

**COHABITATION AMONG THE CATHOLIC YOUTHS IN NYANDO
DEANERY, KISUMU DIOCESE, KISUMU COUNTY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.**

JUNE, 2018

DECLARATION

“This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.”

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study has been a long and taxing journey and I feel indebted to those who participated in their own ways to make it a success.

I thank the Almighty God for his special grace, strength, favor and protection over the entire research period. If not for him, I would not have made it this far.

My sincere appreciation also goes to my supervisors Dr. Humphrey Waweru and Dr. Francis Mwaniki for their scholarly insights, guidance, patience and close supervision throughout my research. Their doors were always open whenever I ran into trouble or had a question. I am indebted to them for their very valuable comments on this thesis.

I must also express my very profound gratitude to my parents for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

Finally, I am grateful to all my friends, postgraduate colleagues and relatives who came to my assistance and did what they could in their various capacities. To all I say, God bless you.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Marriage:** An institution where a man and woman are united in a lasting bond as husband and wife either through customary, civil or Church wedding.
- Cohabitation:** A state of a man and woman living together as husband and wife without being married legally.
- Sacrament:** A religious ceremony or act of the Christian Church that is regarded as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual divine grace.
- Chastity:** The virtue that moderates sexual pleasure according to the principles of faith and right reason.
- Youth:** Young people between the ages of 18 and 35 years (Kenyan constitution)
- Church:** Capital 'C' to refer to the Catholic Church while small 'c' to refer to the universal Church.
- Pre-marital counseling:** A type of therapy offered by the church to those preparing for marriage to ensure a pure, strong and healthy relationship.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CA	Catholic Action
CC	Catholic Catechism
CCC	Catholic Church Compendium
CRE	Christian Religious Education
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FLEP	Family Life Education Program
KCS	Kenya Catholic Secretariat
PPI	Programs of Pastoral Instruction
YCS	Young Christian Students
Gen	Genesis
Cor	Corinthians
Eph	Ephesians
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

ABSTRACT

Cohabitation is a common practice in many parts of the world including America, Europe and Africa. Cohabitation violates the teaching of the Catholic Church on the sacrament of marriage. In spite of the efforts by the Catholic Church to instill chastity, many youths in the Catholic Church do not go through church marriage, instead they choose to cohabit. The main objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of cohabitation among the Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery; Kisumu Diocese, Kenya. Other objectives of the study were to evaluate the Catholic Church teachings on chastity, and to identify the factors leading to cohabitation among the Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. The conceptual framework of this study was derived from Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The target population was 2022 which comprised of 2000 youths and 22 church leaders. The sample population consisted of 210 participants who were sampled through the simple random sampling technique from five parishes in Nyando deanery. The survey design with the use of questionnaires was adopted to gather information from the respondents. Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were also used. The quantitative data was analyzed by the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) using frequencies, percentages, means and Chi-Square test of significance. The study found that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament and that there is a relationship between church teachings on chastity and cohabitation ($\chi^2 = 4.973$; $p = 0.018$). The study also found that significant numbers of the youth were cohabiting which depicts the high prevalence of cohabiting practices among the youth. Some of the reasons for cohabitation include influence from the family background, peers and education level. On economic situation of the youth in the Church and cohabitation, the study concludes that being employed or being unemployed had an influence on cohabitation. The study recommends that the Catholic Church should strengthen its structures on premarital counseling to the youth so that they can embrace church marriage. Future studies should be done on socio-demographic factors influencing cohabitation among the Catholic youths. Other studies can also be done on the attitude and perception of youths on cohabitation.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter entails the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research premises, justification and significance of the study and scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Cohabitation is widely practiced by many people today. To many, it is easier to enter into cohabitation than a marital relationship because formal ceremonies and social recognition are not required for individuals opting to cohabit. Therefore, many people opt for cohabitation although the practice is associated with various effects such as unplanned pregnancies and spread of HIV and AIDS. Additionally, cohabitation is an immoral act since it undermines the sanctity of the marriage institution. Anderson (2003); states that cohabitation is changing the cultural landscape of the society. The proportion of first marriages preceded by cohabitation has increased ten-fold in the last few decades. The increasing number of cohabiting couples therefore sends a mixed message to the young people. On one hand, they hear parents and pastors proclaim the value of marriage, but on the other hand, they see a culture condoning cohabitation.

The Roman Catholic Church has strict views on the subject of cohabitation and considers premarital sex a sin. A priest may refuse to serve communion to a couple who lived together before marriage. Some Protestants are more lenient as they do not specifically prohibit cohabitation, but they do view it as a sin and will often put pressure on a couple to make the commitment of marriage. Judaism also disapproves of cohabitation (Landis; 2017).

Popenoe and Dafoe (1999:55) found that cohabiting appears to be so counterproductive to long-lasting marriage that unmarried couples should avoid living together, especially if it involves children. They argue that living together is “a fragile family form” that poses increased risk to women and children. Anderson (2003) also points out that cohabiting couples are less happy and score lower on well-being indices, including sexual satisfaction. In addition, cohabiting couples are often poorer than married couples. Anderson (2003) further observes that people who live together in uncommitted relationships may be unwilling to work out problems and since there is no long-term commitment, often it is easy to leave the current living arrangement and seek less fractious relationships with a new partner.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, cohabitation can be harmful to marriage as well as to the couples and their children. One study based on the National Survey of Families and Households found that marriages which had prior cohabiters were

46% more likely to divorce than marriages of non-cohabiters. The authors concluded from this study and from a review of previous studies that the risk of marital disruption following cohabitation “is beginning to take on the status of an empirical generalization as more and more couples favour it” (DeMaris and Rao, 1992:54).

Marriage in the Western world used to follow a clearly defined normative sequence: a couple fell in love, married and had children. Today, partners cohabit before marriage (they marry after a period of cohabitation) or instead of marrying, they have children in cohabiting relationships. Since the 1970s, many countries, particularly those in North America and Europe, have experienced rapid growth in their cohabitation rates. Cohabitation was obscure and even taboo throughout the 19th century and until the 1970s. Non-marital unions have become common because the meaning of the family has been altered by the evolving social trends that have progressively matured since the late 1940s. As post war trends illustrate, marriage is no longer the sanctified, permanent institution it once was. The proliferation of divorce, remarriage, step families and single parenthood has transformed the institution of the family. With these structural changes, attitudes toward non marital unions have become increasingly permissive (Jrank, 2013:2-7).

Evidence of declines in the significance of marriage has inspired many in the marriage movement to view culture change as fundamental to the success of efforts to re-institutionalize marriage. The vast majority of people continue to see marriage as important, but the standards against which they are assessing the case for marriage appear to have changed. Whereas marriage was once regarded as an inevitable and central aspect of life, now alternatives such as single parenting, cohabitation and divorce have become acceptable (Manning & Smock; 1995).

In Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, cases of people living in marriage relationships had fallen to its lowest level for fifty years in 1993 and one in five unmarried men and women were cohabiting. It has been revealed that the stigma attached to cohabiting people today is far less than it was two, three or four decades ago. As a result, many couples find no problem in living together as some regard their relationships as trial marriages (Hatari, 2009).

Cohabitation is seen as an alternative to marriage. For instance, over half of all first marriages in the USA are preceded by cohabitation. Cohabitation is now so common that it qualifies as a conspicuous feature of American mate-selection customs. It is hardly a rare occurrence. Bumpass and Sweet (1991:53) using a large National sample showed that by age 30, almost 44% of the United States population had cohabited. People under twenty-five years of age in the United States now account for 33% of unmarried households. This probably reflects the

later age of marriage and more acceptances by society of cohabitation by young and never married people (Seltzer, 2004:66). The majority of college students seem to be favorably disposed toward cohabitation.

Cohabitation is illegal in twelve USA states but the law is difficult to uphold and is rarely acted upon. The reasons for having the law in place may not be obvious to everyone but with 62% of couples cohabiting before marriage and half of these unions ending in separation within ten years, the law may not be such a bad idea (JRank, 2013:9). Despite spreading widely, cohabitation lacks a clearly defined and commonly understood position in the U.S family system (Manning & Smock, 1995:67-69). Cohabitation can be a stage in the marriage process for some couples, a temporary alternative to marriage, or an alternative to being single for others (Smock, 2000:26). JRank (2013:2-9) further states that during the last ten years, Ireland has seen a 300% rise in the number of cohabiting couples. 58,000 couples in 1996 were recorded as cohabiting in Ireland and that rose to 228,000 in 2006. Macklin (1988) found that about four out of five college students would cohabit if the opportunity arose.

Cohabitation, as a lifestyle, is on the rise considering the significant growth in cohabitation rates in the last few decades. In 1960 and 1970, about a half million were living together. But by 1980 that number was 1.5 million. By 1990 the number was nearly three million. And by 2000 the number was almost five million

(Jackson, 1983:39). Researchers estimate that today as many as 50% of Americans cohabit at one time or another prior to marriage (Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin, 1991:53).

However, America appears to be changing its attitude toward cohabitation with 60% of Americans who believe that the best way to establish a successful marriage is to cohabit prior to marriage (Barna, 1993). Another survey found that two thirds (66%) of high school senior boys agreed or mostly agreed with the statement “it is usually a good idea for a couple to live together before getting married in order to find out whether they really get along” (Bachman, Johnston and O’Malley, 2001).

According to Champlin (2001), the Church and the clergy had been silent on cohabitation until the 1980s. Specifically, Champlin (2001) says that most priests tended to say little about this situation to an unmarried couple living together, but now seeking to marry in the Church. The presented argument of the church in America was that the cohabiting members were trying to correct their situation and be reconciled with God, so the clergy will gently and kindly help them along that path. However, from 1980 going forward, the clergy, especially priests came out to condemn cohabitation within the church. Priests took the forefront seat with Father Thomas Kramer of Bismarck, North Dakota, confronting the issue through a letter to engaged couples citing negative effects of cohabitation and urging married couples to either separate or formalize their unions (Champlin, 2001). These views

were supported by clergy across the USA with other dioceses developing documents and regulations on cohabitation.

The practice of cohabitation is not only evident in Western countries but also in Africa. In African tradition, cohabitation was unheard of and was seen as a social vice that was totally unacceptable and intolerable. Culturally, an African girl or woman was supposed to get married while still a virgin and there were people within the community responsible for verification. For instance, among the Bakiga of Northern Rwanda and southern Uganda, a girl who was caught having sex before marriage was taken to an island on Lake Bunyonyi and left to die. (Hatari, 2009) Today, many partners intending to get married are increasingly living together and society seems to have accepted it.

However, statistics reveal that the rate of cohabitation in Africa is a bit lower than the rate in Western countries. For instance, due to many South Africans' conservative background, the acceptance of cohabitation as a lifestyle occurred gradually. However, the practice has increased at a rate of 100% per year since the 1980s (Louw, 1998:578). The increase in the rate of cohabitation can also be seen in other African countries including Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania, among others. In spite of the teachings against cohabitation by Christian churches, cohabitation is on the increase in African countries due to secularization, modernity and economic factors.

Mwaba and Naidoo (2005:33) noted that, amongst others, premarital sex amongst South African university students is on the increase. The growing numbers of those who cohabit and engage in premarital sex are made manifest in the area of high rate premarital pregnancy and the spread of the Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic amongst the youth in greater proportions.

Cohabitation and premarital sex as a lifestyle are on the rise throughout the world and Kenya is no exception. They are fast becoming a kind of a norm amongst students and the working youth, who not only choose to share their lodgings, but also their blankets (Dolbik-Vorobei 2005; cf. Murray-Swant 2005). These growing trends are also creeping into the Church and it has become a subject of concern for two reasons. First, marriage as an institution, as traditionally and biblically understood, is under enormous strain because of the growing trends of cohabitation and premarital sex amongst both Christian and non-Christian youth. Secondly, the teaching of the Church about premarital abstinence as a norm amongst Christian youth is also under severe attack. This has prompted various responses from the global Church regarding the manner in which these trends should be dealt with. Whilst the Church of England accepts cohabitation as a step towards marriage (Thatcher 1999:105), other Church traditions differ profoundly from this view.

Customary law in Kenya assumes that consent to all future sexual activity is given at the time of marriage (Amnesty International, 2002). In spite of this traditional view, cohabitation unions have been on the increase in Kenya. This may be due to reconfiguration of the family units as a result of increased urbanization and increased isolation of young people from their family networks. These unions have become common as the meaning of family continues to increasingly transform in the wake of fast changing societal values. The proliferation of divorce, re-marriage, step families and single parenthood has liberalized the idea of family from the way it was traditionally understood. With these structural changes, attitudes toward non marital unions have become increasingly permissive in the country (Karani, 2015).

Cohabitation, itself sometimes indistinguishable from formal marriage, (Cohan and Kleinbaum, 2002:64), is regarded as a step in the marital process and has recently been recognized by the Kenyan courts as being marriage, albeit without a ceremony. The Kenyan courts have traditionally sought reliance on the English common law principle of presumption of marriage as a vehicle through which cohabitation unions may be legitimized as amounting to a marriage (Karani, 2015). This law, however, leaves out the view of the church which condemns cohabitation as sinful.

According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KNBS, 2015), individuals termed "currently married" include both those who are currently in a

formalized marital union and those living together in an informal union. Three percent of women are currently living with a man and 1% of men are currently living with a woman. This shows that there are cohabitation relationships in Kenya. Specifically, those who reported their marital status as living with partner in non-formal arrangements were mainly youths with 9.7% aged between 20-24 years, 8.8% aged between 25-29 years and 8.7% aged between 30-34 years for both male and females. Young adults may have many reasons for choosing to cohabit. Cohabitation appears to be an additional step in the formation of the marriage bond (Cargan, 1991). Many people have embraced Christianity with the Catholic Church having an estimated population of 7.5 million. An increasing number of young Catholic adherents in Kenya are postponing marriage and opting to live together without formalizing their union (Hennon et al, 2008:230).

Today, cohabitation is on the rise in Kenya among the youth who consider it a prelude to marriage (Fraga, 2014). The Church going youths are no exception as they consider cohabitation a way of understanding each other before marriage (Richardson, 1991). Moreover, economic conditions and changing lifestyle have contributed to increasing cohabitation arrangements. However, cohabitation is considered as one of the causes and determinants of premarital pregnancies and the spread of STIs among the youth.

The practice of cohabitation is evident in many parts of Kenya, including Kisumu County. According to Brett (2006), cohabitation in Kisumu can be traced from

earlier times as stated in the 1920 Annual Report from Kisumu when the District Commissioner wrote that, “under this head may be noted the signs of a prevalence of immorality, including ‘illicit cohabitation with young girls.’” This practice has become rampant in various parts of Kisumu county particularly Nyando district. Since the Catholic Church is well established in Nyando sub-County; this practice of cohabitation among the youth is unexpected due to the teachings by the church on the sanctity of marriage. The Catholic Church teaches that as a sacrament of the church, holy matrimony consecrates human love, sexuality and procreation to a higher purpose. It unites the couple to God and makes them a sign of His covenant with His people (CCC, 1613).

According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2010) census report, the youth form 35% of the population with Catholic adherents being 33%. This is a significant population that provides a good platform for understanding the causes and prevalence of cohabitation. Further, Kisumu County has the second highest prevalence of HIV and AIDS in Kenya (National Aids Control Council, 2015). With Nyando Deanery being part of Kisumu County, it is necessary to investigate cohabitation in the area as it is one of the determinants of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Nyando Deanery falls within the sugar belt region noted to have the highest population in Kisumu County and with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The family structures in Nyando Deanery are affected by high levels of poverty, unstable families and high number of informal marriages (KDHS, 2012). Nyando

Deanery has the highest number of registered youths in the Catholic Church compared to Siaya and Homabay Deanery in the Archdiocese of Kisumu (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2010). In previous studies, there has been little attention on the reasons why youths in Kenya cohabit and this study focuses on these reasons, specifically, in Nyando Deanery; Kisumu Diocese.

The rapid increase in cohabitation continues to occur without adequate scholarly attention to the sources of influence that support such growing levels. This study therefore explores the prevalence of cohabitation among the Catholic youths and factors that lead to the practice of cohabitation in Nyando Deanery in order to provide empirical evidence of the prevalence and factors leading to the prevalence so as to provide recommendation for mitigation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since the universal church has the responsibility to impart morals in her members, the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery teaches the youths that sexuality is a gift from God that has to be enjoyed only in the context of marriage. This education is disseminated through programmes such as matching would be couples with sponsor couples who guide them. They also get educated by attending marriage preparation classes. The Church therefore expects the youths to refrain from sex before marriage thus upholding the virtue of chastity. In spite of these teachings, many Catholic youths still practice cohabitation with only a handful marrying

through church wedding as taught by the church. To this end, the youth in the Catholic Church still bear a reflection of national trends. They still cohabit although it is contrary to the moral law as taught by the Church (CCC: 2390).

In spite of teachings of the church against cohabitation and its negative effects on cohabiters, a significant number of youths practice it. However, there is little documented information on the prevalence of cohabitation among the Catholic youth and especially in Nyando Deanery. This study therefore seeks to fill the gap by investigating the prevalence and practice of cohabitation among the Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following research objectives guided this study:

1. To establish the prevalence of cohabitation among youths in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery.
2. To evaluate the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage as a sacrament in Nyando Deanery.
3. To identify the socio-economic factors leading to cohabitation among the youths in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. What is the prevalence of cohabitation among the Catholic youths?
2. What is the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage?
3. What are the socio-economic factors contributing to cohabitation among the youth in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery?

1.5 Research Premises

1. There is no relationship between the Catholic teaching on chastity and cohabitation.
2. There is no relationship between family background and cohabitation.
3. There is no relationship between the social-economic situation and cohabitation.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

This study sought to highlight the prevalence and practice of cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. The findings of this study may help the Catholic Church in restricting its premarital counseling and sex education to the youth so as to meet the changing societal needs. The results of the study may also be useful to parents, counselors, family therapists, and other religious leaders for pre-marital counseling. Non-Governmental Organizations and other bodies that

deal with young adults' development may use the information for young adult counseling in seminars and workshops.

From the background analysis, most of the literature focused on marriage in the Catholic Church and not cohabitation among youths in Nyando Deanery. The lack of proper recommendation on the subject of youth cohabitation in the church despite church teachings against the practice necessitates a relook into the church programmes as well as the prevalence of cohabitation among the church going youths; hence the need for the present study. The study findings could also provide useful information and add value to the existing knowledge on cohabitation among the youths in Kenya and specifically those in the Catholic Church. The findings may also act as a spring board for future researchers willing to research more on this topic but from a different perspective.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study was carried out in the Catholic Church since it has an elaborate structure and teaching on chastity and marriage in its catechism. Participants of the study were youths between the age of 18-35, who are still going through the teachings on marriage by attending the designed classes or those who were paired with sponsor couples, those who are validly married through the church and those who have violated the teachings and have ended up in cohabitation. People below and above the age bracket were not included in the study. Many areas were relevant for this

study but the research was carried out in Nyando Deanery specifically in five parishes; Ahero, Katito, Nyabondo, Muhoroni and Awasi because there is a high number of youths in these parishes (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2010). Easy availability of the participants helped in giving first-hand information required in the research.

The study was confined to five Catholic parishes in Nyando Deanery and the results can only be generalized to other parishes with a lot of caution. During the study, various challenges were encountered. On one hand, some of the church leaders were not willing to participate in the interviews. They claimed they were not authorized to speak on behalf of the church. Some of the cohabiting youths were also reluctant to participate in the FGDs since they were not ready to disclose their reasons for cohabiting. Some felt embarrassed to open up on their private information. However, upon being assured that confidentiality would be maintained, they agreed to participate in the study. The researcher promised to withhold their names during the reporting of information.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

In this section, relevant literature on the prevalence of cohabitation among the youth in the Catholic Church, Catholic Church teaching on cohabitation, and the economic and social factors for cohabitation was reviewed. Among the factors reviewed are; economic constraints due to unemployment, family background, moral decay, peer influence and desire to test the relationship. Review of literature was important because it created a platform on which this research is based.

2.1 Review of related literature

2.1.1 The prevalence of cohabitation among the Catholic youths

Cohabitation is derived from the Latin word, '*cohabitare*', meaning to live together. Cohabitation is used to mean a man and woman who, though not husband and wife, live together as husband and wife. Louis Roussel offers a useful typology based on the reason given for cohabitation: 'idealist cohabitation', where the couple look on marriage as something banal; anti-conformist cohabitation, where they live in a sort of trial marriage, committed cohabitation where the couple anticipates by several months a marriage for which they are already engaged (Lawler, 1966:166).

Prior to 1564, when the papal Bull (*Benedictus Deus*), issued by Pope Benedict XII in 1336; prescribing compliance with the decisions of the council of Trent became Catholic law; Catholics needed no wedding ceremony to be married. Presently, marriage in the Catholic Church requires the spouses to mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of matrimony by expressing their consent before the church. The priest, who presides over this sacrament, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant, (CCC, 1623).

In spite of the teaching about the sacrament of marriage, marriage in the Catholic Church is struggling against a more insidious attack that threatens its continued existence from within: cohabitation. Cohabitation shares many of the trappings of marriage: chores, bills, sex and even children. The similarities have enticed many prospective brides and grooms to try cohabitation first. Due to the prevalence and tacit acceptance of cohabitation today, many people who enter in to it do not have malicious intent; some do not even suspect that it is wrong (Bonagura; 2009).

According to Fine et al., (2013:42), the rise in non-marital cohabitation in the USA has been one of the most significant trends of recent decades. The proportion cohabiting before age 25 grew from 8 to 33 percent between the 1940-44 and 1960-64 birth cohorts. By 1990-94, 54 percent of all first unions were informal unions,

and 52 percent of all marriages involved cohabiting partners (Bumpass and Lu, 2000:54).

In Sweden, Trost (1978) researched attitudes toward and occurrence of cohabitation without marriage. The study collected interview data from a representative sample of 842 Swedes of age 18 - 70. The results suggested that the Swedes believe that there is a higher commitment and a higher responsibility among those having been married for a long time than among those having been married for a short time. They also show an opinion of a higher degree of commitment and responsibility among those having been married for 5 yrs than among those having been living together out of wedlock for 5 yrs. These data and others point toward the existence of a renewed or perhaps a new courtship and marriage pattern. The study by Trost (1978) focused on attitudes towards cohabitation before marriage in the age group of 18-70. However, it did not focus on Christian youths and did not collect quantitative data. The present study used descriptive and qualitative data from the Catholic youths to find out the determinants of cohabitation as well as its prevalence to be able to fill the gap.

On a similar note, Rayburn (2007) examined the possible relationship between premarital sexual behaviors and the state of the marriage as reported by women in Louisiana State. Participants were recruited from local Southern Baptist churches and were sent an anonymous mail-out questionnaire; 36 women returned

questionnaires that were usable for analyses. Bivariate correlations for the variables that were considered demonstrated that the number of premarital sexual intercourse partners for the participant and her husband were strongly and negatively correlated to marital satisfaction, marital stability, low divorce thoughts, and feelings about the marriage.

An analysis of variance showed that the women who experienced premarital sex (intercourse or oral sex) with at least one non committed partner had lower marital satisfaction than the women who did not experience premarital sex with a non committed partner. Rayburn (2007) did not investigate cohabitation among Catholic youths but the state of marriage based on pre-marriage sex in the Baptist Church. Moreover, the study by Rayburn (2007) used only questionnaires to collect data. The present study focused on cohabitation and collected both qualitative and quantitative data from the clergy and youths respectively.

Mashau (2011) explored the rising trends of cohabitation and premarital sex amongst Christian and non-Christian youth in South Africa while acknowledging that it was becoming more socially acceptable. The study sought to determine the prevalence of cohabitation and provided proposals on what could be done to stop it. The study hoped to minimize premarital pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. This study was qualitative in nature interviewing stakeholders as respondents (Mashau, 2011). Although the study was conducted with Catholic

youths in mind, it did not gather quantitative data from the youths to be able to establish the extent of cohabitation among the youths. The present study sought to fill the knowledge gap by adopting survey design through qualitative and quantitative analysis of data gathered using interviews and questionnaires respectively.

Mashau (2011); states that in South Africa, it is generally believed that there is an increasing trend towards cohabitation, although there is little concrete demographic evidence to confirm this. Cohabitation and premarital sex are common amongst tertiary and working youth. Mwaba and Naidoo (2005:651) shared the same sentiment when they also noted, amongst others, that premarital sex amongst South African university students is on the increase. The growing numbers of those who cohabit and engage in premarital sex are made manifest in the area of high rate premarital pregnancy and the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic amongst the youth in greater proportions. Parents and churches are often called to deal with these cases.

Similarly, Adeoye, Ola & Aliu (2012) conducted a study to examine the prevalence of premarital sexual activities among the youth in a selected private University in Nigeria. A sample of 300 students comprising 176 males and 124 females were

randomly selected to participate in the study. The mean age and standard deviation was 21.7 ± 6.3 years. The ex-post-facto research design was employed. A 35 item; youth premarital sexual activities questionnaire (YPSA) developed by the researchers was used to generate data for the study. Data was analyzed with the use of Independent t-test and Multiple Regression and Analysis of Variance. The results indicated that there is a significant difference between the sex, age and family background and premarital sexual activities. The study concluded that gender and family background play a vital role in engagement of premarital sexual activities by young people.

The study by Adeoye, Ola & Aliu (2012) focused on university students as youths while considering premarital sex as a vice. However, the study did not investigate cohabitation among Catholic Christian youths moreover it only collected quantitative data and thus did not incorporate views of key informants on the subject making the findings inadequate.

Few people make a deliberate decision to begin cohabitation. Instead, it seems to happen gradually, often without clear communication between partners about the meaning of the transition (Manning & Smock, 2005:67). The courtship process now includes cohabitation as the modal pathway to marriage, a process that often begins with dating, transitions in to cohabitation and culminates with marriage (Bumpass et al., 2000:54).

It is believed that between 50 to 70% of couples today are cohabiting before marriage. Catholics reflect national trends in spite of the church's consistent teaching that cohabitation and pre-mature sexual relations are a grave sin and contrary to the moral law (CCC, 2390).

In Kenya, Tumuti, Ileri and Tumuti (2012:31-39) conducted a research on Relationship Guidance Sources, Fears and Reasons for Marriage among Young Urban Christians. The study involved 65 young Christians in Nairobi with an average age of 25.23 (sd.4.38) who completed a self-report questionnaire. Results indicated that the participants relied mainly on friends for relationship guidance. Social emotional benefits, especially companionship, were the major motivation for young people to marry. Infidelity and divorce were the main sources of fear of marriage. Whereas the study by Tumuti *et al.* (2012:1-39) investigated the sources of information on relationship guidance and counseling, the main target was marriage and divorce as opposed to cohabitation. Thus, the study established the prevalence of divorce but not cohabitation among the Christian youths. The current study therefore fills this gap by looking at prevalence of cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery.

Evidence from other countries indicates that there is prevalence of cohabitation. However, to the best of our knowledge, no recent research in Kenya has been done on prevalence of cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando deanery. This

study therefore fills this gap by looking at prevalence of cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery.

2.1.2 The Catholic Church teaching on chastity and the sacrament of marriage

Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas firmly established marriage among the sacraments of the church. They stated that marriage, in so far as it is contracted in faith in Christ, confers grace to do those things which are required in marriage. They say that through the sacrament of marriage, grace is given to the married (Todd et al, 2008:57). The Catholic Church therefore encourages chastity before marriage since the Christian faith teaches that a sexual relationship belongs only in marriage. Sex outside of marriage shows disrespect for the sacrament of marriage, the sacredness of sex, and human dignity.

The catechism of the Catholic Church states that, ‘The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC; 1601).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church further states that those who are engaged to marry are called to live in chastity. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of, mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of

receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expression of affection that belongs to married love (CCC; 2350).

When the Catholic Church teaches that marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament, it implies that the couple's relationship expresses in a unique way the unbreakable bond of love between Christ and his people. Like other sacraments of the church, marriage is a symbol which reveals the Lord Jesus and through which his divine life and love are communicated. In a sacramental marriage, God's love becomes present to the spouses in their total union and also flows through them to their family and community. Their life becomes sacramental to the extent that the couple cooperates with God's action in their life and sees themselves as living in Christ and Christ living and acting in their relationship, attitudes and actions.

Catholic teaching also holds that sacraments bring grace to those who receive them with the proper disposition. In marriage, the grace of this sacrament brings to the spouses the particular help they need to be faithful and to be good parents. It also helps a couple to serve others beyond their immediate family and to show the community that a loving and lasting marriage is both desirable and possible. As Pope Paul VI wrote; "by the sacrament of matrimony, husband and wife are strengthened and consecrated for the faithful accomplishment of their proper duties, for the carrying out of their proper vocation even to perfection, and the Christian witness which is proper to them before the whole world" (*Humanae Vitae*, n. 25).

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is God's plan. Marriage provides intimate companionship for life (Gen. 2:18). It provides a context for the procreation and nurture of children (Eph.6:1-2). Marriage also provides a godly outlet for sexual desire (1 Cor. 7:2). In the New Testament, believers are warned against persistent sin, including sexual sin (1 Cor. 5:1-5). Living together outside marriage not only violates biblical commands but it puts a couple and their future marriage at risk (Anderson; 2003).

In 1968, the bishops of the United States began to consider an approach of systematic provision of sex education in the diocesan school curriculum. This was evidently intended as assistance to the family, not as a usurpation of the family's primary role in instructing their children. In 1978, the American bishops issued a major catechetical document, *Sharing the Light of Faith, National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States*. In this document, the bishops drew attention to the primacy of the parental role in education in human sexuality and to the importance of "the role of self-control, self-discipline, prayer, the reception of the sacraments, and devotion to the Blessed Mother, model of chastity, as elements in developing a Christian approach to sexuality". This document emphasized the role of the Church in helping parents to catechize their own children (Whitehead, 1993).

In the United States, Lanoue (2011) conducted a study titled just sex, whose main consideration was sexual ethics for 21st century Christians. The study addressed non marital sex from a Christian perspective. It questioned the traditional rule of “no sex before marriage” and attempted to define a broader guideline for moral sex that is not dependent on one's marital status. It drew upon five sources for ethical reflection: Scripture, tradition, secular knowledge, experience, and moral discernment. The study found that the inspiration behind many of the commandments limiting sex to marriage is andocentric and patriarchal and thus should no longer be accepted with little reflection (Lanoue, 2011). Whereas the previous study focused on sex before marriage, it did not investigate cohabitation relationships. Moreover, it analyzed the recognized moral guidelines of religion, culture and society without incorporating the views of various persons thus the information cannot be considered as the views of the youths. Consequently, the present study seeks to fill the gap by investigating the determinants of cohabitation especially the Catholic Church teachings on chastity and the sacrament of marriage.

The Catholic Church's traditional teaching about sex education, especially as formulated by popes Pius XI and Pius XII, is that it should not be primarily a matter of giving explicit information at all, but rather it should be a matter of inculcating modesty, purity, chastity and morality. In its pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II states that; especially in

the heart of their own families, young people should be aptly and seasonably instructed about the dignity, duty and expression of married love. Trained thus in the cultivation of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to enter a marriage of their own (Whitehead; 1993).

Manning (2007:33) conducted a study in Britain whose aim was to explore how the church may address cohabitation alongside marriage within its pastoral and liturgical roles and encourage greater stability and faithfulness in all marriage-like relationships. The study found that the church could accomplish this through marriage education, reaching out to couples getting married outside the church. From the researches carried out, two newly emerging lifestyle relationships have been identified that should be of concern to the church.

The first is cohabiting singleness, where the rising age for marriage is encouraging casual and short-term relationships. The second is that of single parent families where one parent, usually the father, is deliberately excluded from the outset (Manning, 2007:33). Although the study by Manning (2007:33) explored ways the Catholic Church could accommodate cohabitation alongside marriage, it did not look at the causes of determination as well as the prevalence. Moreover, the study focused on all cohabitation arrangements and not only youths.

According to Catholic teachings, preparation for marriage begins long before the couple approaches the priest or pastoral minister. In his Apostolic Exhortation on the family; (*Familiaris Consortio*, II 81), Pope John Paul II strongly urges that young people be educated about chastity, fidelity and the meaning of marriage as a sacrament. Religious education, parish based catechetical programs and chastity curricula in elementary schools are all part of this effort (Fall, 1999).

Olorundare (2011) conducted a research on the role of Christian women in curbing moral decadence among the youths in Kaduna State. The study used a 5-section standardized questionnaire to collect quantitative data analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The result revealed that parental negligence, broken relationship between God and man, disobedience to sound Christian teachings on moral issues, joblessness and greed are causes of immorality among the youths in Kaduna State. Second, it revealed that immorality has some negative influence on the lives and development of youths in Kaduna State such as sexually transmitted diseases, lung and brain cancer due to alcoholic drinks and drug abuse. The study also revealed that Christian mothers have great impact on the lives of the youth because; they contribute to the physical, mental, moral and social training of the youths. Whereas Olorundare (2011) focused on moral decadence among the youth, it did not investigate cohabitation as one of such decadence and thus did not look into the impact of church teachings on marriage and sexuality on cohabitation.

In a similar study, Oforchukwu (2010) conducted a research marriage and divorce among Igbo Catholic Christians in Nigeria. The study used in-depth interviews of select group drawn from married couples, divorcees, and children from broken families in order to ascertain the possible causes of marriage and divorce in the Igbo Catholic Christian community. The research revealed that childlessness, adultery, quarrels, and inadequate financial support could disintegrate Christian couples. The work also revealed that there were fewer divorces in earlier societies than in modern society. The study by Oforchukwu (2010) focused on marriage and divorce but did not look into cohabitation. Moreover, it used only qualitative data from across section of the population including married couples, divorcees and children but did not investigate the existing church teachings and programmes and their effect on cohabitation among catholic Christian youths.

High school years can be a prime time for dealing with issues of social relationships, when dating and the desire to date are foremost in the minds of adolescents. During this time, they can be given the spiritual foundation that helps them to make informed, faith-filled and life giving choices throughout their lives. With this foundation, it can be hoped that couples will choose not to cohabit before marriage.

Kangaru (2004) conducted a study titled *Youth, Church and Sexuality in Kenya* whose purpose was to examine what Christian churches are doing to create a conducive environment for young people to discuss sexuality issues openly without fear or guilt. The study used in-depth literature review on various Kenyan newspapers, then focus group discussion where two focus groups were identified. The discussion was recorded and thereafter transcribed and analyzed. The study found that the churches, even in the advent of HIV and AIDS, are not very comfortable in discussing sexuality issues or creating a favourable space for the young adults within the church to explore their sexuality.

Although the study by Kangaru (2004) investigated the role of the church on sexuality among the youth, it did not investigate the aspect of cohabitation. Moreover, information was not based on church teachings but newspapers and media reports. The present study however collects data from the youth in the church as well as church leadership thus describing the church teachings as experienced by the youth to fill in the knowledge gap. This study fills the gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the Catholic Church teaching on chastity in Nyando Deanery as no recent study has been done on this.

2.1.3 Factors contributing to cohabitation among the youth in the Catholic Church.

2.1.3.1 Family background and prevalence of cohabitation

In America, Phillips & Sweeney (2005:67) investigated racial and ethnic differences in risk factors for marital disruption, with a particular emphasis on premarital cohabitation. The study used a sample of 4,547 from the 1995 family and growth survey in America. The study found that the strength of the estimated effects of several risk factors for disruption differ across groups. In particular, premarital cohabitation is positively associated with subsequent marital disruption among non-Hispanic White women but not among non-Hispanic Black or Mexican American women. Phillips & Sweeney (2005:67) did not look into cohabitation among Christian youths. The present study used data collected from the youths on self-reported prevalence to cohabitation as well as socio-cultural factors. Moreover, the present study interviewed priests and catechists on the teachings on marriage as well as youth tendencies to fill knowledge gap.

According to Popenoe (1993:55), families have lost much of their ability to regulate the sexual behaviors of members as witnessed by high rates of premarital and extra marital sex. This partly may explain the rapid rise of cohabitation, as young adults involved in these relationships may be involved in premarital sexual behaviors due to the family's loss of the ability to regulate their sexual behaviors.

Cohabitants express little concern with cohabitation being a moral issue or with the disapproval of parents or friends (Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin, 1991:53).

Kenyan families, like the rest of the world, have undergone a process of change. This can be attributed to factors such as improved communication, transport and access to information and formal education. The freer young adults are from the influence of adult institutions such as parenthood, the more sexually permissive they will be. This may therefore lead them to engage in cohabiting activities. Cohabitants express little concern with cohabitation being a moral issue or with the disapproval of parents (Bumpass, Sweet and Cherlin, 1991:53). The changes in Kenyan families have not only increased contact with ideas and behavioral norms beyond traditional spheres but they have also exposed families to different social circumstances.

Parents' behavior and attitudes about union formation affects cohabitation. Individuals whose mother has divorced and whose mother has liberal attitudes about cohabitation are more likely to enter cohabitation at an earlier stage of life (Thornton, Axinn & Hill, 1992:98). Parental attitudes therefore have a significant influence on adult children's union formation decisions. Manning (2007:33) further states that children raised in two biological parent families are more likely to marry and stay married than children from single mother or divorced families. Adolescents in cohabiting parent families are more likely to cohabit than their

counterparts who never experienced parental cohabitation. Family socioeconomic status affects cohabitation. In reviewing previous studies on cohabitation, Smock (2000:54) found that the cohabiters were slightly more likely to have lower socioeconomic status in terms of educational attainment or income.

Further, Reinhold (2010:47) conducted a study to reassess the link between premarital cohabitation and marital instability. Reinhold (2010:47) estimated proportional hazard models of marital dissolution for first marriages by using pooled data from the 1988, 1995, and 2002 surveys of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). The results suggested that the positive relationship between premarital cohabitation and marital instability had weakened for more recent birth and marriage cohorts and that cohabitation is not selective of individuals with higher risk of marital dissolution and may be a stabilizing factor for higher-order marriages.

The study by Reinhold (2010:47) hypothesized that premarital cohabitation was an explanatory factor of marriage instability but did not look at the reasons for cohabitation especially among the youth. Moreover, the study used quantitative data obtained from national survey but did not include qualitative data. The present study adopted survey design and collecting quantitative data from the youths in the Catholic Church using structured questionnaires. Qualitative data was also used by interviewing the clergy to fill the research gap.

Nduta (2006:15) investigated factors that contribute to the prevalence and practice of cohabitation among Kenyatta University students, Nairobi, Kenya. The study also investigated the attitudes of the youths towards cohabitation. According to the findings of the study, attitudes of the youths towards cohabitation are basically influenced by family based factors. She states that the family is an important unit of interaction in most human societies. It is within this unit that human beings engage in the most intense interactions. However, any universal definition is restricted by the diverse and divergent nature of the institution itself. Families are not static but tend to undergo a process of change.

2.1.3.2 Economic factors for cohabitation

According to Woolley (2016), cohabiting is a far more cost effective alternative to marriage which has had a great significance in the number of couples moving in together. The living cost and rent payment can be split two ways while couples save on phone bills and transport costs to visit each other. Studies have found that blacks place more emphasis than whites on financial prerequisites for marriage (Bumpass & Lu; 2000).

According to Miller & Sassler (2011:60), cohabitants may live together in order to save money, because of the convenience of living with another or a need to find housing. Lower income individuals facing financial uncertainty may delay or avoid marriage, not only because of the difficulty of paying for a wedding but also

because of the fear of financial hardship if a marriage were to end in a divorce. They further found out that most young people decide to go against the teaching of the church about marriage as a sacrament due to dowry demands. Evidence indicates that men with poorer economic prospects and economic instability are more likely to decide to cohabit than marry.

Phiri (2011:92) states that, “With poverty still adversely affecting many African societies, the obligation of bride wealth payment puts on the man and his family an unbearable burden that cannot be settled at once, but in installments. Without that, marriage arrangements cannot commence. In most cases, there is too much demand in dowry payment and a lot of bargaining and some partners, tired of the whole process, decide to elope or start cohabiting as a way of forcing their parents to allow them to get married”.

Hardie & Lucas (2010:72) investigated the economic factors and relationship quality among young couples while comparing cohabitation and marriage. The study estimated regression models predicting respondent reports of conflict and affection in cohabiting and married partner relationships using the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, 1997 (NLSY97, N = 2,841) and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health, N = 1,702). The study found that economic factors are an important predictor of conflict for both married and cohabiting couples. The study by Hardie & Lucas (2010:72) was a longitudinal

study focusing economic factors as determinants of relationship stability. However, the study did not investigate the determinants of cohabitation among the youth. The present study used a cross sectional survey design focusing on the youth to investigate teachings, prevalence and determinants of cohabitation to fill the gap.

Unemployment is a major problem among many youths in Kenya today. Due to unemployment, many youths who are ready to start their families decide to cohabit. They do this due to inadequate funds needed for a church wedding and payment of dowry. The two therefore decide to cohabit in order to pool their resources together and earn a living. They do this since it is believed that the cost of living is less when two people are sharing the bills, (Kansas Bishops, 2014:). The extremely high costs of housing and tight budgets of today's economy are therefore factors that can lead to cohabitation. In previous studies conducted, there has been little attention on how financial factors contribute to cohabitation in Kenya.

In a study conducted by Nduta (2006:46) on the prevalence and practice of cohabitation in Kenyatta University, one hundred and seventy six respondents in their second and fourth years of study were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaires and key informant interviews were used to gather information. The tools used in the analysis included frequencies, percentages, means and Chi-Square test of significance. The significant factors that influenced the students cohabitation behavior included fathers' occupation ($p=0.016$),

mothers' occupation ($p=0.029$), parents' residence ($p=0.000$), parents'/guardians' income ($p=0.000$), peer pressure ($p=0.000$), year of study (0.064) and fathers' level of education (0.074). Majority of the students in the study (77%) had a positive attitude towards peer counseling and religious teaching as deterrent measures of cohabitation.

The previous study by Nduta (2006:46) categorized the youths based on their level of study at the university. However, the study did not consider specifically Christian youths who were the focus of the present study. This study therefore explores how the economy contributes to cohabitation among the Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery in Kisumu.

2.1.3.3 Social factors for cohabitation

Both theoretical and empirical work suggests that social context determines the acceptability of cohabitation and subsequent cohabitation decisions (Manning & Smock, 2009:68)

Due to the low socio-economic structure of their families, the young adults have to pool resources in order to share living expenses and the only way they can do this is by cohabiting (Cohan, 2013:107). This is due to poverty in the family and unemployment of some youths. Also, as the proportion of unmarried partners living

together increases so is the proportion of children who are born to unmarried partners. In turn, children who live with cohabiting parents are more likely to cohabit when they become young adults. Thus, in just a few generations, cohabitation has become integral to contemporary romantic relationships (Cohan, 2013:107). According to Fine (2013:42), mothers whose children have behavioral problems are likely to have greater difficulty than other women in selecting a good marriage partner, so they choose to cohabit. Cohabitation may also be selective of individuals who have weaker parenting skills.

Unlike in Traditional African society where those who engaged in pre-marital sex were heavily punished or mocked (Mokame, 2013), today, the place of the sexual element in married life, and in life in general is greatly distorted. 'Sex appeal' is dragged in to every aspect of life, entertainment, business, and cultural activities (Hofinger, 1962:150). Many young people therefore decide to cohabit due to their desire to satisfy their sexual needs. To the young, a meaningful relationship is a euphemism for sexual intimacy which is nevertheless an honestly held opinion of what an affectionate partnership should permit. To them, this is not necessarily evidence of any decline in self-respect or even in personal moral values.

A higher proportion of cohabiters drift into cohabitation because it is more convenient than protracted courtships. It makes it easier to be with each other sexually than when living separately. Thus, sexual availability motivates many

people to cohabit, (Cohan, 2013:105). The young therefore decide to cohabit for sexual fulfillment (Kay, 1972:20).

Many transformations in family life have occurred as the result of modernization of pre-industrial society. Changing notions of love and growing acceptance of divorce, pre-marital cohabitation, one parent families and poor parenting have caused the weakening of the traditional family institution (Manning & Smock, 2009:68). Manning & Smock (2009:68) further state that; changes in behavior associated with the sexual revolution diminished the connection between sex, marriage and parenthood. This has made marriage less necessary and non-marital child bearing more acceptable and more common.

Researching in Botswana, Mokame (2013) investigated cohabitation as an alternative or a prelude to marriage. The study focused on the role of cohabitation on contemporary Botswana family system using a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis of data from the 2001 Cohabitation Survey and the 1996 Botswana Family Health Survey respectively. The overall results revealed that cohabitation differs from marriage in terms of socio-legal status and the reproductive behaviour of women in cohabiting unions (Mokame, 2013). The study also found that cohabitation in Botswana can be viewed as a temporary phase before marriage. The paper concluded that while the increasing prevalence of

cohabitation does not threaten the institution of marriage in Botswana, it results in delays in timing of marriage.

The previous study by Mokame looked at the influence of cohabitation on family systems but did not investigate the prevalence among Christian youths. Moreover, the previous study used data from two national surveys employing both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The present study acknowledges that cohabitation was more prevalent among the youths despite the catholic youths having access to teaching on marriage. Thus the present study adopted a survey design collecting quantitative data using questionnaires among youths in the Catholic Church while collecting qualitative data from priests.

The intimate relationship choices of young adults today expose a culture that increasingly fails to appreciate moral norms and the inherent value and beauty of marriage. The rapid acceptance of cohabitation and the dissolution of a culture of marriage in the wake of the sexual revolution pose a significant challenge to the Catholic Church in the USA and other countries (Mokame (2013). Moral decay can therefore be seen as a factor contributing to cohabitation in other countries as seen in other studies and this study seeks to find out if it also leads to cohabitation in Nyando deanery.

One reason as to why some youths decide to cohabit is the influence of peer groups. While past research has recognized the importance of peer socialization in forming attitudes about and behaviors toward the opposite sex in adolescence (Mokame, 2013; Nduta, 2006:56), research on the peer influence among young adults is limited. Expected changes in relationships with peers deter men's desire to marry; and among some sub-groups, peer groups may influence decisions regarding relationships (Anderson, 1990).

As a teenager grows older, the reference group of greatest importance switches from parents to peers. Research has shown that young people who are strongly influenced by their parents have relatively conservative sexual standards while those more influenced by peers have more permissive standards. The more one is influenced by peers, and the more permissive those peers are perceived to be, the more permissive are one's own attitudes (Steinmetz et. al., 1990). This is crucial in the determination of permissiveness to cohabitation because, as adolescents grow in to young adulthood, peers become progressively more influential and parents less influential, (Nduta, 2006:56). Young people therefore decide to cohabit to conform to the standards of their peer groups.

A study carried out in South Africa states that young people who become involved in cohabitation and premarital sex do so because of peer influence. They look at

their peers and give in to temptation, because 'everyone does it'. They do it in order to avoid being laughed at and to receive affirmation from their peers. In the end, cohabitation and premarital sex have become kinds of passports to acceptance in a particular age group (Mashau, 2011).

Teachman (2003:65) used nationally representative data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth to estimate the association between intimate premarital relationships (premarital sex and premarital cohabitation) and subsequent marital dissolution. The study found that premarital sex or premarital cohabitation that is limited to a woman's husband is not associated with an elevated risk of marital disruption. However, women who have more than one intimate premarital relationship have an increased risk of marital dissolution. These results suggest that neither premarital sex nor premarital cohabitation by itself indicate either preexisting characteristics or subsequent relationship environments that weaken marriages. Teachman (2003:65) used quantitative data from a national survey but did not consider individual opinions of a specific target population. Moreover, the focus of Teachman (2003:65) on premarital sex determining marriage dissolution but did not investigate the prevalence and determinants of cohabitation. The present study collected qualitative data from priests and catechists of the Catholic Church as well as quantitative data from the catholic youths to examine determinants and prevalence of cohabitation among youths.

A more indirect way through which peers may influence cohabitation is through perceptions of peer experiences in cohabitation. Such perceptions may become ‘vicarious trials’ for dating couples that are considering cohabitation (Nazio & Blossfeld, 2003:19). Nazio and Blossfeld (2003:19) found that young German men and women rely on the experiences of peers more so than they do on their parents’ attitudes and behaviors. To date, little is known about the role of peers in shaping dating couples’ views about cohabitation. The current study explored this issue in Nyando Deanery; Kisumu Diocese.

Another factor contributing to cohabitation is the education level. In the USA, cohabitation is more prevalent among the less educated and its rise in this group has been accompanied by a decline in marriage rates. This is not the case for college educated adults, whose marriage rates have held steady as cohabitation has grown. Comparing partnership status by educational attainment, college educated adults are more likely to be married than their less educated counterparts. People without college degrees are therefore more likely to cohabit (Fry & Cohn, 2010). Bumpass & Lu (2000:54) further state that cohabitation has been consistently more prevalent, and has grown faster, among less well educated persons than among better educated ones.

In a study carried out in the USA, Fein (2003); found out that among women aged 15 to 44 with less than 12 years of school, the proportion ever cohabiting increased from 43% to 59% from the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Among women with four or more years of college, it grew only from 31% to 37%. Unions of less well educated women were somewhat more likely to be intact after five years (55%) than those of better educated women (50%). This implies substantially longer durations of cohabitations among the less educated than the well-educated (Fein et al., 2003). The present study therefore explores the influence of the level of education on the decision to cohabit by the Catholic youths in Nyando because no recent study has been done in this area.

Many young people also cohabit to test the relationship. They believe that by staying together, they may discover whether or not they are compatible. This way, the individuals believe they can avoid the mistake of marrying someone with whom they are fundamentally mismatched. With cohabiting partners, even in the most committed relationships, both the man and the woman know at the back of their minds that if things really become difficult, they can always go their separate ways without the trauma of a legal nightmare, (Kansas Bishops, 2014).

Hatari (2009) further states that proponents of cohabitation stress that it is a trial marriage for people who are nervous of entering in to an unhappy marriage. They argue that living with each other before marriage is necessary to test their

compatibility and commitment to each other. If the trial fails, it is easy to end the relationship without experiencing the trauma of the divorce courts. This argument however forgets to cater for the preservation of African cultural values and the religious essence of a true marriage relationship. The church upholds that involvement in sexual intercourse before marriage is fornication and therefore a sin (Hatari, 2009). Others also cohabit due to fear of commitment. Partners may live together because they fear a permanent commitment. They do this because they want to keep from getting badly hurt. The result of this is reflected in the fact that 40% of couples living together before marriage break up before marriage, (Kansas Bishops, 2014).

Nduta (2006:52) found that parents' residence ($p=0.000$), parents'/guardians' income ($p=0.000$), peer pressure ($p=0.000$), year of study (0.064) and fathers' level of education (0.074) significantly influence the tendency to cohabit among university students. Many studies have been done on reasons for cohabitation but have largely ignored the importance of economic status, family, peers and desire to taste the relationship in the development of views and decisions to cohabit. This study explores whether and how a couple's economic and social context are linked to why they might choose to cohabit despite the church condemning the act as sinful.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is derived from Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory (1925). Bandura's theory posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modeling. People learn through observing others' behavior, attitudes and outcomes of those behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Bandura states that most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action. This theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences.

Bandura believed in 'reciprocal determinism', that is, the world and a person's behavior cause each other, while behaviorism essentially states that one's environment causes one's behavior (Bandura, 1986). Bandura considered personality as an interaction between three components: the environment, behavior, and one's psychological processes. Bandura (1977) states that learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation, social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioral frameworks.

Different external factors such as family, social environment and religion may influence a young adult's decision concerning cohabitation either directly or indirectly. These factors tend to have an effect on what values, attitudes, opinions and expectations a young adult would attach to cohabitation. Some youths cohabit due to the experiences of their parents while others may imitate their peers.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presented in the figure below explains the relations. The conceptual framework in the figure indicates that the social environment, family background and economic factors work in combination to influence an individual's attitude towards cohabitation and subsequently in their decision to cohabit. This study therefore seeks to investigate which of these factors significantly influence the prevalence and practice of cohabitation among Catholic youths. The diagram below clearly illustrates the concept of cohabitation and factors leading to the practice.

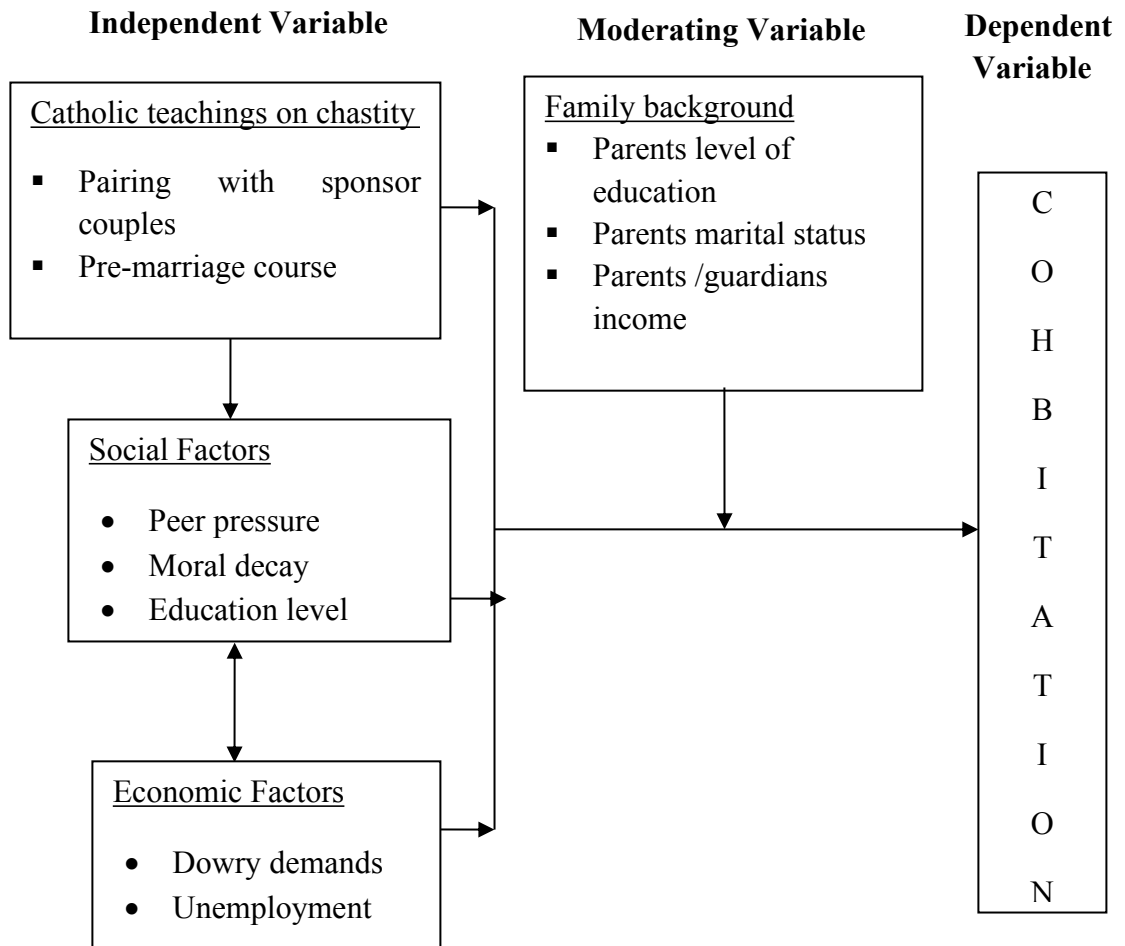


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Modified from Bandura (1925)-Social Learning Theory.

2.4 Conclusion

From the reviewed literature above, it is clear that the Catholic Church teaches against cohabitation. Emphasis is put on marriage as a sacrament and all the youths are expected to uphold the virtue of chastity. Reviewed literature also informed the study that, cohabitation is commonly practiced among many youths in the world including Catholic youths. However, gaps emerged on the prevalence of

cohabitation among catholic youths in Nyando Deanery and the various factors leading to cohabitation among these youths. This study has attempted to fill these gaps since most of the studies focused on the general youths and not the catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. Most studies also relied only on quantitative data and this study employed both quantitative and qualitative data to fill the gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, site of the study, target population, sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection, data processing and analysis, validity, reliability and ethical considerations as used in the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey design with the use of questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:165), survey research seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviour or values." Survey design is convenient in collecting extensive data from a large scale of respondents within a short time. The survey method was applied in this study as it enabled the researcher to study social conditions, relationships, and behavior of people. This method yielded reliable data since there was collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The sample population was also able to represent the views of the wider target population.

3.2 Site of the Study

The researcher carried out this study in Kisumu County, specifically five Catholic parishes in Nyando Deanery, Kisumu Diocese namely; Ahero, Awasi, Muhoroni, Katito and Nyabondo Parishes. Out of the eleven parishes in Nyando deanery, the five were selected through purposive sampling.

These parishes were sampled for the study because each had a minimum population of 100 youths. Research was carried out in this area because of the existing big Catholic population and the various Catholic programs held to enhance morality and teach about the sanctity of the marriage institution. Nyando Deanery covers the greater sugar belt region and falls within the Archdiocese of Kisumu. The Deanery has the highest population compared to other Deaneries in the Archdiocese (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2010). This area was suitable for the study because of the high youth population (35%) out of which (33%) is Catholics (KNBS, 2010). Moreover, cohabitation was found to be high in the region (KDHS, 2012). This area was therefore suitable for carrying out this research due to its easy accessibility to the researcher and the high number of youths who provided adequate information for the study.

3.3 Target Population

A population is the set of all the elements of interest. The study targeted priests, catechists, and youths in the church. Nyando Deanery has eleven parishes with a registered youth population of 2000. Each Parish has a designated parish priest and catechist. The target population was therefore made up of 2000 youths, 11 priests and 11 catechists from the 11 parishes in the deanery. The target population is summarized in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1: *Target population*

Category	Target population
Parishes	11
Priests	11
Catechist	11
Youths	2000
Grand Total	2033

Source: Nyando Deanery Church Records

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

To obtain the parishes within the deanery where the study was conducted, five parishes were selected through purposive sampling based on the number of registered youths. Five of the parishes with at least 100 registered youths were considered for the study. Consequently, 5 priests and 5 catechists were also

selected through purposive sampling from the selected parishes since they had information on the teachings related to marriage and were aware of the uptake of marriage among the parishioners. As for the youths, 10% were sampled from a population of 2000 to take part in the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), when a target population is known then 10 – 30% can be used as an adequate sample to represent the population. Thus, a sample of 200 youths was used in the study.

To obtain the youths participating in the study, stratified sampling technique was used to distribute the 200 youths in the 5 parishes and simple random sampling was used to identify the actual youths participating in the study from the particular parishes. Pieces of papers were labeled with ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ written on them such that whoever picked ‘Yes’ qualified for the study. These participants were expected to provide adequate information relevant to the study in view of the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery, Kisumu Diocese. The sample population is summarized in the table below:

Table 3.2: *Study Sample*

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Priests	11	5	Purposive
Catechists	11	5	Purposive
Youths	2000	200	Stratified/random
Grand Total	2022	210	

Source: Self-generated

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

During the study, both qualitative and quantitative research instruments and procedures were used. They include; questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for key informants who were the cohabiting youths.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to Sommer (1991:129), a questionnaire is a series of written questions on a topic about which the respondent's opinions are sought. The researcher developed a questionnaire for the youths in the church which was administered to all the 200 youths. Within the questionnaires, the youths were asked to specify whether they were married, cohabiting or single, an aspect which was used to categorize the respondents. The questionnaire contained closed items to provide for structured responses and open-ended items for in-depth information in order to make useful recommendations to the study. Open-ended items were used because

they permitted a greater depth of response and gave an insight into the respondents' feelings, backgrounds, hidden motivation and decisions (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). Questionnaires were used in the study because they enabled collection of information from a large number of youths within a short period of time.

3.5.2 Interviews

The interview schedule contained both open-ended and closed-ended items. The open ended questions were used because they are reasonably objective while allowing a more thorough understanding of respondents' opinions and reasons behind them (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1983). The interview schedule was used because it permitted obtaining specific and detailed information and it enabled the researcher to probe so as to get in-depth information (Kinoti, 1998). This was more suitable in getting information from the priests and catechists who are involved in pre-marital education and partner counseling. The interview schedule sought information from the priests and catechists on the forums of educating the youth on marriage and chastity as well as the determinants of cohabitation among the church going youths.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

This is defined as a group of interacting individuals having common interests or characteristics, brought together by a moderator, who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue (Eliot, 2005). In this study, the researcher used FGDs to establish the prevalence and

determinants of Cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. One FGD was organized in each of the parishes for the already identified cohabiting youths who had responded to the questionnaire items. As a rule, the youths who were cohabiting participated as individuals and not necessarily as couples due to the logistic challenge of having cohabiting couples in the same discussion groups. Thus, five Focus Group discussions including 6 members each were organized. The cohabiting youths were organized in FGDs as Key Informants in the study since they were the subject of the study. In this study, the researcher used open ended questions to probe participants in order to get more information.

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

Reliability refers to consistency or stability of the measurement of a variable using a given operational definition; while validity is the degree to which an operational definition measures what it was supposed to measure (Chadwick et al. 1984:47). A pre-test of the data collection instruments was done in Koru Parish which was not selected for the study where 15 youths were administered with questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed and adjustments made which included reframing of questions and addition or deletion of others as deemed appropriate. It also helped in estimating the length of time for the administration of the instrument. It also helped ensure that the items tested what was intended (validity) and they consistently measured the variables in the study (reliability).

3.7 Process of Data Collection

This study employed qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Its main focus is in describing the way respondents define, experience, and constitute their world. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from participants through questionnaires administered to all the 200 youths, interviews from parish priests and catechists and FGDs for identified cohabiting youths while secondary data was collected from the libraries and the Catholic head offices in Nyando Deanery. The questionnaires administered to the selected youths provided quantitative data for the study while the interviews with the priests and catechists as well as the FGDs provided qualitative data.

Before collecting data from the participants, the researcher sought for permission from the priest in charge of the Catholic head parish in Nyando Deanery (Ahero parish) to interview him. With his consent, the date and time was set and the priests and catechists from other selected parishes were contacted regarding the interview. The date and time of the interview was set depending on the availability of the priests and catechists. The interviews were conducted for an average duration of 30 minutes. The researcher asked the questions on the interview schedule and recorded the responses in a note book while noting the date and time. The questionnaires were administered to the consenting participants by the researcher on the appointed dates at the respective churches within the parish. The respondents were given adequate time to respond to the items of the questionnaire.

For the FGDs, the researcher organized cohabiting youths into 5 groups of 6 where one FGD group was organized for each parish. The participants in the FGD groups were informed of their right to participate and withdraw from the study whenever they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, the researcher explained to the FGD participants the purpose of the study and the privacy that would be maintained regarding the use of information. During the FGD sessions, the researcher asked the predefined questions based on which the participants gave their opinion regarding the youth and cohabitation in the church.

3.8 Data processing and analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the study was coded in a standard format and entered into a computer sheet. The structured questions from the questionnaire were coded using figures and labels such as 1 for 'yes', 2 for 'no', 1 = male, 2 = female. As for age of respondents, the age brackets of 18 – 35 years = 1, above 35 = 2 for the church leaders. This was done to allow for the generation of frequencies and percentages to establish the trends and nature of issues under investigation. The significance of the relationship between variables was established by use of chi square test of significance. Contingency coefficient was used to establish the extent of association between the variables. Phi and Cramer's V tests were used. The analysis of quantitative data generated for the study was done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Content analysis was used for qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and FGDs.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Before commencing the research, permission to collect data was sought from the Ministry of Education and Technology and the local administrators of the area. The researcher explained to the participants all what they needed to know about the study and informed consent was sought prior to commencing discussions. Participants were also assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity in relation to the information they provide. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any point of the study. To ensure privacy of participants, they were allowed to use nick names during the discussions and information gathered was only used for the study. Consequently, participants who agreed to participate in the study signed consent forms which have been attached in this document.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS.

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of data on cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery, Kisumu Diocese in Kisumu County. The chapter also outlines views of the youths on cohabitation as well as views of Catholic Church leaders, mainly the priests and catechists. The analysis was guided by the research hypothesis and captured using the research instruments. Data analysis was done using SPSS and employed both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The data is presented using tables of frequencies and percentages.

4.1 Response Return Rate

The study was designed to draw respondents from 5 parishes of the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery. The respondents included youths (married, unmarried and cohabiting), catechists and priests. The study sampled 200 youths of different categories, 5 catechists and 5 priests. Out of the 200 sampled youths, 125 (62.5%) returned duly filled in questionnaires. As for the priests and catechists, the study achieved 100% response return rate since all the priests and catechists were interviewed. The return rate was high because the researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents (200 youths) personally and made follow ups to

ensure the questionnaires were duly filled. As for the interviews, the researcher conducted the interviews with the catechists and the priests. Details of respondents return rate are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: *Response Return Rate*

Category	Sample size	Achieved number of respondents	Response Percentages
Priests	5	5	100
Catechists	5	5	100
Youths:	200	125	62.5%
Total	210	135	64.3%

Source: Field research 2016

4.2 Background and demographic characteristics of the respondents

In order to better analyze the data and answer the objectives, it was necessary to understand the background and demographic characteristics of the respondents. As such, the researcher considered gender of the respondents, academic level and duration as a member of the Catholic Church as some of the important demographic and background characteristics. The analysis is presented in the subsequent section.

4.2.1 Gender of the youths

The gender of the respondents was self-reported as either male or female. This was only done by the youths since all the priests and catechists are male. The findings are tabulated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Gender of the youths

Gender of the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	54	43.2%
Female	71	56.8%
Total	125	100.0%

Source: Field research 2016

The youths who participated in the study were near evenly distributed in terms of gender with the females being the slight majority totaling to 71 (56.8%) compared to 54 (43.2% males. The finding shows that there were slightly more female youths than males in the church.

4.2.2 Academic level

Academic level is one of the characteristics the researcher considered to influence marriage and cohabitation among youth. As such, this was analyzed with reference to the respondents' marital status through cross tabulation. The result is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: *Respondents' academic level with reference to marital status*

Academic Level:	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Primary	1	6.7%	7	25.0%	30	37.1%
Secondary	6	33.3%	18	62.5%	40	50.0%
Bachelors' degree	10	60.0%	3	12.5%	10	12.9%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%

Source: Field Research 2016

The data shows that 9 (60%) of the married youth had a university degree, followed by those with secondary education who were 6 (33.3%). However, as for the cohabiting youths, the majority (18) had secondary education (62.5%) with another 7 (25%) having basic primary education. Generally, the married youths had higher and superior level of education compared to the cohabiting youths. As for the unmarried youths, the majority; 40 (50%) had secondary education, with another 30 (37.1%) having primary education. This finding indicates that the majority of the unmarried youths had primary and secondary education. This means that education is a key determinant on the decision to cohabit. People with low level of education have a high tendency to cohabit.

4.2.3 Years as a Catholic Church member

To be able to understand the extent and influence of the teachings of the Catholic Church on chastity and marriage among the youth, it was necessary to establish the duration they had been members of the church. This would explain whether the youths had been in the church long enough to understand the teachings and live by them. The findings were analyzed to compare, by cross tabulation, the duration as members for the married, cohabiting and unmarried youths. The findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Years as a Catholic Church member

	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 years	0	0.0%	2	8.3%	8	10.0%
5 to 10 years	3	20.0%	11	37.5%	11	14.3%
10 to 30 years	9	53.3%	9	33.3%	47	58.6%
More than 30 years	5	26.7%	6	20.8%	14	17.1%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%

Source: Field research 2016

The data in Table 4.4 reveals that majority of the married youths had been members of the Catholic Church for at least 10 years (80.0%). Specifically, 9 (53.3%) of the married youths had been members of the church for between 10 and 30 years while 5 (26.7%) had been members for more than 30 years. As for the cohabiting youths, 11 (37.5%) had been members of the church for only between 5 and 10 years. Cumulatively, 22 (79.1%) of the cohabiting youths had been members of the Catholic Church for less than 30 years.

4.3 Prevalence of Cohabitation among Youths in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery

The first objective of the current study was to establish the prevalence of cohabitation among youths in the Catholic Church. The prevalence was found from the respondents (youths) as they were requested to indicate their marital status.

Table 4.5: Prevalence of Cohabitation among Youths in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery

	Marital Status	Freq.	Percentages
Youths:	Married	17	13.6
	Cohabiting	28	22.4
	Unmarried	80	64.0
	Total	125	100

The study found that out of the 125 youth that participated in the study, majority of the respondents at 80 (64.0%) were unmarried. However, significant numbers of the youth 28 (22.4%) were cohabiting. Only 17 (13.6%) were married legally under Catholic teachings. The significant number of the cohabiting youth depicts the high prevalence of cohabiting practices among the youth. These findings echo the views of Bumpass and Lu (2000) that by 1990-94, 54% of all first unions were informal unions, and 52% of all marriages involved cohabiting partners.

Qualitative data from the interviews with the priests and catechists also established that the incidences of cohabitation are increasing among the youths in our societies on a daily basis. It has become more common and more socially acceptable for couples to live together without being married. One of the priests said;

My experience of working with the youth in church and at tertiary institutions attests to the fact that cohabitation and premarital sex are common amongst tertiary and working youth. The growing numbers of those who cohabit and engage in premarital sex are made manifest in the area of high rate premarital pregnancy and the spread of the Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic amongst the youth in greater proportions [Priest, 3].

These sentiments by the priest show that the rate of cohabitation among the youth is on the rise and it has adverse consequences on the lives of the youth. One of the catechists also had this to say;

The growing trends of cohabitation and premarital sex in our society among the youth are signs that our youth are in a serious crisis and this manifests itself in a number of ways, such as; large number of girls engaging in premarital sex who become pregnant in their teens and the majority of them then become school dropouts. These children are sexually active at an early stage of their lives. Besides, amongst the majority of our youth, sex before marriage has become a norm, because they maintain that it confirms their freedom. They say they are free to do whatever they please with their bodies; after all, who cares? [Catechist, 2]

These views by the priest and catechist confirm that the trend of cohabitation is increasing among the youth and premarital sex is a common characteristic of cohabitation. Mwaba and Naidoo (2005) share the same sentiment when they also noted, amongst others, that premarital sex amongst South African university students is on the increase.

From the discussions in the FGDs, the cohabiting youths who participated in the study concurred that cohabitation was increasingly more prevalent among the youth. The cohabiting youths noted that they had other friends who were equally cohabiting with their partners. This implies that cohabitation has become a common occurrence among the youth. During one of the FGDs one of the youths said that:

Cohabitation is now common among us and there are many of our friends and youths we know cohabitating today with their partners. This is due to numerous social interactions between and among the youths at different levels and in different events. Moreover, peer pressure and the need to identify with others is pushing more youths into cohabitation. [Focus Group Discussion 2]

Views above are supported by Bandura's Theory which ties development of human behavior to a continuous learning process through observing and modeling. Youths therefore cohabit to fit in a group and be like their friends. The tendency to cohabit is formed from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action.

4.4 Catholic Church Teaching on Chastity and Cohabitation among youth

The second study objective was to investigate Catholic teachings on chastity and marriage. There was need to establish whether there was any relationship between the Catholic teaching on chastity and cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. Various parameters of church teaching on chastity were measured using a questionnaire administered to youths who were classified as married, cohabiting and unmarried. The parameters included the teachings, the teaching personnel and locations where teachings take place. The data is presented in the subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Teachings of the Catholic Church on Chastity and Cohabitation

The youth respondents gave their opinion on whether the church offers teaching on chastity, whether they attend such lessons or programs, and whether such teachings are sufficient. The data was cross tabulated against marital status of the respondents and are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: *Teachings of the Catholic Church on Chastity (N=125)*

Statement	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Does the Catholic Church teach about chastity and marriage as a sacrament?	17 100.0%	0 0.0%	25 87.5%	3 12.5%	79 98.6%
Did/do you attend pre-marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage?	11 66.7%	6 33.3%	2 8.3%	26 91.7%	27 34.3%	53 65.7%
Do you think the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage is sufficient?	12 73.3%	5 26.7%	8 29.2%	20 70.8%	61 75.7%	19 24.3%

Source: Field research 2016

From the findings, all the married youths 17 (100%), reported that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament. Similarly, majority of the cohabiting youths 25 (87.5%) and of unmarried youths 79 (98.6%) concurred. This data shows that the youths are aware that the Catholic Church teaches about

chastity and marriage as a sacrament. Thus the decision to cohabit is not based on lack of teaching on chastity and marriage by the church.

However, the number of youths attending pre-marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage was relatively low. Majority of the married youths 11 (66.7%) said that they attended such meetings. As for the unmarried youths, only 27 (34.3%) said they attend such meetings with the number even dismally low among the cohabiting youths as only 2 (8.3%) reported that they attended or attend such meetings. The data shows that despite the church organizing forums for teaching about chastity and marriage, the youths do not attend as expected. This explains why the number of youths cohabiting is increasing. This is consistent with the comments of Whitehead (1996) that if the youth are trained in the cultivation of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to enter a marriage of their own.

The data in Table 4.5 further reveals that the youths generally agree that the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage are sufficient. With reference to this statement, majority of married youths 12(73.3%) said yes with an even higher majority of the unmarried youths 61 (75.7%) also saying yes. However, the cohabiting youths consider the methods not to be sufficient as the majority 20 (70.8%) said no. This high number could be explained by the fact that majority of the cohabiting youths 26 (91.7%) do not

attend such pre-marital meetings, so their answer might just have been guess work. Similarly, Fall (1999) noted that, according to Catholic teachings, preparation for marriage begins long before the couple approaches the priest or pastoral minister.

4.4.2 Forums for teaching about the virtue of chastity and marriage

The research went further to determine whether the youths were aware of places where teachings on chastity or meetings took place. This was with regard to the youths who were influenced by the Catholic Church teachings about chastity and the sacrament of marriage. Thus 125 respondents indicated that the church offers such teachings in various forums. The data was analyzed and presented in terms of frequency and percentages as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: *Forums for teaching about the virtue of chastity and marriage (N = 125)*

Forums for teaching about chastity and marriage	Frequency	%
Seminars	27	25.7%
Workshops	95	90.5%
Retreats	86	81.9%
Conferences	63	60.0%
School	16	15.2%
Home	31	29.5%

Source: Field Research 2016

From the data presented, the respondents indicated that the forums where the church teaches about the virtue of chastity and marriage were in youth workshops as selected by 95 (90.5%) of the respondents, retreats 86 (81.9%) and conferences 63 (60%). However, the least popular forums were schools 16 (15.2%), seminars 27 (25.7%) and homes 31 (29.5%). Since a significant proportion of youths do not attend the workshops, retreats and conferences, this explains why they do not attend forums for teaching on chastity.

4.4.3 Responsibility for teaching of chastity and marriage

The church youth respondents were asked to indicate, who in their opinion, was responsible for teaching them about chastity and marriage. The responses are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: *Responsibility for teaching of chastity and marriage (N= 125)*

Who is responsible for teaching of chastity and marriage	Frequency	%
Priests	47	44.8%
Catechists	78	74.3%
Youth leaders	19	18.1%
Parents	59	56.2%
Teachers	29	27.6%

Source: Field Research 2016

From the data analysed in Table 4.8, it emerged that the youth in the Catholic Church believe that teaching of chastity and marriage is the responsibility of the catechist as noted by 78 (74.3%) of the respondents. Further, 59 (56.2%) of the respondents believe it is the responsibility of their parents while 47 (44.8%) consider it the responsibility of the priest. Youth leaders and teachers standing at 19(18.15%) and 29(27.6% respectively are not considered as key people in the teaching of chastity and marriage.

These responses show that either parents or the church (priests and catechists) were responsible for teachings on marriage and chastity in the youths' view. This is also supported by Whitehead (1993) who emphasizes on parental role in education in human sexuality and to the importance of self-control, self-discipline and chastity. Todd et al; (2008:57) further emphasized the role of the Church in helping parents to catechize their own children.

4.4.4 Responsibility the for decision to cohabit

As for the 28 youths who were cohabiting at the time of the study, the researcher sought to establish who informs the decision to cohabit. The responses are presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9: *Responsibility for decision to cohabit (N = 24)*

Who is responsible for the decision to cohabit	Frequency	Percentage
Church	2	8.3%
Parents	5	16.7%
Self	13	45.8%
Peers	7	25.0%
Media	1	4.2%
Total	28	100.0%

Source: Field research 2016

Majority of the youth believe that cohabiting is a personal decision as 13 (45.8%) of the respondents indicated that the decision is made by them. However, a significant majority 7 (25.0%) consider the decision to be influenced by peers while 5 (16.7%) believe they were influenced by their parents. The church 2 (8.3%) and media 1 (4.2%) play little roles in the decision to cohabit. The responses show that the youth make the decision to cohabit on their own with a significant magnitude of peer influence as well as parental pressure to probably marry and settle.

4.4.5 Relationship between Catholic Church teachings on chastity and cohabitation

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the Catholic Church teaching and cohabitation, chi square test of association was run

between knowledge of teaching and marital status. The data was categorical for both variables with teaching of chastity and marriage having two levels and marital status having three levels: married, cohabiting and unmarried. The chi square table is as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: *Chi-Square Tests for Church teachings on chastity and marital status (N=125)*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.973 ^a	2	.018
Likelihood Ratio	5.477	2	.047
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.875	1	.040
N of Valid Cases	125		

a. 5 cells (2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.60.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

The findings give a $\chi^2 = 4.973$ with $p = 0.018$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage and the tendency to cohabitation. However, from the descriptive statistics in the cross tabulation, we realize specifically that youths who receive church teachings on chastity and marriage are more likely to be married as opposed to those who don't.

The Phi and Cramer's V tests are provided in table 4.11 giving the strength of association

Table 4.11: Symmetric Measures for Catholic Church Teaching and cohabitation

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.316	.018
Cramer's V	.223	.018
N of Valid Cases	125	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016 (N=125)

There is a strong positive association between teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by Phi = 0.316 and Cramer's V = 0.223. This finding is in line with Todd et al. (2008) who asserted that the Catholic Church encourages chastity before marriage since the Christian faith teaches that a sexual relationship belongs only in marriage.

4.5 Socio-Economic Factors Promoting Cohabitation

The study sought to investigate the socio-economic factors leading to cohabitation among the youths in the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery. This was the third objective with the assumption that there is no significant relationship between the social economic environment and cohabitation. Respondents were therefore probed on their family background, social environment and economic factors.

4.5.1 Family background and cohabitation among the youths in the Catholic Church

Based on the third objective, the researcher sought to establish whether there exists a relationship between family background of the youths and cohabitation. To achieve this, the researcher postulated that the guardian of the youth during upbringing as well as family lifestyle, values and cohesiveness were indications of family background influencing cohabitation. Consequently, such parameters were captured in the questionnaire and are analyzed in the sub-subsequent sections.

4.5.1.1 Guardian of the youth during upbringing

The youths participating in the study were asked to indicate the persons under whose care they were brought up. The responses were analyzed and cross tabulated to show frequency of and percentage of respondents based on their marital status. The responses are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Guardian of the youth during upbringing (N=125)

I spent much of my childhood with:	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Freque nc y	Perce nt	Freque nc y	Perce nt	Freque nc y	Perce nt
Both biological parents	12	66.7%	2	8.3%	37	45.7%
Single mother	2	13.3%	9	33.3%	22	27.1%
Single father	1	6.7%	7	25.0%	10	12.9%
Grandparents	2	13.3%	6	20.8%	4	5.7%
One of my siblings	0	0.0%	4	12.5%	7	8.6%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%

Source: Field research 2016

From the analyzed data, majority of married youths 12 (66.7%) were brought up under the care of both biological parents. As for the cohabiting youths, majority were brought up in the care of single parents; 9 (33.3%) in the care of single mothers, and 7 (25%) in the care of single fathers. However, as for the unmarried youths, majority 37 (45.7%) were brought up under the care of both biological parents followed by single mothers 22 (27.1%) and single fathers 10 (12.9%). The data shows a clear difference between the married youths and the cohabiting youths in terms of guardian as majority of the married youths were brought up by both

biological parents while the majority of cohabiting youths were brought up by single parents. These findings are consistent with Manning (2007) who concluded that children raised in two biological parent families are more likely to marry and stay married than children from single mother or divorced families.

4.5.2 Family Lifestyle and Cohesiveness

Family lifestyle and cohesiveness was measured using four items. Responses regarding the four items were analyzed and cross tabulated against the marital status as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: *Family lifestyle and cohesiveness (N=125)*

Statement	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	My parents have undergone separation	1 6.7%	16 93.3%	9 33.3%	19 66.7%	18 22.9%
Our family has regular meetings during important holidays	15 86.7%	2 13.3%	4 12.5%	24 87.5%	35 44.3%	45 55.7%
I stay close to my family relations with regular communication and updates.	11 66.7%	6 33.3%	12 41.7%	16 58.3%	55 68.6%	25 31.4%
Our family teaches and share traditional family values	12 73.3%	5 26.7%	8 29.2%	20 70.8%	61 75.7%	19 24.3%

Source: Field research 2016

From the responses, majority of the married youths said that their parents have not undergone separation 16 (93.3%). However, as for the cohabiting youths, a significant proportion 9 (33.3%) said that their parents have undergone separation. As for the unmarried youths, majority 62 (77.1%) said that their parents have not undergone separation. The findings show those youths from families which have undergone separation, have the tendency to cohabit which could be attributed to previous events in their lives.

On regular meetings as a family, majority of the married youths said yes, their family has regular meetings during important holidays (86.7%) while majority of the cohabiting youths said no (87.5%). There was a close split for unmarried youths regarding respondents who said yes (44.3%) and those who said no (55.7%). This finding shows that having regular family meetings plays a role in marriage and cohabitation. This could involve sharing of information, teaching each other values of family as well as encouraging each other on marriage plans.

As for regular communication and keeping in touch with other family members, majority of the married youths 11 (66.7%) said that they stay close to family relations with regular communication and updates. This view was also shared by the unmarried youths with 55 (68.6%) saying yes. However, as for the cohabiting youths only 12 (41.7%) said yes with the other majority of 16 (58.3%) saying no. Since regular communication with other family members and relatives always

allow the other members to understand the plans and relationships one is keeping, the relatives will provide advice and actively engage in the marriage process. This leads to the youths marrying through the church procedures thus avoiding cohabitation.

On teaching and sharing family values, majority of the married youths 12 (73.3%) and majority of the unmarried youths 61 (75.7%) responded in the affirmative. However, as for the cohabiting youths only 8 (29.2%) agreed that their family teaches and share traditional family values. The data discussed shows that families of the cohabiting youths appear not to be close together and so do not offer adequate teachings on family values.

4.5.3 Relationship between Family Background and Cohabitation among the Youths

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the youth's family background and cohabitation, chi square test of association was run between guardian of the youth under whose care the youth grew up and marital status. The data was categorical for both variables with guardian having five levels and marital status having three levels: married, cohabiting and unmarried. The guardian were coded 1 to 5 where 1 = other sibling, 2 = single father, 3 = single mother, 4 = grandparent(s) and 5 = both biological parents. The chi square table is as shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: *Chi-Square tests for relationship between family background and cohabitation (N=125)*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.481 ^a	8	.021
Likelihood Ratio	15.692	8	.035
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.417	8	.044
N of Valid Cases	125		

a. 10 cells (4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.10.

Source: *Researcher Analysis 2016*

The findings give a $\chi^2 = 16.481$ with $p = 0.021$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between the family background and the tendency to cohabitation. From the descriptive statistics in the cross tabulation, we find that youths who were brought up under the care of single parents have a higher tendency to cohabit compared to those brought up by both biological parents. This was also concluded by Manning (2007). The Phi and Cramer's V tests are provided in Table 4.15 giving the strength of association.

Table 4.15: *Symmetric measures for family background and cohabitation (N=125)*

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.522	.021
Cramer's V	.432	.021
N of Valid Cases	125	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: *Researcher Analysis 2016*

There is a strong positive association between family background and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.522$ and Cramer's $V = 0.432$. On a similar note, Nduta (2006) found that the attitudes of the youths towards cohabitation are basically influenced by family based factors.

4.5.4 Relationship between Social Environment and cohabitation.

In the third study hypothesis, the researcher set out to establish whether there was a relationship between social environment and cohabitation among the youths in the Catholic Church. Five point five item LIKERT scale was developed to measure the social environment of the participating youths. Items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were positively coded such that strongly agree (SA) = 5, agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and strongly disagree (SD) = 1. However, as for the fourth item in the scale, I attend secular parties frequently, was reverse coded such that strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, neutral = 3, disagree = 4 and strongly disagree = 5. The findings were analyzed to show frequency and percentages for each response as well as the item mean. The findings are presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: *Social Environment*

Statements	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean
I have many friends	61	48.8%	20	16.0%	28	22.4%	9	7.2%	7	5.6%	3.95
My friends go to church regularly	13	10.4%	22	17.6%	41	32.8%	31	24.8%	18	14.4%	2.85
I go to church with most of my friends	8	6.4%	28	22.4%	46	36.8%	33	26.4%	10	8.0%	2.93
I attend secular parties frequently	16	12.8%	35	28.0%	32	25.6%	26	20.8%	6	4.8%	2.93
I attend bible study sessions regularly	6	4.8%	19	15.2%	49	39.2%	31	24.8%	20	16.0%	2.68

Source: Field research 2016 (N=125)

The responses show that the youth in the church generally agree that they have many friends (Mean = 3.95). Specifically, majority of the respondents 61 (48.8%) strongly agreed that they have many friends. This was followed by 28 (22.4%) who were neutral and 20 (16%) who agreed. However, on the statement that ‘My friends go to church regularly’, the study found that the respondents were neutral (Mean = 2.85). Based on this majority 41 (32.8%) were neutral followed by 31 (24.8%) who disagreed and 22 (17.6%) who agreed. The analysis indicates that despite the youths having many friends, the number of such friends who go to church is low.

Based on their study on attitude and behaviour of youths, Nazio and Blossfeld (2003); found that young German men and women rely on the experiences of peers more so than they do on their parents' attitudes and behaviors. This may inform the decision to cohabit as was found by the present study.

The study further found that the youth attend secular parties frequently (Mean = 2.93). Specifically, 35 (28%) of the respondents agree while 16 (12.8%) strongly agree. A significant 32 (25.6%) of the respondents were neutral (undecided) regarding this statement. Attending secular parties frequently could influence the decision of the youths towards cohabitation and marriage.

As for the youths attending Bible study, the researcher found that majority do not attend Bible study sessions regularly (Mean = 2.68). Majority of the respondents were neutral 49 (39.2%) regarding the statement that they attend Bible study sessions regularly with 31 (24.8%) disagreeing and 20 (16%) strongly disagreeing. The responses show that the youth have a tendency to attend secular parties but keep away from Bible studies.

4.5.4.1 Qualitative findings from the Interviews

Qualitative data from the interviews organized with the priest and catechists also showed that the environment that the youths were brought up in would also influence their lifestyle including the tendency to cohabit. One of the priests offered that;

The majority of young people who become involved in cohabitation and premarital sex do so because of peer pressure brought by the environment they live in. They look at their peers and give in to temptation, because 'everyone does it'. They do it in order to avoid being laughed at and to receive affirmation from their peers. In the end, cohabitation and premarital sex have become kinds of passports to acceptance in a particular age group, [Priest, 4]

These sentiments also show that the environment that the youth are exposed to influences their decision to cohabit. Another catechist when asked on the contribution of environment on cohabitation, had this to say;

The media focuses more and more upon the sensual. African youth are exposed to sex and related matters through the medium of newspapers, television, pornographic videos, the internet, radio and various magazines. Explicit sex videos and DVDs are the most popular sellers on the market. They also receive mixed messages from the media. In any given week, they are likely to hear contradictory messages such as 'No sex until you're married', 'No sex until you are older', 'No sex unless you're protected' or 'No sex unless you're in love', [Catechist, 2]

Thus, the youths are at crossroads as to which path to follow as one hand, they are told that being older is a factor before, while on the other hand, the only requirement is love. Further, the church advocates for sex in marriage. These three

sets of messages are contradictory and the youths end up picking the easier path of no sex unless you are in love. On a consistent basis, Hatari, (2009) noted that cohabitation is a trial marriage for people who are nervous of entering into an unhappy marriage.

4.5.4.2 Qualitative Findings from Focus Group Discussions

Similarly, in one of the focus group discussions organized with the youth, it was found that social environment indicated by the type of peer group and the media the youth was associating with would influence to a great extent, involvement in cohabitation practice. One of the group members said;

Youth practicing cohabitation would do so if they see their friends also doing the same. Besides, we are exposed to the media so much such that some of its contents which may be explicit influence our mind and way of thinking. To this, we tend to practice what we learn in the media [Focus Group Discussion, 4]

These sentiments were corroborated by another group member during the focus group discussion, who said that;

Cohabitation is socially tolerated in part because it is expected that cohabiting partners will eventually become married. Another reason for prevalence of cohabitation among the youth is that the youth in relationships like spending time together and they may end up cohabiting with the view of having more time with each other. [Focus Group Discussion 5]

It is very clear from the above statements that cohabitation and premarital sex are two trends that are on the rise among the youth and that they are practiced by Christian and non-Christian youth alike. One of the major contributing factors for

this practice was found to be social environment that the youth were living in, especially if the youth were surrounded by the peers that were already practicing cohabitation. Similarly, Nduta, (2006) found that owing to social environmental factors, the more one is influenced by peers, and the more permissive those peers are perceived to be, the more permissive are one's own attitudes. This is crucial in the determination of permissiveness to cohabitation because, as adolescents grow in to young adulthood, peers become progressively more influential and parents less influential.

The cohabiting youths, through the FGDs, also noted that social factors like upbringing of the youth played a greater role on whether they would likely cohabit or not. The youths opined that the environment, including guardian as well friends was a key contributing factor towards cohabitation. During the FGDs one of the cohabiting youths said that:

The reason most of the youths are increasingly involved in cohabitation is due to the level of parenting they received. Some having come from broken families would not wish to experience the challenges of marriage as those of their parents and guardians so they would rather experiment through cohabitation. [Focus Group Discussion 4]

4.5.5 Relationship between social environment and cohabitation among the youths

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the youth's social environment and cohabitation, chi square test of association was run

between scores on the social environment scale and marital status. The scores were summated and recorded into three categorical variables of disagree (5 – 13) = 1, neutral (14 – 18) and agree (19 – 25) = 3. The data was categorical for both variables with three levels each. The chi square table is as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: *Chi-Square Tests for association between social environment and cohabitation (N=125)*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.562 ^a	4	.006
Likelihood Ratio	7.642	4	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.864	4	.023
N of Valid Cases	125		

a. 20 cells (8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.30.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

The findings give a $\chi^2 = 9.562$ with $p = 0.006$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between social environment of the youth and the tendency to cohabitation.

The Phi and Cramer's V tests provided in Table 4.18 give the strength of association.

Table 4.18: Symmetric measures for social environment and cohabitation (N=125)

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.671	.006
Cramer's V	.635	.006
N of Valid Cases	125	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

There is a strong positive association between social environment and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.671$ and Cramer's $V = 0.635$.

4.5.6 Economic situation of the youth in the church and cohabitation

The fourth research hypothesis required the researcher to determine whether there was a significant relationship between economic situation of the youths and cohabitation. Employment status, number of dependants and average monthly income were used as indicators of economic situation. The responses were analyzed by cross tabulation to establish the influence of each of the indicators on the marital status of the respondents. The findings are as presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Economic Situation of the respondents (N = 125)

Employment status:	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Unemployed	2	13.3%	15	54.2%	38	47.1%
Self employed	6	33.3%	8	29.2%	24	30.0%
Employed	9	53.3%	5	16.7%	18	22.9%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%
Dependents	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
More than 2	1	6.7%	5	16.7%	7	8.6%
1-2 dependants	10	60.0%	8	29.2%	15	18.6%
No dependant	6	33.3%	15	54.2%	58	72.9%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%
Monthly income	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Less than KES 10,000	1	5.9%	13	45.8%	30	37.1%
KES 10,000 – 20,000	2	11.8%	9	33.3%	38	47.1%
KES 20,000 – 50,000	10	58.8%	5	16.7%	10	12.9%
Above KES 50,000	4	23.5%	1	4.2%	2	2.9%
Total	17	100%	28	100%	80	100%

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016 (N=125)

From the analysis, majority of the married youths were employed 9 (53.3%) while majority of the cohabiting youths were unemployed 15 (54.2%). As for the unmarried youths, majority 38 (47.1%) were unemployed with another 24 (30.0%) being self-employed. This shows that being employed or being unemployed probably has an influence on cohabitation since majority of the married youths are employed.

As for the number of dependants, majority of the married youths 10 (60%) had between 1 and 2 dependants with only 1 (6.7%) of the married youths having more than 2 dependants. However, the case is different among cohabiting youths as the majority 15 (54.2%) reported having no dependant followed by 8 (29.2%) who reported having between 1 and 2 dependants. The data shows that being married comes with stability and acceptance since the union is recognized and accepted among other family members which allow the married youths to take care of dependants as opposed to cohabitation.

The other indicator of economic situation was the average monthly income. Based on this, the study found that majority of married youths 12 (73.3%) had a monthly income of between KES 20, 000 to KES 50, 000. Compared to cohabiting youths among whom the majorities 13 (45.8%) were earning a monthly income of less than KES 10,000, the married youths were earning more. This data shows a clear influence of income on cohabitation and marriage. These responses are similar to those reported by Mwaba and Naidoo (2005:651) who also found that cohabitation and premarital sex are common amongst tertiary and working youth. Similarly, Smock (2000) found that the cohabiters were slightly more likely to have lower socio-economic status in terms of educational attainment or income.

4.5.6.1 Qualitative findings from Interviews

During the interview with the priests, it was also found that one of the economic reasons for cohabitation among the youth was inability to pay dowry or organize weddings. One of the priests had this to say,

Presently, unemployment is a major problem facing majority of the youth in Kenya. Because of lack of economic engagement, most of them who are ready to start their own families decide to cohabit, with the hope that they will fulfill the obligations for marriage once they are economically stable [Priest, 3].

One of the catechists also echoed these statements of the priest when he said;

Most of the youth cohabit due to inadequate funds needed for a church wedding and payment of dowry. The two therefore decide to cohabit in order to pool their resources together and earn a living. They do this since it is believed that the cost of living is less when two people are sharing the bills [Catechist 1]

From the above statements by the priests and catechists, it can be deduced that socio-economic ability influences the decision of the youth to cohabit. Emmy, (2003) and Kansas Bishops, (2014) also found cohabitation has been consistently more prevalent, and has grown faster, among unemployed persons than among socio-economically stronger youth.

This view was supported by the cohabiting youths in the FGDs as they generally concurred that economic difficulties left them with cohabitation as the only affordable route of family life since the process of formalizing their unions was very expensive. Specifically, one of the youths noted that;

Majority of the youth lack financial stability. However, the process of marrying through the church has economic and monetary demands which we are mostly unable to meet. This is because most of us have the demand to establish ourselves academically while also meeting other financial needs. This has made the concept of church wedding a luxury which most youths cannot afford. [Focus Group Discussion, 1]

4.5.7 Relationship between economic background and cohabitation among the youths

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the youth's economic background and cohabitation, chi square test of association was run between employment status of the youth and marital status. Employment status was measured as categorical variable with unemployed coded as 1, self-employed = 2 and employed = 3. Similarly, marital status was categorically coded into married = 3, cohabiting = 2 and unmarried = 1. The chi square result is as shown in table 4.20.

Table 4.20: *Chi-Square Tests for association between economic background and cohabitation (N=125)*

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.292 ^a	4	.803
Likelihood Ratio	7.366	4	.725
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.864	4	.665
N of Valid Cases	125		

a. 30 cells (12%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.30.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

The findings give a $\chi^2 = 8.292$ with $p = 0.803$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between employment status and the tendency to cohabitation. Similar findings were arrived at by Clarkberg (1999) who concluded that most young people decide to go against the teaching of the church about marriage as a sacrament due to dowry demands.

The Phi and Cramer's V tests provided in Table 4.21 give the strength of association.

Table 4.21: *Symmetric measures for economic background and cohabitation (N=125)*

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.137	.803
	Cramer's V	.201	.803
N of Valid Cases		125	

- a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
- b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

There is a very weak positive association between employment status and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.137$ and Cramer's $V = 0.201$. The findings of Miller & Sassler (2011) also corroborate this as they concluded that lower income individuals facing financial uncertainty may delay or avoid marriage, not only because of the difficulty of paying for a wedding but also because of the fear of financial hardship if a marriage were to end in a divorce.

4.6 Summary

This field research was meant to establish the prevalence of cohabitation among Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery. The significant number of the cohabiting youth depicts the high prevalence of cohabiting practices among the youth in Nyando Deanery. The study revealed that the social environment, family background and economic factors work in combination to influence an individual's attitude towards cohabitation and subsequently in their decision to cohabit.

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings in the following order; objectives, methodology, major findings and conclusions. Recommendations of the study and areas for further research are also presented in this chapter. The purpose of the study was to investigate the prevalence of cohabitation and factors leading to the practice of cohabitation among the Catholic youths in Nyando Deanery.

5.1 Summary of the study findings

In Chapter One of the thesis, the background information to the problem was discussed. Related literature was reviewed in chapter two along aforementioned key objectives. The discussion here below presents a summary of the study findings.

5.1.1 The Prevalence of Cohabitation among Youths in the Catholic Church

In the first study objective, the study sought to assess the prevalence of cohabitation among youths in the Catholic Church. We found that out of the 125 youths that participated in the study, majority of the respondents at 64.0% were unmarried. However, significant numbers of the youth 28 (22.4%) were cohabiting. Only 13.6% were married legally under Christian laws. The significant number of the cohabiting youth depicts the high prevalence of cohabiting practices among the youth.

5.1.2 Teachings of the Catholic Church on Chastity and Cohabitation

Major findings on this objective show that all the married youths (100%) concur that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament. Similarly, majority of the cohabiting youths (87.5%) and the unmarried youths (98.6%) also agreed that the church teaches about chastity. However, the number of youths attending pre-marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage was relatively low. Specifically, majority of the married youths (66.7%) agreed that they attended such meetings. As for the unmarried youths, only 34.3% said they attend such meetings with the number even dismally low among the cohabiting youths as only 8.3% said they attended or attend such meetings. The study also found that the youths generally agree that the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage were sufficient. However, the cohabiting youths consider the methods not to be sufficient as the majority (70.8%) did not agree with the statement. This could be explained by the fact that majority of the cohabiting youths (91.7%) do not attend such pre-marital meetings.

On forums where the church teaches about the virtue of chastity and marriage, the respondents indicated special workshops as the main forum for these teachings. This was pointed out by 90.5% of the respondents, retreats (81.9%) and

conferences (60%). However, the least popular forums were schools (15.2%), seminars (25.7%) and homes (29.5%). Since a significant proportion of youths do not attend the workshops, retreats and conferences, this explains why they do not appreciate church marriage. It also emerged that the youth in the Catholic Church believe that teaching of chastity and marriage is the responsibility of the catechist as noted by 74.3% of the respondents. Further, 56.2% of the respondents believe it is the responsibility of their parents while 44.8% consider it the responsibility of the priest. However, youth leaders (18.1%) and teachers (27.6%) are not considered as key people in the teaching of chastity and marriage.

On persons responsible for the decision to cohabit, majority of the youth believe that cohabiting is a personal decision as 45.8% of the respondents indicated that the decision is made by them. However, a significant majority (25.0%) consider the decision to be influenced by peers while 16.7% believe it is influenced by their parents. The church (8.3%) and media (4.2%) play little roles in the decision to cohabit. The findings show that the youth make the decision to cohabit on their own with significant magnitude of peer influence as well as parental pressure to probably marry and settle. The relationship between Catholic Church teachings on chastity and cohabitation was also shown by chi-square test (χ^2) where the findings gave $\chi^2 = 4.973$ with $p = 0.018$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage and the tendency to cohabitation. There was also a strong positive association between

teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.316$ and Cramer's $V = 0.223$.

5.1.3 Socio-Economic Factors Promoting Cohabitation

Based on the third objective, the researcher sought to establish the socio-economic factors promoting cohabitation among the youth. Major findings reveal that majority of married youths (66.7%) were brought up under the care of both biological parents. As for the cohabiting youths, majority were brought up in the care of single parents: 33.3% in the care of single mothers and 25% in the care of single fathers. However, as for the unmarried youths, majority (45.7%) were brought up under the care of both biological parents followed by single mothers (27.1%) and single fathers (12.9%). On family lifestyle and cohesiveness, majority of the married youths (93.3%) agreed that their parents had not undergone separation/divorce. For the cohabiting youths, a significant proportion (33.3%) said that their parents have undergone separation/divorce. As for the unmarried youths, majority (77.1%) said that their parents have not undergone separation/divorce. The findings show those youths from families which have undergone divorce or separation, have the tendency to cohabit which could be attributed to previous instances of divorce/separation as they fear the recurrence.

On regular meetings as a family, majority of the married youths (86.7%) said yes, their family has regular meetings during important holidays while majority of the cohabiting youths (87.5%) said no. There was a close split for unmarried youths

regarding respondents who said yes (44.3%) and those who said no (55.7%). This finding shows that having regular family meetings plays a role in marriage and cohabitation as family members get to discuss procedures of marriage and contribute in planning and orientation of each other towards marriage thus avoiding cohabitation. As for regular communication and keeping in touch with other family members, majority of the married youths (66.7%) said that they stay close to family relations with regular communication and updates. This view was also shared by the unmarried youths with 68.6% saying yes. However, as for the cohabiting youths only 41.7% responded in the affirmative with the other majority of 58.3% saying no. Family members who communicate regularly with each other are able to keep track of the plans of each other including the youths among them. This way they will be involved in the process of marriage while also offering guidance thus leading to proper church marriage.

On teaching and sharing family values, majority of the married youths (73.3%) and majority of the unmarried youths (75.7%) said yes. On the contrary, only 29.2% of the cohabiting youths agreed that their family teaches and shares traditional family values. The finding shows that families of the cohabiting youths appear not to be close together and so do not offer teachings on family values. The relationship between family background and cohabitation among the youths was also tested by chi-square test (χ^2) where the findings gave $\chi^2 = 16.481$ with $p = 0.021$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between the family background

and the tendency to cohabitation. From the descriptive statistics in the cross tabulation, we find that youths who were brought up under the care of single parents have a greater tendency to cohabit than those brought up by both biological parents. There was a strong positive association between teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.522$ and Cramer's $V = 0.432$.

The findings further show that the youth in the church generally agreed that they had many friends (Mean = 3.95). Specifically, majority of the respondents (48.8%) strongly agreed that they have many friends. This was followed by 22.4% who were neutral and 16% who agreed. However, on the statement that 'My friends go to church regularly', the study found that the respondents were neutral (Mean = 2.85). Based on this majority (32.8%) were neutral followed by 24.8% who disagreed and 17.6% who agreed. The findings indicate that despite the youths having many friends, the number of such friends who go to church is low. The study further found that the youth attend secular parties frequently (Mean = 2.93). Specifically, 28% of the respondents agree while 12.8% strongly agree. A significant 25.6% of the respondents were neutral (undecided) regarding this statement. Attending secular parties frequently could influence the decision of the youths towards cohabitation and marriage as they met with peers who do not understand the values of church marriage thus putting the youths under pressure to get into cohabiting relationships.

As for the youths attending bible study, the researcher found that majority do not attend bible study sessions regularly (Mean = 2.68). Majority of the respondents were neutral (39.2%) regarding the statement that they attend bible study sessions regularly with 24.8% disagreeing and 16% strongly disagreeing. The findings show that the youth have a tendency to attend secular parties but keep away from bible studies. Using the chi-square test (χ^2) to test the relationship between social environment and cohabitation among the youths, the findings gave a $\chi^2 = 9.562$ with $p = 0.006$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between social environment of the youth and the tendency to cohabitation. There was a strong positive association between teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by Phi = 0.671 and Cramer's V = 0.635

On economic situation of the youth in the church and cohabitation, majority of the married youths were employed (53.3%) while majority of the cohabiting youths were unemployed (54.2%). As for the unmarried youths, majority (47.1%) were unemployed with another 30.0% being self-employed. This finding shows that being employed or being unemployed probably has an influence on cohabitation since majority of the married youths are employed. Thus, employment provides economic stability making it easy for the youths to afford bride price, cost of wedding and family expenses. As for the number of dependants, majority of the married youths (60%) had between 1 and 2 dependants with only 6.7% of the

married youths having more than 2 dependants. However, the case is different among cohabiting youths as the majority (54.2%) reported having no dependant followed by 29.2% who reported having between 1 and 2 dependants.

The findings show that being married comes with stability which allows the married youths to take care of dependants as opposed to cohabitation as more married youths had more dependants compared to cohabiting youths. The other indicator of economic situation was the average monthly income. Based on this, the study found that majority of married youths (73.3%) had a monthly income of between KES 20, 000 to KES 50, 000. Compared to cohabiting youths among whom the majority (45.8%) were earning a monthly income of less than KES 10,000, the married youths were earning more. This finding shows a clear influence of income on cohabitation and marriage. Using chi square test of association to show the relationship between economic background and cohabitation among the youths, the result shows that there was a very weak positive association between employment status and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.137$ and Cramer's $V = 0.201$. The findings give a $\chi^2 = 8.292$ with $p = 0.803$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between employment status and the tendency to cohabitation.

5.2 Conclusion

Major conclusions drawn from the findings were that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament. However, the number of youths attending pre-marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage was relatively low especially among the unmarried youths. Most of the youths acknowledge that the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage were sufficient. With regard to the person responsible for the decision to cohabit, the study concludes that cohabiting was a personal decision as shown by most of the youths in the study. Nevertheless, decisions could also be influenced by peers and parents. The relationship between Catholic Church teachings on chastity and cohabitation was also shown by chi-square test (χ^2) where the findings gave $\chi^2 = 4.973$ with $p = 0.018$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage and the tendency to cohabitation. There was also a strong positive association between teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.316$ and Cramer's $V = 0.223$.

The study also concluded that majority of married youths were brought up under the care of both biological parents, while most of the cohabiting youths, were brought up in the care of single parents. On family lifestyle and cohesiveness, the parents of most married youths had not undergone separation. On the contrary, for a significant proportion of the cohabiting youths their parents had undergone

separation. The study therefore concludes that youth from families which have undergone divorce or separation, have the tendency to cohabit which could be attributed to previous events in their lives. It was also concluded that having regular family meetings plays a role in marriage and cohabitation through counseling and sharing to be able to encourage each other to follow the church process in marriage. On teaching and sharing family values, the study concludes that families of the cohabiting youths appeared not to be close together and so do not offer teachings on family values. The relationship between family background and cohabitation among the youths was also tested by chi-square test (χ^2) where the findings gave $\chi^2 = 16.481$ with $p = 0.021$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between the family background and the tendency to cohabit.

Based on the relationship between social environment and cohabitation, the study concludes that youth in the church had many friends and despite the youths having many friends, the number of such friends who go to church was low. Most youth attend secular parties and attending secular parties frequently could influence the decision of the youths towards cohabitation and marriage. The youth also have a tendency to attend secular parties but keep away from bible studies. Using the chi-square test (χ^2) to test the relationship between social environment and cohabitation among the youths, the findings gave a $\chi^2 = 9.562$ with $p = 0.006$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between social environment of the youth and the tendency to cohabitation.

On the economic situation of the youth in the church and cohabitation, the study concludes that being employed or being unemployed probably had an influence on cohabitation since majority of the married youths were employed. The study also found that being married comes with stability which allowed the married youths to take care of dependants as opposed to cohabitation. The other indicator of economic situation was the average monthly income. Using chi square test of association to show the relationship between economic background and cohabitation among the youths, the result shows that there was a very weak positive association between employment status and cohabitation among the youth as shown by Phi = 0.137 and Cramer's V = 0.201. The findings give a $\chi^2 = 8.292$ with $p = 0.803$. This shows that there is statistically significant association between employment status and the tendency to cohabitation.

5.3. Recommendations

This section makes recommendations to be implemented for practice and policy for good academic or learning outcome of the learners. The study recommends that based on the findings, Catholic Church should strengthen its structures on premarital counseling to the youth so that they can embrace church marriage more. Parents should be given adequate training on how to impart teachings on sexual morality and chastity in their children. Parents, counselors, family therapists, and other religious leaders could adopt the findings of this study as a basis for premarital counseling. Non-Governmental Organizations and other bodies that deal

with young adults' development should also use the information for young adult counseling in seminars and workshops.

5.4. Suggestion for further study

This study contributes significantly to the body of literature on factors that lead to the prevalence and practice of cohabitation among the Catholic youths. From the study findings, the researcher suggested that the following areas could be researched;

- Socio-demographic factors influencing cohabitation among the Catholic youths
- Attitude and perception of youths on cohabitation.
- Effect of single parenthood on cohabitation.
- The relationship between separation, divorce and cohabitation.

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APPENDICES**Appendix I: Informed Consent Form**

Researcher Name: Jackline Wamukoya

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights.

The purpose of this activity is to get your opinion for academic research purposes.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time about the study and the methods used. Your suggestions and concerns are important to us. We will use the information from this study to write a report. The report will be a public document.

Your real name will not be used at any point in the written report. Instead, you and any other person and place you name will be given fictitious names that will be used in all verbal and written records and reports.

The questionnaire will be used only for this study and will not be used for any reasons other than to do this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

You have the right to withdraw at any point of the study, for any reason. If you withdraw, information collected from you and records and reports based on information you have provided will not be used.

Do you agree with the terms of this agreement? _____

Your signature _____ Date _____

Appendix II: Interview Schedule for the Church Leaders.

I am Jackline Wamukoya, a Kenyatta university MA student conducting a research on the rise of cohabitation among the youth in the Catholic Church, Nyando deanery despite the teaching on marriage by the church. Kindly answer all the questions to the best of your ability in the blank spaces provided after each question. The information will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Thank you.

Answer all questions by either filling in or ticking in the spaces provided.

Section A: Demographic information

- Age: 18-35 { } Above 35 { }
- Parish.....
- Academic Level: Primary { } Secondary { } University { }
Other.....
- What position do you hold in church? Priest { } Catechist { }

Section B

1. Does the Catholic Church teach about marriage as a sacrament?
2. Who is responsible for teaching the youth about morality and the sanctity of marriage?
3. In which forums are the youths taught about chastity and marriage?
4. Approximately what percentages of the youths attend such programs?
5. How do the youths respond to these teachings?
6. Does the church face any challenges in inculcating these teachings on morality and If yes, which challenges are mostly experienced among the following?

7. Are there any cohabiting youths in your deanery?
8. Why do you think they decide to cohabit instead of going through church marriage?
9. Who do you think is responsible for the rising number of cohabiting youths in your church?
10. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to minimize cases of cohabitation in the church?

Appendix III: Questionnaire for Youths.

Answer all questions by either filling in or ticking in the spaces provided.

Section A: Background and Demographic information

- Gender: Male { } Female { }
- Marital status: Unmarried { } Married { } Cohabiting { }
- Parish.....
- Academic Level
Primary { } Secondary { } Bachelor Degree { } Postgraduate degree { }
- For how many years have you been a Catholic Church member?
Less than 5 years []
5 to 10 years []
20 to 30 years []
More than 30 []

Section B: Catholic teaching on chastity and cohabitation

1. Does the Catholic Church teach about chastity and marriage as a sacrament?
Yes { } No { }
2. In which forums does the church teach about the virtue of chastity and marriage?
Seminars { } Workshops { } Retreats { } Conferences { } School { }
Home { }
3. Who is responsible for disseminating these teachings to the youth?
Priests { } Catechists { } Youth leaders { } Parents { } Teachers { }

4. Did/do you attend pre marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage?

Yes { } No { }

5. Do you think the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage is sufficient?

6. Who do you think is responsible for your decision to cohabit instead of going through church marriage?

Church { } Parents { } Self { } Media { } Peers { }

Section C: Family Background and Cohabitation

1. I spent much of my childhood with

- i. Both biological parents []
- ii. Single mother []
- iii. Single father []
- iv. Grandparents []
- v. One of my siblings []
- vi. None of the above []

2. My parents have undergone separation/divorce

Yes [] No []

3. Our family has regular meetings during important holidays

Yes [] No []

4. I stay close to my family relations with regular communication and updates.

Yes [] No []

5. Our family teaches and share traditional family values

Yes [] No []

Section D: Social Environment and Cohabitation

The following statements refer to your environment in relation to your friends and daily activities. Kindly indicate by ticking appropriate the extent to which you agree with the statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where SA (strongly agree) = 5, A (Agree) = 4, N (Neutral) = 3, D (Disagree) = 2 and SD (strongly disagree) = 1.

	Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I have many friends					
2	My friends go to church regularly					
3	I go to church with most of my friends					
4	I attend secular parties frequently					
5	I attend bible study sessions regularly					

Section E: Economic Situation and Cohabitation

Indicate, using a tick, the situation most applicable to your case

1. Employment status

Unemployed Self-employed Employed

2. Number of dependants

More than 2 Less than 2 None

3. Monthly income

Less than KES 10,000

Between KES 10,000 – 20,000

Between KES 20,000 – 50,000

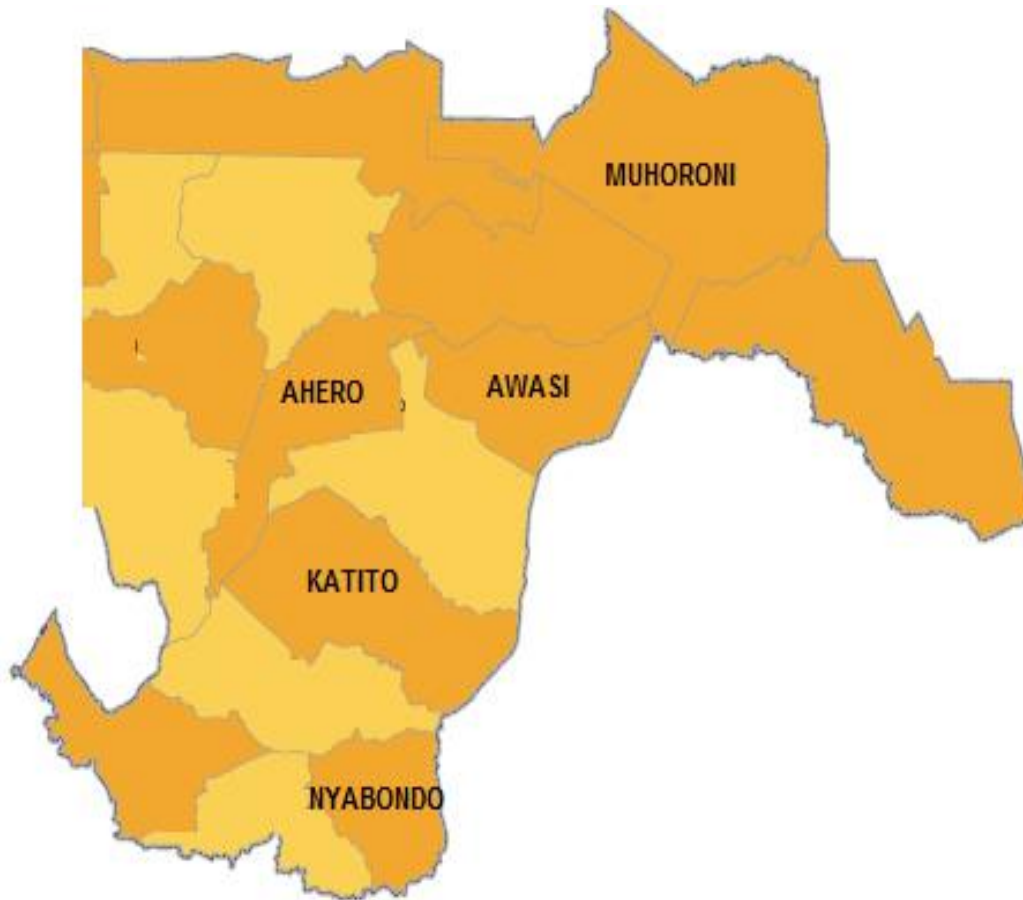
Appendix IV: Focus Group Discussion

1. Does the Catholic Church teach about marriage as a sacrament?
2. Who is responsible for teaching the youth about morality and the sanctity of marriage?
3. In which forums are the youths taught about chastity and marriage?
4. How do the youths respond to these teachings?
5. Does the church face any challenges in inculcating these teachings on morality and If yes, which challenges are mostly experienced?
6. Why do you think the youth decide to cohabit instead of going through church marriage?
7. Who do you think is responsible for the rising number of cohabiting youths?
8. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to minimize cases of among the youth?

Appendix V: Location of Nyando Deanery in Kenya



Appendix VI: Sampled parishes in Nyando Deanery



Appendix VII: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

MISS. JACKLINE WAMUKOYA MUTANYI
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY , 91-40101
AHERO, has been permitted to conduct
research in Kisumu County
on the topic: COHABITATION AMONG
THE CATHOLIC YOUTHS IN NYANDO
DEANERY, KISUMU DIOCESE, KISUMU
COUNTY
for the period ending:
13th February,2018

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/57250/15642
 Date Of Issue : 14th February,2017
 Fee Received :Ksh 1000




[Signature]
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation


Applicant's
 Signature

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEACH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

Serial No.A **12867**

CONDITIONS: see back page