation to men. Maag, (2015) arrived at similar findings in a study carried out in US.

Thirdly, the study sought the views of young adults on the probability of cohabiting as cohabiting couples raised funds of a church wedding. According to Table 4.8, majority of the young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit 32.2%, (73) were in favour of cohabiting while raising funds for a church wedding. In essence, while they did not consider the probability of lacking funds after a church wedding as a reason for cohabitation, young adults were willing to enter into informal unions and get married in church later, after accumulating enough resources for a wedding. These findings are buttressed by a study by Mashal (2011), which established that some working class low-income Christians in South Africa, considered cohabitation a cheaper option to marriage, because the latter involved unaffordable expenses. In agreement respondent 105 supported that with an argument as follows *“How do you tell me to carry out a wedding without having raised more than ksh. 500,000, and you haven’t calculated the cost of paying the dowry.”* This implies that perceived high cost of weddings were a major barrier to solemnizing a wedding and the reason for cohabiting among the youths in kaaga circuit. Most

youth think that they must do a very expensive wedding for it to be a recognized wedding where some even go to the extent of debt and financial burdens in order to raise finances for a single day event (Addo, 2014). Instead of entering into high debts therefore most youths will choose to cohabit instead.

The fourth proposition was whether the young adults would consider cohabitation as a cost-sharing measure. As indicated in Table 4.8, a cumulative majority of young adults 48.9%, (64) were not in favour of cohabiting to share costs. However, it is also noteworthy that a cumulative minority 42.7%, (56) favored this approach to marriage union formation. The latter is in tandem with findings under the second statement posed to the youth which indicated that cohabitation is not informed by lack of funds to raise a family. This therefore posits the variety of different opinions among the young adults. According to Addo, (2014) the young adults are interested in personal financial freedom before marriage therefore making marriage the last thing one can think of when it comes to life choices Addo, (2014) quoting (Cherlin, 2004).

4.3.3. Relationship between Financial Ability and Cohabitation

The study further sought general views of young adults in Kaaga MCK Circuit on the relationship between financial ability and cohabitation and elicited both positive and negative responses as indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9***Relationship between Financial Ability and Cohabitation***

Responses	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Weddings are too costly compared to cohabitation	23	10.1
Lack of money is not a reason for cohabitation	55	24.2
Weddings do not have to cost much	46	20.3
A couple needs to gather enough money for better living	56	24.7
Union formation is about getting the right partner, not financial ability	25	11.0
Cohabitation is good because it allows cost-sharing	22	9.7
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.9, majority of young adults 24.7%, (56) opined that a couple needs to gather enough money for a better living, implying that this group favored cohabitation as a stepping stone to marriage.

On the other hand, 24.2% (55), appeared to favour church weddings at the first instance and opined that, Lack of money is not a reason cohabitation. These assertions were in tandem with 20.3% (46) young adults who believed that weddings did not have to be so expensive as to scare young people into cohabitation. Further, there were equivocal opinions indicating that union formation should not be about financial ability but finding the right partner. These findings were inconsistent with that of Halliday Hardie and Lucas, (2010) who noted that economic hardship significantly explains quality of relationships for the married couples. These findings may be different due to the population structure in these two studies. This study involved the both the young adults in Kaaga circuits where some may have witnessed weddings done on a very small budget and yet the marriages thereafter were successful. These findings are contrasted by those by Catholic Church Diocese of Phoenix (2011) which carried out a study in USA and established that financial strain does not only relate to cohabitation. There are Christians who marry in church to cost-share, not because they believe in holy matrimony

in the sense of the Christian denomination. These findings are in tandem with those from youth counselors and church ministers as presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

Financial Ability and Young Adults' Decisions to Cohabit

Ministers and Counselors' Opinions	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Youth cohabit to cost-share	3	18.8
Youth find wedding expenses too high hence cohabiting	5	31.3
Money meant for weddings is used for settling down in a cohabitation arrangement	5	31.3
Cohabitation is caused partly by increase in living standards	3	18.8
Total	16	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.10, an equal majority of church ministers and youth counselors 31.3 % (16) respectively, opined that wedding expenses are forbidding for young adults and that money meant for church weddings is often used by young couples to start cohabitations. Further, it was opined that money that would have been used for weddings is spent on settling down within a cohabitation and cohabitation was partially caused by high living standards. These findings contrast with those by Haskey, (2001), who carried out a study in UK and established that financial background was not the main determinant of cohabitation as some people merely wanted to enjoy the rights of married couples without having other responsibilities associated with married couples. Contrary, a study conducted in South Africa by Mashal (2011) affirms that low income Christian workers shun formal Christian matrimony in favor of cohabitation due to the financial implication of the process. They consider prioritizing other financial needs over pursuing matrimony in church. The research further established that some middle income Christian workers and high income workers engage in

Christian matrimony whereas others prefer cohabitation as they consider the Christian matrimony as a ‘no pay back’ affair.

4.3.4. Pearson Correlation on Financial Status and Cohabitation

To establish the relationship between financial status and the cohabitation among youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Likert scale data for Financial Status (independent variable) was correlated against Likert scale data for Cohabitation (dependent variable) using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Table 4.11 presents the results of the computation of Pearson r on the relationship between Financial Status and Cohabitation.

Table 4.11a.

Pearson r Correlation of Financial Status and Cohabitation

		Correlations			
		Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Organize Wedding	Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Raise Family after Wedding	Possibility of Cohabiting as Money is Raised for Wedding	Preferenc e of Cohabitin g as Cost- Sharing Arrangem ent
Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Organize Wedding	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 227	.579** .000 227	.708** .000 227	.633** .000 227
Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Raise Family after Wedding	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.579** .000 227	1 227	.631** .000 227	.641** .000 227
Possibility of Cohabiting as	Pearson Correlation	.708**	.631**	1	.757**

Money is	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
Raised for	N	227	227	227	227
Wedding					
Preference of	Pearson	.633**	.641**	.757**	1
Cohabiting as	Correlation				
Cost-Sharing	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
Arrangement	N	227	227	227	227

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

(b)

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.747 ^a	.558	.546	.911	.558	46.231	6	220	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship between Financial Ability and Cohabitation, Adequacy of Monthly Income, Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Raise Family after Wedding, Reason for Current Status in Local Church, Possibility of Cohabiting as Money is Raised for Wedding, Preference of Cohabiting as Cost-Sharing Arrangement
b. Dependent Variable: Probability of Cohabiting for Lack of Funds to Organize Wedding

Source: *Research data*

The correlation coefficients indicated a very strong positive correlation between cohabiting as way of cost sharing and possibility of cohabiting as money is raised for wedding ($r=0.75$, $p<0.01$) followed by cohabiting as the respondents raised money for the wedding (0.708) Probability of cohabiting for lack of funds to organize wedding among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The results are significant at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that the lower the financial ability of young adults, the less likely they were to decide to get married in church and vice versa. Further, according to Table 4.11b, the study found a very strong relationship between financial ability and cohabitation. ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$). Exactly 74% of variations in cohabitation is explained by the model. The study found out very high chances of cohabiting as money is raised for Wedding. According to respondent 120 “we decided to stay together, otherwise we may wait forever and never get married coz we don’t know when we

will get enough money to organize a wedding.” It is evident that the young adults decided to stay together since the notion that weddings should be and are very expensive, was ringing in their minds. According to Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman, (2012) most youth transit from dating to cohabitation as way of commitment into marriage. Though the study never explains why, financial implication may be the major cause. This implies the need to demystify that weddings must be expensive. In essence, financial difficulties were likely to contribute to the decision to cohabit. Comparable findings are those by Wamukoya (2018) who studied young Catholics in Kisumu Diocese and concluded that being employed or not was a key determinant of whether one cohabited or not.

4.4. Family Background and Cohabitation

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the role of family background in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The study posed various questions in this regard and the findings are presented in tables and figures.

4.4.1. Respondents’ Parents’ Type of Union

The study sought to establish the types of unions the parents of MCK Kaaga Circuit young adults were in. Table 4.12 presents the findings.

Table 4.12.

Respondents' Parents' Type of Family Union

Types of Unions	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Religious Marriage	134	59.0
Civil Marriage	11	4.8
Traditional Marriage	49	21.6
Cohabitation	33	14.5
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.12, the parents of the majority of the young adults 59%, (134) were in church-officiated marriages. Those in cohabitations accounted for 14.5%, (33). However, it is likely that some of the religious marriages were initially cohabitations that were later formalized in church. The existence of cohabitation among parents indicates that the practice was still favored in parts of the society despite church teachings. Further, when asked whether any of their relatives was in a cohabitation union, 65.6%, (227) of the respondents replied in the affirmative. The implication is that young adults in MCK Kaaga young adults lived in a familial environment where cohabitation was largely accepted hence predisposing the young people to making the same choice of union formation in due course. As Kohm and Groen (2005) had observed, children born or living in cohabiting families were likely to accept cohabitation and adopt it later in life. Manning et al., (2011) reinforced the notion that children born in or raised in cohabitation had a high likelihood of cohabiting when it came to forming their own unions. Family role models emerged a major theme explaining cohabitation. Where most youths were likely to emulate the potential models of their families and enter into such relationship which their parents or close family relatives were in. *“what do you expect if my brother is cohabiting, my sister is cohabiting and my mother is also in such a relationship, I am not an exemption, I entered into the same relationship because it is allowed in my family”* respondent 8 reported. This clearly implies that the role the family background played in the type of relationship one entered is very significant. This finding was consistent with that of Manning et al., (2011) who pointed out that, the influence of family in the formation of cohabitation views was evident through a variety of mechanisms, including parental advice, social modeling, religious values, and economic control.

4.4.2. Family Background and Young Adults' Choice of Union

The study posed three statements to young adults to elicit information on how various aspects of family background influenced cohabitation decisions among the youth. The following scale was used: 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Undecided, 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly Disagree.

Table 4.13 presents the findings.

Table 4.13

Impact of Family Background on Young Adults' Decisions to Cohabit

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	I am / intend to be in similar type of marriage union as my parents.	53	23.3	29	12.8	47	20.7	39	17.2	59
I would cohabit if my close relatives did.	18	7.9	22	9.7	32	14.1	55	24.2	100	44.1
Children of parents in cohabitation are likely to cohabit in future, too.	27	11.9	34	15.0	28	12.3	72	31.7	66	29.1

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.13, majority of the respondents 26%, (59) strongly disagreed with the opinion that they were in or would choose the same type of union as their parents. In contrast, a similarly significant number 23.3%, (53) either were in similar unions as their parents or would settle for the same arrangement when they decided to get form unions. Considering 20.7%, (47) were neutral, it is apparent that young adults do not necessarily look up to their parents as role models when deciding on the type of marriage union to adopt. Parents form the very first mentorship program to their children form early in life. It is therefore imperative that the children copies the habits of the people whom they recognize influential to their life's and especially their parents. this finding is consistent with that of Thornton, (1991) who noted that

children were likely to copy and enter into opposite sex relationships leading to cohabitations if parents did. This study brings into focus findings by Wamukoya (2018) in a study among Catholic youth in Nyando, Kisumu, which established that most young people in cohabitations grew up either in cohabitations or single parent's families. In essence, while the ideals of the MCK Kaaga Circuit youth may be noble, research indicates that parents' type of union has a strong influence on the offspring's choice of marriage union. The study by Schröder, (2008) also found that parents to a very large extent influence the choices the young adults make on cohabitation. Where the young adults are likely to enter into cohabiting relationship if parents did.

Further results of the study by Whitton et al., (2008) found a long-term influence of family behavior on children's relationship is similar to that of this study. These close responses from young people mirror the opinions of youth counselors and church ministers who indicated, on one hand, that youth may choose to conduct holy matrimony at the first instance instead of opting to imitate cohabiting parents and that it is young adults in relationship who force their partners into cohabitations, irrespective of the parental type of union. This finding was similar to the study of Manning & Cohen, (2012a). On the other hand, youth counselors and church ministers opined that young adults are likely to cohabit if their parents did since parents are role models to their children, and that children raised outside the Methodist Church in Kenya system were likely to ignore the established church marriage system. These findings mirror those of a study conducted in Burkina Faso by Penke (2008), which established that early exposure of children to cohabiting parents predisposes them to the practice when they become young adults of marriageable age.

Table 4.13 also indicates that majority of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit 44.1%, (100) would not enter into cohabitations to emulate their cohabiting close relatives. While opinion

was divided on whether parental type of marital union would be adopted by young adults, it is apparent that most youth would not follow the example of close relatives. Youth counselors and church ministers, on their part, indicated that they extended family had a powerful influence on the decisions of young adults to cohabit. However, those opposed to this opinion indicated that individual decisions often override family backgrounds when the time to form unions comes. This finding was similar to that of Manning & Cohen, (2015) who noted that family background of young adults had little influence on marital decisions.

Table 4.13 also presents the responses of young adults when asked to rate the statement that children of parents who cohabit were likely to cohabit when the time came to make marriage decisions. Majority of the respondents (32%), 72 disagreed with this assertion. This is in tandem with earlier findings that children do not necessarily adopt the marriage union type of their parents. Further, the study by Calvès (2016) had indicated that parents are critical role models for children hence the likelihood of the offspring not cohabiting even parents raised them in such a union.

4.4.3. Opinions on Family Background and Youth Choice of Marriage Union

The study sought for general opinions from young adults on relationship between family background and young adults' union choice. Table 4.14 summarizes the findings.

Table 4.14.

Opinions on Choice of Union and Family Background

Opinions on Choice of Union and Family Background	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Family background influences union type to a large extent	61	26.9
Decision on Union Type depends on Finances, not family background	48	21.1
Cultural practices are more powerful than religious teachings	81	35.7
Cohabitation is an individual choice irrespective of background	37	16.3
Total	227	100.0

Source: Research data

Figure 4.3: *opinion on choice of union*

According to Table 4.14, majority of young adults 35.7%, (81) opined cultural practices were more powerful than religious teachings in terms of influence of union-formation decisions for young adults. However, a similarly significant number 26.9%, (61) believed that family background influenced union type to a large extent. Other important opinions included the assertions that financial matters had a more powerful role than family background when it came to deciding how to begin a marriage union, and that cohabitation was an individual choice irrespective of background. The propensity of young adults to cohabit in tandem with dominant practices within their social backgrounds was cemented in studies such as those by Manning, Cohen and Smock, (2012), Edin and Reed (2005) and Cherlin (2009). Choices have consequences, however the results of cohabiting relationships may not be recognized in the short run. However, the choice of relationships one enters into has both moral and religious implications which cannot be ignored. Reasons for choice of the relationships vary due to different reasons. The study by Schröder, 2008; S. M. Stanley et al., (2006) found that the choice of union has long-term implications for instance divorce and the quality of relationship which implies that the type of union of choice as explained by the family background is an important issue for further discussion.

4.4.4. Pearson Correlation on Family Background and Cohabitation

To establish the relationship between family background and the cohabitation among youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Likert scale data for Family Background (independent variable) was correlated against Likert scale data for Cohabitation (dependent variable). The value of r ranges between +1 and -1. Values between 0.1 and 0.3 are said to be Weak; Medium values range between 0.3 and 05, while Strong values range between 0.5 and 1.0. Table 4.15 presents the results.

Table 4.15.

Pearson r Correlation of Family Background and Cohabitation

		Correlations(a)			
		Respondents Would Choose Same Union Type as Parent	Respondents in Similar Union as Parent	Respondents would Cohabit if some Relatives Did	Possibility of Cohabitants Children Cohabiting Too
Respondents Would Choose Same Union Type as Parent	Pearson Correlation	1	.186**	.363**	.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	.000	.023
	N	227	227	227	227
Respondents in Similar Union as Parent	Pearson Correlation	.186**	1	.131*	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.048	.000
	N	227	227	227	227
Respondents would Cohabit if some Relatives Did	Pearson Correlation	.363**	.131*	1	.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.048		.000
	N	227	227	227	227
	Pearson Correlation	.150*	.479**	.370**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.000	.000	
	N	227	227	227	227

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Model Summary(b)									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.548 a	.300	.281	1.097	.300	15.699	6	220	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Relationship between Family Background and Youth Union Choice, Respondents' Parents' Type of Family Union, Respondents Would Choose Same Union Type as Parent, Whether Any of Respondent's Relatives are in Cohabitation, Possibility of Cohabitants Children Cohabiting Too, Respondents in Similar Union as Parent

b. Dependent Variable: Cohabit if some Relatives Did

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.15, family background had an intermediate relationship between background of the respondent and cohabitation (Pearson's $r=.548$, $p<0.01$) among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The study established a positive correlation between Possibility of Cohabitants Children Cohabiting Too, and Respondents in Similar Union as Parent (Pearson's $r=0.479$, $p<0.01$). This indicated that parents of or rather family background to a significant extent influenced cohabiting among the young adults who came from such backgrounds. Specifically, the study found a positive significant relationship between Response if someone would Cohabit if some Relatives Did and respondents would Choose Same Union Type as Parent was (Pearson's $r= 0.363$, $p<0.01$). This implies that the respondents were likely to copy or learn from their elder family behaviors as models and this influences their behavior on the choice of union. The results are significant at 0.01 level of significance. Existence of cohabitation in the family context was likely to influence young adults to cohabit when they reached the point of forming unions. This was supported by minister D who when asked if parental union was likely to influence youth decision to cohabit, argued that *'I think that family of origin is a key factor that is likely to influence the decision about marriage by the youth. This is because, if they have found parent's marriage working, then it's a confirmation to them that it's not a wedding that makes a family but commitment.'* A youth counselor B however disputed this by arguing that *'Marriage is a personal decision. It's an individual who decides how to go about marital issues and therefore even if family members are cohabiting, an individual may choose a different way of life.'* These findings corroborate those by Wamukoya (2018) who established that family background played a critical role in determining whether young Catholics in Kisumu Diocese, Kenya, formed cohabitations or not. Additionally, in support of these findings by Manning, Cohen and Smock, (2012) found that family of origin influences the views of children and youth on marriage and cohabitation. Such influence is exerted through social modeling, parental advice, religious values and control of finances

within the family. Further, Cherlin (2009), argue that overt or covert approval of cohabitation by parents contributes significantly to the decision to cohabit among young adults. Parental communication of approval or disapproval towards cohabitation is another critical factor in determining whether young people will cohabit or not. Further, religious teachings from parents to children play a socializing role, which implies that religious parents who frown on cohabitation are likely to influence their children to eschew the practice in adulthood. The studies by Diner, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, & Larsen-Rife, (2008); Gold, (2012); Newcomb, (1986, 1986) also similarly show the impact of family background on cohabiting relationships among young adults.

4.5. Peer Pressure influence on Cohabitation

The third objectives of the study were to assess the role of peer pressure in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit and respective questions were posed.

4.5.1. Impact of Peer Pressure of Young Adults' Union Formation Decisions

The study posed three statements to young adults to elicit information on how various aspects of peer pressure influenced cohabitation decisions among the young adults. The following scale was use: following scale: 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Undecided, 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly Disagree. Table 4.16 presents the findings.

Table 4.16.***Impact of Peer Pressure on Young Adults' Decisions to Cohabit***

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	I have close friends who are cohabiting.	71	31.3	100	44.1	23	10.1	12	5.3	21
My friends and peers consider cohabitation to be right.	32	14.1	104	45.8	59	26.0	21	9.3	11	4.8
I am likely to cohabit when the time comes owing to the influence of my peers.	11	4.8	31	13.7	26	11.5	70	30.8	89	39.2
I think it is right for my friends to cohabit.	35	15.4	45	19.8	58	25.6	50	22.0	39	17.2

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.16, majority of the young adults 44.1%, (100) affirmed that they knew close friends who were cohabiting. This affirms the prevalence of cohabitation among young adults, including those in the MCK Kaaga Circuit churches. Further, it underlines the possibility of peer influence towards cohabitation among young people. The young adults wants to equal their peers may it be in social, economic and life setups, no one wants to be left out or to feel like an outcast. A respondents was quoted saying” *my friends and everyone does it and that why I believe it is okay*” this implies that the young adults are strongly influenced by their peers who are in cohabiting relationships. However the fact that everyone does it does not justify it to be okay. The study by Wendy D., Cohen, & Smock, (2009) similarly found that Peers are a key source of social influence, with respondents and their partners using the

vicarious trials of their peer networks to judge how cohabitation would affect their own relationship.

According to Table 4.16, the study sought the opinions of young adults on whether their close friends considered cohabitation right and established that majority of young adults 45.8%, (104) agreed that their peers considered cohabitation right. This points to the high prevalence of the practice among young people, including those in the church as indicated in earlier findings of this study. Studies that demonstrate high prevalence of cohabitation include those by Ojewola (2017) in Kenya, Manning, (2013) in USA, Ojewola and Akinduyo (2017) in Nigeria. Apparently, cohabitation among youth is on an upward mend all over the world and MCK Kaaga Circuit youth are not an exception.

The study further sought to establish whether friends in cohabitation could influence one to cohabit, and the findings, as summarized in Table 4.16 indicate that majority of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit 39.2%, (89) ‘Strongly Disagreed’ while 30.8%, (70) ‘Disagreed’ that they would decide to cohabit from the influence of their friends who were in cohabitations. This is indicative of highly independent young people while underlying the likelihood of other factors being key determinants of the decision by young people to cohabit. On the part of youth counselors and church ministers, there was a significant opinion that young adults were likely to cohabit if their peers were in such unions. Mashal (2011), buttresses these findings by observing that the social environment in which youth live influences their decisions on union formation, including the decision to cohabit. The study by Manning et al., (2011) also found a strong relationship between peer pressure and cohabitation among young adults as in the case of Kaaga circuit.

In addition, according to Table 4.16, when asked whether they considered cohabitation among their peers right, most of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit 25.6%, (58) were ‘Undecided’. This implies indifference towards cohabitation and church marriage and suggests that

cohabitation is a complex issue driven by multifarious factors. A study by Rindfuss, (2004) on cohabitation in Japan and established a close link between having a positive disposition towards cohabitation and knowing people who were in similar arrangements. In essence young adults will be sympathetic towards peers who are cohabiting because those not in cohabitation might be in a similar arrangement in future. The study by, (Manning, Smock, Dorius, & Cooksey, 2014; Wendy D. et al., 2009) also similarly concurs with the finding.

4.5.2. Opinions on Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

The study required young adults to volunteer general opinions on the relationship between peer pressure and cohabitation. Table 4.17 presents their responses.

Table 4.17.

Opinions on Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

Opinions on Peer Pressure and Cohabitation	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Young people are likely to ape their peers in union formation	79	34.8
A principled youth chooses the right way, not what peers do	37	16.3
Many cohabitations by youth break up before marriage	73	32.2
Cohabitation is a premarital stage, not a community issue	38	16.7
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.17, majority of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit 34.8%, (79) opined that “young people are likely to ape their peers in union formation”. On the other hand, a similarly significant number 32.2%, (73) observed that “many cohabitations by youth break up before marriage.” On the part of youth counselors and church ministers, the prevailing opinion was that where older church members were in cohabitations, even though not related by blood to young adults, the latter were likely to decide to cohabit when forming unions. The findings

of Manning, Smock, Dorius, & Cooksey, (2014); S. M. Stanley et al., (2006) studies are consistent with that of this study.

The powerful influence of examples, especially from peers, is further established in the study by Coast, (2009) who studied the Christians in the UK and established that young adults who approve of cohabitation have a high likelihood of entering into this kind of union formation in future. Another critical study in this regard was by Muriithi- Kabaria, (2006) who established that peer pressure was a critical factor influencing cohabitation decisions and practices among Kenyatta University students (Kenya). In agreement with this research, when ministers and youth counsellors were asked about their opinion in regard to peer pressure influence on cohabitation, Minister F conquered by arguing that, *“most of the youth could be influenced into making some decisions including cohabitation from colleagues. If most of their colleagues are cohabiting, one may find it difficult to live a different life from the others.”* One may have decided to keep from it, however, the pressure from friends may be too much to ignore. Ojewola and Akinduyo, (2017) arrived at comparable findings following a study among university students in Nigeria.

4.5.3. Pearson r Correlation on Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

To establish the relationship between peer pressure and the cohabitation among youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Likert scale data for Peer Pressure (independent variable) was correlated against Likert scale data for Cohabitation (dependent variable). The value of r ranges between +1 and -1. Values between 0.1 and 0.3 are said to be Weak; Medium values range between 0.3 and 0.5, while Strong values range between 0.5 and 1.0. Table 4.18 presents the results.

Table 4.18.

Pearson r Correlation of Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

		Correlations			
		Respondent has Close Cohabiting Friends	Respondent 's Friends Consider Cohabiting Right	Friends in Cohabitation may Influence one to Cohabit	Respondent Considers it Right for Friends to Cohabit
Respondent has Close Cohabiting Friends	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1	.634**	.078	.418**
Respondents' Friends Consider Cohabiting Right	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.634**	1	.056	.503**
Friends in Cohabitation may Influence one to Cohabit	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.078	.056	1	.241**
Respondent Considers it Right for Friends to Cohabit	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.418**	.503**	.241**	1
		.000	.000	.000	.000
		227	227	227	227
		.000	.000	.403	.000
		227	227	227	227

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

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.18, peer pressure had a strong positive influence on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit (Pearson's $r = 0.634$, $P < 0.01$). The study found out a significant positive correlation between, "respondents' Friends Consider Cohabiting Right" and respondent has Close Cohabiting Friends. The results are significant at 0.01 level of significance. This implies the more peers of young adults were in cohabitation, the more likely

the youth were likely to enter into cohabitations to fit in with the rest of their peers. Findings from a study by Wamukoya, (2018), who studied cohabitation among Catholic youth in Nyando Deanery (Kisumu Kenya) supports these findings. This researcher established that peer pressure was a key influence of cohabitation decisions by young Catholics. This was supported by a study conducted among South African Christians by Mashal, (2011) which indicates that majority of the young adults that indulge in cohabitation do so because of peer pressure. This continues to happen despite abstinence and sanctity of marriage teachings given in church seminars and sermons. Wendy D. et al., (2009) study noted that respondents' views and plans for cohabitation can be conditioned by their dating partner or are relationship-specific. In other words, they may not cohabit with this partner, although they would with someone else. Even when couples share similar views, the reasons and sources of their views may vary (i.e., stem from negative peer associations or from negative personal experiences). This shows how peer influence forms perceptions and behavior among the young adults. The young adults look at their peers and give in to cohabitation temptation because as reported by one youth '*everyone does it, who am i not to?*' They get into this act despite the church teachings to avoid being laughed at and to gain affirmation from peers. This influences acceptance and feeling of belonging to a particular group.

4.6. Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the role of premarital pregnancy in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Respondents were required to volunteer answers to a number of issues and the findings were presented in tables and figures.

4.6.1. Prevalence of Premarital Pregnancy

The study sought to establish the prevalence of premarital pregnancy among the youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit youth. Table 4.19 presents the findings.

Table 4.19

Prevalence of Premarital Pregnancy in Local Church and Community

Prevalence	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
High	60	26.4
Moderate	87	38.3
Low	80	35.2
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.19, majority of young adults 38.3%, (87) indicated that premarital pregnancy had a moderate prevalence in the local church and community. However, a comparably significant number 35%, (80) considered premarital pregnancy to be highly prevalent in among the youth. These findings were buttressed by those of majority of church ministers and youth counselors 56.3%, (16) who indicated that there was a moderate prevalence of premarital pregnancy among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The fact that the premarital pregnancy existed led to further investigation of its impact on cohabiting decisions. The study by Manning & Cohen, (2015) revealed that the likelihood of cohabiting was high where a premarital pregnancy occurred.

4.6.2. Impact of Premarital Pregnancy on Cohabitation Decisions

The study posed three statements to young adults to elicit information on how various aspects of premarital pregnancy influenced cohabitation decisions among the young adults. The following scale was use: following scale: 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Undecided, 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly Disagree. Table 4.20 presents the findings.

Table 4.20***Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation Decisions***

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	If I got pregnant / my partner got pregnant before marriage, I would cohabit.	56	24.7	52	22.9	29	12.8	65	28.6	25
Most cohabitations I know started as a result of the woman getting pregnant before marriage.	38	16.7	103	45.5	44	19.4	32	14.1	10	4.4

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.20, 28.6%, (56) of the respondents would not cohabit if they got pregnant or their girlfriends conceived. On the other hand, 62.2%, (141) would cohabit in case the female partner became pregnant before marriage. In essence, premarital pregnancy was a key determinant of cohabitation decisions. Among youth counselors and church ministers, 93.8%, (16) opined that unmarried women were likely to cohabit with their male partners on conception or at the birth of the offspring. Minister E and counsellor 2 both agreed that premarital pregnancy to a big extent influences cohabitation. Minister E *'If a lady learns that she's expectant, she would definitely push the man to move in with her. If a man learns about the same, some would not accept but others would count it now as an opportunity to settle down'* Counselor 2 *'Pregnancy is a leading cause of cohabitations. The cohabitants may be left without any other option than to settle down if it happens that a partner is expectant.'* Interestingly, these findings leave one with question, should premarital pregnancy really be the reason for cohabiting?

Trying to answer the question is more complicated because the welfare of the child in this case is to be put into consideration. Forgetting the moral implications and religious sentiments against cohabitation one has no better option than just to stay along together as a couple. Therefore there is a high likelihood that the common reasons why after premarital pregnancy the young adults continue to live together as a husband and a wife are common. Justifications for such relationships have no biblical basis however. The study by Manning & Cohen, (2015) noted that premarital pregnancy leading to the so called “single mothers eventually forces one to cohabiting relationships.

Table 4.20, also indicates that 62.1%, (141) of young adults affirmed that most cohabitations they knew began as a result of premarital pregnancy. This is in tandem with earlier findings that most young adults were likely to cohabit in case the female partner conceived before marriage (Brown & Wright, 2017; Newcomb, 1986; Wendy D. et al., 2009).

4.6.3. Opinions on Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

The study requested young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches to volunteer their general opinions on premarital pregnancy and cohabitation. Table 4.21 presents the findings.

Table 4.21
Opinions on Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

Opinions	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Premarital pregnancy is likely to result in cohabitation	44	19.4
Cohabitants live together for the child's welfare	79	34.8
One doesn't have to get married merely because of premarital pregnancy	81	35.7
Cohabitation increases chances of premarital pregnancy	23	10.1
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.21, 35.7%, (81) of young adults opined that premarital pregnancy was not the sole justification for marriage. Equally significant were the 34.8%, (79) young adults who indicate that it was the welfare of the child that influenced young adults to cohabit. It is

also important to note that some of the young adults observed that cohabitation increased the probability of divorce. The latter sentiment is supported by research work conducted by Musick and Michelmore, (2014), who observed that cohabiting couples are more likely to divorce compared to those in marriages.

4.6.4. Pearson *r* Correlation of Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

To establish the relationship between premarital pregnancy and the cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Likert scale data for Premarital Pregnancy (independent variable) was correlated against Likert scale data for Cohabitation (dependent variable). The value of *r* ranges between +1 and -1. Values between 0.1 and 0.3 are said to be Weak; Medium values range between 0.3 and 05, while Strong values range between 0.5 and 1.0. Table 4.22 presents the result.

Table 4.22

Pearson r Correlation of Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

		Correlations	
		Premarital Pregnancy Must Result in Cohabitatio n	Possibility of Cohabiting Following Premarital Pregnancy
Premarital Pregnancy Must Result in Cohabitation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1	.395** .000 227
Possibility of Cohabiting Following Premarital Pregnancy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.395** .000 227	1 227

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

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.22, premarital pregnancy had a moderate positive influence (0.395) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The results are significant at 0.01

level of significance. This implies that premarital pregnancy was a moderate contribute to cohabitation among young adults. Further, conception by the female partner was likely to result in cohabitation. This finding is supported by a study carried out in Nairobi, Kenya by Mureithi, (2009) to establish the determinants of union formation, which concluded that where a child is born before marriage, fathers were more likely to enter into cohabitation with the mother of the child than in cases where no child had been conceived. Men were likely to take responsibility of Children they sired within a cohabitation relationship Mureithi, (2009). For women, the study established that the first pregnancy was more likely to lead to union formation than subsequent ones. In essence, such women were likely to enter into cohabitation for the sake of the child or to ward of stigma from the society. It was concluded that marriage was the exception, while cohabitation was the norm in Nairobi Mureithi, (2009). *“we were in a relationship with her when I was at Meru university, she got a child in the process of living together and I decided to settle with for fear of hurting her”* a male respondents replied. This implies that some men for fear of worse consequences such as their female counterpart committing suicide in case of neglecting; choose to stay with them for long-term relationships. The study by (Manning & Cohen, 2012b; Newcomb, 1986; S. M. Stanley et al., 2006) supports the finding that premarital pregnancy leads to cohabitation among the young adults. The Erickson stage of intimacy versus isolation in development theory used in this study agrees with the findings of Gold, (2012) who pointed out that college students dating shifts its focus from social interaction to consideration of possible marriage partners. These students and others in the workforce and their family units are experiencing and experimenting With the process of the launching of late-teen-age children. Part of the launching process deals with students being exposed to life-style options and values different from the family-of-origin and input from the older peer group of college students or work colleagues rather than the high

school from which they had graduated. Physical distance from home and the development of new peer reference groups offers differing models of intimate relationships, options that may or may not have been supported in the home environment.

4.7. Counseling and Cohabitation

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the role of counseling in addressing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit. Respondents were requested to volunteer information on the relationship between the two variables.

4.7.1. Impact of Counseling on Cohabitation Decisions

The study posed three statements to young adults to elicit information on how various aspects of counseling influenced cohabitation decisions among the young adults. The following scale was used: following scale: 1. Strongly Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Undecided, 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly Disagree. Table 4.23 presents the findings.

Table 4.23***Impact of Counseling on Young Adults' Decisions to Cohabit***

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	My church conducts counseling for people of marriageable age.	57	25.1	95	41.9	13	5.7	43	18.9	19
I have attended youth counseling sessions where marriage was discussed.	51	22.5	100	44.1	18	7.9	55	24.2	3	1.3
The counseling program for young people in my church is practical.	39	17.2	74	32.6	23	10.1	66	29.1	25	11.0
My parents / family offer(ed) me with premarital counseling.	36	15.9	112	49.3	35	15.4	23	10.1	21	9.3
Effective premarital counseling would avert cohabitation among the youth.	101	44.5	56	24.7	24	10.6	38	16.7	8	3.5

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.23, 67%, (152) of the young adults indicated that churches in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches had counseling programs in place which included; ladies and men forums, mentorship sessions, bible study sessions and fellowships. The Church teaches that the more the image of God is realized in a person's life, the more a person becomes what God intended him or her to be. In agreement Manning, W. D. Cohen. J. A. and Smock P. J. (2012), argued that the sanctity of marriage is found in the original purpose for marital institution. Therefore, understanding of God's intention for marriage is key to making decisions regarding any form

of relationship. All these teachings are grounded in various biblical principles; *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”* Hebrews 13:4. *Further, it’s actually the will of God that people solemnize their weddings. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Many more verses in the bible are against cohabitation, *“...It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.”* 1 Corinthians 7:1-2. *“But I say to the unmarried and the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”* 1 Corinthians 7:8-9. Therefore, this implies that young people should have had some deterrents to cohabitation if they attended these church teaching programs in church. These teachings were meant to build the moral and spiritual dimension of the young adults as way of preparing them for Christian marriage. Youth counselors and church ministers indicated that churches had counseling programs for young adult. Morality and spirituality of the young people was taken seriously in a bid to raise people that are thoroughly equipped to face various challenges including relationships and marriage (Kigunda, 2019 2nd May, 2019). Judging by previous data on the prevalence of cohabitation among the youth, it is probable that the youth either did not attend these counseling/teaching lessons or did not adhere to inherent teachings. Counselling is believed to influence the behavior and bring a paradigm shift of thoughts for transformation and modeling the correct behaviors. However where there is no counsel people perish due to lack of wisdom. *“Since childhood I have been put on the track, don’t do this don’t do that, now counselling comes as something that limits my freedom, I don’t like counselling”* respondent 203. Such responses gives an insight that most youths have a negative attitude towards

counselling even if it is meant to change the direction of their relationships and destinies. The study by Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman, (2009); Tayade, (2019) noted the need to help individuals explore their own expectations about cohabitation as well as how cohabitation may or may not change their relationships and influence future relationship goals.

Moreover, most of the respondents 44.1%, (100) had attended counseling in respective churches. Considering earlier findings on the prevalence of cohabitation among young adults in the MCK Kaaga Circuit area of operation, the effectiveness of counseling is questionable.

Among youth counselors and church ministers, it was opined that given the prevalence of cohabitation among young adults, and in defiance of counseling by the church, the counseling programme was moderately effective. In addition, many of the respondents 32.6%, (74) agreed that church counseling was practical. However, it is noteworthy that 29.1%, (66) disagreed with the opinion. The numbers of those in favor of the statement was almost similar to those opposed to the opinion, hence raising the possibility that the programme did not appeal to young people. In contrast, church ministers and youth counselors indicated that the MCK Church teaching programme is effective and practical. They argued that these church teaching programs were sufficient to mold the moral and spiritual life of the young adults.

Another significant finding was 49.3%, (112) of the young adults received counseling from their parents. Parental counseling appears to be more prevalent than church teachings and plays either a complementary or supplementary role or both, for young adults. Considering family background was established as an important determinant of the decision to cohabit, there is a high probability that church counseling could be playing a subordinate role to parental counseling.

Table 4.23 also indicates that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that effective counseling could arrest the upsurge of cohabitations among the young adults. This buttresses earlier findings that the purported church-based counselling which included preaching, fellowships and teachings on courtship and marriage, engagement, sexual purity in relationships, and abstinence was likely not to have been effective because while many young adults had participated in the programme, cohabitation was relatively highly prevalent in the context of the Methodist Church of Kenya teachings.

4.7.2. Recommended Topics for Counseling

The study requested young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit to recommend topics they would want to be included in the church’s premarital counseling programme. The suggestions are presented in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24

Recommended Topics for Youth Counseling

Recommended Topics	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Drug and substance abuse	32	14.1
Choosing the right spouse	29	12.8
Self-control	40	17.6
Chastity before marriage	39	17.2
Transparency in relationships	41	18.1
Dangers of abortion	19	8.4
Planning for weddings and marriage	12	5.3
Financial Literacy	15	6.6
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.24, 18.1%, (41) of the young adults recommended that Transparency in Relationship be taught to young people intending to get married. Other suggested topics include sensitization against drug and substance abuse, choosing the right spouse, self-control and

chastity before marriage. Others were dangers of abortion, planning for weddings and marriage and financial literacy. When church ministers and youth counselors were asked to recommend ways of improving the content and delivery of premarital counseling programme, the topics suggested included financial management, abstinence and Christian dating. On the manner of delivery, it was suggested that young adults should be counseled from tender ages; they should be kept busy with productive activities and that married couples should be actively involved in premarital counseling in the church.

4.7.3. Pearson r Correlation on Counseling and Cohabitation

To establish the relationship between counseling and the cohabitation among you adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit churches, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation was computed. Likert scale data for Counseling (independent variable) was correlated against Likert scale data for Cohabitation (dependent variable). The value of r ranges between +1 and -1. Values between 0.1 and 0.3 are said to be Weak; Medium values range between 0.3 and 05, while Strong values range between 0.5 and 1.0. Table 4.25 presents the results.

Table 4.25

Pearson r Correlation of Counseling and Cohabitation

		Correlations			
		Respondents has Attended Premarital Counseling Sessions	Church Premarital Counseling is Practical	Parents Provide Premarital Counseling	Cohabitation is Good if Cohabitants Agree
Respondents has Attended Premarital Counseling Sessions	Pearson Correlation	1	.498**	.154*	-.197**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.020	.003
	N	227	227	227	227
Church Premarital Counseling is Practical	Pearson Correlation	.498**	1	.254**	-.090
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.176
	N	227	227	227	227
Parents Provide Premarital Counseling	Pearson Correlation	.154*	.254**	1	.314**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.000		.000
	N	227	227	227	227
Cohabitation is Good if Cohabitants Agree	Pearson Correlation	-.197**	-.090	.314**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.176	.000	
	N	227	227	227	227

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.25, counseling had a moderate negative influence (-.197, p=0.03) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. This is so because despite attending premarital counselling the respondents still held that cohabitation is good if Cohabitants Agree. The results are significant at 0.01 level of significance. The p value of 0.03 means that the correlation is insignificant. The counselling approach is in form seminars which is not enough program for counselling. It also lacks professional follow up therefore the youths might still be

ignorant. The study however developed a psychoeducation approach for relationships which has a training manual. In essence, premarital counseling did not influence young adults to avoid cohabitation.

4.8. Cohabitation

The study further posed questions on the issue of cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Respective responses are contained in tables and figures. However, it is significant to underline that, as indicated by youth counselors and church ministers, cohabitation is against church doctrines even though church members are sometimes ambivalent about the issue. Further, 43.8%, (16) of youth counselors and church ministers indicated that the church considered cohabitation among young adult to be a serious problem.

4.8.1. Number of Friends in Cohabitation

The study sought to know the number of young adults' friends that were in cohabitation. Table 4.26 presents the findings.

Table 4.26

Number of Friends in Cohabitation

Duration in years	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
1-5	119	52.4
6-10	28	12.3
11-15	38	16.7
16-20	27	11.9
More than 20	15	6.6
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

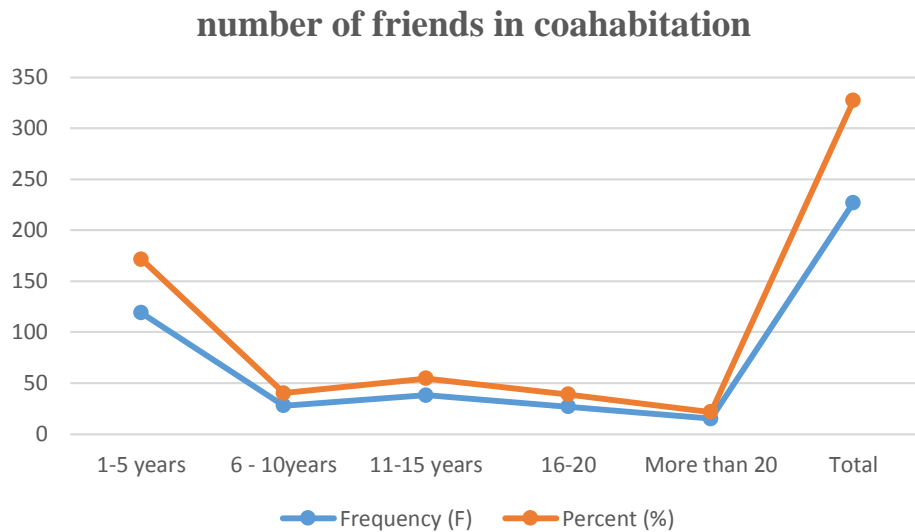


Figure 4.5: number of friends in cohabitation

According to Table 4.26, most of young people 52.4%, (119) had one to five friends who were in cohabitations. Considering the power of peer influence, this was likely to contribute to more young adults deciding to cohabit. Majority of youth counselors and church ministers indicated they knew between 11 and 15 young adults who were cohabiting. These findings are in a tandem with those by Manning (2015), who established that there was a high prevalence of cohabitation among the youth in USA. The study by Brown and Wright, (2017) similarly acknowledged declining long-term marriage relationships and increased rates of cohabitation. Further, Gurrentz, (2018) noted that the number of 18-24 living with unmarried partner has increased in US more than the married.

4.8.2. Cohabitation among Young People

The study also requested young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit to rank a number of statements on cohabitation, from the most important to the least important. The findings are presented in Table 4.27

Table 4.27***Rating of Statements on Young Adults and Cohabitation***

Reason for cohabitation	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Cohabitation works if cohabitants plan and agree.	23	10.2
Cohabitation is an important foundation for marriage.	98	43.1
Most young adults prefer cohabitation to marriage.	32	14.1
Cohabitation leads to marriage	74	32.6
Total	227	100.0

According to Table 4.27, 43.1%, (91) of the respondents considered the statement ‘cohabitation is a strong basis for marriage’ as the most significant opinion among youth in favor of cohabitation. When asked to indicate why youth cohabit, church ministers and youth counselors gave a raft of reasons including that lack of or inadequate funding, influence from families, premarital counseling, peers pressure, influence from mainstream and social media, cultural practices and role models. The study by Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman, (2009a) found the major reasons for cohabiting among youths being convenience, to test relationship and spending more time together. The finding of S. Stanley, (2019) similarly wrote cohabiting before marriage was found important for testing compatibility. The two studies reasons for cohabiting may be similar with those of this study though not mentioned due to differences in education level and economic status of the respondents in this study. Youths in United States were more likely to cohabit to test compatibility and relationships than youths in Kenya specifically kaaga synod who cited financial constraints as some of the reasons for cohabiting.

4.8.3. Importance of Cohabitation before Marriage

The study also sought to establish whether cohabitation was important before marriage. The responses of young adults are summarized in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28***Cohabitation in Important Before Marriage***

Responses	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	61	26.9
Agree	49	21.6
Neutral	35	15.4
Disagree	33	14.5
Strongly Disagree	49	21.6
Total	227	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.28, 26.9%, (61) of the participants agreed that it was important to cohabit before marriage. This buttresses earlier findings that young adults in Kaaga MCK Circuit were in favor of cohabitation. When probed on why they thought cohabitation was important or not important before marriage, young adults gave the following responses: cohabitants had time to know each other before settling down in the lifelong relationship of marriage and cohabitation would result in marriage eventually thus fulfilling the original intention to settle down in matrimony. On the other hand, those opposed to the idea of cohabiting before marriage considered the former to be against Christian and MCK Church teachings and that it would result in broken families. According to philosophy, (2019) in the current generation cohabitation is no longer seen as a contentious issue compared to the recent past when legal systems, societal and legal systems were opposed to cohabitation. Actually people tend to do what they are told not to do just to see how it goes and whether it works. Moral values however depends on ones upbringing and the foundation that forms integrity not to break the law. However due to moral erosion the forbidden thing becomes more beautiful and eventually acceptable and no guilt after doing the wrong the thing.

However religion and especially Christianity is so clear on the need to obey the commands of God as a way of showing expressing our love for Him.

4.8.4. Preventive and Mitigating Strategies to Stem Cohabitation

The study requested youth counselors and church ministers to recommend strategies for preventing or reducing cases of cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Table 4.29 presents the findings.

Table 4.29

Strategies for Mitigating and Preventing Cohabitation among Youth

Recommendations	Frequency (F)	Percent (%)
Inculcating Christian teachings in children from an early age	1	6.3
Role modeling by older Christians	2	12.5
Revamping premarital counseling	4	25.0
Ensuring young people are occupied with productive work	4	25.0
Emphasizing on Christian Marriage	3	18.8
Conducting mass weddings which are a cheaper option	2	12.5
Total	16	100.0

Source: *Research data*

According to Table 4.29, a high number of respondents 25%, (4) recommended that older Christians should act as role models to young adults and that young people should be occupied with productive work respectively. Other suggestions included inculcating Christian teachings in children from an early age, revamping premarital counseling, emphasizing on Christian marriage and conducting mass weddings which are a cheaper option. According to Wamukoya, (2018) following a study on cohabitation among young Catholic adults in the Nyando Deaconry of the Kisumu Diocese, the Catholic Church should strengthen its premarital counseling programme to convince young people to conduct church marriages at the first instance.

4.8 Summary of the results

The respondents' biodata revealed that the numbers of male and female participants in the study were relatively the same for young adults, youth counselors and church ministers. The study established that majority of the respondents (35.2%) were aged between 26 and 30 years. In addition, among the youth counselors and church ministers, a slight majority (56.3%) were between 30 years and 40 years with the remainder falling within the 41 years to 50 years' bracket. On marital status, it was revealed that most of the young adults (30.4%) were single, while among youth counselors and church ministers, (75%) were married. Concerning occupations, majority of young adults (41.4%). The study also established that a number of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit (45.4%) were active church members. Further, most of young adults (45.8%) indicated that they understood the benefits of regular church attendance. On the part of those who did not attend church regularly, 29.5% indicated that hypocrisy was prevalent in church hence discouraging attendance, and that churches thrive on exploiting members financially (10.1%). Other response included general apathy towards church activities (9.3%) and busy schedules that prevented youth from attending church (5.3%).

The first objective of the study was to investigate the role of financial status of a couple in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. It was established that a slight majority of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit (36.1%) considered their monthly incomes adequate. Moreover, a cumulative of respondents (5.7.7%) were not likely to enter into cohabitations solely because they lacked funds for weddings. Additionally, a notable number of the youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit would not choose to cohabit in the event that they lacked funds to raise a family. Further, a majority of the young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit (32.2%) were in favour of cohabiting while raising funds for a church wedding. The study also found out that a cumulative majority of young adults (48.9%) were not in favour of cohabitation as way to share costs. The study found a strong positive relationship between financial inability

and cohabitation. ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$). Exactly 74% of variations in cohabitation is explained by the model. The study found out very high chances of cohabiting as money was being raised for wedding. Further the correlation coefficients indicated a very strong positive correlation between cohabiting as the respondents raised money for the wedding (Pearson's $r=0.708$, $p<0.01$) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. A computation of Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation established that financial background had a moderate positive influence (Pearson's $r=0.49$) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. This implies that the lower the financial ability of young adults, the less likely they were to decide to get married in church. In essence, financial difficulties were likely to contribute to the decision to cohabit.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the role of family background in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. It was established that parents of the young adults (59%) were in church-officiated marriages. Further, quite a number of the young adults (26%) strongly disagreed with the opinion that they were or would choose the same type of union as their parents. Responses from young adults mirror those of youth counselors and church ministers who indicated that youth may choose to conduct holy matrimony at the first instance instead of opting to imitate cohabiting parents and that it is young adults in relationship who force their partners into cohabitations, irrespective of the parental type of union. Further, majority of young adults (44.1%) would not enter into cohabitations to emulate their cohabiting close relatives. Youth counselors and church ministers, on their part, indicated that they extended family had a powerful influence on the decisions of young adults to cohabit. The study also found out that most of young adults (32%) disagreed with the assertion that children born in cohabitations were likely to cohabit. A computation of Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation established that family background had a moderate positive influence (Pearson's $r=0.35$, $p<0.01$) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. This implies

existence of cohabitation in the family context was likely to influence young adults to cohabit when they reached the point of forming unions.

The third objective of the study was to assess the role of peer pressure in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The study found out that majority of young adults (44.1%) affirmed that they knew close friends who were cohabiting. Further, young adults in church (46%) agreed that their peers considered cohabitation right. The study also established that a sizeable number of young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit (39.2%) strongly disagreed while 30.8% disagreed that they would decide to cohabit from the influence of their friends who were in cohabitations. On the part of youth counselors and church ministers, there was a significant opinion that young adults were likely to cohabit if their peers were in such unions. In addition, majority of the youth (52.6%) were undecided on whether their peers were justified to cohabit. A computation of Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation established that peer pressure had a strong positive influence (0.64) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. This implies the more peers of young adults were in cohabitation, the more likely the youth were likely to enter into cohabitations to fit in with the rest of their peers.

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the role of premarital pregnancy in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. It was established that majority of young adults (38%) indicated that premarital pregnancy had a moderate prevalence in the local church and community. Further, most young people in the church (28.6%) indicated that they would not cohabit if they got pregnant or their girlfriends conceived. The study also found out that a cumulative majority of young adults (62.1%) affirmed that most cohabitations they knew began as a result of premarital pregnancy. Computation of Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation established that premarital pregnancy had a moderate positive influence (0.41) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit.

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the role of counseling in addressing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit. It was established that a cumulative majority of young adults (67%) indicated that churches in MCK Kaaga Circuit had premarital counseling programmes in place. Youth counselors and church ministers indicated that churches had premarital counseling programmes for young adults. Further, majority of the respondents (44.1%) had attended premarital counseling in respective churches. Among youth counselors and church ministers, it was opined that given the prevalence of cohabitation among young adults, and in defiance of premarital counseling by the church, the counseling programme was moderately effective. In addition, majority of young adults (32.6%) agreed that church premarital counseling was practical. It was also found out that most young adults (49.3%) received premarital counseling from their parents. Further, most of the respondents strongly agreed that effective counseling could arrest the upsurge of cohabitations among the youth. Computation of Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation established that premarital counseling had a moderate negative influence (-0.19) on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. This implies that premarital counselling young adults, had a little influence in curbing cohabiting.

Further, on cohabitation in general, the study established that (43.8%) of youth counselors and church ministers considered cohabitation among young adult to be a serious problem in the church. Further, majority of young adults (52.4%) had about one to five friends who were in cohabitations, while most of the youth counselors and church ministers (31.3%) indicated they knew between 11 and 15 young adults who were cohabiting. In addition, majority of young adults considered the statement ‘cohabitation is a strong basis for marriage’ as the most significant opinion among youth in favour of cohabitation. The study also found out that majority of the respondents (26.9%) agreed that it was important to cohabit before marriage. The respondents recommended that Christian teachings should be inculcated in children from

an early age and that mass wedding should be conducted to ensure cohabiting young adults get joined together in holy matrimony.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter entails a summary of the contents of the previous four chapters, logical conclusions and recommendation.

5.2. Summary

Cohabitation is on the upward trend globally, especially among young adults. Methodist Church in Kenya, Kaaga circuit, Meru, has recorded a decline in church weddings in recent years, with cohabitation being the main alternative. The purpose of the study was to analyze factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of financial ability, family of origin, peer pressure, premarital pregnancy and premarital counseling on cohabitation among young people. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 780 participants from whom a sample of 251 was derived using a combination of stratified random sampling, simple random sampling and census sampling. The sample comprised 235 young adults, 11 youth counselors and 5 church ministers. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect social demographic characteristics data from the participants while an interview schedule was administered to church ministers and youth counselors to collect qualitative data for the research. A pilot study was conducted in MCK Kinoru Circuit, targeting 25 young adults, 2 church ministers and 2 youth counselors. Data was collected from the respondents on two different Sunday service from respective churches. Data analysis and presentation was conducted using descriptive statistics with the help of IBM Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Statistics version 21. The study established a strong and positive relationship between financial background and cohabitation among young adults($r=0.747$, $p<0.01$); family

of origin had a moderate positive influence on cohabitation among young adults ($r=0.548$, $p<0.01$); peer pressure had a moderate strong positive influence on cohabitation among young adults ($r= 0.634$, $p<0.01$); premarital pregnancy had a moderate positive influence on cohabitation among young adults, and premarital counseling had a weak negative (influence on cohabitation among young adults($r=-.19$, $p=0.03$). The study concluded that lack of financial ability especially to solemnize a wedding was the major cause of cohabitation among the youths. further, family context influenced young adults to cohabit when they decide to form family unions; the more peers of young adults were cohabiting the higher the likelihood of young adults cohabiting and vice versa; premarital pregnancy was a key contributor to cohabitation as the welfare of the child had to be secured, and the church's premarital counseling program had little influence in controlling cohabitation. The study recommended that MCK Kaaga synod to institute and engage youths in income generating project for their financial self-sustainability; that the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) Kaaga Circuit to ensure church weddings are affordable to young people; that mass weddings should be conducted to reduce the number of cohabitations. Secondly, psycho education approach for relationships to help address cohabitation that church leaders should encourage cohabiting young adults to formalize their unions in church inculcating and encouraging Christian dating; that young female adults who get pregnant before marriage should be encouraged to pursue their dreams despite their predicament to avert cohabiting, and the MCK counseling program should be revised to include contemporary issues that contribute to cohabiting among young adults. The findings of this study will be of critical importance to young Christian adults, church ministers, youth counselors, youth development experts and the academic fraternity, particularly experts in counseling and marriage issues.

5.3. Conclusions

Based on Christian teachings as the intervening variable, cohabitation has advanced since the young adults justify the new normal behavior with many reasons that are opposed to religious and expected moral validations. From the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions based on respective objectives:

The first objective of the study was to investigate the role of financial status of a couple in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The study concluded that financial background has a strong positive influence on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit ($r=0.74$, $p<0.01$) the lower the financial ability of young adults, the less likely they were to decide to engage in holy matrimony. The more the financial difficulties the more likely young adults are to cohabit.

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the role of family background in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Family background was found to have a moderate positive influence on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit ($r=0.54$, $p<0.01$). Specifically, the influence increased if the respondents were cohabitant children, parents or close relatives were cohabiting. Existence of cohabitation in the family context is likely to influence young adults to cohabit when they decide to form family unions. Despite religious teachings and upbringing, the dominant union-formation practice in the family and societal environment is likely to be chosen by young adults.

The third objectives of the study was to assess the role of peer pressure in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Peer pressure has a moderate influence on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. The more peers of young adults were cohabiting the higher the likelihood of young adults cohabiting and vice versa. The

existence of other cohabiting young adults (especially close friends) in the community and church is likely to influence young adults to cohabit.

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the role of premarital pregnancy in influencing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. Premarital pregnancy has a moderate positive influence on cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga Circuit. In the event of the female partner conceiving before marriage, there was a high likelihood of the couple cohabiting especially to ensure the child would be born into a family.

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the role of counseling in addressing cohabitation among young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit. Counseling had a weak negative influence on cohabitation among young adults. Counseling was not a deterrent to young adults not to cohabit. A new approach to counseling that targets the main reason for cohabiting needs to be employed.

5.4. Recommendations

5.4.1. Recommendations on Research Findings

From the findings and conclusions of the study, the following policy recommendations:

The Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) Kaaga Circuit should engage in projects that creates income and jobs for the youths to enhance financial sustainability hence afford to solemnize their weddings. Also explore strategies for making weddings affordable to young people, hence encouraging many young adults to choose holy matrimony over cohabitations.

The study recommended a psycho education approach to relationships.

Church leaders should encourage cohabiting young adults to formalize their unions in church while encouraging unmarried to follow the church approach when courting and marrying, as

this will create positive marriage examples among peers, thus discouraging cohabitation. Young female adults who get pregnant before marriage should not be ostracized but welcomed and encouraged to pursue their dreams despite their predicament as this will avert cohabiting with the father of the child for financial or moral support reasons.

The MCK premarital counseling programme should be revised to include contemporary issues that affect the youth with a view of making the programme practical and effective. Among the topics to be emphasized are the importance of chastity before marriage vis-'a-vis the dangers of premarital sex and pregnancy; financial planning and the need for adequate preparation for marriage.

5.4.2. Recommendations for Further Research

The following are research topics that could not be fully or entirely handled by the current study but which other researchers can delve into:

1. The role of popular culture and media influences on the decision to cohabit.
2. Studies that treat each of the independent variables of this study as a specific topic.
3. A replication of the current study in another circuit of the MCK church or young adults in a different Christian denomination.
4. The extent of moral erosion influence on cohabitation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of Transmittal for Data Collection

Denis Muriungi Muriira

P.O. Box 1534.

Meru.

Date 1/7/2018

Dear Respondent

RE: DATA COLLECTION FOR RESEARCH STUDY

I am a Master of Arts degree student at the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU). I am carrying out a study titled “Factors Influencing Cohabitation among the young adults in MCK Kaaga circuit.”

My study requires that I collect data from the young adults, church ministers and youth counsellors in Kaaga Circuit Churches. Kindly help me achieve my study objectives by filling the attached questionnaire. No answers are right or wrong. Remember to be as accurate and honest as possible. Please note that the data I am collecting is for academic purposes only.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Denis Muriungi Muriira

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Young Adults

I am a Master of Arts degree (counseling psychology) student at the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU). I am carrying out a study titled “Factors Influencing Cohabitation among Young People in MCK Kaaga Circuit. “My study requires that I collect data from young people in Kaaga Circuit Churches. Kindly help me achieve my study Objectives my filling this questionnaire. Please fill all relevant sections by ticking the relevant choice and by writing in the spaces provided. There is no right or wrong answers. Do not write your name anywhere in this questionnaire.

PART I: Respondent’s Personal Information

1. Please indicate your gender

a. Male () Female ()

2. How old are you?

Between 18 and 25 years ()

Between 26 and 30 Years ()

Between 31 and 35 years ()

3. Marital Status

Single () Married ()

Separated () Divorced ()

Widowed () Living together but not officially married

()

4. Occupation

Student () Unemployed ()

Formally employed () Self-employed ()

5. Please indicate your status in your local church

Active member () Church goer (passive attendant) ()

I stopped attending church ()

6. Please explain your answer in Question 5 (above). Why are you active, passive or stopped attending church?

.....
.....

PART II: Financial Ability and Cohabitation

7. What is your opinion about morality and cohabitation are you guilt of having getting along with your partner without having solemnized your wedding despite the ability of finances?

.....

Please rate your current monthly income below

Adequate () Barely Adequate ()

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I would cohabit if I did not have enough money to cater for wedding expenses					
I would cohabit if I realized I would not have enough money to raise a family after the wedding.					
I would cohabit before marriage as we raise money for the wedding.					
Cohabitation is good because it involves cost-sharing of expenses					

9. Please comment on the relationship between your financial ability and the decision to cohabit or get married directly

.....

.....

.....

PART III: Family Background and Cohabitation

10. Please describe the type of union your parents are / were in?

- Religious marriage (conducted in church)
- Civil marriage (conducted by a magistrate or judge)
- Traditional marriage only
- Never married but stayed together

11. Are any of your close relatives in cohabitation relationships?

- YES NO

12. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Tick your preferred answer in the respective box).

13.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The type of union I am in (marriage or cohabitation) is similar to the one my parents were / are in.					
If I am to get married today, I would choose the same type of union as the one my parents are in.					
If I am to get married today, I would choose cohabitation if some of My relatives practiced it.					
Children of parents who cohabit are likely to choose cohabitation.					

13. Please comment on the relationship between the type of unions practiced in your community and the type of unions young people form when they decide to start families.

.....

.....

PART IV: Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Tick your preferred answer in the respective box).

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have close friends who are in cohabitating.					
Cohabitation is generally considered right by my friends and peers.					
Having close friends in cohabitation is likely to influence me to cohabit when I decide to form a union.					
I think it is still fine when my friends cohabit					

15. What is your opinion on the role peers play in the decision by young people to cohabit or get married in the first instance?

.....

.....

.....

PART V: Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

16. How widespread is premarital pregnancy in your church and community?

High ()

Moderate ()

Low ()

17. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Tick your preferred answer in the respective box).

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I got pregnant before Marriage / my girlfriend got pregnant before marriage, I would cohabit with her.					
Our union began as cohabitation after I got Pregnant / my girlfriend conceived.					
Most cohabitation I know started as a result of pregnancy.					
When the lady in the relationship conceives, the couple must settle down before a formal wedding.					

18. Please comment on the relationship between cohabitation and premarital pregnancy.

.....

.....

PART VI: Counseling and Cohabitation

19. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? (Tick your preferred answer in the respective box).

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My church conducts counselling for young people of marriageable age.					
I have attended youth counseling sessions where marriage was discussed.					
My church's counselling for young people is practical.					
My parents / family has been providing / has Counselin provided g to me on marriage issues.					
If youth were counseled effectively they would not cohabit.					

20. Which topics / issues would you recommend to be included in premarital counselling to prevent cohabitation among the youth in your church and community?

.....

PART VII: Cohabitation

1. How many of your young friends are cohabiting i.e. living together as husband andwife without getting married officially in church? 1-5 () 6-10 () 11-15 () 16-20 () More than 20

2. Please rank the following reasons for cohabitation with 1 being the most important reason and 5 being the least important.

Reasons for cohabiting	Rank (1-5)
Cohabitation is fine as long as you agree	
I think cohabitation is important as a basis for marriage	

Most young adults prefer cohabitation

Cohabitation eventually encourages marriage.

Other reason (please specify)

3. Cohabitation is important before marriage.

Strongly Agree () Agree () Moderate Agree ()

Disagree () Strongly Disagree ()

4. Kindly give a reason / reasons for your answer in Question 32 (above)

.....

.....

END

Thank you for your time and responses

Appendix C: Focused Group Discussion Questions for Young Adults

Hi. My name is Denis Muriira. I am a Master of Arts degree student at the Kenya Methodist University (KEMU). I am carrying out a study on Factors Influencing Cohabitation among Young People in MCK Kaaga Circuit. My study requires that I collect data from young adults in Kaaga Circuit Churches. Thank you for accepting to participate in this Focus Group Discussion.

1. In your own words and understanding, what is cohabitation? (Probe: Is cohabitation right or wrong?)
2. What do you think about cohabitation among youth in Kaaga Circuit of the Methodist Church in Kenya? (Probe: Is it prevalent or a minor problem among some youth?)
3. There is a notion among youth that if you don't have money or enough money for a wedding, you should cohabit, then get married later. What is your opinion about that? (Probe: How expensive are weddings? Does an expensive wedding mean you will lack money when you start living together as a married couple?)
4. In cohabitations, who bears the greater financial responsibility and why? Probe: How different is this from marriage?
5. My parents are cohabiting or they cohabited before they got married formally. Should I follow their example? Explain your answer.
6. Parents from both families have no problem with us cohabiting, why is the church against this type of union? (Probe: Should church doctrines and teachings prevail over traditions in this case?)

7. It has been said that many young couples cohabit because their friends are in similar unions. What is your opinion on peer pressure and cohabiting? (Probe: Do you know any young people in this situation? Tell us a little about them, without mentioning names.)
8. Much cohabitation are as a result of the girl conceiving before marriage. What is your opinion about that? (Probe: Must you get married because the lady has conceived? Will that marriage be based on love or convenience? What would be the alternative action when she gets pregnant?)
9. What is your opinion about counselling for young people as they approach marriage age? How often should it be done? What topics should be covered? (Probe: Is counselling helpful? How can counselling prevent cohabitation among young people?)
10. What measures should the church take to reduce cases of cohabitation among the youth in Kaaga Circuit
11. Apart from financial status, pre-marital pregnancy, family background, and peer pressure, what other factors do you think influence cohabitation among the young people? (Probe: Are there other factors that influence cohabitation?)

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Church Ministers and Youth Counselors

PART I: Respondent's Personal Information

1. Gender

b. Male () Female ()

2. Age

Between 30 and 40 years () between 41 and 50 Years ()

Between 51 and 60 years () above 60 years ()

3. Marital Status

Single () Married ()

Separated () Divorced ()

Widowed ()

4. Position in local church

Church Minister () Youth Counsellor ()

PART II: Financial Ability and Cohabitation

5. Please rate the prevalence of cohabitation among young people in your church.

High () Moderate () Low ()

6. How does lack of adequate money to cater for wedding expenses influence young people cohabit?

7. What is your opinion on the relationship between lack of adequate money to raise a family and cohabitation among young adults?

PART III: Family Background and Cohabitation

8. What is your opinion on the relationship between the type of union a young person's parent are in and the decision by that young person to enter into a cohabitation union?

9. If a child comes from an extended family background where cohabitation is practiced, how likely is that child to opt for cohabitation when the time for union formation comes? Please explain your answer.

PART IV: Peer Pressure and Cohabitation

10. Do you think cohabiting friends influence unmarried youth to decide to cohabit?
11. Does cohabitation among some older church members influence young adults to cohabit?

PART V: Premarital Pregnancy and Cohabitation

12. How widespread is premarital pregnancy in your church and community?
13. Are young women who get pregnant before marriage likely to cohabit or raise their children alone?

PART VI: Premarital Counseling and Cohabitation

14. Do you conduct premarital counselling for young people of marriageable age?
15. Do you consider your premarital counselling program realistic, practical and effective?
16. Considering the current marital statuses of young people in your church, is your church's premarital counselling effective?
17. What gaps do you see in your premarital counselling content that need to be filled to prevent young people from cohabiting?

PART VII: Cohabitation

- 18. How does your church regard cohabitation among church members?
- 19. How many young couples (current and former members) are cohabiting in church?
- 20. How many weddings of young people (not previously cohabiting) have you conducted in the last one year?
- 21. Do you consider young people’s cohabitation to be a serious problem in your church? Why?
- 22. In your opinion, what are the five most important reasons why youth cohabit? Please rate these reasons starting with the most important.
- 23. What strategies do you recommend your church to use to reduce / stop cases of cohabitation among your young church members?

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Appendix E: Consent Form

Project Title: **Factors Influencing Cohabitation among Young Adults in Kaaga Circuit,
Kaaga Synod**

Name of Researcher: **Muriira Denis Muriungi**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Letter of Transmittal for Data Collection date dated [] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that information collected from me will be used for academic purposes only.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature

Appendix F: Psychoeducation Manual for Relationships

Session	Duration	Content	Activities	Outcomes
One(Ladies only)	1 Day seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the facilitator and training participants. • Setting the rules of engagement • Sharing of trainees' expectations • Introduction of the study and entire program • Introduction & training on; a) Relationship leading to marriage b) self-awareness for positive relations c)Ladies role in a relationship d)relationship expectations e) Fears associated with marriage f) commitment of a marriage relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice-breaking indoor activities. • In session assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a rapport between the facilitator and participants • A conducive environment for training • Clarity of expectations and and the study • Gain insights on Cohabitation. • Identification of fears associated with cohabitation • Understand gender based roles • Gain clarity of expectations in relationships • Fears associated with marriage dwelt with. • Build a firm grip of commitment idea in marriages
Two(Men Only)	2 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the facilitator and training participants. • Setting the rules of engagement • Sharing of trainees' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice- breaking indoor activities • In session assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a rapport between the facilitator and participants • A conducive environment for training • Clarity of expectations and the study • Create a friendly environment for the trainees to know each other.

		<p>Introduction and training on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Relationship leading to marriage b) Self-awareness for positive relations c) Men’s role in a relationship d) Relationship expectations e) Fears associated with marriage f) Commitment of a marriage relationship 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of expectations and and the study • Gain insights on Cohabitation. • Identification of fears associated with cohabitation • Understand gender based roles • Gain clarity of expectations in relationships
Third (Men&ladies)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the participants • Sharing expectations for the joint session • A brief discussion about cohabitation in general • communication skills • Gender responsibilities in relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Facilitator-Participants discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a rapport between the participants • Listing down of expectations for the session • The participants must know what communication entails. • Every participant must know the responsibility related gender. • Every participant must understand the marital process
Fourth	2 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided team building outdoor activities • Guided group discussions on topics already taught 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations • Grouping participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members must socialize

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary session • Personal reflections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share their experiences on cohabitation • Reflections for sound decision making • Group discussions
Fifth	2 Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary session • Participants ask questions based on the presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide question papers • Participants write questions on paper • Asking oral questions • Responses from the facilitator and panelists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight into various issues raised • Deal with unresolved issues • Help participants make an informed decision
Sixth	1 Day Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: The Cornerstone of Your Relationships • Conflict Management: How to Disagree Lovingly • Getting realistic expectations about marriage and avoiding toxic resentments • Dismantling fears about marriage. • Identifying the "seeds" of future marital stress. • money and time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided discussions • Group assignments • Group Discussions • Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get more insight on Communication • Build a strong personality • Learn ways and means of resolving marital conflicts • Equipped for marriage

Appendix G: Ethical Clearance Letter



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. BOX 267 MERU - 60200, KENYA
TEL: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

FAX: 254-64-30162
EMAIL: info@kemu.ac.ke

25TH FEBRUARY 2019

KEMU/SERC/MCO/10/2019

Muriira Denis Muriungi
MCO-3-0905-3/2015

Dear Dennis,

RE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE OF A MASTERS' RESEARCH THESIS

Your request for ethical clearance for your Masters' Research Thesis titled "Analysis of factors influencing cohabitation among young adults in Methodist church in Kenya, (MCK); Kaaga Circuit" has been provisionally granted to you in accordance with the content of your project proposal subject to tabling it in the full Board of Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (SERC) for ratification.

As Principal Investigator, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:


1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the project.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the SERC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. The Proposal number assigned to the project should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Adverse events should be reported to the SERC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for SERC review. The SERC and outside agencies must review the information to determine if the protocol should be modified, discontinued, or continued as originally approved.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be

retained on file. The SERC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.

5. SERC regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. **Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the SERC in order to continue the study beyond the approved period.** Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion will result in termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.

Please note that any substantial changes on the scope of your research will require an approval.

Yours sincerely,


DR. WAMACHI
Chair, SERC

cc: Director, RI & PGS



Appendix H: KEMU Letter to NACOSTI



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya
Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Fax: 254-64-30162
Email: info@kemu.ac.ke

Our ref: NAC/MAS/1/2019/18

18th March 2019

Commission Secretary,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI.

Dear sir/ Madam,

RE: **MURIIRA DENNIS MURIUNGI(MCO-3-0905-3/2015)**

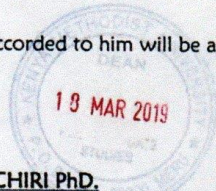
This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, Department of Theology , Religious Studies and Counselling, undertaking a Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology. He is conducting a research on, "Analysis of Factors Influencing Cohabitation among Young Adults in Methodist Church in Kenya, (MCK): Kaaga Circuit"

We confirm that his thesis proposal has been defended and approved by the university.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a permit to enable him collect data for his research.

Any assistance accorded to him will be appreciated.

Thank you.



DR. JOHN MUCHIRI PhD.
DIRECTOR, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Encl.

Appendix H: NACOSTI Research Authorization Letter



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
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Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/19/86246/29548**

Date: **12th April, 2019**

Denis Muriungi Muriira
Kenya Methodist University
P.O. Box 267 – 60200
MERU

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “*Analysis of factors influencing cohabitation among the youth in MCK Kaaga Circuit*” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for the period ending **12th April, 2020**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.

The County Director of Education
Meru County.