

## **Intergenerational Transmission of Violence in Military Families: A Case Study of Anglican Church of Kenya, Military Episcopate, Kenyatta University – Nairobi**

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### **Abstract**

*Marital violence remains a widespread concern in military families globally, yet minimal research has examined how childhood parenting experiences foster intimate partner violence among African military families, particularly within faith-based communities. This study investigated the contribution of parenting backgrounds to marital violence in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Military Episcopate, Kenya Defense Forces. Despite the implementation of faith-based interventions: premarital counseling and pastoral support within the Anglican Church of Kenya Military Episcopate, marital violence remains prevalent among Kenya Defense Forces families, with existing programs failing to address the foundational role of adverse childhood parenting experiences including exposure to parental violence, authoritarian parenting, parental substance abuse, and single parenthood. The mixed-method design was adopted in four military bases (Langata, Laikipia, Mariakani, and Gilgil Barracks). Using a multistage sampling method, 255 married members of the Military Episcopate were surveyed. Information was collected through structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. The quantitative analysis was done using the SPSS version 21 which involved descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis whereas the qualitative data analysis was done using thematic content analysis. The theoretical basis of the study was the Social Learning Theory and Attachment Theory. The participants reported remarkably high rates of adverse parenting experiences: 60–75% witnessed parental violence, 83.1% had experienced authoritarian parenting (emotional distance), 49-74% had parents who used substances, and 48.6-63.9% had experienced single parenting or lived with extended family. The childhood experiences were highly correlated with the current marital violence whereby 93.3% had experienced psychological abuse and 34.5% experienced physical abuse in their respective marriages. The important transmission mechanisms were modeling of violent conflict resolution, normalization of aggression, deficits in anger management (73.3%) and disruptions in attachment. The military culture also contributed to weaknesses by creating hyper masculinity, stress when deployed, and hierarchy. The existing interventions of the Military Episcopate were also not sufficient: 45.1% considered premarital counselling sufficient, 46.7% said that the victims were heard in a proper way, and 73.3% said that biblical teachings were misinterpreted and justified the aggressors. Marital violence in the Military Episcopate is a structural phenomenon based on the intergenerational trauma transmission that is enhanced by the military culture and is not effectively addressed by the current interventions. The comparison between high church attendance (61.2) and near-universal violence shows that the generic forms of faith-based interventions without trauma-informed and evidence-based material cannot disrupt the cycle of violence. Some of the recommendations are the adoption of trauma informed premarital counselling that accommodates childhood experiences, the creation of clear theological training that is clear on the distinction between biblical submission and abuse tolerance, the introduction of relationship education in military training curriculums, strengthening familial support structures, as well as correcting institutional cultural practices that normalize psychological abuse.*

***Keywords: Intergenerational Violence, Military Families, Marital Violence, Parenting Backgrounds, Faith Based Intervention, Kenya Defense Forces, Military Episcopate, Trauma Transmission***

## **1.0 Introduction**

In military families, marital violence is a significant worldwide social health concern, the occurrence of which is higher than that in civilian groups due to the deployment stress factors, combat trauma, and the existing institutional cultures (Marshall et al., 2005; Taft et al., 2011). Although much Western literature is available on this subject, the literature on military families in Africa (especially those incorporated into faith-based societies) has been significantly underinvestigated, despite their distinctive experiences of the intersections among military culture, religious teachings, and social values.

A good example of such complexity is the Anglican Church of Kenya Military Episcopate, which is an amalgamation of Christian theological concepts and Kenyan cultural ideologies within the hierarchical contexts of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). The degree of marriage violence in such an environment cannot be fully understood without reference to the experiences in childhood; the results of a 20-year prospective longitudinal study were used to show that childhood exposure to partner violence was a significant predictor of future perpetration and victimization in adulthood (Ehrensaft et al., 2003). According to Social Learning Theory, children learn violent conflict resolution strategies, since observational learning and modelling are the primary mechanisms of acquisition (Bandura, 1977; 2004), but according to Attachment Theory, relationships that children experience during early caregiving stages are the root cause of patterns in adult intimate relationships (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980). However, it is important to adapt such largely Western constructs to the African military populations carefully (Beswick, 2014).

Similarly, to intercommunal violence, family violence is an indication of the transmission of intergenerational trauma (Musembi & Iteyo, 2018), which is enhanced in the military environment by hyper-masculine cultural standards (Rosen et al., 2023), the impact of deployment (Gewirtz et al., 2018), and the normalization of substance abuse (Cottler, 2018). African armies operate within extended family caregiving systems (East et al., 2020), which, consequently, create protective elements as well as vulnerabilities for military children.

The current article has three specific objectives: (1) establishing parenting background types among Military Episcopate members, (2) investigating whether violent parenting backgrounds

contribute to adult marital violence, and (3) examining the effectiveness of Military Episcopate interventions.

This research has implications not only for the Military Episcopate but also for military families in other African contexts by clarifying the interactions between childhood experiences and military culture as well as religious contexts to develop patterns of violence in adults. Religion communities, as was observed by Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005), can either support or hinder disclosure of violence, and thus, those involving faith-based military communities can be considered important realms of preventive research.

## **2.0 Integrated Approaches to Violence Prevention**

This paper discusses the measures that the stakeholders have taken to deal with marital violence in military families. It therefore examines some of the theoretical frameworks and intervention techniques which are outlined below.

### **2.1 Social Learning Theory and Violence Modeling**

According to Bandura (1977), children adopt behavioural patterns by observational learning, whereby parents play the role of primary model, especially in the family context. Social-cognitive theory also suggests that the violence one observes as a child gets integrated into the system as a justifiable method of conflict resolution (Bandura, 2004). Capaldi et al. (2012) used a systematic review to find intimate-partner violence risk factors after proving that interparental violence during childhood serves as the main predictor for both adult violence and victimization. Kimber et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis, which showed that children exposed to intimate-partner violence demonstrated higher aggressive behaviours, thus confirming the existence of direct modelling effects. According to Whitfield et al. (2005), violent childhood experiences increase the risk of adult intimate-partner violence by three to five times when compared to people who have not experienced such violence. The scheme functions under cognitive schemas, in which violence is internalised as the normal way in which families function, instead of being identified as a problem area requiring intervention. Such a fact can, however, not be explained by modeling, as there are individuals who were exposed to childhood violence, yet become perpetrators of violence in adulthood. This finding means that there are other processes at play other than behavioral replication, which means that the emotional regulation and bonding processes mediate such effects (Dworkin et al., 2021).

## **2.2 Attachment Theory and Emotional Regulation**

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) clarified the role of early relationships with caregivers in forming internal working models that determine adult abilities in intimacy, trust, and emotional regulation. Children who form attachments through regular, responsive caregiving learn to exercise healthy emotional regulation and relationship functioning. On the other hand, secure attachments resulting from neglect, inconsistent treatment, or scaring caregiver behaviour result in adults who have problems with intimacy, trust, and affect control. According to a comprehensive review by Doherty et al. (2024), childhood exposure to intimate partner violence has long-term health impacts through the mediating effects of emotional dysregulation and attachment. Through a randomised controlled study, Rosenblum et al. (2018) showed that improving maternal representations among high-risk moms reduces intergenerational transmission, indicating that attachment-oriented interventions may be utilised to end violent cycles. Thompson et al. (2018) insist on the fact that the process of emotion regulation is cultivated because parent-children communication confirms the feelings of children and calms them down, thus the ability to regulate feelings is developed, and in contrast, children whose feelings are rejected, punished, or parents who are dysregulated do not practice such processes. These deficits make the adults susceptible to aggressive outbursts in cases of relational conflicts, especially when stressed. Attention to military situations worsens vulnerabilities to attachment because parents are often absent because of deployment (Gewirtz et al., 2021). The authors reported that paternal absence at key developmental stages interferes with the development of attachment and leads to adolescent behavioural issues (East et al., 2020). In the case of military families, deployment separation is a normal stressor which affects several generations.

## **2.3 Parenting Styles and Developmental Outcomes**

Baumrind (2013) determined that parenting styles have a substantial impact on risk behaviour and competence in adolescents. High control and low warmth, which are the hallmarks of authoritarian parenting, result in children whose level of self-regulation is poor and who are at risk of substance abuse. Hoeve *et al.* (2009) found in a meta-analysis research that aggressive behaviour and delinquency are predicted by strict and inconsistent discipline. Chao and Tseng (2002) also warned that the effects of parenting style are not cross-culturally relevant; what may be considered authoritarian in the Western context may not have the same effect in collectivist cultures, which place greater emphasis on obedience and family ranking. However,

emotional warmth and responsiveness are cross-cultural protective (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). Vanassche et al. (2014) concluded that parental role modelling has a more significant effect on adolescent behaviour than intact families do, and children who witness positive conflict resolution and emotional management develop the same skills regardless of whether it is a single or two-parent family, as compared to those who see violence and dysregulation in stable single-parent families.

## **2.4 Parental Substance Abuse Effects**

Children of the following ages may exhibit parental substance abuse: 2 to 5 years old, 6 to 13 years old, and 14 to 17 years old. Most of them, Kelley and Fals-Stewart (2004) established that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders is very high among children of drug or alcohol abusing parents compared with the children of non-abusing parents. The impact of substance abuse on parenting is the depletion of parenting ability due to emotional unavailability, lack of discipline, parental neglect, and increased exposure to violence (Lander et al., 2013).

In a systematic review, Park and Schepp (2015) found that children of alcoholics have inherent types of vulnerabilities, which encompass attachment disturbances, Parentification, exposure to traumatic experiences, and modelling of maladaptive coping behaviours. However, these risks can be mitigated by resilience variables (positive peer relations, supportive extended family, and individual competencies). Military culture, where alcohol is treated as a way to bond as a unit and cope with stress (Rosen et al., 2023), introduces a situation in which substance abuse is considered normal and not pathological, thus exacerbating childhood vulnerability when military members observe alcohol abuse in their parents and continuing generations of alcohol-enabled violence.

## **2.5 Single Parenthood and Alternative Caregiving**

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) showed that single parenthood is associated with more child behavioural problems, which is attributable to economic hardship as opposed to father absence in itself. Silverstein and Auerbach (1999) challenged the essential-father claims, asserting that the quality of caregiving and household economic well-being are more critical than father presence. Yoon et al. (2018) also discovered that father involvement curbs behaviour problems in at-risk children, even though whether one is mediated through the father-child interaction is the interaction of the distinct groups, the quality of father-child interaction is the true mediator. Extended family care by grandparents and other relatives is a culturally accepted phenomenon in the African setting, which offers possible protective benefits (Ismayilova et al., 2012).

Extended family caregiving is, however, also an indicator of inability by the parents to meet their caregiving duties as a result of their death, abandonment or dysfunction. Therefore, the impacts and significance of alternative caregiving are context-specific, shaped by environmental conditions and the quality of relationships, not by structures alone.

## **2.6 Military Culture Amplification**

Marshall et al. (2005) documented that military culture creates unique risk factors for intimate partner violence, including hyper-masculinity norms discouraging emotional vulnerability, hierarchical structures replicating control patterns in intimate relationships, combat trauma producing hypervigilance and aggression, and frequent relocations disrupting social support networks.

Taft et al. (2011), through meta-analysis, established that PTSD significantly predicts violence against intimate partners among active-duty soldiers and veterans. Combat exposure creates emotional numbing, irritability, and hyper arousal that manifest in relational contexts as emotional unavailability and aggressive outbursts (Cottler, 2018).

Gewirtz et al. (2018) found that military parenting programs focusing on deployment-related stress can reduce parental distress and suicidal ideation, suggesting preventive interventions can mitigate military-specific risk factors. However, most programs focus on veterans rather than active-duty personnel and rarely address childhood antecedents of violence (Piehler et al., 2024).

## **2.7 Faith-Based Interventions: Help or Hindrance**

Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005) documented that Christian clergy responses to domestic violence vary widely, with some providing essential support while others inadvertently enable abuse through theological misinterpretation. Biblical teachings on submission, forgiveness, and marriage permanence can be weaponized to silence victims and excuse perpetrators.

Knick Meyer et al. (2010) found that collaborative approaches between faith communities and domestic violence services produce better outcomes than either sector alone. Faith leaders provide spiritual support and community accountability, while domestic violence advocates supply safety planning and legal resources.

According to Pargament *et al.* (2013), religious coping can be either positive (collaborative problem-solving with God, spiritual reframing) or negative (spiritual struggle, punitive God representations). Positive religious coping correlates with better mental health outcomes, while negative religious coping predicts worse outcomes, including violence tolerance (Bernardi & Steyn, 2021).

The Military Episcopate represents a unique context where military and religious authority structures overlap, potentially creating both enhanced leverage for intervention and risks of institutional pressure toward violence endurance.

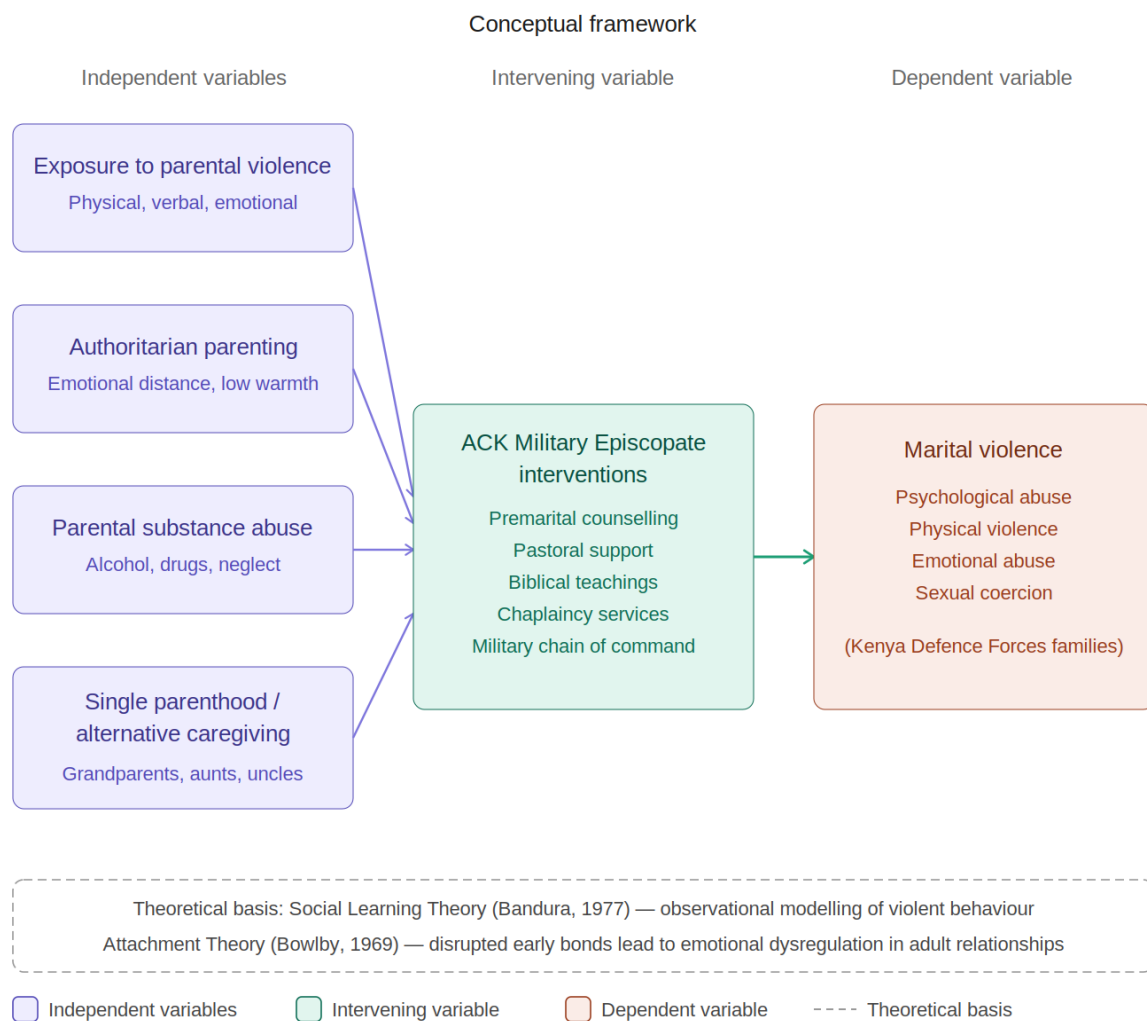
More recent scholars engage with the matter and argue that faith communities occupy a contradictory position in responses to gender-based violence, simultaneously capable of enabling harm and facilitating healing. According to Mombo and Joziassse (2022), some of the theological constructs, specifically the African idea of the term *vumilia* (perseverance), have been used to coerce women into abusive situations in the name of spiritual fidelity. Similar arguments by Freeks (2023), who notes that gender-based violence is a form of systematic warfare on families and that practical theology should go beyond passive moral disapproval and should move to constructive interventions using organized ecclesia. Khosa-Nkatini and Muthivhi (2026) take this argument further and claim that practical theology may be used strategically as an institutional system to deconstruct the cultural and religious framework that perpetuates gender-based violence.

The point of convergence among these scholars is important: all tend to believe that theological misappropriation is one of the main ways violence is perpetuated, and that the church cannot be a passive contributor. This point of contention mostly has been an emphasis point; Mombo and Joziassse emphasize gender and cultural critique, Freeks the ecclesial responsibility, and Khosa-Nkatini and Muthivhi the structural theological reform as a preventative tool.

When applied to this research, these arguments shed light on why 73.3% of respondents defined distorted biblical teachings as aggressor-justifying. The issue of the military episcopate is not so much the pastoral inadequacy but an even greater matter of theological formation, where the structures of endurance of the “*vumilia*” type painted victims silent and where the training of the chaplaincy, as advocated by Freeks (2023), needs to be redesigned explicitly as a concrete theological intervention and not as a generic counselling add-on.

This study was therefore guided by three objectives: to establish the types of parenting backgrounds among Military Episcopate members, to investigate whether violent parenting

backgrounds contribute to marital violence, and to examine the effectiveness of Military Episcopate interventions in mitigating marital violence. The primary variable was marital violence as the dependent variable, examined through psychological, physical, and emotional dimensions. The independent variables were four parenting backgrounds: exposure to parental violence, authoritarian parenting with emotional distance, parental substance abuse, and single parenthood or alternative caregiving arrangements. Anglican Church teachings and premarital counseling programs served as the intervening variable, positioned theoretically as capable of either moderating or exacerbating the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and adult marital violence. Together, these variables frame a study that is uniquely positioned to generate contextually grounded, evidence-based insights into how childhood experiences, military culture, and faith-based institutional responses shape patterns of marital violence within the Kenya Defence Forces.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework. Intergenerational Transmission of Violence in Military Families*

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

The researchers used mixed-methods research to study martial violence which occurs in the Military Episcopate of the Anglican Church of Kenya by conducting in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and structured questionnaires and secondary literature research to study the complex topic and subject matter. (Braithwaite et al., 2017).

The study was undertaken in four strategically chosen military installations that are representative of various operational environments and military services, i.e. Langata Barracks (Nairobi - headquarters of Kenya defense forces), Laikipia Air Base (Nanyuki - arid peacekeeping-like conditions), Mariakani Barracks (Mombasa - coastal Navy presence), and Gilgil Barracks (tear line operations - infantry).

Out of the 2,091 married people in Anglican churches within these installations (target population), 255 constitute the respondents (12 per cent) were sampled using multistage sampling, which included stratified geographic sampling, cluster sampling, which involved specific barracks, and simple random sampling, which involved membership lists of congregations. The sample was composed of 220 couples of Episcopate Military, 10 chaplains, 6 commanding officers, and 19 commanding officers. The sample was determined through purposive sampling to be able to identify key informants who were specific in their knowledge about intervention programmes.

The data collection was done using three complementary tools. The structured questionnaire, which is attached in Appendix 1 was distributed to 220 Military Episcopate couples in the four installations. It included four thematic sections demographic characteristics, childhood parenting experiences assessed using Likert-scale items that evaluated exposure to parental violence, parenting styles, substance abuse, and single parenthood; current prevalence of marital violence measured using validated scales that assessed psychological, physical, and sexual abuse; and knowledge and perception of Anglican premarital counseling and pastoral programs. The questionnaires were self-administered at the church during their congregational meetings and trained research assistants were recruited among the catechists who were present to assist the participants who had any problems.

Ten chaplains and 25 commanding and officer-commanding officers who were chosen through purposive sampling were interviewed in-depth due to their specialized institutional knowledge of intervention mechanisms and violence transmission dynamics. They were conducted at confidential locations to ensure confidentiality and took about 45-60 minutes each. Participants were grouped into discussions of 8-10 people at church sites in each of the installations and the group discussion recorded to gather collective lived experiences at the point of convergence between military culture and lives of religious communities.

Ethical approval was received before data was collected by the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) was obtained to give the research permission and the Directorate of Military Intelligence obtained clearance. Written informed consent was given by all participants, who were assured of voluntary participation and a right to withdraw without penalty, and anonymity by keeping all data instruments anonymous and ensuring the safety of the data collected by using secure passwords.

Thematic analysis based on the six-step deductive coding system by Braun and Clarke (2013) was used to derive patterns and themes that were in line with the study's objective, and narratives were used to present the qualitative findings. SPSS version 21 was utilized to do descriptive statistical analysis of quantitative data, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was employed to examine the associations between parenting backgrounds and outcomes related to marital violence.

#### 4.0 Study Findings

The findings of the study are represented in the table below.

**Table 1: Parenting Background Types and Current Violence Prevalence**

| Parenting Background Type                              | Percentage | Current Marital Violence Correlation               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Witnessed parental violence (all types)</b>         | 60-75%     | 93.3% psychological abuse; 34.5% physical violence |
| <b>Authoritarian parenting with emotional distance</b> | 83.1%      | 73.3% anger management struggles                   |

|                                                 |            |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Parental substance abuse</b>                 | 49-74%     | 74% witnessed childhood alcohol parties |
| <b>Single parenthood/alternative caregiving</b> | 48.6-63.9% | 81% rarely saw parents in childhood     |

According to the data provided in Table 1, authoritarian parenting with emotional distance was the most common parenting background trait that affected 83.1% of the respondents. This was supported by the observation of a member of a focus group that observed, our parents were very strict. We were unable to express ourselves. We would keep silent even when we had issues as talking would cause more trouble. The exposure to violence in parents was shockingly high, with the prevalence of between 60% and 75% of the participants in various violent behaviors. One hundred percent of the respondents (100 00 per cent) said they had seen parents destroy their possessions, and 92 per cent had witnessed physical aggression, such as pushing and grabbing. This view was echoed by Rev Yaendi, a chaplain interviewed in this research when he said that when we counsel couples, we find that practically all were brought up in an environment of violence at home. They think it is normal. They do not even see it as violence anymore.

Parental substance abuse also turned out to be a significant background variable: 74 percent experienced alcohol parties at home as children, 69 percent had witnessed smoking, and 63 percent had witnessed parents in a drunken state. The number of households that consumed alcohol daily was 49%. Jane, who is a military spouse, narrated, “my father used to drink daily after work. He would beat my mother when he was intoxicated. We kids would cover up under the bed. I identify the same pattern with my marriage now”.

Single parenthood and other alternative caregiving arrangements were also prevalent: 64 percent had been raised by grandparents at least once, 53 percent by uncles or aunts. Divorce of parents occurred in 51 per cent of the respondents. One of the commanding officers noted that family stability is challenging in military life. Constant movements imply that children do not have parents they can count on. This impacts on their self-ability to have stable relationships in adulthood.

The security-type responses were manifested in institutional process of reporting violence cases. One chaplain observed that when violence is reported the commanding officer tends to

deal with it by disciplinary action. This is, however, a temporary fix. The couple does not get any counselling concerning the childhood trauma or its influence on their marriage.

There were gross gaps of ineffectiveness found in the intervention programmes in the Military Episcopate. The participants rated premarital counselling as sufficient only at 45.1% and only 80.8 per cent of them cited lack of sufficient counselling as one of the causes of their violence. According to a young couple the premarital counselling was biblical roles of husband and wife, no discussion about how childhood influences our relationship or how to deal with the conflict without violence. It was only 46.7% that they believed that the victims were appropriately heard by the church. Sarah who had been intensely psychologically abused added, when I complained to the church leaders, they advised me to pray and obey my husband. They used quotes of scriptures on wives' submissiveness. They did not inquire about my safety or the well-being of my children.

Theological perversions started to arise, and 73.3 per cent of them admitted that the bible teachings on submission, forgiveness and permanence of marriage were being distorted to suit the aggressors. More than half (52.5%) considered the church to promote tolerance for violence. However, despite 61.2 per cent of partners being regular churchgoers, there was a paradox in that high religious attendance should have resulted in a low level of violence (93.3 per cent). Through these results, it is shown that the parenting backgrounds that are associated with exposure to violence, emotional distance, substance misuse and instability of caregivers have a close relationship with adult marital violence.

The high rate of psychological abuse (93.3%) and the lack of physical violence (34.5 %) in the respondents with unfavourable childhood experiences is a strong indicator of an intergenerational nature. The existing intervention strategies focusing on religious authority and generic counselling are not sufficient and demand considering the issue of childhood trauma and instructions on evidence-based Violence Prevention skills.

## **5.0 Discussion**

This paper suggests that the causes of marital violence in the Military Episcopate is due to the patterns of intergenerational trauma transmission enhanced by the military culture and not sufficiently mitigated by the currently available faith-based interventions. The results are consistent with the literature at large and provide new information related to African military families in religious groups.

These four overlapping and discontinuous categories of parenting background, including violent parenting (60 -75 per cent exposure), authoritarian parenting and emotional distance (83.1 per cent exposure), parental substance abuse (49 -74 per cent exposure) and single parenthood or alternative caregiving (48.6 -63.9 per cent exposure), are not isolated risk factors but cumulative vulnerability. These prevalence rates align with international military population rates reported by Gewirtz et al. (2021), but due to unique African trends, such as the 63.9% reported by grandparents due to extended family guidelines.

The almost ubiquitous exposure to some type of adverse parenting (60 -75%) precluded a comparative study between individuals with violent histories and those without, shifting the emphasis of the research question from the issue of violent backgrounds and marital violence to the question of how such consistently violent childhoods lead to adult patterns. This is reflective of the data provided by Milaniak and Widom (2015), indicating that childhood maltreatment predisposes violence perpetration in the home and the outside world, pointing at systemic, as opposed to individual-level issues.

### **5.1 Intergenerational Transmission Mechanisms**

The study provides convincing evidence supporting the hypothesis that intergenerational transmission of violence is driven by multiple mechanisms. Though 60 and 75 per cent of the participants stated that they had watched parental violence, a higher percentage, 93.3 per cent, now hinged on psychological abuse and 34.5 per cent on physical violence in their marital union. This development of childhood observation to adulthood victimisation would indicate that the normalisation of violent behaviour makes it easy to accept behaviours that would be classified by an outside observer as being abusive. The process of modelling serves to recreate conflict-resolution patterns observed in childhood, which is consistent with Bandura's (1977, 2004) social learning theory. The 71.8 per cent who had observed verbal aggression in the parent now live in marriages where 93.3 per cent are affected by verbal aggression, thus illustrating an outright copying of behavioural patterns.

Kimber et al. (2018) supported similar trends in a meta-analysis study and found that exposure to violence early in life predicts future aggressive behaviours through modelling processes. Violence is normalized and it makes it seem unavoidable. When psychological abuse is close to the universal (93.3 per cent), it will be viewed as normal marriage and not abusive, hence losing the motivation to intervene. The present finding supports the earlier research of

Ehrensaft et al. (2003), which showed that childhood exposure to violence led to adults developing aggressive behaviour patterns and reduced their ability to recognise and resist abusive relationships.

73.3 % of respondents are experiencing anger-management problems, indicating a lack of control over their emotions, which began during childhood, with 60.8 per cent of participants reporting emotional aloofness with their parents and 61 per cent experiencing difficulties with expressing their emotions. Thompson et al. (2014) assume that emotion regulation is shaped by parent-child interactions that validate and calm emotions. Children whose emotions are not acknowledged or shown with parental dysregulation do not develop regulatory abilities, which makes them vulnerable to outbursts of aggression during relational conflict.

The 81percent who rarely observed parents as a child and the 64 % brought up by grandparents experience attachment disturbances, which develop into insecure attachment styles that undermine adulthood intimacy and trust. Dworkin et al. (2021) determined that intergenerational trauma transmission occurs through attachment disruptions as one of its major mechanisms. Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1973, 1980) describes how early relationships with caregivers instill internal working models which influence relationship competence in adulthood, which is an acute pattern observed in the Military Episcopate families.

## **5.2 Military Culture Amplification**

Military institutional factors contribute to the child's vulnerabilities in unique ways. Hyper-masculine culture discourages those who are emotional and defends the expression of anger, implying patterns of childhood learning (Rosen et al., 2017). I interviewed an infantry officer, and he said, "In the military, we are trained to be tough and to hold back fear and sadness. But anger is acceptable." This carries over into our homes, where we are unable to appear weak to our wives but end up angry when they disagree with us.

The authoritarian nature of parenting within the marital relationship is mirrored in the hierarchical command structure. 89% of subjects who had experienced very strict parenting currently work in military systems that require absolute obedience to authority, creating a mismatch with the appropriate relational power dynamics. Marshall et al. (2005) recorded that military structures tend to recreate coercive patterns of control in intimate relationships.

Military constant deployments, war post-traumas, and military deployment stress are other stress factors that trigger violence in people who already have the deficits of emotional

regulation caused by childhood. Taft *et al.* (2011) used meta-analysis to demonstrate that combat exposure causes hypervigilance, which then leads to relationship violence, because they wanted to show that PTSD serves as a vital predictor of intimate partner violence.

74 %of people who experienced home alcohol parties as children are currently in a military culture that successfully socialises the use of substances as a bonding unit among the military (Cottler, 2018). Childhood normalization and adult military drinking culture have a conjunctive effect that creates environments that suppress inhibition to conflict and increase the risk of violence. One of the Navy officers said, “We drink together after rigorous deployments. It is the way we make it through and become brothers. However, on drunken occasions at home, minor disputes with my wife escalate at home.”

Patterns on a branch basis proved to be in line with differences in operations. Families with infantry, armour, and artillery had higher rates of violence, which is correlated with high childhood parental absence and stress caused by current deployment, compared to Air Force and Navy families, which have more stable schedules. This is consistent with Gewirtz et al. (2021), who found that deployment-induced stress negatively affects parenting quality and family stability.

### **5.3 Faith-Based Intervention Failures**

There have been failures of faith-based interventions due to a number of reasons. The Military Episcopate is not without excellent intentions, but with poor efficacy. 61.2% of partners attend church regularly; however, the rates of violence are almost universal (93.3% psychological, 34.5% physical), which suggests that attendance is not a solution to the conversion of relations. This paradox contradicts the belief that religious engagement naturally prevents violence and aligns with Bernardi and Steyn (2021), who found that religious engagement may be a preventive or risk factor depending on the content of the theology and the community's reaction.

Violence is endured because of theological abuse. 73.3% of respondents identify perversions of biblical orthodoxy, and 52.5% of respondents identify the church as tolerating violence. As Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005) noted, the responses of Christian clergy are extremely different, with a misinterpretation of the theological meaning of submission, forgiveness and permanence of relationships in marriages creating barriers to help or entrapment of victims in abusive partnerships. A chaplain has admitted that it is scripture that we have used unwittingly

to hold families together at whatever cost. We stressed female subjection, and not husbands, on the call to self-sacrificing love.

The preaching of forgiveness was done without repentance and change of behaviour. This resulted in a setting where abusers are justified, and victims are caught up. Only 47% believe that victims are sufficiently heard, and only 45.1% regard premarital counselling as sufficient, but 88% point to the ineffectiveness of counselling as a contributory factor to their violence. This discontinuity shows that they do have programmes that do not have trauma-informed content on how childhood experiences affect adult relationships. Today, counselling is placed on generic relationship skills and biblical role teaching instead of helping the couples to understand and transcend certain vulnerabilities based on their parenting experiences.

Knicker-Meyer et al. (2010) have also described the requirement of the interventions of faith-based response to domestic violence that requires working with domestic violence specialised services, clear teaching on the theology of the Bible that draws the line between biblical teachings and toleration of abuse, trauma-informed responses, and the responsibility of institutional organisations. These are the aspects that the Military Episcopate currently lacks, even though there are formal counselling structures.

#### **5.4 Comparison with Community-Based Peace Initiatives**

The results are similar to the studies on community-based conflict resolution in other Kenyan settings. In Kenya, Murang'ai (2022) has discussed community-based peace processes in Kenya's Rift Valley, where the local peace committees had significant roles in dispute mediation and the recovery of social trust. On the same note, Otte and Iteyo (2023) emphasized the use of community-based peace committees to deal with the problem of violence following elections and reported that the effectiveness of such efforts was highly reliant on the local legitimacy and application of traditional conflict resolution systems.

Nevertheless, the hierarchical structure and geographic mobility of the Military Episcopate pose impediments to community-based access. Military families also move around, as opposed to stable rural societies where elders counsel on issues, which affects the community's support systems (Musembi & Iteyo, 2018). Besides, the military chain of command usually overrides community accountability systems, which may silence victims who are afraid of losing their careers due to their spouses serving in the military.

The 67% effectiveness rating of the community-based interventions in the Tana Delta conflict management (Musembi, 2018) is in drastic contrast with the 45.1% adequacy rating of the Military Episcopate premarital counselling, which implies that generic faith-based programmes do not convey the same sense of cultural rootedness and local ownership that makes the community-based interventions effective. This points to the necessity of the Military Episcopate's interventions to integrate the principles of community participation while adjusting to military mobility and institutional limitations.

### **5.5 Theoretical Implications**

The results confirm Social Learning Theory and Attachment Theory by demonstrating how these two theories work together. Social Learning Theory explains how people learn by observing others. i.e., how observed violence is learned as conflict resolution (Bandura, 1977, 2004). Attachment Theory- the emotional and relational mediators, how intimacy in childhood and parental absence lead to insecure attachment, mediating in adulthood in terms of intimacy, trust, and emotional control (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980).

The integration avails numerous points of intervention. Cognitive restructuring addresses acquired views on the acceptability of violence (Social Learning Theory). Skills developed through emotion regulation training are not developed during childhood (Attachment Theory). Both theories deal with contextual factors that facilitate violence by modifying the environment, supporting the community, and holding them responsible (environmental modification). Being the only institution that has access to the Military, the Episcopate can intervene at every tier, which can disrupt the disruption of intergenerational violence cycles to the maximum, should it be designed and applied properly.

Nonetheless, most existing interventions achieve this at the cognitive level through biblical instruction on the roles of marriage and ignore instruction in emotion regulation and environmental responsibility. This is the paradox of high religious knowledge and high violence- cognitive teaching will not have an impact on emotional and behavioural patterns rooted in childhood trauma.

### **6.0 Recommendations**

Reforms proposed in the study involve the broad reform of the Military Episcopate violence prevention and response programmes on five dimensions: First, introduce trauma-informed premarital counseling which clearly discusses how childhood events influence the relationships

in adulthood. Assessment of negative childhood experiences, psycho-educating on intergenerational transmission of trauma, skills training in emotional regulation and positive conflict resolution, and working with individual trauma ought to be discussed in therapy. A controlled, randomized experiment by Rosenblum et al. (2018) showed that intergenerational transmission is lower in high-risk mothers whose maternal representations are enhanced and implied that violence cycles can be interrupted with the help of targeted intervention.

Second, establish a clear theological education that would discriminate biblical submission and tolerance of abuse. Chaplain training should cover scripture weaponization training, victim-blaming theology training, and chaplain training in responding to violence disclosure. Shannon-Lewy and Dull (2005) reported that clergy training has a huge impact on the quality of response to domestic violence. The Military Episcopate should also clearly define that mutual submission, sacrificial love and respect are biblical marriage, and not one-sided male dominance and female inferiority, despite the manner of treatment.

Third, implement relationship training throughout military training. Gewirtz et al. (2018) have discovered that military parenting programmes decrease parental distress and suicidal ideation because preventive interventions have the potential to counter military-related risk factors. The training needs should include the interaction of military culture (hyper-masculinity, hierarchy, deployment stress) with childhood experiences to create risk factors for violence, normalise the seeking of help, and practical skills (concrete) of emotional expression and conflict management.

Fourth, strengthen family support systems and infrastructure, such as confidential counselling services that are not within the chain of command, support groups for spouses who are struggling with childhood trauma and present violence, substance-abuse treatment combined with violence prevention and safe housing that victims may need whilst they need to separate temporarily. Ouimet et al. (2014) reported that fear of career repercussions and institutional shame are perceived barriers to care among military personnel, and that this requires confidential support mechanisms.

Fifth, deal with institutional cultural issues that justify psychological abuse. The fact that the psychological abuse (93.3 %) is very high (almost universal) and physical violence is tolerated (only 34.5%) may indicate institutional acceptance of verbal violence and emotional manipulation. A clear message should be sent by the military leadership that psychological abuse does not coincide with military principles of honour, integrity and protection. The

commanding officers need to be trained on how to identify and respond to such family violence accordingly, without favouring the service members at the expense of punishing those who have abused them.

Finally, evaluation of longitudinal programmes should be carried out to ascertain the efficacy of the interventions through validated measurement tools on the resolution of childhood trauma, violence prevalence rates in the present, help-seeking behaviour, and victim safety. Without a systematic review, well-intentioned programmes can remain in operation with minimal effectiveness, perpetuating the intergenerational cycles of violence that such programmes are designed to break.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The article examines the role that parenting histories play in marital violence in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Military Episcopate. The actions of both governmental and military participants were interceded by the use of the commanding officers and disciplinary action, but they only brought a temporary solution to a systematic tendency of family maltreatment. Premarital counselling programmes and pastoral support structures were also introduced as possible solutions, but they were not sufficient due to the absence of trauma-informed curricula, theological explanations that favoured aggressors and the inability to support victims. The intervention that was based on generic biblical teachings about roles in marriage did not help to reduce the causal factors underlying the violence, which stem from childhood traumatising and get worse in the context of military culture.

This study draws four major conclusions. To begin with, the members of the Military Episcopate present a cumulative continuum of negative parenting experiences, mostly violent (60-75%), emotionally detached (83.1%), interrupted by substance abuse (49-74%), and characterized by the instability of caregivers (48.6-63.9%), creating compounded vulnerabilities as opposed to discrete risk factors. These adverse experiences.

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