

The Influence of Christian Wedding Ceremony on Christian Marriage Stability Among Couples in the Methodist Church, Nairobi Synod, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of Christian wedding ceremony on Christian Marriage Stability Among Couples in the Methodist Church, Nairobi Synod, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed-method design targeting married couples in the Synod. Using purposive sampling, 194 respondents were drawn from 17 Circuits (population 4,010). Data was collected through questionnaires and interview guides via the Open Data Kit platform, capturing both quantitative and qualitative insights. Piloting ensured validity and reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive, inferential, and regression methods, while qualitative data underwent thematic and content analysis. Findings were presented through percentages, frequencies, tables, and thematic summaries, adhering to ethical guidelines. The study found that Christian wedding ceremonies have a strong positive impact on marriage stability among Methodist Church couples in Nairobi Synod (correlation coefficient $r = 0.758$). For every increase in Christian wedding ceremony practices, marriage stability increases by 0.301 units, and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). Christian wedding ceremonies represent foundational elements in establishing and maintaining marital stability within the Nairobi Synod context. The research conclusively demonstrates that formal Christian wedding rituals create essential frameworks of communal accountability that significantly reduce the risk of marital dissolution. The ceremonial aspects of Christian weddings establish multiple layers of commitment through sacred vows, community witnessing, and ecclesiastical sanctioning. These elements work synergistically to create social bonds that extend beyond the immediate couple to encompass the broader Christian community. The study recommends that the Churches within the Nairobi Synod may benefit from establishing formal guidelines that systematically provide clear frameworks for integrating traditional practices within Christian theological contexts while maintaining doctrinal integrity. The guidelines might address practical considerations such as ceremonial procedures and the role of church leadership in facilitating cultural-religious integration.

Keywords: *Christian Wedding Ceremony, Christian Marriage Stability, Couples, Methodist Church, Nairobi Synod, Kenya*

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1. Introduction

A Christian wedding ceremony is a sacred and formal event that signifies the union of a man and a woman before God, the church, and society. Rooted in biblical principles, the ceremony emphasizes the spiritual, emotional, and legal aspects of marriage, reinforcing commitment and stability (Smith, 2021). Christian weddings include essential elements such as the exchange of vows, scripture readings, prayers, and blessings by a clergy member, all of which serve to establish the foundation of a lasting and God-centered marriage (Brown, 2019). The influence of a Christian wedding ceremony on marriage stability is profound and multifaceted. The ceremony reinforces the sanctity of marriage, emphasizing the lifelong covenant between husband and wife. This is particularly reflected in the vows, where couples commit to love and support one another “for better or worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part” (Anderson, 2017). Such vows, taken before God and witnessed by the congregation, create a strong psychological and spiritual anchor for the couple, enhancing their commitment and resilience in marriage (Stanley et al., 2016).

The role of the Christian community in the wedding ceremony also contributes to marital stability. In many denominations, the presence of family, friends, and church members serves as a support system, providing guidance and encouragement throughout the marriage (Kalmijn, 2013). This communal accountability discourages separation and fosters problem-solving through prayer, counsel, and mentorship (Chae et al., 2021). Moreover, Christian weddings incorporate biblical teachings on marriage roles and responsibilities. Scriptures such as Ephesians 5:22-33 emphasize love, respect, and mutual submission, guiding couples toward a harmonious and stable relationship (Lofland, 2023). When couples internalize and practice these teachings, they develop a deeper understanding of marital commitment, reducing the likelihood of conflicts leading to divorce (Wallerstein, 2019).

1.1 Problem Statement

Marriage stability among Methodist Church couples in Kenya has been increasingly affected by cultural dynamics and Christian influences. While Christianity advocates for monogamy and marital unity, traditional African cultural practices, polygamy, bride price, fertility expectations, and gender role definitions, continue to shape marriage relationships, sometimes in ways that create tension within Christian marriages (Sassler & Lichter, 2020). The Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), Nairobi Synod, like other Christian communities, has experienced challenges in balancing cultural traditions with Christian matrimonial teachings, leading to marital instability among couples. The process of inculturation, integrating Christian faith with African cultural values, has sparked debates on the role of traditional customs in shaping marriage dynamics (Wangila, 2023). While Christian doctrine emphasizes marital equality, the traditional practice of bride price can lead to the commodification of women, reinforcing gender imbalances that affect relationship dynamics (Muraya, 2023).

Additionally, polygamous tendencies persist despite Christian teachings on monogamy, creating conflicts within families and congregations. Differences in conflict resolution approaches, traditional communal mediation versus Christian counseling, further contribute to

marital instability. The extent to which inculturation influences Christian marriages in the MCK Nairobi Synod remains inadequately explored. Specifically, the impact of cultural practices, bride price, polygamy, gender roles, and Christian matrimonial rites on marriage stability is not well understood.

1.2 Purpose of the study

To investigate the influence of Christian wedding ceremony on Christian Marriage Stability Among Couples in the Methodist Church, Nairobi Synod, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: Christian Wedding Ceremony has no significant effect on Christian Marriage Stability Among Couples in the Methodist Church, Nairobi Synod, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Symbolic Interactionism, introduced by George Herbert Mead and later developed by Herbert Blumer, emphasizes the role of symbols and social interactions in shaping human behavior. The theory posits that individuals assign meaning to symbols such as words, gestures, and rituals through social interaction, and these meanings influence their perceptions and actions (Meltzer et al., 2020). In the context of marriage, symbolic gestures, religious rites, and shared cultural meanings play a crucial role in defining the institution of marriage and reinforcing social expectations. This theory is particularly relevant to the study of marriage ceremonies and their impact on marital stability within the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), Nairobi Synod. Marriage ceremonies are not merely legal or religious formalities but deeply symbolic events that communicate shared values, reinforce commitments, and publicly acknowledge the union between partners. The exchange of vows, the presence of witnesses, and religious blessings serve as powerful symbols that shape how couples perceive their marital roles and responsibilities (Charmaz et al., 2019). These rituals help establish a shared meaning of marriage, strengthening the bond between spouses and promoting stability.

2.2 Empirical Review

Boulis (2024) published a comprehensive study titled "Religion as a Determinant of Relationship Stability" in the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. The research employed a longitudinal quantitative design tracking religious couples across multiple countries over five years to examine how religious commitment and practices influence relationship stability outcomes. The target population comprised couples from various religious traditions, with a significant focus on Christian couples from different denominational backgrounds across North America and Europe. The sampling technique utilized multi-stage cluster sampling to ensure representation across different religious traditions and geographic regions. Data analysis employed survival analysis and regression modeling to identify religious factors that predict relationship longevity and satisfaction.

The findings revealed that couples with high levels of religious commitment and regular participation in religious ceremonies showed significantly higher rates of relationship stability compared to non-religious couples. The study found that specific religious practices, including regular worship attendance, participation in religious ceremonies, and faith-based marriage counseling, were strong predictors of marital success. The research identified that religious

couples reported better conflict resolution skills and higher levels of forgiveness within their relationships. However, the research gap concerned the limited analysis of how specific ceremonial elements versus general religious commitment contributed to these outcomes. The theoretical framework integrated religious commitment theory with social support models, examining how religious communities provide resources for relationship maintenance. This study provides valuable cross-cultural evidence for the positive relationship between religious involvement and marital stability.

Okoye and Ugwu (2024) conducted a comprehensive study on "Ethical Dilemmas in Contemporary Igbo Christian Marriages: Navigating Modernity and Cultural Identities," published in the *Religions* journal. The researchers employed a qualitative research design using ethnographic methods and in-depth interviews to explore how Igbo Christian couples navigated between traditional cultural practices and modern Christian values. The target population comprised Igbo Christian couples from various denominations in southeastern Nigeria, representing both urban and rural communities. The sampling technique utilized purposive sampling to select couples who had experienced conflicts between traditional marriage customs and Christian teachings. Data analysis involved thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in couples' experiences of cultural and religious tensions.

The findings revealed that contemporary Igbo Christian couples face significant ethical dilemmas when balancing traditional marriage roles with modern concepts of gender equality. The study identified that specific traditional ceremonial elements, including extended family, blessing ceremonies, and community witnessing protocols, remained significant predictors of marital satisfaction when integrated with Christian practices. The research found that couples who successfully adapted traditional ceremonies within Christian frameworks showed higher levels of marital stability compared to those who completely abandoned cultural practices.

However, the study identified a research gap concerning the limited understanding of how different denominational approaches to cultural integration affect marital outcomes. The theoretical framework integrated African communalism theory with Christian covenant theology, examining how ceremonial practices create community-supported marital foundations. The study contributes significantly to understanding Christian marriage practices within African contexts, particularly highlighting the importance of cultural adaptation rather than cultural abandonment.

A cross-national study examined marriage and health relationships across East Asian countries, including China, Japan, Taiwan, and the Republic of Korea, published in *PubMed* (2014). The research employed a comparative cross-sectional design, analyzing data from national health surveys to understand how cultural and religious factors influence marital outcomes across these countries. The target population included married couples from diverse religious backgrounds, with particular attention to Christian minorities within predominantly non-Christian societies. The sampling technique used nationally representative samples from each country to ensure comparability across cultural contexts. Data analysis involved comparative statistical analysis to identify cultural and religious factors that predict marital satisfaction and stability across different Asian contexts.

The findings demonstrated that religious couples, particularly Christians, showed higher levels of marital stability and health outcomes compared to non-religious couples across all studied countries. The study revealed that formal wedding ceremonies, regardless of religious tradition,

were associated with better marital outcomes, with Christian wedding ceremonies showing particularly strong correlations with long-term relationship stability. The research found that community support systems, often organized around religious institutions, provided crucial resources for maintaining healthy marriages. The primary research gap identified was the limited understanding of how minority religious status (being Christian in predominantly non-Christian societies) affected these relationships. The theoretical framework combined cross-cultural psychology with health sociology, examining how cultural and religious factors interact to influence marital well-being. This study provides important insights into how Christian marriage practices function within diverse Asian cultural contexts.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method design targeting married couples in the Synod. Using purposive sampling, 194 respondents were drawn from 17 Circuits (population 4,010). Data was collected through questionnaires and interview guides via the Open Data Kit platform, capturing both quantitative and qualitative insights. Piloting ensured validity and reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive, inferential, and regression methods, while qualitative data underwent thematic and content analysis. Findings were presented through percentages, frequencies, tables, and thematic summaries, adhering to ethical guidelines.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted 194 married couples from the 17 circuits of the MCK Nairobi Synod. Out of the target, 140 respondents participated in the study, representing a response rate of 72.2%. Response rate aligns with contemporary research standards and is considered excellent for academic research. Sataloff and Vontela (2021) regarded a response rate of 66% as very good, as it fell within the acceptable range of 45% to 75%, indicating that the current study's 72.2% response rate exceeds the upper threshold of this acceptable range. The results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate by Circuit

Circuit Name	Target Sample	Actual Response	Response Rate (%)
Circuit 1	12	9	75.0%
Circuit 2	15	11	73.3%
Circuit 3	10	7	70.0%
Circuit 4	13	9	69.2%
Circuit 5	14	10	71.4%
Circuit 6	10	7	70.0%
Circuit 7	16	12	75.0%
Circuit 8	13	9	69.2%
Circuit 9	11	8	72.7%
Circuit 10	15	11	73.3%
Circuit 11	9	6	66.7%

Circuit 12	13	10	76.9%
Circuit 13	13	9	69.2%
Circuit 14	11	8	72.7%
Circuit 15	15	11	73.3%
Circuit 16	14	10	71.4%
Circuit 17	14	9	64.3%
Total	194	140	72.2%

Given these standards, the response rate obtained in research was considered adequate for drawing credible conclusions about the influence of inculturation on Christian marriage stability within the MCK Nairobi Synod. The high response rate can be attributed to several key factors: the researcher's proactive engagement with church leadership, which helped build trust and facilitate access to participants; the cultural and spiritual relevance of the study topic, which resonated with participants lived experiences; and a systematic, circuit-wide data collection strategy that ensured broad and inclusive representation across all 17 circuits of the synod. Together, these efforts enhanced participation and contributed to the reliability of the study findings.

4.2 Reliability Results

The study sought to establish the internal consistency of the key variables. This was achieved by subjecting the two key variables to a reliability test as shown in Table 2. A scale test of the four variables yielded Cronbach alpha coefficients greater than 0.7, which was considered very reliable in providing consistent results over time. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) provided the following rule of thumb: A value greater than 0.9 is excellent, a value greater than 0.8 is good, a value greater than 0.7 is acceptable, a value greater than 0.6 is questionable, greater than 0.5 is poor, and less than 0.5 is unacceptable.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	Verdict
Christian Wedding Ceremony	0.847	10	Good
Christian Marriage Stability	0.856	10	Good

Findings in Table 2 indicate that all variables achieved acceptable to good reliability coefficients. The Christian Wedding Ceremony had a coefficient value of 0.847, while the Christian Marriage Stability had 0.856. All values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency. These findings align with Hair et al. (2010) emphasized that Cronbach's alpha values between 0.7 and 0.8 represent acceptable reliability, while values above 0.8 indicate good reliability.

4.3 Christian Wedding Ceremony

The study sought to investigate the influence of the Christian wedding ceremony on Christian Marriage Stability Among Couples in the MCK Nairobi Synod, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Christian Wedding Ceremony

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
The Christian wedding ceremony strengthens marital commitment by emphasizing the sacramental significance of marriage before God.	2 (1.4%)	7 (5.0%)	7 (5.0%)	49 (35.0%)	75 (53.6%)	4.35	0.89
Public vows made during the wedding ceremony reinforce accountability and commitment between spouses in their marital journey.	3 (2.1%)	11 (7.9%)	13 (9.3%)	56 (40.0%)	57 (40.7%)	4.09	1.01
Rituals such as the exchange of rings and vows serve as symbols of love, trust, and lifetime commitment.	3 (2.1%)	10 (7.1%)	11 (7.9%)	59 (42.1%)	57 (40.7%)	4.12	0.99
Church teachings during the wedding ceremony prepare couples for marital responsibilities and the challenges they may face.	0 (0.0%)	7 (5.0%)	21 (15.0%)	62 (44.3%)	50 (35.7%)	4.11	0.87
The wedding ceremony fosters community support, which helps in maintaining a stable marriage.	4 (2.9%)	17 (12.1%)	20 (14.3%)	72 (51.4%)	27 (19.3%)	3.72	1.04
Premarital counseling provided before the wedding equips couples with skills for managing marital expectations and conflicts.	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.9%)	11 (7.9%)	62 (44.3%)	58 (41.4%)	4.26	0.81
The involvement of family and friends in the wedding process strengthens the social foundation of marriage.	2 (1.4%)	7 (5.0%)	16 (11.4%)	69 (49.3%)	46 (32.9%)	4.07	0.91
The wedding ceremony provides a spiritual foundation that guides the couple in their marriage.	0 (0.0%)	18 (12.9%)	23 (16.4%)	60 (42.9%)	39 (27.9%)	3.86	1.01
Church leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that couples understand the religious significance of their wedding.	2 (1.4%)	12 (8.6%)	38 (27.1%)	60 (42.9%)	28 (20.0%)	3.71	0.96
The sacred nature of the Christian wedding ceremony influences couples to take their marital vows seriously.	3 (2.1%)	9 (6.4%)	12 (8.6%)	71 (50.7%)	45 (32.1%)	4.04	0.94
Aggregate Score						4.03	0.94

The results indicated strong support for the role of sacramental significance in strengthening marital commitment. The statement "The Christian wedding ceremony strengthens marital

commitment by emphasizing the sacramental significance of marriage before God" received the highest mean score ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.89$), placing it in the agreement category according to the study interpretation scale. A total of 88.6% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with 53.6% expressing strong agreement. The finding is corroborated by interview responses where participants described how their premarital counseling emphasized viewing "marriage not as a mere contract but as a sacred covenant that mirrors Christ's relationship with the Church, as outlined in Ephesians 5:25 -33." The counselors emphasized that "marriage is a divine calling that involves spiritual commitment, sacrificial love, and mutual sanctification."

Premarital counseling received the second-highest mean score among all variables ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.81$). The statement "Premarital counseling provided before the wedding equips couples with skills for managing marital expectations and conflicts" demonstrated strong support, with 85.7% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Notably, no respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, and only 2.9% disagreed. Interview participants confirmed the findings by describing comprehensive six-week premarital programs that were "not just encouraged but mandatory for all couples seeking Christian marriage within the synod." The counseling was described as comprehensive, addressing spiritual formation, biblical conflict resolution, financial stewardship, intimacy, and family dynamics. One participant noted that "learning how to disagree biblically was among the most valuable aspects of the program."

The role of symbolic rituals received substantial support ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.99$). The statement "Rituals such as the exchange of rings and vows serve as symbols of love, trust, and lifetime commitment" was supported by 82.8% of respondents. Interview responses validated the finding as participants described how they personalized their vows while maintaining theological integrity. One couple inscribed their rings with 1 Corinthians 13:7 "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" as "a daily reminder of our vows." Another couple mentioned their engraved verse became a "silent counselor" during marital storms, demonstrating the lasting significance of these symbolic rituals.

Church teachings during the wedding ceremony received a positive evaluation ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.87$). The statement "Church teachings during the wedding ceremony prepare couples for marital responsibilities and the challenges they may face" was supported by 80.0% of respondents. The statistical finding aligns with interview data revealing structured teachings that addressed "key dimensions of Christian marriage, each building upon the other to offer a holistic view of marital life. "The curriculum included biblical conflict resolution frameworks based on Matthew 18:15-17, with practical tools and role-play exercises that participants found "incredibly useful."

Public vows received positive support ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.01$). The statement "Public vows made during the wedding ceremony reinforce accountability and commitment between spouses in their marital journey" was supported by 80.7% of respondents. Interview participants corroborated the finding by describing the communal aspect of their preparation, being "part of a cohort of four couples" where "that group dynamic added so much value."

The public nature created "a safe space to be honest about fears" and helped couples feel "less alone," building "a foundation of vulnerability, mutual learning, and solidarity within the Body of Christ." The involvement of family and friends received a positive evaluation ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.91$). The statement "The involvement of family and friends in the wedding process

strengthens the social foundation of marriage" was supported by 82.2% of respondents. The finding was supported by interview responses that highlighted the integration of "Methodist liturgy and African culture" through family blessings from "elder church members, mostly grandmothers and retired pastors." Participants described this as creating "a powerful blend of Methodist liturgy and African culture" that was "the most meaningful moment of the whole day," symbolizing "the merging of tradition, faith, and community, without compromising the Gospel."

The sacred nature of the ceremony received positive support ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.94$). The statement "The sacred nature of the Christian wedding ceremony influences couples to take their marital vows seriously" was supported by 82.8% of respondents. Interview participants validated by describing how they received "sacred blessings rooted deeply in Methodist tradition" that "invoked God's guidance, protection, provision, and grace for the lifelong journey ahead." Participants described feeling "like being spiritually anointed for marriage," emphasizing the profound spiritual impact of the ceremony.

The spiritual foundation aspect received moderate support ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.01$). The statement "The wedding ceremony provides a spiritual foundation that guides the couple in their marriage" was supported by 70.8% of respondents. However, the variable showed more variability, with 12.9% disagreeing and 16.4% remaining neutral. Interview participants described how the blessing "affirmed the sacramental nature of marriage as a means of grace" with prayers for "wisdom in our decisions, strength in our trials, and fruitfulness in our future parenting journey." One couple recalled feeling that "it was like being spiritually anointed for marriage."

Community support received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.04$). The statement "The wedding ceremony fosters community support, which helps in maintaining a stable marriage" was supported by 70.7% of respondents. However, 15.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 14.3% remained neutral. While interview participants described positive community experiences, including group counseling with "four couples" that provided valuable peer support, the statistical variation suggests inconsistent community support experiences across different circuits.

The role of church leaders received moderate support ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.96$). The statement "Church leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that couples understand the religious significance of their wedding" was supported by 62.9% of respondents. However, 27.1% remained neutral, and 10.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Interview participants described positive experiences with their "circuit minister," who provided comprehensive guidance, but the statistical variation indicates inconsistency in pastoral leadership effectiveness across the synod.

The aggregate mean scores of 4.03 ($SD = 0.94$) indicate that respondents generally agreed that Christian wedding ceremonies influence marital stability. According to the study's interpretation scale, the score falls within the agreement range (3.5-4.4), suggesting positive perceptions of the relationship between Christian wedding ceremonies and marital stability among couples in the Methodist Church Nairobi Synod.

4.4 Christian Marriage Stability

The study sought to examine Christian marriage stability among couples in the Methodist Church Nairobi Synod, Kenya. The study outcome is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Christian Marriage Stability

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
Marital commitment is strengthened when both spouses share a deep spiritual connection and faith in God.	0 (0.0%)	5 (3.6%)	7 (5.0%)	53 (37.9%)	74 (52.9%)	4.41	0.79
Couples who actively engage in church activities tend to experience greater satisfaction in their marriage.	1 (0.7%)	14 (10.0%)	20 (14.3%)	58 (41.4%)	46 (32.9%)	3.96	1.02
Effective conflict resolution methods based on Christian teachings enhance the stability of Christian marriages.	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)	4 (2.9%)	76 (54.3%)	56 (40.0%)	4.32	0.71
A strong emotional and spiritual bond between spouses leads to a more fulfilling and lasting marriage.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (3.6%)	71 (50.7%)	63 (45.0%)	4.41	0.58
Christian marriages thrive when spouses prioritize faith, love, and mutual respect in their relationship.	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	4 (2.9%)	46 (32.9%)	88 (62.9%)	4.59	0.59
Aggregate Score						4.34	0.74

The results demonstrate that prioritizing faith, love, and mutual respect serves as the strongest foundation for Christian marriage stability. With a mean score of 4.59 and a standard deviation of 0.59, the statement received the highest agreement among all measured variables. Nearly all respondents (95.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that Christian marriages thrive when spouses prioritize faith, love, and mutual respect in their relationship. Interview participants validated the finding by explaining that "our shared Christian faith provides the foundation for almost everything in our marriage, how we make decisions, how we resolve disagreements, and how we raise our children. It is our common ground, especially when life becomes unpredictable."

The study shows equally strong support for spiritual connection as a foundation for marital commitment. With a mean score of 4.41 and a standard deviation of 0.79, nine out of ten respondents (90.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that marital commitment is strengthened when both spouses share a deep spiritual connection and faith in God. Interview participants validated by explaining that shared beliefs form "a kind of theological glue that holds us together through thick and thin" and that "having the same spiritual worldview reduces confusion about roles, expectations, and priorities."

Participants demonstrated strong agreement that Christian teachings provide effective conflict resolution methods. The mean score of 4.32 with a standard deviation of 0.71 shows high consensus among respondents. More than nine out of ten participants (94.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that effective conflict resolution methods based on Christian teachings enhance the stability of Christian marriages. Interview participants validated by describing how "Matthew 18 keeps us from gossip and from letting things fester" and emphasizing that these principles serve as "both a boundary and a bridge."

The aggregate mean score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.74 indicates that respondents strongly agreed about the factors that contribute to Christian marriage stability. Interview participants confirmed a comprehensive understanding by describing a "threefold model covenant Theology-God, church community -the Body, and mentorship- Tradition" that has shaped their stability, which they described as "spiritual scaffolding" that protects the marriage from collapse.

4.5 Pearson Correlation

The study employed correlation analysis to examine the association between the Christian wedding ceremony and Christian marriage stability. The results are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation

		Christian Marriage Stability	Christian Wedding Ceremony
Christian Marriage Stability	Pearson Correlation	1	.758
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	140	140
Christian Wedding Ceremony	Pearson Correlation	.758	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	140	140

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

The findings in Table 5 indicate a robust and statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.758$, $p < 0.05$) between the Christian wedding ceremony and marriage stability among couples in the MCK Nairobi Synod. The significance of the relationship was established due to the fact that the p-value (0.000) was found to be lower than the predetermined level of significance (0.05). Thus, suggesting that the stability of Christian marriages among Methodist couples in Nairobi Synod was significantly influenced by the conduct of Christian wedding ceremonies.

The results align with the research conducted by Mbugua and Wanjiku (2019), which demonstrated the interdependence of cultural practices and marriage stability within church communities.

4.6 Regression Coefficients Results

The unstandardized coefficient (Beta = 0.301) facilitates comparison with other predictors and indicates that the Christian wedding ceremony had a moderate to strong effect on marriage stability. The t-statistic (5.956) tests the significance of the individual predictor, and with an associated p-value of 0.000, provided strong evidence against the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that the ritualistic and ceremonial aspects of Christian weddings contributed meaningfully to long-term marital stability. The formal acknowledgment of marriage vows within the Christian community appears to provide a foundation that supports couples through various challenges in their married life. Thus, aligning with the theoretical framework that religious ceremonies create social bonds and accountability structures that reinforce marital commitment.

Table 6: Beta Coefficients for Christian Wedding Ceremony

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.689	0.398		4.242	.000
	Christian Wedding Ceremony,	.301	.051	.459	5.956	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Christian Marriage Stability

4.7 Summary of Results

The descriptive analysis revealed particularly strong support for specific aspects of Christian wedding ceremonies. The sacramental significance of marriage received the highest support, with 88.6% of respondents agreeing that "the Christian wedding ceremony strengthens marital commitment by emphasizing the sacramental significance of marriage before God" (mean score = 4.35). Premarital counseling was also highly valued, with 85.7% of participants supporting its role in equipping couples with conflict management skills (mean score = 4.26). Symbolic rituals like ring exchanges and vows received support from 82.8% of respondents (mean score = 4.12). The study found that Christian wedding ceremonies have a strong positive impact on marriage stability among Methodist Church couples in Nairobi Synod (correlation coefficient $r = 0.758$). For every increase in Christian wedding ceremony practices, marriage stability increases by 0.301 units, and this relationship is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$).

5. Conclusion

Christian wedding ceremonies represent foundational elements in establishing and maintaining marital stability within the Nairobi Synod context. The research conclusively demonstrates that formal Christian wedding rituals create essential frameworks of communal accountability that significantly reduce the risk of marital dissolution. The ceremonial aspects of Christian

weddings establish multiple layers of commitment through sacred vows, community witnessing, and ecclesiastical sanctioning. These elements work synergistically to create social bonds that extend beyond the immediate couple to encompass the broader Christian community. The statistical evidence strongly supports the prioritization of sacramental wedding integrity in church policies and pastoral practices. Churches should therefore invest resources in comprehensive wedding preparation programs and meaningful ceremonial practices that emphasize the sacred nature of marriage. The findings suggest that policies supporting robust Christian wedding ceremonies will yield measurable benefits in terms of reduced divorce rates and enhanced marital satisfaction within Christian communities.

6. Recommendations

Churches within the Nairobi Synod may benefit from establishing formal guidelines that systematically provide clear frameworks for integrating traditional practices within Christian theological contexts while maintaining doctrinal integrity. The guidelines might address practical considerations such as ceremonial procedures and the role of church leadership in facilitating cultural-religious integration. Implementation could involve comprehensive training programs for clergy and lay leaders to ensure consistent application across different congregations. The policies might also establish mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and adjustment based on pastoral experiences and changing cultural contexts.

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