

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO PERSISTENCE OF DEFILEMENT CASES IN
THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts Degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice of Egerton
University**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

AUGUST, 2023

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this university or any other for the award of a degree



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Recommendation

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family for their encouragement, support, inspiration and understanding throughout the study. May Almighty God bless them all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength to do this work through such difficult moments of COVID-19 pandemic. My gratitude goes to my Supervisors Prof. Kibet Ngetich and Prof. Hadija Murenga for their dedicated guidance and supervision during the study. Thank you for your time, patience and coaching all through.

I acknowledge the Egerton University for giving me the chance to pursue my Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice. I also recognize the efforts of all the lecturers of the faculty of arts and social sciences at Egerton University who took me through the course work successfully and helped me expand my knowledge and skills during thesis defences. My sincere appreciation goes to the Egerton University library for giving me an ample time and allowing me to access the necessary resources for the success of this study.

Special appreciation goes to my classmates namely Robert Matunda, Mwanaisha Mazuri among others; you have been a source of encouragement all through the programme. My sincere appreciation goes to all my family members for their prayers, support and encouragement and lastly my friends for their support and encouragement throughout my study.

I acknowledge the respondents and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for granting me permission to carry out my research. I also thank the respondents who participated well during data collection.

ABSTRACT

Statistics on child abuse revealed that defilement is the most common form of abuse in Kenya. This study sought to establish the factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to examine the contribution of cultural practices to the persistence of defilement cases, to establish the effect of economic status on persistent defilement cases, to determine the effect of family structure on persistent defilement cases and to explore the effect of community response on persistent defilement cases. This study was guided by theory of the Four-Factor Traumagenic and Social Strain theory. This study used phenomenological research design. The unit of analysis for this study was victims of defilement. The target population for this study was all 98 defiled children (93 girls and 5 boys), 98 parents/caregivers, and 5 chiefs. The study adopted a census method. Three interview schedules were developed for parents/guardians of defiled children, chiefs, and defiled children. Collected data were analysed using thematic method. The study results revealed 67 (95.7%) respondents noted that circumcision for boys meant transition from childhood to adulthood. Results show 38.6% (32) of respondents noted that the community practices FGM. The results show that 15(21.4%) of respondents agreed to marry after initiation. Six (8.6%) of respondents reported being sexually harassed by drunkards at home. The unity of community stakeholders helps to control and reduce defilement. The study found that girls and boys in the community practice many sexuality and rites of passage. Homestead economic status greatly affects community child defilement. When a family cannot meet their basic needs, perpetrators take advantage of any opportunity. Lack of parental care causes child defilement. It is more open that most poor parents force girls to have sexual relations with taxi drivers, bus drivers, boda-boda riders, and others to raise money to eat. Most police and chiefs know the perpetrators of defilement cases. The study found that the Four-Factor Traumagenic and Social Strain Theory can help in reducing persistent defilement cases. The study recommends community support for child defilement prevention programs. Parents should improve their economic sources to escape poverty and meet their families' social and basic needs, including their children. Parents to teach children on their rights. Everyone in the community should help vulnerable children and their families to reduce defilement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
GBVRCs	Gender Based Violence Recovery Centres
InDUC	Inventory of Drug Use Consequences
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KNH	Kenyatta National Hospital
NMUPD	Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs
NWH	Nairobi Women's Hospital
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Defilement is any sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 18 years old, whether or not the child consents. According to Sexual Offences Act 2006, defilement is a crime. Under the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, defilement is a breach of children's human rights. Defilement cases can be viewed from Criminology and Criminal Justice perspectives to illustrate the different theories of crime causation. Defilement cases could be used to examine the different roles played by law enforcement, the courts, and corrections in responding to this type of crime. Further, defilement cases could be used to explore the impact of this type of crime on victims, both physically and emotionally.

Defilement is often a taboo subject because the public believes that such abuse does not exist or is not prevalent enough to warrant discussion. This, therefore, means that not all child victims and families respond to sexual abuse in the same manner. Each victim and family have unique reactions to the problem; their responses are influenced partially by the offender relationship and the nature of the abuse. When the perpetrator is a stranger or even an acquaintance outside the family, parents are the ones who typically report the offence to the authorities. They initially feel blame and guilt for not adequately protecting their child (Winters *et al.*, 2020). However, in the case of incest, the problem may go unreported.

Children who are victims of defilement and their parents often face insurmountable obstacles in trying to bring the perpetrators to justice (Smetana, 2020). The children have suffered defilement and other forms of abuse, but they are too intimidated by cultural attitudes and nation inaction to seek redress since doing so can lead to hostility from family, the community, and the police. Those who do seek justice are confronted by a legal system that ignores, denies, and even condones violence against child victims and protects perpetrators (Mercer *et al.*, 2015).

The results of defilement include physical injuries inside and outside the body, such as cuts, tears, severe bleeding, and damage to internal reproductive organs, which sometimes require surgery (Akpoghome & Nwano, 2016). It can also lead to psychological damage to victims, including; depression, fear, anxiety, distrust, and sometimes suicidal thoughts, death, unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. The victim of defilement can be forced to drop out of school, interrupting schooling and social stigma (Malecki *et al.*, 2015).

One of the core causes of defilement is the inferior status of women in patriarchal societies, resulting in gender inequities embedded within society (Bridgewater, 2016). This manifest itself in differential sex role socialization, that is, girls are raised to believe that they have a role that is defined by their sex, and boys, likewise, have a sexually-defined role that is superior to that of girls. By their nature, such power imbalances create a society that is stratified with males dominating females within the family and the wider society.

The tendency to resolve conflict through physical violence is prevalent among males. This leads to systemic violence within society, which is perpetuated by media portrayals of sexual violence against women, thus negatively affecting children, adolescents, and adults who are exposed to its influence (Easteal *et al.*, 2015). The practice of child marriage and lack of education are both contributing factors to power imbalance within society. The maintenance of male social power is reinforced through various cultural sites, such as language, religion, the media, popular culture, and education (Ombok *et al.*, 2013).

Approximately 69,184 children in the United States were officially counted as victims of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor *et al.*, 2014). These figures may under-represent the number of child sexual abuse victims. Further, it is noted that at least 12-35 percent of American women and 4-9 percent of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children (Miskiewicz *et al.*, 2016).

In Nigeria, children are defiled by both adults and other children (who are, by virtue of their age or stage of development) in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the child victim (Akpoghome & Nwano, 2016). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that about 200 million female children experienced sexual violence with physical contact in 2012. Most perpetrators of defilement are males and are often known to their victims. While it is generally acknowledged that defilement is pervasive in all countries and at all levels of society, available statistics concerning the prevalence of defilement around the world in general and in Nigeria, in particular, are very limited (Akpoghome & Nwano, 2016).

In Uganda, barely a day passes without media reports on cases of defilement or other forms of sex-related crime against children (Nyangoma *et al.*, 2019). Children are being subjected to sexual abuse within their communities, schools, and homes, yet these are the very places they should feel the most secure and safe. According to the Violence Against Children (VAC) report (2018), 35.3% of girls and 16.5% of boys experienced sexual abuse in childhood. While

communities know and understand that defilement is a crime, there is weak law enforcement. Offenders collude with the parents and guardians of the victims. The negotiations are usually illegal, but the high illiteracy rates linked with poverty in rural communities make residents ignore legal proceedings. The most common causes of defilement, therefore, have been ignorance and illiteracy, poverty, cultural beliefs, ignorance of the law, sharing accommodation with older children, which exposes them to early sex, child neglect as parents abdicate their duty of parenting; offering proper guidance and advice, permissiveness and generally moral degeneration (Ojo *et al.*, 2017).

In Kenya, the prevalence of defilement among children is exceptionally high at 55% (Mutavi, 2016). According to National Crime Research Centre (2020), the defilement rate in Kitui is 3.4%, Embu 3.1%, and Meru 2.1%, compared with Tharaka Nithi County with 7.2%. The justice system is, to some extent, proactive in some of the cited issues. For instance, a court in Tharaka-Nithi County, worried by the trend in sexual offences, has taken the initiative to involve the community elders in finding a lasting solution to the many sexual offences in the region (Okwatch, 2019). The lack of witnesses in court is a stumbling block in the just conclusion of the matter. In the area, traditions and taboos of the community are frustrating the fight against the offences. The court noted that some clans in the area found it unacceptable to sue one of their own in such cases. They felt it would attract the wrath of their ancestors (Komen, 2018). In Tharaka-Nithi County, defilement cases have risen in the last four years, as presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Defilement Cases in Tharaka-Nithi County

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2017	2	44	46
2018	2	63	65
2019	4	78	82
2020	5	93	98
Total	13	278	291

Source: Marimanti and Chuka law courts records (2021)

Defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, have been on the rise since 2017 when there were 46 cases, and by 2020 there were 98 cases reported, up from 82 cases in 2019. These cases highlight the need for measures to protect children from defilement in Tharaka Nithi County. It is important to address the root causes of defilement, such as poverty and lack of education, and to provide support to victims of defilement. Strict measures should be put in

place to prevent defilement and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. Poverty is a major factor that contributes to defilement in Tharaka Nithi County. Many families in the county live the poverty line, which can lead to parents being unable to provide for their children's basic needs. As a result, children may be forced to work or beg to support themselves, making them more vulnerable to abuse. Lack of education is another factor that contributes to defilement in Tharaka Nithi County. Many children in the county do not attend school, and this can lead to them being ignorant about sexual matters. As a result, they may be more likely to fall victim to abuse. Cultural norms also play a role in defilement in Tharaka Nithi County. In some communities, it is seen as acceptable for older men to have sexual relations with young girls. This can create a climate of impunity for perpetrators, and it can make it difficult for victims to come forward.

The persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County is a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Addressing these factors makes it possible to reduce the number of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County and protect children from abuse. Therefore, this study investigated factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cases of defilement are persistently on the rise in Tharaka-Nithi County in the last four years, with young men finding themselves behind bars for committing sex offences. Many children are defiled by people in all spheres of life, in the hands of their biological fathers, stepfathers, relatives, friends, religious leaders, caregivers, and strangers. The increase in the number of defilement cases in Tharaka-Nithi County is becoming a great concern. Despite the high rate of reporting by the press, the existence of the penal code, expanding police force, growing judiciary, civil society advocates on child rights, and parents plus local community authorities, all arrayed against child sexual abuses, many factors are facing this phenomenon which this study sought to establish. Against this background, this study attempted to investigate the factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

Defilement is a serious problem in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. In 2020, there were over 90 cases reported, up from just over 80 cases in 2019. The persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya is a problem: Defilement is a form of child sexual abuse that can have a devastating impact on children, both physically and emotionally. Victims of defilement have experienced physical injuries, such as sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy, and

emotional trauma, such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Defilement has increased the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission, as the perpetrator may be infected with the virus. Despite these statistics, many cases of defilement go unreported, so the actual number of cases is likely much higher. If this problem of persistent defilement in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, is not solved, it will have a number of negative consequences, including increased physical and emotional harm to victims, Increased risk of HIV/AIDS, increased social and economic costs, Damage to the community's reputation and increased crime rates. The persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

Despite the high rate of reporting by the press, the existence of the penal code, expanding police force, growing judiciary, civil society advocates on child rights, and parents plus local community authorities, all arrayed against child sexual abuses, many factors are facing this phenomenon which this study sought to establish. This study can fill these research gaps by providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to defilement cases' persistence in Tharaka Nithi County. This information can be used to develop interventions to prevent defilement and protect children from abuse.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are in two categories, namely broad and specific objectives.

1.3.1 Broad Objective

The broad objective of the study was to investigate factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives guided this study.

- i. To examine the contribution of cultural practices to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County.
- ii. To establish the contribution of economic status on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County.
- iii. To determine the contribution of family structure on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County.
- iv. To explore the contribution of community response on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

- i. What are the contribution of cultural practices to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?
- ii. How does economic status contribute to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?
- iii. How does family structure contribute to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?
- iv. What are community response that has contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

1.5 Justifications of the Study

The study shows the dynamics and complexities of the increasing number of defilements as the commonest sexual abuse inflicted on the child. Understanding the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on persistent defilement cases informed the interventions dealing with the well-being of sexually abused children on how to deal with the menace. Socio-economic and cultural factors are key determinants influencing the defilement rates and sustainability of interventions. Therefore, this will help uncover the gaps on why the number of child defilement cases is growing. Hence, relevant interventions may be generated to help in preventing defilement. The research is foreseen to be useful to a wide scope of stakeholders who incorporate Government children's offices, social workers who handle defilement cases at medical clinics, and local leaders in society. The research results are relied upon to help make awareness among community members to cultivate the culture of stopping child sexual abuse in vulnerable situations.

The findings are hoped to be useful for policymakers who could use the results of the study to identify and bridge the gap in the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on persistent defilement cases. This would help in reducing persistent defilement cases. The study provided the Government of Kenya with insight into how to review, design, develop, and implement the defilement cases legislation. Also, it ensures that the new law on defilement cases is adhered to by all citizens to reduce defilement and its consequences.

Academicians/scholars also benefited from the study since it added value to the existing body of knowledge by stimulating new areas for further research through the findings and subsequent recommendations. The research benefited other researchers as they may use it as a reference

guide when carrying out a similar study on the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on persistent defilement cases. It helped them identify the gap left by the researcher in the course of carrying out this study.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, which is a small, rural county with a population of approximately 400,000 people. This means that the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other parts of Kenya or other countries. The scope of the study was limited to defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. This means the study did not investigate other forms of child sexual abuse, such as incest or sexual assault. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to Tharaka Nithi County's defilement. The findings of the study can be used to develop interventions to prevent defilement and protect children from abuse.

The study explored the factors that contribute to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. These factors may include cultural practices, economic status, family structure, and community response. Population: The study focused on individuals who have been affected by defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, who were defiled children, parents/caregivers, chiefs, and community members. This allowed the study to comprehensively understand the factors contributing to defilement in Tharaka Nithi County.

The first limitation of the study was that; respondents could not willing to participate in interviews due to the sensitivity of defilement cases. Defilement is a sensitive topic, and it can be difficult for respondents to discuss, especially if they have been personally affected. Respondents may be afraid that if they speak out about defilement, they will retaliate against by the perpetrator or the community. Respondents may feel ashamed about what happened to them, and they may not want to talk about it. Talking about defilement can be traumatic for respondents, and they may not be ready to do so. The researcher mitigated the limitation by assuring all the respondents that the information given was confidential and used for academic purposes only. Secondly, the respondents could have also failed to give true information hence increasing the study biasness, and this could be mitigated by conducting a pilot study on a population having similar characteristics to Tharaka Nithi County to ascertain for reliability and validity of research instruments.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Cultural practice refers to manifestation of way of lifestyle especially traditional and customary practices which influences defilement cases such as female genital mutilation, initiation and circumcision, virginity testing and child marriages.

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge among Tharaka Nithi County residence, encompassing female genital mutilation, circumcision of boys, virginity testing through sexual practices, child marriages and ceremonial songs and dances which can lead to persistent defilement cases.

Defilement is any sexual intercourse with a child with years 18 whether a girl or boy child, with or without their consents.

Economic status refers to a state or condition in which a person or community access the financial resources and essentials for a minimum standard of living. In this study economic status is careful, thrifty management of resources, such as money, materials, or labour in making out the household budget.

Family structure comprises of; single households, two parent households, divorced, common law marriage and parents are separated. Family structure is the risk factor that is mostly associated to child sexual abuse. Diverse families contribute to complexities within the family that have been associated with a higher likelihood of child defilement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the topic of this study. It begins by giving literature on the effects of cultural practices, poverty, family structure, and community response on defilement cases. The next section looked at the theoretical framework, explaining how the study variables relate to this area. The last section of the chapter presents a conceptual framework that indicates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables as informed by the reviewed literature.

2.2 Cultural Practices and Defilement Cases

Cultural practice manifests a culture or sub-culture, especially regarding the traditional and customary practices of a particular ethnic or other cultural group. Cultural practices are shared perceptions of how people routinely behave in a culture (Mbaire, 2018).

In communities where old cultural beliefs are deep-rooted, defilement is often perpetrated in the name of culture (Nwufu & Otor, 2017). The practice, which is a crime under modern law, has been swept under the rug in some communities for many years, and some perpetrators of defilement are ignorant of the law. Cultural practices such as arranged marriage passing on a female to her deceased sister's husband exacerbate the problem. These cultural practices lead some girls as young as 12 years to become wives with expectations of mutual rights of companionship, aid, and sexual relations because their maturity is based on puberty and not the legal age of consent, which is 16 years (Kana & Mberia, 2020).

Yahaya *et al.* (2012) did a comparative study of the socio-economic and cultural factors associated with childhood sexual abuse in sub-Saharan Africa. Their study sampled 180 children in the age group of 9-18 years from three socio-economic status families using a stratified random sampling technique comprising 60 respondents and their parents from each socio-economic group (30 boys and 30 girls respectively) selected for the study. Yahaya *et al.* (2012) study results indicated that children reported a higher incidence of sexual abuse as compared to that reported by their parents. Socioeconomic status had a significant effect. However, this study by Yahaya (2012) indicated no cultural practices affecting defilement, which was the case in the current study.

Shafe and Hutchinson (2014) studied child sexual abuse and the continuous influence of cultural practices. A computerized literature search of Medline, Science Direct, PSYCInfo, Embase, and PubMed was done for keywords. There were also manual searches in the library of journals that were not accessible online. There is documented evidence of cultural practices that continue to fuel the persistently high level of child sexual abuse across the globe. Shafe and Hutchinson (2014), however, made use of secondary data, whereas the current study involves data collection and analysis to obtain the findings and effects of cultural practices affecting defilement cases.

Wangamati *et al.* (2018) assessed communities' perceptions of factors contributing to child sexual abuse vulnerability in Kenya. The study used qualitative data from 28 focus groups and ethnographic field notes. Findings suggest that people living in these communities perceived CSA as being influenced by multiple factors: developmental stage, peer pressure, huge gender disparities exacerbated by negative social norms and cultural practices, the HIV epidemic, and social media platforms that circulate sexualized images. From our findings, it was clear that participants also regarded poverty as exacerbating children's vulnerability to CSA. However, the study by Wangamati *et al.* (2018) focused on the communities' perceptions of factors contributing to child sexual abuse, unlike the current study, which focuses on cultural practices and defilement cases.

Nansasi (2010) assessed the factors faced in the control of girl child defilement: a study of two NGOs in Kampala District, Uganda. The research was carried out in Nakawa Division, Kampala District, Uganda. Among the research findings include; loss of competence from police, corruption, long procedures of the court, lack of cooperation between parents and authorities, the age of the girl, limited facilities of officers following the case, medical examination, poverty, cultures, most of the defilers are known to the abused girl the research discovered that girls are defiled right from the ages of 3 months to 17 years. Nansasi (2010), however, focused on factors faced in control of girl child defilement, unlike the current study, which is focused on Socioeconomic and cultural practices influence on defilement cases.

Based on the reviewed literature, harmful cultural practices like FGM and child marriage are still prevalent in the communities, contributing to defilement cases' persistence. Cultural practices can contribute to the persistence of defilement cases in communities in a number of ways, including; Early marriages where in some communities, it is customary for girls to be married off at a young age. This can make girls more vulnerable to defilement, as they may be

married to older men who are more likely to abuse them. Some traditional beliefs view defilement as a way to cleanse a girl's body or to bring good luck to a family. This can lead to girls being forced into sexual relationships with older men, even if they do not want to. In some communities, girls are not given the same opportunities for education as boys. This can lead to girls being less aware of their rights and less likely to report defilement. In some communities, a social stigma is associated with being a victim of defilement. This can discourage girls from reporting defilement, as they may fear being ostracized by their community.

2.3 Economic Status and Persistent Defilement Cases

Economic status is the level of continuously, by earnings (wages and salaries), income (earnings plus income from property and other sources), an occupational prestige index, or wealth (Kelley & Evans, 2021). Low economic can mean a lack of access to resources, productive assets, and income, resulting in material deprivation. Low economic can also be recognized as more than a shortage of income. Although it implies low income, it also means malnutrition, persistent ill health, lack of education, poor housing, chronic unemployment, lack of access to basic social services, and inability to assert legal or political rights (Carter, 2019). The economic status which can lead to persistent defilement is usually shows through negligence, property grabbing, and refusal of the right to work or low rewarding incomes, among others. When a person is economically dependent on another, they usually have no say in any aspect of their life (Abikoye *et al.*, 2019). These studies show that one's vulnerability due to economic status can make one yield to anything, which leads to persistency in defilement. The current study filled the gap by comparing and contrasting the impacts of economic status and what should be done to minimize child defilement due to economic status.

Financial constraints due to the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has triggered economic hardships, have contributed to many people living the poverty line leading to children fleeing from home and turning to the streets for support (Kaye *et al.*, 2020). According to the research by the Uganda Law Reform Commission (2016), 34% of cases of sexual abuse were linked to low economic status. Parents' separation and lack of finance lead to low economic status since the parents could not support the children financially (Ochen *et al.*, 2019). Parent-child alienation due to financial constraints leaves their children vulnerable to societal defilement.

The study by Pinea-Lucaterro *et al.* (2019) found that defilement cases primarily affect 108 girls from low-income families lacking economic and social resources. Turner and Stagg

(2016), in a nationally representative sample of 2030 children aged 2–17 in the USA, found that factors related to poverty, such as low socioeconomic status, low parental education, and parental availability, were significant risk factors in child maltreatment including child sexual victimization. Also, Rogan *et al.* (2017) revealed that low economic status was a significant risk factor that puts women and children at high risk of early sexual debut, transactional sex, and unwanted pregnancy, which concurs with the current study on how economic standards and background impacts the incidences of defilement in the society.

Wrigley-Asante *et al.* (2016) researched economic status and crime: Uncovering the hidden face of sexual crimes in Ghana's urban low-income areas. The study examined the occurrence and determinants of sexual offences in urban low-income communities using official police data, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) from five low-income urban neighborhoods in Ghana. Despite the legal and institutional structures in place to prevent such crimes, the investigation indicated that sexual offences constitute one of the most serious crimes in Ghana. According to the study, poor housing (as seen by high room occupancy rates, overcrowding, and congestion) and poverty, in general, encourage sexual offences in low-income urban settings. Furthermore, patriarchal views heighten females' exposure and vulnerability to sexual offences. On the other hand, the study by Wrigley-Asante *et al.* (2016) was conducted in Ghana. In contrast, the current study is a case study of Kenya. However, even so, it informed the current study on how economic status is associated with defilement prevalence, which was brought out in those studies that concur with the current study objective.

Phiri (2016) investigated whether the Zambian criminal justice system sufficiently protects women and girls victims of rape and defilement while acquiring corroboration evidence. According to the study, women and girls who have been raped or defiled suffer from significant physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual stress. Trials are particularly traumatic, with many victims reporting that the day they testified in court was the worst day of their lives. Victims are traumatized not only by the crime itself but also by their communities' negative attitudes against them. Finally, the report includes conclusions and recommendations on Zambia's rule of corroborating evidence. Phiri (2016), in his study, did not, however, show how poverty leads to defilement cases, as was the case in the current study but even so, crime that involves girls and women usually drives them to poverty levels which eventually makes them subscribe to defilement.

A study on economic position, gender, and reproductive justice was conducted by Ninsiima *et al.* (2020). This study examines how poverty combines with gender power dynamics to influence the sexual and reproductive lives of adolescent girls in Western Uganda. A qualitative study involving 147 individuals was conducted. This included 59 in-depth interviews and 11 focus group talks with groups of young women aged 12–14, instructors, and parents. The data were manually analysed with open and axial coding, and conclusions were formed inductively. The findings show that young women's sexual and reproductive rights are hampered not just by poverty and unequal gender relations but also by corruption and poor service provision. Nonetheless, Ninsiima *et al.* (2020) focused on girl children, as opposed to the current study, which focused on defilement in general but even so, it helped bring out the point of the current study on how economic status may influence the rate of defilement in the society.

Otieno (2019) investigated the impact of economic position violent extremism in Kenya: a case study of Mombasa County. Descriptive analysis and Pearson's simple correlation analysis were used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the meta-analysis, economic practices were the primary contributor to violent extremism. According to the statistics, Mombasa's poverty rate is around 38% and has been consistent, according to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2015), while unemployment is projected to be 15% in 2009. According to the analysis, there is a high labour migration from rural areas among the working-age population aged 15-64, but there are also many non-coastal people. According to the findings of the investigation, indoctrination and recruitment into violent extremism is the most serious security danger in Mombasa, and a large number of young people are being recruited to join Al Shabaab, which renders many youths to defilement in that process by those recruiting them, all this is because of poverty of the families from where children come from because, they are promised huge lumpsum of money after joining the terror group. However, Otieno's (2019) study, on the other hand, concentrated on violent extremism, whereas the current study focuses on defilement cases.

Economic status is a major factor that contributes to defilement in Tharaka Nithi County. Many families in the county live the poverty line, and this can lead to parents being unable to provide for their children's basic needs. As a result, children may be forced to work or beg in order to support themselves, which can make them more vulnerable to abuse. A study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2022) found that the poverty rate in Tharaka Nithi County is 45%. This means that nearly half of the people in the county live the national poverty line. The

study also found that the poverty rate is higher for women than men. The high poverty rate in Tharaka Nithi County can lead to a number of problems that can contribute to defilement. For example, poverty can lead to increased family stress. When families are struggling to make ends meet, it can lead to increased stress levels. This can make parents more likely to neglect their children or to lash out at them in anger. When families are poor, they may not be able to afford to send their children to school. This can lead to children being unsupervised and more vulnerable to abuse. When families are poor, they may need their children to work in order to help support the family. This can take children out of school and make them more vulnerable to abuse. When families are poor, they may be more isolated from their community. This can make it more difficult for them to get help if their child is abused.

2.4 Family Structure and Defilement

Family structure refers to members of a household who are linked by marriage or bloodline and is typically used in reference to at least one child residing in the home under the age of 18 (Yatiagisako, 2020). The married family is based deliberately on a decision by the husband and wife to build their lives and family on the love they have for each other, made public in a solemn contract before God and the community. Abuse is higher when the structure of family love is rejected or broken. Growing up in a family with two married parents is the safest place for children. Children who live with one parent are more likely than children who live with two parents to experience defilement (Olayinka & Chinwe, 2017). Children in step families have a significantly higher risk of being defiled by a family member than children in a single-parent home or intact biological family. When someone is abused as a child, they are more likely to abuse others when they become adults. When someone is abused as a child, they are more likely to consider or attempt suicide, all this is due to the structure of the family, as per the current study topic, where one is brought up, which perpetuates defilement.

Vorhölter (2014) discussed defilement as a crime in relation to sexuality among adolescents in Uganda. Following a review of related literature, an extended field study of the prevalence of the practice and attitudes towards it was made. The findings were that, as a legal term, defilement has many theoretical and policing gaps and dilemmas. It was also found that the manner in which the practice is policed deters adolescents' sexual development. It is concluded that, in light of section 129 of the country's penal code act, consensual sex between adolescents may not be a crime. Therefore, it is argued that adolescents' smooth psychosexual development should not be sacrificed, notwithstanding the law regarding child sexual abusers, who must be

punished stringently. Vorhölter (2014) never indicated how family structure leads to defilement cases, as was the case with the current study.

Olayinka and Chinwe (2017) sought to understand the factors associated with girl child rape in Lagos, Nigeria, focusing on family type, family income, number of siblings, schooling arrangement, and neighbourhood. The study adopted a mixed methodology. The quantitative data were generated from four hundred respondents randomly selected from two senior secondary schools using a multi-stage sampling technique, while the qualitative data involved 14 in-depth interviews and 25 key informant interviews. The findings from the quantitative analysis show that about 25.6% of the respondents had experienced rape. The binary logistic regression model revealed that family structure is statistically significant in the experience of rape. However, the study by Olayinka and Chinwe (2017) was done in Lagos, unlike the current study, which was a case in Kenya.

Abeid *et al.* (2014) did a study on family structure and child sexual abuse in rural Tanzania. A qualitative design was employed using focus group discussions with male and female family members, including religious leaders, professionals, and other community members. The discussions centered on causes of defilement, survivors of defilement, help-seeking and reporting, and gathered suggestions on measures for improvement. The participants perceived the defilement of women and children as a frequent and hidden phenomenon. A number of factors were singled out as contributing to defilement, such as erosion of social norms, single parenthood, poverty, vulnerability of children, alcohol/drug abuse, and poor parental care. Participants perceived the need for educating the community to raise their knowledge of sexual violence and its consequences and their roles as preventive agents. Abeid *et al.* (2014) used qualitative research design, while this current study used phenomenological research design.

Family structure can contribute to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County in a number of ways. Single-parent households are more likely to experience poverty, which can lead to the factors mentioned above. Absentee fathers can lead to a lack of male role models in the home, which can make children more vulnerable to abuse. Domestic violence can create an environment where children are exposed to violence and abuse, making them more likely to accept abuse as usual. Lack of communication between parents and children can make it difficult for parents to identify signs of abuse and intervene.

2.5 Community Response and Defilement

Community responses are diverse, dynamic, and highly contextual. They have a unique ability to: Identify and quickly respond to people's needs and concerns (Koss *et al.*, 2017). Community responses for rape victims are often piecemeal and uncoordinated as different systems perform different functions. For example, victims go to the hospital for the rape exam and evidence collection; to the police station to meet with a detective; to the state's attorney to discuss prosecution; to the rape crisis centre for information and crisis counselling; and many other agencies. Community-based interventions rely on reporting mechanisms, child education on sexual abuse, and community actions against perpetrators.

Muhwezi *et al.* (2019) did a study on Vulnerability to high-risk sexual behavior (HRSB) following exposure to war trauma as seen in post-conflict communities in eastern Uganda: a cross-sectional qualitative study of 3 sub-counties in Katakwi district and Amuria in Uganda between March and May 2019. The study collected data using 8 FGDs, 32 key informant interviews, and 16 in-depth interviews. From the study, the commonly identified HRSB behaviours include; transactional sex, sexual predation, multiple partners, early marriages, and forced marriages. The breakdown of the social structure due to the conflict had resulted in economic destruction and a perceived soaring of vulnerable people whose propensity to HRSB is high. Dishonour of sexual sanctity through transactional sex and practices like incest mirrored the consequence of exposure to conflict. HRSB was associated with the concentration of people in camps where idleness and unemployment were the norm. The study by Muhwezi *et al.* (2019) used a cross-sectional qualitative study focusing only Katakwi district and Amuria in Uganda at point in time, while the current study used a phenomenological research design to collect qualitative data. This allowed respondents to report incidences as they have affected them, thus enriching the current study's findings.

Chitundu *et al.* (2018) aimed to explore the perception of the community towards child sexual abuse, which hinders the disclosure and reporting of abuse cases. Data were collected through focused group discussions and in-depth interviews with sixty-nine participants from nine focused group discussions and nine in-depth interviews. Participants were the general community members and relatives of abused children. The interviews were recorded verbatim and transcribed; analysis of data was done using qualitative thematic analysis. Three themes emerged summarizing the factors associated with the non-reporting of child sexual abuse cases, including fear of family and community breakdown, the relationship between the victim and

the perpetrator, and inadequate service provision by the police, which also reflected the community's role in supporting the child. However, Chitundu *et al.* (2018) failed to indicate how Community response leads to defilement cases.

Abeid *et al.* (2014) did a study to explore and understand perceptions of rape of women and children at the community level in a rural district in Tanzania with the added objective of exploring those perceptions that may contribute to perpetuating and/or hindering the disclosure of rape incidences. A qualitative design was employed using focus group discussions with male and female community members, including religious leaders, professionals, and other community members. The participants perceived rape of women and children as a frequent and hidden phenomenon. A number of factors were singled out as contributing to rape, such as erosion of social norms, globalization, poverty, vulnerability of children, alcohol/drug abuse, and poor parental care. Participants perceived the need for educating the community to raise their knowledge of sexual violence and its consequences and their roles as preventive agents.

Wangamati *et al.* (2019) did a study on the effects of community on sexualized violence against children. This paper reviews existing laws and policies on CSA and highlights their strengths and weaknesses. The findings indicate that community laws on child protection exist and are protective to a large extent, as harsh penalties are outlined for sexual offences. Survivors of CSA are entitled to free legal and medical services. However, there are no reparations offered to survivors in criminal proceedings. Moreover, there is no legislation for age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education which plays an important role in cultivating positive gender norms and describing what constitutes CSA and reporting procedures. The national standard operating procedures for the management of sexual violence against children lack CSA screening procedures. Wangamati *et al.* (2019) failed to show Community response and defilement cases as with the current study.

Omondi (2014) examined the statutory provisions of criminal procedure applicable in child sexual abuse cases in Kenya. The article analyses specific provisions for protecting child victims of sexual abuse. The article found out that the drafters of the procedural statutes may not have envisaged children's participation in the criminal justice system. Subsequently, the current criminal procedure laws are not specifically sensitive to the unique needs of child victims of sexual abuse. However, there is a gap in the community's influence on protecting child victims of sexual abuse, which the current study was attempting to fill.

The community response to defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County can contribute to the persistence of the problem in a number of ways. Many people in the community may not be aware of what defilement is or that it is a crime. This can lead to people not reporting defilement cases or victims not seeking help. There is a social stigma associated with being a victim of defilement in some communities. This can discourage victims from coming forward and reporting the abuse. In some communities, there is a fear of reprisal from the perpetrator or their family if a defilement case is reported. This can discourage people from reporting defilement cases. There may be a lack of support for victims of defilement in the community. This can make it difficult for victims to heal from the abuse and move on with their lives.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the theory of Four- Factor Traumagenic and Social Strain theory

2.6.1 Theory of Four-Factor Traumagenic

This study is based on the theory of the Four-Factor Traumagenic. The theory was developed by Finkelhor *et al.* (1988) and dealt with child sexual abuse. The theory explains the dynamics associated with sexual abuse and violence. Finkelhor *et al.* (1988) describe the make-up of individuals who sexually abuse children without depending on basic character pathological attributes. Finkelhor contends that once sexually abused in childhood, one may lack relationship skills and more extensive elements that offer generally to the sexual orientation and socialization of the abused.

Finkelhor *et al.* (1988) identify four factors vital for understanding child sexual abuse's impact on the victims. The first factor is traumatic sexualization which implies children engaging in sexual activity after socialization into it. This may lead to the inability of the abused children to enjoy sexual relations normally in adulthood.

The second factor is betrayal. This is when important people in the child's life cause mistrust in an innocent child. The child loses trust in both perpetrators of abuse and other people. Powerlessness is the third factor. This is when the child's ability to choose appropriately is taken away, the child's rights are violated, and her integrity. The will of the perpetrator is imposed on the child through trickery, coercion, or force. Most societies are patriarchal; hence male-dominated and have power and influence over women and children. This makes them vulnerable to being abused.

The fourth factor is stigmatization; the child begins judging herself and how others see and think about the act. Even when the child has not disclosed, she will likely evaluate what happened to her and the social/cultural norms. The child might decide to keep quiet after being sexually abused due to the sensitivity of sex and the secrecy involved, as most cultures treat it. This sometimes leads the child to the isolation of herself from others.

In relation to this study, the theory provides a conceptual and methodological guide to the research on elements of defilement on a child and how to measure them in the target population. This was helpful to the framework of tackling persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. The theory explained the dynamics associated with sexual abuse: child defilement. The study noted that cultural practices tremendously impact the rate and extent of child defilement in the community. A wide range of cultural practices relating to sexuality and rites of passage are common among both girls and boys in the community. Traditional songs have a moving power and, in the end, lead people into child defilement. Drug and substance abuse is challenging, with its effects more felt in society. The economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. Lack of parental care contributes to child defilement. It is more open that the inability of most parents to provide adequately for their children due to poverty forces girls into sexual relations with taxi drivers, bus drivers, boda boda riders, and others so that they raise some money to afford them eat something. Therefore, the theory has helped this study identify factors that lead to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, such as cultural practices, traditional songs, economic status, and lack of parental care.

However, the four-factor Traumagenic theory has limitations and is not a complete explanation for the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. The theory of four-factor Traumagenic has been criticized for being too narrow and for not considering the social and environmental factors contributing to child sexual abuse. For example, the theory does not consider the role of poverty, inequality, and gender discrimination in child sexual abuse. Therefore, there was a need to adopt the second theory (social strain theory). The theory states that crime is caused by social strain, which is a feeling of frustration and anger resulting from a discrepancy between what people want and what they can achieve.

2.6.2 Social Strain Theory

This study was guided by the Social Strain theory developed by Merton in 1938. The theory states that society puts pressure on individuals to achieve socially accepted goals. This theory

suggests that crime occurs when insufficient legitimate means or opportunities are available to achieve the goals set by society. This can happen to people from low-income backgrounds, those who are not well-educated, and those who lack social networks.

Merton identified five types of deviance that can result from strain: Conformity is the most common type of deviance. Conformists accept cultural goals and the legitimate means of achieving them. Innovators accept cultural goals but reject the legitimate means of achieving them. They may use illegitimate means, such as crime, to achieve their goals. Ritualists also reject the legitimate means of achieving success but do not reject the goals themselves. They may become apathetic and simply go through the motions of life. Retreatants reject both the cultural goals and the legitimate means of achieving them. They may become alcoholics, drug addicts, or homeless people. Rebels reject both the cultural goals and the legitimate means of achieving them. They may try to overthrow the existing social order and create a new one.

The application of Social Strain theory in factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, was analyzed using the following concepts:

Conformity: According to strain theory, individuals who conform to societal norms and values are less likely to commit crimes. In the context of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, individuals who conform to societal norms and values regarding sexual behaviour are less likely to engage in defilement.

Innovation: Innovation refers to the adaptation of new means to achieve societal goals. In the context of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, individuals who lack the means to achieve societal goals such as financial security may commit crimes to achieve material success.

Ritualism: Ritualism refers to the acceptance of societal means but the rejection of societal goals. In the context of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, individuals who reject societal goals such as financial success may still conform to societal means such as sexual behaviour but may engage in defilement due to other factors such as psychological issues.

Retreatism: Retreatism refers to the rejection of both societal goals and means. In the context of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, individuals who reject both societal goals and means may engage in defilement due to a lack of purpose or direction in life.

Rebelliousness: Rebelliousness refers to rejecting societal goals and means and adopting alternative goals and means. In the context of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, individuals who reject societal goals and means may engage in defilement as a form of rebellion against societal norms and values.

The application of the Social Strain theory lens in factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, suggests that societal pressures and inadequate regulation may contribute to the perception of inadequate means to achieve societal goals, which may lead to the commission of crimes such as defilement.

Social strain theory has been criticized for being too simplistic. Critics argue that it does not consider the individual's personality or the social context in which they live. However, social strain theory remains one of the most influential theories in criminology, and it has helped to shape our understanding of crime and deviance.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an analytical tool to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas. This section presents a conceptual framework showing how to study related variables. The independent variables were cultural practices, social practices; family structure, community response, economic factors; poverty (see Figure 2.1).

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Factors

Persistence of Defilement Cases

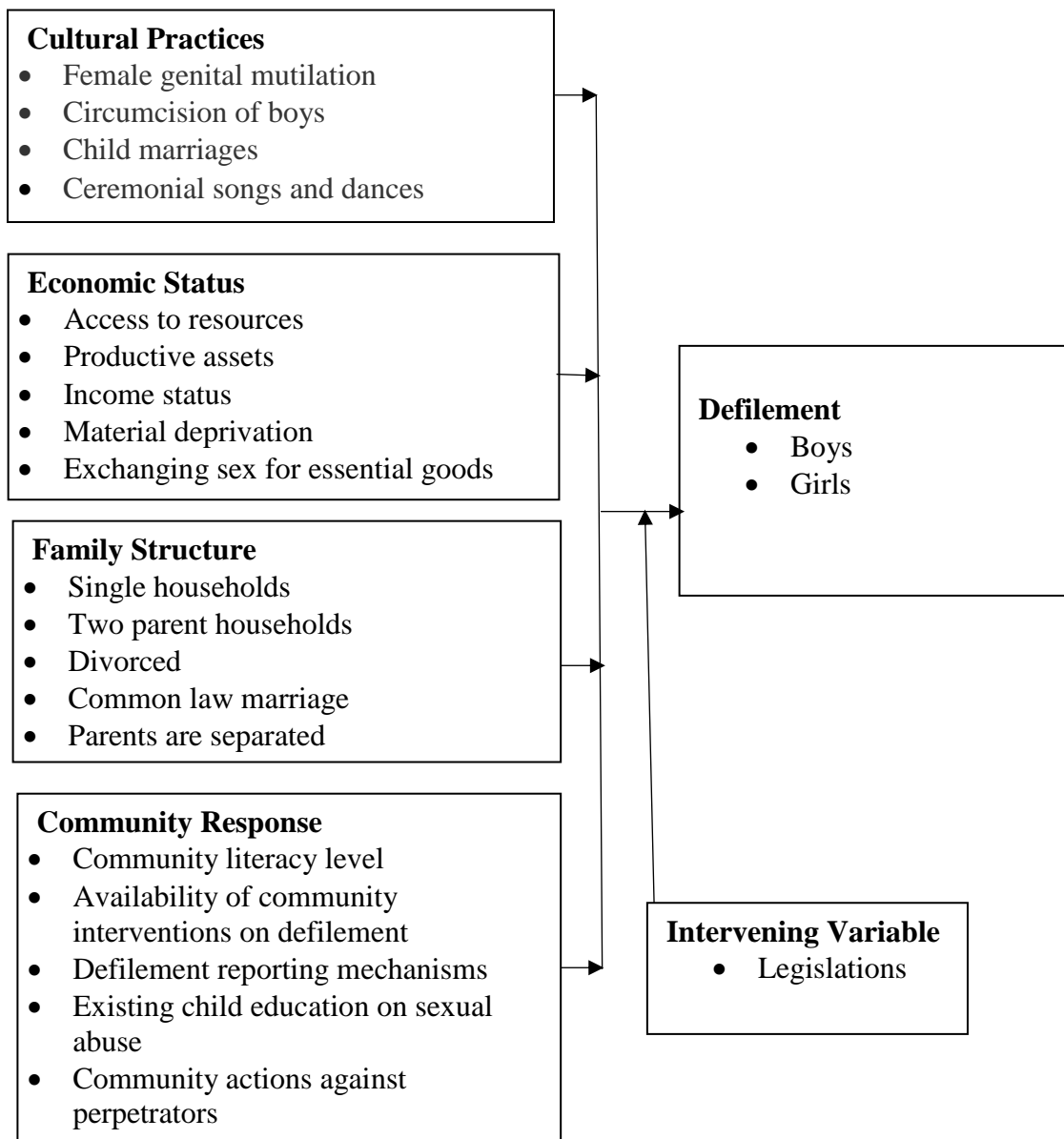


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Cultural practice can lead to the defilement of children in society (Vilas-Boas *et al.*, 2018). When the communities have cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, circumcision ceremonies that encourage sexual acts, virginity testing through sexual practices, early child marriages, and ceremonial songs and dances which have sexual content can lead to the defilement of children. Economic status in this study can lead to the defilement of children when a child engages in sex to meet daily stressors of basic needs, is dependent on others for survival, and engages in high-risk survival activities. Also, a lack of sufficient economic resources can lead a child to exchange sex for essential goods, which is a defilement.

Family structure has long been considered one of the key aspects of family background that may affect various developmental outcomes of children, including defilement. Having different family structures such as single households, two-parent households, divorced, common law marriage, and separated parents can lead to the defilement of children. Community response is an independent variable because how the community response to past defilement cases affects the present and future defilement rates. Community response can lead to or reduce defilement cases of children in the community. There might be low defilement cases when the community literacy level is high. Availability of community interventions on defilement. Defilement reporting mechanisms. Existing child education on sexual abuse and community actions against perpetrators can reduce defilement cases.

The independent variables (factors contributing) and dependent variables (persistence of defilement cases) in the study are related in a number of ways. The independent variables can influence the dependent variable. For example, poverty can lead to stress and desperation, making people more likely to commit crimes. This means that the higher the poverty rate in a community, the more likely defilement cases will persist. The dependent variable can also influence the independent variables. For example, the persistence of defilement cases can lead to decreased economic opportunities for women and girls. This is because women and girls who have been defiled may be stigmatized and have difficulty finding jobs or getting an education. This can lead to further poverty and desperation, making defilement cases more likely to persist. The independent and dependent variables can interact with each other. For example, the effects of poverty on defilement cases may be exacerbated by cultural factors that promote male dominance and female submission. This means that in communities where there is a strong cultural belief that men are superior to women, the effects of poverty on defilement cases may be more pronounced.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, study area, study population, sampling procedure, sample size, unit of analysis, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

This study used phenomenological research design to collect qualitative data. Phenomenological research design is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group (Morrell-Scott, 2018). The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Therefore, phenomenological research design was adopted for qualitative data focusing on the commonality of effects of socioeconomic and cultural practices on defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This allowed using an interview schedule to collect data from parents/caregivers of defiled children and defiled children aged 7 to 17 years.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, for three months. Tharaka-Nithi County is one of the 47 counties of Kenya located in Kenya's former Eastern Province. The county has an area of 2609 km², and as of the 2019 census, it had a population of 393,177 (see Map in Figure 3.1). Tharaka-Nithi County is home to the Chuka, Muthambi, Mwimbi, and Tharaka sections of the Ameru community. Cases of defilement are on the rise in Tharaka-Nithi County, with young men behind bars for sex-related offences, including defilement.

Table 3.1: Defilement Cases Per Sub County, Tharaka-Nithi County

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Tharaka North	13	19	24	30	86
Tharaka South	17	23	27	34	101
Meru South	6	9	12	15	42
Maara	10	14	19	19	62
Total	46	65	82	98	291

Source: Marimanti and Chuka law courts records (2021)

Tharaka Nithi County is a good choice to study the factors contributing to the persistence of defilement cases for a number of reasons. Tharaka Nithi County has one of the highest rates of defilement in Kenya. In 2020, there were 98 cases of defilement reported in the county.

Tharaka Nithi County is one of the poorest counties in Kenya. The poverty rate in the county is 45%, significantly higher than the national average of 43%. Poverty can be a risk factor for defilement, as it can lead to stress and desperation, making people more likely to commit crimes.

There are some cultural factors in Tharaka Nithi County that may contribute to defilement. For example, there is a strong cultural belief that girls should be married off at a young age. This can lead to girls being seen as objects of sexual desire, which can make them more vulnerable to defilement.

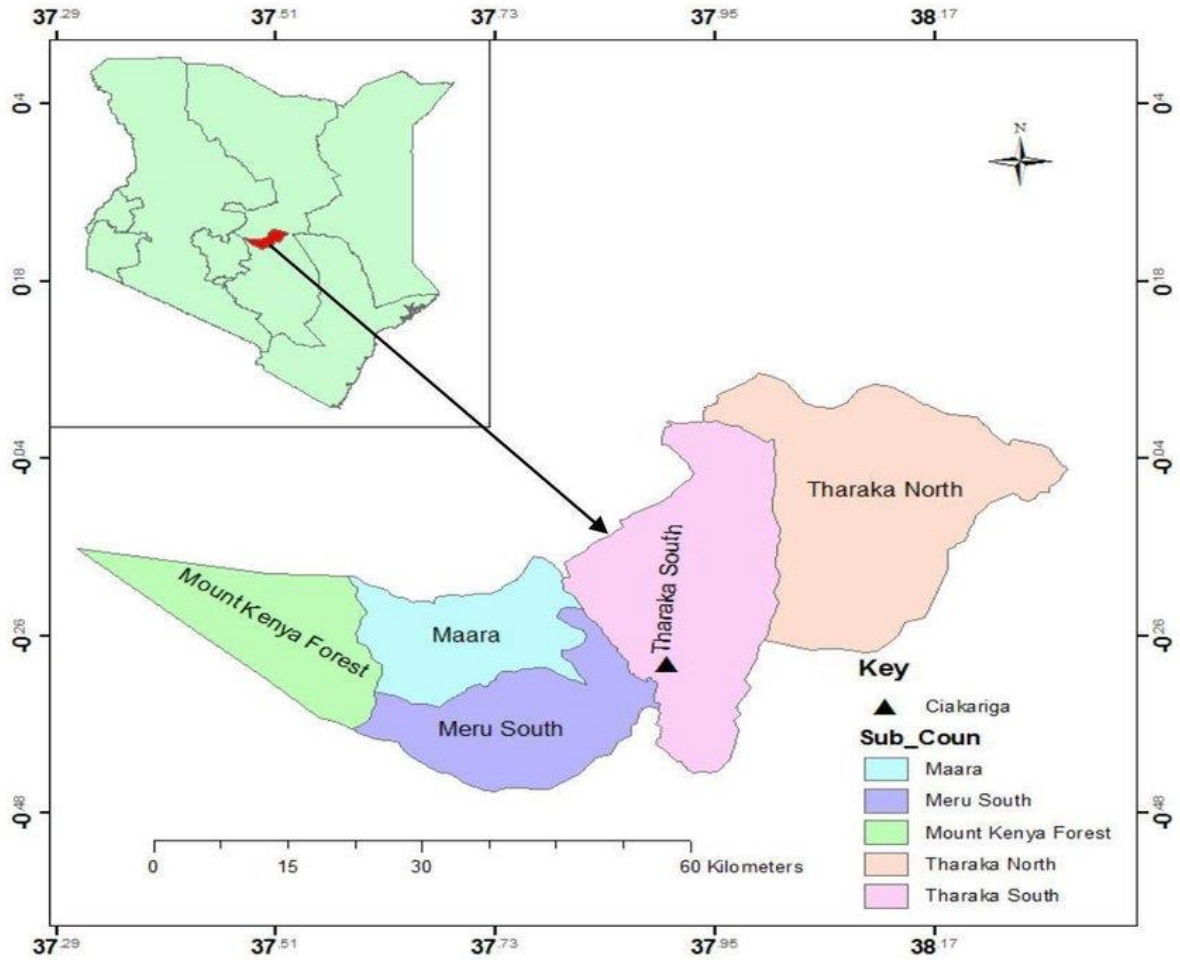


Figure 3.1: Map of Tharaka Nithi County

3.4 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was victims of defilement, meaning that the study focused on the individual experiences of victims of defilement. They provided the defilement information, which was then used to analyze the prevalence, causes, and consequences of defilement. The key informants in this study were Chiefs who provided in-depth information concerning the defilement cases in the county.

3.5 Study Population

The target population for this study was all the 98 defiled children (93 girls and five boys) for the year 2020, 98 parents/caregivers, and 5 chiefs. Defiled children and their parents/caregivers must be registered at Chuka County Referral Hospital and Tharaka level four hospital for 2020 to be included in the study. The year 2020 was used because 2020 had the highest number of defiled children in Tharaka Nithi County in the last three years. Contacts of the

parents/caregivers of the defiled children were obtained from the files one month after the defilement incidence in the year 2020.

Table 3.2: Target Population

Categories	Target population
Defiled girls	93
Defiled boys	5
Parents/Caregivers of defiled children	98
Chiefs	5
Total	201

Source: Chuka County Referral Hospital, Tharaka Level Four Hospital Records Tharaka County administration (2021)

3.6 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study adopted a census method where all the respondents were included since the target population was small and manageable while carrying out the study. Census was used because each member of the target population has an opportunity to provide the required information hence giving the study an elevated degree of statistical confidence in the study outcome. This implies all the 98 defiled children (93 girls and five boys) in 2020, 98 parents/caregivers, and 5 chiefs were used in this study. This sample size was adequate as Kathuri and Pals (1993) recommend a minimum of 100 subjects as ideal for survey research in social sciences.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

The interview schedule was used to collect data in this current study. Three interview schedule instruments were developed for parents/guardians of defiled children, chiefs, and defiled children. Open-ended questions were used in interviewing the parents. Hearing the parents' caregivers' views and concerns on their children's defilement was essential. An interview schedule for defiled children was used because it is helpful in checking in-depth information that cannot be found in other methods. Yates and Leggett (2016) noted that presenting questions orally is a particularly appropriate means of gathering information from the illiterates. Moreover, the approach creates confidence on the part of the respondents, and as they gain interest in the subject, more reliable, valid, and objective results are obtained. The interview schedule for chiefs gave information concerning the defilement cases in their locations.

3.8 Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using thematic method, which entails identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). After conducting the interviews with the respondents, the researcher was familiarized with the data through reading and re-reading. This was followed by the researcher making notes and jotting down early impressions, which is useful. Then, the generation of initial codes followed. In this phase, the researcher organized data meaningfully and systematically. The thematic analysis strategy was used to identify themes from this data. Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological approach to data analysis (Morrow *et al.*, 2015) was utilized. It entailed the following steps: All interview transcripts were read to comprehend their meanings.

Relevant statements to study objectives were then captured. The meanings of the extracted statements were articulated. Data was structured into bands of themes and authenticated. These findings were unified into an exhaustive description of the topic. The researcher then summarized the exhaustive description into short, highly descriptive statements that capture the characteristics deemed essential in understanding the study objectives. The transcriptions and printouts of the qualitative data were read through carefully several times, and synopses of each contribution were written up. The participants were given a code to hide their identity. Further, data was analysed through the use of descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics included frequency and percentage.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The major ethical issues of concern are informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, anonymity, and the researcher's responsibility. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants in English or Kiswahili or vernacular where necessary, after which consent from parents/guardians was sought. Participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix I) before participating in the study. The consent form explained the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits of participating, and the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time. Numbers were used to identify participants so that the confidentiality of the owners was not breached. Informed assent (Appendix II) was obtained from the parents/guardian of the children to be included in this study. Those who declined to participate in the study were not discriminated against. Confidentiality has to do with the agreement between individuals that limits others' access to private information. Anonymity is where all the research participants

have the right to remain anonymous and their identities. The researcher, therefore, obtained consent from the necessary authorities/letter and the respondents before obtaining information from them. The researcher ensured that the respondents were made aware of the intended use of the data and that the information obtained was kept confidential and disclosed or discussed with any unauthorized persons.

To ensure ethical considerations for minors' participation, the researcher ensured that the minors' parents were involved in the decision-making process for their children. An additional adult consent procedure to supplement assent by the minor was only included if it did not interfere with the child's dignity. The design and execution of the consent process and research procedures will support or mitigate vulnerabilities such as decision-making capacity, literacy level, poverty, legal rights, and cultural contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research results in accordance to the study objectives. It presents data analysis as per objectives and the various thematic areas addressed. The chapter presents the data under different sub-sections; analysis, background information of the respondents, contribution of cultural practices, economic status and family structure on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. The chapter also presents a section on discussion of findings which includes data interpretation.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 156 out of 201 total respondents were interviewed giving a responses rate of 77.6%. Specifically, a total of 66 out of 93 girls were interviewed representing 70.1% response rate. Further, 4 out of 5 boys were interviewed representing 80% response rate. Furthermore, out of 98 parents/caregivers 83 were interviewed representing 84.7% response rate. Finally, 3 out of 5 chiefs were interviewed representing 60.0% response rate. This response rate was considered sufficient in providing reliable information on the persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. The high rate of response recorded in this current study supplements the line of thought by Peytchev, (2013) that the best means of obtaining impartial estimates is to realize a higher rate of response. Nevertheless, in a study carried out by Fosnacht *et al.* (2017) established that even reasonably low rate of response gave reliable institution-level estimates, although with superior sampling error and less capability to discover statistically significant differences with comparable institutions.

4.3 Background Information of the Respondents

In this current study, the background information sought from the respondents was gender, age, religion as well as the education level.

4.3.1 Gender of the Parents/Caregivers

In this current study, the respondents were asked to state their gender in the questionnaires provided. Analysed information result is provided in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2. Table 4.1 represents the gender of adults whereas Table 4.2 represents gender of children.

Table 4.1: Gender of Parents/Caregivers of defiled children

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	22	26.5
Female	61	73.5
Total	83	100.0

From the study results in Table 4.1 it is noted that that the majority 61(73.5%) of the Parents/Caregivers of defiled children were female whereas the minority 22(26.5%) of the Parents/Caregivers of defiled children were male. This current study was not biased on gender since both male and female were well represented. Gender is relevant in the study of defilement in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, because girls are disproportionately affected by defilement. This is likely due to a number of factors, including gender inequality, a lack of education about sexual violence, and the belief that girls are less valuable than boys.

Table 4.2: Gender of Children Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	4	5.7
Female	66	94.3
Total	70	100.0

Results in Table 4.2, show the vast majority 66(94.3%) of the defiled children were girls. On the other hand, 4(5.7%) of the defiled children were boys. The study results concur with Nansasi (2010) who assessed that the majority of the defiled children are girls since they more vulnerable compared to boys. Gender is relevant in the study of defilement in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya because gender norms and stereotypes can contribute to defilement. For example, the belief that girls are responsible for their own sexual assault can make it more difficult for them to report the crime. Additionally, the belief that boys are naturally more aggressive can lead to them being seen as less culpable for their actions.

4.3.2 Age of the Respondents

This current study further sought to find out the age of the respondents. The parents/caregivers of defiled children were asked to state their ages this was useful to the study because older parents had more experience on matters defilement compared to young adults. Also, children

were asked also state their ages so that the study can find out the age bracket that children are more defiled. The study results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Age Category of Parents/Caregivers of Defiled children

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
23-28 Years	1	1.2
29-34 Years	7	8.4
35-40 Years	17	20.5
41-46 Years	36	43.4
Above 47 Years	22	26.5
Total	83	100.0

The study results in Table 4.3 show that the majority 36(43.4%) of adult respondents were those of the age brackets between 41-46 years. Further, 22(26.5%) of the respondents were those of the age above 47 years. Those respondents of the age between 35 and 40 years accounted for 17(20.5%). Also, 7(8.4%) of the respondents were those of the age between 29 and 34 years. Finally, 1(1.2%) of the respondents were those of age between 23 and 28 years.

The age category of parents/caregivers of defiled children helps to identify the risk factors for defilement. Parents and caregivers who are older are more likely not access to their children and may be less likely to supervise the child behavior. A study by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2018) found that the majority of children who were defiled in 2018 were under the age of 10. The study also found that the most common perpetrators of defilement were parents and caregivers. This suggest that the age category of parents/caregivers of defiled children is a significant risk factor for defilement.

4.3.3 Age Category of the Defiled Children

The study sought to determine the age category of the defiled children and the findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Age Category of the Defiled Children

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
9-14 Years	6	8.6
15-18 Years	64	91.4
Total	70	100.0

From the study results in Table 4.4 the majority of defiled female children 64(91.4%) were between 15 and 18 years. Those between 9- and 14-years accounted for 6(8.6%). This implies that older children especially girls are more likely to be targeted by predators because they are seen as being more sexually mature. Further, older children are more likely to be unsupervised, making them easier targets. Finkelhor *et al.* (2009) noted that juvenile sex offenders are less likely to target other juveniles who are older than they are.

4.3.4 Residence Period of the Respondents

The study sought to determine the period the respondents have been the residence of Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Residency Period of Parents/Caregivers of defiled children

Residency Period	Frequency	Percent
1-10 Years	3	3.6
11-20 Years	4	4.8
21-30 Years	5	6.0
Above 31 Years	71	85.5
Total	83	100.0

The study results in Table 4.5 shows that the majority 71(85.5%) of the respondents had lived in Tharaka Nithi for more than 31 years. Also, 5(6.0%) of the respondents had lived in Tharaka Nithi for a period between 21 and 30 years. Further, 4(4.8%) of the respondents had lived in Tharaka Nithi for 21 and a period between 11 and 20 years. Finally, 3(3.6%) of the respondents

had lived in Tharaka Nithi for a period between 1 and 10 years. This implies that the longer someone lives in a community, the more opportunities they have to come into contact with potential victims. This is especially true for children, who are often more vulnerable to abuse by people they know and trust. People who have lived in a community for a long time may have weaker social ties than those who are newer to the area. This can make it more difficult for victims to come forward and report abuse, as they may feel like they don't have anyone to turn to for help. In some communities, there may be a culture of silence around child sexual abuse. This can make it even more difficult for victims to come forward, as they may feel like they will not be believed or supported.

4.3.5 Education level of the participants.

The study further sought to find out the education level of the respondents. The study results are presented in Table 4.6 and Table 4.7. Table 4.6 shows the education level of the adults' respondents and Table 4.7 shows the education level; of children respondents.

Table 4.6: Education level of the Parents/Caregivers of defiled children

Education level	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	33	39.8
Certificate	45	54.2
Undergraduate	5	6.0
Total	83	100.0

Results in Table 4.6 show that the vast majority 45(54.2%) of the adults' respondents had college certificates. The study also noted that 33(39.8%) of the adults' respondents had no formal education and 5(6.0%) had university degrees. This implies that children of parents with lower levels of education are more likely to be defiled than children of parents with higher levels of education. Parents with lower levels of education are less likely to have the knowledge and skills to protect their children from defilement. They may not know the signs of defilement, or they may not know how to talk to their children about it. Parents with lower levels of education are more likely to live in poverty. Poverty is a risk factor for defilement, as it can lead to family instability, overcrowding, and lack of access to resources.

4.3.6 Education level of Children Respondents

The respondents were further asked on the education level of children in Tharaka Nithi County. The study results are presented in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: Education level of Children Respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percent
No school	15	21.4
Primary level	44	62.9
Secondary level	10	14.3
Postsecondary college	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

The study results in Table 4.7 show that the majority 44(62.9%) of the children were in primary school. Also, 15(21.4%) had no formal education. Further, 10(14.3%) of the children's participants were in secondary schools and only 1(1.4%) child was in college. The education level of children can affect the defilement cases. Children who are not in school are more likely to be abused. This is because they are often unsupervised and have less access to resources and support. Children who are educated about sexual abuse are less likely to be abused. Education can help children to understand what is and is not appropriate behavior, and to know who to turn to if they are being abused. Children who are educated about their bodies are less likely to be abused. This is because they are more likely to be aware of their own boundaries and to be able to resist unwanted advances. Children who are educated about the dangers of child sexual abuse are less likely to be abused. This is because they are more likely to know what to do if they are being abused, and to be able to tell someone they trust.

4.3.7 Religion of Children Respondents

The study further sought to find out the religion of the children. The study results are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Religion of the defiled respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Christian	69	98.6
Muslim	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

From the study results in Table 4.8, the majority 69(98.6%) of the defiled children were Christians and only 1(1.4%) of the defiled children was a Muslim. This implies that religious institutions can also be a place where defilement occurs. This is because religious institutions often have a lot of power and authority over their members, which can make it difficult for victims to come forward and report abuse. In some cultures, there is a stigma associated with reporting sexual abuse, which can make it difficult for victims to come forward.

4.3.8 Family Economic Status of Defiled Children

The children's respondents were asked of their family status whether they were from a lower income group, middle income group or upper income group. Table 4.9 show the study results.

Table 4.9: Family economic status of defiled children

Family status	Frequency	Percent
Low-income group	58	82.9
Middle income group	12	17.1
Total	70	100.0

The study results in Table 4.9 shows that the majority 58(82.9%) of the children came from lower income group. Also, 12(17.1%) of the respondents came from middle income group. According to the Economic survey (2017) by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the lower income group comprises households with a monthly income of Kshs 23,670 and; while middle income group comprises households with incomes ranging between Kshs 23,671 and Kshs 119,999 and finally the Upper income group enjoys remunerations of above Kshs 120,000.

4.3.9 Victims Knowledge of Offenders

The study sought to determine if the respondents knew offenders of defilement and the findings are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Victims Knowledge of Offenders

Offenders of Defilement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	72	86.7
No	11	13.3
Total	83	100

The results in Table 4.10 show that 72(86.7%) of the respondents said yes and 11(13.3%) said no. The findings imply that most of the respondents agreed that they knew of any offender in that area. This implies that there is a high level of child sexual abuse in the area, and that many people are aware of it but are not reporting it. This because they are afraid of retaliation from the abuser, or they may not believe that the abuse is serious enough to warrant reporting. They may also be ashamed or embarrassed, or they may not know how to report the abuse.

4.3.10 Frequency of Discussing of Child Defilement

The study asked the participants on how often child defilement cases are discussed in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.11

Table 4.11: Child Defilement Discussed

Forum		Always	Often	Rarely	Never	Total
Chief Barazas	F	49	30	2	2	83
	%	59	36.1	2.4	2.4	100
Church	F	3	26	49	5	83
	%	3.6	31.3	59	6	100
Radio	F	72	8	3	0	83
	%	86.7	9.6	3.6	0.0	100
Family	F	2	7	46	28	83
	%	2.4	8.4	55.4	33.7	100
Funerals	F	0	4	3	76	83
	%	0.0	4.8	3.6	91.6	100

The results in the Table 4.11 show that 59.0% (49) of the respondents said that matters on child defilement are Always, 36.1% (30), Often 2.4% (2), rarely and 2.4% (2) never, discussed in Chief Barazas. Also, 3.6% (3) Always, 31.3% (26) Often, 59% (49) Rarely and 6% (5), said that they are discussed in Church. Further, 86.7% (72) Always, 9.6% (8) Often and 3.6% (3) Rarely discussed in Radio. Also, 2.4% (2) Always, 8.4% (7) Often, 55% (46) Rarely, and 33.7% (28) Never discussed in Family. Further, 4.8% (4) Often, 3.6% (3) Rarely and 91.6% (76) Never are discussed in Funerals. The study findings revealed that matters on child defilement are most often discussed in Chief Barazas, followed by radio. They are least often discussed in funerals. This suggests that there is a need for more discussion about child defilement in all locations, but especially in funerals.

4.3.11 Heard of Child Defilement

The participants were asked on whether they had heard of child defilement in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Heard of Child Defilement

Heard of Child Defilement	Frequency	Percent
Always	20	24.1
Very Often	55	66.3
Sometimes	7	8.4
Rarely	1	1.2
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.12 shows that 24.1% (20) of the respondents, always witness or hear of child defilement, 66.3% (55) very often, 8.4% (7) sometimes and 1.2% (1) rarely witness or hear of child defilement. This shows that most of the respondents very often witness or hear of child defilement. It is possible that the area has a high poverty rate, which can make children more vulnerable to abuse. It is also possible that the area has a culture of silence around child sexual abuse, which can make it difficult for victims to come forward.

4.3.12 Age of Defiled Child

The study sought to determine the age at which the child was defiled in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Age of Defiled Child

Age of Defiled Child	Frequency	Percent
6-11 Years	26	31.3
12-17 Years	57	68.7
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.13 show that 31.3% (26) of the respondents heard of children of age 6-11 years who had been defiled, 68.7% (57) of age 12-17 years. This shows that most of the children who had been defiled were aged between 12-17 years.

This implies that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Adolescents may be going through a period of rapid physical and emotional development, which can make them more confused and vulnerable. They may also be more likely to trust adults, which can make them more susceptible to grooming by abusers.

4.3.13 Perpetrator in Child Defilment

The study aimed to determine the perpetrators of child defilement in Tharaka Nithi and the findings are presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Perpetrator in Child Defilment

Perpetrator	Frequency	Percent
Fellow child	17	20.5
Adult male relative	26	31.3
A random adult male	20	24.1
Teacher	13	15.7
Friends	2	2.4
Father	4	4.8
Uncles	1	1.2
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.14 show that 20.5% (17) of the respondents said that the perpetrator in child defilement was a fellow child, 31.3% (26) said Adult male relative, 24.1% (20) A random adult male, 15.7% (13) said Teacher, 2.4% (2) said Friends, 4.8% (4) said Father and 1.2% (1) said Uncles. This shows that most perpetrators in child defilement are adult male relatives. This implies that children are particularly vulnerable to abuse from people they know

and trust. Adult male relatives have more access to children, and they may be more likely to be trusted by children. They may also be more likely to groom children, which is a process of building trust and rapport with a child in order to exploit them.

4.3.14 Areas of Defilment

The study sought to determine the areas where the children are defiled in Tharaka Nithi and findings are presented in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Areas of Defilment

Areas of Defilment	Frequency	Percent
Home	15	18.1
School	9	10.8
On the road	23	27.7
While fetching water	26	31.3
While collecting firewood	10	12
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.15 above show that 18.1% (15) of the respondents noted that children were defiled at home, 10.8% (9) at school, 27.7% (23) by the roadside, 31.3% (26) while fetching water and 12.0% (10) while collecting firewood. This shows that most children are defiled while on their search for water errands. This implies that children are particularly vulnerable to abuse when they are alone and away from their homes. They may be more likely to be approached by strangers, and they may be more likely to feel intimidated or afraid to report abuse. They may also be more likely to be groomed by abusers, who may offer them food or money in exchange for their silence.

4.3.15 Number of Defilement Cases

The respondents were asked on the number of defilement cases they have heard/witness in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.16

Table 4.16: Number of Defilement Cases

Number of Defilement Cases	Frequency	Percent
Once	4	4.8
Two	12	14.5
Three	24	28.9
More than four	43	51.8
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.16 above show that 43% (51.8) of the respondents' children have heard of defilement cases more than four times, 28.9% (24) three times, 12% (14.5) two times and 4.8% (4) of respondents have heard about defilement once. This shows that majority of respondents have heard of defilement cases more than four times. This implies that the area has a high poverty rate, which can make children more vulnerable to abuse. It is also possible that the area has a culture of silence around child sexual abuse, which can make it difficult for victims to come forward.

4.3.16 Household Child Defilement

The study sought to establish whether exist household child defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Household Child Defilement

Household Child Defilement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	83.1
No	14	16.9
Total	83	100

The results in the Table 4.17 show that 69 (83.1%) said Yes, they have a child in their household who has been defiled and 14 (16.9%) said No. This shows that most of the households have had their children being defiled. This suggests that most of the households have had their children being defiled.

4.4 Contribution of Cultural Practices to Persistent Defilement Cases.

In the first objective, the study investigated the contribution of cultural practices to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Interviews were conducted among the parents, defiled children and chiefs. The study revealed that various cultural traditions in the community have contributed to defilement cases. These cultural practices are; circumcision, female genital mutilation (FGM), traditional songs, alcohol brewing, early marriages and engaging in sexual activities. The cultural practices in the community have led to behaviour learnt through socialisation and passed on from generation to generation.

4.4.1 Circumcision for Boys

The study sought to determine if circumcision for boys is carried out in Tharaka Nithi County. The study results are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Circumcision for Boys

Transition	Frequency	Percent
Yes	67	95.7
No	3	4.3
Total	70	100

The study results in Table 4.18 above show that 67 (95.7%) of the respondents noted that circumcision for boys was carried out as a transition from childhood to adulthood. This implies that most of the respondents believed that circumcision for boys means transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

Parent [1] aged 40 years said that:

"Yes, we have cultural practices in our community, for example, circumcision, which, often, has led to child defilement because circumcision means the transition to adulthood. It is a positive move since they are taught morals; however, some go overboard of doing anything because they have freedom, leading to child defilement."

This means that cultural behaviours have a significant impact on the frequency and severity of child defilement in a society, as indicated by the preceding excerpt. A variety of sexuality and rites of passage-related cultural behaviours are prevalent among both girls and boys in the community.

Concurring with parent [1] above, Child [12], a boy, said that:

"There are cultural practices in our community, for example, circumcision, which makes us adults. Our community's transition from childhood to adulthood gives us the freedom to have a girlfriend. So those who do not have girlfriends are tempted to defile young girls who are easily convinced to have sex."

This suggests that, to some extent, cultural norms apply additional pressure on top of boys' peer pressure, resulting in the defilement of young girls through fornication or rape by those under pressure.

4.4.2 Female Genital Mutilation Practice

The study sought to determine if FGM is carried out in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Female Genital Mutilation Practice

Female Genital Mutilation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	38.6
No	51	61.4
Total	83	100

The results in Table 4.19 above show that 38.6% (32) of the respondents noted that the community practices FGM. This shows that FGM is still practised in the community and is one predictor of defilement among children.

In support of the above, chief [2] argued that:

“For sure, we have cultural practices that often encourage child defilement, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), which encourages children to refuse to go to school as they get married. Furthermore, young girls who undergo F.G.M. are more likely to engage in early sexual practices. It also exposes a child to a false adulthood notion, in which they believe they are ready for adulthood when they are not.”

This suggests that child defilement is significantly fuelled by the cultural practices mentioned previously. Culture allows for the exposure of girls who, unbeknownst to them, have already been defiled because some of them are married off at an early age.

Parent [6], a male, noted that:

“However, as much as we have the cultural practices, they have not promoted good morals in our children. The incidences of child defilement are rampant in my community because, for instance, in the case of female genital mutilation, when girls are mutilated, they are taught about marriage and early marriage issues and are advised to give in to marriage. They are equipped with morals that are not well oriented throughout the process and help their future.”

This means that the cultural behaviours described in the preceding passage have caused more harm than threat to society, as the FGM practices have led to more unplanned marriages with underage girls, resulting in their defilement.

Parent [3], a female, concurred that:

“FGM has prompted children to defy school and get married. The young girls undergoing F.G.M have involved themselves in early sexual practices.”

This demonstrates that cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) as described in the preceding sample, lead to deterioration in behaviour and breed obstinacy, which may cause a kid to make poor decisions in her life, such as forgoing studies for an improper marriage.

Disagreeing with parent [3] above, Child [14], a girl, noted that:

“Undergoing FGM helps us learn good morals as we are discouraged from engaging in sexual intercourse before marriage.”

This means that circumcision and female genital mutilation (FGM) raise the rate of child defilement in the society to the same extent as premarital sexual education. Transitioning from infancy to maturity has led many initiates to believe they can obtain a girlfriend or boyfriend and engage in sexual relationships. Persons who have undergone circumcision and female genital mutilation (FGM) are free to marry because they have completed a rite of passage.

4.4.3 Traditional Songs and Dances

The study sought to establish if traditional songs and dances lead to increase defilement of children. The study results are presented in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: Traditional Songs and Dances

Traditional Songs and Dances	Frequency	Percent
Yes	48	57.8
No	35	42.2
Total	83	100

The results in Table 4.20 above show that 57.8% (48) of the respondents agreed that traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies have messages that encourage sexual activities which can lead to child defilement. This implies that the songs sung during initiation ceremonies have sexual content which has promote child defilement.

Parent [2] aged 30, opined that:

“Yes, we have cultural practices like the traditional songs that mostly, tend to promote the child defilement. Traditional songs are accompanied by alcohol drinking, use of some illicit drugs to stimulate the dancers. Songs are mostly sung at night with alcohol

drinking, the lyrics of the songs can cause inebriated individuals to become agitated, and this can cause children defilement.”

This suggests that children are mostly exploited during cultural celebrations, since they cannot evade as it is a traditional norm, that are accompanied by traditional songs and dances that perpetuate the act of defilement.

In support of sentiments by parent [2] above, Child [11] aged 14 years opined that:

“In our community, have cultural practices like the traditional songs that mostly, tend to promote defiling us because usually, traditional songs are accompanied by alcohol drinking with sex dances. The drunk people stirred by content of the song start raping us throughout the night vigil or ceremony.”

The excerpt above implies that child defilement is stirred more by traditional activities that are done during the night vigils as most girls are present and people take advantage of them because of their innocence in those events.

Chief [4] aged 37 years, said that:

“In this issue, we have cultural practices such as traditional songs that tend to promote child defilement. Drunk people stirred by the sexual content of the songs can defile a child at home or along the road.”

From the excerpt, it is denoted that traditional songs are among the major root causes of child defilement in the community because they bear content that stirs men to defile young girls in the society.

Parent [4] a male, said that:

“In my community, excessive alcohol drinking impairs the moral judgement and lead to child defilement by those who under influence alcohol.”

This excerpt demonstrates that, over time, cultural behaviours have a significant impact and are, therefore, a significant influencer on child defilement in the community.

4.4.4 Child Marriages

The study sought to determine the practice of early child marriages in the community. The findings are presented in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Child Marriages

Child Marriages	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	33.7
No	55	66.3
Total	83	100

This shows that 33.7% (28) of the respondents revealed that early child marriages are carried out in the community. The early child marriages encourage child defilements in the community.

4.4.5 Culture Permit for Marriage after Initiated

The participants were further asked if the culture permit for marriage after initiation. The study results are presented in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Culture Permit for Marriage after Initiated

Permit	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	21.4
No	55	78.6
Total	70	100

The results show that 15 (21.4%) of the respondents agreed that they are allowed to be married once they have been initiated.

Parent [5] aged 40 years, opined that:

“In my community, the early marriages are greatly welcome and highly embraced as they see it as source of wealth through dowry payment which in effect, leads to child defilement as parents give out their young girls into marriage hoping for wealth.”

The excerpt above implies that early child marriage is still practiced in the community. Culturally the girl-child was married from the onset of puberty/physical sexual maturity, and presently the girl must be 18 years of age to get married. Child defilement has got roots in the cultural practices done and practiced in the community.

4.4.6 Allowed Sexual Activities After Initiation

The participants were further asked if sexual activities were allowed after initiation in the community. The study results are presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.23: Allowed Sexual Activities after Initiation

Sexual Activities	Frequency	Percent
Yes	30	42.9
No	40	57.1
Total	70	100

The results show that 30 (42.9%) of the respondents agreed that they are allowed to engage in sexual activities after they have transitioned to adulthood.

4.4.7 Having Girlfriend or boyfriend

The study sought to establish if participants have girlfriend or boyfriend. The study results are presented in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24: Having Girlfriend or Boyfriend

Having Girlfriend or Boyfriend	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	41.4
No	41	58.6
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.24 show that 29 (41.4%) indicated that they have Girlfriend/boyfriend. This implies that most of the respondents do not have girlfriend/boyfriend.

4.5 Contribution of economic status on Persistent Defilement Cases

In the second objective, the study investigated contribution of economic status on persistent defilement cases. Interviews were given to the parents, children and chiefs. The study revealed that various economic factors in the community have contributed to defilement cases. These factors are; provision of basic needs, aiding of caregivers/parents generate income and engaging in sexual activities for money. These economic factors in the community have led to increase in number of defilement cases in the societies.

4.5.1 Meaning of Basic Needs

The study sought to find out if the participants understood the meaning of basic needs in Tharaka Nithi County. The study results are presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Meaning of Basic Needs

Meaning of Basic Needs	Frequency	Percent
Yes	67	95.7
No	3	4.3
Total	70	100

The results in Table 4.25 above show that 67 (95.7%) of the respondents said yes that they understood what basic needs are and 3(4.3%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents understood what basic needs were. The majority of respondents 95.7% who understand the meaning of basic needs gave examples as food, shelter and clothing.

Parent [2] a female, said:

“Yes, economic status in my area has been a great cause of defilement because people without land to cultivate are idle hence having many chances of drinking alcohol which can lead to defilement.”

This demonstrates that child defilement is closely linked to a family's or homestead's economic position. Poverty, as illustrated here by a lack of land, contributes to the vulnerability of children to defilement.

Child [4] aged 13 years, a girl said:

“I went and stayed with my relatives because my parents could not afford my school fees and they took advantage of that and now the act of defilement is persistent.”

This indicates that when parents are unable to provide for their children, relatives may take advantage of them. On the subject of landlessness, which leads to poverty, overcrowded, congested slums increase the likelihood of criminality, such as instances of child defilement.

4.5.2 Provision of Basic Needs

The study intended to establish provision of basic needs in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.26.

Table 4.26: Provision of Basic Needs

Provision of Basic Needs	Frequency	Percent
Father	47	67.1
Mother	14	20
Boyfriend	8	11.4
Others	1	1.4
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.26 show that 47 (67.1%) of the respondents have father as a provider of basic needs, 14 (20%) have mother, 8 (11.4%) have Boyfriend and 1 (1.4%) have others as provider of basic needs. This shows that most of the providences of basic needs is met by father despite being unemployed.

Parent [1] aged 30 years, said:

“To greater extent, the issue of lack of economic resources has contributed to persistent defilement in my area because it brings about poverty which exposes a child to being lured with money so that she can settle her needs. This is so because, children lack basic needs hence find themselves in the trap of accepting gifts from people who in turn ask them for sex pleasure.”

As a result of living in inadequate and/or congested housing, children are exposed to molesters because poor families are very vulnerable and lose their sense of identity and affiliation, exposing them to predators.

4.5.3 Asked for Sexual Intercourse

The respondents were further asked on whether the victims were asked for sexual intercourse in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27: Asked for Sexual Intercourse

Asked For Sexual Intercourse	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	7.1
No	65	92.9
Total	70	100

The results in Table 4.27 above show that 5 (7.1%) of the respondents said that yes, they have ever been asked for sexual intercourse by those who partake liquor at their home and 65 (92.9%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents have never been asked for sexual intercourse by those who partake liquor at their home.

Chief [2] of age 40 years, opined that:

“Lack of financial resources has contributed to persistent defilement in my area to a greater extent since it produces poverty, which exposes a child to being lured with money in order to meet her fundamental needs. This is because youngsters are lured into accepting gifts from people who subsequently demand sex pleasure in return.”

This indicates that financial capability correlates with the ease with which victims consent to or are pushed into defilement. Due to poverty, a mother may request that her child live with a neighbour, despite the child's vulnerability to child defilement, as the unrelated neighbour may turn to the child and defile him or her.

4.5.4 Assisting Parents/Caregiver in Selling the Alcohol

The study also sought to establish on assisting parents/caregiver in selling the alcohol in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28: Assisting Parents/Caregiver in Selling the Alcohol

Assisting Parents/Caregiver	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	7.1
No	65	92.9
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.28 above shows that 5(7.1%) of the respondents said that yes that they assist parents/caregiver in selling liquor and 65 (92.9%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents do not help their parents/caregiver in selling liquor.

Child [3] a girl aged 14 years, said that:

“My parents are not in variance with me engaging with men or sell alcohol, as long as I generate some income for home and for myself, it is a persistent thing.”

The except above implies that economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. The fact that a family is in a state where they cannot provide the most basic needs opens a door and an opportunity for the opportunists who take advantage of any chance that presents itself.

4.5.5 Sexually Harassed by Drunkards

On the issue of sexually harassment by drunkards, the study intended to establish its effects in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29: Sexually Harassed by Drunkards

Sexually Harassed by Drunkards	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	8.6
No	64	91.4
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.29 above show that 6 (8.6%) of the respondents said Yes that they have ever been sexually harassed by drunkards at their home and 64 (91.4%) said No. This indicates that most of the respondents have never been sexually harassed by drunkards at their home.

Chief [4] a male, identified that:

“Indeed, economic status has been a major cause of defilement in my area, because people without land to cultivate are idle, which increases their chances of consuming alcohol, which, in many instances, lead to defilement.”

This demonstrates that people's living conditions can drive them to such desperation that they will accept anything to improve their plight. Poverty is related with malnutrition, hazardous housing and working conditions, unclean water and sanitation, and lack of access to healthcare in low-income nations.

4.5.6 Brewing of Alcohol for Sale

The study sought to establish if there is brewing of alcohol for sale in Tharaka Nithi County and the findings are presented in Table 4.30.

Table 4.30: Brewing of Alcohol for Sale

Brewing of Alcohol for Sale	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	8.6
No	64	91.4
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.30 above show that 6 (8.6%) of the respondents noted that their parents brew alcohol for sale and 64 (91.4%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents' 91.4% parents do not brew alcohol for sale.

Child [1] a girl aged 16, said:

“My parents are not well-off, both are unemployed and at times, I end up with someone so that I can cater for my food and my siblings or brew alcohol for that matter.”

This shows that child defilement is closely pegged to the economic status of a family or a homestead. Poverty as depicted here as lack of land, is a contributing factor to children vulnerability to defilement.

Parent [3] a female, also noted that:

“It is an open fact that we all witness currently that, lack of sufficient economic resources leads to poverty which exposes a child to being lured to exchange sex for basic needs, for example, a girl was given 50bob so that she could get food and she was impregnated. This is child defilement in the highest sense of the word.”

This suggests that financial stability can significantly influence the prevalence of child defilement in the society. The passage above demonstrates conclusively that there is a strong

relationship between poverty and child defilement. As a result, child defilement has its roots in poverty. Parents abandon their responsibilities to provide for their children's needs due to poverty. A parent may advise a girl to find a capable somebody to care for her basic requirements. A female may wind up getting defiled for money out of bewilderment.

4.5.7 Going to School

The study also sought to determine whether they are going to school or not in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.31: Going to School

Going to School	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	61.4
No	27	38.6
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.31 above show that 43 (61.4%) of the respondents said yes, that they go to school and 27 (38.6%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents go to school. Majority of the respondents noted that the school is not far away from their home and they get there by walking, relying on Samaritans or boda-boda riders to take them to school.

Chief [1] a male, said that:

“Poverty is undoubtedly produced by one key factor: a lack of sufficient economic resources, which exposes youngsters to the risk of taking money or presents in exchange for sex from older people, who, for example, give sex in exchange for food and shelter, which is already defiling to minors.”

This suggests that family values and standing have a substantial effect on children, which may predispose them to child sexual abuse. As married men relocate to urban regions in pursuit of employment, poverty is the primary cause of family dissolution.

In support of the above statements, Chief [5] aged 45 years, said that:

“Many of my community members suffer from poverty and this tend to make them rush for any quick money scheme to alleviate the problem which in many occasions, end up in defilement of children in my community.”

The exception above demonstrates that poverty is a significant factor in cases of child defilement within the community. Poverty has a crucial part in child exploitation since it renders children susceptible.

4.5.8 Using Bodaboda to go to school

The study also sought to establish whether the participants went to school using boda-boda in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32: Using Bodaboda to Go to School

Using Bodaboda	Frequency	Percent
Yes	3	4.3
No	67	95.7
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.32 above show that 3 (4.3%) of the respondents said Yes, they use boda-boda to go to school and 67 (95.7%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents do not go to school by use of boda-boda. Majority of respondents walked to school because they cannot afford to pay for Boda-Boda.

Chief [3] aged 42 years, said that:

"It is an open fact that we all experience today that a lack of appropriate economic resources leads to poverty, which exposes a youngster to being led to swap sex for basic requirements, such as a girl who was paid 100 shillings to acquire food and was impregnated. This is child defilement in the most extreme sense."

This suggests that financial stability can significantly influence the prevalence of child defilement in the society. The preceding passage demonstrates conclusively that there is a strong relationship between poverty and child defilement.

4.5.9 Bodaboda Rider Asking for Sexual Intercourse

The study engaged the respondents so as to establish whether they are asked for sexual intercourse by boda-boda riders in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.33.

Table 4.33: Bodaboda Rider Asking for Sexual Intercourse

Asking for Sexual Intercourse	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	5.7
No	66	94.3
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.33 above show that 4 (5.7%) of the respondents said Yes, they have ever been asked for sexual intercourse in exchange for fare and 66 (94.3%) said No. This implies that many of the respondents have never been asked for sex by boda-boda riders in exchange for fare.

Child [2] aged 13 years opined that:

“Bodaboda rider usually takes advantage of me because I cannot afford to pay for my fare to and from school, my parents are not in a position to pay my school fees, and also my fare.”

This says that youngsters are readily influenced since their needs are not met. In addition, the inability of some parents and/or guardians to provide for their children rendered these children vulnerable and susceptible to influence by child molesters through presents of money, food, clothing, and ornaments.

4.5.10 Money in Exchange for Sex

The respondents were further asked on whether they are taking money in exchange for sex in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.34.

Table 4.34: Money in Exchange for Sex

Money In Exchange for Sex	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	18.6
No	57	81.4
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.34 above shows that 13 (18.6%) of the respondents said Yes, they were given money in exchange for sex and 57 (81.4%) said No. This implies that most of the respondents have Yes, never been given money in exchange of money.

Parent [4] aged 50 years, opined that:

“For sure, poverty is caused by one major factor which is lack of sufficient economic resources which exposes children to the danger of accepting money or gifts for sex by older people, for instance, they give sex for food and shelter which already is defilement to children.”

This demonstrates that poverty is a significant factor in incidents of child defilement in the community. Poverty is a significant factor in child defilement because it makes youngsters vulnerable. Parents are compelled to surrender their children to able men in exchange for food because of entrenched poverty, lack of education, and lack of income-earning options.

4.6 Contribution of family structure on Persistent Defilement Cases

In the third objective, the study investigated contribution of family structure on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Interviews were given to the parents, children and chiefs.

Lack of parental care contributes to child defilement. It is more open that the inability of most parents to provide adequately for their children due to poverty forces girls into sexual relations with taxi drivers, bus drivers, boda boda riders and other so that they raise some money to afford them to eat something. Parent support is, thus lacking in many households today where it is found that parents spend less time with their families. Children who are emotionally abused and subjected to child defilement are denied the opportunity to exercise their rights.

Parent [1] aged 40 years, opined that:

“The structure of a family is a great determinant as to whether there is defilement because, controlling the children alone is not easy just one parent finds it hard to multitask finding money and always be there for the children for advices. They do not listen to advices; they are stubborn and this makes them to be driven by any wind of advices which can end up in them being defiled.”

The excerpt above affirms that structure of a family is can be a stepping stone or stumbling block in curbing child defilement problem in the community. Substance abuse and constant family conflict are the major causes of divorce and separation; when one parent dies, the kid may be obliged to assume the role of the deceased parent.

Chief [2] aged 48 years, said that:

“The structure of a family plays a significant role in determining whether or not there is defilement since supervising children alone is difficult, and just one parent finds it difficult to multitask while also seeking money and always being available to the children for advice. They do not listen to advise; they are stubborn, and this causes them to be swept along by any breeze of suggestion, thus defiling them.”

This implies that a child's upbringing has an impact on his or her life and that a single parent cannot fully provide it, leaving the youngster exposed to defilement, the structure has a significant impact on child's development which can lead to defilement if not well-guided by the close family she is surrounded with.

4.6.1 Parents Alive

The study sought to establish whether their parents are alive in Tharaka Nithi County. The study results are presented in Table 4.35.

Table 4.35: Parents Alive

Parents Alive	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	70
No	21	30
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.35 above show that 49 (70%) of the respondents said yes, their both parents are still alive and 21 (30%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents' parents are still alive, both of them.

Child [7] a girl aged 9 years, noted that:

“I live with my dad alone, and mostly, he is off to work and am left alone with the house helps who usually take advantage of his absence and defile me.”

This implies that parenting affects the lifestyle that child leads which may affect child being defiled, if parenting is not planned properly, the child is left to vulnerable to defilement.

Chief [5] a female, said:

“Due to absence of the father in a given family, moral instruction from a father figure is lacking, thus they do not receive it because the father is not present to cater for basic requirements. Children find it difficult to survive without food, which leads them into money sex exchange traps. Keeping a child alive in a one-parent household is costly, therefore the youngster finds someone to gather for their necessities.”

This means that parents should be there for children’s support and provision of basic needs in order to mitigate the child defilement incidences.

In support of the above statements, Child [6] a girl aged 12 years, opined that:

“Am orphaned and stay with my relatives for my living and schooling, but my relatives have been using this as a way of fulfilling their lust on me and this has been persistent for a while now.”

The excerpt above affirms that structure of a family is can be a stepping stone or stumbling block in curbing child defilement problem in the community.

Parent [2] aged 30 years, said that:

“Family structures does not influence child defilement, because when both parents are there for children both financially and physically the children are likely to be mentored in a good way, it all depends on how a parent takes responsibility of his/her children whether single or couples.”

This excerpt affirms that regardless of the structure in the family, discipline will remain constant and child defilement cannot be heard of.

Parent [3] male, aged 40 years, noted that:

“Yes, since I am solemnly the provider it is difficult for me to meet all the financial needs, just by myself, I find it hard to multitask finding money and always be there for the children for advices which predisposes them to stray advices which might end up in child defilement.”

These strongly indicates that the family structure is a great factor that brings about child defilement in the community.

Parent [4] a female, aged 37 years, said that:

“Sometimes the father is not supportive financially and is never at home hence cannot replace the gap in terms of giving advice the children and hence, because both parents are not there to support, a child might give in to sex for food.”

This excerpt confirms that family structure is a great factor in child defilement incidences and in cases where family is dysfunctional, it is worse. Family disintegration has a high influence on child defilement since victims who considered it to be high and very high accounted for most of the victims.

In support of the above statements, Chief [4] aged 50 years, noted that:

“Because both parents are absent, a child may succumb to sex for food because the father is not financially supportive and is rarely at home. As a result, the father cannot fill the gap in terms of giving counsel to the children.”

This excerpt firmly confirms that family structure is a great factor in child defilement incidences and in cases where family is dysfunctional, where the father is the only breadwinner of the family, a child lacks support financially and physically. This concurs with the study by Bello and Osunde (2022) who noted that lack of finances in the family through parents’ providences may pose a challenge to children which may make them vulnerable to defilement as they try to seek for financial aid.

Parent [5] aged 29 years, noted that:

“Yes, the moral advices from father figure are absent hence they do not get since the father is not there to gather for basic needs children find it hard to live without food which makes them fall into traps of money sex exchange, sustaining a child in the case of one parent household is expensive hence the child gets someone to gather for their needs.”

This provides insight into how a dysfunctional family can lead to incidents of child defilement because the parent's moral support or lack thereof causes the child's emotional and physical development to stagnate.

Parent [6] female aged 41 years, said that:

“We live peacefully hence no defilement cases, we as parents, set good example to children. This leaves no room for our children’s thoughts to be strayed by those with ill intentions.”

The excerpt above shows that when there is unity and harmony in the family, the incidences of child defilement is rare.

Parent [7] a male opined that:

“It is for a fact that when I hustle, I leave the kids alone, and strangers or even friends take advantage of my absence. This could expose the kids to defilement if they are left alone, with a stranger, or even with house help.”

This excerpt shows that when there is no coordination on how the family should be handle, strangers may take advantage and lead to child defilement.

Parent [8] a female, noted that:

“When I leave my kids with relatives to work, they might not take proper care of them and expose them to defilement, or at times, the maid that we have employed may expose them to adult content which may lead them astray.”

This implies that child’s moral decision majorly depends on parental guidance which, if the child deprived of, she can make grievous mistakes which leads to defilement.

In support of the above statements, Chief [3] aged 35 years, opined that:

“In most instances, girls are defiled because they are the ones who are enticed into 'come we stay marriages' by married men who then chase the girls and return to their wives once they are fulfilled.”

This shows that the issue of caring for kids at home is a great determinant in curbing the incidences of child defilement in the community. The relatives for example uncles when left alone with children of their family they take advantage of the opportunity and make sexual advances towards them.

Parent [9] aged 40 years, further said:

“In the event that parents are divorced, the children are left vulnerable for defilement because they do not get full support and protection for them and strangers or people with ill intentions may take advantage of the situation and hence defiling them.”

This implies that harmony and unity in the family is a great indicator as to whether the incidences of child defilement are being reduced or on contrary it is being perpetuated.

Child [5] a male aged 14, said that:

“My parents got divorced and since then, there has not been peace and stability in our home and some of relatives are taking advantage of that and they are defiling me constantly because there none to speak out for me.”

This means that family stability affects the peace and reasoning ability of a child so that he/she does not fall a prey for defilement.

In support of the above statements, Chief [1] aged 55 years, noted that:

“In my community, when parents’ divorce, their children are left vulnerable to defilement since they do not receive complete support and protection from their parents, and strangers or persons with bad intentions may take advantage of the situation, defiling them.”

This implies that harmony and unity in the family is a great indicator as to whether the incidences of child defilement are being reduced or on contrary it is being perpetuated. Divorced parents mainly leave their children at the hands of mercy perpetrators.

Parent [10] female aged 42 years said that:

“Girls are mostly defiled, because they are the ones who are lured into ‘come we stay marriages’ by men who are married and once they are satisfied, they chase the girls and go back to their wives.”

This points out that most of the incidences of child defilement is on girls and not boys as they are the ones who predisposed by great percentage.

4.7 Contribution of community response on Persistent Defilement Cases

In the fourth objective, the study investigated contribution of community response on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Interviews were given to the parents, children and chiefs. The study revealed that various community responses have in one way or the other, contributed to or curb the increasing number of defilement cases. These factors are; establishing the perpetrator of defilement, nature and the measures taken on the same.

Parent [1] a male aged 47, opined that:

“The leading factor that predispose children to child defilement is pornography as they try to emulate that which they have watched, which may end up in one child defiling another child.”

This implies that social media plays a great role in predisposing kids to child defilement through adult content therein. Access to pornography impacts a child behaviour and mentality. Once a child is a victim of pornography it affects decisions when an approached by strangers.

Parent [2] a male, said that:

“I link poverty with child defilement because when the background of the child is poor, he/she maybe predisposed to defilement through the relatives who take the advantage or the strangers within the community.”

This implies that poverty plays a great role in either eradicating or increasing the incidences of child defilement in the society.

Chief [4] aged 32 years, said that:

“Parents that make alcohol at home are predisposing their children to defilement because drunkards passing by can take advantage of the girls in the homestead, resulting in defilement.”

This implies that the kind of lifestyle the parents lead, may impact the children in their lives and hence child defilement.

Chief [1] a male, opined that:

“I associate poverty with child defilement because when a child's background is poor, he or she may be prone to defilement by relatives who take advantage of the situation or outsiders in the neighbourhood.”

These means that family’s position in the society in terms of finance can impact their fate because outsiders may take advantage of them.

4.7.1 Knowing the Perpetrator

The study intended to establish whether they know the perpetrator in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.36

Table 4.36: Knowing the Perpetrator

Knowing the Perpetrator	Frequency	Percent
Yes	66	94.3
No	4	5.7
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.36 above show that 66 (94.3%) of the respondents said yes, they knew the person who defiled them and 4(5.7%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents knew who defiled them.

In support of the above statements, Child [8] a girl aged 12 years, noted that:

“I know the perpetrator who defiled me but my parents are afraid of reporting him to the authorities because he has a high position in the government office in our community.”

This implies that poverty plays a great role in either eradicating or increasing the incidences of child defilement in the society. This further implies that peoples’ class in the community have acted as a shield from being prosecuted and hence perpetuating child defilement.

Parent [3] aged 38 years, noted that:

“The first teacher of the child is the parent. But, in the event that parent fails to dispense parental power and nurturing the child, the child may accept any information from other people who may take advantage of her and hence defiling her.”

This implies that dysfunctional family cannot fully protect and teach children in the required extent such that they do not fall a prey of child defilement.

In support of the above statement, Chief [3] a male, noted that:

“The level of education of parents has an impact on the rate of child defilement since illiteracy might lead to an increase in defilement cases because the illiterate is readily swayed by material goods.”

This implies that dysfunctional family cannot fully protect and teach children in the required extent such that they do not fall a prey of child defilement.

Parent [4] aged 38 years said that:

“Most the parents and guardians are ignorant on the rule of law on child defilement and this means they can go ahead and practice the child defilement without anyone being sued or an actin done for the same.”

This implies that ignorance of laws by the parents has impacted more in the incidences of child defilement.

Child [9] a girl aged 16 years, said that:

“I reported the incident to the area chief and an action was taken after the procedures were followed, the perpetrator was sued.”

This implies that the community has got civil and health education about child defilement matter.

Parent [24] aged 29 years, said that:

“We usually report the incidences to the respective authorities rather than taking the law by hands which may lead to bloodshed.”

This points out that there are some people in the community who are civilized and helps mitigate these cases in a more liberal way.

Chief [2] aged 40 years, said that:

“Most parents and guardians are unaware of the legislation regarding child defilement, which means they can engage in child defilement without fear of being sued or having an action taken against them.”

This implies that education of community about their rights affects them and hence child defilement.

In support of the above statements, Child [10] aged 15 years, opined that:

“On whether I should forgive the person who defiled me, I did forgive him but no action was taken to curb the defilement from going on, so he sometimes take advantage of me.”

This implies that ignorance of laws by the parents has impacted more in the incidences of child defilement.

Parent [5] a male, opined that:

“Parents who brew alcohol at their homes are predisposing their children to defilement because the drunkards who come around can takes advantage of the girls in that homestead and hence defilement.”

This implies that parents’ occupation has a great effect in the issue of child defilement. This has been one of the major issues to struggling families in rural areas.

Parent [6] a female, said that:

“The level of parents’ education affects the rate of child defilement since illiteracy can result to increase defilement cases since the illiterate are easily carried away when lured with material things.”

This implies that education and literacy have a part in mitigating the issue of child defilement in the community. In the modern society a high percentage of parents did not have the opportunity to be educated.

Parent [7] aged 37 years, said that:

“Yes, the illiterates are the at high risk of being defiled because they are likely to be from low economic status and they may bend so low to anything that they see may alleviate their problems.”

This implies that level of education is of great significance in curbing the issue of child defilement in the society.

Parent [8] aged 50 years, opined that:

“Yes, illiterates in the community are vulnerable to child defilement because they are ignorant and are idle too, they do not have a name to protect.”

This shows that literacy plays a role in eliminating cases of child defilement. High levels of illiteracy have increased the number of idle children in the community.

Parent [9] aged 38 years, said that:

“The illiterate is most likely to be idle since they have no jobs. They will engage in reckless alcohol drinking which might lead to defilement and more so, they usually have a mentality that they are going to bribe those in charge in the event that they are brought to justice about the defilement.”

This shows that literacy determines ones’ occupation which in turn affects his income and being busy hence reducing the cases of child defilement which also the reverse is true.

Parent [10] aged 40 years, opined that:

“Anyone can cause defilement either literate or illiterate, it is all about lust and it cuts across all classes of literate or illiterate, that means anyone can cause defilement, whether educated or not.”

This implies that literacy do not act as a barrier in whether one can or cannot defile a child.

In support of the above statements, Parent [25] aged 35 years, opined that:

“We have taken initiative of educating our girls on the dangers of engaging in early sex whether by own volition or forced, this has helped to curb the incidences of child defilement in my community.”

This implies that literacy do not act as a barrier in whether one can or cannot defile a child.

Parent [11] aged 30 years, said that:

“The illiterates are move vulnerable because they are even reluctant to report when it happens, they are aware of the rule of law that protects them against such acts and this perpetuates the child defilement in the community.”

This implies that there is a close relationship between literacy of someone and his ignorance too, such that if one cannot read law, he or she will know what is expected of him/her.

4.7.2 Related with the Perpetrator

The study also sought to find out whether they were related with the perpetrator in the area of Tharaka Nithi. The study results are presented in Table 4.37.

Table 4.37: Related with Perpetrator

Related with Perpetrator	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	31.4
No	48	68.6
Total	70	100

The results in the Table 4.37 above show that 22 (31.4%) of the respondents said yes, they were related with the person who defiled them and 48 (68.6%) said no. This implies that most of the respondents were not related with those who defiled them.

Parent [12] a male, noted that:

“In the event that the person who defiled the child is relative, the information is not easily said out, rather it is kept a secret as this may bring some shame to the family hence perpetuation of child defilement in my community.”

This means child defilement is perpetuated by someone trying not to taint his/her name, protection of ones' position in the society is prioritized.

Parent [13] a female, said that:

“Some of the parents take it a normal and right thing as long as the perpetrator promises to marry the child at the end of it all, this by great extent perpetuates the incidences of child defilement in my community.”

This implies that some of the parents see it as a normal thing, they equate it to marriage, a step into it for that matter which fuels child defilement.

Parent [14] aged 55 years, opined that:

“The act of mocking the one who has reported the case and hating, the next victim will fear to report because she fears being mocked or stigmatized in a way and hence encouraging the perpetrators to continue with the act.”

This means that someone’s reputation is guarded at the risk of someone’s health, for this case the child suffers as the perpetrator goes scot-free.

Parent [15] a male, noted that:

“The community still holds beliefs that having sex with a child heals STIs or HIV that is what traditional healers tell people, this perpetuates the similar act of child defilement in the community.”

This implies that most of the child defilements therefore, has been carried out in the name of superstitious ideas such as these in the community.

Parent [16] aged 33 years, said that:

“In the event where the offender has some authority or hold some position in the community or government, the issue is unlikely to be reported and this makes child defilement to continue in the community.”

This implies that there are some perpetrators who take advantage of their government positions to fulfil their lust and they are not held responsible.

Parent [17] a male, said that:

“Some of the people in the community hold a notion that those who walk half-necked wants sex or to be raped which by greater extent increase the rates of defilement in the community.”

This implies that education on code of dressing among the people in the community should be revised so that they do not someone for something else and else avoid child defilement.

Parent [18] a female, said that:

“The community feel that without evidence the police cannot believe such an incidence hence they fail to report when there no bruises and this basis leads to more and more incidences of child defilement being done.”

This implies that police should be aggressive in their way of accessing the victims, it should be wholistic and not narrow so as to accommodate such victims and thus reduce child defilement.

Parent [19] aged 40 years, opined that:

“Concealing boy child rape because community believes that men have to be strong no matter what, which perpetuates the incidences of child defilement in the community.”

This means that the cases of child defilement have been one-sided for a while and the other party, that is boys, is suffering because of that prevailing notion in the community.

Parent [20] aged 40 years, said that:

“Most of the parents in the community fail to report when a girl is defiled because the community feels a girl at puberty is ready for marriage therefore no need to report and this in turn, perpetuates the child defilement by great extent.”

This implies that child defilement in the community have been propagating through this notion which affects the victims by great extent.

Parent [21] aged 39 years, opined that:

“Community get information of the defilement via electronic devices for communication for example, the radios, Televisions, or any social platform forum like the Facebook page.”

This implies that one of the major and fastest ways of getting defilement news has been through social platforms in the community.

Parent [22] a male, said that:

“Whenever we have chief barazas, we are informed of the cases found or witnessed and that is where we decide on the decision or action on that incident.”

This implies that the meetings convened in the community play a role such as that one chief barazas and the incidences of child defilement is addressed.

Parent [23] a female, opined that:

“We have families in our community who have victims within them and so they have experience of child defilement incidences.”

This implies that defilement cases are not necessarily pegged on getting information as some families has the victims within their homesteads.

Parent [26] a female, said that:

“We have educated our girls wholistically, from dangers of living with strangers at home, to enticements by boda boda riders to engage in sex, these has kept them aware and literate, they are no longer ignorant of the issue.”

This shows that sex education has been given a high priority so as to address this menace of child defilement in the society.

In support of the above statements, Chief [5] a female, noted that:

“Parents who are illiterate are most likely to be idle since they have no jobs. They will engage in reckless alcohol drinking which influences their children and also, might lead to defilement and more so, they usually have a mentality that they are going to bribe those in charge in the event that they are brought to justice about the defilement.”

This shows that sex education has been given a high priority so as to address this menace of child defilement in the society.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion on the association between the independent and dependent variables as contained in the specific objectives of the study. Each of the subsequent sections has been subdivided according to the study objectives.

5.2 Contribution of Cultural Practices to Persistent Defilement Cases

The findings of objective one show that cultural practices tremendously impact the rate and extent of child defilement in the community. The study results showed that 67 (95.7%) respondents noted that circumcision for boys was carried out as a transition from childhood to adulthood. Parents [1] aged 40 said that: They have cultural practices, for example, circumcision, which often has led to child defilement because circumcision means the transition to adulthood. A variety of sexuality and rites of passage-related cultural behaviours are prevalent among both girls and boys in the community. Child [12], a boy, noted that the community's transition from childhood to adulthood gives them the freedom to have a girlfriend. So those who do not have girlfriends are tempted to defile young girls who are easily convinced to have sex. This implied that a wide range of cultural practices relating to sexuality and passage rites are common among girls and boys in the community. There are ceremonies that form part of the socialization and coming-of-age process. Examples include seclusion and initiation rites for girls and boys (to mark their passage to adulthood), which take place. This agrees with a study by Shah *et al.* (2019), who noted that cultural practices and norms impact children's lives and sometimes lead to defilement. However, the interviewed parents in this current study revealed that some parents are positive in their cultural ceremonies and utilize the moments to educate their children on good morals. Both girls and boys in the community share a variety of cultural rites of passage and sexuality rituals. The socialization and coming-of-age processes include ceremonies. Examples include the seclusion and initiation ceremonies performed for boys and females to signify their transition to adulthood.

The study findings revealed that 38.6% (32) of the respondents noted that the community practices FGM. Chief [2] indicated that they have cultural practices that often encourage child defilement, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), which encourages children to refuse to go to school as they get married. Parent [6], a male, further noted that cultural practices like FGM had not promoted good morals in children. The incidences of child defilement are

rampant in my community because, for instance, in the case of female genital mutilation, when girls are mutilated, they are taught about marriage and early marriage issues and are advised to give in to marriage. Parent [3], a female, concurred that FGM had prompted children to defy school and get married. The young girls undergoing F.G.M. have involved themselves in early sexual practices. This demonstrates that cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), as described in the preceding sample, lead to deterioration in behaviour and breed obstinacy, which may cause a kid to make poor decisions in her life, such as forgoing studies for an improper marriage. This shows that FGM is still practiced in the community. This cultural practice allows for the exposure of girls who, unknown to them, have already been defiled because some are married off at an early age. The current study findings concurred with the study by Akpoghome (2016), who posited that cultural practices impact child defilement in African communities and further pose a health danger to those under practices such as FGM. According to a parent interviewed, girls are more vulnerable to defilement than boys, even though most incidents are not reported to the appropriate authorities. Cultural norms against reporting defilement make it even more difficult to curb the same problem. That concurs with Katzenstein and Fontes (2017), who posited that there are cultural practices that have an impact and promote child defilement.

The results showed that 57.8% (48) of the respondents agreed that traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies have messages that encourage sexual activities, which can lead to child defilement. This implies that the songs sung during initiation ceremonies have sexual content, which has promoted child defilement. Parents [2], aged 30, opined that they have cultural practices like traditional songs that mostly promote a child's defilement. Traditional songs are accompanied by alcohol drinking and the use of some illicit drugs to stimulate the dancers. Songs are mostly sung at night with alcohol drinking, the lyrics of the songs can cause inebriated individuals to become agitated, and this can cause children defilement.

The current study findings revealed that elderly adults defile young children by taking advantage of their ignorance and the advantages of cultural customs, which perpetuates defiling behavior in the community. Boys usually inherit rights to property and other sorts of wealth legally, although women do not. Boys are also perceived as making greater financial contributions to the household. Because the male line carries the family name, boys' desire may also be influenced by family preservation. Practices prioritizing boys may cause boys who must

perform family responsibilities and protect their family's reputation in the community to endure enormous challenges. Due to their propensity to be married early, move away, and live with their husband's families, girls are simply not regarded in society as being a sensible investment for low-income families. Boys' preference has a hugely detrimental impact on the well-being of female children since they are frequently given better and more nourishing meals, more opportunities for school, and more free time for play. Because gender bias is linked to child defilement, many cultural practices identified in this study are entrenched. This is consistent with research by Novi (2020), which revealed that many people had used culture as a cover to molest young boys and girls in the community, increasing the instances of child defilement there.

As indicated by the Chief interviewed, children mostly fall victim to circumstances in cultural ceremonies followed by traditional songs and dances, which perpetuates the act of defilement. Many cultural practices do not consider adolescents children because of customs like initiation rituals and the belief that puberty marks the transition from childhood to womanhood. This also justifies early marriage. Some parents have been known to wed off their young daughters to older men to raise money for the girls' male siblings' college costs and other expenses. Early marriages, where parents marry off their young girls in exchange for livestock, are widespread in pastoral communities. The local economy heavily depends on these livestock trades for women and girls. This agrees with the study by Sanjeevi *et al.* (2018) that elucidated that cultural adherence impacts the sexual life of children, which in most cases, end up in defilement.

Parents [2] interviewed opined that perpetrators have been under the influence of alcohol or beer, which compromises their judgments during the ceremony, which leads to child defilement. Children are likely to suffer if there is a pattern of criminal behaviour and confrontations brought on by alcohol. Crime and violence are closely associated with alcoholism, defilement, and battering. Most fathers defile their daughters, and also many domestic violence cases involve a family member who is an alcoholic. Victims of child defilement often blame themselves for what has happened. Because they feel so guilty, ashamed, and helpless, they may turn to drink to escape from the pain. Often, Children of alcoholics, if mistreated, carry their problems into adult life. They may also have issues with family responsibility since their alcoholic parent was irresponsible and did not provide them with the basics of life as they grew up thinking that it contributed to their being defiled. The

current study findings concurred with the study by Warrior (2019), who posited that the culture of the surrounding community, to a great extent, influences child defilement. Efforts that have been employed at regional and social levels are not effectively deterred. The production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs and substances continue to be experienced. Even though there are measures such as legal registration and awareness of the dangers of drugs and substance abuse, the problem is still widespread in the community, which fuels child defilement by people under drug influence. This aligns with the study by Okafor (2020), who asserted that songs have the power to either sway people to engage in sexual behaviour, which may end up in defilement, or desist from the same act.

The study's current findings showed that 33.7% (28) of the respondents revealed that early child marriages are carried out in the community. Early child marriages encourage child defilement in the community. Despite early child marriages being socially sanctioned by the community and national laws, they still practice in secret. They usually occur within the child's family and with the parent's approval and are often (but not exclusively) promoted more strongly by communities in rural areas among low-income families. It is often part of a family's survival strategy to hold on to its identity and promote its cultural heritage in the face of change in a foreign or hostile environment. This concurs with the study by Washington and Kuo (2020), who noted that some codes and traditions promote early child marriage practices even if they are unlawful in the country.

Further, the current study's findings noted that children are taken as a source of wealth in the community, such that they are exchanged for marriage which ends up in defilement as they are given into marriage while they are still young. The community views marriage as an institution that legally and/or socially formalizes and sanctions sexual relations, reproduction, and child-rearing. There are also economic considerations for marriage: controlling inheritance, increasing family wealth through the exchange of goods and land, strengthening political alliances between families, and raising children who will contribute to the family income. Although many countries have laws that dictate the minimum age of marriage and the age of consent, customary law very often prevails in decisions over when girls and boys do, in fact, marry. Marriage of children and adolescents under the age of 18 is very common in many parts of the world, but it is difficult to assess the exact prevalence. Many of these early marriages are not registered and therefore are not included in national data. This tallies with the study by Acebo (2016) that noted that the notion that many parents have of their girl children being a

source of wealth is a leading factor to early marriages and further child defilement in the community.

According to a parent aged 30 interviewed in the study, ceremonies of weddings have a part in child defilement in the community, which has fuelled the incidences. In their society, children are a source of wealth, and girls are means of obtaining money, cows, goats, sheep, and camel or foodstuffs. Therefore, since the highest proportion of the bride price goes to the girl's parents, their parents marry off these girls when they are still young to old men who defile them due to their parents' need for material gains. Therefore, if a man defiled a girl before she married, he would be fined a goat, one cow, and two backcloths to give to the girl's father. This is in line with the study by Yowela (2016) that elucidated that child defilement is propelled by the cultures in the societies and family ritual practices that are upheld.

Along the same line, the results showed that 15 (21.4%) of the respondents agreed that they are allowed to be married once they have been initiated. It was revealed that boys frequently have formal inheritance rights to land and other types of wealth after initiations hence allowed to get married. Boys are also thought to contribute more financially to the family. Family preservation may also factor in boys' selection because the family name is passed down through the male line. It can be extremely difficult for boys to fulfil their family obligations and maintain the family's good reputation in the community when practices favour boys. Since girls' fate was to marry young, move away, and live with their husbands' families in the community, they were simply not seen as a worthy investment for low-income families. In light of the fact that boys are frequently provided with better and more nourishing food, more possibilities for schooling, and more free time for recreation, the preference for boys significantly negatively influences the well-being of girl children. This concurs with a study by Jamal (2016), who noted that boys are more valued than ladies; thus, girls are left vulnerable to anything that might come there, including defilement.

The study findings revealed that 15(21.4%) of the children agreed that they are allowed to marry once initiated. Initiation occurs during the adolescent stage when they are considered not to be children in society because of rituals like initiation rites and the belief that puberty marks the transition from childhood to womanhood. Some parents in the study area have been known to marry off their young daughters to older men not only to raise money for their male siblings' educational costs and other needs but also to quench their thirst for alcoholism. Parents frequently marry off their young daughters in return for livestock. These trades in cattle for

women and girls are essential to the local economy. This is in line with the study by Viola (2016), who noted that cultural practices threaten children's health and may sometimes lead to defilement.

5.3 Contribution of Economic Status on Persistent Defilement Cases

The findings of objective two revealed that a homestead's economic status greatly impacts child defilement in the community. The results showed that 47(67.1%) respondents have a father as a provider of basic needs. Parent [1], aged 30 years, noted that to a greater extent, the lack of economic resources has contributed to persistent defilement in my area because it brings about poverty, which exposes a child to being lured with money so that she can settle her needs. This is so because children lack basic needs and hence find themselves in the trap of accepting gifts from people who, in turn, ask them for sexual pleasure. As a result of living in inadequate and/or congested housing, children are exposed to molesters because low-income families are very vulnerable and lose their sense of identity and affiliation, exposing them to predators.

The fact that a family is in a state where they cannot provide the most basic needs opens a door and an opportunity for the opportunists who take advantage of any chance. Most people pretend to sympathize with the family because of their status and offer to give some aid which they do, but with ill motives that lead to children being defiled in their parents' absentia. When both parents must relocate for the family's food and other requirements, the other party enters and entices the children since they are impressionable and in desperate need of food. This perpetuates child defilement in the community to a great extent. This rhymes with the study by Ninsiima *et al.* (2020), who noted that the state of families' economic status hugely affects child defilement as children from low-income families may plunge to the wrong means of getting finances to cater to their daily needs.

Parent [2], a female, noted that economic status in my area had been a great cause of defilement because people without land to cultivate are idle hence having many chances of drinking alcohol which can lead to defilement. This demonstrates that child defilement is closely linked to a family's or homestead's economic position. Poverty, as illustrated here by a lack of land, contributes to the vulnerability of children to defilement. From interviewed girl aged 16, it was noted that child defilement is closely pegged to the economic status of a family or a homestead. Poverty, depicted here as a lack of land, contributes to children's vulnerability to defilement. Poverty may be hard to reverse due to its intergenerational and multi-faceted nature. It is characterized by people with no access to productive assets, education, health care, income,

food, decent housing, and clothes. The most frequently cited cause of households falling into poverty is poor health and accompanying costs, which opens the door for child defilement because those in this situation may try to find solutions that put their children at risk of being defiled. This aligns with the study by Shandro *et al.* (2016), who posited that a lack of financial resources in a family might plunge them into defilement as children are misled on how to get finances through alcohol or even prostitution.

From interviews, parents' poverty plays a crucial role in child defilement because it makes the children vulnerable. Entrenched in poverty, lack of education, and income-earning opportunities force the parents to allow their children or give them to able men in exchange for food. In low-income families, children miss school, the majority being girls who marry earlier or even start having sex to get their basic needs. Children from poor households, especially poor orphans, get involved in risky child labour where they are forced to trade in sex to supplement the money they get from their labour earnings. The current findings concurred with the study by Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2018), who posited that socio-economic background had rendered many preys to child defilement for quite a while.

Study findings further revealed that family standards and status hugely impact children, possibly predisposing them to defilement. Poverty is the leading cause of family separation, as married men migrate to urban areas for employment. The unavailability of jobs in urban areas creates idleness and frustration, forcing many to engage in anti-social activities. Sexual activities in urban areas become abundant, with the men targeting young boys and girls who are unknown to them, and they threaten them with secrecy or offer small gifts to silence the children. Poverty is associated with teenage pregnancy, as poor adolescents are at a higher risk of having babies than their non-poor peers. Earlier childbearing is associated with an increased risk of premature babies or babies with low birth weight, dropping out of school, and low future earning potential due to a lack of academic achievements. This agrees with the study by Musisi and Kinyanda (2020), who noted that poverty levels had pushed many families' lines to yield to anything that may generate income, which paves the way for child defilement.

Chief [2], age 40 years, opined that lack of financial resources has contributed to persistent defilement in my area to a greater extent since it produces poverty, which exposes a child to being lured with money to meet her fundamental needs. This is because youngsters are lured into accepting gifts from people who demand sexual pleasure. This indicates that financial capability correlates with the ease victims consent to or are pushed into defilement. Due to

poverty, a mother may request that her child lives with a neighbour, despite the child's vulnerability to child defilement, as the unrelated neighbour may turn to the child and defile them. Financial stability can significantly impact the state of child defilement in the community in one way or the other. There is a strong correlation between poverty and child defilement. Hence, child defilement has its roots in poverty. Poverty makes parents abandon their responsibility of providing for the need of their children. A parent can ask a girl to look for a capable person to handle her basic needs. Out of confusion, a girl may end up being defiled in return for money. Therefore, can poverty create a risk factor for child defilement in children who may be tempted to engage in child defilement for a financial awards? This is in line with the study by Boullier and Blair (2018), who noted that the economic stability of families might lead to defilement if they cannot cater to children's basic needs.

The chief interview noted that financial capability is pegged on the ease of victims allowing themselves or being forced into defilement. It was also noted that poverty is associated with poor housing problems such as substandard housing, homelessness, and housing crisis, low-income housing units, lack of enough space, central heating, sewer, and septic systems, and these houses are located in areas with high crime rates and high levels of pollution, concentrated areas of poverty and poor housing in urban areas. These are the places where child defilement is most rampant. In these areas, a mother may ask for her son or daughter`s accommodation in a neighbour`s house where the child is vulnerable to child defilement, as the unrelated neighbour may turn to the child and defile him or her. This is in line with the study by Syulikwa (2017), who noted that lack of financial support had plunged many low-income families and children from humble backgrounds into child defilement.

From an interviewed child, it was noted that lack of options, in terms of finance, greatly impairs the ability to withstand child defilement by the victims in the community. Children from broken families who are poor are left vulnerable, thus leaving them with no one to give them direction and shield them against defilers and other community members who may not have good intentions for them. Defiled children without parental support are often deprived materially and psychologically. Material aspects include sanitary towels, counselling services, and proper socialization. This leaves victims more predisposed to seeking support, due to their poverty, from those who have the means. Who, in turn, is likely to lure the children into illicit sex, using monetary and/or fall prey to defilers due to material baits? This agrees with the study by Omari

(2021), who noted that perpetrators defile many children through enticements, gifts, and promises in exchange for money.

Child [1], a girl aged 16, revealed that her parents are not well-off; both are unemployed and at times, they end up with someone so that they can cater for food and siblings or brew alcohol, for that matter. As noted by a parent interviewed living standards of people may make them bend so low and into desperation and thus yield to anything that may come their way to alleviate the situation. In low-income countries, poverty is another economic factor associated with malnutrition, hazardous housing and working conditions, unsafe water and sanitation, and lack of access to Medicare. Economic status is associated with higher rates of health risk behaviours such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and being physically inactive. The lower-class members are subjected to the most stress and have the fewest resources to cope with it. Poverty is linked to stress which may lead to substance abuse and child defilement; this substance abuse is a health problem that places an enormous burden on every society, harming health, family life, the economy, and public safety. This concurs with the study by Uzodike (2018), who noted that the state of livelihood in terms of financial stability affects the rate at which they yield to child defilement.

Chief [5], aged 45 years, indicated that many of my community members suffer from poverty, making them rush for any quick money scheme to alleviate the problem, often resulting in the defilement of children in my community. Quick money schemes have pushed many children into defilement in the hope of getting a better source of income which, in turn, increases the incidences of child defilement in the community. Unemployment is also a risk factor for child and spousal abuse and marital instability in families. When an adult is unemployed, other family members are often compelled to work more hours to keep the family afloat, and unemployed non-custodial parents, usually fathers, fall behind on their children's support payments. Unemployment is a risk factor for homelessness, substance abuse, and crime. Some unemployed individuals turn to illegitimate criminal sources of income, such as theft, drug dealing, prostitution, and, further, defiling children. The current study findings agreed with the study done by Andiemma (2019), who elucidated that socio-economic background greatly influences child defilement in the community.

Child [2], aged 13 years, opined that Bodaboda rider usually takes advantage of young children because they cannot afford to pay for their fare to and from school; their parents cannot pay their school fees and fare. The inability of some parents and/or guardians to provide for their

children rendered these children vulnerable and susceptible to influence by child molesters through the presents of money, food, clothing, and ornaments. The Chief interviewer noted that children are defiled because of their inability to provide for themselves. The majority of the girls were defiled due to poverty in their households. Causes of adolescents abandoning school and seeking employment as house help led to most of them being defiled by husbands or sons of their bosses. Such cases are usually kept secret, and the adolescents are threatened to silence. This is in line with the study by Wrigley-Asante *et al.* (2016), who noted that poverty levels highly propel child defilement in families in societies as they can push children to other levels as they try to cater to their basic needs in the event that their parents are not in a position to meet all their wants.

Parent [4], aged 50 years, indicated that poverty is caused by one major factor, which is the lack of sufficient economic resources, which exposes children to the danger of accepting money or gifts for sex by older people; for instance, they give sex for food and shelter which already is a defilement to children. This demonstrates that poverty is a significant factor in incidents of child defilement in the community. Poverty is a significant factor in child defilement because it makes youngsters vulnerable. Parents are compelled to surrender their children to able men in exchange for food because of entrenched poverty, lack of education, and lack of income-earning options. The current study findings revealed that children are easily swayed because of their incapability to meet their needs. Furthermore, some parents and/or guardians were unable to provide for their children, leaving the latter vulnerable and hence likely to be influenced by child defilers through gifts, such as money, food, clothing, and ornaments. Due to socio-economic factors, some families have found themselves unable to provide their children with basic needs, especially food. Due to peer pressure and love for fashions, especially clothing, some adolescents have exposed themselves to perpetrators of defilement, including the boda-boda riders who entice them with cheap things. Further, lack of adequate shelter has been associated with child defilement cases. This agrees with the study by Atebo (2016), who noted that child abuse is extensively propagated by boda-boda riders or cyclists who take advantage of children's innocence and their state of need for money.

From interviewed children, it was found that parents' decision about their children generating income affects their health as they are defiled frequently. Ordinarily, defiled children end up devastated, especially in circumstances where their parents or guardians are not in a position to meet their basic needs, including emotional necessities such as counselling and parental

advice. Their basic needs were food, clothing, school fees, adequate shelter, parental or caregiver protection, and other requirements. This concurs with the study by Habib (2020), who noted that a family's economic status might pose a challenge to children who may end up in defilement as they try to get themselves out of poverty in their families.

According to the chief interview, parents' incapability to provide for children can end up in them being taken advantage of by their relatives. On the issue of landlessness, which leads to poverty, congested overcrowded slums increase the chances of lawlessness, such as child defilement incidences. Furthermore, poverty causes families to be largely vulnerable and to lose their sense of identity and attachment, thereby exposing children to defilers as people live in inadequate and/or congested housing. Important also to note is the fact that poverty and unemployment were two twin evils that exposed entire families to the exploitation of all kinds, from economic to sexual ones. This rhymes with the study by Njuguna and Muchanje (2019), who noted that socio-economic background influences child defilement in society.

5.4 Contribution of Family Structure on Persistent Defilement Cases

This current study findings of objective three established that structure of a family can be a stepping stone or stumbling block in curbing child defilement problem in the community. Parent [1] aged 40 years, indicated that the structure of a family is a great determinant as to whether there is defilement because, controlling the children alone is not easy just one parent finds it hard to multitask finding money and always be there for the children for advices. They do not listen to advices; they are stubborn and this makes them to be driven by any wind of advices which can end up in them being defiled.

The structure of a family forms the basis of protection to a child and as a result of multitasking by the parent there is less time spend by the parents with their children. Absenteeism because of work makes the single parent unable to monitor and mentor their children generally putting children at risk. Most offenders become aware of the period they can go and look for these children and abuse them. Children can thereby engage in incidents such as dressing and go out to attract men putting themselves at risk of being defiled. This concurs with the study by Bridgewater (2016) who noted that most incidences of child defilement are rooted in the structure of the family as they set a tone for either its prevalence or it being curbed in the society.

The current study findings revealed that family structure is a great factor that brings about child defilement in the community. This is a single parent working hard to provide for his or her family. This state of single parenting makes it hard for the child to seek an advice from the parent since the parent had no sufficient time to discuss with her/his children on sexual topics. In other situations, the parent becomes harsh to the child because of pressure to meet the needs of the family. These children thereby seek advice from outside parties including their friends. They are therefore influenced by their friends and get exposed to misuse of friends. These friends who are in this act of smoking in turn, poses high risk to them of being defiled. Because of advice from their peers, children attend parties and travel the rest of the world without the parent being aware. These makes child defilement incidence occur among these innocent children. This aligns with the study by Sampson (2017) who noted that the family structure has a direct impact to children which may work to their advantage of disadvantage where they are defiled by those who mislead them through wrong advices.

The chief interviewed in this current study noted that family structure is a great factor in child defilement incidences and in cases where family is dysfunctional, where the father is the only breadwinner of the family, a child lacks support financially and physically. The reason behind sex for food by these children is because they lack financial support and advise from both parents. Other kids start showing more interest in going on dates, taking snaps of themselves to share with their peers, and posting those pictures on social networking sites. Others becomes excited in hooking up and they end up hooking up in private places that creates a room for these children to be defiled. This puts children under pressure on sex after a man takes her out for dinner or a trip. Men even demand that they have trip. Men trap children's firm stand against sex because of them being precious gifts by men. Because the father fails to advise and support, the child is not permitted in getting a proper education. This agrees with the study by Okoth (2017) who noted that where there is good family structure, there is less incidences of child defilement in the society as children are well taught and guided.

A parent interviewed indicated that dysfunctional family can lead to incidents of child defilement because the parent's moral support or lack thereof causes the child's emotional and physical development to stagnate. Because of lack of basic needs children face impossible choices in their daily living. A single parent finds it hard in taking care of the child and the next choice is to get someone to cater for the needs. The defiling of children includes anything from sex for food to forced marriage, and girls are pushed to make difficult choices in order to meet

their necessities. This is in harmony with the study by Hsieh *et al.* (2021) who elucidated that dysfunctional families are prone to child defilement as there is lack of unity in such kind of families.

Further, one of the interviewed parents revealed that when there is unity and harmony in the family, the incidences of child defilement are rare. Setting good example to children involves having a frank and an open conversation with the children. Being willing to let them think and letting them be aware of your feelings makes children to be open with parents. Cases of defilement are thereby rare because children take advises from parents and seek necessary help because of the good relation. This concurs with the study by Mulenga and Mukaba (2018) who noted that when their educative instructions from parents to kids, the cases of defilement will be unheard of and also, when parents set a good example, they will nurture their kids well and thus they will not yield to any form of defilement easily.

Further, it was found out in this study that harmony and unity in the family is a great indicator as to whether the incidences of child defilement are being reduced or on contrary it is being perpetuated. Divorced parents mainly leave their children at the hands of mercy perpetrators. Children become defiled by their step fathers because the father considers that there is no direct relationship with the child. Most children become lucky to be rescued and placed in children's home while others flee far away to towns to become street children. This therefore imply that unity and love in the family greatly influences defilement among children. This concurs with the study by Akonor and Okorley (2021) that posited that divorce in the families leads to children being defiled as they have no one to guide them appropriately as the support from both parents is compromised through divorce.

Parent [3] male, aged 40 years, noted that: "since I am solemnly the provider it is difficult for me to meet all the financial needs, just by myself, I find it hard to multitask finding money and always be there for the children for advices which predisposes them to stray advices which might end up in child defilement." Leaving children alone makes them unsupervised in their activities. They thereby often exhibit loneliness, stress and high level of boredom. These children are left at a greater risk of being victims by strangers and friends. Leaving children alone at home therefore makes them vulnerable to defilement because of their easier access. This agrees with the study by Harman *et al.* (2021) who elucidated that when there are negatives dynamics in the family such as poor alienations by parents, children may be taken advantage of by perpetrators and get defiled in that event.

Further, from interviewed parents the study found out that the issue of caring for children at home is a great determinant in curbing the incidences of child defilement in the community. The relatives for example uncles when left alone with children of their family they take advantage of the opportunity and make sexual advances towards them. Because the child is aware that the parent gave responsibility to their relatives, children find it hard in reporting the case to parents. Children born out of wedlock are mostly defiled by relatives with their parents shying away from the incidence. This case shows how important it is for parents to play a role in defilement by excluding other parties in bringing up children. This concurs with the study by Deche (2019) who posited that child defilement is in other instances done by close relatives of the victims who in turn suffer in silence.

It was further found out from the current study that most of the incidences of child defilement is on girls and not boys as they are the ones who predisposed by great percentage. From the content of defilement, a greater point is that defilement occurs in situations where a person commits offense with a child 18 years. Men who tend to have money attract school children to stay with them in the name of love. After a period of time children are abandoned despite them trying to build a future. The current study findings concurred with the study done by Solomon (2021) who posited that family structure is a core in determining the fate and behaviour of children which may lead them child defilement or make them sober and not fall a prey of the same.

The chief interviewed revealed that family has an effect on children defilement because parents act as support and security. Married families mainly rely on making decisions which is made by husband and wife. Divorce leads to a family breakup and rejection of love within family environment. Divorce makes children undecided because of lack of love and directions in life. When family love is broken, fragmentation of the family leads to defilement because children have poor decisions and advise to implement. This matches with the study by Odero (2020) who noted that the structure of a family has an impact to children as it can open ways for the perpetrators to fulfil their lust or on the other hand, act as a shield to children from being defiled.

The current study findings revealed that upbringing of a child has an impact in children's life and one parent cannot fully deliver it which may end up making child vulnerable for the defilement. Breeze of decisions is directly proportional to adverse effects to a child. At the adolescents age children are greatly influenced by emotions. They become stubborn and because of lack of advice and supervision by the parent children experience behavioural issues

in adolescence. Because of lack of awareness by parents' children make bad decisions falling into victims of defilement. This aligns with the study by Makumba Salim (2018) who noted that the structure of a family plays a significant role in tendencies of child defilement in the families and society at large.

From interviewed chief it was found out that 'come we stay marriages' are majorly appreciated by abusive men. Boys also forms a percentage that has been omitted in defilement. They are severally sexually abused by their relatives including aunts and house helps at their young age. Children at young age experience conjugal abuse with most of them using verbal and physical aggression. The relationship adversely affects how they relate with women at their young age making them sexually harassed. This rhymes with the study done by Mwangi *et al.* (2018) who noted that boys also suffer in equal measure as girls as they are also defiled and so boys' grievances should be addressed as well.

Further, the chief noted that moral judgement of children is weak and is whole dependent on their parents which if not guided, will lead to child defilement by them yielding to such. Neglect by parents has led to erosion of moral values by the young children in the society. Defilement has affected children due to lack of moral support physically and mentally which has led the education, counselling and food in exchange for abuse. This concurs with the study by Mugo (2019) who noted that children need support for them to be protected from defilement from the perpetrators.

The current study findings revealed that parents should be there for children's support and provision of basic needs in order to mitigate the child defilement incidences. Mainly in most family's fathers who are away are frustrated by mistakes made by incidences. Mainly of offering morals instructions these innocent children are mistreated. Conflict over children results to blows in marriages and as a result children tend to have depression making them to go for options that leads to defilement. The current study findings concurred with the study done by Ngovi (2020) who noted that family structure acts as a basis for moral guidance for all the household.

It was further revealed in the current study that family stability affects the peace and reasoning ability of a child so that he/she does not fall a prey for defilement. It is advisable that biological parents perfectly fit in raising children. Separation causes changing of partners either a mother or a father. This causes structural reorganization of family duties leading to conflicts with

children. Unexpected expectations from parents results to poor communication with children leading to defilement. This agrees with the study by Abiodun *et al.* (2020) who posited that divorce or family disintegration leads increases the chances of child defilement as the child has no full protection and guidance from the parents.

The current study findings noted that desperation of children because of their status as orphans, can lead them fall for anything that comes their way. Relatives who commit to take of orphans tend to take advantage of children. For instance, those single relatives provide everything to orphans and because there is no one responsible they sexually harassed young children. This concurs with the study by Wangamati *et al.* (2018) who noted that orphans are more vulnerable to defilement because there no one to rush to their defence, and so they suffer in quietude.

From the interviewed parents it was revealed that parenting affects the lifestyle that child leads which may affect child being defiled. The current study agreed with the study done by Mutavi *et al.*, (2016) that family structure has an impact on child defilement in the society. House helps who are men exploit young girls because parent do not take their time in wisely choosing house helps with good moral values. Children are thereby left with unsafe hand with the effect being early pregnancies.

5.5 Contribution of Community Response on Persistent Defilement Cases

This current study findings of objective four showed that social media plays a great role in predisposing children to child defilement through adult content therein. Parent [1] a male aged 47, opined that *“The leading factor that predispose children to child defilement is pornography as they try to emulate that which they have watched, which may end up in one child defiling another child.”* Access to pornography impacts a child behaviour and mentality. Once a child is a victim of pornography it affects decisions when approached by strangers. They fall to be victims of defilement because of emotional decisions made after watching pornography at a young age. They fall to be victims of defilement because of emotional decisions made after watching pornography at a young age. This aligns with the study by Omari (2021) who noted that the increasing numbers of child defilement is greatly related to social media platforms that promotes the content and triggers sexual desires by the perpetrators.

Parent [2] a male, noted that: *“I link poverty with child defilement because when the background of the child is poor, he/she maybe predisposed to defilement through the relatives who take the advantage or the strangers within the community.”* The interviewed chief posits

that poverty plays a great role in either eradicating or increasing the incidences of child defilement in the society. In different dimensions poverty causes defilement in children at younger ages. In this case, considering a poor child who has been working hard in school progresses and attains a level like secondary level. This child excels and joins a bigger school and because poverty is dominating in the child's family, the child decides to find a sponsor or a supporting relative making them being defiled in exchange for finances. This agrees with the study by Lippard and Nemeroff (2020) who noted that child defilement is highly fuelled by state of family's economic status, when there is poverty, there is likelihood of kids being left to defilement.

Chief [3] a male, noted that: *“The level of education of parents has an impact on the rate of child defilement since illiteracy might lead to an increase in defilement cases because the illiterate is readily swayed by material goods.”* This implies that dysfunctional family cannot fully protect and teach children in the required extent such that they do not fall a prey of child defilement. Dysfunctional family cannot fully protect and teach children in the required extent such that they do not fall a prey of child defilement as noted by one of interviewed parent in the study. Lack of acquired knowledge and guidance in daily live by the parent enables the child to be swayed easily with decisions. A child will decide to attend a party or leave home for travel dates without awareness on the effect or without the parent's permission. Ignorance as a result by the parent cause a child to be defiled by those providing advises. This is in concord with the study by Renzaho *et al.* (2018) who posited that state of family and its stands, principles, greatly impact child defilement in the community.

Parent [4] aged 38 years revealed that: *“most the parents and guardians are ignorant on the rule of law on child defilement and this means they can go ahead and practice the child defilement without anyone being sued or an actin done for the same.”* This implies that ignorance of laws by the parents has impacted more in the incidences of child defilement. This has led defilement dominate at homes because the law has failed to stretch further to parents at home. Ignoring the rule of law has largely supported defilement because other parents find it okey with their children being defiled and as a result they fail to report the issue to the authority. However, those parents with money fail to face the law because of the power of money and in many cases, they are bailed out. This aligns with the study by Sitati (2016) who posited that law and its knowledge plays a significant role in curbing child defilement, and therefore its ignorance may bring negative consequences.

Parent [5] a male, opined that: *“Parents who brew alcohol at their homes are predisposing their children to defilement because the drunkards who come around can take advantage of the girls in that homestead and hence defilement.”* This implies that parents’ occupation has a great effect in the issue of child defilement. This has been one of the major issues to struggling families in rural areas. This has been one of the major issues to struggling families in rural areas. Most parents brew alcohol and provide them authority for young girls to drop out of school and sell alcohol. Drunkards take advantage of engaging these children in prostitution for the purpose of generating money. Children become used to this behaviour and in the end their life’s become miserable because of the results caused by defilement. This concurs with the study by Lawson *et al.* (2018) who elucidated that occupation of a parent has an impact on child defilement as parents interact more with their children and the perpetrators may take advantage in that event.

Parent [6] a female, noted that: *“The level of parents’ education affects the rate of child defilement since illiteracy can result to increase defilement cases since the illiterate are easily carried away when lured with material things.”* This implies that education and literacy have a part in mitigating the issue of child defilement in the community. In the modern society a high percentage of parents did not have the opportunity to be educated. In the modern society a high percentage of parents did not have the opportunity to be educated. These parents therefore have the perception of village mentality of instance, marrying children at young age. Decisions made by parents thereby generally affects these innocent children with the village chiefs failing to act. In the end the children are defiled because decisions made by their parents is because of lack of lack of education. This is in line with the study by Benedicto (2018) who noted that community education of children about sex is important in curbing defilement in the society.

Parent [7] aged 37 years, said that: *“Yes, the illiterates are the at high risk of being defiled because they are likely to be from low economic status and they may bend so low to anything that they see may alleviate their problems.”* This implies that level of education is of great significance in curbing the issue of child defilement in the society. Further chief interviewed revealed that level of education is of great significance in curbing the issue of child defilement in the society. Most of the children are considered to be uneducated and this creates lack of knowledge on awareness of defilement. Illiteracy therefore affects these children because they take anything in exchange for sex which they view it to be right because of lack of knowledge on things happening in the society. This concurs with the study by Otieno *et al.* (2018) who

noted that children's literacy level matters to curbing of child defilement as uneducated ones maybe taken advantage of.

It was further found out in the current study that literacy plays a role in eliminating cases of child defilement. High levels of illiteracy have increased the number of idle children in the community. Most children become social workers in the community at early age and they become ignorant about being educated in life and the importance of education in childhood development. They therefore become more vulnerable to defilement because they are considered to be cheap. This is line with study by Ada and Anyaogu (2016) who noted that many incidences and cases of child defilement is related with the state of someone's literacy levels.

The current study, furthermore, revealed that literacy determines one's occupation, which in turn affects income and being busy hence reducing the cases of child defilement also, the reverse is true. Idleness creates more time to focus on drinking alcohol for fun. This influences the young daily because they struggle daily to get little money to purchase alcohol. As a result, recklessness makes this child be defiled by those taking and selling alcohol. This concurs with the study by Aina-Pelemo (2021), who noted that the literacy levels of people and the community would greatly determine the prevalence of child defilement in society. Literacy does not act as a barrier in whether one can or cannot defile a child. Because those considered those people working to earn money and are educated, they approach young girls because they believe their knowledge is insufficient enough to understand the dynamics of defilement in the community. Both people who are educated and those not educated tend to defile a young child for lust. This concurs with the study by Gulere and Zeleke (2017), who denoted that literacy levels do not hinder perpetrators from defiling the child as it is a form of lust and sexual fulfilment.

It was further noted in the current study that there is a close relationship between the literacy of someone and his ignorance, too, such that if one cannot read the law, they will know what is expected of them. The illiterate is more targeted because, in rural areas, defilement cases are solved traditionally, going against the rule of law. Children, therefore, are denied the right and freedom to access justice because of illiteracy in society. This agrees with the study by Mepukori (2016), who noted that illiteracy in the community is one of the leading causes of child defilement.

The interviewed chief noted that child defilement is perpetuated by someone trying not to taint their name, and protecting one's position in society is prioritized. Family members' voices are always prioritized in different cases, and family members find it hard to share issues that will bring shame to the family. Relatives defile the children of their families in exchange for providing, and when these issues arise, the family keeps it a secret because of shame. The child is thereby victimized in defilement, suffering emotionally and physically. This aligns with the study by Chitundu *et al.* (2018), who noted that most of the defilement is usually done by close relatives of the victims, which, in many instances, is hidden from being because of shame in the community.

The parent interviewed revealed that children get pregnant at a young age in certain areas where the authority is not strict. As a result of escaping the rule of law, the perpetrator promises to marry the child. The child's education life is interrupted, and when it comes to future consideration, the child is betrayed and left out of suffering. This shows how child defilement has been rampant in society. This is in line with the study by Mulumeoderhwa (2016), who noted that parents sometimes yield their children to defilement by the perpetrator simply because he promised to marry their girl.

In addition, one of the interviewed parents indicated that someone's reputation is guarded at the risk of someone's health; for in this case, the child suffers as the perpetrator goes scot-free. The ones who report defilement cases are considered bad people in society because of their goodwill. Volunteers are mocked, and when reporting defilement cases, some are beaten by reporting to the authority. Many people have the fear to come forward and report these cases because they will be hated in the community. This concurs with the study by Mutavi *et al.* (2016), who observed that many victims of defilement suffer from stigma, which tends to lower the reporting of the perpetrators of child defilement.

The current study findings revealed that most child defilements had been carried out in the name of superstitious ideas such as these in the community. Defilements have occurred because of myths and misconceptions by the young generation in the community. The misconceptions like having sex with a child cure disease make children in traditional society be defiled with the help of old men who should be vital in fighting defilement. This is in line with the study by Mbonye *et al.* (2016), who noted that there are perpetrators in society who, having suffered from HIV or STI, thought that having sex with a child would bring a faster healing process to them.

One of the victims of defilement in the current study noted that some perpetrators take advantage of their government positions to fulfil their lust and are not held responsible. The authority power and the connection other people have in the government create room for defilement. For instance, a government official who causes defilement to a young child will evade facing the law because they are above the law. Child defilement cases are therefore thrown out of court and not considered a concern. This rhymes with the study by Suyantov *et al.* (2019), who posited that there are perpetrators who defile children, knowing that their positions in the government will shield them from being prosecuted in a court of law.

Chief interview posits that education on the code of dressing among the community's people should be revised to avoid child defilement. The choice of wearing short dresses has increased the risk of defilement in society. Young children who wear short dresses sexually attract defilers, and because other girls deny association with other men, it leads to anger. Anger causes men to approach young girls, force them into sex with others, and even rape them. This concurs with the study by Chirwa (2016), who posited that in some instances, girls dress provocatively, tempting men to have sex with them, which ends up in the defilement of the children.

One of the parents noted that police should be aggressive in accessing the victims; it should be holistic and not narrow to accommodate such victims and thus reduce child defilement. To some extent, family of a defiled child fear reporting the case to the authority because a child might fail to provide evidence. Other parents fear that they might be fined because of being defeated in cases at the court of the accused. However, even if the police are not involved, the community finds it difficult to fight for justice because evidence might be insufficient. This agrees with the study by Powell and Henry (2018), who posited that police have different ways of curbing offences, which sometimes may not favour reducing the cases of child defilement in the community.

The cases of child defilement have been one-sided for a while, and the other party, the boys, is suffering because of that prevailing notion in the community, as noted by one of the parents interviewed. Boys have entirely been eliminated from the community because it is known that men are the ones causing defilement. Ignorance of a boychild also makes young boys victims of defilement because women who have money take advantage of these young boys in exchange for money. Because of that, a girl child has been mostly attended to, leaving young boys to defilement in society. This concurs with the study by Amo-Adjei (2022), who

elucidated that boys have been side-lined and girls' issues have been attended to more, leading to boys being tallies defiled in silence.

The parent interviewed noted that child defilement in the community has been propagating through this notion which affects the victims to a great extent. Mostly, children in puberty are considered to be ready for marriage. A girl is defiled through the involvement of marriage at an early age because puberty shows she is enough to be a mother because of her appearance. Parents in society appreciate these marriages because they obtain dowry, and to a greater extent, a child is affected. This concurs with the study by Sarfo *et al.* (2022), who posited that lots of communities have a different view when it comes to children's puberty, and many deem it as being preparedness for marriage which in turn propagates child defilement.

Chief indicated that one of the major and fastest ways of getting defilement news has been through social platforms in the community. There is an effort that should be made to fight defilement. Enabling internet access in remote areas, campaigns against defilement, and educating the public through mass media will help create awareness for people in rural areas. This aligns with the study by Wangamati *et al.* (2018), who posited that one of the major leading factors in the increase in child defilement is social media platforms that portray such incidences, which sometimes promote instead of curbing them.

The study found that meetings convened in the community play a role, such as that one chief barazas, and the incidences of child defilement are addressed. The unity of community stakeholders acts as a pillar in controlling and reducing defilement issues. Chief barazas become the authority, and they have permission to punish people defiling children. If chief barazas are in unity with outside parties like police officers, then defilement cases will be less. Defilement cases are not necessarily pegged on getting information, as some families have the victims within their homesteads. Some families tend to have more knowledge because of the defilement that ever happened to their children. Many children have been exposed to health risks issues due to depression because parents view them as victims of defilement. This concurs with the study by Ngira (2019), who noted that personnel ensure that child defilement is kept at bay through the chief barazas and such kinds of meetings in the community.

The current study revealed that there are some people in the community who are civilized and help mitigate defilement cases more liberally. As a result, these people promote defilement with the intention of solving cases liberally. People in the community, therefore, are not afraid

of harassing the young sexually because law consequences are absent. Instead, it has led a lot of children to face mental health problems or disabilities because the law does not solve defilement. This aligns with the study by Currie (2019), who posited that instituting laws that govern and keep child defilement in the community in check is significant in efforts to curb that problem.

The current study findings further revealed that girl-child education, more so in their health, plays a significant role in curbing child defilement such that they can defend themselves when cornered by the perpetrators. Education has enhanced life skills, including social skills training, providing life, and ensuring that children get educated. This has helped improve the knowledge about defilement's effects and the benefits of rights before the law. This concurs with the study by Olaniyi and Akinyemi (2020), who posited that an educated girl child has a high chance of resisting any kind of allurements that may come her way and pose some dangers to her in the form of defilement; hence education is very crucial in the curbing defilement.

One of the parents interviewed revealed that sex education had been prioritized to address this menace of child defilement in society. The importance of sex education is that it has provided the key to preventing sexual abuse against young children, harassment, and exploitation. It has extended to providing essential information about reproduction and risk issues associated with sex. The current study agreed with the study done by Ileri (2018), who pointed out that the community has a role in shaping the children and, in turn, families in terms of their characters which aids in mitigating child defilement and other kinds of defilements in the community.

In addition, the study findings indicated that a family's position in society in terms of finance could impact their fate because outsiders may take advantage of them. Children become victims of school dropouts, and they encounter difficulties in looking for jobs. This impacts great opportunities that can be accessed in the future. Children fall at high risk of victimization later by perpetrators pretending to provide financially, affecting the upcoming generations. This tallies with the study by Wu and Xu (2020), who noted that a family's stability in terms of finance has an impact on the likelihood of child defilement occurring in those kinds of families or not.

The chief noted that the community's education about their rights affects them, hence child defilement. In a more extensive view, most people in the community lack knowledge about the law. This can be a result that most of the parents never attended school. Therefore, they lack

knowledge about the impacts of child defilement and more about the law. This has made people in society commit defilement with the awareness that they cannot be judged according to the law. This agrees with the study done by Bilson *et al.* (2018), who noted that education of the community on legislations placed against child defilement helps in curbing and reducing child defilement incidences in the community. Education has a place in society for scrubbing some of the notions they get from outsiders, mitigating child defilement. In a community where most parents are educated, the defilement cases are less. This is because education is an important tool to help society be educated about broad topics related to defilement. This rhymes with the study by Mangeya (2018), who noted that education is a key determinant of curbing child defilement, especially sex education for both children and parents.

According to interviewed parents, the kind of lifestyle the parents lead may impact the children in their lives and hence child defilement. Drunkards bully and also causes social harm to children due to other children being unromantic or refusing to engage in sex to an extent. It causes violence among young children because of social assault with the use of weapons and others involving gangs to harass children. Parents take alcohol lead as a bad example because children follow the footsteps of their guardians, therefore, affecting the whole family. This concurs with the study by Basu and Banerjee (2020) posited that the kind of environment a child is brought up in predisposes them to defilement, for example, an alcohol brewing environment.

It was noted from the current study findings that illiterate parents are most likely to suffer more from child defilement in their families because they are not on the know-how. Illiteracy leads to a lack of comprehension of issues revolving around the current world, one of them being defilement. A high level of illiteracy promotes defilement by a significant percentage because society is unaware of the effects of defilement on a young child. This concurs with the study done by Wangamati *et al.* (2021), who noted that the community has a part in developing children's character and mitigating child defilement. People's class in the community has acted as a shield from prosecution, hence perpetuating child defilement. A different class has created a gap between the poor and the rich. People with a high class have promoted defilement because they consider it cheaper to convince a young child with money. Because of class differences, poor parents fear reporting the case to courts and police officers because the power of money speaks for them. This agrees with the study by Alessi *et al.* (2016), who pointed out that child defilement is still witnessed in the current society because they are hidden and never reported

to relevant authorities because of the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

The interviewed parent noted that the community had got civil and health education about child defilement matters. Chiefs and assistant chiefs have greatly helped to provide justice to innocent children and families because of their authoritative power in making decisions. Perpetrators, therefore, face the law with the help of chiefs in the community. Chiefs collaborate with police officers to conduct arrests; therefore, their efforts have reduced defilement cases and provided for justice. This concurs with the study by Mathews *et al.* (2018), who posited that there are stipulated civil laws that guardsguard' children against defilement; this shows that they are well informed about the dangers of child defilement in the community.

The chief indicated that there are some loopholes in the community where justice is not fully done, perpetuating children's defilement. Defilers become aware that through negotiations, they still obtain the freedom to defile a young child because the law is not involved after forgiving. This shows how decisions made in society appreciate defilement affecting the child. The current study findings concurred with the study by Ileri (2018), who elucidated that community has a role in educating children on sexual education so as to reduce child defilement in the community.

The community response has influenced persistent defilement cases in a number of ways. When communities are aware of defilement, they are more likely to report it to the authorities. This can help identify and prosecute perpetrators and serve as a deterrent to others who might consider committing such an act. When communities support victims of defilement, it can help them heal from the trauma they have experienced. This support can come in many forms, such as providing counselling, financial assistance, or simply being there to listen. When communities change their attitudes and beliefs about defilement, it can create a more supportive environment for victims and make it more difficult for perpetrators to get away with their crimes. This can be done through education and awareness campaigns and by challenging traditional beliefs that support violence against women and children.

Caregivers' responses to defilement can have an impact on the psychosocial outcomes of defiled children. Caregivers who provided emotional support and believed and validated the child's experience positively impacted the child's recovery.

Community health workers (CHWs) can play a role in sexual violence services. CHWs can provide support services to survivors of sexual violence, including counselling, referrals, and follow-up care.

Community-level characteristics can influence rates of child sexual assault. Communities with higher levels of social disorganization and lower social control were found to have higher rates of child sexual assault.

The community's ability and willingness to report cases involving relatives and close acquaintances can impact the prevalence of child sexual abuse. Communities with a higher level of community orientation toward child sexual abuse had a lower prevalence of child sexual abuse.

Community influence can be a factor in why children get little schooling. Communities with negative attitudes toward schooling had a lower level of schooling for children, even after controlling for poverty, unemployment, and other factors.

Community response can have a significant impact on persistent defilement cases. Changes need to be sustainable so that child sexual abuse and exploitation are comprehensively addressed by the government, communities, and relevant services.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter contains conclusion based on the findings and recommendations arising from the findings.

6.2 Conclusions of the Study

This section presents empirical and theoretical conclusions of the findings of this study.

6.2.1 Empirical Conclusions

The study concluded that cultural practices tremendously impact the rate and extent of child defilement in the community. A wide range of cultural practices relating to sexuality and rites of passage are common among both girls and boys in the community. There are ceremonies that form part of the socialization and coming-of-age process.

Traditional songs have a moving power and, in the end, lead people into child defilement. Drug and substance abuse is challenging, with its effects more felt in society. Efforts that have been employed at regional and socioracial levels are not effectively deterred. The production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs and substances continue to be experienced. In society, despite the fact that there are measures such as legal registration and awareness creation on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse, the problem is still widespread in society which fuels child defilement by people under drug influence.

The economic status of a homestead has a great significant impact on child defilement in the community. The fact that a family is in a state where they cannot provide the most basic needs opens a door and an opportunity for the opportunists who take advantage of any chance that presents itself.

Lack of parental care contributes to child defilement. It is more open that the inability of most parents to provide adequately for their children due to poverty forces girls into sexual relations with taxi drivers, bus drivers, boda boda riders, and others so that they raise some money to afford them eat something. Parent support is, thus, lacking in many households today, where it is found that parents spend less time with their families. Children who are emotionally abused and subjected to child defilement are denied the opportunity to exercise their rights. Defilement cases are reported to the chief and to the police, most of which are aware of the perpetrators.

6.2.2 Theoretical Conclusion

This current study was guided by the Four-Factor Traumagenic and Social Strain theory, which provides a framework for tackling persistent defilement cases. The theory explained the dynamics associated with sexual abuse: child defilement. The theory helped this current study identify factors that lead to the persistence of defilement cases, such as cultural practices, traditional songs, economic status, and lack of parental care. Social Strain theory guided this study by suggesting how societal pressures and inadequate regulation contribute to the perception of inadequate means to achieve societal goals, which may lead to the commission of crimes such as defilement.

6.3 Recommendations of the Study

This study makes recommendations for policy based on the findings. The study recommendations are based on findings of the specific objectives:

Objective one aimed to examine cultural practices' contribution to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. It was found that cultural practices have a tremendous impact on the rate and extent of child defilement in the community, and it, therefore, recommends that the community should always support prevention programs. Too often, intervention occurs only after abuse is reported. Greater investments are needed in programs that have been proven to stop the abuse before it occurs, such as family counselling and home visits by nurses who aid with victims of defilement and their parents.

The prevention programs communities can support to avert persistent defilement are education and awareness campaigns, support groups, legal reforms, and community-based sanctions. Support groups can provide a safe space for victims of defilement to share their experiences and to get support from others who have been through similar experiences. These groups can be led by trained professionals or by community members who have been affected by defilement. Legal reforms can help to hold perpetrators of defilement accountable for their crimes. These reforms can include increasing the penalties for defilement and making it easier for victims to report the crime. Community-based sanctions can be used to hold perpetrators of defilement accountable for their crimes. These sanctions can include ostracism, community service, or even imprisonment.

Objective two set out to establish the contribution of economic status on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. It was found out that child defilement is closely pegged to the

economic status of a family or a homestead, and it, therefore, recommends that the parents should seek to advance their economic sources of livelihood to alleviate themselves from poverty levels and meet the social and basic needs of their families including their children.

The following are economic livelihood sources that households can use to avert defilement. Agriculture is a major source of income for many households in developing countries. By investing in agriculture, households can improve their economic security and reduce their reliance on other sources of income, such as begging or prostitution. This can make them less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including defilement.

Microfinance is a type of lending that provides small loans to entrepreneurs and small businesses. This can help households start or expand their businesses, leading to increased income and improved economic security. This can make them less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including defilement. Skills training can help households to develop the skills they need to get better jobs or start their businesses. This can lead to increased income and improved economic security. This can make them less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including defilement. By engaging in these economic livelihood sources, households can improve their economic security and reduce their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, including defilement.

Objective three set out to determine the contribution of family structure on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. It was found out that family structure is a great factor in child defilement incidences, and it, therefore, recommends that children are taught by their parents about their rights since when children are taught, they are special and have the right to be safe, they are less likely to think abuse is their fault and more likely to report an offender.

It is important to raise awareness about the issue of defilement and the importance of strong family structures in preventing it. This can be done through education, public awareness campaigns, and providing support to victims and their families. Families need support to create strong and healthy environments for their children. This support can come from government programs, community organizations, and religious institutions. Create a safe and supportive environment for children where they feel comfortable talking about their experiences and where they know that they will be believed and supported. This can be done by creating a

culture of open communication and by providing children with access to resources, such as counseling and support groups.

Objective four set out to explore the contribution of community response to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. It was found that education and literacy have a part in mitigating the issue of child defilement in the community, and it, therefore, recommends everyone in the community should get involved with other parents to help vulnerable children and their families improve access to education and literacy which in turns will increase awareness to defilement cases. Education is one of the best ways to improve economic opportunities and reduce poverty. By investing in education, households can give their children the skills they need to get good jobs and earn a decent living. This can make them less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including defilement. Education and awareness campaigns can help to break down the stigma associated with talking about sexual abuse and can also help to raise awareness about the issue. These campaigns can be conducted in schools, community centers, and other public spaces.

6.4 Areas for Further Research

Based on the objectives that guided this current study and the subsequent findings, the following are suggested areas for further research:

- i. To future should further examine community response to child defilement.
- ii. To investigate available community-based interventions against child defilement is there in the community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent to Participate in the Study

Background

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Read the following information carefully and ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether you want to take part in this study

The purpose of this study is to determine the **factors contributing to persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya**. Our study is for research purposes but we hope that the information obtained will be used to help the victims of defilment and the community to handle the issues of persistent defilment.

Study Procedure

The respondents will be requested to fill the questionnaires and give them back to the researcher the same day. After distributing the questionnaires to the parents/caregivers, the researcher leaves them to fill.

Risks

Participants may find participating in research stressful, especially if they are vulnerable, hidden or suppressed feelings or memories may be uncovered, additional concerns may come up and participants may worry about what they have shared. Therefore, it's essential for researcher to have clear procedures to follow if a child says anything that indicates they or another child may be at risk of harm. The procedures should also include places where a researcher or child can access further support. If a researcher suspects that a child might be at risk of harm, then the research must be stopped until that child's safety is secured. Researcher can manage risk by providing counselling if the research subject is likely to become distressed; advice about services or help as a result of discussing needs which are not being met; offering the benefits of an intervention after completion of an intervention programme.

Benefits

There are no direct medical or material goods benefits to your child for participating in this study. A potential benefit of the study will be to reduce the defilment cases based on the recommendations of this study.

Alternative Procedures

You may choose your child not to participate in this study

Confidentiality

This research will be conducted in accordance with all the Kenyan laws and regulations that protect rights of human research subjects. All records and other information obtained will be kept strictly confidential and your child's protected health information will not be used without permission. All data collection tools will be identified by number or otherwise coded to protect any information that could be used to identify your child. Results of this study may be published, but no names or other identifying information will be released.

Person to Contact

If you have questions, complaints or concerns about this study, you can contact the investigator from Egerton University; Peter Rotich Kurgat +254 721 103039

Voluntary Participation

It is up to you to decide whether your child takes part in this study. Refusal to participate or the decision to withdraw from this research will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. This will not affect your relationship with the investigators.

Right of investigator to withdraw

The investigator can withdraw your child from the research without your approval.

Costs and Compensation to participants

There is no cost to you, and there is no compensation to subjects for participation in this study.

Authorization for use of your protected health information

This study does not entail the use of your child's protected health information.

Thank you for your child's participation in this research and we truly appreciate your help.

CONSENT

By signing this consent form, I confirm I have read the information in this consent form and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I will be given a signed copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Name of CaregiverSignature..... Date.....

Name of InvestigatorSignature..... Date.....

Egerton University secretary.....Signature..... Date.....

Appendix B: Children Assent Form

Introduction

In order to learn more about factors contributing to persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, Peter Rotich Kurgat with other researchers are doing a "thesis" (some people call it a study). I am here to give you more information about this thesis and to ask you if you would like to be a part of it.

Purpose of the Project

- The purpose of the thesis is to find out factors contributing to persistence of defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya
- You will be asked some questions concerning the topic.

Benefits

- Being a part of the thesis may or may not help you and other children which have your same problem of defilement.

Being a part of the project may help in interventions dealing with the well-being of sexually abused children on how to deal with the menace. Therefore, this will help uncover the gaps on why the number of child defilement cases is growing.

The findings are hoped to be useful for policy makers who could use the results of the study to identify and bridge the gap of effect of socio-economic and cultural factors on persistent defilement cases. This would help in reducing persistent defilement cases.

Assent

- I understand that my Mom or Dad, guardian, has said that it is okay for me to take part in this thesis (study) about my situation
- I understand what this thesis (study) is about.
- I am going to be in this thesis (study) because I want to.
- I have been told that I can stop being a part of this thesis (study) anytime I want to. Nothing will happen to me if I want to stop.

Name of Child/Parent.....Signature.....Date.....

Principal Investigator.....Signature.....Date

Principal Investigator(s) contacts.....

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for Parents/Caregivers

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender; Male { } Female { }
2. What is your age
3. For how long have you been a resident of Tharaka Nithi County?.....
4. What is your highest level of education; No formal education { } Certificate { }
Diploma { } Undergraduate { } Masters { }

Other specify.....

5. In your opinion, what is defilement?

Having sex with a child [] having sex with a student []

Having sex with a woman adult [] Forcing someone into sex []

6. Do you know of any offender of defilement in this area?

Yes []

No []

7. How frequent are matters on child defilement discussed in the following forums?

Forums	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
Chief Barazas				
Church				
Radio				
Family gets together				
Funerals				
Others Specify _____				

8. How often in your life have you witnessed or heard of child defilement?

Always [] Very Often [] Sometimes [] Rarely [] Never []

9. What was the age of the child you heard was defiled? _____

10. Who was the perpetrator in child defilment?

Fellow child [] Adult male relative [] A random adult male [] Teacher [] Friends []

Father [] Uncles []

11. Which areas do children mostly get defiled by their perpetrators?

Home [] School [] on the road [] While fetching water [] While collecting firewood

[] church [] other specify []

12. In the past two years how many cases of child defilement have you heard?

13. From the heard child defilement case what was the causes?

14. Has your household had a child defiled?

Yes [] No []

15. Who was the perpetrators?

16. What was the leading cause of defilement?

Section B: Cultural Practices on Defilement Cases

17. What are the cultural practices you carry out in your community?

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. Have these cultural practices promoted defilement in your community?

Yes [] No []

Explain.....

19. Do the community practice female genital mutilation?

Yes [] No []

20. If yes, has the female genital mutilation contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....
.....

21. If no, what else has contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....
.....

22. Is virginity testing carried out in the community?

Yes [] No []

23. If yes, has the virginity contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....
.....

24. If no, what else has contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....
.....

25. Are early child marriages carried out in your community?

Yes [] No []

26. If yes ,has early child marriages resulted to high rates of defilement?

.....
.....
.....

27. Are there traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies?

Yes [] No []

28. If yes, has traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

Section C: Economic Status of the Residents

29. What is you your source income?

.....

30. What is your monthly income?

.....

31. Do you afford for basic needs for the family? Yes [] No []

32. Do you face financial constrains in effort to meet basic needs for the family?

Yes [] No []

33. If yes has financial constrains for meeting basic needs contributes to any child defilment cases?

.....
.....
.....

34. Do you depend on others to get basic needs for the family?

Yes [] No []

35. If yes has dependence on others for survival contributes to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

36. Are your children participating in any sexual relationship to raise money for their basic needs?

Yes [] No []

37. If yes has high-risk survival activities contributes to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

38. Are your children engaging in early relationship with adults for fiancé and basic needs?

Yes [] No []

39. If yes, has early relationship with adults contributes to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

40. Is there lack of sufficient economic resources?

Yes [] No []

41. If yes has lack of sufficient economic resources contributes to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

42. Do children exchange sex for essential goods?

Yes [] No []

43. If yes has exchanging sex for essential goods contributes to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....

Section D: Family Structure

44. Which of the following represent your family structure?

Single households []

Two parent households []

Divorced []

Common law marriage []

Parents are separated []

45. Does your family structure influence the defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

Yes [] No []

Explain.....
.....
.....

46. Have single households contributed to increased cases of defilement among the children?

.....
.....
.....

47. Have two parent households contributed to increased cases of defilement among the children?

.....
.....
.....

48. Has divorced family contributed to increased cases of defilement among the children?

.....
.....
.....

49. Has common law marriage contributed to increased cases of defilement among the children?

.....
.....
.....

50. Has separated family contributed to increased cases of defilement among the children?

.....
.....
.....

Section E: Community Response

51. What factors in this community do you think predispose a child to defilement?

.....
.....
.....

52. Do you think literacy level in the community can result to increased levels of defilement? Yes [] No [] Explain your answer

.....
.....
.....

53. In which ways can the community attitude contribute towards increased levels of defilement cases?

.....
.....
.....

54. How does the community get informed on child defilement?

.....
.....
.....

55. What strategies does the community have in handling defilement cases?

.....
.....
.....

56. Which preventive measures have the community used in responding child defilement?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Children

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender; Male { } Female { }
2. What is your age
3. Name of the Location _____ Village _____
4. What is your parents highest level of education?
No school [] Primary level [] Secondary level [] Post-secondary college []
University []
5. Which religion do you and your family belong to?
Christian [] Muslims [] others specify []
6. What is the family status?
.....
7. Who is the head of your family?
.....

Section B: Cultural Practices on Defilement Cases

8. Does undergoing FGM for girls and Circumcision for boys mean transition from childhood to adulthood?.....
9. Have you undergone FGM/Circumcision?.....
10. Does your culture permit you to be married off once you are initiated?.....
11. Are you allowed to engage in sexual activities given the fact that you have now transitioned to adulthood?.....
12. Do you have a girl friend or a boyfriend?.....
13. Do you engage in sexual activities with her or him? Explain your answer
.....
14. How old is your partner?.....
15. Are their traditional songs sang during initiation ceremonies?.....
16. Do those songs carry sexual content in them?.....
17. Can you name one such song that promotes sexual intercourse?.....
18. In your opinion do you think such songs encourages defilement in your community?.....

Section C: Economic Status and Defilement Cases

- 19. Do you understand what basic needs are?.....
- 20. Name at least two of basic needs.....
- 21. Who provides for you basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing?.....
- 22. What is the occupation of your parents/caregivers?.....
- 23. Do your parents/caregivers brew alcohol for sale?.....
- 24. If yes answer question 19
- 25. Do you assist your parents/caregiver in selling the said liquor?.....
- 26. Have you ever been sexually harassed by drunkards at your home?.....
- 27. Have you ever been asked for sexual intercourse by those how partake liquor at your home?.....
- 28. Do you go to school?.....
- 29. How far is your school from your home?.....
- 30. Do you use bodaboda to go to school?.....
- 31. How pays for your fare to and from school?.....
- 32. Has the boda-boda rider ever asked you for sexual intercourse in exchange of fare?.....
- 33. Whom did you have sexual intercourse with?.....
- 34. What does he/she do for a living?.....
- 35. Did he /she give you money in exchange for sex?.....

Section D: Family Structure and Defilement Cases

- 36. Where do you sleep?.....
- 37. Who do you share room with?.....
- 38. Are both of your parents alive?.....
- 39. Do you know the person who defiled you?.....
- 40. Are you related with that person?.....

Community Response and defilement

- 41. Whom did you report to that you have been defiled?.....
- 42. What action did your caregiver or parents take once you told them of the defilement incidence?.....
- 43. Where were you taken when you were defiled?.....

44. Did the Chief or police ever visited your home when they learnt that you have been defiled?.....
45. Was the perpetrator arrested and taken to court?.....
46. Were you ever asked to forgive the perpetrator by your caregiver?.....

Appendix E: Interview Schedule for Chiefs

Section A: Background Information

1.Respondents Gender; Male Female

2.What is your age

3.For how long have you been a chief of Tharaka Nithi County?

5years between 5 – 10 Years 10 years and above

4.What is your highest level of education; No formal education Certificate

Diploma Undergraduate Masters

Other specify.....

Section B: Cultural Practices on Defilement Cases

5.What are the cultural practices carried out in your location?

.....
.....
.....

6.Have these cultural practices promoted defilement in your location?

Yes No

Explain.....

7.Does the community carry out female genital mutilation?

Yes No

8.If yes has the female genital mutilation contributed to persistent defilement cases in your location?

.....
.....
.....

9.Are community members carry out early child marriages in your location?

Yes No

10.If yes has early child marriages resulted to high rates of defilement?

.....
.....
.....

11.Are there traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies?

Yes No

12.If yes has traditional songs and dances sung during initiation ceremonies contributed to persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

.....
.....
.....

Section C: Economic Status of the Residence

13.How is the economic status among households in your location?.....

14.Are households face daily stressors in meeting basic needs in your location?

Yes [] No []

15.If yes has daily stressors in meeting basic needs contributes to persistent defilement cases in your location?

.....
.....
.....

16.Do families have high dependence ratio for survival?

a. Yes [] No []

17.If yes has dependence on others for survival contributes to persistent defilement cases in your location?

.....
.....

Section D: Family Structure

18.Does family structure influence the defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County?

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.....
.....
.....

19.Have single households resulted to increased cases of defilement among the children?

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.....
.....

20. Have two parent households resulted to increased cases of defilement among the children?

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.....
.....

21. Has divorced family resulted to increased cases of defilement among the children?

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.....
.....

22. Has common law marriage resulted to increased cases of defilement among the children?

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.....
.....

23. Has separated family resulted to increased cases of defilement among the children?

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.....
.....

Section E: Community Response

24. What factors in this community do you think predispose a child to defilement?

.....
.....
.....

25. Has literacy level in the community resulted to increased levels of defilement?

.....
.....
.....

26.Has the community attitude contributed towards increased levels of defilement cases?

.....
.....
.....

27.How does the community get informed on child defilement?

.....
.....
.....

28.What strategies does the community have in handling defilement cases?


.....
.....

29.Which preventive measures have the community used in responding child defilement?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix F: Permit Application Letter from University

EGERTON
Tel. Pilot: 254-51-2217620
254-51-2217877
254-51-2217631
Dir. line/Fax: 254-51-2217847
Cell Phone



UNIVERSITY
P.O. Box 536 - 20115
Egerton, Njoro, Kenya
Email: bpgs@egerton.ac.ke
www.egerton.ac.ke

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

Ref: **AME20/17508/18** Date: **11th March, 2022**

Mr. Peter Kurgat Rotich
Dept. of PSSS
Egerton University,
P. O. Box 536,
EGERTON

Dear Mr. Rotich

RE: CORRECTED PROPOSAL

This is to acknowledge receipt of soft copies of your corrected proposal entitled: **"Persistence of Defilement Cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya."**



You are now at liberty to commence your fieldwork. However note the following: -

1. You must register each semester.
2. Pay your fees every semester.
3. Submit progress reports every four (4) months (Masters) or six (6) months (PhDs). Without this, your thesis/project will not be accepted. Forms are available at the Board.
4. You are expected to publish one (1) paper (Masters) or two (2) papers (PhD) in peer-reviewed journal and present them before issuance of "Intent to Submit Thesis/Project" form by the Board.

NB: Please provide a **HARD COPY** of the proposal duly signed by the supervisors for the file.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Nzula Kitani
DIRECTOR, BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

c.c. Dean, FASS
COD, PSSS
Supervisors

NK/vk **Transforming Lives Through Quality Education**

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

AME20/17508/18

11th March, 2022

Ref:.....

Date:.....

The Director General
National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation,
P. O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir,

**RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT – MR. PETER ROTICH KURGAT
REG. NO. AME20/17508/18**

This is to introduce and confirm to you that the above named student is in the Department of Peace, Security & Social Studies, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Egerton University.

He is a bona-fide registered M.A student in this University. His research topic is **“Persistence of Defilement Cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.”**

He is at the stage of collecting field data. Please issue him with a research permit to enable him undertake the studies.

Your kind assistance to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


Prof. Nzula Kitaka
DIRECTOR, BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES



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 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
<p>Ref No: 158109</p>	<p>Date of Issue: 22/March/2023</p>
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<p>This is to Certify that Mr. Peter Basil Kagat of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: Prevalence of Borketum Cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya for the period ending: 22/March/2023.</p>	
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<p>Signature: </p>	
<p>Designated General</p>	
<p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>	
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THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013

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Appendix H: Publication



Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences

Volume 19, Issue 1, Page 36-45, 2023; Article no.ARJASS.96457
ISSN: 2456-4781

Economic Status and Persistent Defilement Cases in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/ARJASS/2023/v19i1419

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.scribd.com/review-history/96457>

Original Research Article

Received: 06/12/2022

Accepted: 11/02/2023

Published: 23/02/2023

ABSTRACT

Statistics on child abuse revealed that defilement is the most common form of abuse in Kenya. This paper explores the effect of economic status on persistent defilement cases in Tharaka Nithi County. This study was guided by theory of Four- Factor Traumagenic. This study used phenomenological research design to collect qualitative data. The unit of analysis for this study was victims of defilement. The target population for this study was all the 98 defiled children (93 girls and 5 boys), 98 parents/caregivers and 5 chiefs. There were three interview schedules developed for parents/guardians of defiled children, chiefs and defiled children. Collected data was analysed using thematic method which entails identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The study findings revealed that the need to provide basic needs, assist parents/caregivers in income generation, use of motorbikes to school, and need for money in exchange for sex have greatly contributed to high defilement cases in the study area. The study recommends that the parents need to advance their economic sources of livelihood in order to alleviate themselves from poverty levels and meet the social and basic needs of their families including their children.

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Asian Res. J. Arts Soc. Sci., vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 36-45, 2023