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PREDICTORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE AMONG MARRIED MINISTERS IN AFRICA INLAND CHURCH, MAKUENI COUNTY KENYA

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S IN THEOLOGY STUDIES (MTH) OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is the result of my original work and has not been presented for a university degree or any other award.

Signature:... …….. Date …...……..

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This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors:

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Second Supervisor

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DEDICATION

With deep gratitude, I dedicate this research to the divine force that has guided and sustained me throughout my journey. God has been my strength. From the depths of despair, I have been pulled out, my life has been renewed, my purpose has been revived, and my spirit has been restored – a heartfelt dedication to my beloved children, Lydia Mutheu and Samuel Mwamba. Your unwavering support and encouragement have been a beacon of light to guide me through my darkest times. To my mother Esther Muthoki, your resilience in the face of adversity is always admirable**.** To the memory of my father, Pastor Daniel Mwina, whose foresight and benevolence in supporting advanced education laid the foundation for this scholarly endeavour. Your profound wisdom, compassion, and steadfast devotion continue to serve as a wellspring of inspiration. This work is further dedicated to the ministers' wives of the Africa Inland Church in Makueni County, Kenya. Your candid accounts and willingness to share both triumphs and tribulations have been instrumental in shaping this research. Your resilience and unwavering faith in the face of adversity stand as a testament to your fortitude and spiritual conviction. May God intervene in your situations, bring comfort where there is pain, hope where there is despair, and joy where there is sorrow. May your voices continue to be heard, your needs addressed, and your spirits uplifted. By God's grace, I stand at the culmination of this journey, humbled and grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the body of knowledge in my field.

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ABSTRACT

Emotional abuse is a prevalent issue in intimate partner relationships, yet few studies have explored this phenomenon within the context of clergy marriages, particularly in the Africa Inland Church (AIC) of Makueni County, Kenya. This study aimed to identify key predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in AIC Makueni County. To address the research problem, the following objectives were pursued : to identify the key factors that drive emotional abuse among ministers wives in the AIC, to explore the various forms of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the AIC, to assess the impact of emotional abuse on the holistic wellness of ministers' wives in AIC Makueni County, and to develop theologically grounded strategies to address emotional abuse within the AIC Makueni County, Kenya. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing a narratological research design and in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to gather rich, detailed narratives from participants. Purposive sampling was used to select ten respondents based on marital duration, age, and theological training, ensuring diverse perspectives. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study was informed by Mercy Oduyoye's feminist theory, which helped to analyze gender dynamics and power structures in the context of emotional abuse. The findings revealed that power dynamics, misinterpretation of scriptures, silence, infidelity, financial dependence, unrealistic expectations, emotional neglect, and loneliness were key predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in AIC Makueni County. This study contributes valuable insights to the academic literature on emotional abuse in clergy marriages and provides a foundation for developing targeted interventions within the AIC and similar religious contexts. The results will be useful for academicians, religious leaders, and policymakers in addressing emotional abuse and promoting healthier relationships within families and religious communities.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC: Africa Inland Church

UN: United Nations

NACOSTI: National Commission for Science and Technology

CCAWT: Circle of Concerned African women theologians.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Emotional Abuse: According to the American Psychological Dictionary (2020), emotional abuse is a type of non-physical abuse marked by deliberate and repetitive behavioural patterns. These behaviours are intended to harm the victim's emotional and behavioural well-being, ultimately affecting their mental health and ultimately undermining competence.

Predictors: predictors often refer to characteristics, behaviors, or environmental factors that are associated with increased or decreased probability of a particular phenomenon. In the context of emotional abuse, predictors refer to factors that will be investigated as potential contributors to emotional abuse (West et al., 1991:573).

Ministers' wives: In this research, ministers' wives refer to the spouses of pastors within the AIC (Andor, 2013:4).

Narratology: Narratology is the study of stories. It examines how stories are constructed, what elements make them effective, and how they influence our world perception. Narratology focuses on various story components such as characters, plot, and setting, and explores how these components interconnect to convey meaning (Thiong'o, 2021:3).

Narratives: Fischer-Appelt and Dernbach (2022:3) define narratives as structured accounts that present a sequence of events or a situation from a specific perspective, thereby conveying and reinforcing particular values or viewpoints."

"Vumilia theology": Vumilia, the Kiswahili word for "persevere" or "endure", refers to a gendered religious construct that legitimizes and promotes women's passive suffering in marital relationships while suppressing resilience and resistance (Mombo and Joziasse, 2022:3).

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Chapter One provides an overview of the study, including background information, the problem statement, objectives, and research questions. It also explains the study's significance and rationale, the scope, ethical considerations, and the conclusion.

1.2 Background of the Study

Emotional abuse is a multifaceted form of maltreatment defined and studied by various scholars across different disciplines, which transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, affecting individuals across various contexts. Bushong (2019:3); Qasim and Muzaffar (2021:2) and The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) (2002) defines emotional abuse as a repetitive pattern of behaviour within a relationship characterized by power imbalances, where one person intentionally acts to undermine the other person's self-esteem, sense of safety, and development of competence. Additionally, Ali (2007:3); Qasim and Muzaffar (202:2) and Khan, A. J. et al. (2014) agree that this behaviour can be physical, verbal, nonverbal, or emotional and often involves criticism, humiliation, manipulation, control, financial coercion, isolation, hostility, and threatening behaviour and can have severe mental health consequences. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022) in the United States, one in four women (23%) has experienced partner emotional abuse since the age of 15. The UN statistics from 2015 record that intimate partner violence accounts for about one-third of all female sexual violence cases globally. A meta-analysis on intimate partner violence (IPV) found that emotional abuse is particularly high among women, with rates reaching up to 80% (Carney and Barner, 2012:3). The World Health Organization "WHO" (2001) highlights that

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emotional abuse is often underreported due to societal stigma and a lack of recognition as a form of violence. Mulaudzi et al., (2022) cites that this underreporting is exacerbated by the subjective nature of emotional abuse and the absence of obvious symptoms until stress, illness, or even death strikes.

In Africa, emotional abuse is a critical issue that has garnered limited attention compared to physical and sexual violence. In a similar vein, a systematic review indicated that emotional abuse is prevalent across various countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with estimates suggesting that emotional violence can affect as many as 57.8% of females in some contexts (Ssenyonga et al., 2023). In South Africa, Ward et al, (2018), found that 19.1% to 28.4% of women experienced emotional abuse throughout their lifetimes. This study also highlighted the high rates of physical and sexual abuse in the same population, indicating a troubling landscape for vulnerable groups. Another study in South Africa revealed that emotional abuse was a common feature in relationships, with significant proportions of women reporting experiences such as their partners boasting about or bringing home girlfriends (Jewkes, 2001:3). In the North-East sub-region of Nigeria, the study found that women experienced psychological abuse in the form of financial deprivation and being deprived of essential needs Kaidal, (2004:271-284).

Emotional abuse is recognized as a severe issue in Kenya, particularly in domestic settings. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey "KDHS" (2014) revealed that 24% of women aged 15 to 49 had suffered emotional abuse at the hands of a spouse. Correspondingly, a study conducted in Kisumu, Kenya, found that emotional abuse was the most common kind of intimate partner violence, with 29% of women reporting having experienced it (Makayoto et al., 2013). A cross-sectional study in Kenya conducted by Mutisya et al. (2022:) found that emotional violence is a

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significant problem, with 37.7% of women reporting experiencing emotional violence by their intimate partner in the past 12 months. Complementary to this, research has indicated that a significant percentage of women report experiencing emotional abuse during childhood, with studies showing that 72.5% of women experienced direct emotional abuse and 69% witnessed it, both of which are significantly associated with higher perceived stress, lower social support, and poorer family functioning (Gama et al., 2021:156).

Additionally, a study in Kiambu County prisons found that 17.9% of inmates convicted of domestic abuse acknowledged experiencing emotional abuse themselves (Mudi, 2005: 45). In addition, Mulaudzi et al. (2022:2) and Dye (2019:1) conducted a qualitative study that revealed the pervasive nature of emotional abuse among married women, emphasizing that many women do not report such abuse due to its insidious nature. The stigma associated with emotional abuse, particularly in religious settings, can further silence victims, as they may fear judgment from their communities.

Several scholars agree that emotional abuse includes a diverse array of non-physical attacks and controlling behaviours. These actions have a profound impact on an individual's self-esteem, leading to tendencies of self-harm and causing long-term psychological implications. (Queen et al., 2009; Gold and Pitariu, 2004; Ali and Hamarman et al. 2002; Guo 2022 and Korolevskaia, and Yampolskaya, 2022) agree that emotional abuse involves the manipulation of feelings using various forms of power and control, often serving as a precursor to physical forms of abuse. The effects of emotional abuse are far-reaching and have been linked to a range of mental health issues such as depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, increased psychological and emotional distress, excessive drinking, negative health perceptions, diminished ability to cope with stressful situations in life and cognitive impairment (Ghafournia, 2017:4; Nelson et al.,

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2017). This statistic underscores the widespread nature of emotional abuse across different demographics and highlights its implications for mental health and well-being.

Ali (2007) notes that, in the case of emotional abuse, where the wounds are psychological, there is an ease of secrecy for the perpetrator which contributes to the woman's isolation from potential sources of help. Munyoki et al. (2023:3) cite that the breach of trust inherent in infidelity often precipitates emotional abuse as a maladaptive coping mechanism. Conversely, the researchers observed that pre-existing patterns of emotional mistreatment could catalyse infidelity, as individuals seek external validation or escapism. The authors posit that this dynamic frequently results in a shifting of power balances within the relationship, potentially exacerbating the vulnerability of the betrayed partner to further abuse. Moreover, the study highlights the significant deleterious effects of both infidelity and emotional abuse on mental health outcomes, fostering an environment conducive to the escalation of harmful behaviours.

Studies by Norman et al., 2012 show that emotional abuse has been found to have a lasting effect on health throughout adulthood, with significant associations observed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and panic disorder diagnosis. Another important finding is that emotional abuse is associated with mental disorders, interpersonal problems, and depressive symptoms, mediated by emotion dysregulation and may be perceived as less severe (Nguyen-Feng et al. 2023). These findings suggest that the effects of emotional abuse exceed a person's ability to successfully regulate their emotions, which exacerbates the underreporting.

Religious institutions often play a dual role in the lives of their adherents; they can serve as sources of support and community, while simultaneously perpetuating patriarchal norms that may condone or overlook abusive behaviors. The intersection of faith and emotional abuse raises critical questions about agency, power dynamics, and the theological interpretations that

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influence individuals' responses to violence. Research suggests that approximately 30% of women in religious contexts report experiencing emotional abuse from their partners, which can be exacerbated by the teachings and practices of their faith communities (Hulley et al., 2023).

In Europe, studies have highlighted that emotional abuse can manifest within religious contexts, with varying prevalence rates depending on the specific community and cultural background. For example, a study examining family and domestic violence (FDV) in faith-based communities found that while participants generally disapproved of violence, cultural structures often enabled or overlooked abuse against women (Truong et al., 2022: 5). A seminal study by Bottoms et al. (1995) surveyed clinical psychologists and uncovered a startling statistic that religious factors were involved in 60% of emotional abuse cases they had treated.

Biblical interpretation plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviors within religious communities. Certain verses, when taken out of context or interpreted narrowly, have been used to justify or perpetuate emotional abuse, particularly within marital relationships. For example, in Ephesians 5:22-24 – "Wives Submitting to Husbands" Oduyoye (1995) argues that the concept of submission in Ephesians should be understood within the broader context of mutual submission and love. She emphasizes that the passage should not be used to reinforce patriarchal structures that oppress women. Teresa Okure, a Nigerian biblical scholar, offers a contextual reading of this passage. Okure, (2003) suggests that Paul's instructions should be understood as a challenge to the patriarchal norms of the time, rather than an endorsement of them. She argues that the emphasis on husbands loving their wives "as Christ loved the church" sets a standard of sacrificial love that subverts traditional power dynamics. On the same note, Dube (2000) encourages readers to consider how colonial and patriarchal interpretations have influenced the

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understanding of submission in African contexts. She advocates for a reading that promotes mutual respect and partnership in marriage. This work is supported by Kanyoro (2001) who emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural context of both the biblical text and the contemporary reader in exegeting 1 Peter 3:1-6. This is also informed by the works of Oduyoye (2001) who suggests that Christ's example of servant leadership should inform our understanding of submission. She argues that true submission is a mutual act of love and service, not a hierarchical power dynamic.

Ganje-Fling and McCarthy (1996) investigated spiritual abuse within counselling contexts, identifying patterns of abusive behavior disguised as spiritual guidance. These patterns included the exploitation of religious texts to reinforce guilt, misuse of spiritual authority to discourage independent thinking, and manipulation of religious concepts to maintain control. In the context of clergy families, Thomas, (2023:33-52) indicates that pastors' wives grappling with their husbands' compulsive sexual behaviors encounter significant challenges, such as feelings of isolation, lack of support, and worries about confidentiality. The disclosure of their husbands' behaviors within the faith community can exact a profound personal cost and impact on the wives' identity. Research indicates that emotional abuse within religious contexts can lead to serious mental health issues, with about 50% of victims experiencing depression and approximately 33% reporting suicidal ideation (Bottoms et al., 2003:244).

Supplementary to this, Oduyoye (2001) argues that emotional abuse is often rooted in the broader context of patriarchy, which perpetuates power imbalances between genders. She contends that traditional religious teachings can sometimes reinforce these imbalances, leading to environments where emotional abuse is normalized or overlooked (Oredein, 2021:45). Central to Oduyoye's theology is the concept of human dignity, which she posits should be equally

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accorded to all individuals, regardless of gender (Chidili, 2003:17). This fundamental principle underpins her critique of patriarchal interpretations of scripture that, she argues, serve to diminish women's dignity and autonomy. Oduyoye's theological stance thus represents a significant challenge to traditional exegesis, as it calls for a re-evaluation of scriptural interpretation through the lens of gender equality and universal human worth. By juxtaposing the ideal of human dignity with the reality of gender-based discrimination in religious contexts, Oduyoye effectively illuminates the discrepancies between theological principles and their practical application in many religious communities.

Emotional abuse is frequently disregarded due to various factors, including cultural acceptance, the perpetrator's apparent lack of malice, and the belief that help is not urgently needed. Gunnlaugsson (2018:123) emphasizes that emotional abuse often remains undetected because it lacks obvious symptoms until significant stress or health issues arise. Similarly, Stirling and Kerr (2008:450) point out that emotional abuse is often minimized due to cultural norms that normalize such behaviours and the perception that they do not constitute serious harm. Mulaudzi et al. (2022:4) further support this notion by highlighting how emotional abuse is seen as an issue to be kept secret, with victims often feeling that their experiences are invalidated by societal attitudes. Moreover, Moono and Muche (2020:40) discuss how cultural practices, such as lobola, reinforce the power dynamics in relationships, leading women to accept emotional abuse as a normal part of marital life. This cultural backdrop contributes to the normalization of emotional maltreatment and the reluctance of victims to seek help. The underrepresentation of emotional abuse sheltered together with other forms of violence within clergy marriages underscores a concerning trend. Unfortunately, comprehensive data on this topic is often lacking, partly due to the secretive and stigmatized nature of emotional abuse, especially within church spaces. All in

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all, emotional abuse is damaging to women and emotional abuse should not be taken lightly as an acceptable element in any aspect.

The Africa Inland Church in Makueni County, located in the eastern part of Kenya, is characterized by its rich cultural heritage and strong religious influence. The community values traditional gender roles, with women often expected to conform to societal norms of submission and support for their husbands, who hold positions of authority, including ministerial roles within the church. Within this context, ministers' wives play multifaceted roles in both their families and the church community. They are often expected to embody the ideals of a virtuous and supportive spouse, providing emotional and practical assistance to their husbands in their pastoral duties while maintaining the well-being of their households. However, the expectations placed on them can also create vulnerabilities. The stigma surrounding issues of abuse and the reluctance to speak out against religious leaders may contribute to the underreporting and perpetuation of emotional abuse within this context.

Despite the outward appearance of harmony and respectability often associated with ministerial families, there may be hidden struggles and challenges faced by ministers' wives behind closed doors. It is within this specific context that this research aims to investigate emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church in Makueni County, Kenya, addressing a critical gap in understanding and potentially informing interventions to support these women and promote healthier relationships within religious communities.

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1.3 Statement of the Problem

Gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses a wide range of harmful acts perpetrated against individuals based on their gender, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse Nyambura, (2021:129). Within this broad spectrum, emotional abuse in intimate partner relationships represents a pervasive yet often overlooked form of GBV. This invisibility is particularly pronounced in contexts where relationships are expected to exemplify harmony and stability, such as those involving clergy spouses. Despite the normative expectation for clergy spouses to embody model relationships, emotional abuse remains largely unrecognized and under-addressed due to its subjective nature and the disproportionate focus on physical manifestations of violence. Nyambura, (2021:131). This oversight persists even as emotional abuse can inflict deep, lasting trauma on victims, undermining their sense of self-worth and agency. While physical abuse is prevalent and can be seen, emotional abuse is not always easily visible. Thus, this study sought to investigate the predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the context of intimate partner relationships in AIC Makueni County. In addition to unearthing the predictors of emotional abuse and identifying the various types of emotional abuse, this study proposes a theological approach to address emotional abuse in clergy marriages.

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1.4 General Objective

To assess key predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County with the intention of developing a contextual theological model that promotes holistic wellness among ministers' wives.

1.5 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the key factors that drive emotional abuse among married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya.

2. To identify and describe the various forms of emotional abuse experienced by ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya.
3. To assess the impact of emotional abuse on holistic wellness among the married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya.
4. To establish theological strategies to address emotional abuse among the married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are the main factors that drive emotional abuse among married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya?
2. What are the various forms of emotional abuse experienced by pastors' wives in the Africa Inland Church, Makueni County, Kenya?
3. What is the impact of emotional abuse on holistic wellness among the married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya?
4. What theological strategies are in place to address emotional abuse among married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya?

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1.7 Justification and Significance of Study

This study was prompted by a perceived need for more research within the African Inland Church, Makueni County, regarding the experiences of ministers' wives in relation to emotional well-being. While existing studies have touched on related topics, there seems to be room for further exploration of this specific subject in this context. This research seeks to contribute additional insights to our understanding of this potentially significant issue.

Its significance lies in filling a critical gap in the existing literature by examining the unique experiences of ministers' wives and the emotional abuse they endure within their marriage contexts. Despite the increasing awareness of emotional abuse in various societal settings, there remains a lack of empirical data and scholarly investigations specifically focused on this vulnerable demographic within religious communities, particularly within the African Inland Church. By delving into the unique experiences of ministers' wives, this study seeks to contribute significantly to our understanding of the dynamics of emotional abuse and its implications for individual well-being.

Secondly, this study aimed to uncover the complex intersection of faith and abuse, shedding light on how religious institutions navigate and respond to issues of emotional abuse within their communities.

Lastly, this study holds significance beyond academic circles, offering practical insights and resources for theologians, and pastoral leaders, and equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to recognize and address emotional abuse within their congregations thus fostering healthy supportive religious communities where all members, including ministers' wives, can thrive and find solace.

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1.8 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in Makueni County, Kenya, in the country's eastern region. Makueni County has a diverse religious community with various denominations like the African Inland Church (AIC), African brotherhood church, Pentecostal churches, Catholicism, Anglicanism, and others represented within its population. This rich religious environment, where approximately 90% of the population identifies as Christians, is further enhanced by numerous bible schools

bordering the county. This unique setting provides an opportunity to explore the experiences of ministers' wives within the AIC.

The study was limited to ministers' wives affiliated with the Africa Inland Church in Makueni, Kenya, excluding ministers' wives from other denominations or regions. The number of respondents may not fully represent all ministers' wives in the area. This is because minister's wives are a key demographic in church spaces. Additionally, it specifically examined emotional abuse and not any other form of abuse experienced by ministers' wives within the Africa Inland Church (AIC). Moreover, the study was conducted in the AIC because there is little research done on emotional abuse in the AIC church.

The study adopted a theological perspective to emphasize the intersection of faith, gender dynamics, and emotional abuse within the context of the AIC in Makueni County. To mitigate these limitations, this study provides thick descriptions of the context, respondents, and findings to enhance transferability to similar settings. Member checking was also employed, inviting respondents to review and validate the interpretations of their narratives to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Purposive sampling was used to ensure a diverse range of experiences within the target population is captured, including varying ages, years of marriage, and theological training. Finally, the study explicitly outlined areas for future research to address its limitations and expand understanding of the topic. This includes suggestions for broader studies across multiple denominations or regions, as well as investigations into other forms of abuse within religious contexts.

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1.10 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Makueni County, Kenya. The study addressed a significant gap in the literature by examining the unique experiences of ministers' wives, a vulnerable and often overlooked demographic within religious communities. The study's significance lies in its potential to uncover the complex intersection of faith and abuse within Makueni cultural and religious settings. While limited in scope, this study represented an important step in addressing the underreported issue of emotional abuse in clergy marriages, with careful ethical considerations to ensure participant well-being.

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CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the existing literature on emotional abuse, examining its factors, forms, impacts, and theological strategies used to address emotional abuse. It also covers the theoretical frameworks used in the study and a conclusion.

2.2 Factors that Drive Emotional Abuse.

An interesting analysis by (Macassa, (2013) maintains that emotional abuse is a distressing reality that can occur in various relationships, including marriages. For example, Emotional abuse is a significant issue in Europe, with prevalence rates ranging from 27.1% to 29.7% with factors such as low social support and high anxiety levels playing a significant role). While the manifestation and prevalence of emotional abuse may vary across cultures, its impact is felt globally. In East Africa, for instance, emotional abuse in relationships often stems from a desire for power and control (Ali, 2007: 73). This dynamic is particularly evident in some Christian communities, where patriarchal structures reinforce male dominance (Ali, 2007:75). Religious leaders may exploit their positions to exert control over followers, often using religious language to justify or perpetuate domestic violence against women (Westenberg, 2017: 2).

According to Ali, (2007:76), research indicates that emotional abuse serves as a tool for manipulation and control, frequently reinforcing traditional gender roles. Stark (2007:229), further argues that emotional abuse is a form of coercive control, systematically eroding the victim's autonomy and sense of self. These patterns of abuse, rooted in power imbalances, can be particularly insidious within religious contexts where authority figures may misuse their influence to maintain control over their congregants (Ali, 2007:77; Westenberg, 2017: 5). Past

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studies by (Flood and Pease, 2009: 130-132) have shown that abusers utilize a range of strategies, including isolation, deception, and intimidation, to control their victims and preserve control in abusive relationships. Additionally, broader societal and cultural factors play a role in facilitating emotional abuse. Patriarchal beliefs and rigid gender roles can contribute to the acceptance of emotional abuse, particularly against women.

Previous research has established that in some cultures, certain forms of emotional abuse may be normalized or even encouraged as part of traditional relationship dynamics (Malley-Morrison and Hines, 2004: 138-140). Surveys such as that conducted by Vyas (2012:10-12), says that women's economic situation in Tanzania can affect their likelihood of experiencing partner violence, especially emotional abuse, and women's economic situation in Tanzania can affect their likelihood of experiencing partner violence, especially emotional abuse. This is consistent with the data obtained by Acierno et al., 2010; Djamba et al., 2008; Kobyliński, 2022; Labuschagne, 2023; Macassa et al., 2013; Marambi, 2022; Meinck et al., 2017; Nwaomah, 2012; Seguino, 2011; Westenberg, 2017).

Njiru (2024), cites factors such as cultural norms, gender dynamics, and interpretations of religious texts, often reinforcing unequal power dynamics and justifying oppressive behaviours in the context of grandmothers not in ministers' wives. In clergy marriages, research reveals religion, culture, and entrenched gender stereotypes as key factors as cited by Chisale (2018:9) and Moon (2010: 532-533). These factors may cause self-silencing among victims, preventing women from speaking out about abuse. Stressors such as ministerial duties and societal expectations can exacerbate emotional abuse, particularly affecting ministers' wives (Nwaka, 2020;128-129) Korolevskaia and Yampolskaya, 2022:350-351).

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Emotional damage in pastoral ministry can also result from a variety of stressors, including failure to receive or give forgiveness, seeking a position, financial challenges, personal influence, loneliness, distraction and conflict, ministerial placement, and anger (Marambi, 2022:48-50). Emotional abuse can continue in contexts where these elements cross because they frequently encourage one another. While factors driving emotional abuse in various contexts have been studied, there is a lack of specific research on the unique factors contributing to emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church (AIC) of Makueni County, Kenya which this study addresses.

2.3 Forms of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a prevalent issue in various countries with specific forms being more common among certain groups. The United Nations (2015), states that around one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Ratner's (1993) study found that emotional abuse is more prevalent than physical abuse, often accompanied by physical abuse. A study in Europe found that emotional violence in married couples is correlated with anxiety, depression, and hostility, with differences in emotional reactions between husbands and wives.

Lanre, (2014), cites that one common type of emotional abuse that can have serious detrimental repercussions on the victim is verbal abuse. This includes name-calling, yelling, screaming, and harsh criticism. According to Evans (2010:1,23-25), verbal abuse that occurs regularly can seriously harm a person's sense of self-worth and general emotional health. Such aggressiveness has an effect that extends beyond the emotional distress it creates. Because these connections are continuing and there's a chance that the abuse may become acceptable or hidden from public

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view, verbal violence can be particularly detrimental in the context of close relationships, like those of ministers' wives.

Intimidation is a powerful form of emotional abuse that creates an atmosphere of fear and control in interpersonal relationships which involves various threatening behaviors, including verbal threats, hostile body language, and property destruction (Ezeh,2022:6). These activities successfully create and perpetuate a power imbalance between the abuser and the abused. According to Ezeh, these intimidation strategies are not separate events but rather form a component of a larger pattern of coercive control. Additionally, Ezeh suggests that these intimidation strategies are not separate events but a component of a larger pattern of coercive control.

In Jordan, isolation is the most prevalent form of abuse among married men, especially in rural areas and in love marriages (AlSawalqa, 2021:2-3). As per Dutton and Goodman (2005:747), this abusive technique aims to make the victim more reliant on the abuser by controlling and limiting their contact with friends, family, and other sources of support. The abuser may use the minister's wife's social status to justify isolating her, making her more vulnerable to abuse and limiting her ability to seek help.

Sweet (2019), explains gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse involving psychological manipulation. She additionally argues that this abusive strategy systematically erodes the victim's confidence in their sense of reality, memory, and sanity. The abuser achieves this by consistently contradicting the victim's perceptions or memories of events through persistent denial or misrepresentation of reality.

Humiliation, as a form of emotional abuse, involves publicly or privately shaming the victim. Lammers, Ritchie and Robertson (2005:30-40) reports that this abusive behaviour is particularly

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damaging as it affects not only the victim's self-esteem but also their social standing. In the case of ministers' wives, the public nature of their role can worsen the impact of humiliation, potentially affecting their status within the church community which can lead to long-term psychological trauma, including depression, anxiety, and diminished self-worth. In religious societies, this could involve using spiritual doctrines to defend abusive actions or to place the blame for relationship issues on the victim which can cause self-doubt and keep the victim from realizing the true nature of their situation.

Silent treatment is a form of emotional abuse that involves cutting off communication as a form of punishment. According to AlSawalqa, (2021 9-10), it causes severe mental suffering and feelings of rejection in the victim. This strategy can be particularly damaging in intimate relationships, such as those between ministers' wives. Prolonged or frequent use of silent treatment can cause the victim to feel worthless, anxious, and depressed, weakening the foundation of trust and communication in the relationship.

Excessive monitoring and jealousy are forms of emotional abuse, wherein the victim's movements and activities are continually scrutinized due to the abuser's possessiveness. This can lead to increased isolation and dependency on the abuser, especially for ministers' spouses. Consequently, it can have a severe negative impact on the victim's mental health and well-being (Karakurt and Silver, 2013:7-11).

Onyango (2013) highlights psychological battering as a common form of abuse that has a significant impact on the victims' mental health. These studies collectively underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of emotional abuse among married ministers in Kenya. Ministers' wives in Makueni County have likely faced persistent marginalization and unfair treatment. The study sought to address a significant gap in the existing research landscape.

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Research shows extensive literature on emotional abuse in general populations but there is a notable dearth of research specifically examining the unique experiences of ministers' wives within the Africa Inland Church (AIC) context. This study aimed to fill this void by investigating the manifestations, prevalence, and dynamics of emotional abuse among this distinct group.

2.4 Influence of Emotional Abuse on Holistic Wellness

Kumar (2016) reports alarming global statistics on elder abuse, revealing that approximately one in four older adults faces the risk of mistreatment. This type of abuse has been found to have a detrimental impact on psychological well-being, particularly in women who are psychologically abused by their intimate partners Vuuren, (2015:20-21) correlated with anxiety, depression, and hostility, with differences in emotional reactions between husbands and wives.

McGraw et al. (2019:5-15) present a comprehensive review of the consequences of abuse by religious authorities. Their findings reveal a range of severe impacts on victims, including psychological disorders such as PTSD, which is frequently observed following sexual abuse by clergy. The authors emphasize the profound emotional distress experienced by victims, characterized by feelings of betrayal, shame, depression, and hopelessness. These negative emotions are often intensified by disbelief from family members and the secrecy maintained by religious institutions. The study also highlights the complex impact on victims' faith, noting that while some lose their religious beliefs, others find their faith strengthened as a coping mechanism. Furthermore, the research underscores the far-reaching effects of clergy abuse on family dynamics and relationships, with many survivors struggling to navigate these repercussions within their families of origin. This long-term nature of these mental health effects, with many victims facing ongoing psychological challenges throughout their lives, illustrating

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the enduring impact of such abuse. This is particularly concerning given the high prevalence of depression and occupational distress among ministers (Kansiewicz, 2022:2-3).

The impact of emotional abuse on the holistic wellness of these women, particularly those in the unique position of being married ministers, is a significant gap in the literature. Notwithstanding extensive research documenting the impact of emotional abuse on general populations, there is a significant lack of knowledge regarding its effects on ministers' wives, particularly within the unique cultural and religious setting of the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Makueni County, Kenya, which this study addresses.

2.5 Theological Strategies Used to Address Emotional Abuse

Research focused on theological strategies addressing emotional abuse in clergy marriages has unveiled various approaches. Davis and Johnson (2020:4) assert that within the black clergy community, abuse occurring in religious contexts is perceived as a misinterpretation of scripture. They underscore the significance of victims being well-versed in God's Word as a means of defense. In the Anglican Church in South Africa, certain teachings, such as support for male primacy, silence, forgiveness, and divorce, encourage women to remain in abusive marriages Makhanya, (2022:2). This calls for context-specific measures within the context of intimate partner violence including the role of patriarchy and traditional values studies Nduka (2023:7). These studies highlight the need for clergy to undergo specific training, gain a theological understanding of abuse prevention, and address systemic factors that contribute to harm in religious contexts.

Alade (2022) further emphasizes the importance of speaking out about emotional abuse, particularly in intimate relationships, as a key strategy in addressing this issue. Musimbi Kanyoro employs a cultural hermeneutics model, which seeks to create equal partnerships

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between men and women, particularly within marriage (Kanyoro, 2002:5-8). This approach acknowledges the significance of cultural beliefs and practices in shaping gender dynamics and advocates for transformative change to promote women's rights and well-being through a feminist lens. Her highlights on the intersectionality of violence against women consider how factors such as culture, religion, and societal norms influence women's experiences of violence. However, Kanyoro's method appears to diverge from a strictly biblical interpretation and align more closely with feminist ideologies, underscoring the need for a nuanced exploration of gender roles within the context of religious teachings.

Owusu-Ansah, Sylvia. (2016) recommends addressing violence against women and girls through societal changes at all levels which includes educating women on reporting assaults, dispelling myths that blame victims, and tackling root causes like economic disparities and male dominance. The goal is to minimize and eliminate all forms of violence by increasing accountability, awareness, and structural change.

Wamue et al. (2023) believe that most initiatives to eliminate violence against women are focused on male perspectives and are Western-oriented. They emphasize personal results as well as social and religious conventions that forbid candid conversations. This indicates that churches have a culture of silence.

A recent study by Mombo (2022:2-3) shows that Vumilia theology, a gendered religious concept, is being used as a strategy to potentially legitimize and promote women's passive suffering in marital relationships, thereby hindering their ability to develop resilience and resist abuse. Biblical texts often used to justify gender norms and reinforce the marginalization and oppression of women within the church include Ephesians 5:22-24 and 1 Peter 3:1-2. These

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passages are often cited to emphasize wives' submission to their husbands, sometimes without considering the mutual respect and love also outlined in the passages.

Additionally, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14 have been used to restrict women's participation and leadership roles within religious settings and reinforce patriarchal norms. These interpretations concur with Chisale (2018), cited by Rebecca (2023:43-44) who both highlight the issue of self-silencing among victims, often perpetuated by religious teachings, in preventing women from speaking out about abuse.

Petersen (2016), and Sande (2019), underscore the importance of working with religious leaders and faith communities to develop culturally informed strategies to combat violence and the need to deconstruct theological views that perpetuate violence.

Notably, Moon (2010) cites that pastors often lack training and resources to address intimate partner violence, which may include emotional abuse while Zust et al…. (2017, 2021) point out that pastors feel ill-prepared to counsel victims of domestic violence, including emotional abuse, and struggle with the complexities of these situations. On the same note, Natterstad, (2023:14-18), and Maneta et.al (2008) cite that most practitioners offer practical, idiomatic recommendations through which clients can reassess the limitations of common religious schemas, including conceptions of wifely submission, marital permanence, infinite forgiveness, and pious suffering, which calls for further exploration of the theological underpinnings of emotional abuse among pastors' wives.

According to Ria (2023), ministers should receive pastoral counselling training to address domestic violence conflicts in congregations, including emotional abuse. The analysis underscores the intricacies surrounding the identification and mitigation of emotional abuse

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within the context of church spaces, revealing a notable inadequacy among pastors in effectively addressing its dynamics through theological lenses. Existing literature lacks comprehensive, theologically grounded strategies specifically tailored to address emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the AIC Makueni County, considering the unique intersection of religious, cultural, and gender dynamics in this context. This study aims to bridge this critical gap by exploring and developing theological strategies that are culturally sensitive and contextually relevant to the experiences of ministers' wives in the AIC Makueni County.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This dissertation was guided by three theories, namely the social learning theory by Albert Bandura, 1973, the cycle of violence theory by Walker,1979 and the feminist theory by African women theologians (1989). The Social Learning theory posits that individuals learn behaviors, including abusive behaviors, through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. According to this theory, individuals may develop patterns of emotional abuse by observing and internalizing abusive behaviors modelled by significant others, such as parents, peers, or authority figures. (Nabavi, 2012:5-15). Research by Bandura 1973, 1986, 2006 cited in Nabavi, 2012: empirically supports social learning theory, demonstrating how individuals acquire and imitate behaviors through observation and reinforcement. Research has shown that individuals who have experienced or witnessed emotional abuse in childhood are more likely to perpetrate similar behaviors in adulthood.

In the context of pastors' wives, social learning theory has helped explain how exposure to abusive behaviors within the church community or familial relationships can contribute to the perpetuation of emotional abuse. It emphasizes the role of modelling and cognitive processes in

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learning and behavior Nabavi, (2012:9-14). Its strengths lie in its ability to explain complex behaviors and their practical applications, while its weaknesses include a lack of emphasis on individual differences and the potential for oversimplification. Wildemeersch et al. (1997:466-469).

The application of the social learning theory to predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives is supported by several studies. Cohen, Bazilianskya and Beny, (2014) cited in Howell (2018:6) identified age, occupational status, employment status, and observation of parental violence as predictors of spousal violence by men.

Lewis (2004,1987) both found support for a learning theory explanation of wife abuse, with factors such as social class and race not significantly influencing the likelihood of abuse. These studies highlight the relevance of the social learning theory in understanding and predicting emotional abuse, particularly in the context of minister's wives. In the context of the AIC church, these factors may be influenced by the church's teachings and practices. Additionally, the role of stressors, self-consciousness, and coping strategies, and the impact of religious belief incompatibility and religious coping.

Choi (2020) and Davis (2020) both emphasize the role of social support and religious beliefs in coping with and addressing emotional abuse, indicating that these factors can also be learned and perpetuated within the church community. Nonetheless, some critics contend that this theory oversimplifies the issue, disregards biological factors, and may not be universally relevant.

Secondly, the cycle of violence model developed by Walker In 1979 establishes several principles, including the recurrence of abuse as a cycle. This cycle comprises three distinct stages: the tension-building phase, the acute violence phase, and the reconciliation or calm phase.

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The learning-from-experience concept is also an integral part of the model, whereby new habits are developed based on past experiences. Furthermore, the model encompasses the notion of learned behavior, which involves the acquisition of acts and attitudes about brutality through imitation and observation, typically within the domestic environment.

Moreover, the cycle of violence model incorporates cognitive factors that influence an individual's propensity to be violent or experience violence, such as beliefs, perceptions, and psychological factors. Mental health practitioners also use the model in therapy to help patients understand and manage their emotions regarding violence.

In the specific context of pastors' wives, the cycle of violence model was used to shed light on the cyclical nature of emotional abuse dynamics within clergy marriages and the challenges associated with breaking free from abusive patterns. Within this framework, emotional abuse can profoundly impact the holistic wellness of individuals, encompassing their mental, emotional, and spiritual health which will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of emotional abuse dynamics and facilitate the development of a theological model aimed at promoting the holistic wellness of minister's wives. The strength of the cycle of violence model is that it considers all the aspects surrounding a person, including their social setting. Its Predictive value is that this theory can also be used as a tool to identify risk factors linked to certain behaviours.

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This study also utilized the feminist theory particularly as it relates to the unique socio-cultural and historical experiences of women in Africa. African Feminist Theory (CCAWT), founded in 1989, has played a pivotal role in shaping feminist theory in Africa. Mercy Oduyoye emphasizes that the Circle seeks to create a space where African women's voices can be heard and their experiences acknowledged within theological discourse" (Oduyoye, 2001:15).

The feminist theoretical framework employed by African women theologians in examining emotional abuse encompasses three critical components: naming, disrupting, and challenging (Kanyoro, 2001; Oduyoye, 2001). This approach provides a robust methodology for investigating and addressing the complex issue of emotional abuse within African contexts. This theoretical framework, founded on feminist scholarship offers a culturally sensitive but critically engaging method of investigating emotional abuse in African contexts.

As explained by Oduyoye (2001:38), the act of naming is essential to uncovering accepted forms of emotional abuse since it entails recognising and expressing oppressive experiences within certain cultural and religious contexts. Moreover, the study of "Vumilia" theology by Mombo provides an example of this naming process which is the first step towards transformation for it gives survivors' experiences legitimacy, a language to express their difficulties and turn their individual experiences into acknowledged communal challenges (2022:13).

This theory's disruptive element by Njoroge (2000:118-121), questions conventional readings of religious texts and cultural customs that could support the oppression of women. Moreover, Phiri 2004:23, argues that it is crucial to present alternatives that are based on African Christian heritage and that affirm life rather than merely criticizing.

The framework of African feminist theology goes beyond critique to actively resist oppressive structures and propose alternative interpretations and practices. As Phiri (2004: 23) emphasizes, the challenge is "not just to critique, but to reconstruct." This approach is particularly relevant in addressing emotional abuse, as it involves confronting abusive behaviours and the systems that

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enable them, while simultaneously proposing new models of relationships and community support.

Moreover, it focuses on developing culturally appropriate interventions and prevention strategies that are rooted in African contexts and experiences. By employing this theoretical framework, the study aims to not only understand emotional abuse in African contexts but also to contribute to the development of appropriate interventions and support systems, aligning with Mombo's vision of transforming communities into spaces where all can flourish (2018:45).

The choice of the feminist theory is justified on several grounds. Firstly, its development by African scholars ensures cultural relevance and sensitivity, providing insights directly applicable to the African context of emotional abuse. The framework's broad scope which includes diagnosis, analysis, and interventions allows for a complete investigation of emotional abuse, including its potential causes to its cultural and religious foundations (Phiri, 2004:23). Moreover, feminist theory is particularly fitting for studying emotional abuse within an African context because it provides critical tools for analyzing power dynamics and structural inequalities that contribute to such forms of violence. Methodically, it guides the research toward participatory and emancipatory approaches for studying sensitive issues like emotional abuse (Njoroge 2000:37).

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2.6 Conclusion

This literature review explores the complex dynamics of emotional abuse, particularly within the context of clergy marriages. It examines factors driving emotional abuse, the various forms, its impact on holistic wellness, and theological strategies already in place. It highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing emotional abuse considering cultural contexts, religious teachings, and personal experiences and calls for further research into the specific experiences of

ministers' wives and the development of effective theological models to mitigate and address emotional abuse in clergy marriages.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three captures the research method, study area, target population, sampling procedures, sampling size, data collection tools and methods, data analysis, data presentation, and finally the conclusion. Also included are the references, informed consent form, questionnaire, work timeline, budget of the study process, a Map of the area of study, and the appendices.

3.2 Narrative Methodology

This study utilized narratology to examine and analyze narrative texts, focusing on the structure, elements, and functions. Narratology is a powerful method of storytelling that African women theologians have frequently used explained by Njoroge and Dube, (2001:89-90). This is because storytelling is a significant art particularly in diverse cultures of Africa as stories show where people fit into society. (Mombo 2022: 4). The CCAWT uses narratology to Centre women's stories in theological discourse (Mombo 2019:3-6). This method is instrumental in contextualizing its theologies, establishing contra-cultures to patriarchy, and bringing healing to gendered societies (Njoroge,2001:22). Moreover, without a narrative identity, human beings cannot survive.

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The strength of narratology lies in its power to unmute voices, and feelings that may have been silenced by culture or biblical interpretations of scriptures. The voice unmuted in using narratology reveals power, identity, and status as well as claiming self-identity thus finding impulses for hope. For ministers' wives, there is a need to claim and name their identities to avoid the victim status that they so often experience in emotional abuse. This approach will allow for a deep exploration of the experiences and perspectives allowing a nuanced

understanding of the complexities of emotional abuse within the unique narrative landscape of ministers' wives, offering a rich and insightful perspective on the factors influencing such behaviour.

3.3 Study Area

This study was conducted in Makueni County, Kenya, located in the eastern region of the country. The findings are anticipated to hold relevance for other regions where the church has an operational presence. The target population for this research were ministers' wives from the AIC church in Makueni County.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study was fifty (50) ministers' wives within the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Makueni County, Kenya. This specific group was selected due to the unique challenges and experiences they face in the context of clergy marriages.

3.5 Sampling Methods and Sample Size

This research utilized purposive sampling whereby the researcher intentionally selected individuals based on specific characteristics. This method was used when the researcher aimed to focus on population traits that were of interest, to enable participants to answer the research questions. The researcher selected respondents based on marital duration, age, and theological training. The total population of ministers' wives who attend the bi-monthly fellowship is approximately 30-50, as per the fellowship register. This number of respondents was determined based on the concept of data saturation which often guides sample size determination, in qualitative research, particularly narrative inquiries by saturation which frequently occurs within

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6-12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink et al., 2017:3). Ten (10) ministers' wives were sampled as participants in the study.

The nature of narrative research prioritizes rich, in-depth data over large sample sizes, and ten participants allowed for a thorough exploration of individual experiences providing a range of perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2018:71). Additionally, given the time-intensive nature of narrative interviews and subsequent analysis, ten respondents represent a manageable number within the study's timeframe and available resources. This sample size strikes a balance between achieving data saturation, capturing diverse experiences, and maintaining feasibility within the constraints of the study. Carminati, (2018:3) noted that qualitative study does not aim for statistical generalization typical of quantitative research, instead, it seeks a theoretical or analytical generalization.

3.6 Narrative Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative approach, employing in-depth interviews through a guided questionnaire to investigate the experiences of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the African Inland Church (AIC). The research design integrated traditional interview techniques with principles of narratology to gather rich, contextual data. The data collection process involved direct, face-to-face interviews with ministers' wives who are married and have a theological education background. These interviews combined open-ended questions and narrative prompts designed to elicit storytelling responses concerning emotional abuse.

This approach was designed to encourage participants to share their experiences in narrative form, providing detailed, personal accounts that reveal what happened and how participants felt, thought, and made sense of their experiences. The researcher actively listened during the

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interviews, asking follow-up questions to encourage further elaboration or clarification, allowing participants to guide the narrative. Recruitment took place at church offices and meetings of ministers' wives' fellowship, which are held twice a month to discuss church issues, their lives, and matters concerning gender-based violence. The goal was to draw from their conversations and address the topic of intimate partner abuse, specifically emotional abuse, which is often overlooked.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and no inducements were offered to influence involvement. The study objectives and process were comprehensively explained to avoid any misconceptions regarding anticipated or mandatory participation. After obtaining informed consent, the researcher conducted narrative interviews of those who were willing to share their stories. As a trained theologian, clergy, clergy spouse, and a member of the fellowship, I had access to them. While my background might initially establish rapport, my commitment laid in research objectivity and participant confidentiality.

This approach was particularly well-suited to this topic for several reasons; first, it focused on lived experiences. Secondly, the narrative inquiry goes beyond simply reporting events. It delves into how participants construct meaning from their experiences and prioritizing the voices and lived experiences of participants will allow for the emergence of new meanings and diverse ways of understanding emotional abuse.

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3.7 Narrative Data Analysis

This study utilized thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes associated with emotional abuse. Afterwards, it examined the themes' relationships to pertinent theological ideas found in the AIC in Makueni County. The study's goal was to create theologically sound frameworks

based on the experiences of the participants, enabling a participant-centred and contextually appropriate method of resolving emotional abuse in clerical marriages.

3.8 Narrative Data Presentation

This study utilized pseudonymed narratives collected from ministers' wives within the Africa Inland Church (AIC). This approach prioritizes both participant confidentiality and uncovering the underlying dynamics of emotional abuse. The objective was to identify common and distinctive themes within these stories to determine the predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives. The discussion centred on exploring theological approaches aimed at addressing the thematic elements depicted in the narratives.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the narrative research, the researcher implemented several scholarly practices to enhance the authenticity and credibility of the findings. This was crucial for maintaining the quality and rigor of the narratives in the study, with a focus on trustworthiness and narrative truth. The practices included establishing a clear methodological framework and involving participants in a process called Member Checking, where interpretations and findings were shared with them for validation. This allowed participants to confirm or clarify their narratives, ensuring that the research accurately reflected their experiences and enhancing reliability. The researcher also made a conscious effort to reflect on their own biases, assumptions, and perspectives, while maintaining a keen focus on the participants' point of view when writing the narratives. Additionally, the researcher prioritized the voices and lived experiences of the participants to ensure self-awareness (Loh, 2013; Punch et al., 2023)

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3.10 Ethical Consideration

The research was conducted morally, with a steadfast commitment to ethical principles guiding every stage. The purpose of the research was transparently explained to respondents, ensuring they understood the significance of their participation. The researcher sought research approval from the authorities of St. Paul University to conduct research. The researcher also sought permission from NACOSTI and AIC leadership, Makueni County before conducting the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement, ensuring they had a clear understanding of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participants were informed of their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation and their ability to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. Participants' responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality. In minimizing harm, particular attention was paid to mitigating any potential distress to participants, especially when discussing this sensitive topic of emotional abuse. Adequate resources and support services were provided to participants who may have experienced emotional distress during and after participation in the study. In addition, efforts were made to prevent re-traumatization among participants who have experienced emotional abuse by employing sensitive language and trauma-informed interviewing approaches to foster a safe and supportive setting for sharing experiences.

Respect for autonomy was crucial to the research process. Participants were given the freedom to make informed decisions about their participation in the study, including how much information they provided. Additionally, the researcher maintained reflexivity, acknowledging and critically

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reflecting on personal biases, values, and assumptions that may have influenced the research process and findings. By adhering to these ethical considerations, the research upheld the rights and well-being of participants, ensuring a respectful, responsible, and ethically sound study.

3.11 Conclusion

In this study, the need to recognize emotional abuse alongside other forms of abuse was highlighted to uncover the lived experiences of pastors' wives. The importance of utilizing a theological model of acknowledging, analysing, and transforming harmful narratives to address emotional abuse within religious contexts, particularly within clergy marriages, was outlined. This approach was proposed to foster holistic well-being among clergy marriages and contribute to the broader discourse on abuse within religious communities. By framing the research within a theological model, it was suggested that this would provide a pathway to understanding and addressing emotional abuse, contributing to support mechanisms and interventions tailored to pastors' wives and religious communities.

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CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND OF FINDINGS

4:1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews conducted with ten ministers' wives in line with emotional abuse in the Africa Inland Church Makueni Kenya. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the participants, providing general demographic information while maintaining their anonymity. The main body of the chapter is devoted to the presentation of the narratives, followed by a discussion of the emerging themes from the women's stories and a conclusion.

4.2 Demographic Information

The study involved ten ministers' wives serving with the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Makueni County, Kenya. The women's ages ranged from 32 to 48 years old. The duration of their marriages varied from seven (7) to twenty (20) years. The educational backgrounds of the participants were diverse, with five of them holding diploma certificates in theology, three having undergraduate degrees, and the remaining two being continuing students of postgraduate studies in theological studies.

This diversity showcased a wide range of educational achievements within the group. The participants exhibited varying levels of professional engagement outside their roles as ministers' wives. Four of the ministers' wives have additional jobs to support themselves financially while applying their skills in fields beyond the church, effectively balancing their professional lives with their responsibilities at home and in the church. The remaining six ministers' wives are fully dedicated to their roles as ministers of the gospel.

4.3 The key in-depth interview questions were:

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1. What are the Key predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in Africa Inland Church?
2. What are the various forms of emotional abuse experienced by ministers' wives in the Africa Inland church?
3. What is the impact of emotional abuse on the holistic wellness of ministers' wives in Africa Inland Church?
4. What Theological approaches are used to address emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church?

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4.4 DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

4.4.1 The Command Destabilizes Me.

My name is Sarah, and I work with the Africa Inland Church from Makueni County. I have been married for 13 years to Ezra and we are blessed with four children. Honestly "I never thought it would be like this. I was so proud to be a minister's wife when I married Ezra. But now... it's like I'm invisible. Being a minister's wife, I feel like I am always under a microscope. Ezra comes from a very controlling family background. His father exerts significant control over his decisions and plans, and Ezra tends to listen to his father more than to me as his wife. Majorly Ezra makes decisions about our finances, and I find this disrespectful. I hate the way he commands me to do things in our family with finality; for example, many times he dedicates a duty to accomplish and gives me a deadline as if I am a child. When I try to voice out my view on the same, he tells me that 'I have married you and I am final'. This crushes my spirit, most times I run mad, and I lose the strength to do my house chores. This also affects my sleep patterns. I withdraw from people and find myself talking alone even on the roads as I walk.

Additionally, I find my voice highly muted in our marriage because much of what is accomplished in our family comes from my husband and my father-in-law. My heart pins a lot. Ezra often reminds me that his position in the church means that I have to behave in a certain way. He uses his role as a spiritual leader to control my actions, my friendships, and even my thoughts. If I disagree with him, he says I am 'rebellious against God's appointed leader.' It's like he sees himself as an extension of God's authority and questioning him is the same as questioning God. I feel powerless, trapped between my faith and my sense of self. "Every decision, big or small, is his to make. The other day, I suggested we visit my parents for Christmas at the end of the year, and he shut me down immediately. 'We need to be here for the congregation,' he said. It's always about what he thinks is best. I feel like I'm suffocating, but I can't say anything. What would people think if they knew the truth? Sometimes I wonder if this is what God intended for a marriage." I hope that one-day things will change. We are always taught in women's conferences to persevere and be there for our families no matter what. This has given me a lot of stress and withdrawal from many things. I have tried quitting, but many questions surround me.

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4.4.2 My Dreams Shattered

My name is Lisa (not my real name), and I'm 45 years old. I've been married for 18 years to a man who, like me, is a minister. We used to serve God in the same church, but now... well, things have changed dramatically. I used to dream of being a teacher, you know? But that feels like a lifetime ago. During the early years of our marriage, things were good, but then everything started unravelling. Back in 2017, my husband was faced with a scandal he was accused of having sexual affairs with young boys in the church. This crushed my spirit completely. As a couple, we sat down and talked about it, and he denied everything. He became very angry with

me for trying to find out how he had found himself in such a mess. The church council took the matter to the higher authorities, and he was excommunicated from the church. He remains excommunicated to this day. Now, I spend my days trying to stretch every penny, barely covering our rent and utilities. I've resorted to selling vegetables in the market on the days I'm not doing ministry work, just to help ease our bills and meet our basic needs. My husband is jobless now, and since the scandal, our sexual desire has died. I don't love him anymore, but I can't bring myself to divorce him. I fear being excommunicated from the church myself, and I worry about my children growing up without a father figure. My dreams have shattered, but I'm trying to hold onto my faith. It's a daily struggle, to balance my ministerial duties, providing for my family, and dealing with the emotional toll of my husband's actions. I often find myself questioning why this happened to us, to our family, and to our ministry. But I try to remember that God has a plan, even if I can't see it right now. I always tell my heart that it's okay to feel hurt, angry, and confused and these feelings have consumed me. I find strength in my faith, in your children. I'm learning to redefine my identity beyond being a wife and a minister's spouse. It's a journey, and I'm not sure where it will lead, but I'm trying to trust in God's guidance every step of the way.

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4.4.3 The Pressure is Too Much

They call me Maria and I am 40 years. I have been married for 15 years and we are blessed with three children. My journey has been good and bad for there is no perfect marriage. For me, it's the pressure to maintain a perfect image of a godly marriage and family that has taken a toll on our family. Every time things do not work out; my husband blames me for it. "It's exhausting, it's overwhelming. From the moment I step out of our house, I have to be perfect. Hair done, clothes neat, smile in place. Everyone's always watching, judging. One time I was criticized for wearing

a knee-length skirt and I wondered why because there was nothing wrong with my dress, I was neatly dressed. To make matters worse, my husband went ahead and supported the members about my dressing style and insisted I should wear long dresses. I feel like I'm acting in a play, but I can never leave the stage. My husband doesn't understand. He says it's part of our calling to be examples for the community. But sometimes I just want to scream, to tell everyone that I'm human too. I make mistakes, I get angry, I have bad days. But I can't. I have to be the perfect minister's wife, always. The pressure doesn't just affect me; it's hurting my family too. My children feel they can never make mistakes, always having to be 'the pastor's kids.' My marriage suffers because I can't be vulnerable with my husband - he sees my struggles as a lack of faith rather than a cry for help. Additionally, when I need anything, even essentials, I must ask him for money and justify every expense. Meanwhile, he makes unilateral decisions about large donations to the church or helping congregation members financially. When I question this severally, he accuses me of lacking faith and not trusting God's provision. It's humiliating to be a grown woman who can't even buy a coffee without permission." Often am met with silent treatment and every spending is met with criticism. I always have panic attacks before church events, my body physically rebelling against the strain of constant performance. Constant criticism has been the order of the day after every church service. Sometimes I preach and he always gives negative comments about my preaching, and I always feel I am in an exam room and tell myself that I will never preach again when he is there. I love God and I love our community, but I'm losing myself in this role. Is this really what serving God should look like?" But at what cost? I'm crumbling under the weight of these impossible expectations. In these difficult challenging situations, I have developed personal spiritual practices such as prayer,

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meditation, and studying religious texts which have continued to be a source of comfort, perspective, and resilience.

4.4.4. I Always Think of Sexually Cheating on Him

Jennifer breathed, her voice heavy with despair. I have been married for 20 years now, we are blessed with two boys now in their teenage stages but honestly, I never imagined I'd be trapped in a loveless marriage. I thought things would change after some time, but they got worse. I have not had any emotional touch with my husband for close to 10 years now. That's what it feels like most days. Don't misunderstand - I know Tom cares for me on some level, but there's no real intimacy. We are together because of the children. No spark, no passion. He's constantly at the church, always consumed by one crisis after another. When he finally comes home, he's too drained for anything but collapsing into bed. I've tried discussing it with him, but he turns it around on me, asking 'Do you want me to abandon my calling because of you?' His words cut deep, making me feel selfish and small. The constant rejection and dismissal of my needs have eroded my self-esteem. I feel invisible and undesirable like I'm fading away in my own home. The loneliness is overwhelming. I ache for love, affection, and a scrap of genuine connection. Is it so wrong to want to be desired by my husband? to crave that emotional and physical bond we once shared?. Negligence has taken its toll. I find myself withdrawn, going through the motions of daily life but feeling hollow inside. I've developed anxiety, constantly on edge waiting for the next disappointment. To cope, I've built walls around my heart, trying to need him less, to expect less. But it's exhausting, always being on guard. I'm terrified that if something doesn't change soon, I might do something I'll deeply regret. The temptation to seek comfort elsewhere grows stronger each day. Not just physical intimacy, but emotional connection too. I have desired for a long time for someone to see me and value me. I never thought I'd be the type of person to

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contemplate infidelity. But after years of emotional starvation, I'm not sure how much longer I can survive like this. The guilt eats at me, but so does the desperate longing for affection. I'm caught between my vows and my basic human needs, and I don't know how much longer I can endure this isolation. When I felt I could not hold it any longer, I joined a group from our region, particularly for minister's wives to look for support on family matters and particularly issues of relationships thus, I have found connections with others facing similar trials. Sometimes Prayer doesn't make sense and many times I do not pray. Reading scriptures has become rare because of the difficult situations I find myself in. My life is full of stress, I always feel confused, and I have neither joy nor peace at all. My nights are full of tears questioning why I got married to such a negligent man. I'm tired of such a dry marriage. I have always desired to leave this marriage but now where do I take my teenage boys and how am I going to sustain them, especially now while the father caters for their education? Am stuck on which way to go.

4.4.5 Confused About the Bible Teachings

I am Racheal, 38 years old, married for ten years and blessed with five children. My marriage journey has been good though not without challenges. We do not serve at the same church for now, but my life has been rough as far as my relationship with Justus is concerned. When we got married, there was much love to be desired but after some time, like four years down the line, things changed. Our communication started having issues, I started experiencing roughness in his talks to me, and he even became so tough that approaching him became difficult for me. When I enquired why I was met with shock, he told me that I was not qualified to be a minister's wife. I asked him why and he told me that I needed to read the bible very well to know my position in a marriage relationship. Every time we disagree, he continuously quotes Ephesians 5:22, 'Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ

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is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. [24] As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. But he conveniently ignored verse 25 that says 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her'. He used this verse severally to justify his control over every decision in our marriage. When I try to voice my opinion, he accuses me of being unbiblical and disobedient to God. He'd say things like, 'The Bible clearly states that the man is the head of the household. You must submit, not question.' One time he told me: to reread Proverbs 31, and Proverbs 14:1 and style up. I followed up on why things had taken a different trajectory and found that he was feeling insecure with his level of education. He went ahead and made sure that I would not be preaching in the church which I accepted and kept quiet. Sometimes back I was struggling with depression and suggested seeing a therapist, he told me 'The moment you submit to your husband, Stress will leave your life; I do not have money to waste, and he left for his daily business. When he came later in the evening, he told me that my mental health issues were a result of spiritual weakness. He withdrew from having conversations with me in the family and even if I tried to start one, he stopped me immediately. It felt like the Bible, which should have been a source of comfort, was being used as a weapon against me." Sometimes I read the Psalms in secret, just to remember that God is love, not control."

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4.4.6. Lost Touch with Social Life

My name is Mary, and I serve with AIC church in Makueni and I'm 41 years old. For years, I prayed to God to bless me with a minister of the gospel to be my husband, and when He answered my prayer, I was overjoyed. The first years of my marriage were good, though I started seeing some red flags before the end of the first year. I'm a minister myself, and while things haven't been extremely bad in my role, they certainly haven't been easy either. The most

challenging aspect of my life has been the influence of my husband's family on our marriage. From the beginning, they did not support our union. They spread malicious rumours about me, and my husband remained silent about the whole issue. His sisters, brothers, and especially his parents did not welcome me into the family. They hated me for no reason, and I felt an emotional detachment from them. The situation became so unbearable that I eventually decided to rent a house far from the family home. I lost connection with them - the joy and attachment I had hoped for in my new family was gone. As a pastor, navigating this space was incredibly difficult. The public knew what was happening to me, which added another layer of complexity to my situation. Mostly, I withdrew from people. I was even called a "cow" by some family members. I tried talking to my husband about these issues, but he also became angry with me. This left me feeling even more isolated and unheard. Throughout this ordeal, I've tried to listen to myself and maintain my integrity as a pastor. However, it's been a constant struggle to balance my challenges with my public role in the church. The emotional toll has been significant, and I've often felt trapped between my calling as a minister and the reality of my difficult family situation. This affected my sexual relationship with him and most times, we stayed without any pleasure. Despite these challenges, I continue to serve in my role at the church. Things haven't been easy, but they haven't been entirely bad either. I'm still trying to find my way through these complex family dynamics while staying true to my faith and my calling as a pastor. This experience has deeply affected my sense of self, my marriage, and my relationship with the broader church community. I often find myself questioning how to reconcile my public role as a pastor's wife and minister myself with the private pain and isolation I feel within my own family. In all these difficult situations, I found solace in the nurturing presence of my spiritual mother,

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whose heartfelt prayers and gentle guidance became a beacon of hope. I also read the scriptures and found comfort in hoping that things would change.

4.4.7 Rape is the norm

I am Grace, and I have been married to Pastor John for 12 years now. To our church community, we're the picture of a perfect Christian couple. John is charismatic, respected, and seems devoted to me in public. But behind closed doors, my life is a nightmare; I can't seem to escape. It didn't start this way. John was charming when we first met, and I felt blessed to marry such a godly man. But over time, things changed. It began with harsh criticisms, then escalated to yelling and name-calling. Now, I flinch at the sound of his voice, never knowing what might set him off. The worst part is what happens in our bedroom. John doesn't see me as a partner but as property. For the past three years, John prevented me from seeing a gynecologist, claiming financial hardship while still demanding "conjugal rights," and repeatedly raping me regardless of my feelings or consent. I've tried to refuse, but that only makes him angrier. The pain and violation I feel afterwards are indescribable. Recently, he moved out of our shared bedroom. I felt relief at first, but it was short-lived because he came back after three days demanding conjugal rights. One time he told some church elders that I was frigid and unable to satisfy him as a wife. The whispers and judgmental looks from our congregation members cut deep. 'I felt trapped and alone'. Who would believe me if I spoke up? John is beloved by everyone. They see his public face, not the monster I live with. I pray for guidance, for strength, for some way out. But for now, I'm left wondering how my life became this nightmare, and if I'll ever find a way to wake up.

4.4.8 My Journey of Faith and Perseverance

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My name is Joan, and I work with AIC Makueni County. I have served in the field for 25 years, and I'm now 46 years old. I am a mother of two boys, and I can testify of God's faithfulness in my life. I got married back in 2005, but life has been tough. My husband wasn't supportive, and for eight years, our marriage was very rough. My marriage was filled with hardships. My husband would leave the house without telling me where he was going, and when he returned, he would refuse to answer my questions. He used not to provide for the household but would still eat at home. This confused me, and I wondered if I was the one who had married him instead of him marrying me. He was violent towards our children, beating them and thrusting them against the wall for no reason. He would say things like, "What's in my heart, no one knows," which raised my concerns about our safety.

Infidelity was another issue. I would find condoms in his pockets when washing his clothes. Every question I asked led to a disaster in the house. We preach about perseverance in church, but I realized this kind of perseverance could lead to contracting diseases, experiencing more violence, or even death. During arguments, I would keep quiet while he called me names like you are a fool, a monkey, a prostitute. I persevered because I knew I wasn't those things. He would abuse me in front of our children, and they understood what was happening. The abuse often stemmed from his anger when I could not give him money. The constant tension affected my health. I developed high blood pressure and would wake up with a swollen face from crying all night. I became angry and found it difficult to talk to men, even my fellow pastors. This anger lasted for about four years until 2022 when I finally started to heal. My coping mechanisms included trying to assume nothing was wrong, sleeping a lot, and eating well. On the outside, people could not tell I was suffering, but deep inside was a deep wound. I could not pray but cry every time I went into my prayer closet. I could not even say "amen." Songs helped me a lot. I

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would see angels come to me and give me songs to sing, which I would write down and record. In 2012, God gave me Isaiah 60:1 which says, "A rise and shine,". This gave me strength. By 2012, I decided to quit my marriage. I processed the divorce in 2017, which was finalized in 2019. Despite these challenges, I have continued to be faithful to God, and the church has accommodated and supported me. One lesson I learnt from my marriage struggles is that God can carry us through the most difficult situations in our lives. As it says in Psalms 118:7, I will declare the goodness of God. There is life after all the challenges we face. And Psalm 27:10 reminds me that even if my father and mother left me, God will still uphold me. Since then, I have held onto that message. To all women out there, I say: Arise and shine, for your light has come. Do not live as if you are dying today. Trust in God and see His light amidst darkness and be able to discern when things are not right in your marriage. Don't stay in a marriage that could lead to your death – God affirms life. Trust in God, and He will carry you through, just as He did for me.

4.4.9. Longing to Be Heard

I am Pendo, wife of Reverend Michael for 20 years now. When we first married, I was so proud to be a clergy's wife, ready to support my husband's calling and serve our community. But over the years, what began as a partnership in faith has slowly eroded into a prison of silence and pain. In our culture, a wife's role is clear - to be submissive, supportive, and silent. As a minister's wife, these expectations are even more pronounced. I am to be the perfect helpmate, always smiling, and never complaining. But living up to these impossible standards has taken its toll. Michael's preferred method of control is silence. When I displease him, and it seems I often do, though I'm never quite sure how he simply stops speaking to me. Days, sometimes weeks, pass without a word. The silence in our home is deafening, crushing my spirit bit by bit. When

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he does speak, it's often to criticize. 'My cooking isn't good enough, the house isn't clean enough, and I'm not a good enough example to the women in our congregation'. Nothing I do ever seems to measure up to his expectations. Slowly, I have found myself isolated from friends and family. Michael says it's not proper for a minister's wife to be too social, and that I should focus on my duties at home and church. I have tried to speak up, to assert myself, but our culture frowns upon wives who challenge their husbands, especially those in religious leadership. Each attempt is met with harsh criticism and longer periods of silence. I put on a brave face for our congregation, playing the role of the contented minister's wife. But inside, I'm screaming, longing for someone to hear me, to see me as a person worthy of respect and love. I pray for strength, and courage to find my voice again. But for now, I remain trapped between the expectations of my culture and the reality of my marriage, wondering if I will ever find a way to break free from this invisible cage.

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4.4.10 Where and How Do I Go About My Situation?

I am Ruth, and I have been married to Pastor David for 15 years. From the outside, we appear to be a model couple leading our church community. But behind closed doors, my life is a nightmare of violence, betrayal, and despair. The beatings started after two years into our marriage. At first, David would apologize profusely, blaming stress or fatigue. But over time, the apologies stopped, and the violence became more frequent. I have learnt to hide the bruises with makeup and long sleeves, terrified of what might happen if anyone found out. David controls every aspect of our finances. I have no access to our bank accounts, no credit cards, not even cash for necessities. I have to beg for money to buy groceries or clothes for our children. This financial stranglehold has left me completely dependent on him, with no means to escape. But perhaps the deepest wound is his infidelity. David often brings young women from the

congregation to our home, claiming he needs to counsel them privately. I was naive at first, believing in his dedication to pastoral care. But as time went on, I discovered that these counselling sessions were sexual encounters. Witnessing this betrayal in my own home shattered my confidence and self-esteem. I felt worthless, unable to trust my judgment. This makes me question everything - my attractiveness, my worth as a wife, even my faith. 'How can I lead women's ministries or offer marriage advice when my husband treats me with such disregard'? The constant abuse and humiliation have taken their toll on my whole life. I continually struggle with depression and anxiety, often finding it hard to get out of bed in the morning. I've withdrawn from friends and family, too ashamed to admit the reality of my situation. My once vibrant personality has dimmed, replaced by a meek, fearful woman I barely recognize. I long to leave, to find safety for myself and my children. But where will I go? How would I support myself with no money, and no job experience? And who would believe me if I spoke out against the beloved pastor of our church? So, I remain silent, trapped in a cycle of abuse and betrayal, praying for a way out that seems increasingly impossible. The woman I once was - confident, joyful, and full of faith - feels like a distant memory struggling to survive each day in a home that has become a prison. Sometimes I pray, other times I don't because I feel God doesn't hear my prayers. I have tried to fast several times, but things haven't changed. I believe that one day God will come through for me.

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4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.5.1 Power Dynamics at Home and Church

The narratives reveal how the elevated status of ministers within the church community has become a tool for abuse. The misuse of spiritual authority, as seen in Sarah's narrative (4.3.1) as her husband uses spiritual authority to control her, her Lack of decision-making power in the

family and the influence of father-in-law on the couple's family decisions. The aspect of Justice's decision to prevent Rachel in narrative (4.3.5) from preaching in the church demonstrates his power to control not just their personal life, but also Rachel's spiritual expression and leadership potential. This action limits her autonomy and ability to fulfil her calling within the church. This is highlighted by Kobyliński (2022) which serves as a significant predictor of emotional abuse. Ministers may exploit their position to justify controlling behaviours, framing their actions as divinely sanctioned leadership. This power imbalance is exacerbated by the public nature of their roles, making it difficult for wives to challenge or resist abusive dynamics without risking public scrutiny or perceived spiritual disobedience. The literature review supports this, with Stark (2007) arguing that emotional abuse is a form of coercive control used to strip away the victim's autonomy. This is seen in Pendo's narrative (4.3.9) where her husband uses silence as a form of punishment and control, and in Jennifer's narrative (4.3.4) where her needs are consistently dismissed. The most overt manifestation of power abuse is the physical violence Ruth experiences (4.3.10). This represents a severe form of control and domination, creating an atmosphere of fear and submission. The progression from initial apologies to normalized violence demonstrates an escalation of power abuse over time. These align with the strategies of isolation, deception, and intimidation mentioned by Dutton and Goodman (2005) in the literature review.

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4.5.2 Misinterpretation of Biblical Texts

The religious context, particularly the interpretation of biblical texts, emerges as a potent predictor of emotional abuse. This is manifested in the narrative (4.3.5) where Rachel's husband selectively and manipulatively uses biblical passages to control her. Justus weaponizes scripture

to establish and maintain control. His selective quoting of Ephesians 5:22-24 while ignoring verse 25 demonstrates a manipulative use of biblical text to justify his dominance.

This misuse of spiritual authority aligns with Kobyliński's (2022) findings on how religious leaders can exploit their positions to maintain control. As Westenberg (2017) notes, Christian language can be weaponized to justify and perpetuate abusive behaviours which are implicit in the narratives. Ministers may selectively interpret scriptures to reinforce patriarchal structures and demand unquestioning submission from their wives. This misuse of religious texts creates a framework where emotional abuse can be disguised as spiritual guidance or righteous authority, making it particularly insidious and difficult to challenge. The women's struggle with faith and their roles as clergywives reflect the complex interplay between religious beliefs and abuse dynamics discussed in the literature review.

4.5.3 Financial Dependence

Ruth's story (4.3.10) powerfully illustrates how financial dependence can be a strong predictor of emotional abuse. David's complete control over finances is a classic form of economic abuse, as described by Vyas (2012). By denying Ruth access to money, David creates a situation of total dependence, effectively trapping her in an abusive relationship. This financial stranglehold extends his power beyond physical control to limit her options for independence or escape. Aligned with Vyas's, (2012) research, the economic structure of many ministerial households, where the husband is often the sole breadwinner, creates a situation ripe for financial abuse. This dependence limits the wife's options for independence or escape, effectively trapping her in an abusive situation. The control over financial resources becomes a tool for maintaining power and compliance. This theme is supported by Acierno et al., 2010; Djamba et al., 2008; Kobyliński,

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2022; Labuschagne, 2023; Macassa et al., 2013; Marambi, 2022; Meinck et al., in the literature review, highlighting how economic factors can trap women in abusive situations.

4.5.4 Silence

Pendo's (4.3.9)"longing to be heard" narrative directly addresses the theme of silence. This aligns with Stark's, (2007) argument that emotional abuse is a form of coercive control used to strip away the victim's autonomy. The prolonged periods of silence Pendo endures serve as a powerful tool of control and punishment, gradually eroding her sense of self-worth and agency. Sarah's narrative in (4.4.1) describes how her husband's commands silence her: "When I try to voice out my view on the same, he tells me that 'I have married you and I am final'. This crushes my spirit...This corresponds with Njiru (2024) discussion of self-silencing among victims due to cultural norms, gender dynamics, and religious interpretations. Her internal conflict between the desire to speak out and the pressure to conform to cultural expectations exemplifies the complex psychological impact of long-term emotional abuse. This theme is supported by Rachel's attempts in narrative (4.3.5) to voice her opinions or concerns which are consistently met with accusations of being "unbiblical" and "disobedient to God." This pattern of silencing and invalidation serves to erode Rachel's confidence in her judgment and interpretation of faith, reinforcing the power imbalance in their relationship.

4.5.5 Societal Factors and Unrealistic Expectations

Maria, (4.3.3) and Jennifer's, (4.3.4), narratives highlight the immense pressure on clergy wives to maintain a perfect image and support their husbands unconditionally. This aligns with Nwaka (2020) and Korolevskaya & Yampolskaya (2022) findings on how societal expectations and ministerial duties can exacerbate emotional abuse. Both narratives have also highlighted the erosion of personal identity. Maria's statement, "I'm losing myself in this role," and Jennifer's

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feeling of invisibility demonstrate how the demands of being a minister's wife can overshadow individual needs and desires. Both women struggle with reconciling their personal needs with the expectations placed on them as ministers' wives. This theme connects with Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control, where victims lose their sense of autonomy and self. These ministers' wives struggle with reconciling their personal needs with the expectations placed on them as ministers' wives. This internal conflict reflects the complex interplay between religious beliefs, cultural norms, and individual well-being discussed in the literature review.

4.5.6 Emotional Neglect and Loneliness

Jennifer's story (4.3.4) powerfully illustrates the theme of emotional neglect within a clergy marriage. Her longing for intimacy and connection aligns with the literature on how ministerial duties can lead to emotional distance in marriages (Nwaka, 2020). This neglect contributes to feelings of isolation, which Dutton and Goodman (2005) identify as a key strategy in coercive control. This theme is also evidenced in the narratives of Lisa (4.3.2), Racheal (4.3.5), Mary (4.3.6), Joan (4.3.8) and Ruth (4.3.10).

4.5.7 Infidelity

The theme of infidelity emerges as a significant issue in several narratives, highlighting the complex challenges faced by ministers' wives. It manifests in various forms, from suspected infidelity to confirmed affairs, often intertwined with other forms of emotional abuse and control. This aligns with Munyoki et al.'s (2023:3) observation that infidelity often precipitates emotional abuse as a coping mechanism. Lisa's story (4.4.2) presents a case of alleged sexual misconduct with minors, leading to her husband's excommunication and devastating their ministry. This reflects the severe mental health impact noted by Bottoms et al. (2003:244), who found that emotional abuse within religious contexts can lead to serious psychological issues.

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Jennifer (4.4.4) contemplates infidelity due to emotional and physical neglect in her marriage, illustrating how marital dissatisfaction can lead to such temptations. This scenario echoes King's (2003) research on the significant challenges faced by pastors' wives, including feelings of isolation and lack of support. Ruth's narrative (4.4.10) provides a clear example of ongoing infidelity, where her husband abuses his pastoral authority to engage in sexual encounters with congregation members. This case exemplifies Oduyoye's argument (Oredein, 2021:45) about how patriarchal religious teachings can reinforce power imbalances and lead to environments where abuse is normalized. These accounts demonstrate how infidelity in ministerial marriages not only affects personal relationships but also has wider implications for the church community and the credibility of the ministry. The theme underscores the unique pressures and expectations placed on ministers' wives, who often feel trapped between their pain and the public image they are expected to maintain (Pendo, 4.4.9). Ultimately, these narratives reveal the complex interplay between marital issues, public ministerial duties, and the struggle to maintain faith and commitment in the face of betrayal.

The findings on emotional abuse in these narratives strongly align with the feminist theory of naming, disrupting, and challenging oppressive structures. By narrating their experiences of emotional abuse, these women engage in the crucial feminist practice of "naming" which is giving voice to previously silenced or minimized forms of oppression. Their stories disrupt the facade of harmony and equality often presented in religious communities, challenging the notion that spiritual leadership inherently protects against abusive dynamics.

These accounts serve to unmask the subtle, yet pervasive forms of control exerted through emotional manipulation, gaslighting, and isolation - tactics that feminist theory identifies as key mechanisms for maintaining patriarchal power. Moreover, by sharing their experiences, these

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women are not only naming the abuse they've endured but also disrupting the narrative that such treatment is acceptable or divinely sanctioned. Their courage in speaking out challenges the status quo, inviting critical examination of religious structures and practices that have long shielded abusive behaviours from scrutiny. This aligns perfectly with the feminist approach of exposing, questioning, and ultimately working to dismantle systems that perpetuate emotional oppression.

Despite the major themes of financial dependence, infidelity, unrealistic expectations, and power dynamics identified as primary predictors of emotional abuse, this study uncovered several minor yet significant factors contributing to abusive relationship dynamics. Communication breakdown emerged as a notable predictor. Jealousy and insecurity, and ministerial duties surfaced as interrelated minor predictors highlighted in excessive possessiveness and profound fear of abandonment, often stemming from deep-seated insecurities.

4.6 Forms of Emotional Abuse

The narratives of ministers' wives reveal several key forms of emotional abuse aligning with existing research in the literature review.

Verbal abuse and criticism in Sarah's narrative (4.3.1), she describes her husband's commanding tone and harsh criticism. Pendo states (4.3.9), "When he does speak, it's often to criticise. My cooking isn't good enough, the house isn't clean enough..." This aligns with Evan's (2010) and Lanre's (2014) descriptions of verbal abuse, including name-calling, yelling, and harsh criticism. The literature suggests that such abuse can severely harm a person's sense of self-worth and emotional health, which is evident in Sarah's statement about feeling crushed and losing the strength to do house chores.

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Intimidation and Control Maria's story (4.3.3) illustrates intimidation through her husband's use of his position as a spiritual leader to control her actions, friendships, and thoughts. This aligns with Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control, where intimidation and other controlling behaviours create a power imbalance between the abuser and the abused creating an atmosphere of fear and control. The narrative shows how this control extends to various aspects of Maria and Sarah's life over financial resources, including Maria's appearance and economic decisions. Controlling behaviour and undermining Sarah's narrative (4.3.1) illustrates this: "I hate the way he commands me to do things in our family with finality; for example, many times he dedicates a duty to accomplish and gives me a deadline as if I am a child." Ruth (4.3.10) also says, "David controls every aspect of our finances. I cannot access our bank accounts, credit cards, or even cash for necessities."

Isolation as a form of emotional abuse appears in Mary's story (4.3.6). Her disconnection from her husband's family and subsequent withdrawal from people align with Alsawalqa's (2021) and Dutton and Goodman's (2005) descriptions of isolation as an abusive technique to increase the victim's dependence on the abuser and the victim is cut off from support networks. ": She says, "I lost connection with them - the joy and attachment I had hoped for in my new family was gone.

Gaslighting as a form of emotional abuse is clearly shown in Rachel's narrative (4.3.5), particularly in how her husband uses biblical teachings to invalidate her feelings and experiences. This aligns with Sweet's (2019) description of gaslighting as a form of psychological manipulation that erodes the victim's confidence in their perceptions.

Humiliation emerges in Maria's story (4.3.3), particularly regarding criticism of her dress in front of church members. This corresponds with Follingstad et al.'s (1990) description of humiliation as a form of emotional abuse that affects both self-esteem and social standing.

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Silent Treatment: Jennifer's narrative (4.3.4) and Pendo's story (4.3.9) both feature silent treatment as a form of emotional abuse. When I displease him... he simply stops speaking to me." This directly corresponds to the silent treatment described by Williams (2001) as causing severe mental suffering and feelings of rejection.

Excessive Monitoring and Jealousy: The narratives of Sarah (4.4.1) and Pendo (4.4.9) vividly illustrate the theme of excessive monitoring and control experienced by ministers' wives. In Sarah's case, her husband Ezra uses his position as a spiritual leader to exert control over various aspects of her life, including her behaviour, social interactions, and even her thought processes. He justifies this control by citing his ministerial role, effectively using his spiritual authority as a means of manipulation. Similarly, Pendo's husband Michael imposes restrictions on her social life, asserting that it is inappropriate for a minister's wife to be overly social. He insists that she should limit her focus to her duties at home and in the church, effectively isolating her and constraining her freedom. Additionally, elements of excessive monitoring appear in Maria's story (4.3.3) regarding her husband's control over her appearance and actions. These accounts reveal how ministerial positions can be misused to justify excessive monitoring and control within marriages, placing immense pressure on wives to conform to narrow, restrictive expectations of behaviour and social interaction.

Psychological Battering is also a form of emotional abuse evidenced in Sarah's (4.3.1) and Maria's (4.3.3), narratives. This aligns with Onyango's (2013) description of psychological battering among married ministers in Kenya.

As a scholar examining these narratives and their alignment with existing literature on emotional abuse, I find the depth and pervasiveness of these experiences both compelling and deeply

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concerning. What strikes me most is how these forms of emotional abuse are not only prevalent but also intricately woven into the fabric of religious authority, gender roles, and power dynamics. This intersection creates a unique form of vulnerability for ministers' wives that requires careful unpacking. Additionally, the narratives reveal a disturbing pattern of how biblical teachings are weaponized to justify and perpetuate abuse. This misuse of scripture not only enables the abuse but also creates a spiritual crisis for the survivor, potentially damaging their faith alongside their emotional well-being. This calls for a critical examination of how religious texts and traditions can be interpreted and applied in ways that either combat or enable abuse.

Lastly, I'm struck by the resilience displayed by these women in sharing their stories. Their willingness to name and challenge their experiences, despite the potential for backlash within their communities, is not just data for our research but a powerful act of resistance against oppressive systems. As scholars, we have a responsibility to ensure that these voices are not only heard but also instrumental in shaping interventions, policies, and further research in this field.

These findings underscore the urgent need for a more nuanced understanding of emotional abuse within religious contexts. They call for a re-examination of how religious teachings on marriage and gender roles might inadvertently create environments where abuse can flourish unchecked. Moreover, these narratives highlight the need for targeted support systems that understand the unique challenges faced by ministers' wives, including the spiritual dimensions of the abuse they endure.

Moving forward, I believe our scholarly focus should expand beyond merely documenting these experiences to actively explore ways to disrupt these patterns of abuse within religious contexts,

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empower survivors, create pathways for healing and importantly call for accountability of abusers in positions of spiritual authority.

4.7 Impact of Emotional Abuse on the Holistic Wellness of Ministers' Wives

The impact of emotional abuse on the holistic wellness of ministers' wives is profound and multifaceted, as evidenced by both the literature review and the personal narratives provided. In terms of psychological well-being, the narratives vividly illustrate the detrimental effects of emotional abuse. Maria's narrative (4.3.3) depicting her constant struggle with feelings of inadequacy and her relentless pursuit of perfection are clear indicators of the anxiety and depression commonly associated with emotional abuse in intimate partnerships.

This aligns with findings from studies across Europe and East Africa that highlight the correlation between emotional violence and psychological distress. Similarly, Jennifer's experience (4.3.4) of being consistently ignored and dismissed by her husband exemplifies the psychological toll of such treatment, further corroborating the literature's findings on the harmful psychological impact of emotional abuse. Social isolation, a tactic frequently employed by abusers, is starkly illustrated in Pendo's narrative (4.3.9). Her husband's discouragement of social interactions, under the guise of it being improper for a minister's wife, directly reflects the isolation strategies mentioned in various studies. This forced withdrawal from social networks can severely impact an individual's social well-being and deprive them of crucial support systems, exacerbating the effects of abuse and making it more difficult for victims to seek help or maintain a sense of self outside their abusive relationship.

The stress and psychological distress described by these women undoubtedly affect their ability to fulfil their roles within the ministry effectively. This aligns with research findings on occupational distress among ministers and their spouses, underscoring the far-reaching

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consequences of emotional abuse beyond the personal sphere. Although the narratives do not directly mention physical health issues, the chronic stress described by these women is likely to contribute to various physical health problems.

The literature review by Korolevskaia, A., & Yampolskaya, S. 2022 indicates that emotional abuse can lead to a range of physical symptoms, including headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and a weakened immune system. The persistent psychological distress evident in the narratives suggests that these women may be at heightened risk for such physical health complications.

Lastly, the intergenerational impact of abuse is touched upon in Maria's narrative (4.3.3), where she expresses concern about the effect of her situation on her children. This reflection aligns with research findings on the far-reaching consequences of domestic abuse, which can extend beyond the immediate victim to affect family dynamics and potentially perpetuate cycles of abuse across generations. Maria's awareness of this impact highlights the complex web of consequences that emotional abuse can have on the entire family unit, not just the primary victim.

The impact on these women's lives is devastating and all-encompassing. The emotional abuse they're experiencing is not just causing immediate distress but is likely to have long-lasting effects on their mental health, physical well-being, social relationships, and overall quality of life. They are in positions that ostensibly command respect and influence within their communities, yet they are simultaneously trapped in cycles of abuse that strip away their autonomy, identity, and well-being. The unique context adds additional layers of complexity to their situations, making it even more challenging for them to seek help or escape their abusive circumstances. This demands urgent attention and our understanding and addressing of emotional abuse within religious contexts.

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4.8 Theological Strategies to Address Emotional Abuse among Married Ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya

The narratives reveal various coping mechanisms ministers' wives employ to navigate challenging situations. Spiritual practices emerge as a primary source of comfort, with many women turning to personal prayer, meditation, and scripture study for solace and strength. Some, like Jennifer (4.3.4), find support in groups specifically for partners of clergy, providing a safe space to discuss their struggles. Despite their circumstances, maintaining faith is a common thread in the narratives. Many wives cope by seeking independence and building lives separate from their husbands, focusing on their children, or pursuing personal interests and volunteer work. Some resort to maintaining appearances, putting on a brave face for their congregation while dealing with private pain.

Other coping strategies include withdrawal and isolation, as seen in Maria's case (4.3.3) where she retreats from social situations to manage the pressure of expectations. Some women engage in secret acts of resistance, like Rachel (4.3.5) reading Psalms privately to counter her husband's misuse of scripture. Many cling to hope for change to endure their current circumstances, while others fantasize about escaping without acting on these thoughts. Emotional numbing is also evident, with some women distancing themselves emotionally from their husbands and situations. While these coping mechanisms provide temporary relief, it's important to note that many do not address the underlying issues of abuse and may not be sustainable long-term solutions.

An important factor in these women's experiences is the strong pressure they face to preserve their marriages at all costs. Many are told that divorce is not an option, especially given their husbands' positions as religious leaders which negate the misuse of scripture for control. An

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example is Rachel's husband who uses biblical verses to justify his control. Rachel says, 'my husband continuously quoted Ephesians 5:22", 'Wives, submit to your husbands as difficult the Lord". This again relates to the '*vumilia'* (perseverance) theology implied in the literature review, where religious texts are used as tools of manipulation. This expectation to persevere, often rooted in religious teachings and social norms within their communities, makes it extremely difficult for these women to consider leaving, even in abusive situations. As a result, they find themselves struggling to reconcile their well-being with the perceived duty to maintain their marriages and support their husbands' ministries. The variety of strategies employed reflects the complex and challenging nature of ministers' wives' experiences.

These findings show the complex interplay of faith, cultural expectations, and personal survival strategies at work among ministers' wives. First and foremost, the prevalence of spiritual practices as a primary coping mechanism is noteworthy. While it's admirable that these ministers' wives find strength in their faith, it's concerning that the very belief system that should provide comfort is often weaponized against them. This paradox demands our attention as scholars. We must critically examine how religious teachings can be both a source of resilience and a tool of oppression. The concept of *"vumilia"* (perseverance) theology is particularly troubling.

While perseverance can be a virtue, its misapplication in abusive situations perpetuates harm. There is a need to challenge interpretations of scripture that enable abuse and work towards developing theologies of empowerment and mutual respect within marriage. The coping strategies these women employ, from emotional numbing to secret acts of resistance, demonstrate resilience and desperation. While these strategies may provide short-term relief, they don't address the root causes of abuse.

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The existence of support groups for clergy partners is a positive finding, but it also highlights the systemic nature of the problem. There is a need to explore how these groups can be leveraged not just for support, but as catalysts for change within religious institutions.

The complexity and prevalence of emotional abuse within clergy marriages necessitate a comprehensive and spiritually grounded approach to intervention and healing. In this regard, the feminist theory provides a promising framework for addressing emotional abuse. Ministers' wives from AIC Makueni County agreed to share their experiences regarding emotional abuse.

Oduyoye emphasizes that naming the abuse is the first step towards healing. It's important to recognize that the experience of abuse is not just personal misfortune, but a systemic issue that needs to be addressed (Oduyoye, 1995:34). Additionally, Oduyoye (1995:45) states that "the stories we tell about ourselves shape our realities and must be critically examined for their implications on our lives". Once the abuse is acknowledged, the individual proceeds to comprehend and dissect the nature of the abuse and its consequences for their life.

This is self-expression and validates the emergence of a transformed self (Ali,2007:4). Emotional abuse can be challenging to recognize because it often does not leave physical scars, and abusers can manipulate victims into believing the abuse isn't real. The process of identifying the abuse involves becoming aware of patterns of manipulation, control, or emotional harm in the relationship. By breaking the silence and denial that often surround emotional abuse, and aligning with feminist theory's focus on giving voice to marginalized individuals, survivors can reclaim their experiences and bring them into the open where they can be addressed. The purpose of this phase is to help ministers' wives transition from feeling confused, blaming themselves, and downplaying the abuse to recognising and labelling it as emotional abuse.

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This is followed by seeking validation through therapy, support groups, or trusted individuals, which helps the victim understand that their experiences are both valid and indeed abusive. Secondly, African feminist theory aims to challenge prevailing understandings of religious texts and cultural practices that could reinforce the subjugation of women. Oduyoye proposes a critical reevaluation of established gender norms, arguing that they frequently condone abusive behaviour. Therefore, there is a need to analyze our cultural narratives and develop new ones that empower women instead of holding them as slaves (Oduyoye, 1995: 72).

In the context of ministers' spouses, this entails fostering an environment conducive to questioning and reinterpreting theological doctrines that are employed to rationalize or diminish abusive conduct. Additionally, encountering abuse may prompt a reassessment of one's self-beliefs and self-perception, culminating in the assimilation of self-expression and an examination of the underlying patterns, triggers, and emotional dynamics at play. The imperative is to critically engage with our cultural practices and religious teachings to unearth the origins of oppression and progress toward liberation (Oduyoye, 2001:15). The primary objective is to attain a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of emotional abuse, its manifestations, and its profound impact on an individual's life. This knowledge enables the victim to disrupt the cycle.

Within the context of ministers' wives, this necessitates training religious leaders to identify signs of abuse and furnishing survivors with the resources to discern abusive patterns within their relationships"

Thirdly, the challenging phase in addressing emotional abuse is crucial for creating meaningful change. This phase involves confronting and dismantling the societal norms and power structures that perpetuate emotional abuse, emphasizing the need for both individual and collective action. Oduyoye (1995) asserts that the church must transform into a space where women can freely

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express their experiences and confront systems of oppression constituting a fundamental component of collective healing and empowerment**.** This is supported by Mombo's work where she emphasizes the significance of women in opposing repressive structures in religious settings and calls women to reclaim their voices in theological discussions to ensure that their experiences are recognized and valued"(2008:34). African feminist theologians have consistently advocated for a paradigm shift in theological discourse to address systemic oppression and abuse.

Hinga (2005:112) posits a transformative theological framework that integrates women's perspectives, asserting that "A theology rooted in justice must challenge the patriarchal structures that allow emotional abuse to flourish". This stance underscores the imperative for theological constructs to actively confront and dismantle oppressive systems. The marginalization of ministers' wives' voices in theological discourse overlooks a crucial perspective that can profoundly impact our understanding of ministry and community. This is fully supported by Phiri (2005:74) and Hinga (2003) who advocate for a transformative approach that actively incorporates women's viewpoints in theological discussions, arguing that the exclusion of these voices results in an incomplete theology.

By intentionally seeking and valuing the participation of women, including ministers' wives, in shaping faith communities, we can develop a more comprehensive and nuanced theological framework. This inclusive approach not only acknowledges the unique experiences and insights of women in ministry but also enriches our collective understanding of faith, service, and community building, ultimately leading to a more holistic and representative theology. Within this context, the potential contributions of ministers' wives in addressing emotional abuse emerge as a critical, yet often overlooked, element of theological praxis. Oduyoye (2001) elucidates this

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potential, noting that "Ministers' wives have a unique position; they can be agents of transformation within their communities". This observation highlights the strategic role that women in clerical partnerships can play in effecting change. Oduyoye (1986) posits a fundamental principle for community development, asserting that the cultivation of a healthy communal environment necessitates the rejection of both domineering and submissive paradigms in favour of fostering relationships predicated on "mutual respect and responsibility". The integration of these perspectives into mainstream theological discourse not only enriches the field but also provides a more comprehensive framework for addressing issues of emotional abuse within religious contexts hence emotional recovery and transformation both on an individual and systemic level takes place.

This stage involves creating new theological frameworks that encourage positive, fair relationships and confront abusive power dynamics. It consists of adopting pastoral care practices that help survivors and ensure abusers are held responsible for their actions. In the context of ministers' wives, the Africa Inland Church of Makueni County Kenya is therefore called to transform, prioritizing respect, equality, and safety within her cultures. This may require reinterpreting scriptures to emphasize mutual care, and respect, and establishing support systems that empower vulnerable individuals to set boundaries and seek help. Transformation is a continual process that demands ongoing dedication and commitment from personal perspectives and religious communities to effect lasting change.

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4.8 CONCLUSION

The research delved into the intricate nature of emotional abuse, investigating its primary determinants, diverse manifestations, effects on overall well-being, and theological strategies for addressing it. The results unveiled a convoluted interaction of factors that perpetuate emotionally

abusive relationships. Together, these findings depict emotional abuse as a multifaceted, multidimensional problem deeply entrenched in individual, social, religious and cultural environments. The complex interplay of predictors, forms of abuse, and their impacts presents unique challenges in each case. However, the study also uncovers potential pathways for intervention and healing, particularly through the integration of psychological understanding with sensitive theological approaches.

This study concludes that emotional abuse has significantly impacted the lives of ministers' wives in AIC Makueni County, Kenya, affecting their psychological, social, and spiritual well-being. This necessitates a comprehensive, theological approach to address the unique challenges posed by the intersection of religious authority, gender dynamics, and societal expectations within the context of clergy marriages. This study concludes that emotional abuse is a serious sin that contradicts core Christian values. It violates human dignity, misuses power and distorts God's design for relationships. Such abuse creates divisions and obstructs the message of salvation in Christ.

From a confessional viewpoint, emotional abuse is doctrinally unacceptable. Perpetrators must embrace a theology of the cross that emphasizes liberation, repentance, and transformation, acknowledging the sinful nature of their actions and how they hinder others from experiencing God's love and grace. This journey ultimately leads to the freedom and wholeness that Christ extends to all.

This research highlights the necessity of a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to addressing emotional abuse. The study addresses the persistent and complex issue of emotional abuse,

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offering valuable insights that can significantly enhance our approaches to supporting victims and nurturing healthier relationships within religious contexts.

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CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to identify the key predictors of emotional abuse among ministers' wives in the Africa Inland Church, Makueni County. This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations based on the responses gathered through the in-depth interviews and narratives.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study investigating emotional abuse among married ministers in the Africa Inland Church in Makueni County, Kenya, yielded several significant findings. Emotional abuse within clergy marriages often manifests through the misuse of spiritual authority, misinterpretation of biblical texts, and financial dependence. These issues are frequently exacerbated by silence, societal expectations, and the pressure to uphold a perfect public image.

Ministers' wives commonly endure various forms of emotional abuse, including coercive control, isolation, spiritual abuse, gaslighting, public humiliation, criticism, neglect, and intimidation. The consequences of this abuse are profound and multifaceted, impacting the psychological, social, physical, and spiritual well-being of these women. It also greatly affects their family relationships and ministerial effectiveness, with potential ramifications for future generations.

The impact of this abuse is profound and multifaceted, affecting the psychological, social, physical, and spiritual well-being of these women. It also significantly impacts their familial

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relationships and ministerial effectiveness, with potential consequences extending to future generations.

To cope, ministers' wives adopt a range of strategies, including spiritual practices, participation in support groups, maintaining their faith, seeking personal independence, and pursuing individual interests. However, these coping mechanisms often offer only temporary relief and fail to address the underlying issues.

The study further highlighted the considerable pressure these women face to preserve their marriages at all costs, deeply rooted in religious teachings and social norms. This dynamic makes it incredibly challenging for them to contemplate leaving, even in cases of abuse. These findings illuminate the complex interplay between cultural norms, religious beliefs, and individual well-being in the context of emotional abuse within clergy families, contributing to the ongoing cycle of emotional abuse in such marriages.

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5.2 Conclusion

This dissertation has discussed five chapters, in chapter one, the study background was laid, paying attention to emotional abuse from global to local levels, the statement of the problem. This chapter also discusses the research objectives and questions required to solve the problem, justification, scope and limitations were all covered in here.

Chapter Two reviewed literature relevant to the study which includes books, articles, and journals that were evaluated based on the study's objectives, the field research was conducted to

get insightful information from the first-hand experiences of ministers' wives in line with Emotional abuse.

Chapter three comprises the methodology of the research. Makueni County served as the study's location, and a qualitative method of research was employed. Ministers' wives were chosen as respondents using the purposive sampling technique, with in-depth interviews carried out using a guided questionnaire.

Chapter Four dealt with Data Presentation and Analysis. The researchers employed thematic data analysis to examine the information gathered from participants and the results were presented and interpreted per the objectives of the study. Chapter five discusses the summary of the findings guided by the four objectives of the study. Conclusions, recommendations for further studies and finally suggestions for further research.

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5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 To Academic Institutions and Scholars

1. Academic institutions should prioritize transformative theological training for ministerial formation to equip clergy to recognize and mitigate emotional abuse within family and religious contexts.

5.3.2 To Pastoral Leaders

1. Church leaders should declare emotional abuse as sinful (a confessional issue) declaring it doctrinally unacceptable, enforcing stringent anti-abuse policies, and instituting regular marital enrichment programs for clergy couples.

5.3.3 To Ministers' Wives

1. Ministers' wives should engage with licensed therapists or counsellors who have expertise in both emotional abuse and religious contexts, potentially opting for faith-based counselling if it aligns with their beliefs while ensuring the chosen counsellor is properly trained in abuse dynamics.
2. Ministers' wives should also embrace financial independence by pursuing personal income sources for empowerment and security thus reducing financial dependence and increasing their sense of autonomy.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies and Research

1. Further studies demand a comprehensive investigation incorporating the perspectives and experiences of both spouses to gain a more holistic understanding of emotional abuse.
2. Longitudinal research is necessary to investigate the comprehensive impact of emotional abuse on the overall well-being of ministers' spouses, to inform more effective theological intervention strategies.

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Appendix1: Approval Letter

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/234/2024 **Date: 19th August 2024**

TO: Josphine Kanyiva
St. Paul's University

Dear Josephine,

==========

REF: Predictors of Emotional Abuse among Married Ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County Kenya

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 243, for the period between 20th August 2024 – 20th August 2025 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect

the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.

viii. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) ***https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke*** **and also obtain other clearances needed.**

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee



Appendix 2: Recommendation Letter

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

22nd August, 2024

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR JOSPHINE KANYIVA MOSES – MTHLMR180223 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Master in Theology (MTH) Program at St. Paul's University.

The second year consists of a major research work leading to a Thesis. The student's selected topic is:

"Predictors of emotional abuse among married ministers in Africa Inland Church, Makueni County, Kenya."

Kindly grant this student the required permit.

Yours Faithfully,

DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY 22 AUG 2024 P.O. BOX 00217 TEL 0202505/2020510 LIMURU

Dr. John Muhoho
Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies

Appendix 3: Nacosti Permit



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **702624**

Date of Issue: **12/September/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Josephine Kanyiva Moses of St. Paul`s University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Makueni on the topic: Predictors of Emotional Abuse among Ministers wives in Africa Inland Church,Makueni County Kenya for the period ending : 12/September/2025.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/39781**

702624

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions

St. Paul's University Repository

Appendix 4: Informed Consent

Predictors of Emotional Abuse among Married Ministers in the Africa Inland Church, Makueni Kenya

By: Josephine Kanyiva Moses **Institution: St. Paul's University, Limuru**

You are invited to take part in a study to discover predictors of emotional abuse among minister's Wives in the Africa Inland Church. This study seeks to understand better the factors that may contribute to emotional abuse in this specific situation. While there may be no immediate benefits for you, your participation will help us better understand the difficulties that ministers' wives encounter, which may shape future support and intervention initiatives. Your identity will remain confidential. All personal information will be coded and securely kept. No personally identifying information will be released in any publications or presentations based on this research. All the interviews will be audio recorded. To protect participants from potential harm related to audio-recorded materials, all interviews will be securely stored on an encrypted, password-protected device accessible only to the primary researcher. Within two weeks, recordings will be transcribed with all identifying information replaced by pseudonyms or codes. Original recordings will then be permanently deleted. Transcripts will be stored separately from any identifying documents. Only de-identified quotes may be used in publications or presentations. Participants have the right to review their transcripts and request modifications. If a participant withdraws from the study, all their data will be immediately deleted. The researcher is bound by confidentiality and will not share raw data or identifying information with any third parties, including church leadership. Participating in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

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Consent

I have read and understood the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Appendix 5; Guided Questionnaire

Questions on factors that drive Emotional Abuse

a) What is emotional abuse according to you?

b) Can you describe the communication and decision-making process in your marriage?

c) How would you characterize the emotional atmosphere in your relationship?

d) What role do you play in making important decisions in your marriage and household?

e) How do cultural norms or traditions influence your marital relationship?

f) In what ways do religious teachings shape your understanding of marriage roles?

g) How does your community typically view and address marital conflict?

h) How do you balance your personal life with your public role as a minister's wife?

i) What challenges, if any, do you face in maintaining this balance?

Questions on forms of Emotional Abuse among ministers' wives'

a) What challenges have you encountered in your marital communication?

b) How are disagreements typically handled in your marriage?

c) Can you describe how decisions about personal interests and activities are made in your relationship?

d) How would you describe your level of independence within your marriage and role as a minister's wife?

e) What has been your experience with financial management in your marriage?

f) How would you describe your social connections and support networks?

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Questions on the influence of emotional abuse among ministers' wives.

a) How have your experiences within your marriage affected your self-perception and emotional state?

b) In what ways, if any, has your marital relationship impacted your physical health or daily habits?

c) How does your role as a minister's wife interact with your personal spiritual journey?

d) What expectations do you feel are placed on you by your church community regarding your marriage?

e) How do you balance self-care with your responsibilities as a spouse and minister's wife?

a) Questions on strategies for Addressing Emotional Abuse among ministers' wives.

a) When facing marital challenges, who do you turn to for support?

b) What strategies have you found helpful in maintaining your self-esteem and confidence?

c) How do you approach setting and maintaining personal boundaries?

d) What are your thoughts on seeking professional help for marital or personal issues?

e) What coping mechanisms do you use when dealing with emotional stress?

f) Have you ever found online resources or support groups helpful in dealing with challenging relationships? Why or why not?

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Appendix 6; Interview Schedule

The researcher will carry out all the interviews in this study face to face to allow for better judgment as it will be possible to observe nonverbal body language.

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Appendix 7; Project Timeline

Period		SEP 2022-DEC 2023	JAN-24	FEB-24	MAR-24	APR-24	MAY-24	JUNE-24	JULY-24	AUG-24	SEP-24
Activity	Study Period										
	Concept note submission										
	Proposal development/Submission										
	First defence										
	Ethical review submissions										
	Data Collection/Data Analysis										
	Final report										

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	compilation										
	Final defense										
	Revision & Editing										
	Binding/Final dissertation										

Period in Months

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Appendix 8; Project Budget

I budgeted 74,800/= broken down for three days, for data collection assistants and respondents as follows.

1. **Meals.**

BREAKFAST		LUNCH	SUPPER
Day 1	500x4=2000	700x4=2800	1000x4=4000
Day 2	500x4=2000	700x4=2800	1000x4=4000
Day 3	500x4=2000	700x4=2800	1000x4=4000
6000		**8400**	**12000**

Total=26,400

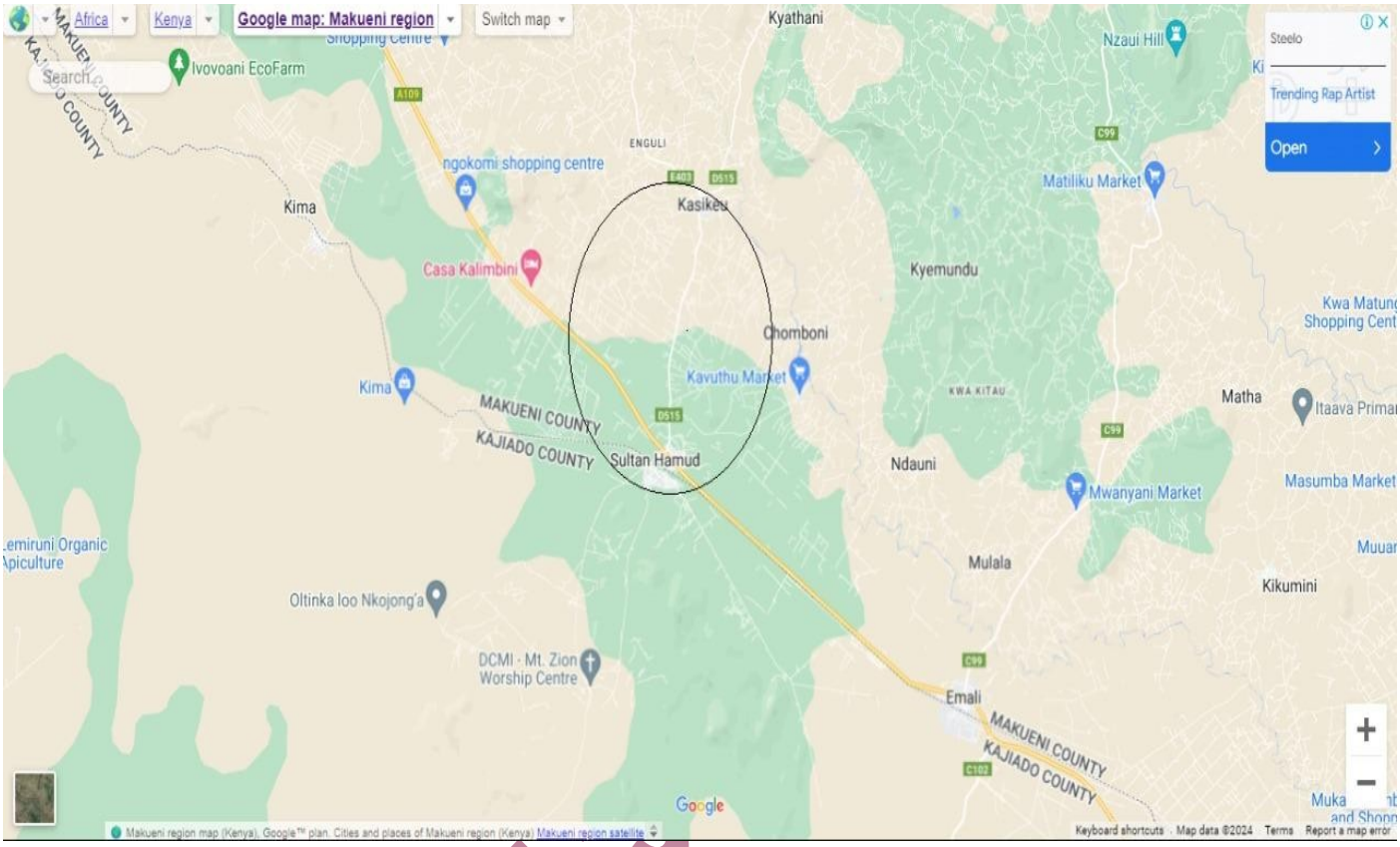
2. Respondents' Lunch 10x1000=10,000
3. Audio Recorder Gadgets 4x2800=8400
5. Transport 4x 1500=6000
6. Accommodation. 4x2000x3=24000

Kshs: 48,400

Total's Kshs: 74,800

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Appendix 9: Map of Makueni County



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