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**THEOLOGY OF COHABITATION AMONG THE YOUTH IN
THE KENYAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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Christianity has made a real claim on Africa... the question is: Has Africa made a real claim on Christianity? Christianity has Christianized Africa, but Africa has not Africanized Christianity (Mbiti quoted by RJ Gehman 1987).

Abstract

One of the challenges facing the Church today concerns the need to think differently about marriage. Indeed, old ideas about marriage have failed the Church and nowadays such ideas ought to be deconstructed as myths. The Catholic Church in Kenya teaches its young people that marriage is a sacrament and it should be held in respect in the family circles as well in social circles in general. However, it has been observed that cohabitation among the Catholic youths is rampant violating the teaching of the church on the sacrament of marriage. Many youths in church today opt for cohabitation rather than the tedious process of dowry and going through church marriage, they simply choose to cohabit. Hence this article evaluates the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage as a sacrament among the Catholic youths in Kenya. Many young people today argue that the idea of marriage in Church was invented by the “colonial missionaries” to serve as “the other” of the Christianity and the Church. The young people contend that marriage, which is “reified in the colonial missionary”, needs to be thought of a new (Waweru 2011). The young people’s idea of rethinking marriage afresh means a new kind of thinking capable of mobilizing enough creative energy to fuel the reconstruction of marriage, from Albert the

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

Keywords: *Marriage, Cohabitation, Sacrament, Chastity, Youth, Church and Pre-marital counseling*

Introduction

The Catholic theology of marriage was firmly established among the sacraments of the church by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. They both argued that marriage, in so far as it is contracted in faith in Christ, confers grace to do those things which are required in intimate partner relationships. For these two theologians the sacrament of marriage, offers grace which is a portion for the married (Todd et al, 2008). The Catholic Church therefore encourages chastity before marriage since the Christian faith teaches that sexual relationship is for those who are married. Sex outside marriage shows disrespect for the sacrament of marriage, the sacredness of sex, and human dignity must be upheld by all.

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

The Catechism of the Catholic Church further states that those who are engaged to marry are called to live in chastity. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of, mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expression of affection that belongs to married love (CCC; 2350).

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

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

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

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

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

The Catholic Church's traditional teaching about sex education, especially as formulated by popes Pius XI and Pius XII, is that it should not be primarily a matter of giving explicit information at all, but rather it should be a matter of inculcating modesty, purity, chastity and morality. In its pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II states that; especially in the heart of their own families, young people should be aptly and seasonably instructed about the dignity, duty and expression of married love. Trained thus in the cultivation of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to enter a marriage of their own (Whitehead; 1993).

Manning (2008) conducted a study in Britain whose aim was to explore how the church may address cohabitation alongside marriage within its pastoral and liturgical roles and encourage greater stability and faithfulness in all marriage-like relationships. The study found that the church could accomplish this through marriage education, reaching out to couples getting married outside the church. From the researches carried out, two newly emerging lifestyle relationships have been identified that should be of concern to the church.

The first is cohabiting singleness, where the rising age for marriage is encouraging casual and short-term relationships. The second is that of single parent families where one parent, usually the father, is deliberately excluded from the outset (Manning, 2008). Although the study by Manning (2008) explored ways the Catholic Church could accommodate cohabitation alongside marriage, it did not look at the causes of determination as well as the prevalence. Moreover, the study focused on all cohabitation arrangements and not only youths.

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

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

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

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

Kangaru (2004) conducted a study titled *Youth, Church and Sexuality in Kenya* whose purpose was to examine what Christian churches are doing to create a conducive environment for young people to discuss sexuality issues openly without fear or guilt. The study used in-depth literature review on various Kenyan newspapers, then focus group discussion where two focus groups were identified. The discussion was recorded and thereafter transcribed and analysed. The study found that the churches, even in the advent of HIV and AIDS, are not very comfortable in discussing sexuality issues or creating a favourable space for the young adults within the church to explore their sexuality. Although the study by Kangaru (2004) investigated the role of the church on sexuality among the youth, it did not investigate the aspect of cohabitation. Moreover, information was not based on church teachings but newspapers and media reports. This article evaluates data from the youth in the Church as well as Church leadership thus describing the church teachings as experienced by the youth to fill in the knowledge gap. The article fills the gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the Catholic Church teaching on chastity in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

Since it was difficult to survey the whole of the Catholic Church in Kenya, a sample area was targeted, where a descriptive survey design was used. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were applied to collect data. The study took place in Kisumu County, where there is a huge Catholic population. The authors of this article decided to specifically choose five Catholic parishes in Nyando Deanery, Kisumu Diocese namely; Ahero, Awasi, Muhoroni, Katito and Nyabondo Parishes. Out of the eleven parishes in Nyando deanery, the five were selected through purposive sampling.

Nyando Deanery has eleven parishes with a registered youth population of 2000. Each Parish has a designated parish priest and catechist. The target population was therefore made up of 2000 youths, 11 priests and 11 catechists from the 11 parishes in the deanery as shown below

Table 1: Target population

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

Source: Nyando Deanery Church Records

To obtain the parishes within the deanery where the study was conducted, five parishes were selected through purposive sampling based on the number of registered youths. Five of the parishes with at least 100 registered youths were considered for the study. Consequently, 5 priests and 5 catechists were also selected through purposive sampling from the selected parishes since they had information on the teachings related to marriage and were aware of the uptake of marriage among the parishioners. As for the youths, 10% were sampled from a population of 2000 to take part in the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), when a target population is known then 10 – 30% can be used as an adequate sample to represent the population. Thus, a sample of 200 youths was used in the study.

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

Table 2: Study Sample

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

Source: Self-generated

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

The researchers developed a questionnaire that contained closed items to provide for structured responses and open-ended items for in-depth information in order to make useful recommendations to the study. Open-ended items were also used as they permitted a greater depth of response and gave an insight into the respondents' feelings, backgrounds, hidden motivation and decisions (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999).

Interview schedule was also used in data collection as it permitted obtaining specific and detailed information and it enabled the researcher to probe so as to get in-depth information (Kinoti, 1998). This was more suitable in getting information from the priests and catechists who are involved in pre-marital education and partner counseling. The interview schedule sought information from the priests and catechists on the forums of educating the youth on marriage and chastity as well as the determinants of cohabitation among the church going youths.

Five Focus Group discussions including 6 members each were organized and used. The cohabiting youths were organized in FGDs as Key Informants in the study since they were the subject of the study. In this study, the researcher used open ended questions to probe participants in order to get more information.

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

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

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

For the FGDs, the researchers organized cohabiting youths into 5 groups of 6 where one FGD group was organized for each parish. The participants in the FGD groups were informed of their right to participate and withdraw from the study whenever they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, the researcher explained to the FGD

participants the purpose of the study and the privacy that would be maintained regarding the use of information. During the FGD sessions, the researcher asked the predefined questions based on which the participants gave their opinion regarding the youth and cohabitation in the church.

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the study was coded in a standard format and entered into a computer sheet. The structured questions from the questionnaire were coded using figures and labels such as 1 for 'yes', 2 for 'no', 1 = male, 2 = female. As for age of respondents, the age brackets of 18 – 35 years = 1, above 35 = 2 for the church leaders. This was done to allow for the generation of frequencies and percentages to establish the trends and nature of issues under investigation. The significance of the relationship between variables was established by use of chi square test of significance. Contingency coefficient was used to establish the extent of association between the variables. Phi and Cramer's V tests were used. The analysis of quantitative data generated for the study was done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Content analysis was used for qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and FGDs. Before commencing the research, permission to collect data was sought from the Ministry of Education and Technology and the local administrators of the area. The researcher explained to the participants all what they needed to know about the study and informed consent was sought prior to commencing discussions. Participants were also assured of strict confidentiality and anonymity in relation to the information they provide. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any point of the study. To ensure privacy of participants, they were allowed to use nick names during the discussions and information gathered was only used for the study. Consequently, participants who agreed to participate in the study signed consent forms.

Towards a theology of cohabitation

In view of the above introduction and methodology, the study was designed to draw respondents from 5 parishes of the Catholic Church in Nyando Deanery. The respondents included youths (married, unmarried and cohabiting), catechists and priests. The study sampled 200 youths of different categories, 5 catechists and 5 priests. Out of the 200 sampled youths, 125 (62.5%) returned duly filled questionnaires. As for the priests and catechists, the study achieved 100% response return rate since all the priests and catechists were interviewed. The return rate was high because the researcher administered the questionnaires to the respondents (200 youths) personally and made follow ups to ensure the questionnaires were duly filled. As for the interviews, the researcher conducted the interviews with the catechists and the priests. Details of respondents return rate are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 3: Response Return Rate

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

Source: Field research 2016

Background and demographic characteristics of the respondents

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

Gender of the youths

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

Table 4: Gender of the youths

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

Source: Field research 2016

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

Academic level

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

Table 5: Respondents' academic level with reference to marital status

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

Source: Field Research 2016

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

Years as a Catholic Church member

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

Table 6: Years as a Catholic Church member

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

Source: Field research 2016

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

Catholic Church Teaching on Chastity and Cohabitation among youth

The study sought to evaluate Catholic teachings on chastity and marriage. Various parameters of church teaching on chastity were measured using a questionnaire administered to youths who were classified as married, cohabiting and unmarried. The parameters included the teachings, the teaching personnel and locations where teachings take place. The data is presented in the sub sequent sections.

Teachings of the Catholic Church on Chastity and Cohabitation

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

Table 7: Teachings of the Catholic Church on Chastity (N=125)

Statement	Married youths		Cohabiting youths		Unmarried youths	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does the Catholic Church teach about chastity and marriage as a sacrament?	17	0	25	3	79	1
	100.0%	0.0%	87.5%	12.5%	98.6%	1.4%
Did/do you attend pre-marital meetings organized by the church to teach about chastity and marriage?	11	6	2	26	27	53
	66.7%	33.3%	8.3%	91.7%	34.3%	65.7%
Do you think the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage is sufficient?	12	5	8	20	61	19
	73.3%	26.7%	29.2%	70.8%	75.7%	24.3%

Source: Field research 2016

From the findings, all the married youths 17 (100%), reported that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament. Similarly, majority of the cohabiting youths 25 (87.5%) and of unmarried youths 79 (98.6%) concurred. This data shows that the youths are aware that the Catholic Church teaches about chastity and marriage as a sacrament. Thus, the decision to cohabit is not based on lack of teaching on chastity and marriage by the church.

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

Data further reveals that the youths generally agree that the approaches used by the church to equip the youth on sexual morality and marriage are sufficient. With reference to this statement, majority of married youths 12(73.3%) said yes with an even higher majority of the unmarried youths 61 (75.7%) also saying yes. However, the cohabiting youths consider the methods not to be sufficient as the majority 20 (70.8%) said no. This high number could be explained by the fact that majority of the cohabiting youths 26 (91.7%) do not attend such pre-marital meetings, so their answer might just have been guess work. Similarly, Fall (1999) noted that, according to Catholic teachings, preparation for marriage begins long before the couple approaches the priest or pastoral minister.

Theological Forums on virtue of chastity and marriage

Regarding the youths who were influenced by the Catholic Church teachings about chastity and the sacrament of marriage, the research sought to determine whether they were aware of places where such teachings or meetings takes place. Thus 125 respondents indicated that the church offers such teachings in various forums. The data was analyzed and presented in terms of frequency and percentages as shown below.

Table 8: Forums for teaching about the virtue of chastity and marriage (N = 125)

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

Source: Field Research 2018

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

Person responsible for teaching of chastity and marriage

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

Table 9: Person responsible for teaching of chastity and marriage (N= 125)

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

Source: Field Research 2018

From the data analysed above, it emerged that the youth in the Catholic Church believe that teaching of chastity and marriage is the responsibility of the catechist as noted by 78 (74.3%) of the respondents. Further, 59 (56.2%) of the respondents believe it is the responsibility of their parents while 47 (44.8%) consider it the responsibility of the priest. Youth leaders and teachers standing at 19(18.15%) and 29(27.6%) respectively are not considered as key people in the teaching of chastity and marriage. These responses show that either parents or the church (priests and catechists) were responsible for teachings on marriage and chastity in the youths’ view. This is also supported by Whitehead (1993) who emphasizes on parental role in education in human sexuality and to the importance of self-control, self-discipline and chastity. Todd et al; (2008) further emphasized the role of the Church in helping parents to catechize their own children.

Relationship between Catholic Church teachings on chastity and cohabitation

In order to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the Catholic Church teaching and cohabitation, chi square test of association was run between knowledge of teaching and marital status. The data was categorical for both variables with teaching of chastity and marriage having two levels and marital status having three levels: married, cohabiting and unmarried. The chi square table is as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests for Church teachings on chastity and marital status (N=125)

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

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

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016

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

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

Table 10: Symmetric Measures for Catholic Church Teaching and cohabitation

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

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

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

Source: Researcher Analysis 2016 (N=125)

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

Theology of cohabitation and the way forward

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

On forums where the church teaches about the virtue of chastity and marriage, the respondents indicated special workshops as pointed by 90.5% of the respondents, retreats (81.9%) and conferences (60%). However, the least popular forums were schools (15.2%), seminars (25.7%) and homes (29.5%). Since a significant proportion of youths do not attend the workshops, retreats and conferences, this explains why they do not attend forums for teaching on chastity. It also emerged that the youth in the Catholic Church believe that teaching of chastity and marriage is the responsibility of the catechist as noted by 74.3% of the respondents. Further, 56.2% of the respondents believe it is the responsibility of their parents while 44.8% consider it the responsibility of the priest. However, youth leaders (18.1%) and teachers (27.6%) are not considered as key people in the teaching of chastity and marriage.

On persons responsible for the decision to cohabit, majority of the youth believe that cohabiting is a personal decision as 45.8% of the respondents indicated that the decision is made by them. However, a significant majority (25.0%) consider the decision to be influenced by peers while 16.7% believe it is influenced by their parents. The church (8.3%) and media (4.2%) play little roles in the decision to cohabit. The findings show that the youth make the decision to cohabit on their own with significant magnitude of peer influence as well as parental pressure to probably marry and settle. The relationship between Catholic Church teachings on chastity and cohabitation was also shown by chi-square test (χ^2) where the findings gave $\chi^2 = 4.973$ with $p = 0.018$. This shows that there is a statistically significant association between the Catholic Church teaching on chastity and marriage and the tendency to cohabitation. There was also a strong positive association between teaching on chastity and marriage and cohabitation among the youth as shown by $\Phi = 0.316$ and Cramer's $V = 0.223$.

Conclusion

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

Recommendations

The study recommends that based on the findings, the Catholic Church should strengthen its structures on premarital counseling to the youth so that they can embrace church marriage more. Parents should be given adequate training on how to impart teachings on sexual morality and chastity in their children. Parents, counselors, family therapists, and other religious leaders could adopt the findings of this study as a basis for pre-marital counseling. Non-Governmental Organizations and other bodies that deal with young adults' development should also use the information for young adult counseling in seminars and workshops.

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