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# Assessment of the effects of family and peer relationships on child wellbeing: a case of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoroï Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese.

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**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON CHILD  
WELLBEING**

*A CASE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, NKOROI CATHOLIC PARISH,  
NGONG DIOCESE*

DENIS OMAE NCHORE

ADM. 146451

RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS OF THE AWARD OF A MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY AND  
MANAGEMENT OF STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY

STRATHMORE BUSINESS SCHOOL

STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY

NAIROBI, KENYA.

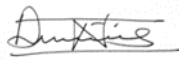
2025



## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. It has never been submitted to any institution for academic credit. All sources consulted are duly acknowledged.

Denis Omae Nchore



Approved by

Supervisor

Dr. Miriam W. Oiro Omolo



## ABSTRACT

Child well-being is a multifaceted undertaking demanding a community-based approach to ensure its realisation. A multi-sectoral approach involving the government, church, community leaders, parents, and peers is essential to ensure improved child well-being. Anchored on the IPARTheory and the Transformation Leadership theory, the current study sought to assess the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being using the case study Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese. Specifically, the study aimed to evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP) 2019, identify the factors that influence family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing, and establish the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be replicated to enhance child wellbeing in Kenya. Findings revealed that the Kenyan government has failed in its mandate of implementing legislations and policies for promoting family and peer relationships domain of child well-being, that numerous factors influence family and peer relationships domain of child well-being, and that the Catholic Parish community employs a variety of measures to promote healthy families and peer relationships as well as foster a supportive environment for child well-being. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Kenyan government embrace a multi-sectoral approach that includes churches and community leaders in the implementation of legislations and policies related to child well-being. It also recommends mainstreaming community-driven approaches into national policies in the family-and-peer relationships domain toward the holistic well-being of children in Kenya.

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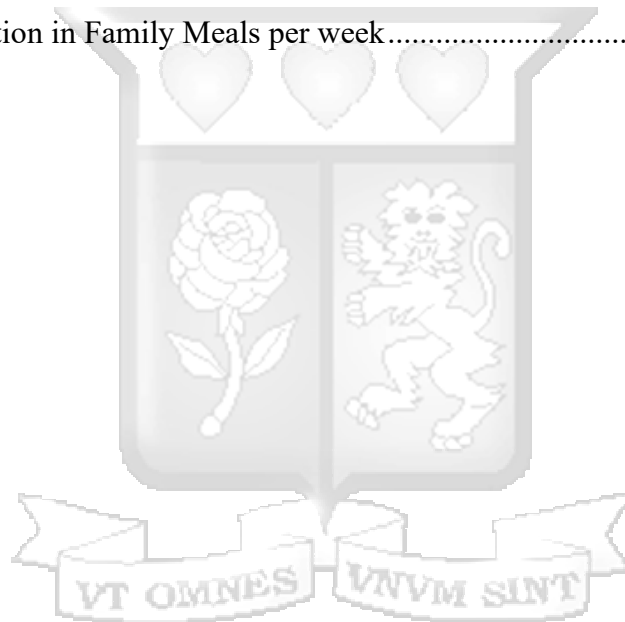
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## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to families and communities in a special way for their support I got during my period of study. They have been the source of strength and inspiration in my studies and hard work.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUCRW - African Union Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

EAC - East African Community

EACCP - East Africa Community Child Policy

FLC - Family Life Coaching

IPAR - Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection

KNBS – Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

NCCS - National Council for Children’s Services

NPFP - National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection

NCPS - Framework of the National Child Protection System

NCRSCK - National Care Reform Strategy for Children in Kenya

RoK- Republic of Kenya

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

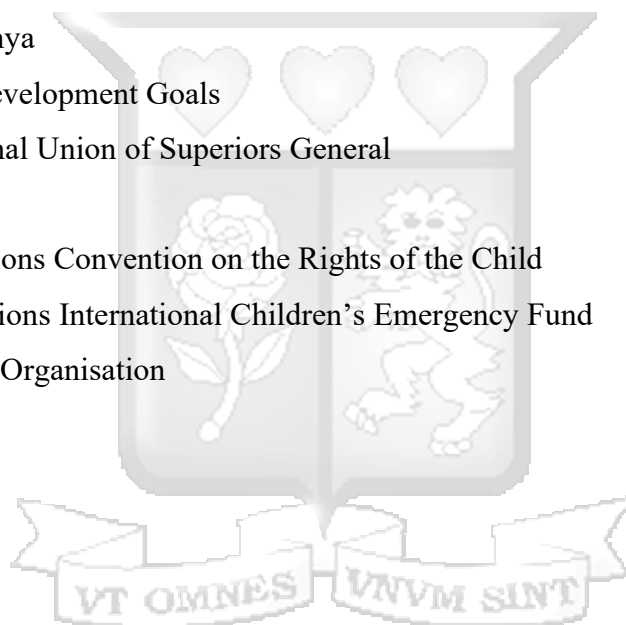
UISG- The International Union of Superiors General

UN – United Nations

UNCRC - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNICEF - United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

WHO - World Health Organisation



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the background of the study to create context and a foundation. The background includes an analysis of the current state of child wellbeing and associated challenges, focusing on global, regional, and local contexts. It also reviews the role of family and peer relationships, framing these constructs within the context of child wellbeing. The chapter also clarifies the problem statement, research objectives, and questions. It also highlights the study's significance, the scope it covers, and finally summarises the contents of the chapter.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

Well-being encompasses emotional, mental, physical, and social health, and is essential for a fulfilling life. Mostly, it is associated with positive health behaviours, longevity, improved recovery from illness, and reduced healthcare burdens (Bautista et al., 2023). Well-being is a multifaceted concept that not only focuses on an individual's health but also their performance. Ruggeri et al. (2020) ascertain that better physical health is synonymous with improved individual performance. Howell et al. (2016) further maintain that well-being motivates people towards success, strengthens relationships, and boosts the economy. Typically, better individual performance resulting from improved health contributes positively to economic growth.

The concept of well-being traces back to the 1948 World Health Organisation's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". While health or well-being has been a crucial subject of focus for centuries, frameworks for supporting children's welfare came into existence in 1989 under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Since its inception, the UNCRC has been fundamental in promoting child survival, development, protection, and participation.

Children's well-being is of greater significance as it enables them to grow, learn, and build the skills they need to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society's progress. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has emphasised the value of children's well-being, reporting that "The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born" (UNICEF, 2007). UNICEF has further specified six domains for assessing child wellbeing. They include material wellbeing, health and safety, education,

family and peer relationships, behaviour and risks and the young people's sense of wellbeing (UNICEF, 2007). These domains are widely applicable, with the World Bank using them as guidelines for its multisectoral approach to comprehensively address child well-being (World Bank Group, 2016).

Besides UNCRC and UNICEF, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), established in 1990, has been instrumental in promoting child welfare and well-being in Africa. With its objective of ensuring the virtues of culture, history, and values of African civilisations are reflected in the rights and welfare of children, ACRWC remains an important framework and tool for promoting child well-being across the continent. Regionally, the East African Community Child Policy (EACCP) of 2016 has also been vital, inviting all partner states to harmonise the standards and approaches of implementing child rights.

In Kenya, the ratification of the UNCRC and ACRWC through the Children Act 2001 has made provisions that guide child well-being countrywide. Additionally, Article 53 of the Kenya Constitution 2010 makes commitments to the rights of children. The Children's Act 2001 has been updated by the Children's Act 2022, which has further provided additional legal provision that protects the rights of children. The Children Act 2022 has also emphasised parental care where father and mother are present. The Children Act 2022 stipulates that children's affairs are managed by the National Council for Children's Service (NCCS), with the entity being responsible for regulating, coordinating, oversight and advising the government on children's affairs.

Despite the availability of a robust legal framework to support children welfare and welfare, the Kenyan national and county governments have failed to promote and enhance the family as the core institution responsible for child wellbeing. This failure is demonstrated in delays to enact the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP) 2019. The delay in enacting the NPFPP (2019) has significantly weakened the structure of implementing child well-being policies in the country.

The family remains the core institution responsible for children's well-being. While several non-state actors have emerged to support the Kenyan government's initiatives towards promoting child well-being, they have equally failed to address the promotion and enhancement of the family as the core institution responsible for child well-being. Efforts from international and local non-governmental organisations to provide support remain inadequate. For instance, World Vision's effort to train and support parents on responsive caregiving, education, facilities and programmes, health and wellness, including access to immunisation,

access to clean water and child protection has been significantly undermined by resource constraints (World Vision, 2024).

### **1.2.1 Family and Peer Relationships**

The family unit is the key foundation for a child's well-being. Notably, a functional family creates a healthy environment, characterised by safety, stability, and support, which is essential for children's development and flourishing. On the contrary, a dysfunctional family, coupled with challenges like poverty, stress, and insufficient resources, can negatively affect children's well-being. Ladd (2021) acknowledges that stable and functional families positively contribute to children's well-being and growth. Terlonge et al. (2012) further recognise that inadequacies of dysfunctional families threaten a child's safety and well-being. For instance, conflict between parents, caregivers, or guardians threatens a child's safety and well-being. Families in which parents or caregivers are mentally or physically ill or even struggle with substance abuse expose children to violence and exploitation. Children's safety and well-being are also threatened in families where parents suffer from extreme anxiety or stress and where child abuse, including physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or neglect, is rampant. Walga (2020) points out that child abuse that includes physical and emotional abuse within a family lead to child behaviour disorders, low self-esteem, incompetence, anxiety disorders. Terlonge et al. (2012) also note that ineffective parenting styles equally place children at risk. For example, when parents are over-protective, too lenient, excessively strict, or burdening children with extra responsibilities, they undermine a child's safety and well-being.

Hunter (2021) identifies peer relationships as groups that include friendship, enmity, age mates, and classmates. Peer relationships can impact children's well-being, shaping their emotional, social, and mental health. If peer relationships are nurtured well, they can help children to manage stress, develop healthier relationships, and build on their self-esteem, contributing to their wellbeing. (Thomas, 2017). While positive peer relationships can encourage empathy, resilience, and social skills, negative interactions like bullying and exclusion can have detrimental effects. Positive interactions should therefore be encouraged to improve children's social and emotional development as well as their overall well-being. Encouraging positive interactions has a likelihood of positively influencing a child's mental health, academic performance, and future relationships.

In the context of this study, family is considered an environment where the child experiences their first interpersonal and social relationships. Thus, the study defines a healthy family relationship as an environment where violence is absent, with the existence of dialogue, where there is the presence of both parents, if possible and caring members who make the child feel

loved and accepted within a community. Peer relationships, in the context of this study, focus on a wide sense that involves relationships of children with other children within families, the community and society. Hence, a healthy peer relationship is where a child feels liked/loved among peers within the family, community and society.

### **1.2.2 Complementary Initiatives of the Catholic Church Towards Support of Child Wellbeing in Kenya**

The Catholic Church is a key non-state actor in supporting the Kenyan government in promoting child wellbeing (UISG, 2024). Through its structures, it provides education, health and nutrition support at the Parish level, which is the unit of contact with families. For effective reach, 15-20 families come together to create a small Christian community (Known as *Jumuiya*) (AMECEA, 2024). The Christian family concept has biblical origins.<sup>1</sup> And the services offered to support family and peer relationships include spiritual accompaniment to empower members to face their daily challenges, seminars on family issues and love of the neighbour, Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood education that aims at preparing children to develop an attitude of supporting other children (Vatican, 2024). The Catholic Church also offers material, financial, emotional and social support to families, which positively impacts child well-being. (St. Jude Catholic Church – Donholm, 2024).

In the case of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic parish, the parish leadership has adopted the best practice of providing mentorship and coaching programs to families and children with their peers. The aim is to maintain healthy family and peer relationships within the parish community. This can also be achieved through involving the Small Christian Community (SCC) members in supporting (spiritually, materially, financially, socially and emotionally) families nurturing their children. The members of the SCC who are active in these programmes have benefited as the programmes have contributed to the stability of their marriages, which is critical for healthy family relationships. Single-parent families have received help from the programmes as their children have an opportunity to receive support from their peers, especially in developing a sense of belonging in the parish community. This positive contribution of Nkoroi Catholic parish leadership can be considered by national and county governments in developing a complementary family policy for different communities to make their unique contribution in promoting and enhancing the stability of families for child wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:42-47

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The government of Kenya has ratified several international initiatives for child wellbeing, which include the UNCRC, ACRWC and EACCP. Several institutions have implemented the various multidimensional aspects of child wellbeing at the national, county and non-governmental levels. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) Art.53 encompasses the Children Act 2022, whose aim is to improve child wellbeing, and to ensure that every child in Kenya is under the care of their family or a community-based arrangement (RoK, 2023).

Currently, it is estimated that 24.4 million of Kenya's population is aged below 18 years (UNICEF, 2023). Nurturing this population into honourable and productive men and women begins at the family level. Rohner (2021) notes that "parental love is the single most important factor in a child's life." However, delays in the enactment of key frameworks for supporting children's well-being, such as the NPFPP, have raised concerns about the ability of the Kenyan government to realise a holistic approach to child well-being. The fact that 45,000 children are still under the care of 845 charitable children's institutes and 1,000-1,200 children under the government-run institutions has exacerbated these concerns (RoK, 2023). The situation in families further shows that 11% of children do not live with their parents, and 23% are under the care of their mothers, raising concerns about whether the traditional two-parent family structure is becoming obsolete. However, the increasing prevalence of depression among teens, with 36.0% being out of school and 20.6% being in school, suggests that the current arrangement where most children do not live with their parents or stay with their mothers, is dysfunctional and inadequately supports children's well-being (KNBS & ICF, 2023).

Despite Kenya's efforts in enacting legislations and policies to support child welfare, the increasing prevalence of mental health symptoms among teens raises concerns about the robustness and effectiveness of the existing legal and policy frameworks. Legislation and policies to support child welfare should improve well-being rather than expose teenagers to mental health systems. The current trends in teenage well-being, characterised by increased school dropouts, suggest potential inadequacies in the existing legal and policy framework and further suggest a need for more comprehensive measures to address child well-being. Therefore, the current sought to evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being through the existing legal and policy frameworks, including underlying gaps in these frameworks, while also establishing the factors influencing family and peer relationships domain of child well-being as well as the measures non-state actors such as the Catholic Parish community has put in place to promote healthy family and peer relationships to foster a supportive environment for child well-being.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The main objective of the study was to assess the effects of family and peer relationships on child wellbeing within the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic parish, which can be replicated to enhance child wellbeing in Kenya. More specifically, the study sought to:

- i. To evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP) 2019.
- ii. To identify the factors that influence the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing.
- iii. To establish the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be replicated to enhance child wellbeing in Kenya.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions.

- i. How has the Kenyan government implemented policies and frameworks to address the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing, and what gaps exist due to the delayed enactment of the NPFPP?
- ii. What factors influence the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing?
- iii. How has Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community contributed to promoting healthy family and peer relationships that can be used to enhance child wellbeing in Kenya?

#### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

This study was considered necessary for multiple reasons. One significant motive for conducting this study is that child well-being is a global concern that is included in SDG 2030, which aims at realising the six domains of child well-being specified by the UNICEF in every country. Thus, carrying out this study allowed gathering information on what has worked in other countries and relating it to the Kenyan situation of child wellbeing. The study was also considered necessary due to Kenya's commitment to implementing the international legal and policy framework of child wellbeing in the Children's Act, which was ratified in 2001. Despite this dedication, the government is still facing challenges in implementing policies related to child well-being. Hence, this study sought to establish a complementary approach and policy framework to support the government's efforts in realising better child well-being. Moreover, the study was necessary since the Kenyan government has already embarked on the National

Care Reform Strategy for Children in Kenya (NCRSCK) 2022-2032. For this care reform to be realised, all stakeholders need to be involved. Thus, the findings of the study contribute to the realisation of this care reform by providing a better understanding of how to mitigate the effects of single parenting. Finally, the study was considered necessary as it seeks to address the gap of fragmentation (Chege, 2020) in the implementation of policies related to children's activities. Findings of the study provide a basis for understanding how community engagement programmes can contribute to the effectiveness of the government in addressing child well-being.

### **1.7 The Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the existing family and peer relationships programs at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic parish and the contribution they make to child wellbeing. This study was limited to Nkoroi parish because of its unique contribution to healthy family and peer relationships.

### **1.8 The Significance of the Study**

This study holds considerable significance for several stakeholders, including the government, policymakers, the church community, NGOs, and parents.

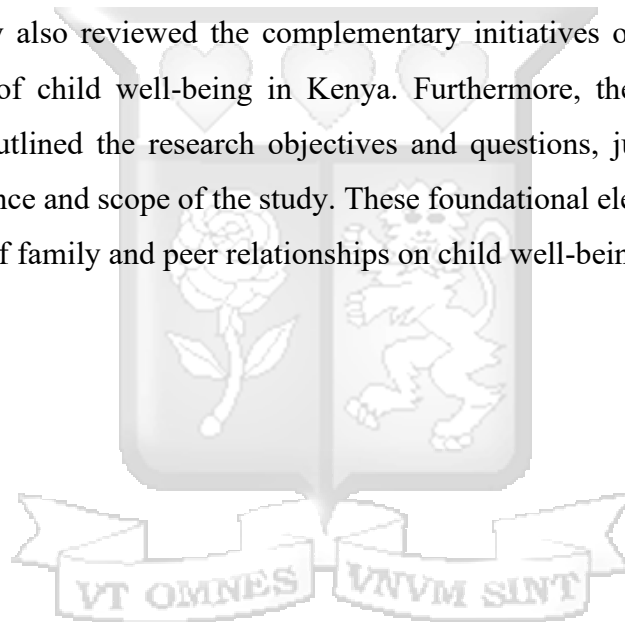
The findings of the study are of critical importance to policymakers. Evaluating how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being through existing legal and policy framework, including the gaps that remain due to delayed enactment of the NPFPP 2019 offers valuable insights for improving the existing legal and policy framework to ensure it adequately addresses and considers the importance of the family unit and peer interactions in supporting child well-being. Additionally, by assessing the existing gaps resulting from the delayed implementation of the NPFPP 2019, the study guides the Kenyan government to accelerate the enactment of the NPFPP to mitigate the intensifying health risks among the country's young population.

The study is also of substantial significance to the church community. By identifying the factors influencing family and peer relationships in the context of child well-being, the study provides valuable insights that the church community can leverage to position itself to offer adequate support to families and collaborate with other relevant stakeholders to establish a holistic approach to improving children's well-being. Besides, by establishing the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships, the study includes valuable information that the larger church community can leverage to equally support children's well-being in society.

Additionally, the study is of considerable value to NGOs and parents. By identifying the factors that influence family and peer relationships within the context of child well-being, the study includes crucial information that NGOs and parents can utilise to improve the well-being of children. Moreover, by establishing the measures the establishing the measures Our Lad of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships, the study establishes itself as a guide whereby NGOs and parents can likewise replicate these initiatives to enhance child well-being.

### **1.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter introduced the proposed study, providing a background and establishing the context for assessing the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being. It also reviewed the family and peer relationships constructs, framing them within the context of child well-being. The study also reviewed the complementary initiatives of the Catholic Church towards the support of child well-being in Kenya. Furthermore, the chapter clarified the problem statement, outlined the research objectives and questions, justified the study, and explored the significance and scope of the study. These foundational elements set the stage for assessing the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical assessment of relevant literature, sources, and up-to-date findings related to the study. It includes a theoretical review, which identifies and explains the theories underpinning the research and their connection to the variables being studied. Additionally, it presents earlier research findings related to the factors under investigation. A summary of the literature review is provided, highlighting existing research gaps that this study aims to address. Furthermore, the chapter introduces the conceptual framework, linking the variables in the context of this research.

### 2.2 Theoretical Review

This section presents the theories underpinning this study. Ndlovu et al. (2022) define a theory as a speculative idea that describes, explains, and predicts the occurrence of real-world phenomena. In explaining a phenomenon, a theory provides insights into why things are the way they are (Stewart et al., 2011). Typically, the purpose of theory is fourfold: to describe by setting forth what exists, to explain by accounting for how it functions, to predict by outlining the conditions under which a phenomenon occurs, and to prescribe by identifying the conditions under which a phenomenon should occur (Dwivedi et al., 2009). Overall, theories serve to describe, explain, predict, and prescribe phenomena in the real world.

This study adopted a multi-theoretical framework, integrating multiple theories to offer a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the concept under investigation. Including two or more theories is usually considered synonymous with providing a more comprehensive perspective on the constructs under study (Multi-theoretical Explanation, 2022). Besides, a multi-theoretical approach allows the researcher to address the limitations of depending on a single theory. Notably, a single theoretical model may be inadequate in fully explaining complex phenomena. However, a multi-theoretical approach offers the advantage of drawing from multiple viewpoints and methods of analysis, thereby enhancing the depth of the study.

The use of a multi-theoretical framework was appropriate for this study, as it allowed the researcher to explore areas of potential conflict among theories and develop a more refined understanding of the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being. By leveraging different theoretical perspectives, the researcher examined the findings from various angles, offering a more objective and robust analysis of the variables under investigation.

#### 2.2.1 Interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (IPARTheory)

Developed and popularised by Ronald P. Rohner in the 1960s, the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) posits that humans have an inherent need for positive

interpersonal relationships such that acceptance from others becomes vital for healthy development and adjustment (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021; Rohner, 2025). During its inception, the IPARTheory was known as the parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) and primarily focused on how parental acceptance or rejection influenced children's development, both in childhood and extending into adulthood. As research advanced, the PARTheory evolved and broadened to encompass other interpersonal relationships, such as intimate adult relations, peer associations, and sibling interactions (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021; Rohner, 2025). To reflect this broader scope, the theory was therefore renamed to IPARTheory (Rohner, 2021). The IPARTheory suggests that perceptions of acceptance or rejection in relationships significantly shape an individual's psychological well-being and behaviour.

The IPARTheory emphasises that positive and negative interpersonal relationships impact well-being, and that the effects of acceptance or rejection extend into adulthood. Notably, the effects of childhood acceptance or rejection can have long-term consequences on a person's psychological well-being and adjustment in adulthood (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021; Rohner, 2025). For instance, rejection in childhood can have far-reaching consequences, including mental health symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021). Typically, the IPARTheory underscores the importance of interpersonal relationships in shaping human development and well-being, preserving that acceptance from others can lead to better outcomes, while rejection can have detrimental effects.

The influence of the feeling of being accepted or rejected has effects on the present and future life of a person. This perspective explains why those who feel accepted can cope with day-to-day challenges better than those who experience rejection. For example, nurturing a child in a constantly changing environment, such as different children's homes, invites feelings of rejection that expose the child to mental health symptoms such as depression and behavioural problems. Additionally, single parenting causes feelings of being rejected by the absent parent, with such perceptions causing stress and affecting the child's psychological well-being. Wachs (1999) reports that apart from considering health and physical growth in child development, behavioural development is equally important.

The IPARTheory aligns with the current study's focus on the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being by providing a framework to understand the value of positive interpersonal relationships on the well-being of children. As such, it anchors the study's objective of identifying factors that influence the family and peer relationships domain of child

well-being. The model acknowledges that single-parenting and children's homes trigger feelings of rejection among children, exposing them to mental health symptoms, such as depression and behavioural problems that persist and extend into adulthood. Although the model offers strategic guidance for improving the psychological and behavioural well-being of children, it is also a vital tool for establishing effective measures (initiatives for promoting positive interpersonal relationships) that Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships and that can be replicated to enhance child well-being.

### **2.2.2 Transformational Leadership Theory**

Coined by sociologist James V. Downton in 1973, the transformational leadership theory posits that inspiring and motivating individuals enables them to realise their full potential and drive significant change within their surroundings (Eaton et al., 2024). Downton's (1973) transformational leadership theory was limited in scope, necessitating further advances to broaden it. In 1978, leadership expert James MacGregor Burns developed and expanded the model further to describe what constituted transformational leadership. According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders are those individuals who seek to change existing thoughts, techniques, and goals for better results and the greater good.

Burn (1978) considers transformational leadership as a style of leadership that changes the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of people for a higher common good. Thus, a leader facilitates directing the efforts of the people involved to achieve performance. In this case, government leaders in collaboration with community leaders should inspire all actors to promote and enhance a culture that respects a family as a core institution responsible for child wellbeing. Vesnica Mlinarević (2022) reported that institutional culture predetermines the tone of an environment that will affect satisfaction. Additionally, the character of a leader influences the transformational model of leadership in an institution. Thus, the more the developed and shared the culture of nurturing children as a community, the less the need for regulatory issues related to children.

Transformational leaders can raise the awareness of parental responsibility as a critical social determinant of the health-related behaviours of adolescents (Morton, 2010). Parenting is associated with an innate attachment behavioural system, which motivates proximity seeking support from others for the sake of protection and safety (Cherniak, 2021). People turn to their dependents for safety and a secure, especially in the modern society where work and family are two indispensable realities for adulthood (Shen, 2022). There is a need for transformational

leadership to adopt new perspectives to create a new path of growth and prosperity for all in society (Korejan, 2016).

The combination of these two theories shaped the perspective of the study. The study sought to assess the importance of health, family, and peer relationships that contribute to child wellbeing. For this to happen, it requires transformational leadership both at the government and community levels to initiate the interventions of supporting families. The focus of the initiatives should promote and enhance stability in the family as an institution and shape the interpersonal interactions, which indicates the growth of a community. In the African context, a family is made possible through a marriage bond (Kirewen, 2008; Mbiti, 1973). Kirewen (2008) reports that the marriage rites in African culture are meant to ensure the permanency of marriages because a failed marriage is associated with the failure of the community. Furthermore, the benefits of stable marriage and healthy relationships cannot be replaced in the process of realising child wellbeing. Thus, the need for transformational leadership is to spearhead the desired change in communities by supporting families in nurturing their children. The transformational leadership theory supports the study's objective of evaluating how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the NPFPP 2019. The model recognises that a transformation leader would have taken note of the consequences of delaying the enactment of the NPFPP 2019 and accelerated the enactment process to address the inadequacies of the existing legal and policy frameworks. For instance, accelerating the implementation of the NPFPP 2019 would put in place measures to support the family unit as essential to child well-being and reduce the widespread disintegration that exposes children to psychological and behavioural problems.

### **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

This section includes a review of the empirical literature based on the objectives of the study.

#### **2.3.1 How Governments Address the Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Well-being**

Available literature has not directly examined how governments address the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. Although most studies have not independently and directly studied the subject matter, they offer significant insights into how governments are addressing the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being.

Using a systematic review of literature to measure and track behaviours that adults wish to prevent, Moore et al. (2004) established that the existing U.S. indicators system does not monitor positive development and outcomes for the most part but instead includes measures of

child well-being that primarily focus on negative outcomes and problems. Such inadequacies reveal that government approaches to child well-being lack the breadth and balance required to realise better well-being outcomes for children. Moore et al. (2004) thus suggested the need for measures that encompass multiple domains of child well-being and development, including cognitive attainment and educational achievement, health and safety, social and emotional development, and self-sufficiency. According to the researchers, these measures should also be able to work across varied subgroups and levels of governance. Subsequent research by Lippman (2006) emphasised the need for measures to include comprehensive indicator reports and online resources to support efforts towards enhancing child well-being. Lippman (2006) also underscored the importance of state contributions through support for index projects and aligning national frameworks to international indicator measures.

Employing a systematic review of literature, Lippman (2006) revealed that critical aspects of child well-being indicator development can be uncovered through monitoring and tracking its history. In his analysis, Lippman (2006) found that there is a need for stakeholders, including the government, to focus on subjective as well as objective measures of well-being. Lippman's (2006) findings also underlined the need for stakeholders to develop indicators for the multiple ecological contexts of children's lives while separating measures of context from measures of child outcomes. Equally, adopting a systematic review of literature, Casas (2011) affirmed the need for relevant stakeholders to prioritise subjective social indicators of child well-being. By summarising the historical and epistemological foundations of the concept of social indicators, Casas (2011) found that gaps in systematic data collection of children's and teens' perceptions, evaluations, and aspirations as the key obstacles undermining the realisation of subjective social indicators of children's well-being. The lack of political will in this data collection process discourages the belief that such data can be valuable for decision-making and for evaluating social change. However, government involvement can change perception, streamlining the data collection and leveraging the data to make key decisions to stir social change and child well-being at large.

Fattore et al. (2008) provided a justification for and details of the qualitative research methods applied by the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People to develop an authoritative child-informed framework for monitoring of children's well-being. In the study, Fattore et al. (2008) highlighted the importance of relationships with others, emphasising the crucial role of control and agency, in this case, government institutions, in the various domains relevant to children's well-being. Using a structured bibliographic search involving literature addressing public policy implications of work on child resilience, Ager (2012) emphasised the

critical roles governments can play in supporting domains pertinent to children's well-being. According to Ager (2012), governments can be instrumental in supporting sectoral engagement across the fields of education, health and social work. Besides, encouraging diversity across the systemic levels: individual (biological and psychological), communal (systems of faith and cultural identity), institutional, and societal, can be vital in bettering children's well-being (Ager, 2012). Overall, Fattore et al. (2008) and Ager (2012) emphasise the critical role governments can play in supporting domains essential for better child well-being.

Lippman et al. (2011) reviewed existing data sources and research studies for examples of positive measures that have been successful in measuring the indicators of child well-being. In their study, Lippman et al. (2011) identified data and measurement gaps as potential obstacles undermining the comprehensive measurement of positive indicators of well-being and well-being in children and adolescents. Equally, adopting a systematic review of literature, Newland (2014) identified multiple risk factors, including poverty, living in geographic locations with limited resources, and high levels of neighbourhood violence as other impediments to child well-being. Brik et al. (2018) further recognised child disabilities, regional disparities, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation, and multisectoral coordination as challenges to child well-being and obstacles in programmes for promoting child well-being in the Gulf countries. Using a quantitative approach involving a cross-sectional non-probability sampling design, Butler et al. (2022) examined the association between the level of family adult support, school adult support, and school peer support and mental well-being in children aged between 8 to 15 years in schools in the United Kingdom. In their study, Butler et al. (2022) found that schools provide a crucial context in fostering positive peer relations and supportive teacher-student relationships to promote mental health and resilience for all children, including those with and without supportive home environments. Applying a systematic review of literature approach to assess current evidence on the outcomes of place-based interventions for improving children's well-being, Hoang et al. (2024) found that promoting children's development and capacities requires a multifaceted approach, with place-based interventions being one of the effective strategies available. Brik et al. (2018) have also emphasised the critical role of place-based interventions. Reviewing policies and programmes to support child well-being in the Gulf countries, Brik et al. (2018) established that national strategies for supporting child well-being provide broad policy frameworks in which country-specific initiatives are designed to address location-based risk factors of child well-being.

### **2.3.2 Factors that Influence Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Well-being**

Chung et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analytical review to assess how parenting stress during the COVID-19 pandemic affected both parental and child functioning. The findings highlighted a consistent negative impact of heightened parental stress on children's emotional and social well-being, particularly on peer connectedness. Similarly, Martins and Oliveira (2024) investigated the intersection of child well-being and family functioning within low-income families facing cumulative contextual strain. Using a mixed-method approach combining family interviews and standardised well-being assessments, their study found that high family strain correlated with lower-quality family and peer relationships, especially when parental mental health was compromised. Although both studies confirmed the detrimental impact of stress on relationship domains, Chung et al. (2024) drew from a broader pandemic context through aggregated data, while Martins and Oliveira (2024) offered depth through direct observation in economically strained households. The contrast in methodological scope—meta-analysis versus in-depth case studies—underscores the need for longitudinal designs to capture the persistent relational effects of environmental stressors on children.

Erol and Köksal (2025) used a quasi-experimental design to evaluate how a structured friendship education program influenced primary school students' psychological well-being and peer interactions. Their intervention, which involved weekly sessions over eight weeks, led to significant improvements in social competence and reductions in peer-related anxiety. In contrast, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2023), using a survey-based approach, explored peer relationships and mental health in children aged 8 to 14. They discovered perceived peer support to be strongly correlated with lower symptoms of anxiety and depression, but confirmed that unsupervised peer interaction might lead to risk-taking and peer-based stress. The two studies indicated that strengths in peer relationships promoted mental well-being but differentiated between controlled peer intervention as part of school settings (Erol and Köksal 2025) and observation using national data (AIFS 2023). The methodological difference between controlled trials and surveys implies that further research must combine controlled intervention studies and naturalistic peer dynamics in various school settings.

Havewala et al. (2021) tested parental support as a moderator of peer influence during adolescence. With a longitudinal design and behavioural and self-report data, they discovered that high parental support buffered adolescents from negative peer influence, particularly in terms of risk behaviour and conformity to the peer group. Supplementing this evidence, Qiu and Shum (2022) probed caregiver emotion regulation and parenting style as predictors of preschoolers' emotional competence. In terms of preschooler standardised emotion assessments

and parental self-report data, they discovered that adaptive emotion regulation by caregivers and an authoritative style were associated with enhanced child emotion regulation and indirectly promoted better peer relationships. Although both studies highlight the root role of parenting in shaping peer relationships, their methodological divergence, adolescent longitudinal tracking versus preschool cross-sectional data, speaks to the subtlety of child development. In particular, Havewala et al. (2021) tested adolescent autonomy and peer conformity concerns, while Qiu and Shum (2022) focused on early emotion scaffolding. Future longitudinal comparison-based studies might map early emotional competence onto adolescent navigation through peer relationships in differing parental contexts.

Hautala and Lehti (2025) examined children's perceived economic disadvantage and its implications for school-based social relationships using student reports and school-based observation data. Economic disadvantage impacted peer relationships negatively through eroded social confidence and stigmatisation. Perhaps counterintuitively, positive family functioning also mediated these relationships by promoting emotional resilience and active engagement with others. In contrast, Wang et al. (2024), in a 20-year systematic literature review, examined peer relationships among adolescents with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). They found that adolescents with multiple ACEs tended to experience disrupted peer attachments and enhanced social withdrawal when early family support was insufficient. Both articles reaffirm the mediating role of family in inter-peer relationship quality during adversity. Hautala and Lehti (2025) provide direct quantification of economic perception and peer outcome association, and Wang et al. (2024) an overarching synthesis of ACEs' influence. The comparison highlights a methodological gap: economic disadvantage-based empirical models would be enriched by including ACE designs for a greater appreciation of the cumulative risk. Palahan (2025) utilised social network analysis to examine how students' social roles influence academic performance and peer connectivity. By mapping social interactions in academic settings, the study found that students who occupied central social positions tended to perform better academically and reported more stable peer relationships. These findings are echoed by Havewala et al. (2021), who also reported that positive peer influence can contribute to prosocial behaviour and academic engagement, especially when moderated by strong parental support. However, while Palahan (2025) emphasises the structural aspects of peer networks through quantitative mapping, Havewala et al. (2021) adopt a behavioural lens to examine relational influence mechanisms. Together, these studies suggest that social position and peer quality are mutually reinforcing and can be shaped by both internal traits and external guidance. The methodological gap here lies in the limited integration of parental or family variables in

social network studies, pointing to the value of hybrid models that combine sociometric and familial data to explain peer-based academic trajectories more holistically.

Chung et al. (2024) and Wang et al. (2024) both offer macro-level insights into how stress and trauma affect family and peer relationships, but their motivations differ. Chung et al. (2024), through their meta-analysis, centred on parenting stress during a global crisis (COVID-19), finding consistent disruptions in family functioning and child-peer interactions. Wang et al. (2024), in contrast, synthesized decades of research on ACEs, identifying patterns of emotional withdrawal, peer victimization, and relational instability. Despite their similar thematic concern with adversity, Chung et al. (2024) highlight acute stress impacts, while Wang et al. (2024) reflect on chronic, cumulative adversities. Both methodologies—systematic reviews—lend strength in synthesising broad evidence but lack real-time behavioural data. Integrating such reviews with observational or experimental research, like that of Erol and Köksal (2025), could offer a richer understanding of how different types of adversity interact over time to shape children's social worlds. The convergence of these findings underscores the need for multi-method, longitudinal studies to capture the layered effects of stress on relational domains.

### **2.3.3 Measures the Church Community has Taken to Promote Healthy Family and Peer Relationships**

Not so many studies have explored the measures the church community is taking to promote healthy family and peer relationships. Available literature has not focused on the general context rather on the church setting.

Benavides et al. (2024) employed a mixed-methods design to test an eHealth intervention's influence on adolescent habits. Its results indicated that formal online platforms promoted more effective peer communication and individual responsibility for health among adolescents. Similarly, Springer (2024) described a church-based e-mentoring program to link Black youth with mental health and academic support. With a community-based participatory approach, Springer learned that church-based online mentoring enhanced access to treatment, intensified peer relationships, and desensitised stigma. Although each study highlights technology's ability to improve adolescent well-being, Benavides et al. (2024) focused on independent habit formation, while Springer (2024) addressed formal support through church partnerships. Interestingly, Benavides et al. used a quasi-experimental design but did not include a longitudinal follow-up, while Springer's study included community evaluation and did not measure specific behavioural change. These disparities highlight a methodological gap: a lack of longitudinal studies with a focus on behavioural change and combining technological and relationship-based church-based interventions for family and peer relationships.

Wray-Lake et al. (2022) conducted a large-scale survey of U.S. adolescents to understand changes in time use and social relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their findings highlighted the importance of family rituals and digital peer interaction in maintaining emotional well-being. In contrast, Crosby et al. (2021) employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how trauma-informed children's ministry practices supported emotional and relational development. The study found that churches implementing trauma-informed training for volunteers significantly improved relational safety for children, particularly those from unstable family backgrounds. While both studies emphasise the significance of relationships, Wray-Lake et al. (2022) relied on adolescent self-reporting during a unique crisis period, limiting generalizability, whereas Crosby et al.'s (2021) focus on church settings provided more targeted, context-specific insights. However, Crosby et al. (2021) did not include youth voices directly, revealing a gap in child-centred perspectives. The divergence in methodologies—quantitative for general patterns vs. qualitative for depth—indicates the potential for mixed-method research exploring both children's experiences and the institutional practices that shape them.

Musya (2024) offered a practical guide for churches incorporating technology in youth mentorship, advocating for structured programs that pair youth with faith leaders via digital tools. Though primarily descriptive, the work illustrates how churches can modernise engagement and strengthen mentoring relationships. In a more empirical context, King et al. (2021) conducted a randomised intervention trial on the LET's CONNECT community mentorship program for adolescents with peer difficulties. The results showed that structured mentorship improved peer connectedness and reduced social anxiety. Though Musya did not offer outcome data, the implementation strategies align with King et al.'s evidence-based mentorship model. The primary methodological contrast lies in King et al.'s rigorous trial versus Musya's (2024) applied, anecdotal account. Still, both advocate for intentional mentorship as a protective factor. This raises a research opportunity: to formally evaluate faith-based digital mentorship models, particularly measuring their effect on family communication and peer resilience among vulnerable youth populations, which remains underexplored in current literature.

Galindo-Silva and Tchunte (2023) used econometric modelling and national survey data from Colombia to assess the role of religious competition in shaping domestic violence trends. Their findings suggest that areas with higher church competition experienced lower rates of domestic abuse, possibly due to increased social accountability and varied support services. Whiteman (2023) assessed post-pandemic church engagement approaches in an American context and

discussed how some churches practised holistic family support approaches, ranging from counselling to financial education, to restore relational stability. Although Whiteman's (2023) study lacked formal statistical testing, it offered pragmatic examples of church reactions to family tension. Conversely, Galindo-Silva and Tchente (2023) presented strong statistical evidence but were short on qualitative characterisation regarding church practices. This methodological imbalance, quantitative over practice-based observation analysis, indicates a gap in research triangulating behavioural change with fine-grained church-based intervention approaches. Future research might investigate how denominational variations and resource endowments influence the success of relationship support initiatives, particularly in diverse populations.

Crosby et al. (2021) and Springer (2024) studied church-based initiatives promoting child well-being with different emphases and methodologies. While Crosby et al. highlighted trauma-informed training for volunteers at church through qualitative interview data from church leaders, Springer studied a church-school collaboration providing e-mentoring to Black youth through mixed methods. Both investigations reported greater emotional safety, peer support, and participation when churches employed structured relational designs despite varying populations and methodologies. However, neither study systematically compared denominational nor geographic area differences. Springer's (2024) model, while encouraging, lacked an active comparison group and therefore diminished causality, while Crosby et al.'s (2021) study was constrained by its small sample and consequently lacked generalizability. These omissions recommend further studies comparing and contrasting how cultural, racial, or societal economic contexts moderate church-based relational program effectiveness. Additionally, additional research needs to investigate how peer relationships are constructed differently in traditional ministry contexts as opposed to technology-based programs, and particularly for youth struggling with trauma while developing their identity.

Sun and Stewart (2023) applied a case study design in the Asia-Pacific Resilient Children and Communities Project to assess school and community partnerships for promoting child well-being through values education and building resilience. They observed enhanced peer collaboration and family involvement when community leaders, including religious figures, were included. Concurrently, King et al. (2021) established through randomised control trials that community-based and especially church-based mentorship programs improved adolescent social connectedness and emotion regulation. While Sun and Stewart (2023) centred on communal resilience and values as prevention, King et al. (2021) spotlighted targeted youth instead of those broadly at risk for social struggles. Comparatively, the approaches shine

complementary light upon each other while also presenting an opportunity: combining universal building of resilience with targeted church-based intervention could meet a wider array of child needs. Sun and Stewart's (2023) case study is methodologically weaker in its movement towards causality than King et al.'s (2021) experimentation, but richer in context. This necessitates a gap in hybrid models where evidence-based mentoring is nested within values-based community contexts assessed with statistical rigour and qualitative depth.

#### **2.4 Research Gaps**

The empirical review reveals significant theoretical, methodological, and practical gaps. Theoretically, most studies are not grounded in theory. This inadequacy raises concerns on the suitability and reliability of the findings established on child well-being. To address this theoretical gap, this study is grounded in the IPARTheory and transformational leadership theory to substantiate how interpersonal and leadership dynamics shape child well-being.

Methodologically, most studies have primarily employed a systematic review of literature, while a few have attempted to integrate a mixed-methods approach. This has resulted in an incomplete picture of the state of child well-being in different contexts, as lived experiences within immediate settings are under-researched. To address this, the current study assumed a single-case study design involving quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This approach provides a more thorough analysis of the lived experiences of the target population for the formulation of a comprehensive approach to improving child well-being.

Practically, available literature does not adequately acknowledge the role of leadership and policy within the context of child well-being. Regarding policy, studies have not looked at the Kenyan context, considering that policies are often country-specific. As such, the current study seeks to address this gap by examining whether Kenya's policy on family welfare and child well-being is sufficient and effective enough. With leadership, past studies have failed to examine the aspect of leadership within the context of child well-being. To address this gap, the current study examines the current leadership of the Catholic Parish in Kenya within the context of child well-being.

#### **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study is based on a multi-theoretical approach that draws on the IPARTheory and the transformational leadership theory. It builds on existing research regarding the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being.

The conceptual framework considers the six domains of child well-being to understand whether they have been adequately achieved, even though their existence is acknowledged by both the government and non-government actors. The six domains considered in the framework are

material wellbeing, health and safety, education, behaviours and risks and the young people's sense of wellbeing. Within the Kenyan context, the family and peer relationships domain has not been addressed with equal measure. Thus, the current study focused on assessing family structures and peer interactions within the Nkoroi Parish community to compare children living with both parents and those living with single parents or other caregivers.

This conceptual framework offers a structured approach to examining the relationships between policy implementation, challenges, and outcomes. By assessing the family and peer relationships domain, the study provides valuable insights on related policy gaps, contributing factors, and available measures.



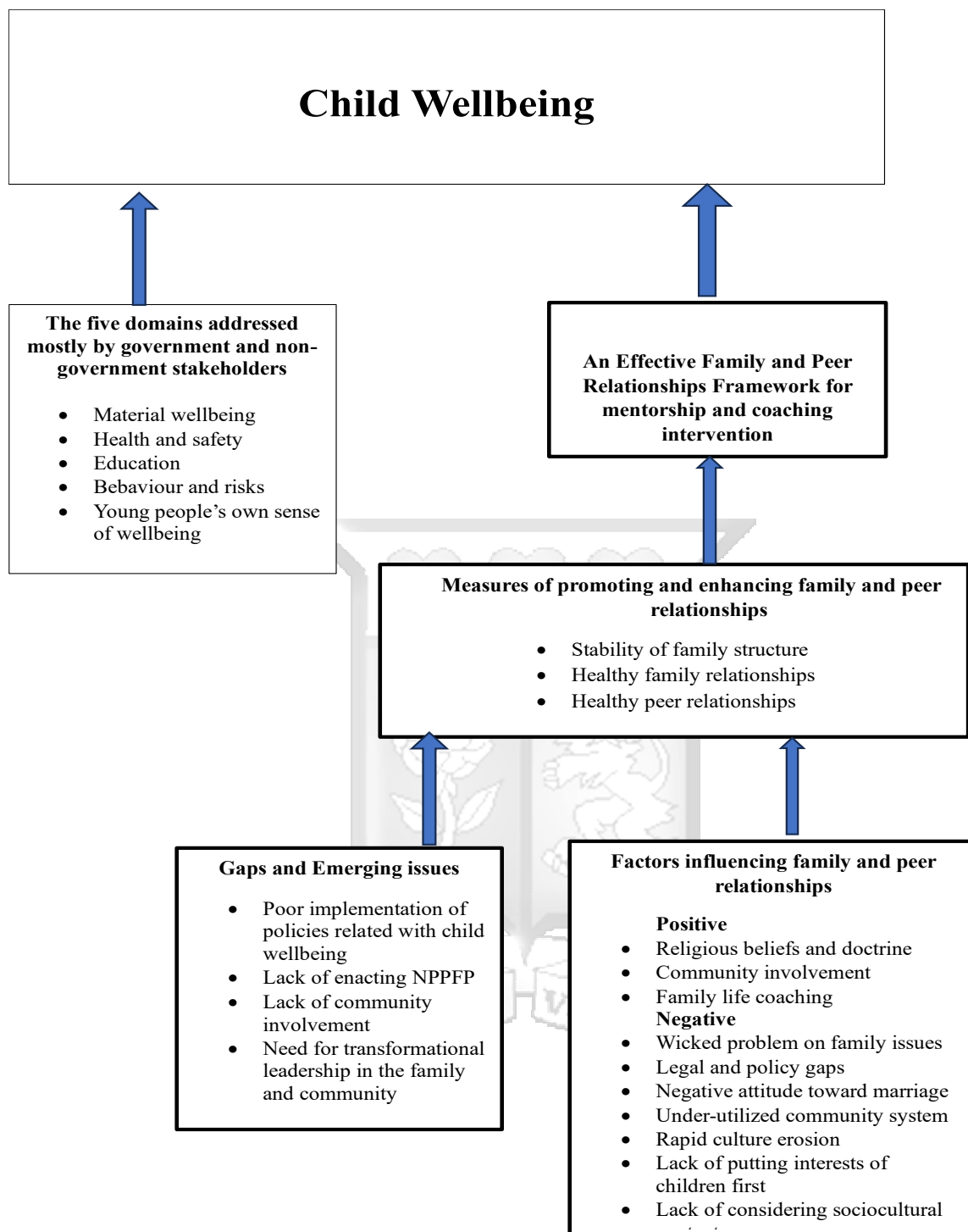


Figure 0.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2025)

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the available academic literature and scholarly articles relevant to the study. It began with a theoretical review, focusing on the IPARTheory and the transformational leadership theory. These theories established the foundation of the study's theoretical framework and academic positioning. The chapter also

reviewed the empirical literature relevant to the study, identifying existing gaps in research. Through this analysis, the chapter highlighted the significant knowledge and methodological gaps that further justify the need for the current study. The chapter concluded with the presentation of a conceptual framework, which illustrates the relationships between key constructs of the current study.



## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's methodological approach, which comprises the research philosophy, research design, population and sampling, data collection procedure, data analysis methods, data presentation, and ethical considerations.

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

This research adopted the interpretivist philosophy, which focuses on understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of research participants in the cultural and social contexts (Chowdhury, 2014; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). The interpretivist philosophy is based on the idea that reality is neither fixed nor objective, but is instead socially constructed and interpreted through individual and group perspectives. Overall, the interpretivist paradigm provides a framework for understanding a phenomenon through the lens of human interpretation and meaning-making.

This philosophy is well suited to the current study as it aligns with the study's objective of assessing the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being. By adhering to the framework's focus on the lived experiences of individuals, the study provides an understanding on how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being, on the factors that influence family and peer relationships domain of child well-being, and on the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships. Besides, by providing subjective meanings and experiences, the study closes methodological gaps in the literature as it provides first-hand lived experiences to substantiate the existing literature that has heavily employed systematic literature reviews.

### 3.3 Research Design

The study adopted the single case study research design for multiple reasons. One reason is that there was a limited body of existing research on the Catholic Church's contribution to child well-being, particularly within the specific context of Nkoroi. This necessitated an exploratory approach to understand the unique features and complexities of this case study (Stake, 2008). Secondly, a single-case study design allowed for a deep dive into the lived experiences of families, children, and church leaders associated with Nkoroi Catholic Church, providing a nuanced understanding of their perspectives on family and peer relationships (Merriam, 2009). Finally, given the interpretivist focus on social context, this design enabled an examination of how Nkoroi Catholic Church interacts with its surrounding community to potentially influence family and peer dynamics (Flick, 2014). Nkoroi Catholic parish was purposively selected since

the researcher had been part of the community and participated in the mentorship and coaching programs. This selection aligned with the interpretivist approach, focusing on a case that offers a rich context for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, the researcher's accessibility to the site and participants strengthens the case selection rationale.

### **3.4 Population Sampling**

Given the unknown size of the population associated with Nkoroi Catholic parish, this research employed purposive sampling with a saturation approach. Purposive sampling allowed for the selection of information-rich participants who could offer valuable insights into the research question (Patton, 2015). Saturation refers to the point at which no new themes or significant insights emerge from further data collection, typically achieved after interviewing 12-13 participants. (Hennink, 2022). This approach ensures data collection reaches a point of diminishing returns, optimising the sample size for a qualitative study. The target population for this research encompassed families, children, adolescents, church leaders, and local authority figures associated with Nkoroi Catholic Church. The sampling strategy aimed to capture diverse perspectives within this population.

#### **3.4.1 Sampling Strategy**

The research involved a combination of individual interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich and nuanced data. Individual interviews involved 95 participants distributed across the three categories of focus. Notably, they included 52 parents selected purposively from the church's congregation, 35 children from families that recognised members of the Parish, and 18 leaders from the Parish. Focus groups were divided into two, with each consisting of members of small Christian communities within Nkoroi Catholic parish (The groups working with children included Small Christian community, Pontifical Missionary Childhood animators, Catechists and the county children's office).

This sampling strategy ensured representation from various stakeholder groups within the case study. Families provided insights into family dynamics and how the church interacts with family life. Interviewing children directly allowed for understanding their experiences within the Catholic parish community. The parish leaders and local authorities offered perspectives on the church's programs and their potential impact on families and peers. Finally, focus groups with members of Small Christian Communities fostered a more interactive environment to explore shared experiences and collective interpretations of the church's influence. Perspectives and lived experiences of all the groups were instrumental in understanding how the Kenyan government is addressing the family and peer relationships domain of child well-

being, as well as the factors influencing the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being.

### **3.4.2 Justification for Sample Size**

A sample size of 95 participants distributed across the three cohorts was considered adequate for various reasons. The sample aligned with the interpretivist approach, which emphasises understanding the lived experiences of a well-defined group rather than generalizability to a larger population. (Willig, 2017). Thus, it was easier to explore the lived experiences of 35 children, 52 parents, and 18 church leaders compared to a large group. The saturation approach further supports 95 as a sufficient sample size to adequately capture the complexity of the phenomenon under study.

However, the study acknowledged the potential vulnerabilities of the population and outlined the steps for the protection of vulnerable participants and risk mitigation. While this study was considered low-risk in terms of physical harm, the researcher acknowledged that the participants involved, families and children in the Nkoroi Catholic Parish, constituted a vulnerable population. They may face risks of coercion, exploitation, or harm, particularly given the sensitive nature of family and peer relationships and their potential impact on child wellbeing. To address this, the study implemented the necessary measures to protect participants and mitigate any possible risks (see Annex 3).

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

The research employed a mixed-methods approach in gathering data. Notably, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered to achieve a rich and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study. (Greene, 2018). This triangulation of data sources was instrumental in enhancing the research's validity and reliability. (Denzin, 2018).

#### **3.5.1 Qualitative Data Collection**

Semi-structured Interviews were used to collect qualitative data. Notably, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with families (parents and children), children (adolescents), church and local government leaders, and members of Small Christian Communities. An interview guide, developed through a comprehensive literature review and piloted within the Nkoroi Catholic Church context, ensured consistency while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. (Flick, 2014). Interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. This approach allowed for in-depth exploration of participants lived experiences and perspectives on family and peer relationships within the church community. (Willig, 2017).

### **3.5.2 Quantitative Data Collection**

A survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data. Notably, a short, standardised questionnaire was administered to participants to gather quantitative data on family structures, relationship quality (using validated scales), and peer group dynamics. This quantitative data complemented the qualitative findings and provided additional insights into the participants' experiences, allowing for some degree of generalisation within the Nkoroi Catholic Church context. (Creswell, 2018).

### **3.5.3 Justification for Multimethod Approach**

The combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods aligned with the interpretivist philosophy. This approach acknowledged the subjective nature of reality while allowing for the exploration of shared patterns and experiences within the case study. (Willig, 2017). The qualitative data provided an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives, while the quantitative data offers some level of generalizability within the Nkoroi Catholic Church setting.

### **3.5.4 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted with a small sample from the target population within Nkoroi Catholic Church. This pilot study was to test the research instruments (interviews and questionnaires) for clarity, comprehensiveness, and appropriateness in the specific context. The pilot study allowed for the refinement of the instruments before the main data collection phase, enhancing the research design's rigour. (Polit, 2017).

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The researcher used a multi-step data analysis process to extract meaningful insights from the collected information. Qualitative analysis first, the audio was transcribed and translated into English. Qualitative data analysis software, NVIVO, was then used to organise the transcripts for thematic analysis. To ensure the reliability of coding, the researcher collaborated with a research assistant, resolving any discrepancies through discussion. The coded themes were used to identify patterns and connections across different participant groups (families, children, and leaders focusing on how participants describe the church's influence on their family dynamics and peer interactions. For the quantitative data from the questionnaires, the researcher employed various statistical methods to paint a more complete picture. Primarily, descriptive statistics were used to summarise key characteristics of the data to understand family structures, relationship quality scores reported by participants, and peer group dynamics.

### **3.7 Research Quality**

Research quality was achieved through reliability and validity testing.

#### **3.7.1 Reliability**

Reliability was achieved through the implementation of standardised data collection instruments (Taherdoost, 2016). A reliability test was necessary to ensure that the data collection instrument was consistent, less prone to human error, and could lead to more dependable and accurate results. Semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion scripts were meticulously developed to ensure consistency across participants and minimise interviewer bias. Additionally, inter-coder reliability was established during thematic analysis. This entailed employing multiple coders with established coding protocols and definitions. This approach reduced the influence of individual interpretations and strengthened the replicability of the research. Furthermore, a comprehensive audit trail was maintained to document all methodological decisions and data analysis procedures. This meticulous record-keeping facilitated transparency and allowed for potential replication of the study by other researchers.

#### **3.7.2 Validity**

Validity was addressed through a multi-pronged approach, allowing the researcher to apply multiple strategies to ensure accurate and reliable findings (Bannigan & Watson, 2009; Shannon-Baker, 2015). Notably, validity was addressed to ensure the intended abstract concept was accurately captured and the subject matter was adequately covered. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit key informants with the specific knowledge and experience relevant to the research question. This ensured that the data collected reflects the lived experiences of individuals directly engaged with the issues under investigation. Furthermore, triangulation was achieved by utilising a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. By gathering data from various perspectives and identifying convergent patterns across these sources, the study enhanced the credibility of its findings. Finally, member checking was conducted to verify the accuracy of the data interpretation with key informants. This crucial step allows participants to offer feedback and ensures that the researchers' interpretations align with the participants' experiences, fostering confidence in the validity of the research.

This study was committed to respecting the welfare, rights, beliefs, customs, and cultural heritage of all participants. Informed consent was obtained in a language that participants understood, ensuring voluntary participation. The research team demonstrated cultural sensitivity by adapting procedures to align with local norms and beliefs, while also engaging

with community leaders where appropriate. Participants' privacy was protected through anonymised data and secure storage. Potential risks to welfare, including emotional or psychological harm, were mitigated by offering necessary support. These measures ensure that the study was conducted with respect and consideration for all participants' cultural and personal contexts.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Strathmore Business School after the ethical review committee approval and applied for a license from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI) to collect data. The respondents were informed and assured that the intended purpose of the study and ensure confidentiality. A participant consent form was issued. The researchers remained obliged to observe confidentiality of what was shared during the interviews through coding the information while analysing the data. The researcher ensured that plagiarism was avoided, used only data that was collected and acknowledged those who contributed to the study. All participants received a token of a notebook and a pen. Once the manuscript of the research is published, it will be made available using a link with a few hardcover reports availed at the parish office, and dissemination events will be organised where the church population will be sensitised on the findings of the study.

### **3.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has outlined the research methodology applied in the study. It has presented the research philosophy, the research design, the target population, the sampling techniques, and the sample size. The data collection methods and data analysis procedures have also been discussed. Furthermore, the chapter has addressed issues related to research quality, focusing on reliability and validity. Lastly, the chapter has examined the potential ethical considerations of the study, ensuring that all research activities were conducted in a manner that respects the rights and well-being of participants.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents findings from the survey conducted to assess the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being using the case study of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese. It includes descriptive analyses encompassing frequency distributions, means, percentages and visual representations (bar charts, pie charts, and histograms) to summarise the demographic characteristics and principal survey responses. It also includes a thematic analysis involving open-ended responses from focus group discussions and interviews.

### **4.2 Response Rate**

The research achieved a 100% response rate across all participant groups. Specifically, all 35 children (aged 9–17), 18 church leaders, and 52 parents who participated in answering questionnaires and one-on-one interviews. This total participation: 35 children, 18 leaders, and 52 parents, demonstrates exceptional engagement from the Nkoroi Catholic Church community. The absence of non-responses among those solicited ensures a fully representative dataset, strengthening the reliability of findings.

#### **4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

This section presents demographic characteristics of respondents based on the three participant groups of parents, adolescents (children), and community leaders. The demographic data encompasses characteristics, such as age, gender, marital status, education, and job for parents. For adolescents or children, demographics covered include age, gender, and school grade level. For community leaders, demographics considered are sex, leadership role, and years of experience.

##### **4.2.1.1 Demographic Profile of Parents**

To understand the contextual features of parents, the study collected responses from parents on their backgrounds.

###### **4.2.1.1.1 Age of Parents**

Parents' age distribution is presented in Figure 1 below and is classified into five-year intervals. As shown, most respondents were in the 50-54 age group, meaning that most parents surveyed were middle-aged. There are relatively few younger (15-34) and older (60+) parents. This distribution points out that interventions geared towards family and peer relationships should consider the relevant predominant age group to tailor their responses accordingly. Importantly, the younger parents' interest in surveying was low, indicating a possible gap that deserves exploration. The age distribution of parents participating in the survey was considered

essential, providing insights into the age distribution of respondents, revealing some demographic characteristics, and how various age groups view and influence family and peer relationships.

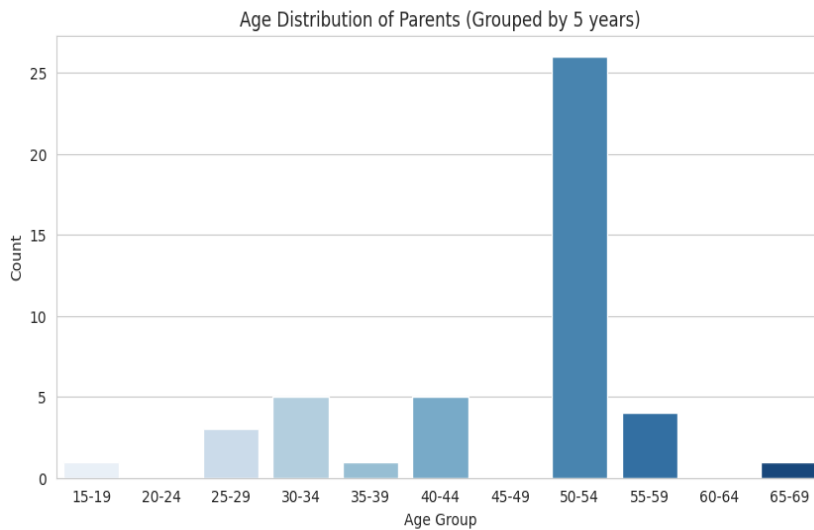


Figure 0.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.1.2 Gender Distribution of Parents

The study also assessed the gender composition of parents to ascertain the balance between male and female respondents. Gender representation was considered vital in investigating parental functions, decision-making, and family dynamics. Figure 2 below shows the proportion of male and female respondents who participated in the study. As shown, the gender distribution of parents was moderately balanced, with 52.2% male and 47.8% female respondents. Such parity may allow for a richer variety of ideas on parenting experiences. Only a slight majority of respondents being male may indicate that fathers were a bit more involved, with possible repercussions for gender roles in family interactions. Further analyses may be required to find out if gender accounts for a difference in perspectives on parenting and family relationships.

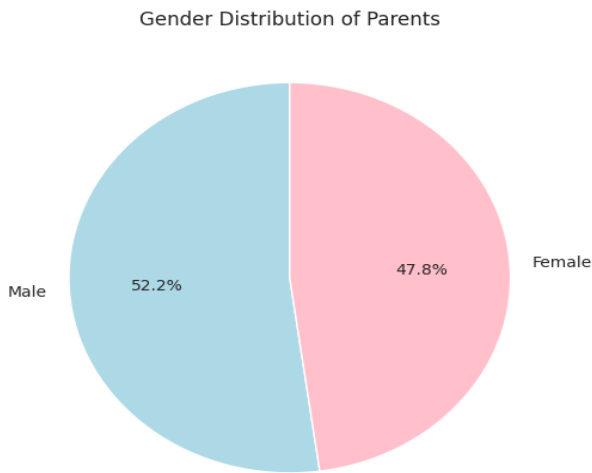


Figure 0.2: Gender Distribution of Parents

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.1.3 Marital Status of Parents

The survey investigated the marital status of the parents to interpret family settings that might influence parenting styles and household dynamics. In this regard, marital status would be a variable on parental roles, economic security, and the social support system. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of marital status among surveyed parents. As shown, a significant proportion of respondents were married as compared to other categories. Notably, the marriage category had the highest number of respondents. A small minority of those interviewed termed themselves as divorced, single, or widowed/widower. This finding suggests that the majority of the children studied are being brought up in a two-parent setting, which may likely influence family decision-making and support systems. However, the presence of single, divorced, and widowed parents also reflects diversity in family structures, which may pose other implications on parental experience and challenge.

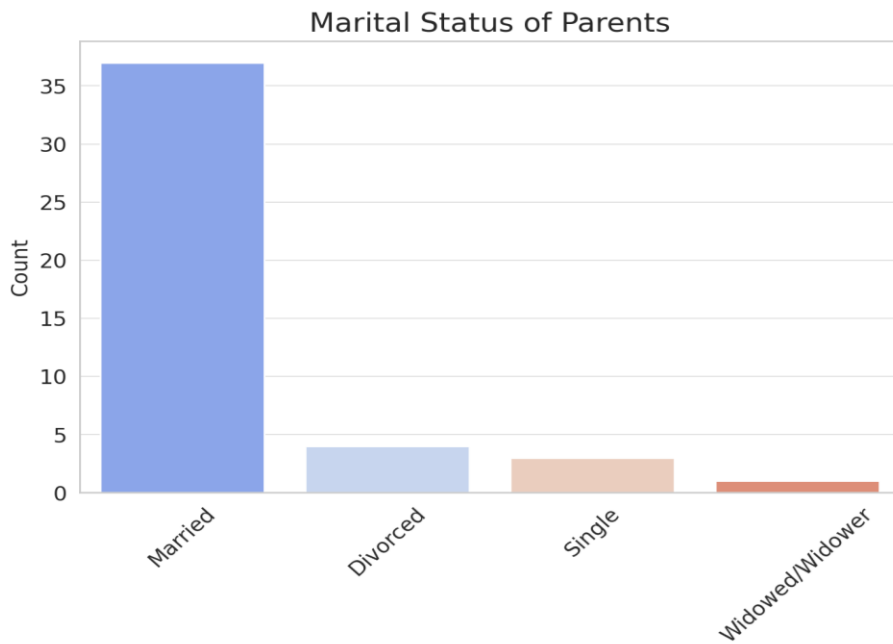


Figure 0.3: Marital Status of Parents

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.1.4 Number of children in household

Table 4.1 below is based on the frequency distribution of the number of children among the surveyed households. As shown, households with three children were the most common among the respondents, followed by families with two children. However, very few accounted for households with four or more. For most respondents, a small portion reported not having children, which may include parents whose children do not reside with them. The number of children in a household was considered the main demographic variable that affects family structure, financial planning, and parenting responsibilities. It reflects the family life and indicates their different demands according to the number of children in a household.

Table 0.1: Number of children in household

Number of Children	Distribution(frequency)
0	3
1	2
2	12
3	21
4	4
5	4

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.1.5 Education Level Distribution of parents

Figure 4.3 captures the education level of the parents surveyed. The bulk of the parents surveyed either holds a university degree or a college degree, suggesting that the present sample is mostly educated. Few parents have secondary educational qualifications, primary education, or just a diploma. This infers the existence of the possible connection between parental education and their involvement in their children's academic progress. Parental education was considered an influencing factor for them to be involved in their children's academic endeavours. The distribution ascertains the influence level of parental education on learning support.

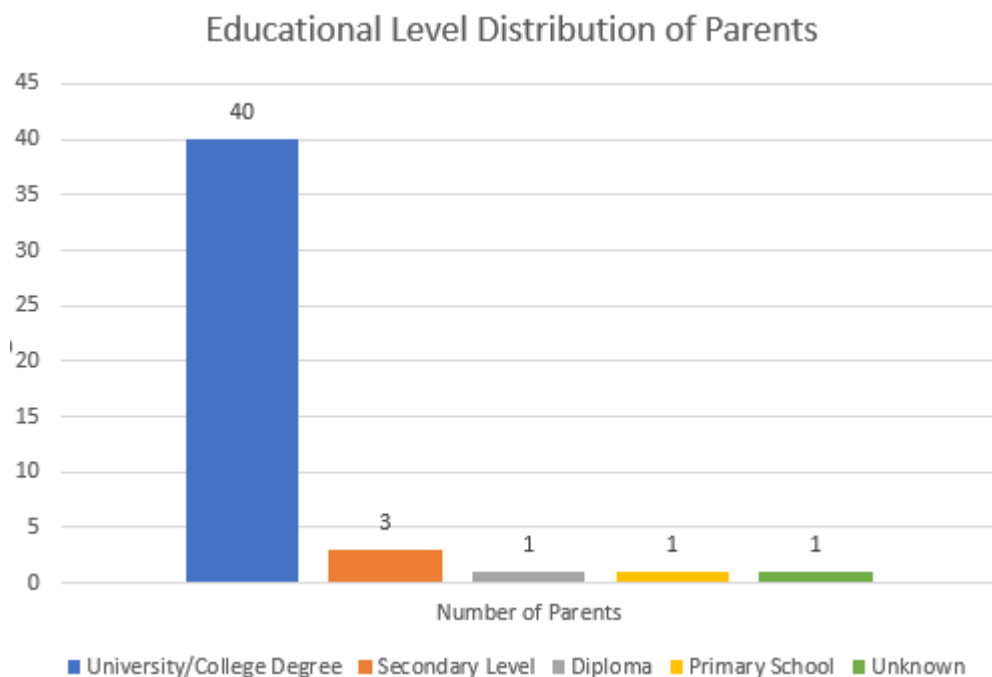


Figure 0.4: Education Level Distribution of Parents

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.1.6 Occupation (Categorisation into employment sectors.)

Among the parents in this study, occupations are diverse, with as many as 10 of them being unaccounted for in their occupations. Teaching is followed by farming, civil service, and business-related activities as the main occupational choice. Other professions are banking, healthcare, IT consultancy, administration, and skilled trades like plumbing and carpentry. These differences in parents' occupations suggest a variety of economic backgrounds that could vary aspects such as educational support, income levels, and parental participation in children's academic progress. Again, this makes clear that there are different professional experiences in the parents' lives, which could also shape perspectives on education and child development.

#### 4.2.1.2 Demographic Profile of Children

A survey was given to all adolescent respondents in order to get their ages, gender, and school grade level, all of which are critical demographic information relevant to their social development and peer interactions.

##### 4.2.1.2.1 Age Distribution of Children

Most children surveyed belonged to an age bracket, peaking around fifteen years. Child age distribution points toward early to mid-adolescence. Figure 4.4 presents the age distribution under its analysis, such that peaking at the age of fourteen, has fewer younger and older respondents. Such a distribution would have relevance in analysing aspects such as academic performance, psychosocial development, and parental engagement in education

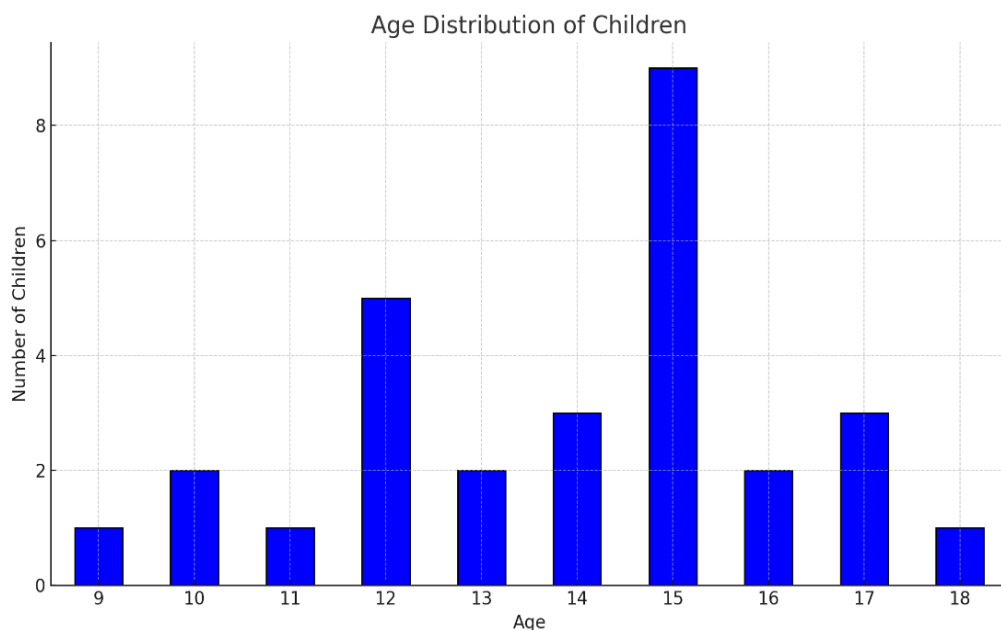


Figure 0.5: Age Distribution of Children

Source: Researcher (2025)

##### 4.2.1.2.2 Distribution of Children by Sex

Understanding the distribution of children by sex is a big step in analysing possible differences in such areas as academic engagement, parental expectations, and social experiences. From the data shown in the above figure (Figure 6), the sample would have 55.2% male and 44.8% female respondents. This means that there is a reasonably well-balanced representation for a fair analysis between genders in terms of academic participation and parental involvement.

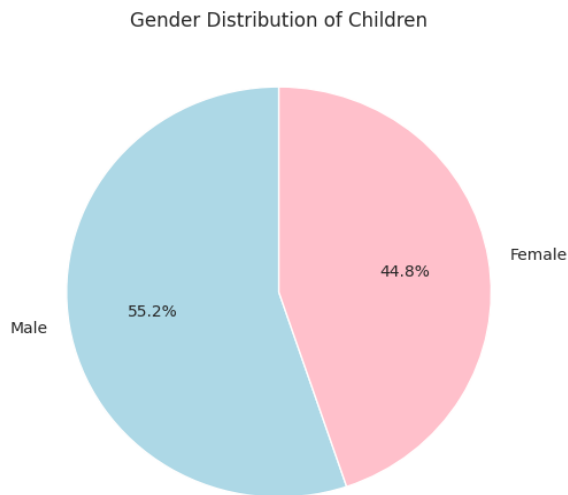


Figure 0.6: Gender Distribution of Children

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.2.3 Grade Level Distribution

Table 4.12 below presents the grade level distribution of child respondents. As shown, most of the respondents (18) did not indicate their grade level. Among those who did, the distribution is quite evenly spread out, with Form 1, Form 2, and Form 4 each having three students, while Form 3 has two. This distribution means that the study captures perspectives across academic stages, providing analysis of trends in parental support versus student performance across the secondary school years. The distribution of children across grade levels gives an indication of their academic progress and at what stage they face various problems of learning. This distribution, therefore, serves as a criterion for assessing the influence of parental involvement and other factors on academic performance across various levels.

Table 0.2: Grade Level Distribution

Grade Level	Distribution(frequency)
Unknown	18
Form 1	3
Form 2	3
Form 3	3
Form 4	2

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.2.4 Distribution of parental closeness of Children

The distribution of the responses of children as regards their perceived closeness to their parents was sort in the study. Family context plays a major role in emotional and social

development, and this aspect relates to understanding how well the child will understand and give benefits or inputs from his support at home, possibly influencing behaviour patterns, self-esteem, and overall well-being.

Figure 4.6 below shows how children evaluated their relationship with their parents as per the scale from "Slightly Close" to "Very Close." Most of the respondents (16 out of 29) reported that they felt "Very Close" with their parents, suggesting high emotional closeness along with parental support in several households. Another noticeable part rated it "Moderately Closest" (8 respondents) and "Quite Close"(4 respondents), which is still generally reflective of an atmosphere in family relations that is positive.

Only one respondent chose "Slightly Close," which may signify that there is either emotional distance or some form of difficulty in the communication between the parents and that child in that household. There was no answer for a category like "Not Close" or any similar category, which is already considered to be a good sign of the general state of parental relationships in the study population.

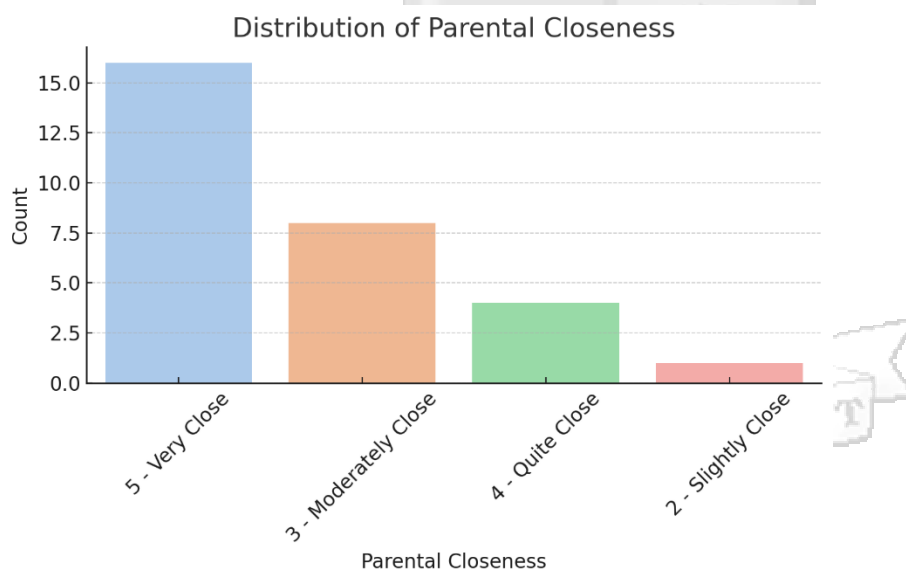


Figure 0.7: Distribution of Parental Closeness

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.3 Demographic Profile of Leaders

The demographic profiles of leaders who participated in the study are presented below.

##### 4.2.1.3.1 Distribution of Leaders by Sex

Figure 4.7 below presents the gender distribution of leaders who participated in the study. As shown, men (75%) leaders who took part in the study were more compared to women (25%). This finding indicates that men dominate the leadership in the scope of the study. Examining the distribution of leadership by sex sheds light on the representation and diversity pertaining

to leadership roles. Therefore, this area is essential to understand and gauge inclusivity and explore the discrimination that may exist in leadership opportunities.

Gender Distribution of Leaders

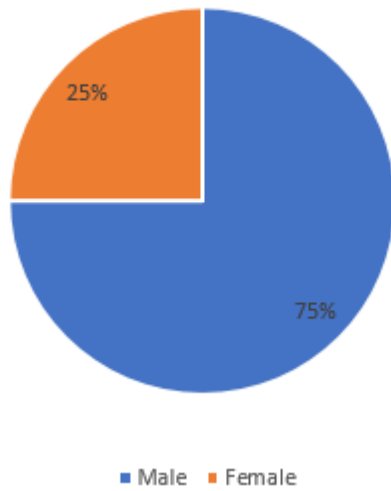


Figure 0.8: Gender Distribution of Leaders

Source: Researcher (2025)

#### 4.2.1.3.2 Position/Title (e.g., Priest, Elder, Chief)

The findings reveal a diverse range of leadership positions, with secretaries and youth leaders being the most frequently mentioned roles. Other leadership titles, such as village elders, Jumuiya leaders, and youth matrons, were also represented. However, a notable portion of respondents did not specify their leadership position. This variation in leadership roles suggests a broad spectrum of responsibilities within the community, which may impact leadership effectiveness and representation.

#### 4.2.1.3.3 Years in Leadership Role

Table three above shows that most of the leaders have two to three years' experience, an indication of fairly recent enter into leaderships. A few people had stayed longer, one of the leaders reporting over ten years of experience.

Table 0.3: Years in Leadership Role

Years in Leadership Role	Distribution(frequency)
2	4
3	4
4	1
5	1
7	1

Source: Researcher (2025)

### 4.3 Thematic Analysis Findings

This section presents findings from the thematic analysis conducted on qualitative data.

Table 0.4: Findings from the Thematic Analysis

Objectives	Themes	Subthemes
To evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP) (2019).	Government Policy on family and child welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay in the Implementation of the policy</li> <li>• Limited Visibility of the government Support structure</li> </ul>
	Awareness and Sensitisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low public awareness of child rights and family support services</li> <li>• The role of the extended and single-parent family in child nurturing</li> <li>• The significance of early home-based development</li> </ul>
To identify the factors that influence the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing.	Family and Children support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stability in Marriage</li> <li>• Support from partners in nurturing children</li> <li>• Emotional support</li> </ul>
	Presence of Father and Mother in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meals together</li> <li>• Intimate Relationship with a small Group of friends</li> <li>• Easy communication</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> </ul>
	Children's Connection with family members and peers	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Support given to parents</li> <li>• Child connections</li> <li>• Education and opportunities</li> <li>• Shared resources, time and finances in parenting children.</li> </ul>
	Economic Stability	
	Benefits from the teachings and doctrine of the catholic church.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacrament of marriage</li> <li>• Social Responsibility</li> <li>• Care for Children</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Social Support</li> </ul>
	Small Christian Communities (SCCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture of shared values based on the Catholic Faith</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged in people's lives</li> <li>• Provided Support services like mentorship and coaching</li> </ul>
To establish the measures, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be replicated to enhance child wellbeing in Kenya.	Strong leadership within the parish community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising the involvement of Children</li> </ul>

Source: Researcher (2025)

### 4.3.1 Government Performance on Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Wellbeing

The study sought to evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships of child well-being through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the NPFPP 2019. Findings concerning this objective are presented below.

#### 4.3.1.1 Government policy and legal framework

Government policies and legal frameworks are of considerable importance, providing guiding principles that facilitate the smooth administration. Yet, the participants were not aware of any family policy.

##### 4.3.1.1.1 Delay in Implementation of Family Policy

All participants raised concerns about the slow pace at which the government has operated concerning key frameworks designed to strengthen families while at the same time protecting children. The NPFPP 2019, despite its enormous potential, has been cited often as having stalled at the drafting stage. Respondents felt that because no clear implementation plans were

available and no awareness campaigns were programmed, the impact of this and other child welfare policies was limited. Even without a fully enacted framework, most families remain unaware of their rights or available supporting systems. Here, it was thought, lies a vacuum which is now being filled, not evenly, by faith-based organisations and community initiatives.

#### **4.3.1.2 Family and Children Support Service**

Support for children and families emerged as a strong recurrent theme from the interviews, with many participants emphasising that home is the first layer of the child's emotional, social, and moral grounding. However, the study noted that there is a lack of support services from the government. Thus, stable structures of families, whether nuclear or extended, were viewed as nurturing capacities of children to build self-esteem, develop communication skills, and exhibit positive social behaviour. Both mother and father features are regarded as key determinants in child development, while the single-parent family is recognised for incurring a peculiar set of challenges and requiring additional inputs in ensuring comprehensive care for the children. The extended family was described as extremely important for the nurturing of culture, identity, and value systems to fill certain gaps left by the nuclear arrangement.

Parent Respondent: “We need to have means and ways of helping our children right from the home before they go out, so that when they go out, they are confident of themselves.”

Child Respondent: “At Sunday school, we learn things in a way we understand... we play and also talk about God with our friends.”

Leader Respondent: “Family forms a very important unit... children learn about communication, within the family... to use to form relationships.”

Considered to supplement the family endeavours, the Church plays a major role in structured support services through Sunday school, mentoring, youth groups, and Christian community forums. Here, spiritual formation, social interaction, and life skills development are offered. Alumni events, career days, sports tournaments, and youth camps were held in high regard for helping children remain engaged, form healthy peer relationships, and receive concrete adult role modelling. Although community and church efforts are robustly in place, participants noted significant voids in formal-state support-especially in child protection services-arguing that government agencies must do better to coordinate and complement the grassroots family-based initiatives.

##### **4.3.1.2.1 The Role of the Extended and Single-Parent Family in Child Nurturing**

Participants appreciated the extended and single-parent family as the most cherished pillar for child development. Even though nuclear families were believed to be the best, extended

families helped in covering distances between cultures, emotions, and relationships. Grandparents, uncles, and aunts had much importance in converting the process of identity and values for children, as it aided them in acquiring their broader sense of belonging. Single-parent families are recognised as having more challenges than others and require purposeful, emotional, financial, or relational support to nurture children optimally.

#### **4.3.1.2.2 The Significance of Early Home-Based Development**

An important insight shared by participants was that the early foundations for emotional and social development are deeply rooted within the home environment. Home, finally, is the most basic "classroom" where children learn communication, emotional control, sharing, and how to relate to others. The intentional nurturing by parents during these formative years indeed offers better chances for children to develop higher self-esteem and good interpersonal skills. This early home-based development contributed positively to later life successes in peer relationship formation, management of external social pressures, and expression in the world with confidence. Thus, participants must ensure that parents are emotionally available and that they develop an open line of communication for children to have a good attempt at understanding the world beyond the family set-up.

#### **4.3.1.3 A Critical Appraisal of Kenya's Legal and Policy Framework on Child Well-being**

To supplement findings from the field survey, a critical appraisal of Kenya's legal and policy framework on child well-being was conducted using secondary data involving policy documents and policy reviews. A total of 11 policy documents and policy reviews focusing on Kenya's legal and policy framework on child well-being were selected for this critical appraisal. Jointly, they acknowledged that Kenya's legal and policy framework on child well-being is comprehensive, consisting of the 2010 Constitution (Article 53), the Children Act 2022, the Kenya National Children Policy 2010, the National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya 2015 – 2022, the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), and numerous other policies and programmes (Nilofer & Rabiltoosaporn, 2024; Aoko, 2022; Amka Africa Justice Initiative, 2025; Centre For Reproductive Rights & Federation Of Women Lawyers-Kenya, 2007; Government of Kenya et al., 2015; Maroun et al., 2006; Muthuri, 2020; "Legal and Policy Framework: Early and Unintended Pregnancy and the Right to Education in Kenya," 2019; (National Council for Children's Services, 2015; National Council on the Administration of Justice, 2023; The African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, 2018). The documents further recognise that despite Kenya's comprehensive legal and policy framework on child well-being, thousands of children across the country are still

exposed to abuse, lack of parental care, sexual exploitation, and violence due to challenges in implementation and enforcement. They acknowledge that issues of resource allocation, lack of coordination, poorly targeted implementation, inadequate capacity building, lack of data for tracking progress, and limited public awareness and engagement remain obstacles to the effective implementation and enforcement of the country's comprehensive legal and policy framework on child well-being.

Regarding resource allocation, the policy documents underscore inadequate funding and resources as impediments to the effective implementation of child well-being laws and policies, causing gaps in service delivery and enforcement. They also highlight that the lack of coordination between different state actors and non-state actors leads to an overlap of responsibilities and inefficiencies in the implementation of these policies. Additionally, the policy documents stress inadequacies in capacity building, with the Kenyan government providing little to no support to social workers and other stakeholders, such as the church community involved in child protection. The policy documents also note that the lack of data to track progress, identify gaps, and inform policy development hinders the implementation. Finally, they reveal that limited public awareness and engagement on child rights undermine the culture of child protection. Overall, these challenges suggest the government's failure to actively fulfil its mandate of ensuring the effective implementation of policies.

#### **4.3.2 Factors Influencing Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Wellbeing**

The study sought to identify the factors influencing the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. Findings regarding this objective are presented below.

##### **4.3.2.1 Presence of Father and Mother in the Family**

The study evaluated the family composition of respondents as a critical factor for understanding how parents view family relationships. Family composition generates many influences on a child's well-being, such as emotional stability, discipline, and overall development. Based on this understanding, the second objective of the study was to assess how much family relationships shaped the well-being of children.

Figure 4.8 below shows the distribution of various family types across the respondents. As shown, the majority of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, with just a few in extended families, single-parent households, and other categories. This indicates that the majority of the children in the study area were raised in a nuclear family. However, the other family structures, like single-parent households and extended families, reflect the nature of the parish community with diverse needs of families and children. For single-parent families, suggestions were made to offer them necessary support in nurturing their children, especially in covering the absent

parent. While emotional safety is important for a child, economic safety is essential for most parents, alongside leaders' discussions that will concern community support for vulnerable families.

The existence of both parents in a home was noted as a major determinant of how children fare in their interactions with family and peers. Respondents indicated that the children in a two-parent family gain emotional stabilisation, role modelling, and a more significant level of security.

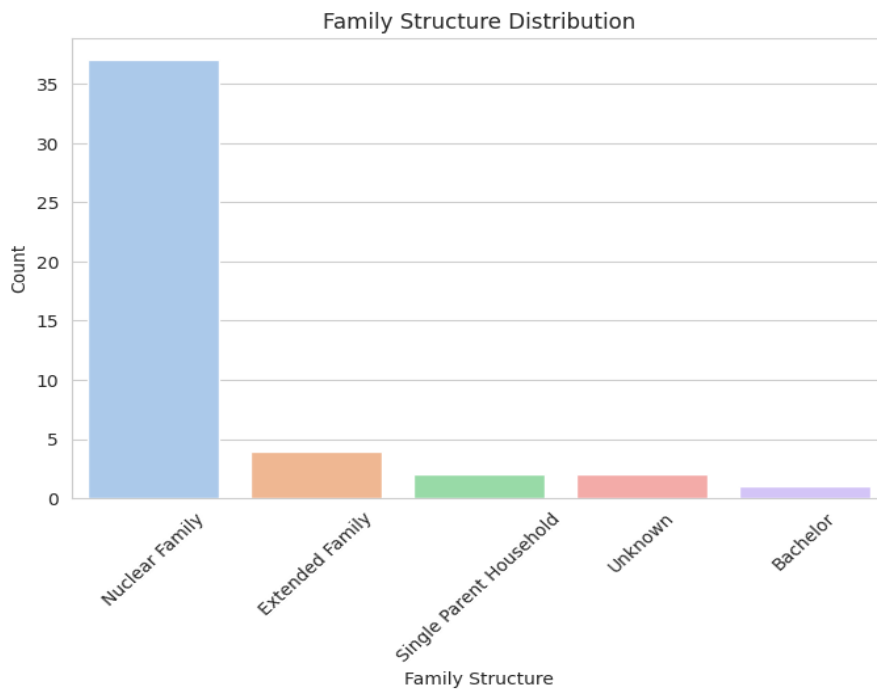


Figure 0.9: Family Structure Distribution

Source: Researcher (2025)

The interaction between both parents was said to provide a good deal of overlap and subtlety in the support given: fathers gave structure, discipline, and provision, while mothers were nurturing in terms of emotional support, prayer, and daily care. Wherever both parents were available and engaged, children showed greater interactive skills and fewer behavioural problems.

Parent Respondent: “If both parents are there, children grow knowing how to balance emotions and respect both genders—it makes a difference.”

Child Respondent: “I like when my mum and dad come to church together... it makes me happy and I feel safe.”

Leader Respondent: “The father is the priest of the home... the mother is the prayer warrior. When both are present, the children are more stable.”

Participants stated, however, that single-parent families, especially ones headed by women, experience additional challenges in addressing the emotional and developmental needs of their children. Extended family support with intentional inclusion of father or mother figures as supporting actors becomes eminent, as emphasised by respondents. The missing parent was noted to have an impact on the child's self-image and relationship with others in an assertive manner. Children who are raised without influence from either of their parents need to be helped more so in developing healthy peer relationships and a clear understanding of gender roles.

#### **4.3.2.2 Stability in Marriage**

Stability in marriage contributes to what children experience. For example, parents are present in a marriage, contributing significantly to the psychological and emotional well-being of children. It creates a safe base for children to develop since the provision is given to both partners in forming their emotional attachment toward each other. It thereby minimizes domestic conflicts, and creates a routine and actual sense of safety, which are important for a child's physical development; furthermore, this model on stable marriages will also eventually show children how to relate to each other, thus determining how they would develop their future relations and understanding in terms of commitments.

#### **4.3.2.3 Support by Partners in Nurturing Children**

However, the second factor concerned was co-parenting, that is, how much shared responsibility, both disciplinary and financial, maternal and paternal, as well as in spiritual nurture, would equally benefit the children in family development. Mothers were the emotional anchors in most considerations, while fathers were associated with provision and protection. When these two roles were synchronised, children were brought up with a concrete understanding of the society's reserved gender roles and relationship dynamics within the family.

#### **4.3.2.4 Emotional Support**

Emotional supports from the family play a very important role in developing well-being among children. It engenders a sense of security and trust, as well as self-confidence. Parents' perceptions regarding the emotional support provided to their children were examined.

Table 0.5: Perceived Emotional Support in Family

<b>Emotional Support</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Always</b>	47.83
<b>Sometimes</b>	36.96

<b>Unknown</b>	10.87
<b>Rarely</b>	4.35

Source: Researcher (2025)

The data analysis above shows that slightly less than half (47.83%) of the respondents put forth the idea that they, as parents, always avail emotional support for their children, while 36.96% for using such support at times. Conversely, a mere 4.35% on exceptional occasions made use of that kind of emotional support, while 10.87% have not declared what they thought about that. Overall, these findings show that most parents believed themselves to be emotionally supportive; however, this was not necessarily constant among some parents. Therefore, this calls for further actions like programs and interventions geared towards building strong emotional bonding within families and goes in line with this study in promoting healthy relationships in families.

Emotional support was one of the areas identified as a critical problem for a well childhood among family members. They all agreed that parents were encouraged to have open lines of communication and express affection, while they also shared some part of their time with their children. Because there is emotional support, children express themselves well, and they feel secure and accepted in the social environment. A child's emotional gap is usually filled by covering it with the absence of one or both parents. Other family members or even a trusted person in the community would help the child in balancing their psychology.

#### **4.3.2.5 Children's Connection with Family Members and Peers**

There was consensus among the participants that children's emotional and social well-being has much to do with the quality of the children's connections with family members and peers. The family environment was described as the very first, most original site for the cultivation of trust and confidence and emotional safety. When children are given time, heed, and emotional availability at home, they are more likely to establish healthy relationships with peers and navigate social situations with ease and comfort. Having family mealtimes and general conversations were quoted as some of the easiest but most effective means to strengthen these connections.

Parent Respondent: "When we eat together, we talk. That's when I get to know what's going on in their lives."

Child Respondent: "I like playing with my two best friends. We always understand each other and help when one is sad."

Leader Respondent: “When children feel like they belong at home and with their peers, they grow up confident and grounded.”

The peer networks of children formed through schools, neighbourhoods, and church groups were equally important. Children are likely to develop small trust networks around themselves and then forge their social identities, their empathy, and sense of belonging. Making it easy for a child to communicate with family and peers, blended with stable emotional affirmation, is an important part of building positive self-esteem and psychosocial development for children. It would also nurture connectedness in these domains in children as a protective factor from the negative peer pressures and social exclusion.

#### 4.3.2.6 Meals Together

Family meals are very important in terms of family relations as they provide opportunities for bonding, communication, and emotional attachments. This study states that the mean frequency of family meals per week is 7.67. This means that, on average, a particular family shares at least one meal together every day. However, the high standard deviation of 11.52 means that there is significant divergence in responses. This implies that some families regularly have their meals while others hardly share any meals. Family dinners are good for bonding, communication, and family-strengthening times. Regular attendance at them has been associated with some positive developmental outcomes of children, such as emotional support and an enhanced possibility of relationships within the family. Figure 4.9 below includes a histogram that was created to show the frequency of children's participation in family meals per week.

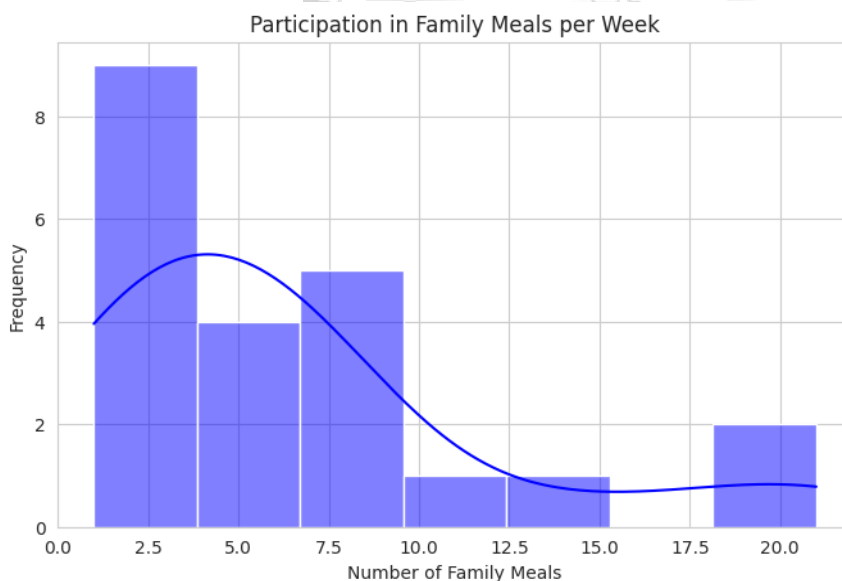


Figure 0.10: Participation in Family Meals per week

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in Figure 4.9 above, the frequency at which children participate in family meals varies, with a sizeable portion having fewer family meals per week. On the contrary, while some children have family mealtimes weekly, others have limited participation in them. These results have implications for encouraging families to spend mealtimes together as a way of enhancing relationships and communications.

The participants highlighted the fact that it is essential for families to have meals together as a way of bonding and connecting. These moments were described not so much as having meals but as moments for communication, listening, and emotional support. Parents get to check on their children regarding their well-being, guide them, and build trust in these instances. The more regular the meals, with many family members participating, the more favourable the impact on establishing stronger emotional ties and enhanced communication habits among children.

#### **4.3.2.7 Close Relationship with Small Group of Friends**

Children tend to gain more from a close-knit, trusted inner circle of peers instead of having large crowds. Such small groups give emotional security, and they foster deeper, more intense relationships in children. It was also observed that within these smaller circles, children learn how to empathise, solve conflicts, and help each other-thus forming a good foundation for achieving success in society, as well as good emotional development.

#### **4.3.2.8 Easy Communication**

The ability for children to communicate openly and comfortably with their parents and peers was cited as a key factor in relational development. It was reiterated that communication should be encouraged from an early age, creating a safe environment where children feel that they have been heard and understood. This open dialogue helps children share concerns, express their feelings and gain trust at the family level, and also within their social circles.

#### **4.3.2.9 Sense of Belonging**

Over and over again, the strongest sense of belonging found within the walls of home, both in the family and among peers-consistently emerges as quite fundamental to child well-being. When children feel accepted, loved, and an integral part of both these environments, they end up creating a much more stable identity and a stronger sense of worth. Families and communities that purposely cultivate those above attributes-also mentioned in the title-by their act of making the school grounds inclusive and creating bonds, were deemed significant in feeling valued and emotionally secure in children.

#### **4.3.2.10 Economic Stability**

Economic stability was mentioned by participants as a softening force for family relationships and children's well-being. Families with a steady income were seen as more likely to provide an atmosphere of security and emotional stability for their children, such that parents can respond to their children's basic needs without being under constant stress. Survey participants indicated that with less financial burden, parents are available emotionally and the conflicts at home are fewer-thus, family members get to bond with each other and spend quality time with children. Financial stability has also helped children secure better education, healthcare, and social opportunities.

Parent Respondent: “When we have some stability, we can focus on our children, not just surviving but guiding them.”

Child Respondent: “I like when both my parents are around and not always working. We can go to church or talk after school.”

Leader Respondent: “It’s not just about income, how families share their time and resources determines how well children are nurtured.”

The economic stability of parents enables them to better plan, nurture and invest in their children's development. They noted that families that have stable incomes invest more in church and community activities, thereby supporting their kids' spiritual and emotional development and building responsible practices. However, the participants agreed that financial well-being is about more than money; it is a shared priority for family members in terms of time, energy, and emotional presence. The responsible usage and sharing of these two resources-time and money-are equally significant in raising confident and well-adjusted children.

#### **4.3.2.11 Shared resources, time and finances, in parenting children**

It was clear that participants heralded that nurturing a child did not mean just providing financial support; it also involved sharing one's time, attention, and emotional investment. Time shared with children-usually mealtimes, church activities, visits to schools, or play time-were as important as money. Presence and involvement of parents- they were viewed as more effective than money in raising children who are emotionally balanced and socially responsible. Financial resources were also supposed to be disbursed, where available, on conditions that they directly serve the welfare of education, health, and basic needs. As for the presence of both time and money when they come in great desire, this feature creates a wholesome and sound environment for children to grow up in.

#### 4.3.2.12 Child Connections

The mean closeness score reported by children was 4.24, suggesting that most children perceive a strong and positive relationship with their parents. This finding highlights the presence of nurturing family environments that foster emotional support and open communication. Individual variations may exist, and efforts to strengthen family bonding should include active parental involvement, and dialogue remains essential in strengthening these relationships.

The data on children's social circles, as shown in Table 4.6 below, presents a varied picture of how they form and maintain friendships within the church environment.

Table 0.6: Type of Social circle by children

Social Circle Type	Percentage Breakdown
Small, close circle of friends	31.03
Unknown	24.14
Large, close circle of friends	17.24
Small, loose circle of friends	13.79
A large, loose circle of friends	13.79

Source: Researcher (2025)

A “Small, close circle of friends” was the most common (31.03%), suggesting that many children prefer deeper, more intimate friendships rather than broader social networks. However, a significant portion of responses fell under “Unknown” (24.14%), which could indicate either a lack of clarity in responses or varying definitions of social connections. Additionally, “Large close circles” (17.24%) and “Loose circles” (13.79% each for both small and large groups) highlight that while some children maintain wide social networks, these may not always be deeply connected. Understanding these dynamics can help the church tailor programs that encourage meaningful and supportive relationships among children.

#### 4.3.2.13 Education and Opportunities

The responses indicate how education and opportunities can affect a child's future. Words that were often repeated include learning, school, success, opportunity, and support. Children wished for better educational opportunities, while the parents considered quality education to be the backbone of a better future. The leaders talked about equal access to education for all children.

Child Respondent: "I want to study hard so I can have a good job and help my family."

Parent Respondent: "Education is the key to success, and every child deserves a chance to learn."

Parish Leader: "If we invest in education, we are securing a better future for the entire community."

Mostly, children answered positively; aspirations were discussed, and educational assistance was needed by the parents. Plans for community development through education were voiced by leaders. According to the responses, access for everyone to quality education is indispensable for personal development, economic reliability for those in society at large, and welfare within society.

#### **4.3.2.14 Other observed challenges in family relationships**

There are stand out challenges that affect family relationships. Most of these challenges are cases such as "Conflict Resolution & Communication" (6) as the leaders said; thus, many of them see the breakdown of communication and unresolved conflicts as pertinent concerns in families. It would, therefore, seem that many families struggle with effective dialogue, which could lead to misunderstandings, tensions, and even conflicts.

On the other hand, "guidance & counselling" only registered one mention, which means that some leaders believe there are and should be support systems in place to help families in need through hurdles.

The different ways in which parents think the church affected their family lifestyle include:

**Spiritual Growth and Faith Development:** These parents said church teachings had an impact on their faith, and the faith created a base for moral and ethical decision-making in the family.

**Better Family Bonding:** Going to services, partaking in spirituality programs, and spending time talking faith at home have helped them get closer together.

**Direction on Parenting and Relationships:** Sermons and other church-led parenting programs teach parents better communication and discipline, leading to a more wholesome environment at home.

**Children Develop Morally:** Parents are convinced that children's religious teachings impart good values like honesty, respect, and compassion to children, which train their behaviours positively.

#### **4.3.3 The contribution of Nkoroi Catholic Parish to the Family and Peer Relationship Domain**

The study also sought to establish the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community has taken to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be

replicated to enhance child well-being in Kenya. Qualitative findings based on this objective are presented below.

#### **4.3.3.1 Benefits from Teachings and Doctrine of the Catholic Church**

The teachings and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church were seen by our participants to have a significant effect on strengthening family relationships and guaranteeing children's well-being. They have been expressed through homilies, catechism classes, and Small Christian Communities, thereby guiding families with moral teachings and practical support. The Church goes beyond the important spiritual teachings; it is also a community that enhances the values of love, unity, and responsibility. Through the doctrine of the Church, families are encouraged to view their relationships in terms of marriage and parenting as a divine calling wherein commitment, sacrifice, and care are required.

Parent Respondent: “The Church teachings remind us how important our family roles are—they guide us to live in peace and raise our children with purpose.”

Child Respondent: “I love Sunday school because we learn about God and how to be good to each other.”

Leader Respondent: “The doctrines of the Church shape how we live at home and in the community—they give us a moral compass.”

The participants emphasised that the Church is also at work in forming how families interact with society. Its teaching cultivates a spirit of compassion, joint responsibility, and child-centred attention. Involvement in liturgical roles, content creation for youth groups, and Sunday school are examples of how the Church extends the home and holistically nurtures children. These teachings will strengthen the inner bonds of the family and help in equipping the family to relate with others in the greater community. This way, the Church also claims credit for raising children with some moral, social consciousness, and spiritual sustenance.

##### **4.3.3.1.1 Sacrament of Marriage**

Respondents emphasise that, as a sacrament, marriage is considered central to the teachings that fortify the family unit of the Catholic Church. In this sacred premarital counselling, together with teachings imparted regularly, couples are led to see marriage as a divine and exclusive vocation. The teachings foster unity, fidelity, and spiritual partnership, prompting couples to handle their issues through prayer and open dialogue. For those who consider marriage within this paradigm, a stable marital environment strongly rooted in Catholic doctrine is requisite to produce children who, emotionally secure and morally sound, have their own families.

#### **4.3.3.1.2 Social Responsibility**

Teaching instructions would put a very great sense of social responsibility into the minds of the parishioners. The members did not only identify faith communities as places of worship but also as spaces that nurture values such as compassion, kindness, and solidarity. They should be taught and cultivated from families that love and take good care of each other. While this has to happen, they should also reach out beyond their families to extend help to those in need. This shared doctrine of responsibility promotes a culture in which helping others becomes second nature, thereby fostering strong relationships between children and the wider community.

#### **4.3.3.1.3 Care for Children**

Respondents highly praised the Church with respect to its strong influence over parents and, more generally, society in the upbringing of children. These programs, such as Sunday school, PMC, and altar serving, are indispensable to children's spiritual formation and social development. Parents should be present and purposeful in their parenting, while the community walks alongside parents to ensure that children are recognised, loved, and guided. These teachings put child-rearing not just as a family responsibility but as a spiritual calling that demands care, protection, and moral education.

#### **4.3.3.1.4 Small Christian Community**

Small Christian Communities (SCCs) were widely acknowledged by the participants to provide conducive structures that strengthen family ties as well as foster child well-being through intimate, localised spiritual engagement. One of the greatest gifts of participating in the SCC is the deep sense of belonging it engenders. Families have reported feeling more connected and less isolated during neighbourhood events, prayer, Bible sharing, and social gatherings. Children in particular stand to benefit early on from communal worship, peer interaction, and the feel of being part of a supportive spiritual family larger than their nuclear family.

Parent Respondent: “Through the small Christian community, I’ve seen my children grow in faith and learn that we are not alone—others care about us.”

Child Respondent: “I like when we pray with our neighbours. It feels like we are one big family.”

Leader Respondent: “The small Christian community brings people together and teaches children that faith is lived out in everyday life, not just in church.”

SCCs serve greatly as venues for social support and the nurturing of a culture of shared values rooted in the Catholic faith. Participants pointed out that SCCs intervene at moments of need to support their families—in cases of death, sickness, or financial distress—thereby putting

into practice the Church's precepts regarding compassion and care for the community. At the same time, the very immersions in the SCC experience serve to consolidate basic Church teachings such as the dignity of persons, mutual respect, prayer, responsibility, and service. These common shared values will mould the behaviour and perspective of children as they are growing in faith and fellowship, gradually learning to view themselves as part of a larger moral community that promotes the well-being of both spirits and society.

#### **4.3.3.1.5 Sense of Belonging**

Participants stated that Small Christian Communities foster a strong sense of belonging for parents and their children. Praying together, studying the Bible together, and celebrating life together help to anchor the family spiritually within this social inclusion. This repeated interaction, established in a familiar local faith environment, allows the children to feel known, respected, and cared for beyond their immediate family unit. Thus, the SCC becomes their spiritual home, in whose values and practice each member, child and adult alike, has both a place and a role.

#### **4.3.3.1.6 Social Support**

Small Christian Community members form a credible backup whenever need arises. Many instances were cited of SCC members physically rallying resources for families who found themselves sick or mourning or having financial trouble. Such care mimics gospel values of charity and solidarity, making the Church's lesson visible and practical in very human terms. Children observe such acts of kindness and begin to appreciate helping others in distress and in troubling times.

#### **4.3.3.1.7 Culture of Shared Values Based on Catholic Faith**

SCCs were also characterised as the context for reinforcement of a common moral and spiritual system based on Catholicism. Attending the SCC meetings ingrains such values as respect, forgiveness, generosity, and loyalty, which become guiding principles in all relationships for both adults and children. These meetings also serve as an arena for children to not only learn about the faith but also witness its practice, which in turn shapes their attitudes and choices in the family and with peers.

#### **4.3.3.2 Strong Leadership with the Parish community**

The interviews with the participants revealed a commendation of the leadership of Nkoroi Catholic Parish for the active involvement of the parishioners in the life of the Church beyond purely spiritual concerns. The priests and parish leadership were noted for their availability, approachability, and responsiveness to the daily concerns of families. This involvement in the lives of the local people was seen in how leaders visited homes, engaged in community

activities, and maintained a close relationship with parish members through times of crisis and of joy. Such a hands-on way of leadership instilled trust and nourished the family-church bond such that families felt spiritually and socially aided.

Parent Respondent: “Our priests and leaders are always there—you can talk to them, and they follow up when families are struggling.”

Child Respondent: “I feel proud when I read in church or help as an altar server. It makes me feel part of something important.”

Leader Respondent: “We believe in raising leaders early—that’s why we give children roles and guide them closely through mentorship.”

The other areas where the parish leadership was commended included their social support services like mentorship and coaching, particularly targeted at the youth. In so doing, the Church provided meaningfully to children and parents through structured programs like career days, youth forums, spiritual retreats, and mentorship. These efforts were intensified by the parish's commitment to prioritising children. They had been actively encouraging children not only to attend Sunday school and youth groups but also to lead services in liturgy, in the choir, and with the altar service. This intentional involvement increases their confidence, spiritual rooting, and sense of purpose within the faith community.

#### **4.3.3.2.1 Engaged in People's Lives**

The local parishioners noted that the parish leadership in Nkoroi Catholic Parish was quite engaged and present in their lives. Apart from presiding over liturgical services, priests and church leaders were travelling companions in various life situations, helping during family celebrations, home blessings, and listening carefully to critical issues afflicting families. The relational aspect of the leadership connected the church even deeper into the lives of the church members, creating a culture of trust, care, and accessibility. To most families, this engagement meant that the church was not merely a place of worship, but also a home with opportunities for true healing and comfort.

#### **4.3.3.2.2 Providing Support Services like Mentorship and Coaching**

The parish leadership was also praised for providing practical support through structured mentorship and coaching, especially targeting young people and families. Through organised activities and events such as career days, youth mentorship programs, spiritual retreats, and group discussions Church was actively involved in guiding children and youth toward responsible living and purposeful decision-making. These services cut across spiritual instruction, life skills, character building, and emotional support, thereby creating a fully rounded mentorship environment based on faith.

#### 4.3.3.2.3 Prioritising the Involvement of Children

One other key strength of the parish leadership was its conscious effort to involve children in church life. Children were not spectators but active actors in liturgical roles, Sunday school, PMC (Pontifical Missionary Childhood), and altar serving. It is through this participation that they learned leadership skills, ownership, and spiritual confidence at a tender age. The participants highlighted how these opportunities shaped the children's public speaking, teamwork, and responsibility, eventually preparing them to become morally-grounded and socially-engaged members of the community.

#### 4.3.3.2.4 Spiritual and Emotional Support Networks Created by the Church to Support Family Relationships and Child Well-being

The church has made a network of support to the family facing challenges, which includes counselling services, financial assistance, and prayer groups.

The functional role of the church often goes beyond spiritual guidance and shape avenues of social interaction and friendships among people in the community. This study has assessed parental views about church influence on their children's friendships, knowing social outlets play a crucial role in the moral and character development of children, and here follow the popular responses.

Table 0.7: Church Influence on Friendships

Church Influence	Percentage
Yes	67.39
Unknown	19.57
No	13.04

Source: Researcher (2025)

As shown in Table 4.7 above, 67.39% of parents believed the church had a major influence on their children's friendships, affirming its role in the creation of social relations. Nevertheless, 13.04% denied any influence of the church in friendships, and 19.57% remained undecided. Therefore, most families appear to see some connection between the church and their children's integration into social networks. This, in turn, would support the study's aim of delving into the church's influence on social development and prompt further consideration in the context of church programs designed for the youth.

#### **4.3.3.2.5 Positive Community and Social Environment Created by Nkoroi Parish to Support the Community Members**

Responses indicate the child's environment as a factor in development. Some commonly mentioned words were influence, behaviour, role models, environment, and community support. Children mention how their environment affects their decisions, while parents emphasise the importance of positive environments in training responsible children. Leaders argue that children's development thrives if their community offers support.

Child Respondent: "When I see people in my community doing good things, I also want to do the same."

Parent Respondent: "A child raised in a good environment learns good values and respect."

Parish Leader: "A strong community provides guidance and support that shapes children into responsible individuals."

Most responses conveyed a positive attitude: children mentioned outside influences, parents stressed the need for a nurturing environment, and leaders pushed for community involvement. The responses suggest that a child's behaviour and future opportunities are moulded by the social environment in which the child finds him or herself and the behaviours modelled by the others around them.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the research findings, providing a comprehensive analysis of the data collected for the study. It began by detailing the background information on the respondents, offering key characteristics and demographic data that set the context for the analysis. The chapter further delved in the descriptive and thematic analyses, framing the analyses based on the study's objectives.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings, conclusion, recommendations, limitations of the study and areas of future research. It also includes the implications of the study, the limitations, and directions for future research.

### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The findings from the data analyses, presented in Chapter 4, provide valuable insights into the parameters under investigation and offer responses to the research questions and study objectives.

The study realised a response rate of 100%, with all target respondents in the three participant groups taking part in the study.

The demographic analyses showed that most of the parents interviewed in the study were middle-aged and thus well distributed between the two sexes and mostly married. Moreover, most parents had a university or college degree, implying that the sample is relatively educated; thus, understood the importance of child well-being.

They also revealed that the occupation of parents was diverse, with most parents being teachers, farmers, and civil servants. Understanding such constructs was vital to know how different kinds of economic backgrounds that can affect family dynamics and influence the support offered towards children's development.

The surveyed children were mainly in the early, late adolescent years, with nearly equal gender distribution and spread across different grades in secondary school. This broad spectrum demographically allows for an extensive analysis of how family and peer relationships have an impact on children as they progress. Community leadership is male-dominated, with men outnumbering women in the leadership categories considered.

An analysis of family structure revealed that most households are nuclear families, which is a greater indicator of emotional and social development of children. Findings also uncovered that a significant proportion of extended family households and single-parent households, indicating that the sample comprised various family structures, including some that can expose children to diverse challenges and opportunities. They showed that family meals are taken constantly, almost eight meals per week, which may be interpreted as strong family bonding opportunities. The parents are also comfortable discussing family matters with their children which is an important aspect of emotional support and free communication. About half of the parents report always providing emotional support, thus highlighting the importance of having familial emotional backing in the development of a child.

Findings disclosed that respondents were not aware of any family policy raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing government policies and legal frameworks. They also ascertained that numerous factors are available that influence the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being.

Findings also noted that the church is actively engaged in various activities and programs geared toward improving well-being among families. The areas of support by the church heavily centred on conflict resolution and spiritual mentoring. Youth groups offer platforms for social interaction and mentorship to youths. Moderation in participation in these groups presents unexploited areas in enhancing the social and spiritual growth of the youth.

Moreover, peer friendships were found to be significantly important, allowing teens to develop a sense of belonging with their age mates. Positive peer interactions were found to positively contribute to emotional and psychosocial well-being. Moreover, negative results are sometimes brought on by peer influence into risk-taking behaviour.

### **5.3 Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses the findings of the study based on the objectives. The discussion is grounded in theory and empirical literature.

#### **5.3.1 Government Performance on Family and Peer Relationship Domain of Child Wellbeing**

The study sought to evaluate how the Kenyan government has addressed the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being through existing legal and policy frameworks, including the gaps that remain due to the delayed enactment of the NPFPP 2019. The findings of the study revealed that the Kenyan government has significantly failed in implementing policies that support family and children's welfare or well-being. This finding is consistent with the transformation leadership theory, which emphasises that transformational leaders seek to change existing thoughts, techniques, and goals for better results and the greater good (Eaton et al., 2024). Typically, Kenya's leadership has significantly failed in its mandate of implementing legal and policy frameworks such as the NPFPP 2019, which are essential in enhancing the well-being and development of families. Ratified in 2019, the NPFPP emphasises the importance of loving parents, a supportive home environment and social interactions for the holistic growth of children. The policy was approved by the Kenyan government to empower families and ensure their participation in various social and economic aspects of society. However, findings have revealed that the government has failed in its mandate of implementing the policy framework. This failure can be attributed to issues in leadership, as policy implementation in the country is managed and supervised by leaders.

From the findings, delays in the implementation of key policy frameworks such as the NPFPP 2019 remain a key obstacle to family and child well-being. These delays also suggest the lack of clear policy implementation plans by the government, raising concerns about whether the country's leaders are sufficiently executing their duties and responsibilities. It is also the mandate of the government and elected leaders to create awareness of newly enacted policies to increase awareness among the public. Weng et al. (2021) stress the government's role in increasing public awareness about government policies through various communication channels, including educational campaigns, public outreach programmes, and diverse media outlets. However, findings suggest otherwise in regards to the NPFPP 2019. Notably, no awareness campaigns were programmed in regards to policy, which has significantly limited its impact.

The findings of the current study are also consistent with Moore et al. (2004), Lippman (2006), Casas (2011), Fattore et al. (2008), Ager (2012), Lippman et al. (2011), Butler et al. (2022), and Hoang et al. (2024). Primarily, previous studies (Moore et al., 2004; Lippman, 2006; Casas, 2011; Fattore et al., 2008; Ager, 2012; Lippman et al., 2011; Butler et al., 2022; Hoang et al., 2024) have emphasised the vital role of the government in supporting measures and initiatives to improve family welfare and child well-being. Moore et al. (2004) and Fattore et al. (2008) note that the government has a crucial role to play in the various domains of child well-being and development, including cognitive attainment and education achievement, health and safety, social and emotional development, and self-sufficiency, while ensuring that its measures work across varied subgroups and levels of governance. Ager (2012), Butler et al. (2022), and Hoang et al. (2024) further ascertain that governments can be instrumental in fostering multi-sectoral engagements across the fields of education, health, and social work to adequately support family welfare and child well-being. Lippman (2006) affirm governments critical role through support for index projects and aligning national frameworks to international measures, and also agrees with Casas (2011) that governments can lead efforts in prioritising subjective social indicators of child-well-being as well as objective measures.

Overall, while the study confirms the failure of government in implementing policies that support families and welfare of children, it aligns with the transformational leadership theory and previous studies in acknowledging the critical role the state can play in enhancing family welfare and children well-being.

### **5.3.2 Factors Influencing Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Wellbeing**

The study also sought to identify the factors that influence the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. Findings revealed that there are numerous factors, especially in

the child's immediate environment, that shape the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. This finding is consistent with the IPAR Theory, which emphasises how the social environment significantly influences child well-being (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021; Rohner, 2025). The social environment is characterised by a wide range of factors, with some shaping how family and peer relationships influence child well-being. Findings of the current study reveal factors such as presence of father and mother in the family, stability in marriage, support by partners in nurturing children, emotional support, children's connection with family members and peers, meals together, close relationship with small group of friends, easy communication, sense of belonging, economic stability, shared resources (time and finances) in parenting children, child connections, and education and opportunities as influential in family and peer relationships domain of child well-being.

The findings align with discoveries made by Chung et al. (2024), Martins and Oliveira (2024), Erol and Koksall (2025), Australian Institute of Family Studies (2023), Havewal et al. (2021), Qiu and Shum (2022), Hautala and Lehti (2025), Wang et al. (2024) and Palahan (2025). Like the findings of the current study, Chung et al. (2024) acknowledged stability in marriage as a critical factor, suggesting that when parents are stress-free, they create a favourable environment for the development and adjustment of the child, leading to improved well-being. Martins and Oliveira's (2024) recognition of the role of family income is consistent with the current study's finding on the vital role of economic stability in child well-being. An economically stable household has the financial resources to ensure quality care and well-being of a child. By underlining the impact of children's perceived economic disadvantage, Hautala and Lehti (2025) support the current study's finding that economic stability is a crucial factor in shaping the family relationships domain of child well-being.

Additionally, Erol and Koksall (2025) emphasise the importance of a structured friendship education program, acknowledging the education and opportunities factor underscored by the current study. The Australian Institute of Family Studies (2023) finding that perceived peer support mitigates mental health symptoms aligns with the current study's finding that emotional support, sense of belonging, and close relationships with small groups of friends equally shape the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. Likewise, Qiu and Shum's (2022) recognition of the vital role of caregiver emotion regulation and parenting styles in a child's emotional competence supports the current study's findings that support by partners in nurturing children is an essential factor in child well-being. Moreover, Wang et al.'s (2024) emphasis on the negative impacts of adverse childhood experiences advances marriage stability as a crucial factor in improving child well-being. Furthermore, Palahan's (2025) discovery that

students' social roles shape mental stability aligns with the sense of belonging factor, which the current study also identifies as a factor shaping the peer relationships domain of child well-being.

Overall, factors identified in the current offer a new breadth on the existing literature, offering a more comprehensive perspective on aspects shaping the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. By identifying these factors, the current study emphasises the critical role of the social environment, outlining some of the social environment features that families and peers can consider to foster a supportive environment for the development and adjustment of children.

### **5.3.3 The contribution of Nkoroi Catholic Parish to the Family and Peer Relationships Domain of Child Wellbeing**

The study also sought to establish the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community is taking to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be replicated to enhance child well-being in Kenya. Findings indicate that Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish contributes significantly to the family and peer relationships domain of child well-being through supportive measures such as teachings of the sacrament of marriage, social responsibility, care for children, and Small Christian Communities (SCCs). They also reveal that strong leadership within the Parish community has been instrumental. These findings align with IPARTheory and the transformational leadership model. By establishing that the church engages in measures (initiatives for promoting positive interpersonal relationships, according to the IPARTheory) that offers strategic guidance for improving psychological and behavioural well-being of children, the findings typically align with the IPARTheory (Rohner & Lansford, 2017; Rohner, 2021; Rohner, 2025). Besides, by emphasising the role of strong leadership within the Parish community, the study is consistent with the transformational leadership theory's postulation that leaders facilitate directing efforts that guarantee better outcomes (Eaton et al., 2024).

The findings of the study are also consistent with (2024), Musya (2024), King et al. (2021), Crosby et al. (2021), Galindo-Silva and Tchuenta (2023), and Whiteman (2023). The study's findings on the benefits of the Catholic Church's teachings and doctrines on the sacrament of marriage, social responsibility, and care for children are supported by Whiteman's (2023) discovery that post-pandemic church engagement approaches such as holistic family support initiatives in the United States improved family's well-being across the nation. Even though there is a difference in context, these consistencies in findings emphasise the critical role of the church community, including Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community, in

promoting healthy family and peer relationships geared towards improved children's well-being. These consistencies can also be attributed to the fact that churches are supposed to be pillars of morality and beacons of hope for communities, engaging in activities that promote greater social good.

The findings on the role of strong leadership within the Parish community are relatively supported by Springer (2024), Musya (2024), King et al. (2021), and Crosby et al. (2021). Notably, findings establish that strong leadership within the Parish community advocate for and encourages support services such as mentorship and coaching for parents and children, creating a supportive environment for child well-being. Springer (2024) and Musya (2024) emphasised church-based online-mentoring programmes, highlighting their role in enhancing the peer relationships of child well-being. Additionally, King et al. (2021) ascertain that church-based mentorship programmes improve adolescent social connectedness and emotion regulation. Social connectedness is typically relative to a sense of belonging and social support experienced through peer interactions and Small Christian Community initiatives promoted by the Parish.

The study's findings also designate the Parish community as a key player in direct community service and an advocate for social justice and social cohesion. Crosby et al. (2021) note that trauma-informed training facilitated by the church community improves relational safety for children, especially those from unstable family backgrounds. Small Christian Communities serve as suitable platforms for trauma-informed training, contributing positively to child well-being. As advocates of social justice and social cohesion, churches lower rates of domestic abuse and community violence trends (Galindo-Silva & Tchuente, 2023). As such, they foster positive community and social environments that not only support the community members but also establish favourable environments that are ideal for the development of children. Churches also address the integral good of humanity, offering emotional, spiritual, social and material support crucial for families and the adjustment of children.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The study sought to evaluate the effects of family and peer relationships on child well-being using the case study of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoro Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese. The findings highlight the failure of the Kenyan government in implementing legal and policy frameworks that support family welfare and child well-being. This gap in policy implementation continues to expose families and children to mental health symptoms, including anxiety, stress, depression, substance abuse, and other related risk factors.

The study also sought to identify the factors influencing family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. The findings also reveal that there are numerous factors that shaping family and peer relationships domain of child well-being. By identifying these factors, the study contextualises the aspects that families and peer can pursue to foster a supportive environment for improved child well-being.

The study also sought to establish the measures Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish community is taking to promote healthy family and peer relationships that can be replicated to enhance child well-being in Kenya. By acknowledging the positive contribution of the Nkoroi Catholic Parish in supporting families and establishing some of the initiatives the church has taken, the study emphasises the greater social good of the church community in matters of child well-being and community development.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations have been proposed to promote child well-being and support the family unit as the fundamental setting for improved child well-being.

One key recommendation is for the Kenyan government to accelerate the implementation of legal and policy frameworks, such as the NFPPP 2019, that seek to improve family welfare and child well-being. Developing a multi-sectoral approach to policy implementation can help address issues of delayed implementation.

The successful story of Nkoroi Catholic Parish presents an opportunity for the Kenyan government to consider such an approach, as it ensures that community resources are adequately involved in realising improved child well-being. The Kenyan government can learn from the Rwandan government, which has taken the lead in utilising communities and local resources in realising child wellbeing.

Another recommendation is increased investment in young parents, as they are not actively involved in religious activities. There is a need to invest more in young parents to understand their challenges and interests. Educational campaigns and increased awareness on parenting can be handy. Therefore, consideration should be made when designing programmes to ensure that they attract and address the interests of all parents and caregivers.

Additionally, investing more in initiatives that encourage youth involvement in community activities is necessary. With more young people becoming parents, community activities can help reach out to them on matters regarding child well-being. Youth-based initiatives, such as crusades, can be actively promoted to enhance their participation in church activities.

## **5.6 Policy Implications**

Kenya's legal and policy framework on child well-being is robust and comprehensive, and guarantees improved child well-being if well implemented. Adequate resource allocation guarantees effective implementation, which guarantees addressing the current gaps in service delivery. Ensuring proper coordination between different government institutions and non-state actors, such as the church community, can help to ensure proper allocation of responsibilities, eliminating the inefficiencies that continue to undermine current implementation efforts. Robust data collection and monitoring systems could be critical in tracking progress, identifying gaps, and informing policy formulation and targeted implementation.

## **5.7 Limitations of the Research**

One notable limitation of the study was the challenge of including minors in the research. It was challenging to interview children below 18 years as permission was to be sought first from the parents, who were reluctant to allow their children to participate in the survey. The reluctance significantly undermined the timetable for data collection and analysis. Consequently, costly and time-consuming measures, such as travelling to the location to physically trace the PAPs, were employed to facilitate the data collection process. This issue not only increased the operational costs but also posed challenges in terms of time constraints.

## **5.8 Future Areas of Research**

The current study is limited to the Catholic parish, which has an adequately organised structure of administration. Future researchers should possibly consider other church denominations to understand whether the measures are common and possibly working for the greater social good, especially in terms of child well-being.

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## ANNEX

### Annex 1: Respondent's Consent Request Form

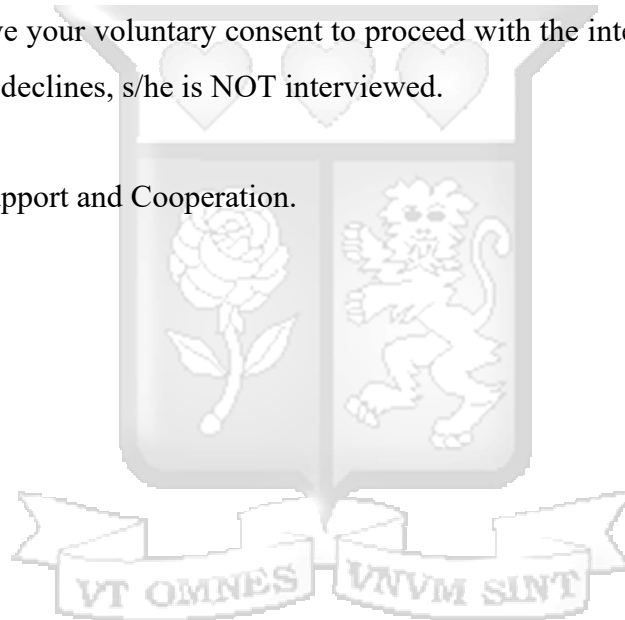
Dear Respondent,

I am Fr. Denis Omae Nchore, a master's student in Public Policy and Management of Strathmore University. As a requirement for my study, I am conducting academic research on **ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON CHILD WELLBEING**

A CASE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, NKOROI CATHOLIC PARISH, NGONG DIOCESE

I therefore request you to provide information on this topic to enable me to achieve this goal. The information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality only for the purpose of this study. Do I have your voluntary consent to proceed with the interview? YES (  ), NO (  ). If the respondent declines, s/he is NOT interviewed.

Thank you for your support and Cooperation.



## Annex 2: Questionnaire

For Parent

### SECTION A: Demographic information

**Instructions:** Please fill the blank spaces and respond to the questions to the best of your knowledge

#### Section A: Background Information

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_ 1. Male \_\_\_\_ 2. Female
3. Marital Status: \_\_\_\_ 1. Single \_\_\_\_ 2. Married \_\_\_\_ 3. Divorced \_\_\_\_ 4. Widowed/Widower \_\_\_\_ 5. Other (specify)
4. Number of Children in your Household: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Highest Level of Education (select the highest level completed):
  1. No formal education
  2. Primary School
  3. Secondary School
  4. University/College Degree
  5. Other(specify)
6. Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., Teacher, Farmer, Shopkeeper)

#### SECTION B: Family dynamics

1. Which of the following best describes your current household family structure? \_\_\_\_
  1. Nuclear family \_\_\_\_
  2. Extended family \_\_\_\_
  3. Single parent household \_\_\_\_
  4. Other (specify).
2. In your experience, how often do you participate in family meals together?  
\_\_\_\_ 1. Daily \_\_\_\_ 2. Weekly \_\_\_\_ 3. Monthly \_\_\_\_ 4. Occasionally \_\_\_\_ 5. Other (Specify)
3. How do you feel talking openly with your children about their problems? \_\_\_\_
  1. Very comfortable \_\_\_\_
  2. Comfortable \_\_\_\_
  3. Somewhat comfortable \_\_\_\_
  4. Uncomfortable \_\_\_\_
  5. Very uncomfortable
4. Do you feel your family provides your children with emotional support?  
\_\_\_\_ 1. Always \_\_\_\_ 2. Sometimes \_\_\_\_ 3. Rarely \_\_\_\_ 4. Never
5. How does your involvement with Nkoroi Catholic Church, if any, influence your family's communication and conflict resolution strategies? (Please provide specific examples)
  1. Increased focus on open communication empathy

2. Utilizing forgiveness rituals or seeking guidance from religious leaders
  3. Implementing communication strategies based on religious teachings
  4. Other (specify)
6. What are the roles of religious values and teachings from Nkoroi Catholic Church in shaping your parenting style and family traditions.
1. Emphasis on values like respect, forgiveness, and gratitude
  2. Incorporation of prayer, grace, or religious scripture into family routines
  3. Participating in charitable works or service projects as a family.
  4. Other (specify)
7. Which activities does your family participate in any church-sponsored activities or programs together?
1. Family choir or music group
  2. Family service projects or volunteering together
  3. Attending church picnics, social events, or religious education classes together

#### Section C: Peer Relationships

1. Does Nkoroi Catholic Church, if at all, influence your children's opportunities to develop healthy friendships within the community? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No (If yes, how?)
  - a. Increased Participation in Church Youth Groups: \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No  
If yes, how many times per month on average does your child(ren) attend (estimate)?
  - b. Frequency of Social Interaction Through Church Activities (Select one)
    1. Daily
    2. Several times a week
    3. Once a week
    4. Monthly
    5. Other (specify)
  - c. Number of Friends Made Through Church Activities (estimate): \_\_\_\_
2. Are there any church-based youth groups or activities that your children participate in? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No
3. List specific church youth groups or activities your child(ren) participate in. (e.g., choir, sports teams, bible study)

4. Frequency of Participation (e.g., weekly meetings, monthly events): (Select one)
  1. Daily
  2. Several times a week
  3. Once a week
  4. Monthly
  5. Other (specify)
5. In your observations, do you see any positive or negative effects of the church's influence on your children's social development and peer group dynamics, particularly regarding issues like bullying, social anxiety, or self-confidence? \_\_\_\_ 1. Positive \_\_\_\_ 2. Negative. (Please elaborate.)

Section D: Open-Ended Reflection

1. In your own words, how would you describe the overall impact of Nkoroi Catholic Church on your family life and how these dynamics contribute to your children's overall well-being, including their emotional health, social development, and sense of belonging?
2. How has the Kenyan government implemented policies and frameworks to address the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing, and what gaps exist due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP)?

**FOR CHILDREN (Adolescents)**

SECTION A: Demographic information

**Instructions:** Please fill the blank spaces and respond to the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Section A: Background Information

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_ 1. Male \_\_\_\_ 2. Female
3. Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Section B: Family Life

1. How close do you feel to your parents/guardians (use a scale of 1-5, where 1 = Not Close, 5 = Very Close)? \_\_\_\_ (record number)
2. In the past month, how many times have you felt comfortable talking to your parents/guardians about a personal problem? \_\_\_\_ (record number)

3. How often do you feel comfortable talking openly with your parents/guardians about your problems (use a scale of 1-5, where 1 = Very often, 5 = Very rarely)? \_\_\_\_\_ (record number)
4. How often do you participate in family meals together (including breakfast, lunch, or dinner) on average per week? \_\_\_\_\_ (record number)
5. Do you feel your family's involvement with Nkoroi Catholic Church influences your sense of belonging within the family unit? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No
6. Are there any religious teachings or values from the church that you find particularly relevant to feeling supported and loved by your family? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No
7. Do you feel that your family's involvement with Nkoroi Catholic Church influences your sense of belonging and overall well-being within the family unit in any way? If so, please explain.
8. Are there any religious teachings or values from the church that you find particularly relevant to feeling supported and loved by your family? Please elaborate.

#### Section C: Peer Relationships

1. What is your typical social circle? \_\_\_\_ 1. Small close circle of friends \_\_\_\_ 2. Small loose circle of friends \_\_\_\_ 3. Large close circle of friends \_\_\_\_ 4. Large loose circle of friends \_\_\_\_ 5. Other (specify)
2. How many close friends do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ (number)
3. What type of activities you do together? (list activities)
4. Do you participate in any youth groups or activities at Nkoroi Catholic Church \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No
5. **(If yes)** List the specific youth groups or activities you participate in.
6. How often do you participate (e.g., weekly meetings, monthly events)? (Select one)
  1. Daily
  2. Several times a week
  3. Once a week
  4. Monthly
  5. Other (specify)
7. In your experience, has the church played a role in shaping your values and how you interact with your peers? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No

**FOR LEADERS** (Nkoroi Catholic, village elder/sub-chief/cheif, children officer, MCA)

**SECTION A: Instructions:** Please fill the blank spaces and respond to the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender: \_\_\_\_ 1. Male \_\_\_\_ 2. Female
2. Position/Title: \_\_\_\_ (e.g., Priest, Youth Leader, Village Elder)
3. How many years have you been in this Role? \_\_\_\_
4. Briefly describe your connection to Nkoroi Catholic Church \_\_\_\_ 1. Lifelong member \_\_\_\_ 2. Recent arrival \_\_\_\_ 3. Occasional attender \_\_\_\_ 4. Other (specify)

Section B: Church Programs and Activities

1. In your perspective, how does Nkoroi Catholic Church prioritize the well-being of children within the church community?
  1. programs
  2. Activities
  3. teachings
2. Are there any specific church programs or activities designed to support families or foster positive peer relationships among youth? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No
3. **(If yes)** List the specific programs/activities offered by the church (e.g.,
  1. youth groups
  2. family counselling
  3. social events
4. For each you have selected above, describe the program/activity and its goals how it supports families, fosters positive peer relationships
5. How do church leaders (including yourself) encourage or facilitate participation in these programs or activities
  1. Announcements
  2. outreach programs
  3. Other (specify)

Section C: Family and Peer Relationships

1. From your observations, how does Nkoroi Catholic Church influence family dynamics within the community?
  1. Communication

2. conflict resolution
  3. values
  4. Other (specify)
2. In your experience, how do church activities or programs contribute to the development of healthy peer relationships among youth?
    1. shared activities
    2. fostering a sense of belonging
    3. Other (specify)
  3. Are there any challenges or concerns you see regarding family or peer relationships that might impact child well-being within the church community?
    1. lack of communication
    2. bullying
    3. Other (specify)

Section D: Collaboration and Support

1. Does Nkoroi Catholic Church collaborate with any local organizations (e.g., schools, social services) on initiatives that support families or children? \_\_\_\_ 1. Yes \_\_\_\_ 2. No

(If yes)

2. Briefly describe the collaborations?
  1. joint programs,
  2. resource sharing
4. How do these collaborations benefit families and children within the church community?
5. In your role as a leader, how do you work with families and youth to address any concerns related to child well-being?
  1. Counselling
  2. Referrals
6. Are there any additional resources or support systems you believe would be beneficial for families and children within the Nkoroi Catholic Church community
  1. Workshops
  2. mental health services
  3. Other (specify)

Section E: Open-Ended Reflection

1. In your own words, how would you describe the overall role of Nkoroi Catholic Church in promoting the well-being of children within the community?
2. Are there any specific church programs or activities designed to support families or foster positive peer relationships among youth? (Yes/No) **(If yes, please list and briefly describe these programs/activities)**
3. How do church leaders (including yourself) encourage or facilitate participation in these programs or activities?
4. How has the Kenyan government implemented policies and frameworks to address the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing, and what gaps exist due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP)?



## Focus Group Discussion Guide: Nkoroi Catholic Church, Family & Peer Relationships for Child Wellbeing

### Introduction:

Welcome everyone! Today we'll be discussing the important roles of family and peers in a child's well-being. As members of Nkoroi Catholic Church's small Christian communities, your experiences and perspectives are invaluable.

### Discussion Prompts:

#### 1. Family and Peer Relationships:

How do strong family bonds and positive friendships impact a child's overall well-being? Can you share examples from your own communities?

#### 2. Family Structures

Does the type of family structure (nuclear, extended, single-parent) influence a child's development? How can we ensure children thrive in all family settings?

#### 3. Peer Relationships within Age Groups

Discuss the types of relationships children typically form with peers within their age groups. How do these friendships contribute to a child's sense of belonging and social skills development?

#### 4. Factors Influencing Relationships:

In your experience, what are some factors that contribute to healthy family and peer relationships for children? Conversely, what factors might create challenges?

#### 5. Nkoroi Catholic Church's Role:

How does Nkoroi Catholic Church, through its programs, activities, or teachings, promote strong family bonds and positive peer interactions for children within your communities?

#### 6. Small Christian Communities and Child Wellbeing:

What specific initiatives or practices do your small Christian communities implement to nurture healthy family and peer relationships, ultimately contributing to a child's overall well-being?

#### 7. Leadership Roles:

Discuss the importance of strong leadership within families, the church, and local authorities (village elders, officials) in promoting child well-being. Can you share examples of how your leadership roles impact children in your communities?

#### 8. Open Discussion:

Is there anything else you'd like to share about how family and peer relationships affect a child's development and well-being?

9. How has the Kenyan government implemented policies and frameworks to address the family and peer relationships domain of child wellbeing, and what gaps exist due to the delayed enactment of the National Policy on Family Promotion and Protection (NPFPP)?

Thank you for Your Cooperation



### **Annex 3. Protection of Vulnerable Participants and Risk Mitigation**

1. Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation:

Each participant will be fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their role in it. Informed consent will be obtained in a language they understand, ensuring that participation is entirely voluntary. For child participants, parental or guardian consent will be obtained, along with child assent where appropriate, to ensure that children understand their involvement and have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Participants' privacy will be strictly protected. Any data collected will be anonymized to prevent the identification of individual families or children. Sensitive information will be securely stored, and only the research team will have access to this data, further reducing the risk of coercion or exploitation.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and Avoidance of Stigmatization:

The research team will engage with local leaders and stakeholders to ensure that the study respects the cultural values and norms of the community. This includes making certain that the study is non-intrusive and does not exacerbate existing vulnerabilities. Care will be taken to avoid any questions or procedures that could stigmatize or marginalize participants.

4. Safe and Supportive Environment:

Interviews and data collection will take place in safe, comfortable environments where participants feel at ease. Additionally, if any sensitive issues such as family conflict or child abuse are revealed during the study, appropriate referrals to local support services will be made to ensure the participant's welfare.

5. Minimization of Psychological Harm:

The study involves discussions of family and peer relationships, which could potentially bring up emotionally charged topics. To mitigate this, trained personnel will conduct the interviews, and participants will have the option to skip questions or stop participation if they feel uncomfortable. We will also provide information on local counselling services for participants who may need emotional support.

6. Safeguard Measures for Minors:

For interviews with minors, these will be conducted in the presence of at least two adults, with their parent or guardian close by to ensure safeguarding concerns are addressed. This will further protect minors from potential risks and ensure that the interview process is safe, transparent, and comfortable for all involved.

By implementing these safeguards, we aim to minimize the risk of coercion, exploitation, or harm, while ensuring that the study is conducted ethically and with the highest regard for the welfare and protection of participants.

### Risk and Mitigation Protocol

The study aims to explore family and peer relationships in the context of child well-being among a vulnerable population in Kajiado County, Kenya. While this research is expected to pose no more than minimal risks beyond those typically encountered in daily life, particularly concerning the loss of personal data, we recognize the importance of addressing potential risks comprehensively. Participants will face risks no greater than those they encounter in their everyday lives, as the nature of the interview questions will be non-sensitive and age-appropriate, focusing on family dynamics and peer relationships—topics frequently discussed among children. Since the questionnaire will avoid traumatizing subjects, the risk of re-traumatization is considered low.

To ensure informed consent and data protection, participants will be made aware of potential risks, especially regarding the loss of personal data. They will be informed about the measures the research team has implemented to minimize this risk, including the anonymization of data and restricted access. Participants will also be briefed on who will have access to their information and the duration for which it will be stored, fostering transparency and establishing trust.

Baseline interviews will last no longer than 15 minutes, and the topics covered will be carefully selected to avoid sensitive areas, ensuring participants can discuss their experiences comfortably. Recognizing that discussions of family relationships can evoke emotional responses, trained personnel will conduct the interviews, allowing participants the option to pause or skip questions if they feel uncomfortable. Moreover, information about local support services will be provided for those who may need further assistance.

For interviews involving minors, safeguard measures will be implemented, ensuring they are conducted in the presence of at least two adults, and with the parent or guardian close by. This approach addresses safeguarding concerns and helps participants feel secure throughout the process.

I also recognize potential concerns regarding feelings of exclusion among participants not directly involved in the research. However, all participants will have access to the same resources and content discussed during the study, which will be freely available online once published. This approach reduces the likelihood of envy or exclusion and fosters an inclusive

environment among participants. Finally, in cases where sensitive issues arise during interviews, the research team will have a referral mechanism in place to connect participants with appropriate local support services, ensuring their well-being remains a priority throughout the study.



#### **Annex 4. Assent Form**

Hello, I am Fr. Denis Omae Nchore, and I am a researcher from Order of Carmelites, focused on understanding family and peer relationships and their impact on child well-being in Kajiado County, Kenya. I am conducting a study to learn more about how these relationships affect the well-being of children and teenagers, particularly in the context of our community.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study. I will now explain what it means to participate in the study.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer questions about your background, your family, your friends, and your general views about life and relationships. Your participation will involve completing an in-person baseline interview that will take about 15 minutes.

For participating in this interview, you will receive a small token of appreciation, such as a notebook and a pen.

I do not expect any risks from taking part in these interviews. However, I will be collecting personal information about you. If you do not want to answer any question, you may skip it without penalty. Participation is entirely voluntary; you can choose not to participate, skip any question, or stop at any time.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you give your consent for Fr. Denis Omae Nchore to collect, process, and store your personal data for the purposes of this research. I will keep your information secure and confidential. When I share the results of this research, your name will not be used.

Fr. Denis Omae Nchore is committed to complying with the principles of data protection set forth in the Kenya Data Protection Act, 2019. You have the right to be informed about how your data will be used, access your data held by us, and request corrections or deletions at any time.

Your parent or guardian has given their approval for you to participate in this study. Now, it is your choice to decide whether or not you want to participate. You can choose to continue, stop now, or stop at any other time. It is completely your decision.

It is okay if you decide not to participate or if you change your mind later. No one will be upset with you for choosing not to take part.

Questions: Before you decide, I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Do you have any questions for me? Would you like to participate in the study?

If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact the following project representative:

You can contact me, Fr. Denis Omae Nchore, at SBS, or by e-mail [denis.omae@strthmore.edu](mailto:denis.omae@strthmore.edu), or by phone 0705570099. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Miriam W. Oiro Omolo, at the Strathmore Business School, Nairobi, or by e-mail [momolo@strathmore.edu](mailto:momolo@strathmore.edu).

If you want to ask someone independent anything about this research please contact:

The Secretary–Strathmore University Institutional Ethics Review Board, P. O. BOX 59857, 00200, Nairobi, email [ethicsreview@strathmore.edu](mailto:ethicsreview@strathmore.edu) Tel number: +254 703 034418

Agreement:

1. Did the participant decide to be in the study knowing they do not have to? (1=Yes,2=No)

2. Did the participant confirm that they are between 9 and 17 years old? (1=Yes, 2=No) |

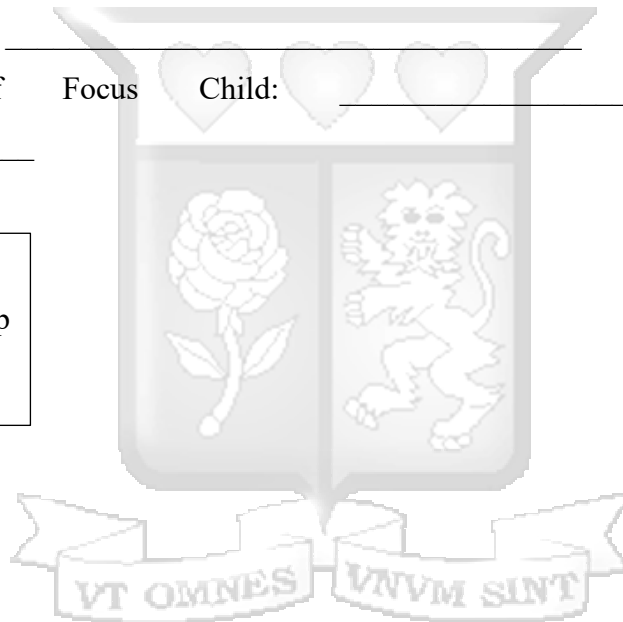
Signatures:

Name of Focus Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Mark of Focus Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fingerprint Stamp



## **Annex 5. INFORMATION SHEET**

### Section 1: Personal Information

**Investigator:** Fr. Denis Omae Nchore O.Carm

**Institutional affiliation:** Strathmore Business School (SBS)

### SECTION 2: INFORMATION SHEET–THE STUDY

Why is this study being carried out?

For the fulfilment of the requirements of my Master’s Degree in Public Policy and Management

Do I have to take part?

No. Taking part in this study is entirely optional and the decision rests only with you. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to get information on a printed copy. If you are not able to answer all the questions successfully the first time, you may be asked to sit through another informational session after which you may be asked to answer the questions a second time. You are free to decline to take part in the study from this study at any time without giving any reasons.

Who is eligible to take part in this study?

- Active members of Nkoroi Catholic church from selected groups and
- Those working with children within Nkoroi Catholic parish

The groups working with children included, Small Christian community, Pontifical Missionary Childhood animators, Catechists and county children office. The adolescent targeted are age 9-17 years.

Who is not eligible to take part in this study?

- Non-residence of Nkoroi Catholic church
- Adolescents without the consent of parents or guardians

What will taking part in this study involve for me?

You will be approached by Fr. Denis Omae Nchore O.carm and requested to take part in the study. If you are satisfied that you fully understand the goals behind this study, you will be asked to sign the informed consent form (this form) and then taken through a questionnaire to complete.

Are there any risks or dangers in taking part in this study?

There are no risks in taking part in this study. All the information you provide will be treated as confidential and will not be used in any way without your express permission.

## Risk and Mitigation

The study aims to explore family and peer relationships in the context of child well-being among a vulnerable population in Kajiado County, Kenya. While this research is expected to pose no more than minimal risks beyond those typically encountered in daily life, particularly concerning the loss of personal data, we recognize the importance of addressing potential risks comprehensively. Participants will face risks no greater than those they encounter in their everyday lives, as the nature of the interview questions will be non-sensitive and age-appropriate, focusing on family dynamics and peer relationships—topics frequently discussed among children. Since the questionnaire will avoid traumatizing subjects, the risk of re-traumatization is considered low.

To ensure informed consent and data protection, participants will be made aware of potential risks, especially regarding the loss of personal data. They will be informed about the measures the research team has implemented to minimize this risk, including the anonymization of data and restricted access. Participants will also be briefed on who will have access to their information and the duration for which it will be stored, fostering transparency and establishing trust.

Baseline interviews will last no longer than 15 minutes, and the topics covered will be carefully selected to avoid sensitive areas, ensuring participants can discuss their experiences comfortably. Recognizing that discussions of family relationships can evoke emotional responses, trained personnel will conduct the interviews, allowing participants the option to pause or skip questions if they feel uncomfortable. Moreover, information about local support services will be provided for those who may need further assistance.

For interviews involving minors, safeguard measures will be implemented, ensuring they are conducted in the presence of at least two adults, and with the parent or guardian closeby. This approach addresses safeguarding concerns and helps participants feel secure throughout the process.

I also recognize potential concerns regarding feelings of exclusion among participants not directly involved in the research. However, all participants will have access to the same resources and content discussed during the study, which will be freely available online once published. This approach reduces the likelihood of envy or exclusion and fosters an inclusive environment among participants. Finally, in cases where sensitive issues arise during interviews, the research team will have a referral mechanism in place to connect participants

with appropriate local support services, ensuring their well-being remains a priority throughout the study.

Are there any benefits of taking part in this study?

The information will be used to improve the child wellbeing beyond Nkoroi Catholic Parish.

What will happen to me if I refuse to take part in this study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Even if you decide to take part at first but later change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time without explanation.

Who will have access to my information during this research?

All research records will be stored in securely locked cabinets. That information may be transcribed into our database but this will be sufficiently encrypted and password protected. Only the people who are closely concerned with this study will have access to your information. All your information will be kept confidential.

At any point any participant who wish to get updates on the progress of the research or need access to their information, they are free to contact the lead researcher and the necessary updates will be given.

Who can I contact in case I have further questions?

You can contact me, Fr. Denis Omae Nchore, at SBS, or by e-mail [denis.oma@strthmore.edu](mailto:denis.oma@strthmore.edu), or by phone 0705570099. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Miriam W. Oiro Omolo, at the Strathmore Business School, Nairobi, or by e-mail [momolo@strathmore.edu](mailto:momolo@strathmore.edu).

If you want to ask someone independent anything about this research please contact:

The Secretary–Strathmore University Institutional Ethics Review Board, P. O. BOX 59857, 00200, Nairobi, email [ethicsreview@strathmore.edu](mailto:ethicsreview@strathmore.edu) Tel number: +254 703 034418

I, Fr. Denis Omae Nchore O.carm, have had the study explained to me. I have understood all that I have read and have had explained to me and had my questions answered satisfactorily. I understand that I can change my mind at any stage.

Please tick the boxes that apply to you;

Participation in the research study

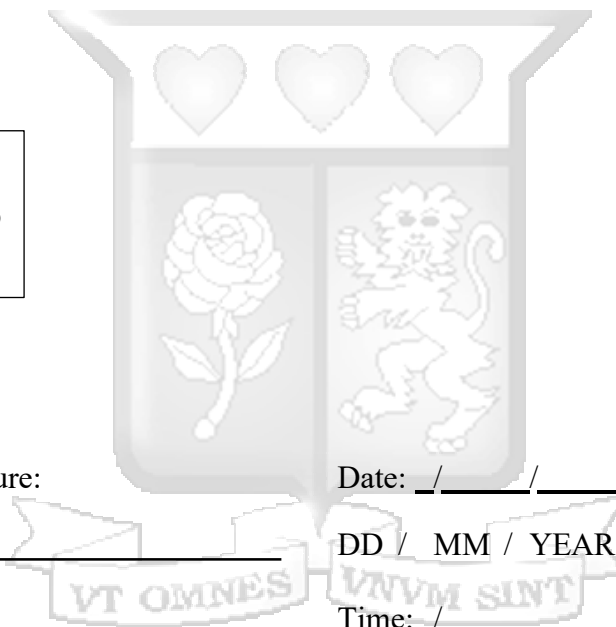
I AGREE to take part in this research

DON'T AGREE to take part in this research

I AGREE to have my completed questionnaire stored for future data analysis

DON'T AGREE to have my completed questionnaire stored for future data analysis

Fingerprint Stamp



Participant's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:     /     /    

DD / MM / YEAR

Participant's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Time:     /    

(Please print name)

HR / MN

I, \_\_\_\_ (Name of person taking consent) certify that I have followed the SOP for this study and have explained the study information to the study participant named above, and that s/he has understood the nature and the purpose of the study and consents to the participation in the study. S/he has been given opportunity to ask questions which have been answered satisfactorily.

Investigator's Signature:

Date:     /     /

Amptis

DD / MM / YEAR

Investigator's Name:

Time: / \_\_\_\_\_

Fr. Denis Omae Nchore

HR / MN

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print name)



Schedule and Budget of Collecting Data on:

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON CHILD WELLBEING

A CASE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, NKOROI CATHOLIC PARISH, NGONG DIOCESE

By DENIS OMAE NCHORE

Schedule for collecting data

The Interviews will be done within one week

The research will spend four days to reach out all individuals for one-on-one interviews

One day will be spend on the focus groups one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

Budget

Item	Amount (Kshs)
Personnel Costs	3000
Travel cost	4000
Survey Costs	4000
Supplies	2000
Intervention Monitoring Costs	5000
Other Direct Costs	2000
TOTAL COSTS	20000



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Ref No: **891276**



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Date of Issue: **23/October/2024**

**RESEARCH LICENSE**



**This is to Certify that Fr.. Denis Omae Omae of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in on the topic: ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON CHILD WELLBEING for the period ending : 23/October/2025.**

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/41337**

**891276**

Applicant Identification Number

*Walter Mwangi*

Director General  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document,

Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

See overleaf for conditions



9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Mr Nchore Denis,  
denis.oma@strathmore.edu

Dear Mr Nchore,

**RE: Assessment of the Effects of Family and Peer Relationships on Child Wellbeing: A Case of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese**

This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above **SU-masters** proposal. Your application reference number is **SU-ISERC2355/24**. The approval period is from **9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2025**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

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

Yours sincerely,

**Mr Ambrose Rachier,  
Chairperson; SU-ISERC**

Ole Sangale Rd, Madaraka Estate,  
P.O Box 59857 00200, Nairobi, Kenya,  
Cell: +254 703 414/6/7, Twitter: @SBSKenya  
Email: info@sbs.ac.ke or visit www.sbs.strathmore.edu



Monday, 14 October 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

**RE: FACILITATION OF RESEARCH – DENIS OMAE NCHORE**

This is to introduce Denis Omae who is a **Master's in Public Policy and Management (MPPM)** student at Strathmore University Business School, admission number MPPM 146451/21. As part of our MPPM Program, Denis is expected to do applied research and undertake a project. This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MPPM course. To this effect, he would like to request for appropriate data from your organization.

Denis is undertaking a research paper on "**Assessment of the Effects of Family and Peer Relationships on Child Wellbeing: A Case of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Nkoroi Catholic Parish, Ngong Diocese "**

The information obtained from your organization shall be treated confidentially and shall be used for academic purposes only.

Our MPPM Program seeks to establish links with industry, and one of these ways is by directing our research to areas that would be of direct use to industry. We would be glad to share our findings with you after the research, and we trust that you will find them of great interest and of practical value to your organization.

We appreciate your support and shall be willing to provide any further information if required.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Njoki Kiagiri".

**Njoki Kiagiri**  
**Manager – Graduate Programs.**  
**Strathmore University Business School**

Strathmore Business School is a Proud member of:

