

Original Research Article

Church Doctrines and their Implication to the Stability of Christian Marriage among the SDA Church Members in Keroka Station, Kenya

Osiero Isaiiah Onger^{1*}, Daniel Rotich Kandagor¹, Ojwang Ochieng¹¹School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Kisii University, Kenya P.O Box 408-40200, Kenya

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Abstract: Christian marriage and values are pegged on the radical teaching of Jesus Christ in marriage. His comments on marriage in the New Testament, which are primarily tangential in nature which include pictures, analogies, and fragments, also show this radicalism. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the Church Doctrines and Their Implication to the stability of Christian marriage among the SDA Church members in Keroka Station, Kenya. The study was conducted at Keroka Station of Nyamira West Field of Seventh Day Adventist Church. The target population is 17,997 members of SDA Church in Keroka station. The study employed purposive and random sampling. The sample size was 17 church elders, 364 Senior church members and youths and 4 pastors totaling 385 respondents which was spread out equally in the four Districts. The data collection tools used were questionnaires and interview schedule of group focus. Data was analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 23) to describe the findings of the study. The findings were reported through tables, charts and verbatim. The study found that the SDA church teachings centered on monogamy, faithfulness, mutual respect, forgiveness, and spiritual unity are highly regarded by members of the church. Most respondents agreed that these teachings are biblically grounded and form the foundation for strong Christian marriages. The researcher recommends for future scholars to conduct studies to explore how Christian marriage values are perceived and practiced across different denominations to identify unique or shared challenges and strategies for marriage stability, an investigation on the attitudes and expectations of youth regarding Christian marriage to tailor church teachings to younger generations and examination of the impact of gender expectations within SDA marriage doctrines on marital satisfaction and stability.

Keywords: Christian Marriage, Teachings of the Bible, Church Manual, Sexual Orientation, Family Structure, Parental Separation.

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INTRODUCTION

Christian marriage and values are pegged on the radical teaching of Jesus Christ in marriage. His comments on marriage in the New Testament, which are primarily tangential in nature which include pictures, analogies, and fragments, also show this radicalism. He transformed marriage from the Old Testament “contract,” which continues to be the model (through Roman legislative philosophy) of civil law to something more profound: an entry into a spiritual profundity of communion that truly reflects the Lord’s own salvific love for his church. Naturally, the concept of a contract especially one as significant in society as marriage need

not be incompatible with the concept of spiritual communion.

The Stability of Christian Marriage

Christian marriage is based on the teachings of the Bible, though different churches in Christendom define Christian marriage differently. According to the SDA church, marriage should be between Male and female church members. They are believed to have found the truth of Christ (Alicea Santiago, 2014). Couples bonded by shared spiritual ideals and lifestyles have a higher chance of enduring marriage and have their family life fulfil the divine plan. For these reasons, the Church advises its pastors not to perform marriages between Seventh-day Adventists and members of other religions,

*Corresponding Author: Osiero Isaiiah Onger

School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Kisii University, Kenya P.O Box 408-40200, Kenya

and it highly discourages such marriages (SDA Church Manual, 2022). Accordingly, the charge, vows, and declaration of marriage in a marriage ceremony are only given by an ordained pastor, except in those regions where division executive committees have authorized the performance of the service by a chosen group of licensed or commissioned pastors who have also been ordained as local elders (Reid, 2024). Local legislation may require individuals performing marriage ceremonies to possess a state license or permit. The sermonette, prayer, and blessing may be delivered by an elder, a licensed or commissioned pastor, or an ordained pastor (SDA Church Manual, 2022).

Higher marital quality was positively correlated with better personal well-being both immediately and over time, according to a meta-analysis by Proulx *et al.*, (2007). However, for long-term married people, the relationship became more difficult with time. On the other hand, marital issues are negatively associated with higher levels of mental loneliness, decreased life satisfaction, increased depressive symptoms, and lower self-rated health.

Although there is empirical evidence that marriage stability, marital satisfaction, and personal well-being are positively correlated, the effects can differ depending on the individual, group, and living situation (Proulx *et al.*, 2007). However, there is currently no integrative research that examines the circumstances and mechanisms influencing subjective well-being and marriage satisfaction while accounting for marital stability (for an exception, see Proulx *et al.*, 2007).

Different sexual orientation from the norm has affected negatively the stability of marriage a case study reported by Kerr ST. *et al.*, (1990) on a 28-page questionnaire that examined their experiences as mothers and wives was completed by twenty-one heterosexual women who were or had been married to bisexual or homosexual men and had children by them. Every married woman had the expectation of a monogamous, long-lasting marriage. Prior to marriage, just three were partially aware of their husband's sexual orientation. When they discovered that their spouses had sexual, emotional, or both connection to other men, they all experienced a terrible grieving reaction.

The suffering was aggravated by feeling deceived or stupid for not having guessed the truth. What made it difficult for them to seek support from family and friends was the fear of encountering social disapproval or ostracism. For themselves, their husbands, and their kids, they were terrified. Eleven of the twenty-one women were still married and living with their husbands at the time of the study, but the majority of them were not sure if their marriage would endure. Ten were separated, divorced, or in transition. Merely three of the remaining married spouses were entirely certain that their marriages will remain stable in the future.

We assess whether a kid has remained in the same family structure from birth through all subsequent interviews (up to age five) in order to ascertain family stability. The underlying forces of children's family structures are then captured by defining a set of mutually exclusive binary variables and classifying them as either stable or unstable. A child who has lived in the same family structure since birth is said to be in a stable household. Stable marriage, stable cohabitation, stable single-parenthood, and steady transition from cohabitation with the biological father to marriage with the biological father are among the stable family structure classifications.

The impact of parental separation on children's educational achievement across several cohorts was examined in a 2024 study published in the European Journal of Population (Gonzalez, & Morgan, 2024). According to the results, children of married parents experience worse educational outcomes than children of cohabiting parents, with the negative consequences being particularly noticeable for children of separated parents. This implies that children's progress in school is greatly influenced by family stability.

Research published in 2024 examined how transitions in family structure, such as moving from a two-parent household to a single-parent or stepfamily, impact children's educational achievements (Farkas, & Blossfeld, 2024). The study found that such transitions negatively affect educational outcomes, particularly among children from less-educated families. The presence of a highly educated stepparent, however, can mitigate some of these adverse effects.

A 2024 study utilized biomarkers to assess the stress levels of children experiencing changes in family structure (Bailey, Cooper, Flood, Gouskova, & Mazumder, 2024). The results demonstrated that transitions, such as parental separation or the introduction of a stepparent, are linked to increased stress levels in children, highlighting the psychological impact of family instability.

Children whose parents divorced before the age of five had serious long-term disadvantages, according to a new study conducted by economists from the University of California, Merced, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the University of Maryland (Bernardi, & Boertien, 2024). These included higher chances of teen pregnancy and incarceration, as well as 13% lower wages by the age of 27. According to the study, these results are caused by things like losing one's job, moving to a less affluent area, and having less parental participation.

A 2023 study in the Journal of Marriage and Family explored how family composition affected students' learning growth during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kim, & Guryan, 2023). The research

indicated that children in two-parent households experienced more stable learning environments compared to those in single-parent families, due to shared responsibilities and resources.

The society currently as it is lacks adequate preparation for the young people for a responsible moral adulthood. The irresponsible behaviour in the lives of many people today can be ascribed to the dwindling of moral formation in their individual families. Stresses are therefore made to the organizations in the society entrusted with ethical guidance to immediately respond to the declining level of decency in these areas of concern. Failure to properly read the signs of the times and their sway on families and communities is perhaps what brings about the increase in immorality in the Kenyan youths. It means that whatever the experience in the societies today affects the marriages and marriages affect the society likewise (Kim, & Guryan, 2023).

Jennifer *et al.*, (2012) found that indicators of young people's sleep behavior and quality were correlated with several aspects of stability in the family of origin. Routines and activities in the family's starting point were linked to sleep patterns and quality in terms of molecular family stability. In particular, decreased molecular stability was linked to higher sleep latency (the amount of time it takes to fall asleep), daytime dysfunction, sleeping medicines, and worse subjective sleep quality. Additionally, poorer sleep quality and dysfunction throughout the day were linked to more changes in family life (lower global stability). Examining the bivariate correlations indicates that, of the two aspects of family stability, molecular stability may be more proximally related to young adults' sleep behavior and quality, even though global stability was significantly related to important aspects of sleep, especially the more distant effects of sleep disturbance.

Implications of marriage: God created marriage to be a living drama of the loving relationship between Christ and his bride, the church (again, see Ephesians 5). Therefore, this living out of forgiveness and hope honors marriage. Therefore, those who embody the forgiveness, purity, and joy that God intended marriage to represent are the ones who best uphold this goal.

Marriage exists to magnify the truth and worth and beauty and greatness of God; God does not exist to magnify marriage (Piper 2018). Until this order is vivid and valued until it is seen and savored you will not experience marriage as a revelation of God's glory but as a rival of God's glory.

This study by Riddhi Kelshikar (2022) would raise awareness of the adult perspective on marriage and companionship, which would benefit the entire society, including friends, family, neighbors, and relatives, and everyone would be aware of the thoughts and perspectives of the youth. People frequently refuse to

accept the changes brought about by the new generation and the changing world because they are rooted in traditional beliefs. Nonetheless, this study would actively promote and urge others to respect the opinions and aspirations of the vast majority of young people.

According to Shubhranshu Kumar Upadhyay (2006), education and financial security or readiness are essential for a stable marriage. If the age at marriage is higher than the legal age, there is a significantly higher possibility of getting to know the spouse before marriage. Premarital interactions with spouses were found to be significantly and favorably influenced by improved economic household conditions, mother education, and youth education, particularly for married women. Young people who identify as SC/ST and who practice Christianity are more likely to interact with their spouses prior to marriage. This readiness also points to other elements, such as the mental and physical development of young people who are single.

Given that money is a major source of relationship stress these days, it should come as no surprise that a partner with financial problems can lead to serious tension and even a breakup. According to Hoek, (2025), it usually becomes a problem when couples combine their accounts without discussing it. Budgeting can be difficult for young couples just out of college. Their lifestyles inflate because of new jobs and larger paychecks. Be sure to create a budget together for your combined spending and account for monthly savings.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Church Doctrines and Their Implication to the stability of Christian marriage among the SDA Church members in Keroka Station.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Keroka Station, with a focus on examining church teachings on Christian marriage and their implications for the sustainability of Christian marriage and values. Special reference was made to selected SDA churches within Nyamira West Field.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The Seventh Day Adventist church in Nyamira West Field (NWF) comprises five stations namely Keroka, Rigoma, Kemera, Riotero and Nyagesenda. This study was carried out at Keroka Station in Southern Kenya was the study's location. The following stations are nearby: Gesabakwa of South Kenya to the south, Rigoma Station of Nyamira West Field (NWF) to the north-west, and Matutu Station of Nyamira Conference (N.C.) to the east (SKC). According to the Nyamira West Field Secretariat report dated 2022 (Nyamira West Field Executive Secretary Records, 2022), it has 17997

members. Ten pastors oversee ten districts and one secondary school in Keroka Station. The Keroka station was selected for this research due to its high number of registered young people (youths).

Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative research design with a focus on a case study. A case study is a research strategy that enables a detailed and multidimensional understanding of sophisticated themes from real-life

perspectives (Crowe *et al.*, 2011). Typically, a case study is appropriate when a researcher is interested in understanding a phenomenon in a specific area of study. Thus, this makes it a suitable approach in the current study (Vu *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, Vu *et al.*, (2022) argued that when researching to find answers to the questions "how" and "why," a case study is essential. Therefore, it was the most appropriate in this study.

Target Population

Table 1: Target Population

S/No.	District	Population				
		Youth Members	Elderly members	Church elders	Pastors	Total
1.	Riyabe District	613	499	34	1	1147
2.	Keroka North	782	653	39	1	1475
3.	Matangi	1337	851	64	1	2253
4.	Keroka South	1525	1219	43	1	2788
5.	Riakworo	733	302	46	1	1082
6.	Nyakongo	1234	1137	53	1	2425
7.	Nyabiosi	717	452	40	1	1210
8.	Esani	1547	1138	83	1	2791
9.	Mochenwa	1144	842	54	1	2041
10.	Ritibo	455	295	34	1	785
Total		10087	7388	490	10	17997

Source: Keroka Station 2023

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

A sample size determines the number of specific samples utilized in an experiment. A sample describes the observation number used to estimate a particular population. On the other hand, sampling is an approach to obtaining a subset of subjects from the population of interest to determine the features of the entire population. The number of entities present in the population's subset is chosen for analysis.

The study used purposive sampling approach to select a subset of the target population. Purposive sampling is used in qualitative studies to recognize and effectively identify in-depth information in circumstances with few available resources (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). As a result, it includes recognizing and choosing groups of people or people who are experienced and knowledgeable about the theme of interest. Besides the experience and knowledge, the

participants must be willing and available to participate. Furthermore, they should possess the ability to convey opinions and experiences in a reflective, expressive, and articular manner (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). Campbell *et al.*, (2020) argued that purposive sampling is appropriate when selecting participants who are likely to provide helpful information using limited resources. Therefore, based on the explanation of purposive sampling from these scholars (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015; Campbell *et al.*, (2020), it is appropriate for this study because there is limited information concerning the role of church teachings in Christian marriages at Keroka station's settings. Therefore, the researcher selected two urban and two rural Districts to accommodate the views and opinions of both urban and rural settings. From this perspective, Keroka North and Keroka South Districts were used because they represent town settings, while Riakworo and Matangi represent rural districts. 2 shows the sample size.

Table 2: Shows the Sample Size

District	Church	Church elders	Elderly Members	Youth members	Pastors	Total
Riakworo	Riakworo	8	56	148		212
	Ramona	7	58	96		161
	Riooga	5	37	65		107
	Nyamoteneno	4	31	105		140
	Nuru	5	25	48		78
	Risa	6	40	132		178
	Riamoni Central	7	35	88		130
	Geta Baraka	4	20	51		75
Sub Total		46	302	733	1	1081
Keroka North	Bocharia	7	56	92		155

	Keroka Central	14	200	262		462
	Amabuko	8	248	250		506
	Nyatieko	5	149	178		332
Sub Total		34	653	782	1	1469
Matangi	Metamaywa	11	90	128		229
	Matangi	8	100	146		254
	Riabore	12	224	288		524
	Rikwota	7	100	144		251
	Riomanga	7	125	168		300
	Nyasore	5	50	114		169
	Mwangaza	7	86	206		299
	Masera	7	76	143		226
Sub Total		53	761	1209	1	2252
Keroka South	Beyond Tomorrow	14	700	923		1637
	Montine	6	188	205		399
	Nyabiemba	14	183	210		407
	Beyond North	9	148	187		344
Sub Total		43	1219	1525	1	2787
Grand Total		176	2935	4249	4	7589
Sample		17	364		4	

Source: Keroka Station 2023

According to Omona (2013), a study should have a sample size between 10% and 30%. Given this reasoning, the researcher sampled church elders using 10%, or 17. Regarding young people and churchgoers, 364 respondents were chosen using Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table. The four District pastors were incorporated into the study. As a result, the sample size for this study was 17 church elders, 364 youths and senior church members, and four pastors, for a total of 385 respondents evenly distributed throughout the four Districts. Equation 1 illustrates how Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sampling calculation algorithm determines the sample size.

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P) + d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}{d^2} \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

Where;

s =required sample size

X^2 =the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level

N =the population size

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d =the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender of Participants

The study sought to know the gender distribution of the participants. The information is illustrated in figure 1.

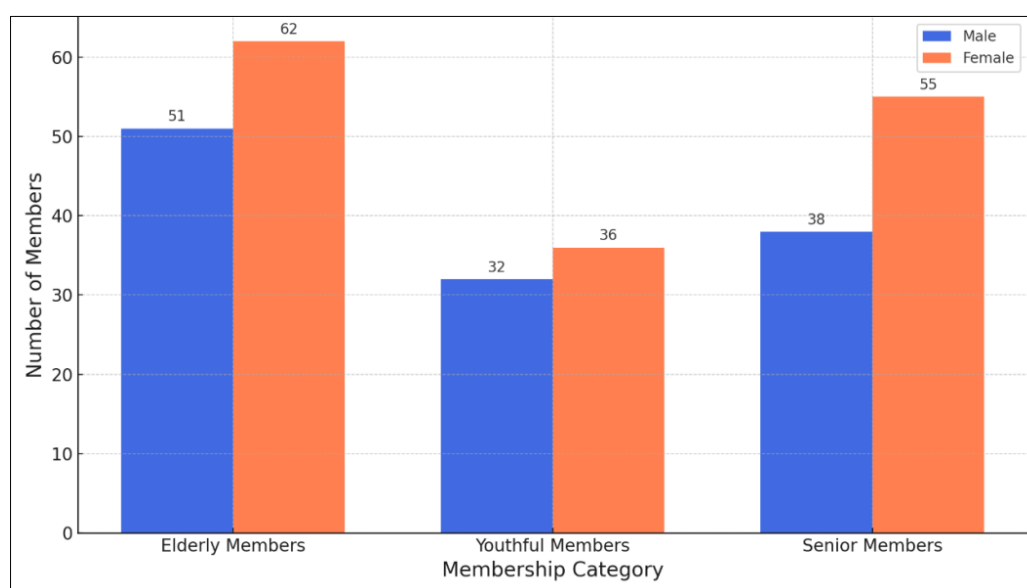


Figure 1: Distribution of members by Gender and category

Age of Participants

The data presented in figure 1 shows the gender distribution of participants across three demographic categories: Elderly Members (113), Youthful Members (68), and Senior Members (93). The total number of respondents in each category is broken down by gender: male (blue) and female (orange). The findings in figure reveal that female participants were consistently more represented across all age brackets in the study. This is significant because, according to Gallardo *et al.*, (2020), gender representation can influence how religious values, such as those concerning marriage, are perceived and practiced, especially within faith-based communities.

The predominance of female participants may also reflect broader trends within church demographics, where women are often more engaged in both attendance and participation in church activities (Pew Research Center, 2016). The implications of this imbalance suggest that any initiatives or programs developed to enhance Christian marriage values within the church may need to consider strategies to better engage male members, particularly in mentorship and family life training programs.

Participants Educational Level

The study inquired about the age of participants. The information is shown in figure 2.

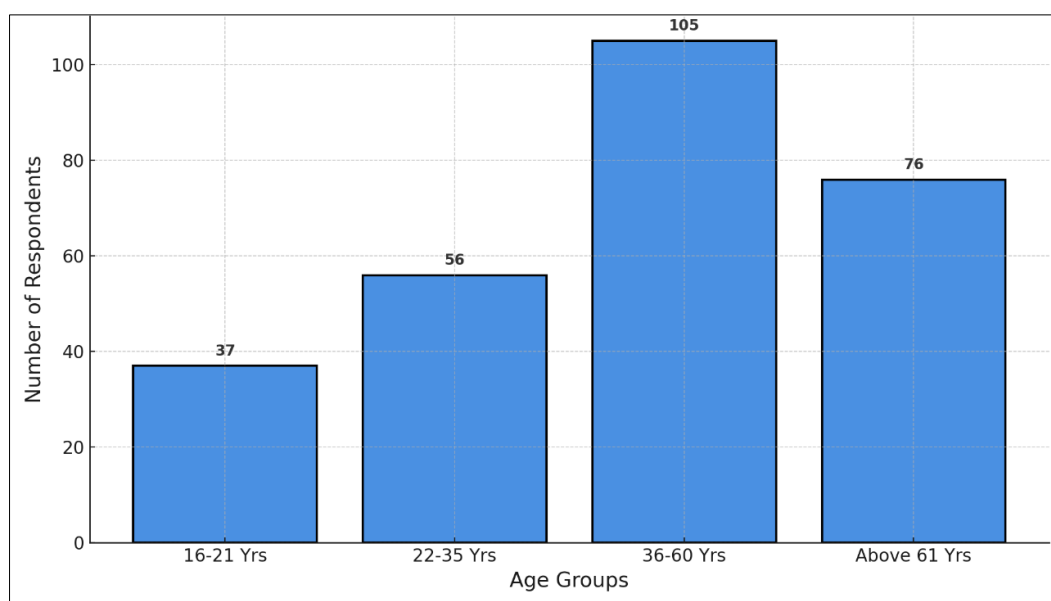


Figure 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

According to Figure 2, the majority of respondents ($n = 105$) fall within the 36–60 years age range, indicating that middle-aged individuals formed the largest demographic segment of the study sample. This may reflect the target population of the research, potentially focusing on individuals with greater life experience or long-term exposure to the studied variables (e.g., church teachings, marriage values, etc.). The second largest group, respondents above 61 years old ($n = 76$), suggests substantial participation from senior individuals, possibly indicating their continued engagement in community or religious matters. The 22–35 years group ($n = 56$) represents a moderate segment, likely younger adults who may still be forming or solidifying their views on the topic. The youngest group,

aged 16–21 years ($n = 37$), had the fewest respondents, which might be attributed to lesser involvement in marital or spiritual commitments, or lower availability or willingness to participate in such studies. These findings suggest that the study's insights are predominantly influenced by the experiences and perspectives of mature and senior individuals. Such a demographic skew could impact how values, traditions, and religious doctrines are perceived and upheld, particularly concerning marriage and moral values.

Member's Duration after Baptism

The study investigated how long they had stayed in church after baptism. Figure 3 shows the information.

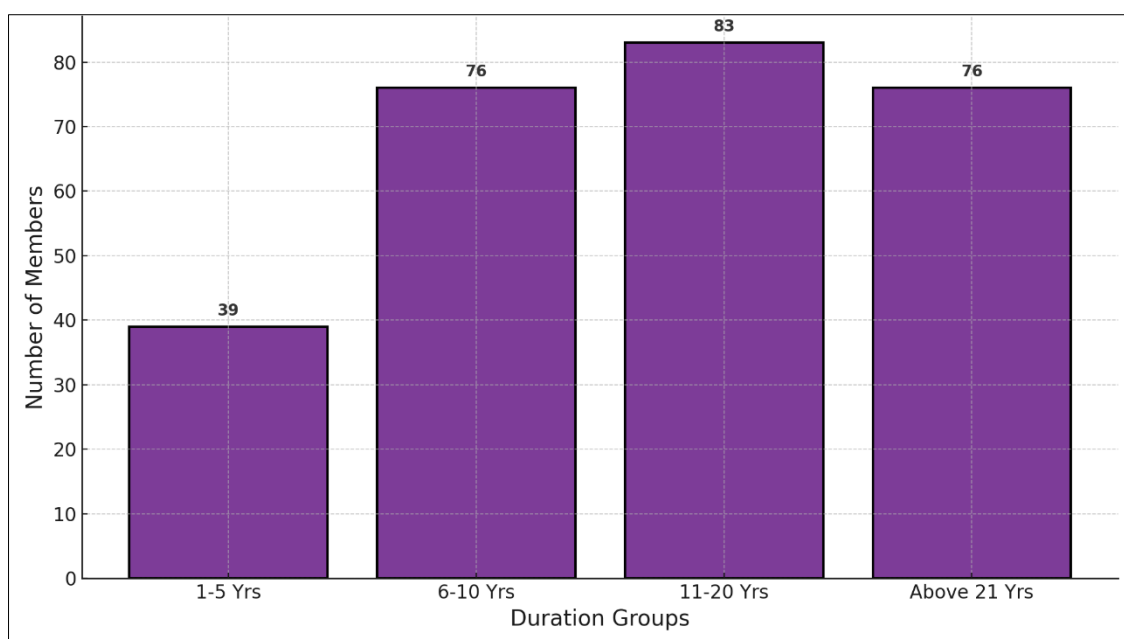


Figure 3: Duration of Membership after Baptism

As shown in Figure 3, the group with 11–20 years since baptism had the highest number of respondents ($n = 83$), indicating that a significant portion of the participants have been long-term members of the church. This trend implies a stable core of committed individuals who have likely developed a deep-rooted connection to the church's teachings and community life. The 6–10 years and above 21 years groups both accounted for a substantial number of members ($n = 76$ each), suggesting that the church retains its members for extended periods. This reflects the effectiveness of the church in nurturing spiritual growth, providing a supportive community, or aligning well with members' values. The 1–5 years group had the smallest number of

respondents ($n = 39$), potentially indicating a lower rate of recent conversions or newer member engagement. These findings suggest that the church's membership is predominantly composed of long-term adherents, which can be strength in preserving tradition and consistency in values. However, the lower numbers among newer members call for revitalized evangelistic strategies and youth-focused programs to sustain growth.

Those in Leadership/ Responsibility

The researcher asked the participants to indicate as to whether they were in leadership position or not. Figure 4 shows their responses.

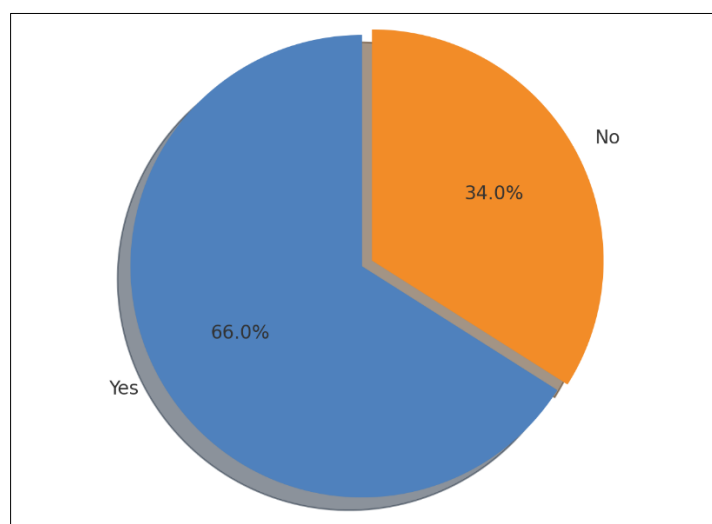


Figure 4: Those in Leadership Responsibility

As illustrated in Figure 4, a significant majority of the respondents (66%) reported that they are currently serving in a leadership capacity within the church or

organization. This indicates a strong involvement of members in guiding roles, which reflect a culture of shared responsibility and active participation.

Leadership roles in religious settings often include pastoral duties, department coordination, teaching, or administrative responsibilities (Smith & Doe, 2020). On the other hand, the remaining 34% of respondents reported not being in leadership roles. While this is a smaller portion, it still represents over a third of the community and suggests there is room to engage more individuals in leadership development or mentorship programs. Holding leadership roles affect members'

perspectives on church decisions, engagement, and retention, and such factors could be explored in future studies.

Marital Status:

The researcher requested participants to indicate their marital status. Figure 5 shows their responses.

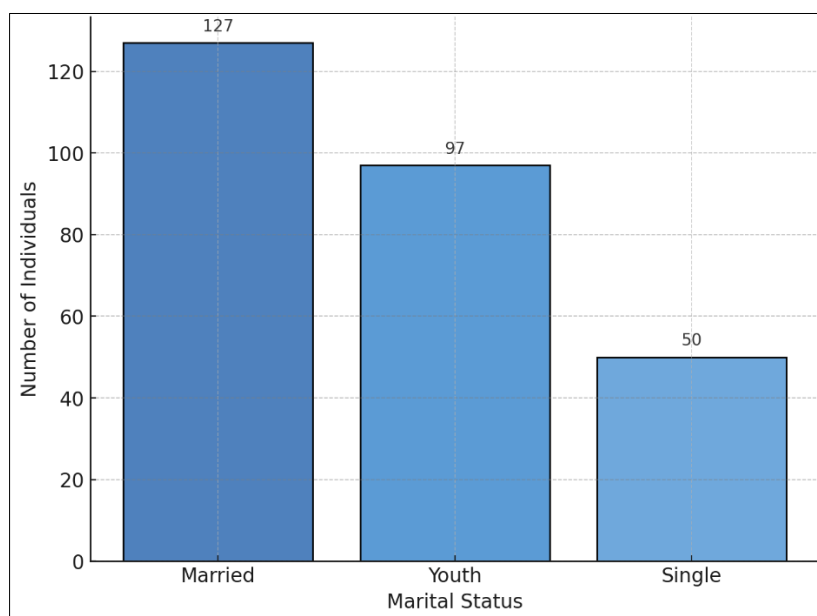


Figure 5: Marital Status

As represented in Figure 5, a substantial portion of the study's participants are in marital relationships. The married group comprises nearly half of the total sample, indicating that marital status may serve as a meaningful variable in the context of this study, especially when examining constructs such as social support, relationship satisfaction, or family dynamics (Waite, & Lehrer, 2003).). The "Married" category has the highest frequency at 127 individuals, followed by "Youth" with 97 individuals, and "Single" with the lowest frequency at 50 individuals. The data presented in Figure 5 demonstrates a clear disparity in the distribution of individuals across marital status categories. This indicate a mature demographic or a population where marriage is prevalent and possibly culturally emphasized. The "Youth" category, while notably smaller than the "Married" group, still represents a

substantial portion of the population at 97 individuals. The "Single" group is the least represented, with only 50 individuals. This suggests that unmarried individuals form a minority in the sample, which may be relevant for studies focusing on relationship status and its implications on variables such as lifestyle, income, or psychological well-being.

Doctrines/teachings and their implication to the stability of Christian marriage

The study was to evaluate the church doctrines and their implication to the stability of Christian marriage among SDA Church members in Keroka Station. The researcher inquired from the respondents about how familiar they were with the teachings of the SDA church marriage. Figure 6 illustrates their responses.

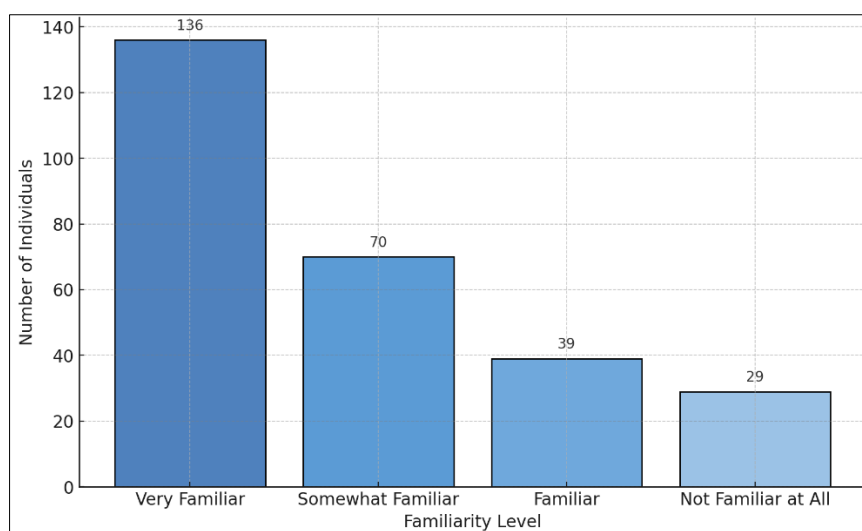


Figure 6: Familiarity with teachings of SDA Church Marriage

The bar chart displays levels of familiarity with the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church regarding marriage. The responses are categorized into four levels: Very Familiar, Somewhat Familiar, Familiar, and Not Familiar at All. The majority of participants ($n = 136$) reported being Very Familiar with the teachings. This is followed by a smaller group indicating Somewhat Familiar ($n = 70$), a much smaller group selecting Familiar ($n = 39$), and the least number indicating Not Familiar at All ($n = 29$). The results depicted in Figure 6 suggest that the majority of respondents possess a high level of awareness regarding the SDA Church's teachings on marriage. The dominant response, Very Familiar, indicates a strong engagement or exposure to these teachings among participants, which may reflect consistent religious education, cultural emphasis on doctrinal knowledge, or long-term affiliation with the church. The second-highest group, Somewhat Familiar, although considerably smaller, still

indicates a moderate level of understanding. This may represent individuals newer to the faith, less engaged in church activities, or those exposed to teachings in a more informal manner. The relatively low numbers of participants indicating they are only Familiar or Not Familiar at All suggest that there is minimal lack of awareness about church doctrines in the sampled population. These groups could consist of individuals on the periphery of the faith community or those who have not had direct instruction on the church's position on marriage.

The Extent of SDA Church's Doctrines/Teachings Contribution to the Stability of Christian Marriage

The study researcher requested the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement; what is the extent to which the SDA Church doctrines contribute to stability of Christian Marriage. Figure 7 illustrates the information.

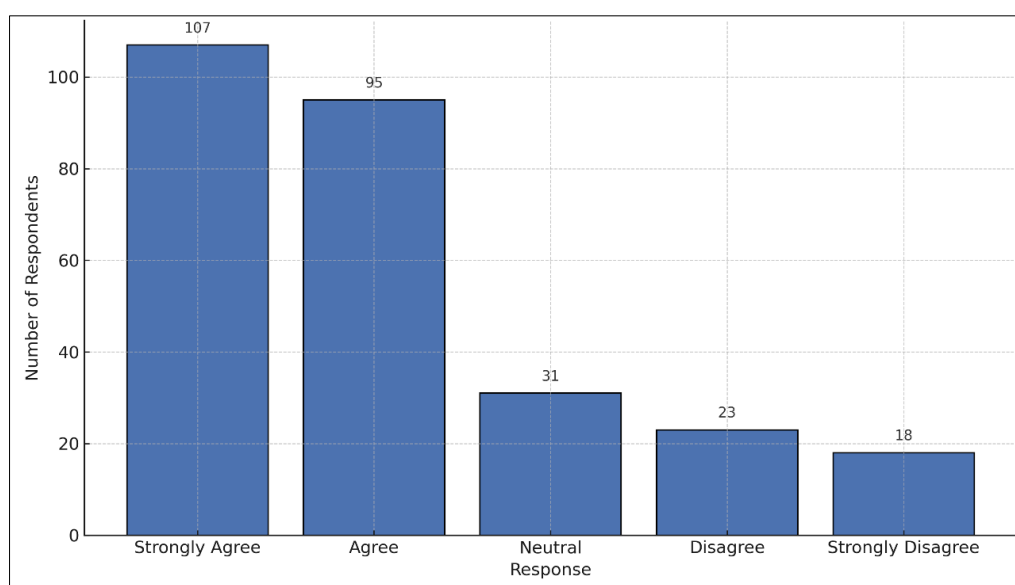


Figure 7: Impact SDA Church doctrines contribute to stability of Christian Marriage

The bar chart presents data on respondents' views of the statement: "SDA Church doctrines contribute to the stability of Christian marriage." The distribution shows that the majority of participants strongly Agree ($n = 107$), followed by those who Agree ($n = 95$). A smaller portion of the respondents indicated a Neutral stance ($n = 31$), while only a few participants expressed Disagreement ($n = 23$) or Strong Disagreement ($n = 18$). The data in Figure 7 reveals a strong consensus among participants that the doctrinal teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church play a significant role in promoting the stability of Christian marriage. Approximately 73.72% of the respondents expressed positive agreement (Strongly Agree or Agree), which underscores the perceived value of SDA teachings in guiding marital relationships. This overwhelming agreement suggests that the principles upheld by the church such as commitment, spiritual unity, mutual respect, and faithfulness are widely seen as effective in fostering strong and lasting marriages. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that religious involvement and adherence to shared beliefs contribute positively to marital satisfaction and durability (Mahoney *et al.*, 2001). The small number of Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree responses point to either a lack of exposure to SDA doctrines, differing personal experiences, or alternative views on what factors most significantly contribute to marriage stability.

Church Teachings That Positively Impact Marriages

The findings from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Keroka Station, highlight a broad spectrum of church teachings that respondents believe have contributed positively to Christian marriages. These responses reveal a deeply embedded appreciation for both doctrinal instruction and practical application of Biblical principles in marital relationships. The teachings were categorized into several overarching themes: spiritual grounding, interpersonal virtues, family structure teachings, and moral responsibilities.

Spiritual Grounding and Religious Practice

Many participants cited spiritual practices such as prayers, family life, Christian marriage, and covenants as foundational to successful marriages. Prayer, both individual and shared, is consistently emphasized in Christian marriage literature as a tool for deepening emotional intimacy and resolving conflicts (Fincham *et al.*, 2018). The value placed on "covenants," "vows," and "Christian marriage" reflects the theological understanding of marriage as a sacred and binding agreement under God (Malachi 2:14, New International Version).

Values such as love, faithfulness, forgiveness, trust, honesty, gentleness, kindness, and understanding one another were said to be important in christen marriages. These reflect the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23), which are essential to healthy relational dynamics. Love and faithfulness, in particular, were mentioned multiple times, underscoring their centrality in sustaining long-term marital bonds. According to Mahoney *et al.*, (2001), religious frameworks that promote forgiveness and compassion are linked to higher marital satisfaction and resilience.

The responses also included teachings related to the structure of the family and roles within marriage, such as sharing responsibility, family picnics, one man one wife, and monogamy. These responses highlight the importance of mutual engagement in both parenting and household management. The emphasis on "one man one wife" and monogamy is consistent with the Seventh-day Adventist Church's doctrinal stance on marriage, as outlined in its official beliefs (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020).

Terms such as integrity, maturity, humble, holy, patience, and teaching point toward the moral expectations placed upon individuals entering and sustaining marriage. These attributes are cultivated over time and are often reinforced through church teachings, pastoral guidance, and community support. The presence of department and teaching may imply organized church programming aimed at equipping couples with these virtues.

Issues such as family picnics, department, and union, reflect recognition of the role of community and church-organized events in fostering marital unity. These gatherings not only build fellowship but also provide informal settings for mentorship and emotional bonding between couples. A notable response was "undecided," suggesting that some participants were unsure about the direct impact of church teachings on marriage. This response may point to a need for better visibility, engagement, or clarity around church teaching programs related to marriage.

Importance of Christian Values in Sustaining Marriage

The role of Christian values in maintaining and nurturing marriage is affirmed overwhelmingly in the data collected from members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Keroka Station. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of Christian values in sustaining marriage on a five-point scale: Very Important, Important, Neutral, Not Important, and No Response. The distribution of responses is as shown in figure 8:

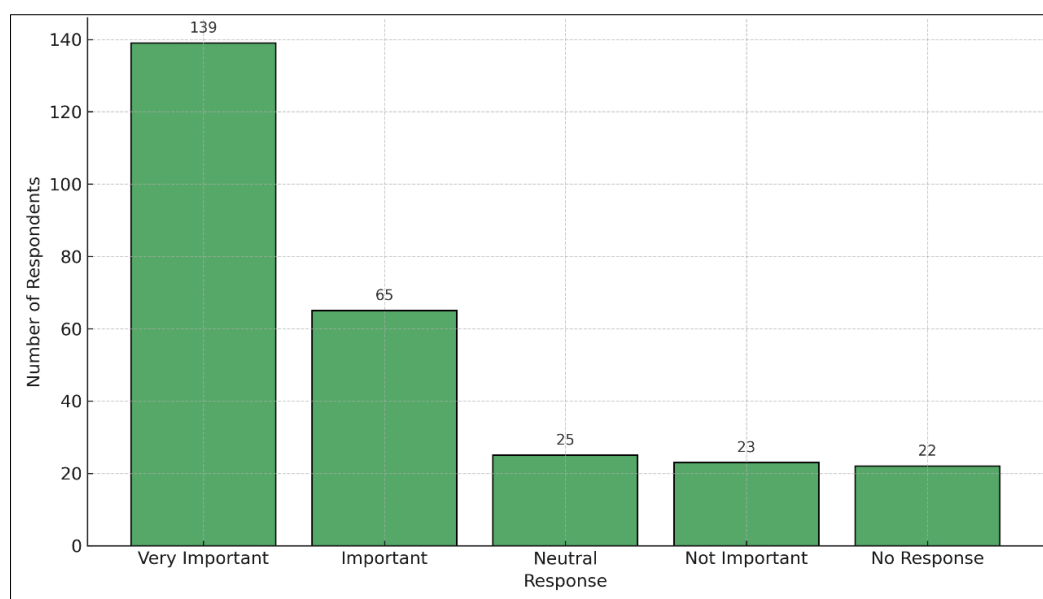


Figure 8: Important of Christian Values in sustaining a Marriage

Figure 8 was used to present participants' views on the importance of Christian values in sustaining a marriage. The majority of respondents indicated that Christian values were very important ($n = 139$, 50.7%) or important ($n = 65$, 23.7%). A smaller proportion remained neutral ($n = 25$, 9.1%), while others felt Christian values were not important ($n = 23$, 8.4%). A small portion of participants did not respond to the question ($n = 22$, 8.0%). These findings suggest that a significant portion of the sample attributes a high level of importance to Christian values in marital sustainability. However, the absence of a clear y-axis label in the chart reduces clarity, and the use of a 3D chart may slightly distort the visual perception of bar heights. According to Wilcox and Wolfinger (2016), couples who regularly practice their faith together through prayer, worship, and the application of biblical principles report greater levels of happiness and commitment in marriage. This outcome resonates with the Seventh-day Adventist Church's teachings, which stress values such as love, fidelity, prayer, forgiveness, mutual respect, and covenantal commitment (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2020).

The strong affirmation of Christian values suggests that pastoral teams and church leadership should continue prioritizing marriage enrichment programs grounded in scriptural principles. Marriage seminars, premarital counseling, and ongoing family life ministry can serve as effective avenues to reinforce the values that respondents deem critical to marital success. As Mahoney *et al.*, (2001) note, religious communities have a unique role in promoting marital virtues and offering support systems that secular frameworks may lack.

Critical Christian Marriage Values in Maintaining a Suitable Christian Marriage

The responses to this question highlight the spiritual and relational pillars that members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at Keroka Station believe are essential for maintaining a successful Christian marriage. The values mentioned by respondents include: Faithfulness, Love, Communication, Prayers/Prayer, Submission, Trust, Honesty, Maturity, Respect, Unity, Loyalty, Purity and Vows. These responses reflect a well-rounded view of marriage, consistent with biblical teachings and the doctrinal position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The emphasis on faithfulness, love, trust, and prayer aligns with scriptural principles found in Ephesians 5:21–33, where marriage is described as a covenant grounded in mutual respect, sacrificial love, and spiritual unity.

Among all the values listed, faithfulness, love, communication, prayer, and trust emerged as the most frequently cited. These elements form the bedrock of many Christian teachings on marriage. Faithfulness and love foster emotional security; communication and trust promote conflict resolution and understanding; and prayer serves as the spiritual glue that binds couples in faith and purpose. Mahoney *et al.*, (2001) argue that couples who share spiritual practices such as prayer and worship experience higher levels of intimacy, forgiveness, and conflict resolution. Similarly, Wilcox and Wolfinger (2016) highlight that religious couples often hold stronger norms around fidelity and mutual support, which helps buffer marital strain.

The study also found out the element of "capital." "Capital" suggests recognition of economic factors as contributors to marital stability. While not traditionally categorized as a moral or spiritual value, financial stewardship is a practical aspect of family life emphasized in biblical texts (Proverbs 21:20). "Vows"

underscores the covenantal aspect of marriage, reinforcing that marriage is not just a contract but a spiritual commitment made before God.

These insights affirm the importance of holistic marital counseling that addresses not only spiritual growth but also emotional, relational, and financial maturity. Programs that teach effective communication, promote faithful living, encourage spiritual practices like prayer, and offer financial literacy training could enhance the church's support system for couples.

CONCLUSION

This section presents the conclusions drawn from the study. The study aimed to examine the implications of church doctrines on the stability of Christian marriages among SDA members in Keroka Station, explore the challenges that undermine marital stability despite these doctrines, assess the perception of Christian marriage and its values, and evaluate the church's support systems in upholding marriage values. The conclusions are derived from qualitative data collected from the respondents and reflect the core findings of the study. These insights are essential in understanding the current dynamics affecting Christian marriages within the church context.

Evaluation of Church Doctrines and Their Implications on Marriage Stability

The study concluded that the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church doctrines particularly those emphasizing monogamy, faithfulness, forgiveness, mutual respect, and spiritual unity are foundational to Christian marriage stability among members of the Keroka Station. These doctrines are widely respected and perceived as biblically grounded, forming a spiritual and moral framework for marital life. The church promotes these teachings through various channels including sermons, counseling sessions, and premarital seminars. However, the effectiveness of these teachings is somewhat diminished by a noticeable gap between doctrinal ideals and practical implementation. Some members reported that despite the availability of sound doctrine, consistent application in daily marital life remains a challenge.

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