

**COMMUNICATION CUES IN MARRIAGE CONFLICTS: A CASE STUDY OF MIDDLE-
CLASS COUPLES IN EMBAKASI CONSTITUENCY IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

LILLIAN K. MUTISO

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other university or institution other than the University of Nairobi for academic recognition.

Student

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Lillian K. Mutiso

K50/11370/2018

This research project has been submitted with my approval as the appointed Supervisor.

Supervisor

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Dr. Elias Mokuu

School of Journalism and Mass Communication,

University Of Nairobi

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my loving husband Lewis, for the endless support and encouragement towards the completion of my study. My children Sandra, Morgan and Elaine who gave me the love and support throughout my academic journey.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AG	Attorney General
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolutions
CBD	Central Business District
CRSA	Conflict Resolution Styles Assessment
CRSI	Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory
CMA	Catholic Men Association
CWA	Catholic Women Association
EVT	Expectancy Violation Theory
LSK	Law Society of Kenya
PDA	Public Display of Affection
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

The study focused on communication cues in marriage conflicts among middle-class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The study was guided by four main objectives: To investigate the verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle; to establish dominant attitude cues conflicting middle couples manifest towards each other during conflict; to explore verbal and non-verbal communication signs used in conflict resolution (de-escalation); and lastly to investigate whether or not conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency Nairobi County, and if so how? The study was anchored on two theories - Expectancy Violation and Social Exchange Theory. The study adopted a qualitative approach in order to generate in-depth understanding of communication dynamics and the cues that manifest those dynamics during conflicts among couples. The study location was in Donholm Catholic Church and Mavuno Church Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The study's population was purposively sampled and it included men and women who were legally divorced, separated, and married conflicting couples and couples who were ready to reunite. In addition, key informants included professional and religious counselors. The sample size was made up of 12 participants. The data was collected through in-depth interviews using interview guide questions. The data was presented using direct quotes from the respondents to enable interpretation, discussion and drawing of conclusions. The research has found out that couples in conflict do not really understand each other's communication cues as intended. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the verbal and non-verbal cues is responsible for conflict escalation and also that conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting couples. Therefore, the research has recommended that marriage counselors include verbal and nonverbal cues in their teachings. Additionally Marriage is a lifetime commitment; hence the couple should invest in nurturing it through routine counseling and active listening.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This Chapter discusses the background, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, justification, scope and limitation of the study, the chapter will conclude with the operational terms used in the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Across the globe, spousal conflict has a lot of negative effects mentally, emotionally, physical and on family health. In the last three decades, researchers have generated an in-depth image of behaviours that distinguish non-distressed couples from couples who are distressed. Recently, researchers have tried to paint a more textured picture of marital conflict by studying spouses' backgrounds and characteristics, investigating conflict in the contexts of support giving and affectionate expression, and considering the ecological niche of couples in their broader environment. Systematic psychological research on marriage emerged largely among clinical psychologists who wanted to better assist couples experiencing marital distress. In the 30 years since this development, marital conflict has assumed a special status in the literature on marriage, as evidenced by three indices.

First, many of the most influential theories of marriage tend to reflect the view that "distress results from couples' inducing dislike and weak response to conflict" (Loscocco & Walzer, 2013). Secondly, marriage study is concerned with what spouses do in dispute or conflict, and marital newspapers are dominated by problem-resolution and conflict-resolution studies. Third, emotional interventions for distraught spouses mostly aim at

conflict-resolution skills.

Communication can be either verbal or nonverbal and creating a quality marital and family atmosphere relates to the marital and family communication. Therefore, there is need for consistent communication to ensure clear verbalization of what one is thinking, feeling and experiencing, (Williamson et al, 2015). Couples engage in conflict through communication processes that are direct or indirect, (Anger et al, 2011). Communication relies heavily on the unspoken. Scholars have recognized different ways of the unspoken communication. Which include gestures, body language, paralanguage, proxemics, personal attire among others. People can receive and send nonverbal communication with or without knowing it, and messages surrounded by the nonverbal cues vary cross-culturally, while others are universal.

1.1.1 The Global Context

Research in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, China and Japan indicates that marital conflict has been associated with the onset of symptoms of depression, eating disorder, male alcoholism, episodic drinking, spree drinking, and drinking out of home. These research studies have shown that while married persons are on average healthier than those who are unmarried, marital disputes are linked to poorer health and specific diseases like cancer, heart disease or chronic pain, likely because conflict-hostile activities are linked to changes in immune, endocrine and cardiovascular functioning. Moreover, in approximately 30% of married couples in the US, sexual abuse is present and in approximately 10% of couples there is serious physical harm. Marriage is often the most frequent interpersonal context of homicide and more women are

killed than anything else by their partners. Lastly, marital conflict involves major family consequences, such as bad parenting, poor children adaptation, increasing the probability of conflict between parents and children and conflict between siblings. Frequent, intensive, physical and related marital conflicts involving children in particular, as do marital disputes that are due to the actions of their children (Muthoni & Makana. 2015).

Studies over the last few years have found that worldwide, approximately 45% of marriages end in divorce, with the United States of America having the highest incidence (Loscocco & Walzer, 2013). Individuals interviewed in a research study by Muthoni and Makana (2015) named problems that contributed to their divorce as lack of commitment, infidelity and frequent conflict. Although separation and divorce are not always supposed to be negative it may be an opportunity to terminate a bad or sick relationship in order to fulfill some personal goals and objectives (Kendall 2015). It is noted that the statistics keep on changing and presenting new aspects every year on aspects and prospects in matters of divorce (Elena, 2018).

1.1.2 The African Context

Studies done in Africa suggest that there are increasing cases of divorce among African couples (Schudlich, Papp & Cummings, 2011). Allendorf and Ghimire (2013) opines that even though there is divorce in Africa, divorcees are stigmatized and labeled as failures by friends and family and because of this, couples often struggle to do all that they can to settle their differences so that they can avoid the shame of divorce.

For example, about 81 percent of respondents in a study of marital conflict in African countries undertaken by Anger and colleagues (2011) claimed that they knew of

spouses who stayed within abusive marriages characterized by conflict due to adultery, snoop in-laws and the extended family. However, with the growing influence of western culture transmitted through advanced technology and modernization, divorce is increasingly becoming common in Africa. The rampant incidence of separation and break up in African homes originate from political and socio-economic impact in the society. In Nigeria today, for instance, the rate at which marital couples experience divorce and remarriage is quite alarming (Askari et al, 2012). Many families have been and some are still seriously at war with themselves simply because of their failure to arrest, manage or resolve conflicting issues between couples or families.

1.1.3 The Kenyan Context

Family lawyers, marriage specialists, and clerics who in regular contact with spouses, have elevated the fright over increasing cases of skirmish leading to separation and divorce among Kenyan spouses (Musau & Kisovi, 2015). They are concerned that many matrimonyes are in an hopeless situation and approve that contemporary marriages come across various challenges this including, finances, emotional and physical abuse, unmet expectations, spousal separation, burden to balance in life, family and career, this has made many marriages to operate in a void, lacking sufficient support from the society and family at large. Muthoni and Makana (2015) indicated that lack of proper communication by many spouses on their expectations causes friction and war in marriages.

This is because one's partner may not know their spouse's expectations and since there is no proper discussion, spouses who think they know one another well, they come to

understand they actually know very little about the each other and what to expect from them. Muthoni and Makana (2015) agree that males and females are formed differently and that conflict is certain. Unfortunately, a number of them do not identify on how to handle their conflicts and this can lead to divorce and separation. Another evidential marital case, Kenyan couples will have to stay in a marriage for at least three years before seeking divorce from their partner in Kenya if a proposal by the Law Society of Kenya to the Attorney General is passed. The proposal will also require a married couple to seek Alternative Dispute Resolutions (ADR) – such as mediation and negotiation – before seeking divorce as a final option. “There will be an introduction of a three-year time limit before a divorce can be filed. Parties seeking divorce have to provide evidence of a failed mediation process before filing a divorce,” reads the proposed amendment published by the AG.

According to Registrar General Mary Njuya, who was quoted by the *People Daily*, the proposals arose from concerns raised by stakeholders regarding the implementation of Christian marriage laws. The LSK says the new law will help restore order in marriages as there has been an increase in divorce cases. Kenya has experienced a lot of cases due to marital conflict which have led to death for example: On April 4th, 2020. The Daily Nation reported on a case in Ikoli Village, Kakamega County on a woman who stabbed her husband to death because she served him ugali and it accidentally tipped over, a fight between the two broke out after the man alleged that his wife had served him while drunk. The wife also stabbed herself in the stomach but survived and was hospitalised. The area Assistant chief Mr. Walter Namatuli said the couple had visited him severally seeking his intervention, and was hoping they would resolve their conflict. The Nation Media group

also reported a bizarre incident that took place on January 5th, 2020 in Chembani in Bamburi Mombasa County, which involved a pastor. Pastor Elisha Misiko, a 55-year-old man stabbed his wife several times during a church service, and when worshipers rushed her to the hospital, he slit his throat and died in the church. Family and friends said the couple had a family dispute over management and ownership of the church.

1.1.4 The Kenyan Middle Class

The middle class is defined as those who fall into the middle group of workers compared to the bottom 20% or top 20%. Meaning it also applies to those that fall between the lowest-earning and the highest-earning households. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics June 4th 2019 indicates that anybody spending approximately between Ksh. 24,000 and KSh 200,000 per month qualifies as middle class. Business people, lawyers, managers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers are usually regarded as middle class.

Couples in the Middle class in Embakasi constituency in Nairobi, just like any other couples, experience conflict. Couples in Nairobi form a significantly large group among residents. Most people in this category will live in estates with good security, good drainage systems, clean water, modern housing, moderate rent and proximity to workplace or the Nairobi CBD.

In middle class areas rent is commonly high but middle class do not mind for as long as they get the comfort they are looking for as they can mostly afford it. In the year 2019, middle income estates in Nairobi were characterized by some features. Most of the middle-class people own at least a house, have a medical care cover, have at least college education for their children, own a vehicle or two this gives them freedom and ease of

movement, can afford a family vacation, this shows that they have extra money and are successful to afford leisure away from home and lastly most of the middle class have retirement security plan this makes them to enjoy their hard work and are stress free. An example of conflict in Embakasi constituency, Susan Njeri Wachira, 25 years was at the Milimani Law Courts on May 7th 2020 charged with killing her partner Kelvin Njenja by stabbing him 11 times on the 9th of April 2020. They started fighting over who was to wash the dishes. The accused denied the charges before the Milimani High court judge James Wakiaga.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Statistics show a continuous increase in cases of divorce, separation and strained relationships between married couples, whereas, communication advancement has created many alternatives for conflicting couples to track each other. In addition, feuding couples nowadays lack the traditional family back up in solving conflicts due to the culture of individual rights superseding family and community rights in resolving domestic conflicts among married couples. Furthermore, the 2009 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report on Marital Status Statistics in Kenya indicates, within a total population of 38,412,088 Kenyans, 212,972 (about 7%) were divorced and about 355,018 (about 9%) were separated (Kenya Demographics Profile, 2014).

This worrying statistic indicates that approximately 15% of marriages in Kenya have broken down. The Business Daily, using Kenyan Research Published by (Ipsos Synovate, 2015) reported that between 2010 and 2015, a total of 1246 divorce cases were filed at The Nairobi Milimani Law Courts. Also, other conflicting spouses time and again are

discouraged from the court process due to family influence, religious factors, personal reasons, mutual agreement or even stigma. Latest statistics, nevertheless, point to a steady increase in the number of divorce cases. By the end of December 2019 some 1,108 people had filed divorce petitions. January 2020 had 95 cases and in February 145 cases had been petitioned to dissolve marriages. In spite of cues in communication behavior among couples in conflict signaling the intensity of a conflict (escalating or de-escalating) not much study in Kenyan has been done to explore on the interpretation and reception of the signs elicited by each party during a conflict. Therefore, there is a knowledge gap on whether communication cues between couples in conflict are understood by recipients as intended.

1.3 Study Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study focuses on communication cues in marriage conflicts among conflicting middle-class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate the verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County.
- ii. To establish dominant attitude cues conflicting middle Class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County manifest towards each other during conflict.

- iii. To explore verbal and non-verbal communication cues used in conflict resolution (de-escalation) among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County.
- iv. To investigate whether or not conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting middle-class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County, and if so, how.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What are the verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County?
- ii. How does attitude affect communication between couples during conflict among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency Nairobi County?
- iii. What are the verbal and non-verbal communication signs used in conflict resolution (de-escalation) among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County?
- iv. How does conflict redefine communication behavior among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency Nairobi County?

1.5 Significance of the Study

To both prospective and married couples, the study is expected to gather information that the researcher hopes will help them to understand better the verbal and

non-verbal cues that cause conflict escalation and how better to de-escalate, avoid or handle the conflict before it flares up.

The study hopes to greatly benefit marriage counselors practicing couple therapy, as it identifies potential areas of conflict in marriage that are related to personality traits, and predict the likelihood of divorce.

If marriage counselors can have a better understanding of the combination of communication behavior most likely to influence clients' ability and capacity to solve escalated conflicts positively, they will be better placed to select effective communication interventions during couple therapy.

1.6 Justification for the Study

Common conflicts among couples have an impact on day to day handling of problems, thus activating negative thoughts among couples. This study was relevant especially in the wake of increases in marital instability and conflicts leading to physical, emotional and mental health issues in Embakasi Constituency. Also, to increase knowledge because there are few studies done on communication cues in marriage conflicts among couples during conflict escalation.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out among the middle-class population of Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The study only covers legally divorced, separated, and married couples.

This study was limited to a fully qualitative approach, use of focus group discussion would be enriching to my study but due to the government directive of social distancing this was a challenge. The fact that people want to make favorable initial impressions and thus providing positive information and experiences to strangers is another limitation that affect the data involves expectations and connotations of conflict.

Therefore, the researcher tried to establish a relationship with possible interviewees before any interview. While participants conveyed highly personal information to the interviewer following questions which were not threatened, it is not possible that all partners have shared their key values and experiences of conflict and contact throughout their marriage.

If couples could have agreed to contribute more time, the interviewer could have interviewed each couple separately and thereafter together. This procedure could have potentially provided richer results.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Communication behavior: In this study refers to how couples articulate their differences and express their feelings towards each other.

Communication Cue: Signs based on gestures and body movement; they give extra visual information about words used in conversation to make it easier to understand. People can send and receive nonverbal communication with or without knowing it.

Conflicting Couple: Spouses who experience continuous disagreement and argue frequently basically because their desires, needs and opinions are incompatible.

Conflict escalation: This is spouses respond negatively to each other, interaction is continuously becoming increasingly aggressive. In increase, negative remarks fuel wrath and anger.

Couples: Two individuals of the opposite sex who cohabit legally as man and wife.

De-escalating conflict: The opportunity to improve conflict situations and strengthen relationships.

Flash points: A place, event, or time in marriage at which violence or hostility flares up.

Marital Conflict: Fighting, clashing over differences, values, interests, opinions or having disagreement over feelings or engagements by Couples.

Marital instability: according to the study marriage is at a brink of breaking or collapsing.

Middle Class: Refers to a class of people in the middle of a social hierarchy. It is a social group between the lower and the upper working class.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a literature review on the study on communication behavior in conflict escalation among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency Nairobi County. The chapter begins with a literature review followed by review of related empirical studies then by giving a theoretical framework of the study and ends with a conceptual framework.

2.1. Communication behavior and advanced technology in relationships

Studies showing that conflict can boost or erode relation satisfaction have usually described conflicts as disagreements and not as violence by interpersonal communication scholars (Zhou & Buehler, 2017). However, the exact characteristics that characterize conflict and differentiate between them are little accepted.

Yoshimura (2013), who defined five features of conflict: interdependence, incompatibility, intervention, resource shortages, and articulated struggle, was among the most frequent citations for conflict. Under this definition, two or more interdependent parties are in dispute. As close ties tend to be strongly interdependent, they typically involve relatively high levels of conflict and satisfaction (Verhofstadt et al, 2015). Conflict also means that inconsistent goals are viewed. Incompatibility is the most likely cause of conflict, as shown in (Bahrami, 2012), when people believe that the interests of their spouse are interfering with their own goals and resources.

Technology production and use have flourished in recent years (Cole et al. 2009), making technology a leading part of the day-to-day life of modern society (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). Social media have been developed to promote and facilitate contact. For various reasons, individuals use technology, including information, entertainment, work and their relations with others. Many couples incorporate technology into their daily interactions (Iverson, & Grant, 2011). The use of technology has changed human interaction by blurring boundaries and interaction laws and finally altering intimate relationship initiation, maintenance and termination processes (Hertlein & Blumer, 2014).

The technical dynamics of couples' usage are complex. For example, the use of technology can have positive as well as negative consequences for couples; joint use of technology in pairing may be beneficial to intimacy (Henline, 2006). In the long term, for example, couples can set time at the end of every day to speak to each other via a visual video chat system. Advanced technology has implemented a distract and separate mechanism in two partnerships, in particular with cell phones (Hertlein, 2012).

Lang and Jarvenpaa identified the mobile telephone usage paradox, where the mobile telephone frequently disengages from face-to-face interactions with increasing SMS, email and social media technologies. Text messaging is becoming incredibly common with 31 percent people who prefer to telephone calls (Smith, 2011).

New technology threatens to strip away important aspects of how people relate and connect on a personal level. Intimacy is compromised if a spouse constantly uses technology for personal success rather than spending time with his partner. Technology may, likewise, promote jealousy and distrust. It offers other ways that jealous partners can follow one another (Papp, Danielewicz, & Cayemberg, 2012).

Technology is also changing some of the most intimate ways in which couples connect. Sexting that is sending someone text messages containing explicit sexual content has increased among adults since 2012. Statistics have shown that over 60% of all divorces today are due to social media. Over 50% of all breaks ups and splits have also been linked to text messages and social chat rooms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter.

A good example is a recent a story that went viral about the Luo Boys Club, where Edgar Obare one of the members exposed the rest and this brought a huge conflict between Jalang'o and his newly wedded wife, another case is of the West Pokot Governor Lonyangapuo who was exposed by his 'Mpango wa Kando'.

2.2 Communication and Redefining Marriage

Happy couples show various patterns of contact during conflict encounters than distressed couples. Analysis (Carroll's et al, 2013) has shown that couples have a greater risk of divorcing if they have a conflict behaviour, passing from critique to dislike to defensiveness and then eventually to resistance. In addition (Carroll's et al, 2013), the work shows that happy couples display fewer negative effects and positive effects during both disputes and regular interactions than distressed couples. Further, distressed pairs are more likely to negatively decode neutral messages, which can cause harmful communication spirals.

Distressed and abusive couples can also find it difficult to reason rationally and to engage in successful conflict-resolution behaviours. Some people have been leading to offensive or abusive communication because of this social deficiency.

(Fincham, 2003) discussed that distressed couples behave more negatively during conflict than non-distressed couples. Identified as “negative reciprocity,” (Fincham, 2003) reports that partners are more likely to respond in a negative manner when their partner is being negative with them. A cyclical pattern begins to form as distressed couples find themselves unable to break negative exchanges between them, whereas non-distressed couples are better equipped to accommodate and resolve issues (Fincham, 2003). Just as in communication, distressed couples operate in a pursue/withdraw interaction that feeds the cyclical pattern. As one partner pressures, demands, and/or criticizes, in an attempt to engage the other partner, the response from the other partner is to become defensive, retreat, and avoid the conflict altogether (Fincham, 2003).

This pattern is important to consider as it depicts the cycle of conflict within couples. By identifying the cycle, couples need skills and tools to help remedy their issues and resolve conflict. Conflict will continue to be prevalent in couple relationships; however, how couples choose to respond will dictate the various consequences that follow.

2.3 Communication and Conflict Escalation among Couples

Often it is more critical than conflict itself for couples to resolve conflict. For example (Bahrami, 2012) found how constructively they interacted during the conflict-emergency was the primary factor distinguishing between couples who remained together and those who ruptured after the first big fight." Those who remained together stated that the dispute contributed to a stronger understanding and trust that they could overcome issues together and sacrifice one another. Those who disintegrated stated that the struggle results in frustration and uncertainty about the relationship state and worry about the tense

and unpleasant future interactions. Weak management of interpersonal conflicts, can lead to dysfunctional relationships with relevant consequences for couple well-being (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

Conflicts happen in couples for many reasons. (Dalgeish et al, 2015) identify these sources of conflict; Miscommunication and misinformation; real or perceived differences in needs, priorities, values, beliefs, attitudes and culture; structural conditions. Effective communication in interpersonal relationships builds a sense of trust. Collaboration might be achieved through communication and this could lead to a durable conflict resolution. Communication and interaction therefore become the mitigating factor and the go between to ensure smooth transition and interaction.

According to (Igbo, Awopetu & Ekoja, 2015), lack of proper communication can cause marital problems. When there is miscommunication between spouses, it tends to happen in four styles. *Placaters* go with whatever the other spouse wants and so how they actually feel is usually unknown. *Blamers* lack the patience to listen and tend to accuse the spouse of everything that goes wrong, meaning they do not take up any responsibility for any action. *Computers* do not express feelings and their effect is constantly regulated so that they avoid any show of emotions. *Distractors* also avoid anything that would spur on openness of feelings and so they easily change subjects, trying as much as possible to stay clear of difficult topics.

Without proper communication, there is disharmony and strain in tackling problems. Communication thus should not reduce, time to talk should often be made, spouses should work on being good communicators and working schedules should be adjusted after marriage so that the spouse is priority. Since communication can reduce after

marriage as the spouses now live together, there has to be intentional plans to talk every day, and talk about anything and everything (Hindman, 2015).

2.4 Conflict Escalation Stages

Both marriage partners vary, but how they express themselves and how they manage the dispute tells them whether their relationship prospers. They will reduce the negative effect if they know where, why and how their disagreements arise, and appreciate the tools to overcome them. However, if their disagreements sometimes escalate into a total tragedy, they eventually decompose.

Allendorf & Ghimire (2013) describe the occasions when a few battles are being battled as "flash points." Both partners need to recognise those change instants as early as possible or get out of control quickly. Wives who cause these vital relationships to escalate would easily pass from battle mates to war-time enemies. Bloodshed will cause both sides to feel devastated and deserted.

Unfortunately, spouses who have allowed these "flash points" to go without editing seek work late. They have already invested a lot of their energy in the stressful and discouraging battle modes when they initiate a therapeutic touch. They look really solid on the outside and are heartbroken and defend themselves from further attack. Many partners at that moment lost the capacity to realize, when their "flash spots" happened, to distort the borders between future reconciliation and the emotional struggle. The negative conversations between them easily transform into bush-fires from small discrepancies to when or how they can no longer decide. While they seem to merge, flash points are systematically built (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013).

Christopher Moore (2014) and Allendorf (2013) came up with conflict cycle stages. These stages can be identified and categorized into six different stages. As each stage, their intensity gets a notch higher as the partners become more entrenched in their rigidity, very righteous in their ideas and less motivated to alteration. If fighting spouses can recognize these stages and know how to halt the dispute before the damage, they can turn back the clock on these negative partnership communications. To comprehend this well, I will discuss the conflict cycle stages.

2.4.1 Stage One – Spats and Skirmishes (Latent)

The underlying tensions of one or both sides, which did not grow into established controversy, are a mark of this stage of conflict. There are tensions in latent disputes stemming from the fact that some but not all of those individuals are impacted by the issue that is not fully understood and are interested in the dispute (Christopher Moore, 2014).

In the latent stage couples are in harmony but there is that feeling of everything is not alright there is something that is wrong but one cannot really pinpoint or lay a hand on it. Involves intrapersonal communication. Disparities which can become more severe conflicts normally begin to define and to comprehend gently. If there is adequate time between their disagreements, they typically will return to their earlier compatibility, overcome those differences successfully, and retain their regeneration ability. Seeing and discussing these variations effectively will potentially have restored one another's enthusiasm and passion (Allendorf, 2013).

2.4.2 Stage Two – Conflict Emergency

At this point of confrontation, the majority, if not all of the problems at stake have been established and the dispute is understood to the parties. While the dispute has been established, disputes at the emergent stage do not have a specific settlement mechanism and can therefore continue to intensify. Here proof causes a confrontation.

The partners start to blame each other; no one is ready to own up or admit his or her mistakes. The two are involved (Christopher Moore, 2014). As arguments become more during the interactions, the spouses become less attentive in learning new ways of changing the relationship, and are focused more on the other partner's mistakes.

At the emergency stage, spouses often defend and counter-attack immediately when the fight starts. They feel like their partner needs to win or want to make them feel like the bad person. One or both start telling the other that they are not responsible, cannot understand, and begin to feel like the victim of the other's fury. As those negative verbs and nonverbal begin to rise, the couple starts to escalate their wrath, disappointments and fears of loss. Where the couples viewed each other as a refuge, they now become suspicious and threatening at each other. Yet, at this point, they are neither dissatisfied, nor ready to give up, (Allendorf and Ghimire, 2013).

2.4.3 Stage Three - Conflict Escalation (Loss of the Other)

In conflict escalation hostilities intensify. Collective grievances/ collecting accusations, High level of hostility that often is solved by humanitarian intervention is sought. Warring factions cannot disengage meaning other parties are involved e.g. friends or family (Moore, 2014).

The spouses at this stage are on a divorce path. Whether they agree to go on living together or to separate, their true intimacy will vanish fast if they do not halt their patterns by doing something very different. The spouses get better at what they keep on doing; even the specific behaviour is counter-productive and negative.

If spouses practice being virtuously annoyed and legitimately oppressed, they will only get better at being that. Within a short time, the loving kind and compassionate spouses are no longer in love with each other. Unfortunately, many couples at this stage look for other adventures like sexual affairs, romantic activities or other means to devote their energy and time away from their partners, (Allendorf and Ghimire, 2013).

2.4.4 Stage Four – Polarization

Here relations break down, misinformation, communication is misdirected and a lot of assumptions are experienced, contact and communication is strained and hostile e.g. doing something to hurt the other, feel good when the other is in pain. Antagonism building – mapping strategies, the situation gets more complex as other parties are drawn in for example, colluding with criminals to harass the other and embarrassing your partner in public.

At this stage the conflict escalation is realised, all of their ugly side is out. Their flash points become more prompt and the spouses chase each other with no compassion and less care. They threaten, accuse, and want to hurt one another. Whatever good they once vowed to one another vanished. Even when clearly they can see that their engagements have become selfishly damaging, they do not stop. They interject one another continuously, threaten to leave, shout, bring in other people's feelings that equal

their own, and feel completely accurate and self-righteous that they are the victims of one another.

It is a very sad development to see, a couple who at one time loved one another deeply does not seem to care how their engagements are distressing their partners, and sometimes even seem proud harming the other person. They have become unbreakable and insensible to their partners' anguish. They both see the other as hunters and themselves as the prey.

They can become physical. What is unbelievable is that the couples, who seem, cruel and insensitive to each other, can be very generous, caring, and polite to others, including strangers. They may also look as a perfect and complete couple to the world out there. Basically, they have become enemies in private, but pretend to be ok in the face of the outside world.

At this stage couples, sadly, are frequently the ones who are impatient and desperate, pushed into therapy by one threatening to leave if the other does not conform. At this point, they are typically disillusioned, disagreeing, discouraged, and asking within themselves if it is late and whether they should just end the discomfort they have created.

2.4.5 Stage five - Entrapment

Honorable withdrawal is almost impossible, forms of avenge and counter-revenge prolong the fight creating new grievances and reasons for continuing. One would like to go but they may just be holding on to the relationship because of other attachments, such as disputes over property, limited funds to live apart, or custody battles. It is no longer because they really want to live with each other anymore. (Allendorf and Ghimire, 2013).

This is the stage when both couples have a clear notion of who their partner is, faults, and weaknesses more, yet they make a conscious choice to be with this person in spite of all of those things. You are no longer with your partner because you need them, but because you've chosen them, and ready to accommodate or compromise so that you can meet at a central point.

2.4.6 Stage six - De-escalation

Interventions begin to reduce tension, engage in dialogue, negotiation, which reduce or resolve or end conflict. Parties start to discuss and consider reaching a compromise during this process. The mediation or settlement process starts when the conflict's dominant party makes concessions to the non-dominating party when de-escalate is completed. To make sure the tension doesn't return, you must compromise a bit. Normally, no party is genuinely satisfied when dispute is resolved, but no party is also irritated. It is necessary to ensure that both sides can continue working or live in peace. Unless this can be accomplished, there is no complete resolution to the dispute.

Peace-building will complete the final portion of dispute resolution. The best approach is to create trust and to use brokers to track the situation for couples and the police. It must be agreed and applied mutually to operate effectively. When the couples find a compromise, the relationships destroyed during the escalation stage have to be restored. Also strong marital disputes often settle down, when one or more of the individuals involved in the dispute recognize that as they continue their inability to look at the conflict from both sides, they will be unable to achieve a conclusion.

2.5 Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs in Communication

Communication can be seen as a focal point in both conflict and resolution (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013). Couples engage in conflict through communication processes that are direct or indirect, manipulative or flexible, verbal or nonverbal, metaphorical or concrete, demanding and/or withdrawing (Anger et al, 2011). The communication styles in which partners ascribe to are helpful in interaction patterns understanding of that positively and negatively influence the couple relationship. Addressing conflict as it arises can help individuals and couples learn effective ways to resolve conflict and to address the complex details that conflict can produce. The nature of conflict varies from couple to couple and can range from minimal to severe (Zhou & Buehler, 2017). Couples disclose conflict causes, varying from verbal, emotional and physical violence and individual characteristics and behavior.

2.5.1 Verbal Communication

An important role in creating a quality marital and family atmosphere relates to the marital and family communication; it must be direct, open, clear and unambiguous (Williamson et al, 2015). Williamson et al. (2012) emphasizes the need for existence of consistent communication, meaning a clear verbalization of what you are thinking, feeling and experiencing. On the other side, inconsistent communication is unambiguous, indirect communication and is typical for spouses who have disrupted family and marital relations. When the level of communication (process and content) does not match, it results in problems that disrupt the marital psychodynamics and its functionality (Dalgeish et al, 2015).

The research of Loscocco and Walzer (2013) shows that “happy” and “unhappy couples” are distinguished by the quality of communication. Happy partners communicate openly and honestly, trying to solve problems, and to share their opinion, show mutual understanding, emotion, tolerance and honesty. While unhappy partners avoid or ignore conflicts and most likely blame each other.

DeMaris, Mahoney and Pargament (2010) further state that communication can deteriorate if married couples do not pay attention to each other’s words and feelings. To communicate effectively, it is important to know the right time to talk, have a warm tone, learn to be positive with the talk, understand what the other person needs and feels, respect the other person’s thoughts, talk specifically without ambiguity, and learn how to converse more. Talking has to be done intentionally, and the time to talk created during the day.

Engaging in fun activities reignites interest in each other and a desire to talk freely with each other (Decuyper, De Bolle & Defryut, 2012). Daily communication also enhances a married couple’s chances of being able to evaluate factors that play a part in their marriage and make adjustments accordingly.

2.5.2 Non-verbal Communication

Research by Igbo, Awopetu & Ekoja (2015) opines that nonverbal communication takes a huge percentage in communication which is at 93 percent. Communication depends greatly on the unspoken, than the spoken. Scholars have acknowledged different extents of unspoken communication. It is vital to remember that the messages embedded in the nonverbal some are universal, while others vary cross-culturally. Kent, identifies different ways to communicate nonverbally: This includes, facial expression, proxemics,

paralanguage, personal attire, posture, body position and eye contact. He states that the most common are hand gestures and facial displays.

Facial displays are the facial expressions individuals create when communicating. These include smiling, frowning, wrinkling, rising of the eyebrows, scowling, among others. Frowning and smiling are worldwide signs of irritation and happiness when applied openly, though their deliberate use for specific reasons can differ cross-culturally. Facial expressions are significant for emotion, attraction and identity (Javanmarda & Garegozlob, 2013). Individuals with facial expressions, *eye activities* contain countless unspoken messaging behaviors. This includes eye expressions and eye contact.

Kinesics involves body movement's posture and gestures. This set comprises of the individuals posture which portrays a person's degree of self-confidence and image, arm and hand gestures we perform to go with dialogue, or, sometimes, to substitute speech. For instance the unfriendly sign of "flipping the bird," which has a connotation to itself and desires no words to supplement it because the receiver understands well what the sender means (Lavner & Bradbury, 2010).

Paralanguage is another nonverbal sign which means voice. These cues touch on varieties of sets, including articulation (clarity of speech), tone (reflecting emotion or mood), pitch (high or low), inflection (variations in pitch), volume (loud or quiet), accent, speed and use of silence to express meaning. Most of these areas vary by the demands of the social context in which we find ourselves (Nikitina, 2014). In addition we also manage dialogue with unspoken word. We have a tendency to use gestures, tone of voice and eye contact, as turn-taking indicators to show that one is about to finish up talking and another is ready to carry on.

For instance, one can raise a finger to show they either would like to talk or are done talking. Studies propose we incline more on eye contact while listening than when talking, so in most instances when we are set to offer the other person a chance to talk, we are likely to engage on eye contact. Variations in tone of speaking can indicate changes in the dialogue. For example, we tend to let the pitch in words rise indicating we have a question or drop to indicate that we are ending with talking (Alderl et al, 2013).

Some unspoken channels can contribute to emotional manifestation. For instance, aggressive emotions like jealousy, hatred, envy and fury, time and again end in teeth-gritting and door-slamming, as well as decreasing proximity. These feelings tend to make individuals detach themselves in terms of time, and keep a distance from a person for a while. Anxiety and sadness are frequently communicated through slumped posture, regular head-scratching extreme fidgeting and slow movement. Affection and happiness makes us want to spend adequate time with others, to give gifts, engage in mutual eye contact and enhance our physical appearance to those around us (Malouff et al, 2010).

According to (Perkins Les, 2008), *an attractive environment* makes people feel happy and relaxed, it also shapes our communication. Sometimes married couples have difficulty communicating because of what they learnt and believed as they grew up, and how they were taught to socialize with others. Temperaments also have a part to play on how people communicate. Though nonverbal messages are ambiguous, they are more intense and expressive. Nonverbal communication shows what someone is feeling, and that is why even without words, a person's body language portrays a lot about their emotions. (Lavner & Bradbury, 2010).

Other research has predominantly demonstrated that nonverbal negative expressions are more common in unhappy relationships, whereas nonverbal positive expressions are more prevalent in happy relationships (Rauer, Williams & Jensen, 2015).

In fact, unhappy couples appear to display more aggression and dissatisfaction than happy couples during conflict interaction. Instead, happier couples appear, during disputes, to show more agreement and love. Scott et al (2013)'s study indicates that subjective conflict effects predict current and subsequent matrimonial satisfaction.

(Weger, 2015) found that those with a positive and less negative impact were more likely than three years later to be happy with marriages at the time of the dispute. Williamson et al (2015) research has shown that the strictly negative and positive effect is not as significant as the relation between the positive and negative impacts.

Haptics is the study of communication by touch. Touch is extremely powerful it has the power to comfort someone in moments of conflict and sorrow when words alone cannot. A lack of nonverbal communication competence related to touch could have negative interpersonal consequences; for example, if we do not follow the advice we have been given about the importance of a firm handshake, a person might make negative judgments about our confidence or credibility.

A lack of competence could have dire negative consequences, including legal punishment, if we touch someone inappropriately (intentionally or unintentionally). Touch is necessary for human social development, and it can be welcoming, threatening, or persuasive. There are several types of touch, including functional-professional, social-polite, friendship-warmth, love-intimacy, and sexual-arousal touch.

Touch is also important at more intimate levels. At the friendship-warmth level, touch is more important and more ambiguous than at the social-polite level. At this level, touch interactions are important because they serve a relational maintenance purpose and communicate closeness, liking, care, and concern (A. Judy, 2009).

Proxemics refers to how space and distance influence communication. We only need look at the ways in which space shows up in common metaphors to see that space, communication, and relationships are closely related. For example, when we are content with and attracted to someone, we say we are “close” to him or her.

When we lose connection with someone, we may say he or she is “distant.” In general, space influences how people communicate and behave. Unexpected breaches of personal space can lead to negative reactions; someone has violated our space willingly. Proxemics Distances Scholars have identified four zones for Americans, which are public, social, personal, and intimate distance.

Public Space: (12 Feet or More) Public and social zones refer to the space four or more feet away from our body, and the communication that typically occurs in these zones is formal and not intimate. Public space starts about twelve feet from a person and extends out from there. This is used to encourage the audience to see or to retain some distance as a power symbol, or for safety and security purposes, if someone has a famous or influential individual such as a celebrity or an executive.

Social space (4–12 Feet) Contact in the social area used in a professional or informal relationship. In many professional environments, this gap is preferred because it eliminates the suspicion of errors. A good example is a classroom set-up; most of your lecture audience really would be in your social area rather than your public area, which is

advantageous in fact because it will help you interact more with it.

Personal space (1.5–4 foot) The space which begins with our physical bodies and spans four feet refers to personal and intimate zones. These areas are reserved for families, friends and other relevant persons. We have a great deal of contact in the personal field.

Even though we are getting closer to the physical body of another person, we may use verbal communication at this point to signal that our presence in this zone is friendly and not intimate. Even people who know each other could be uncomfortable spending too much time in this zone. We can easily touch the other person as we talk to them; briefly placing a hand on his or her arm or engaging in other light social touching that facilitates conversation, self-disclosure, and feelings of closeness.

Intimate Space: As we breach the invisible line that is 1.5 feet from our body, we enter the intimate zone, which is reserved for only the closest friends, family, and romantic/intimate partners. It is impossible to completely ignore people when they are in this space, even if we are trying to pretend that we are ignoring them. A breach of this space can be comforting in some contexts and annoying or frightening in others (Helio Fred, 2012). We need regular human contact that is not just verbal but also physical. Being close to someone and feeling their physical presence can be very comforting when words fail.

There are also social norms regarding the amount of this type of closeness that can be displayed in public, as some people get uncomfortable even seeing others interacting in the intimate zone. While some people are comfortable engaging in or watching others engage in PDAs (public displays of affection).

Territoriality is the use of space or object to represent ownership, it's an unconscious drive for taking up spaces and protecting them. Many species and individuals share this drive from animal packs to individual citizens to countries. We assert those places as ours, whether it's a gang area, a quarter claimed by a specific salesperson, the favorite place in which we sleep at a restaurant, our regular school table or the side of the bed in which we sleep. There are three main divisions for territory: primary, secondary, and public.

A person's house, yard, room, desk, or the side of the bed, could be considered primary territories. Secondary territories do not belong to us and are not exclusively under our control, but they are associated with us, which may lead us to assume that the space will be open and available to us when we need it without us taking any further steps to reserve it, this happens in classrooms or in the office.

Public territories are open to all people, for example a church. According to Judy 2009, People are allowed to mark public territory and use it for a limited period of time which makes it difficult to manage for some people and can lead to conflict. To avoid this type of situation, people use a variety of objects that are typically recognized by others as nonverbal cues that mark a place as temporarily reserved for example, jackets, bags, papers, or a drink.

Artifacts are aspects of physical appearance that may include rings and tattoos, brands and logos, clothes, cars, watches, handbags, eye glasses which may project gender role or position, class or status (McLean, 2014). For instance, the way a couple dresses or organizes the dining table can speak volumes.

2.6 Conflict Resolution Approaches

Conflict in itself is not bad. The problem is how spouses handle it. There are two types of conflict. Basic conflicts touch on expected roles of a marriage, for example if a woman decides not to support her husband and yet it is expected. Non basic conflicts touch on issues that are major but the core of the marriage is not shaken.

For example, a man may want to invest in one sector, and the wife may want to invest in another sector. Since they both agree that investment is important, they have the ability to resolve the disagreement and decide the way forward (Phillips et al., 2012).

Having a happy marriage does not depend so much on the choice of spouse as compared to how conflicts are handled. Knowing how to fight fair goes a long way in ensuring closeness and togetherness (Pelt, 2008). Many conflicts can be avoided if a couple asks themselves if the concern is worth quarrelling about. Since spouses know quite a bit of what the other person dislikes, being able to stay away from doing the dislikes will go a long way in avoiding unnecessary conflict.

Disagreeing is expected in relationships because spouses have different thoughts. What matters is that spouses can talk out the differences and respect each other's opinions. A good way to handle matters is to start with praise or empathy before criticism. It is possible to argue without quarrelling, since sharing different opinions does not have to get out of hand.

When deciding to handle conflict in the marriage, know when and where to bring up the concerns, be clear about what the problem is, handle one problem at a time, be respectful at all times, look for appropriate solutions and work with one that both spouses can agree on (Pelt, 2009). There is a relationship between negative conflict resolution

styles and marital conflicts. In addition, positive conflict resolution styles reduce such conflicts (Navidian, Bahari, & Kermansaravi, 2014). Presently, there is destructive and constructive conflict management. Destructive conflict management uses negative behavior like manipulation, avoidance and the like. Constructive conflict management however has the motive of both spouses learning from each other's differences. Being able to handle conflicts well was mostly detected among couples who were able to summarize, paraphrase, validate each other and clarify. Therefore, it was found that being able to work through conflicts together was important because using more negative and less positive statements ensured conflicts (Phillips et al., 2012).

The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) discusses four conflict resolution styles. This entails solving, participating in disputes, withdrawal and enforcement. Positive issue resolution explores the ability of partners to settle disputes. Conflict participation believes multiple ways partners can target each other.

Withdrawal applies in how spouses may refuse to continue talking on an issue. Compliance is where spouses may accommodate without desiring to. Some conflict may be important for a healthy marital relationship, but too much or too little signals destructive possibilities. Some good ways suggested for resolving conflict are supporting one's spouse through a strategy like active listening, assertion, and negotiation.

Negotiation looks at choosing to agree, bargaining and coexistence. Married couples can choose to agree so that they can move on beyond the conflict. Bargaining entails both spouses looking for what works best for their relationship. Sometimes differences may not be resolved, and so if a married couple has to live with certain factors that they cannot fully agree on, they should be able to find a way to live with them (Phillips

et al., 2012).

Just as in communication, distressed couples operate in a pursuit interaction that feeds the cyclical pattern. As one partner pressures, demands, and criticizes, in an attempt to engage the other partner, the response from the other partner is to become defensive, retreat, and avoid the conflict altogether (Zarch, Marashi & Raji, 2014).

This pattern is important to consider as it describes the cycle of conflict within couples. By identifying the cycle, couples need skills and tools to help remedy their issues and resolve conflict. The Conflict Resolution Styles Assessment (CRSA) would highlight the individual typology and help couples understand how they resolve conflict.

Thereby gaining information and understanding that is needed to enhance communication and build new skills. According to Yoshimura (2013), Providing basic communication and dispute resolution capabilities is one of the best ways of enhancing compatible relationships between partners. These critical skills have been found to help families successfully and healthily overcome marital disputes. Resolving conflict in couples is possible. This starts by knowing why the conflict has arisen in the first place and handling it amicably. Conflict can be handled by understanding the concern at hand, focusing on it and not the people portraying it, evaluating possible actions to help deal with the concern, understanding and acknowledging each person's contribution to the concern and working out a mutual agreement.

2.7 Attitude and Spousal Communication

Spouses come from different cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and family members are likely to have diverse personalities and levels of development, which

will affect how they communicate. For instance, a person who is introverted and emphasizes on emotions will probably talk differently from a person who is extrovert and focuses on perceptions and cognitive. When one person communicates from a state of feelings and another communicates from a state of cognition or behaviour, it is as if they are speaking two different languages.

People who have a good marriage outlook seem to show strong marriage support (Wood et al., 2008). Attitude is negative or positive attitude (Sylvia Smith, 2013). It would be difficult to achieve success in your marriage if you feel rancor, resentment, or anger towards your wife, and maintaining a positive attitude towards your spouse will make you closer, more truthful and happier for you both.

Attitude is complicated. There are numerous components that make up any person's attitude, each component overlaying and colouring the others resulting in a singular "Attitude" that those around us perceive. Arrogance, authenticity, confidence, interest, defensiveness, pessimism, passion, doubt, nervousness, exuberance, optimism among others might all contribute to what somebody perceives as your attitude. (Ahmadi, K et al. (2010).

According Bradbury and Karney (2013), early approaches led by the theory of social exchange proposed that the ratios of positive to negative actions in the relationship could differentiate between happy marriages and unhappy marriages. Since then, studies have shown consistently that unhappy couples have less constructive contact activity in dispute resolution than relatively fulfilled couples.

Likelihood and familiarity with the behaviors of partners are related to positive results (Lakey & Cronin, 2008). Attitudes are assessments and emotions of the things,

individuals, circumstances, challenges, events and actions in memory (Posavac, Vanous, Ho, & Fazio, 2007). Attitudes are also increasingly shown to play an important role in interpersonal behaviour. Several studies have shown that attitudes similarity is linked to partners' liking (Gaunt, 2006; Luo & Kohnen, 2005). Research has recently shown that acquaintance with attitudes of the partners can be vital to help, prevent disputes and maintain close connections (Sanbonmatsu, Uchino, Wong, & Seo, 2012).

In terms of personality and values, political attitudes and religious characteristics, Kuhn and Luo (2005) assessed similarities and concluded that while similar personalities were linked to matrimonial satisfaction, certain values, attitudes and religiosity had no relation to marital satisfaction. Familiarity with other people's behaviors can also be practical, which will make it easier to prevent confrontation and better meet the needs of partners. (Sanbonmatsu et al. 2011) found that partners familiar with each other more positively and self-esteem during their day-to-day life reported. A subsequent research (Sanbonmatsu et al., 2012) has shown that familiarity with attitudes of partners is correlated with accounts of less struggle and exaggeration, better conduct and greater membership.

In marriage, our attitudes need to be tested and whether our opinions are focused on reality or misconceptions. We should check if our spirits are right about each other and if the things that we believe about each other are true should be keen to know if our partners are ignoring us on purpose. We have about seven negative attitudes that kill a marriage, like pride and instead show humility, avoid ungratefulness and embrace gratitude, ignore irritation and annoyance and embrace enjoyment and acceptance, always practice forgiveness and avoid selfishness (Aristide et al, 2016).

Couples should learn how to cultivate positive attitudes towards each other; they should consciously choose to focus on the positives in each other. Learn about each other's emotional needs, things that allow your partner to feel loved and valued by you. It is unlikely that both couples share the same emotional needs, so one should not make the mistake of only showing love in the way that they like to receive love.

Instead, make intentional, regular, and daily deposits into each other's emotional bank account in ways that your partner recognizes as loving, caring behavior. A partner might have to go out of their comfort zone. If your partner needs to be touched and you are not a "touchy" person, it is time to learn a new love language. Express fondness by touching each other affectionately every day. Tender touch is a fundamental need for human beings. Touch is healing. Your body is an extension of you, so when someone touches your body tenderly it is like they are touching and acknowledging you. Lastly, couples should build their friendship with each other by tuning in to each other's feelings and needs, intentionally looking for ways to express caring, spending time with each other, and having fun together (Peter Svenneby, 2012).

2.8 Theoretical framework

The study is guided by two theories, the Expectancy Violation Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

2.8.1 Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT)

This is an interpersonal communication theory that analyzes how people respond to unexpected breaches of social standards and expectations. Judee K. Burgoon suggested the

theory in the late 70s be followed up as a nonverbal theory of expectation abuses and persisted in the 1980s and 90s, based on Burgoon's proxemics study. Burgoon initially studied individual allowances and perceptions of personal distance and how reactions to infringements of personal distance were affected by the extent of the infringers' liking and their relationships.

This theory sees communication as an exchange of behaviors, where one individual's behavior can be used to violate the expectations of another. Participants in communication will perceive the exchange either positively or negatively, depending upon an existing personal relationship or how favorably the violation is perceived. Violations of expectancies cause arousal and compel the recipient to initiate a series of cognitive appraisals of the violation (Griffin, 2011).

Beyond proxemics and examining how people interpret violations in many given communicative contexts, EVT also makes specific predictions about individuals' reaction to given expectation violations: individuals reciprocate or match someone's unexpected behavior, and they also compensate or counteract by doing the opposite of the communicator's behavior. EVT also emphasizes on an individual perception of the interaction in a particular situation. When the couples are communicating will create an expectation of how the other will react. People are bound to behave differently according to the cultural values they grow up in and this influences the reaction of the people considerably.

This theory is relevant to my study in that it is dependent on private space. The single space is the limit that we hold and independence is granted to the people we are close to. The people with whom we relate according to our connection with them are

supposed to have particular personal space.

EVT states that wives prefer, when a breach of the desired conduct occurs, to hold private spaces. In short, the effects of nonverbal in appropriation on interpersonal contact are expected, differentiated and clarified. This theory helped the researcher understand better objective one and three on nonverbal communication.

2.8.2 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was developed by sociologist George Homans around 1958, and it states that social behavior is the result of an exchange process. Most relationships are made up of a certain amount of give-and-take, but this does not mean that they are always equal.

The purpose of this exchange is to maximize benefits and minimize costs. According to social exchange theory couples assess the costs and benefits of their relationships and make decisions about their relationships based on those assessments. When the risks outweigh the rewards, people will terminate or abandon the relationship.

Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) cited several core assumptions of Social Exchange Theory, these core assumptions are outlined as follows: (1) Social Exchanges are characterized by interdependence: That is, the ability to obtain profits in a relationship is dependent on the ability to provide others with rewards; (2) The emergent experiences of relationships guide subsequent exchanges; social exchanges are regulated by norm of reciprocity; (3) Social exchanges are regulated by norms of fairness; (4) The dynamics of interaction within relationships and the stability of relationships over time results from the contrasting levels of interactions and dependence experienced by the participants in the

relationship.

Further spouses' level of fulfillment of expectations will be determined on the basis of whether they are experiencing more or less of a behavior than anticipated. Therefore, the evaluation of the level of fulfillment of marital expectations will be based on their perceptions of costs and benefits from the marriage relative to their investment.

According to Sabatelli and Shehan (1993). The higher the level of fulfillment of marital expectations the more likely the couple is to experience marital satisfaction. If couples are experiencing less than expected on a majority of the issues, they will have an unsatisfactory marital experience.

The reason why social exchange theory is an appropriate theory to this study, relates to two propositions; one, couple make sensible conclusions concerning behavior and two rational conclusions are based on perceptions of net return. Meaning a couple's behavior will determine the reaction of the outcome. This theory explains why people stay in a relationship; people weigh what they can get out of the relationship versus the cost. For example, the man can decide to buy a house and expect the wife to furnish it. Social exchange theory's basic premise of human interaction is that people behave in a cost/benefit way that will be most beneficial to them. The theory helped the researcher understand objective two and four better.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is defined as a logically developed network of interrelationships among variables deemed to be the integral part of the dynamics of the situation being investigated.

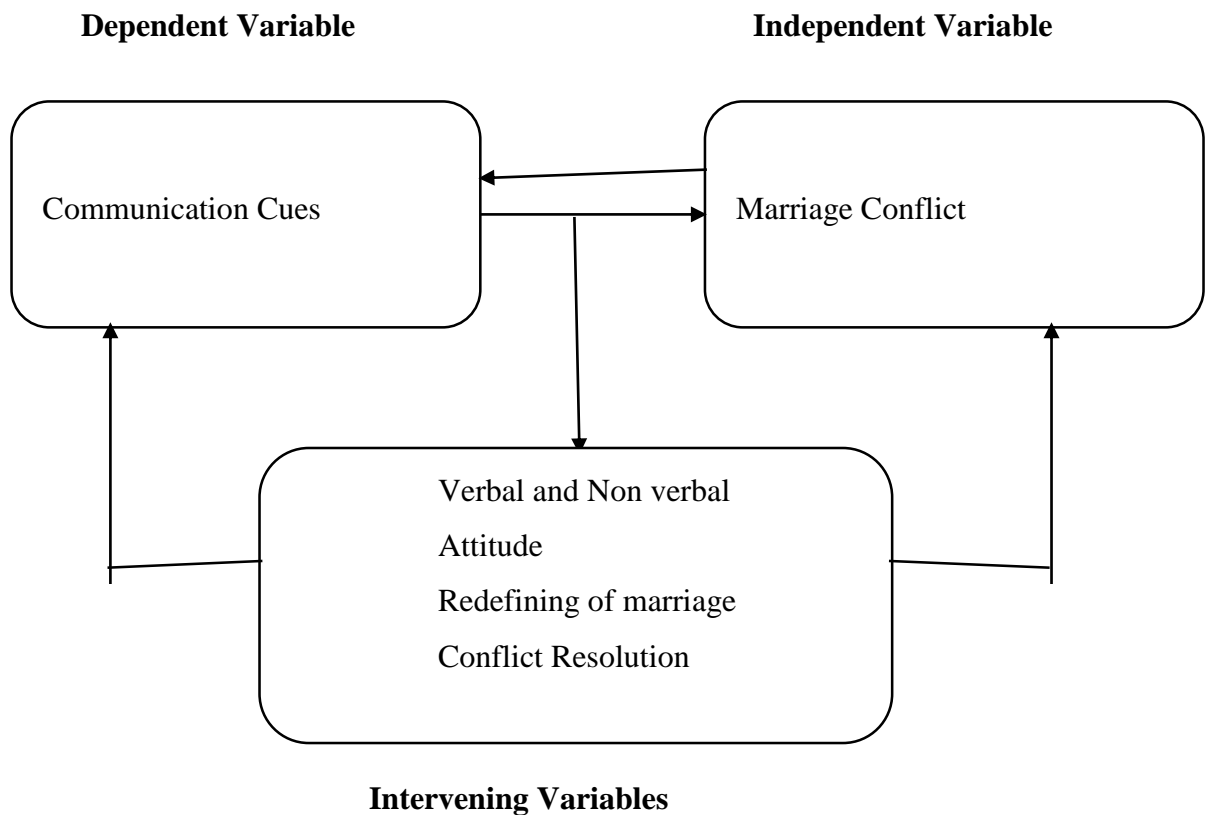


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework

Diagram 2.9 represents the dependent variable as the communication cues, the independent variable as marriage conflict and how they have influenced each other. Intervening variables in this study which are verbal and nonverbal cues, attitude communication behavior and conflict resolution determined how the communication cues influenced marriage conflict and vice versa, among middle class among middle class couples, in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter describes the research methodology that guided the study. These include, research design and approach, study site, research method, study population, population sample, sampling method, data collection and research Instruments, validity and reliability, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive case study to investigate the cues in communication behavior among conflicting middle-class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. Descriptive research studies are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group (Kothari, 2014). Descriptive design allowed the researcher to gather information, summarize, and interpret data for the purpose of clarification (Creswell, 2017).

3.3 Study Site

The study was conducted in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The preference for selecting Embakasi Constituency was because it has middle class estates like Donholm, Imara Daima and Greenfields which are closely together. Another reason for choosing Nairobi is for convenience and proximity to the researcher because of the current Nairobi County Covid 19 pandemic restriction of movement laws or lockdown instilled in the country by the government to limit spread of the virus. Lately, these areas have been in

focus due to the large number of cases of marital conflict among couples highlighted in the media.

3.4 Research Approach

Qualitative analysis is a logical examination used by different subjective examination methods, such as observing tactics, face to face discussions and contextual inquiries, to collect non-numerical knowledge (Kothari 2014). Qualitative research approaches highly contribute to understanding of complex issues like conflict, among couples. Qualitative data collection tools were through in-depth interviews which allowed further probing, so as to get more accurate and detailed information, from the respondents on their opinions, experiences and feelings. (Maxwell, 2012).

3.5 Research Method

This study adopted the Case study method. Case studies enable a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. Different researchers have different definitions of case study. Yin, R.K (2017) says a case study is a complete study of a social unit, whether it be a person, a group, an organization, a family, or a society. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subject of study.

Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. All the above put together case study is a method of minute and detail study of a situation concerning a social unit in an intensive and

comprehensive manner in order to understand the personal as well as hidden dimensions of human life phenomenon (Kothari 2014).

One of the reasons for the recognition of case study as a research method is that researchers were becoming more concerned about the limitations of quantitative methods in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioral problems in question. Through case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioral conditions through the actor's perspective. (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006). The Case study method was relevant to my study because of the limited number of subjects to be studied and the small geographical area to be covered.

Also, it was suitable for collecting data pertaining to sensitive areas of phenomenon (Kothari 2014). In this case discussing personal issues required in-depth interview which in turn required a lot of time, hence helped the researcher to collect details regarding the diverse habits, traits and qualities of the study in question, this means understanding more on cues on communication behavior used during conflict escalation by differing couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The characteristics of case study align with this study because it is descriptive meaning data collected mainly emphasized on constructive or verbal descriptions of behavior or experience. Case study is narrowly focused meaning it offers a completed and comprehensive description of all facets of a social unit. Last but not least, case study is process oriented hence enables the researcher to explore and describe the nature of the process which occurs over a time.

3.6 Study Population

The study population consists of males and females who are married, separated or divorced and those who are intending to reunite. Professional Counselors and Religious

Instructors formed part of the key informants to give any additional information based on their day to day experiences when handling marital counseling.

In-depth interviews and semi structured interviews (face to face) was administered to the selected participants, through the following organizations, Divorce care Mavuno Church, and Dohnholm Catholic church groups that is Catholic Men Association (CMA) and Catholic Women Association (CWA).

3.7 Population Sample

The population sample of the study was 12 informants but I managed 10 participants, because one divorced man never came, and one conflicting couple it is the wife who came alone because the husband was unwell. Hence the actual size consisted of 1 separated lady, 1 separated man and 2 married conflicting couples (3 individuals), 2 divorced ladies, 1 divorced men and 1 couples who were once separated and are trying to reunite (2 individuals). 1 church marriage counselor and 1 professional counselor were the key informants because they have enough knowledge and experience about the issue at hand, they handle marriage issues which include divorce and even save marriages. The unit of analysis was a single individual in marriage and was selected through purposive sampling. Table 3.1 on sample size explains the categories of the study.

Table 3. 1 Sample Population

Category	Sample Population
Separated Ladies	1
Separated men	1
Married Couples	3
Divorced men	1
Divorced Ladies	2
Reunited couples	2
Total	10

3.8 Sampling Methods

Sampling refers to the procedure that is used to select a sample from the target population in a study. This study embraced Non probability sampling which was done through purposive sampling. The primary purpose of sampling for a qualitative researcher was to collect specific cases, events, or actions that can clarify or deepen the researchers understanding about the phenomenon under study. (Kothari, 2014). The sampling procedure per location is indicted in the table below:

Table 3. 2 Sample Population and Location

Category	Sample Population	Location
Separated Ladies	1	Donholm Catholic church
Separated men	1	Donholm Catholic church
Married Couples	3	Donholm Catholic church
Divorced men	1	Divorce care Mavuno church
Divorced Ladies	2	Divorce care Mavuno church
Reunited couples	2	Divorce care Mavuno Church
Total	10	

The participants come from Embakasi constituency and attend worship in Donholm and Mavuno Church.

3.9 Data Collection Method and Research Instruments

A face to face interview is a version of an in-depth interview which was preferred in this study. In-depth interview is an effective qualitative method for getting people to talk about their personal feelings, experience, attitudes, opinions, and detailed perceptions. (Rukwaru, 2015).

This face to face interview can be done in person or by mass media (phone, video call or webinar). In this study the in-depth interview was carried out face to face. When carrying out this type of interview, the researcher had ready discussion guide questions. Face to face gave the researcher the opportunity to interpret body language and facial expressions (Marshall, 2016).

Furthermore, an In-depth interview is one that takes place when the researcher interviews the study population (individually or in groups) so that the participants can freely express themselves about the topic being studied (Rukwaru, 2015).

This type of interview established a relationship among informants and that the researcher must have had an opening question. Face to face interviews were conducted using interview guides and the respondents were adequately given time to explore their perspectives, experiences and opinions regarding the main factors influencing communication behaviors among middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County.

The researcher also used tape recording with consent from the key informants and participants for backup purpose and also to ensure that everything that was said was taken in correctly. This was later transcribed.

3.10 Data Analysis and Presentation

Analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help to explain why those patterns are there. Data was transcribed and organised in relevance as per the study objectives and emerging themes were discussed. After transcribing the organization was done as follows:

Interviews from each respondent were coded, data for each object was identified and grouped together for ease of analysis, a textual analysis and framework was done and finally identification of word phrases and emerging themes. The data was presented using narrations and direct quotes from the respondents and Key informants.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), validity of a measurement tool refers to the degree to which a test is subjected to proper and accurate measurement of what it is supposed to measure. Validity, based on the perspective of Creswell (2014), is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to be measuring.

Validity is also the degree to which results obtained from analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under investigation. Mugenda and Mugenda (2010) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial. Reliability is stability over time and stability over rates

and is concerned with consistency and explicability of the study results or of measuring tools (Willis Yuko, 2016).

The researcher conducted a pilot study to check if the instruments used were understandable and clear to the respondents. Adequate preparation of the instruments under the guidance of the supervisor, to ascertain content validity and also ensure that the instrument items adequately represented all the objectives of the research were done.

After piloting the researcher with the guidance of the supervisor assessed the relevance of the content used in the instruments and developed changes for the purpose of improvement on the instrument and some objectives.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are systems of accepted beliefs which control the behavior of members on what is morally right or wrong. Researchers, being a universal family of people concerned with generation of new knowledge, also have a system of beliefs, which control their behaviour (Willis Yuko, 2016).

In order to uphold ethical considerations, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the School of Journalism and Communication, The University of Nairobi and ensured professional and ethical standards related to research were observed. Informed consent was sought from all those participated in the study, names were not indicated anywhere in the data collection tools for confidentiality.

The informants were briefed before and after the interview, that the information gathered was only to be used for the purposes of this academic study. These include procedures relating to the conduct of the interviews, confidentiality, voluntary informed

consent, voluntary disclosure, responsible processing and safe storage of the information as argued by Creswell (2014).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Overview

This chapter focused on analysing collected data according to the research objectives. The data was collected through in depth interviewing. The study used Christopher Moore conflict cycle to analyse whether communication cues between couples in conflict are understood by recipients as intended. The findings were represented through discussion. The research informants' identity was concealed through coding of their names. The following is the coding of the respondents:

Respondents	Code	No. of respondents
Conflicting couple I	CCI	1
Conflicting couples II	CCII	2
Divorced case man I	DCI	1
Divorced case lady II	DCII	1
Divorced case lady III	DCIII	1
Key Informant I	KII	1
Key Informant II	KIII	1
Separated case-lady I	SCI	1
Separated case- man II	SCII	1
Reuniting Couples	RUC	2

4.2 Verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle

This study paid attention to verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict. The study sought to establish whether couples interpret correctly verbal and non-verbal cues elicited by their spouses at different stages during their conflict. The study used Christopher Moore, (2014) conflict cycle (Table 4.2.1

below) to identify the use of verbal and non-verbal cues at different stages. Please find the whole complete table in (Appendix D).

Table 4. 1 Verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle

Stage	Latent – experience of communication breakdown	Emergency – evidence of conflict triggers: Abusive words	Escalation – hostilities intensify/ alliance building Communication is misdirected Misinformation and assumptions.	Polarization – relations breakdown, hurting deliberate. Public humiliation.	Entrapment - Honorable withdrawal impossible, revenge and re-creating new grievances. Humiliating.	De-escalation – interventions begin to reduce, negotiations, dialogue applied.
Communication – verbal	Am Not sure Why? Doubting me? Really? Absolutely no. Can't understand. Struggling to see your point. Ooh ok. I see. Never mind.	What!! Seriously!! Impatient. Wait a bit. This is your fault. You woman. What's your problem? Stop it!! Whatever!! Grow up. Careless.	Good for nothing Sucker. Liar. Lazy. Illiterate. Idiot. Fool. Nasty. Crook. Thief. Big headed. Vampire. Pig. .	Ugly. I regret knowing you. Disgusting. Cheap. Prostitute. Couch potato. Devil. Sadist. Poisonous. Criminal. Abort the child. Am not your dad. Am not an ATM.	You are not reasonable. Don't be selfish. Mean. Self-centered. Don't care about you. Bossy. Big headed. Forget it. Am done with you. Why don't you go away?	My love. Darling. Sweetheart My king. Precious. My world. Queen. Babe. Sorry. Forgive me. I love you. Never meant to hurt you. It will never happen again
Communication cues non-verbal	Avoidance Fidgeting Keep distance. Shaking of head. Eye rolling. Lost in thoughts. Sigh. Less attention.	Silence. Distance. Stops supporting the family. Frown. Banging doors. Weird facial expressions. Clicking. Clapping. Throwing of hands. Walks away. Fault	Cold. Moody. Edgy. Yelling. Sleeping separately. Drinking too much. Not picking calls. Not texting back. Sleeping on the couch. Forces me to clean the house. Serves food in plastic cups and plates.	Sleeping out. Too much drinking. Not eating at home. Rape. Keeps my phone with him. Not supporting the family. Packs my clothes. Dresses sexy. Block her from my	Autonomous space facial displeasure Fear. Guilt. Anxious. Confused. Seek intervention from family, church, friends or counselor. Crashes phone. Breaks the table.	Wink. Hug and kisses Buys gifts. Coffee and dinner date. Help in the kitchen. Holding hands. Spend time together. Cook your favorite meal. Clean and tidy house. Call and text back.

finding.	Serve him cold	phone.	Take him to	Pays bills.
Blame	food.	Family	court.	Gives me
game.	Hit him with an	meetings till	Attach his	cash.
Coming	object.	wee hours.	salary for	Folds clothes.
home late.	Shouts at the	Poured cold	child support.	Cooks.
	children.	water on	Attend	Shows
	I dress very	sofa	family	respect.
	smart.	Spit on her	meetings.	
		face.	Take care of	
		Took poison.	a sick man	
		Disappears	who	
		for months.	neglected us.	
		Throw the	When his	
		baby on the	family comes	
		sofa.	visiting I	
			have to feed	
			and host	
			them.	

4.2.1 Latent stage

Moore (2014) argued that during this stage the couples are in harmony but there is that feeling that everything is not alright, there is something that is wrong but one cannot really pinpoint or lay a hand on it. For instance, the following caption has verbal and non-verbal cues which showed that CCI were coming to a conflict:

My marriage has been a bliss for the better part of it, but when I got heavy, my husband began to change slowly by slowly I could see things were not as normal but nothing serious to worry about. So when the baby finally came he started to come home late and other times sleep in a different room when I asked he said the baby was crying too much and he needed enough sleep because he was working early mornings. For me I thought for sure he needed peace so I would excuse him knowing that the baby would outgrow the colic that was causing all the crying. As time went by he started drinking which he never used to before and when I asked he said he feels lonely, abandoned and unwanted I felt confused and some resentment. I thought he was becoming selfish because this was something new to all of us and I expected him to understand and encourage me. This hurt me and I kept quiet and avoided him. One day I wanted to take the baby for the normal clinics, I asked him to drop us at the hospital he laughed out loud and said when I was having the baby I knew what I was getting myself into so I should carry my own cross, this shocked me thought he was joking but true to his word he left us behind. (CCI). Please find the rest of the story in appendix E (a).

Although there were verbal and non-verbal cues indicating that CCI was coming to a conflict, they disregarded them. The couple exhibited signs that they were coming to a conflict because their verbal cues showed lack of understanding and at the same time rubbishing what they didn't understand as petty while the non-verbal cues showed keeping distance and less attention. There was a sign that something was not adding up but it was disregarded as a non-issue. The husband was said to have started keeping distance by sleeping in a different room citing that the baby was making too much noise and that he wanted to sleep as he was waking up very early in the mornings.

The wife misinterpreted this verbal cue that the husband for sure needed peace and so she excused him knowing that the baby would outgrow the colic that was causing all the crying. However, this study has established that this was a misinterpretation on CCI wife side because when the husband was asked by the father in-law what the problem was at a later stage of their conflict, he said that he was not ready for a baby who came in very fast and he felt like an intruder in his own house. CCI wife recounted it as follows:

Well, when I asked him to take the baby as I finished some work, he said that I should carry my own cross. I got so worked up and hit him with a pan and he spat on my face as he tried grabbing me. We fought and enough was enough, I called my parents and explained what had been happening including their visitation which was not welcomed. When he was asked by my father what the problem was he said he was not ready for a baby who came in very fast and he felt like an intruder in his own house. (CCI)

The husband's verbal cue connoted exactly that from the beginning when he said that he felt lonely, abandoned and unwanted. This indicated he felt that the wife was giving him less attention. Even though these verbal and the non-verbal cues showed that the couple was coming to a conflict, none of the spouses interpreted it as such. They just

started misunderstanding each other henceforth.

The utterance that the husband felt lonely, abandoned and unwanted left his wife confused with some resentment so she misunderstood that the husband was becoming selfish. She never interpreted the husband's verbal and non-verbal cues as an indicator of onset of a conflict. The conflict escalated because everyone wanted to be understood and not understand the other. The husband wanted to be understood why he had started distancing himself by sleeping in a different room while the wife also expected the husband to understand and encourage her because according to her having the newborn was something new to all of them.

Lack of understanding each other's verbal and non-verbal cues during the latent stage after the conception of the baby escalated their conflict to the next levels of the conflict cycle. Their conflict escalation can be explained by Expectancy Violation Theory, thus, the couple's attitude towards each other changed because each felt disappointed by the other.

KII, in appendix (F), observed that children can bring a rift between couples. KII is quoted in the extract below:

When the children are many, most of the women become busy and switch their energy towards their children and neglect the man of the house. And on the other hand, men tend to change because of the responsibilities at hand. (KII)

4.2.2 Emergency Stage

Most of the respondents interviewed during this study reported that they tried to compromise with their 'changed' spouse's behaviour during the latent stage, but they were not able to fish out the problem. Thus, conflict escalated to an emergency stage. The verbal

and non-verbal cues during this stage showed that their middle ground was no more. Dalgeish et al (2015) argued that when the level of communication does not match, it results in problems that disrupt the marital psychodynamics and its functionality.

This stage is characterized by confrontations as the couple try to outwit their spouses in the best way possible. This study observed that the most prompted verbal and non-verbal cues during this stage exhibit ignorance, escapisms, extra-careful, temperamental behaviours and absconding responsibilities. For example, DCII husband said that he was ‘not amused,’ ‘declined the idea of getting pregnant’ and ‘he said he didn’t have money’. Non-verbal cues include how he distanced himself from the wife and children after she disregarded him and went ahead with her idea of getting pregnant. DCII quote below had verbal and non-verbal cues depicted during emergency stage:

I noticed that he was always very smart; he took extra care of himself to an extent of ironing his inner wears, I thought because he was staying alone, maybe that’s why I felt like he was acting weird. I was promoted at work. I came with the good news but he was not amused. I asked him we get another baby he declined but I went ahead and got pregnant, when I told him he become very moody, distanced himself avoided me, when I tried to find out what was the problem he said he was fine, one day I asked him to walk me to the supermarket he quickly said he can’t walk with a person who walks like a penguin who is untidy and my age was not supposed to be giving birth we are past that, so he refused to take me I asked for the cash I go by myself he said he didn’t have money. He became worse to a point that he didn’t want to hear or see the other children play, he stopped talking to them and he wanted a spotless clean house which is next to impossible with children in the house. At times he would pour water on the side of bed where I sleep and on the sofa, he wanted me to sleep standing. When I was about to get the baby I requested him to be coming home early in case of anything in fact it’s like I told him to disappear. On my due date I called and he didn’t pick my calls and he knew very well what was happening. A neighbor took me to the hospital, I delivered the baby and wrote him a text message, he never replied and never came to see us. After a day I called him and he asked about the naming. He said I can name the baby after whoever I wanted. I can even call him Mweri, Njata, Bururi kana Kirimo (moon, star, earth or monster). My sister came on the discharge day and helped me around

and I was wondering where to go, but I had no choice but to go to my home. When we got there, shock on us we were told they Moved. I almost collapsed. I felt cheated, confused and embarrassed. We went to my sister's place and her husband took upon himself to look for my husband and talk to him and find out why he was acting recklessly. (DCII). Please find the rest of the story in appendix E (b).

DCII did not understand the husband's verbal cue when he said that she should not get pregnant. She disregarded his verbal cue and went ahead to get herself pregnant. She thought that getting pregnant was a good idea and that the husband would soon or later welcome it but instead it brought more troubles to their marriage. Before she pushed on with her idea, she should have been guided by the earlier non-verbal cues that they were already in a conflict by the fact that the husband was not amused when she told him that she had been promoted at her work place. Their misunderstanding according to DCII started after the husband's job transfer. Unfortunately, she did not understand that they had gotten into a conflict until it had reached the emergency stage. Sadly, their misunderstanding concerning her conception that had developed during the emergency stage led to their divorce.

The misunderstanding was that the husband thought that he had made himself verbally clear about the notion of having another baby, but the wife went on with the idea thinking that the husband was somehow going to accept the child later, but that never materialized. She ignored her husband's verbal and non- verbal cues. She overlooked her husband's behaviour even though she had noted that he was '*acting weird*' since his transfer. (Appendix F) KII, observed that job transfers can start a conflict. See in the extract below:

You find that the family was living together happily but once one partner is transferred or relocates to a different location, temptations are high and they find themselves getting involved elsewhere. (KII)

4.2.3 Escalation stage

DCIII husband's job transfer really got him involved elsewhere as this study observed. Their verbal and non-verbal cues indicated intensified hostility. The kind of insults that they hurled towards each other during their verbal confrontations indicated that their conflict had flared up. The following DCIII's extract has verbal and non-verbal cues that showed that their conflict was at escalation stage according to the study.

I noticed that my husband had this habit of carrying his phone with him even in the bathroom and one day he forgot it on the table and a love message popped out of a lady saying she misses him and when he is going up country. That is when I knew most of the time he was not even going home, when I confronted him he started calling me names like, liar, lazy, idiot, cheap, ugly, disgusting he said he was sick of me and I called him womanizer, dog, devil, prostitute I demanded to know who this lady was he didn't hide he told me it was someone I knew, immediately I went to her home and I found her washing clothes I poured the dirty water on her and brought a lot of commotion the husband who was in the house came out and I told him the whole story, he was also a friend to my then husband. The husband went to attack my then husband and threatened to kill him if he did not leave his wife alone. He later went to the priest and reported what was happening and they later broke up. I kept wondering why he was cheating on me, was I dressing badly, I decided to change my wardrobe and started taking good care of myself. He soon became jealous and kept on asking why I had changed my dressing and he started tracking me and threatening me that one day he will kill me. One day as we were urging he took away my phone and kept it for a week, this really hurt me. On another incident was called again from our rural home a lady was asking if I was around because she saw clothes washed and hanged, I told the lady that I was in Nairobi she confirmed to me that there was a lady there, I called my husband and funny enough he did not deny he said there was a woman yes just doing cleaning when he came we fought he even said after I called I spoiled everything and they broke up, mind you this is a different lady, I broke his phone I remember praying to God to help me separate with him and from that day we started sleeping in separate rooms. (DCIII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (c).

Even though DCIII had sensed that something was not adding up within their marriage, she believed the husband's verbal cues when he told her that he was visiting their rural home just to say hello to his departed father. It would have been a good idea for her to have accompanied her husband to their rural home and say hello to the deceased together. However, she was comfortable with the answer that the husband had given her even though the non-verbal cues stated otherwise. DCIII interpreted the husband's frequent visitation to their rural home as a way of mourning his dead father. This was a misunderstanding because the husband was using his dead father as an excuse for him to visit their rural home with his mistresses far away from the wife.

While the wife showed that she understood her husband by believing in what he had told her, the husband saw a fool and a lazy person in her according to his later insults after it was confirmed that he had been cheating all along. According to her, she was letting him to mourn his father but according to him she was a fool because she believed him that he was just going there to say hello to his father. DCIII was just misinformed.

The couple was unable to interpret each other's verbal and non-verbal cues. For instance, after DCIII was cheated by the husband severally with different women and was also called ugly, she thought she was indeed ugly and changed her dress code for the husband to stop cheating on her. Instead of the husband understanding that she had changed her dress code for him so that he would stop seeing other women, he became jealous and even threatened to kill her. So lack of proper interpretation of each other's verbal and non-verbal cues brought their marriage into its knees leading to their divorce at a later stage.

According to the theory of social exchange, people keep relationships that are beneficial to them. In this case DCIII evaluated their marriage as a liability, thus leading to a divorce. Their marriage was marred with infidelity and insecurities. KII cited infidelity as one of the main issues that cause marital conflict. Coincidentally, all the main issues causing marital conflicts that KII cited matched with the non-verbal cues during the escalation stage according to the excerpt below:

The main marital conflicting issues that have been handled include mostly child support, infidelity, negligence and withdrawal of family support. (KII).

4.2.4 Polarization stage

SCI fits to be used as an example during the polarization stage of their conflict, including usage of dehumanizing statements, deliberate hurting and public humiliation. Basically, the verbal and non-verbal cues exchanged by the couple showed that they wanted nothing to do with each other; thus, their marriage had become a battlefield. SCI exchanged harsh words with her husband after he stopped sending her money and stopped buying her food.

Other incidences include the physical assaults, what he had told his girlfriend about his wife, what he told his wife after she conceived their second born, what he told his son when he asked for a birthday cake and SCI act of attempting suicide all indicated that their conflict was polarized. The verbal and non-verbal cues in the SCI's extract below showed that their conflict was in polarization stage:

When he started getting money from his side hustle which was singing he completely changed and started abusing me physically called me names like ugly, cheap, poor, illiterate, you have no brains, you are not my class and he began sleeping out. For me I saw a devil in him and I started praying for my family. When I got our baby he said it wise I go to their rural home to get help and advice from his mum, since this was our first born. Months passed by when I asked when we should be joining him he said he wanted to open a business of my choice and see how it goes. If it does well he will take a loan and boost it, I agreed because we were getting along with his mum. The business was doing fine. He came home with the loan as promised and told his mother his intentions. The mum declined and advised him to buy a big TV set and a car to enjoy the things that he didn't get when growing up, so the plan changed and was deeply hurt. He went back to work and I was determined to make the business flourish even more and for sure it did very well and it reached a point he stopped sending me cash, he stopped buying food and when I asked he said I was rich I had enough cash so we should start sharing responsibilities. I refused we quarreled he called me dog, big headed, useless, he said he hated me and I called him prostitute, couch potato, mama's boy, mad, also told him I regret knowing him, from there he didn't come to visit for a two weeks then for a month when I called he didn't pick nor return my calls. I shared what I was going through with his mother of which somehow she knew what was happening since we stayed in the same house. To my disbelief the mother said I would leave his son alone for as long as I was the legitimate wife. I let his son enjoy life with whoever pleases him. This was too much for me to bear. I couldn't even share with my mother because she was against our union from the word go. I became depressed. The business started going down and soon it collapsed. I was very broke and I packed my bags and went to Nairobi without telling him. I regret doing that, I found another woman busy cooking she welcomed me and the baby calmly and called my husband babe to come and see the visitors, when he came he looked down and the girlfriend was confused we started a fight the girl said he told her that his wife died while giving birth she didn't know we existed. The lady fled and he followed her, I cried the whole night and the fact that he said I was dead made me mad. The following morning I bought poison and took it, I just wanted to die. (SCI). Please find the rest of the story in appendix E (d).

There was a misunderstanding in this couple's verbal and non-verbal cues. For instance, there was a time that the husband told SCI that he hated her, she was not his class and another time he told her that he did not want a wife and therefore, he packed her clothes for her to leave. She seemed to have misinterpreted his utterance and the act of also packing her clothes has something done out of anger, so instead of going to her parent's

home, she went to their rural matrimonial home waiting for the husband to calm down.

However, his verbal and nonverbal cues continued to show that he really meant what he had said about not wanting a wife because he not only stopped supporting his wife and children but also was reported to have started a new life with a girlfriend. The verbal and non-verbal cues surrounding his marriage life right from the beginning showed that he might have never wanted a wife in the first place. The first indicator was how their marriage was conducted and the kind of defense and energy that his parents had put into it to ensure that he got the wife.

According to SCI, her mother had rejected their marriage citing that she was too young, thus, she didn't see wife at her age. This was because she had just cleared O' level education and was yet to join college. But the in-laws were quick to say that they would educate her so her mother should stop worrying about that. This showed that the husband's parents were so much into their son getting married more than him. Besides that, the SCI's husband verbal and non-verbal cues in different incidences cited above also conformed to his notion that he didn't want a wife. He was reported to have advised his wife to abort their second born when he learned that she was pregnant. This indicated that he didn't want more responsibilities as a family man. This indicated that he was dodging the responsibilities of raising the baby. Evidently, there was something fishy about him with permanent relationships like a marriage and giving birth. His verbal cues connoted that he never wanted a permanent relationship, thus, no permanent attachments like babies.

He once lied to his mistresses that he was a widower because his wife died while giving birth. The wife was very infuriated when she learned about that, thus, she took poison to end her life. In another incidence, he denied his own son by telling him that he

was not his father and also refused to buy him a birthday cake as he said he was not an ATM machine. The wife was enraged by such utterances to the extent that she regretted knowing him. All these verbal and non-verbal cues depicted that this couple was polarized. However, misinterpretation of the verbal and non-verbal cues during their conflict escalated their conflict into a polarization stage. The development of their conflict conformed to the theory of expectancy violation while their conflict de-escalation conformed to social exchange theory.

4.2.5 Entrapment stage

The study shows that, during the entrapment stage, verbal and non-verbal cues show that one is willing to put up with a dysfunctional marriage for the sake of reasons beyond them. However, these verbal and non-verbal cues connote that the couple is struggling to stay together. Some marriages that do exist during this stage cite that their children are the root cause why their marriage still exists. Others acknowledge the interventions mounted on them from the beginning for instance, their wedding vows. CCII verbal and non-verbal cues exhibited the entrapment stage. The following extract has verbal and non-verbal cues during entrapment stage as CCII recounted:

I came to discover that he had liver cancer and what pains me most is that I have to take care of the person who abandoned us when we needed him most. I do this because of the vows I made during our wedding. We go for family meetings together and pretend that we are a very happy couple but in our house we are strangers. We also attended school functions together when he could. Right now he is bed ridden. This has taken a toll on me. I have to wake up very early, prepare his special food which is always blended, I take him for his chemotherapy all by myself, his family does not support us in any way not even giving us moral support, at least someone to help me take him for his clinics, while I go to work. My friends and family who supported me when he was not there feel betrayed and are bitter about my actions. I am a manager in a big reputable firm. I have to go for huge

meetings and I have to smile to friends, colleagues and my juniors and the society at large but am really hurting inside. I have to nurse him every day and night. My life has become a nightmare as I see him suffer and go through a lot of pain. He has really drained me emotionally mentally and financially. I feel misused and not appreciated. This man has 10 siblings and no one has ever volunteered to come and help me nurse him. My work revolves around Kenyatta National Hospital, work and home it's not easy. (CCII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (e).

The verbal and non-verbal cues in the excerpt above depicted tolerance and interventions. CCII tolerated her mother in-law even after losing five babies. However, this was enabled through the intervention of their pastor and family members. She also endured infidelity from her husband through the intervention of his mother and their best man during their wedding. She put up with her husband behaviour of raping her even after making her hear what was happening between him and his mistress in their bedroom.

At some point, she even sought police intervention after she was publicly humiliated as the 'husband snatcher' and almost got stabbed with a knife after the husband and his mistress ganged up against her. After that episode, she involved their best couple who played him their wedding tape just to remind him of his wedding vows but he told them he was just acting during his wedding day. Even with such utterance, she still tolerated him. He would later show up in her house when he became very weak and sick and she still welcomed him. She even made an effort to search for him when he didn't come back after he had said that he went to work. Even though earlier on he used to visit his children empty handed she would let him see them. At some point she was confused whether to let him in or not when he finally came to live with them after he got sick. However, she said that she allowed him in because the children were happy to see their dad.

The misunderstanding of each other's verbal and non-verbal cues could be spotted right from their wedding day. The husband made vows which the wife thought he meant what he said on that day but only for him to negate his wedding vows and said that he was just acting. The wife thought he was genuine with his vow that is why she involved their best couple to intervene. However her effort was futile, hence, showed misunderstanding. Another misunderstanding could be seen by the fact that she said that at the current stage of their marriage conflict, they were only pretending to be a very happy couple by attending events together but in the real sense they were strangers in their house. CCII feels trapped and unappreciated because she has to take care of the sick husband who once mistreated them, she has to pay his medical bills and take time to nurse and take him to the hospital often.

The social exchange theory contradicts CCII who is in an entrapment stage as the caption above indicates. The theory states that most relationships are made up of give-and-take, If one party feels they are not getting enough they can quit the relationship. Yet CCII stood by his husband and yet she was not gaining anything.

4.2.6 De-escalation stage

The verbal and non-verbal cues during de-escalation stage revolve around settling the conflict. Some of the verbal and non-verbal cues used during this stage communicate the idea of making up while others signify breaking up. Those who want to reconcile depict verbal and non-verbal cues showing willingness to iron out their differences. Those who want to keep their marriage are apologetic to their spouses and acknowledge their mistakes. RUC recount below has verbal and non-verbal cues during the de-escalation stage:

He changed a lot he respects me, visits all the time, foots all my bills, calls me babe, honey, my pie, takes me out for dinner, there is a time he came when I was not in the house he folded all my clothes neatly, cooked for the children and when I came he offered to wash me. He has worked hard to bring his family back to his life. About how I see marriage after all these is that marriage is sweet but can be very tricky and very involved. Our children are very happy and eagerly waiting for the big day, all I can say is he has learnt his lesson and has learnt mine too and I am wiser and I know patience is a must in every marriage and for me and my partner we were meant for each other regardless the circumstances. We have organised a family meeting and we are attending counseling sessions which we are about to finish. We have decided to lay down rules and regulations that will govern our union because we believe marriage is meant to be for better or worse. (RUC). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (f).

The study showed that there was effort to reconcile. However, their marriage started crumpling due to misinterpretation of each other's communication cues. For instance, RUC reported that their marital conflict started as a joke. Evidently, one party misinterpreted the communication cue as a joke while it was never a joke at all in the other party's perspective. It was an indicator that the couple was coming into a conflict

Another misunderstanding could be cited when she termed her mother-in-law as an understanding person, citing that as the reason as to why one time she sought her intervention when their marriage started going haywire. However, she later realized that she was the root cause of their marriage woes. According to RUC husband, his mother had advised him to remarry. She should have understood this by far when the husband appeared not amused when she reported him to his mother. His non-verbal cues then showed that her notion to involve his mother was misinformed and misdirected.

4.3 Dominant attitude cues conflicting couples manifest towards each other during conflict

Conflicting couples show different dominant attitudes cues depending on the stages of their conflict in the conflict cycle according to Moore (2014). The study also examined whether the couples understand each other’s attitude cues.

Table 4. 2 Dominant attitude cues conflicting couples manifest towards each other during conflict

Stage	Latent Stage:	Emergency Stage:	Escalation Stage:	Polarization Stage:	Entrapment Stage:	De-escalation Stage:
	Tending towards negativity	Negative. Need evidence to show its negative	Clearly Negativity	Blown out Negativity Cruel.	Neither Negative nor positive.	Positive comments about each other.
Attitudes of conflicting partners	Watchful.	Sudden mood change.	Annoyance. Ungrateful.	Unforgiving. Boastful.	Selfishness. Gratitude.	Joyful. Forgiving.
	Disillusion.	Irritation. Ignorance.	Anger. Controlling.	Don’t care. Arrogant.	Nervous. Confident.	Acceptance. Passionate.
	Silence.	Resentment. Defensive. Competitiveness. Withdrawal Hatred.	Careless. Irresponsible. Disrespectful. Pride.	Heartless. Sarcastic. Explosive. Destructive. Aggressive. Recklessness Suicidal.	Domineering. Perseverance. Humility. Ignorance Manipulative	Loving. Caring. Submissive. Respectful.

Source: researcher (2020).

DeMaris, Mahoney & Pargament (2010) stated that communication can deteriorate if married couples do not pay attention to each other’s words and feelings. This study has observed that this tends to bring about negative attitude towards each other. Aristide et al (2016) argued that there are about seven negative attitudes that kill a marriage, like pride and instead show humility, avoid ungratefulness and embrace gratitude, ignore irritation and annoyance and embrace enjoyment and acceptance, always practice forgiveness and avoid selfishness. CCI exhibited negative attitude as the dominant attitude towards each other as expressed in the excerpt below:

We have done a few projects together. We built our town home and I needed a door fixed at a corridor that was leading to the living room, he said there was no need and refused, so I thought maybe he didn’t have cash. I called the ‘fundi’ and bought

a nice door only to find the 'fundi' fixing it almost halfway done and ordered him to remove it and go away never to be seen in that compound again. Immediately he started yelling saying I felt like I had a lot of money and power so I can do what I want, he even accused my friend and said she was poisoning me and misadvising me and that the door will never be fixed without his permission. From that day henceforth, I decided that I will not do any project or even buy the slightest thing including utensils so my attitude changed to negative and I became withdrawn and he became careless, more controlling and boastful, everything that had we bought together or developed he said to his friends he did that by himself. (CCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (a).

CCI's (the wife) attitude changed to negative when the husband chased their construction worker who was fixing their door, citing disrespect because he had not permitted that construction. Although he had been asked about it, he stated that he did not have funds to fix it, so the wife took over the initiative. Little did she know that he was just rejecting the idea and that was a sign of a negative attitude meandering within their marriage not lack of funds as he had stated. This was depicted through his verbal and non-verbal cues when he was chasing the constructor away. He told him never to show up in his house ever again. That showed that he was becoming more controlling and therefore, he was also having a negative attitude towards his wife.

This was more evident with the kind of verbal cues he used while dismissing the constructor, '*He started yelling saying I felt like I had a lot of money and power so I can do what I want.*' Besides that, his negative attitude towards his wife could also be traced from his earlier utterances when he told his wife that he regretted marrying her according to the extract below:

'He started calling me names like pig, lazy, good for nothing, my work is to eat. He went ahead to say that I think I was married by a fool, and he regrets marrying me.' (CCI).

Another incident was when he threw their infant on the couch. That prompted attitude cues of being careless, irresponsible and disrespectful. CCI termed that act as '*the most degrading thing that ever happened.*' This showed that the act played a significant role as to why her attitude changed to negative beside other incidents like how he stood her up during her mother's visitation as well as chasing their constructor away.

From the extract above, it was clear that CCI's husband annoys and makes her angry thus making her attitude become negative. The husband also harbors a negative attitude towards his wife. According to him, the wife is very disrespectful because she does not heed his counsel but does as she pleases. This was portrayed by her act of allowing her mother's visitation even after the husband had objected to it, employing a nanny against his will and fixing their door without his approval.

Williamson et al. (2012) accentuated on clear verbalization of what you are thinking, feeling and experiencing as a way of resolving a conflict. However, CCI (The wife and the husband) attitude showed no effort towards resolving their problem because both harbour negative attitudes towards each other. According to the wife the husband is arrogant, controlling, irresponsible, careless and disrespectful. The CCI husband also accused the wife of being disrespectful. No one seemed to care about the other, hence their frequent misunderstandings. Their negative attitudes towards each other conformed to Fincham (2003) study that partners are more likely to respond in a negative manner when their partner is being negative with them.

Dalgeish et al (2015) identified miscommunication and misinformation as one cause of conflict. Therefore, the moment the conflicting couples begin to understand each other, they develop a positive attitude towards each other as the dominant attitude. Positive

attitude is characterized by positive comments about each other. RUC exhibited positive attitude towards her husband as the dominant attitude in the following extract:

He changed a lot he respects me, visits all the time, pays all my bills, calls me babe, honey, my pie, takes me out for dinner, there is a time he came when I was not in the house he folded all my clothes neatly, cooked for the kids and when I came he offered to wash me. He has worked hard to bring his family back to his life. About I how see marriage after all these is that marriage is sweet but can be very tricky and very involving. (RUC). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (f).

RUC showed positive attitude towards her husband by the fact she said that the husband *'has worked hard to bring his family back to his life.'* Her positive attitude can also be seen in how she defined marriage; *'marriage is sweet' 'marriage is meant to be for better or worse.'* She also showed forgiveness when she said *'all I can say is, he has learnt his lesson and has learnt mine too.'* Besides her forgiveness, she showed acceptance when she said, *'I am wiser and I know patience is a must in every marriage and for me and my partner we were meant for each other regardless of the circumstances.'* She was very passionate about the idea that they were getting back together. She said, *'our children are very happy and eagerly waiting for the big day'* but one could also tell that she was as excited as the children were, when she said, *'for me and my partner we were meant for each other regardless of the circumstances.'*

Her optimism towards her partner could also be spotted by the fact that she believed that he had changed for good and also how she described him. She seemed to have been moved by his several gestures, thus, she was convinced that the man really deserved another chance to be with them. She also portrayed him as a caring and a loving partner, which painted a positive attitude towards him. Generally, both showed positive attitudes

towards each other by the fact that they organised a family meeting and they were also attending counseling sessions together in preparation for their union. The positive attitudes in them could also be seen as they had also laid down rules and regulations that would govern their union.

The husband showed concern towards his wife verbally and non-verbally. He took care of them and pampered them with a lot of love which portrayed a positive attitude towards his wife. He even said that he couldn't leave without them. However, their conduct agrees with Bahramit (2012), which observed how constructively they interacted during the dispute episode was the key factor distinguishing between couples who had remained together versus those who had separated after the first major struggle. Those who stayed together have said that the dispute has contributed to greater understanding and trust that they can solve problems together and are ready to sacrifice one another (Bahrami, 2012).

For instance, RUC have been able to resolve their conflicts severally because they always find a way to de-escalate their conflict every time they fall out. This study has therefore concurred with Bahrami (2012) argument above because those who had divorced or separated and were interviewed during this study like DCI, DCII, DCIII, SCI, SCII did not show any positive attitude towards their spouses. This was because a cloud of misunderstanding still hovers above them. They showed no concern with their estranged partners. Thus, positive attitude could be said to be reclaimed through having comprehensive communication as illustrated by RUC. KII argued:

Attitude can interfere with marriage in that, when the attitude is negative it tends to trigger the conflict but when positive tends to lighten up the atmosphere hence improving communication. It can either move from negative to positive or vice versa. Attitude emanates from maturity, experience, spirituality, culture, education and number of children. (KII)

The two counselors agreed on the effect of attitude within marital relationships.

KIII is quoted in the following excerpt:

Attitude interferes with marital relationships. Attitude can be negative or positive and it can be categorised in terms of educational background, spiritual virtues, age and sometimes how one was raised up. A spouse with a negative attitude will tend to put their spouse down, despise them, thereafter respect is compromised, the bond is weakened and they stop admiring each other. If the attitude is right and positive the couple will understand each other better and mind about their feelings. They will correct their shortcomings with love and understanding. (KIII)

The study has shown that from the first to fourth stage the attitude is negative while during the fifth stage the attitude is neither negative nor positive and in the last stage the attitude is positive. Therefore, this study has observed that the dominant attitude is the negative attitude.

4.4 Verbal and non-verbal communication cues used in conflict resolution (de-escalation)

Kent, 2011 identifies some ways to communicate nonverbally: This includes facial expression, proxemics, paralanguage, personal attire, posture, body position and eye contact. He states however that the most common are hand gestures and facial displays. Table 4.4.1 below showed the verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues.

Table 4. 3 Verbal and non-verbal communication cues used in conflict resolution (de-escalation)

Stage	Latent Stage:	Emergency	Escalation	Polarization	Entrapment	De-escalation	
De-escalation verbal cues	Initiate a talk	It's not my mistake.	I recognize your efforts.	Can we talk?	How can we fix this?	It will never happen.	
	Can we talk?	Stop crying.	Am sorry for hurting you.	Never meant to hurt you.	I understand your point.	Deeply sorry.	
De-escalation non-verbal cues	It's important to talk.	Tell me what irritates you	Am embarrassed for my actions.	I did it out of anger.	What can we do to change this?	Regret my actions.	
	Do have you a minute.	most about me.	I think I was blind I didn't see it coming.	Regret my actions.	You are generous.	Will make it up to you.	
	No need to use such a tone.	On this point you are right.	Please understand me.	You are passionate.	It is workable.	Let's work on this together.	
		The devil is bad.	Forgive me.	It was not intentional.	Let's try for the sake of the children.	My queen.	
					I can't handle this alone.	My apple.	
						Can't live without you.	
						Promises to change.	
		Polite eye contact.	More smile. Wink.	Hug. Kiss.	Buys gifts Help in kitchen.	Eat together. Active listening.	Dinner date. Intimate space.
		Mild smile.	Calm talk.	Touch.	Stops yelling	Keeps time.	Help tie his tie.
		Talks politely.	Call more. Text back immediately.	laugh Share a meal. Hold hands.	Pat on the back. Wash his clothes.	Tidy house. Fuels my car at full tank.	Feed each other. Prepare special meal.
		Asks the children to go and kiss mum for dad.	Sit close together. Playing.	Covers me when sleeping on the couch. Moves to a better house.		Go for a vacation. Kneels to ask for pardon.	
			Sends cash. Supports children.	Buy good furniture. Visit parents. Pays dowry.		Sets up business for me. Pays my debts.	

Source: researcher (2020)

The study observed that during the latent stage, verbal communication cues involve initiating a talk that is directed to finding a common ground between the conflicting couple. Polite gestures are also used during this stage to calm down the situation. All these set a good environment for listening to one another to ensure understanding. This is because it is not easy to listen and understand one another especially when people are full of rage. One person has to swallow their pride and initiate a polite talk to the other. However, it may not be that easy to do all these because the other partner may be showing signs of reluctance.

For instance, DCII initiated a talk during the latent stage to resolve their conflict after noticing that her husband's behaviour had changed. DCII is quoted below:

My marriage conflict started when my husband was transferred to a different station outside Nairobi. He used to come every Friday and leave on Monday morning, then he graduated to visiting after two weeks then after a month and I started getting concerned. When I asked he said he was very busy trying to learn and catch up with the office work, which was too much. Before long he was not coming home as often, so I suggested that we be alternating he comes and I also go, he agreed but I could read his body language and facial expression which suggested that there was more than I thought. So we struggled with our union and I asked him to look for a transfer and after a long wait he finally came and we were back together. (DCII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (b)

According to the above extract, it was clear that DCII initiated a talk to resolve their conflict right from the beginning. However, it was not easy because according to her she *'could read his body language and facial expression which suggested that there was more than I thought.'* This showed that even though she was determined that they resolve their conflict, the other partner was reluctant towards that initiative, hence that was an obstacle for resolving their conflict. The above statement also showed a misunderstanding in their communication. It showed a mistrust between them because according to DCII, she felt that the husband was not telling her the truth. The guy accepted that they be alternating on visiting one another but DCII still felt that he was still keeping something to himself.

Ross, (2010) argued that it is important to understand that trust is one of the essential elements of your marriage, as it is key to a healthy and supportive lifetime commitment. When a couple is doubting one another, it means that there is a misunderstanding between them, hence, there is a need to talk about that doubt. Talking clears the air and boosts the couple's trust towards each other. Talking about the problem

brings more understanding while silence is more often a recipe (way) for conflict escalation.

During the Emergency stage, the verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues showed increased efforts to make things right. One partner takes the blame and shows willingness to rectify their mistakes. Their verbal and non-verbal cues signal conflict de-escalation efforts. These cues could be traced in RUC's story according to the following excerpt:

He called our pastor and he did not say the truth, said I got annoyed because he used to lift his friend to work. He told the pastor he cannot leave without me and the children, am the only person who understands him and only death that will separate us. He started visiting us frequently, he would ask the children to come and kiss mummy for him and he would even cover me when I was taking a nap on the sofa, he played a lot with the children. He even gave me money to pay for my rent and bought food and supported us in everything he said he really misses us we talked about it and we agreed we start afresh and forget about the past. (RUC). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (f).

RUC husband's verbal and non-verbal cues showed that he was remorseful, thus, he needed her forgiveness. Non-verbal de-escalation cues set a reconciliation mood as Fincham (2003) observed that non-distressed couples are better equipped to accommodate and resolve issues. However, some of his verbal cues depicted dishonesty especially when he was seeking their pastor's intervention. He was not honest enough to tell the pastor that the wife caught him with their house help, instead he lied that his wife left him because he used to lift his friend to work. That was a sign that he was not a straightforward person, hence his verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues could be deceiving. Thus, the wife was susceptible to misinterpret his verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues.

In the Escalation stage the cues depicted being apologetic. CCI story was used during this stage because of their verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues. CCI recount is represented below:

When I went to pack my necessities, my husband promised to change and asked me to ignore his mother and stay until we try working on our marriage. He started coming home early, stopped the everyday drinking, called many times in a day to see how I was faring on , texted back immediately, he bought me gifts, held my hand, smiled more he became playful and called me darling, princess, honey-pie... (CCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (a)

As expressed on the above extract, the husband promised to change and asked his wife to ignore his mother and stay with him so that they could resolve their marital conflict. The fact that the wife decided to stay, showed that they were ready to bury their hatches. That also showed that the husband had noticed his mistake and that was why he promised to change. His immediate verbal and non-verbal cues after the wife agreed to stay with him, showed that he had truly changed. The communication cues depicted de-escalation of their conflict. Even though he promised to change, they seemed to have overlooked dealing with the things that he had accused his wife of.

For instance, what role did the wife perform to de-escalating their conflict after she was accused of being disrespectful? How did they deal with the problem that made the husband feel as an intruder in his house? The answer to these two questions is none, which meant that there was a misunderstanding and misinformation in their conflict de-escalation cues. The effort to de-escalate their conflict was only one sided.

During the polarization stage, the de-escalation verbal and non-verbal cues seek forgiveness. For instance, SCI husband was very apologetic after the wife attempted suicide following his claims that she had died while giving birth. His verbal and non-verbal

cues during then depicted apology. Those verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues are presented in the following excerpt:

The following morning I bought poison and took it, I just wanted to die but fortunately or unfortunately a neighbor came in and found me in bad shape. I was rushed in the hospital where I got help. My husband came to the hospital and when we came back home he promised to change and said he was very sorry and that will never happen again and he still loved me and our baby. He asked me not to tell anyone what had happened he even paid the remaining dowry, visited my parents and sent them cash, we moved to a bigger and better house and he said we will always stay together. (SCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (d).

From the above excerpt, the husband was said to have been very apologetic verbally and in action. He said that he was very sorry and promised to change, but also asked her not to tell anyone what had happened, meaning that he was ashamed of his action. However, the fact that he was concealing his wife's suicide attempt from other people showed that he was not sincere that he really wanted them to resolve their conflict or he even loved her as he posed to. Suicidal people need professional counseling so that to avoid recurrence of the same but he hindered that, thus, he was not helping her overcome her suicidal thoughts. So, even though he told her that he still loved her, his other verbal cues depicted the opposite of that.

Entrapment verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues depict some efforts towards reconciliation. These verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues connote acceptance after a lengthy assessment of the conflict whereby the couple come to a conclusion that conflict de-escalation is inevitable. Although it may not be easy to sustain the marriage because of severe heartbreaks within the marriage, this stage is marked with endurance cues for the continuity of the marriage. DCII story had communication cues for this stage. Their verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues depicted entrapment stage according to the excerpt

below:

When he was confronted he said he was told by my close friend that I had an affair with his friend and the baby was not his. This was too much to bear. I called my relatives and his relatives too and I asked him to do a DNA which he refused. After a long talk he finally allowed us back and slowly he started accepting the child. He bought him clothes, bought me a nice watch, he gave me back my car and fueled it to full tank called me good names and soon we were a neat family again. (DCII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (b).

Ross (2010) argued that it is possible to build trust again and breaches of trust can repair if both of you are willing to work together to restore trust between you. For instance in the above excerpt, DCII husband was reported to have accepted them back even without clearing his doubts whether the child was his or not. The assumptions were that he had unconditionally accepted them back as he bought both the child and the wife gifts. It was these verbal and non-verbal cues which made her believe that their family was neat again. However, their family was not that neat as she thought as she later found out. Accepting them back did not mean that the husband had finally acknowledged the child as his, but the wife thought so. Evidently there was a misinterpretation of verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues between the couple.

He even called her good names, thus, convincing her that their conflict had been resolved for good, but it was a hoax. The husband believed in the hearsay and his intuition that the child was not his. In three years' time, he had already started complaining that the same child resembled no one in their family. In the later stage of their conflict, the center could not hold their marriage together as they kept dwelling on the same issue without resolving it. Their conflict went from worse to worst and when the push came to shove, they called off their marriage.

Verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues during the de-escalation stage depict reconciliation, change and unity. During this stage, change is paramount. Couples either separate, divorce or iron out their differences and start living in harmony. Most of the couple interviewed during this research who had reached this stage either separated or divorced; only RUC were working out towards getting back together. There was SCI, SCII, DCI, DCII and DCIII who their marriages seemed to have hit a snag. The verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues in RUC story were presented in the excerpt below:

It has been three years now and when I thought he had moved on, his mother visited my parents and was pleading for them to call for a meeting as he had realised his mistakes. During the meeting he was crying uncontrollably and what he said is what shocked us that his mum and the aunty advised him to marry another woman since we had girls only and I had refused to try getting a boy, mind you this is whole grown man who is well educated, I asked for some time to think through. He has changed a lot he respects me, visits all the time, foots all my bills, calls me babe, honey, my pie, takes me out for dinner, there is a time he came when I was not in the house he folded all my clothes neatly, cooked for the kids and when I came he offered to wash me. He has worked hard to bring his family back to his life. (RUC)

The above excerpt showed that the couple was resolving their conflict. They were not yet together but they were working towards it. They were courting each other again as they waited on their reunion date. RUC's husband was said to have realized his mistake. He truly changed as he had promised. However, the wife seemed to have misunderstood him when he said that he could not live without them but soon went back to his old ways. He even then lied to the pastor about the root cause of their conflict. The fact that he could not say the truth to the pastor should have been a red flag to the wife on his seriousness of getting together. She should have probed further on what he meant when he said he couldn't live without them and that she was the only person who understands him. Maybe

he wanted to keep her and still look for a second wife as she was said to have refused to try getting a boy or maybe he wanted to keep her because she was the only person whom he found to be too gullible.

There was a need to understand what he meant when he said that she understands him yet in one incident he had complained to their best man that she was nagging and that she didn't appreciate him. These statements did not tally, thus, there was still a misunderstanding in their verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues. Even so RUC thought that her husband had changed because he had been helping her with the house chores, However, KII stated that such familiarity escalate conflicts. In KII argued:

Familiarity does contribute to conflict escalation between spouses, some couples start assuming things or responsibilities for example a man helps his wife once in a while in house chores and the wife takes full advantage of that. Another scenario they answer each other's phone, the husband picks the phone or laptop and starts going through this brings some conflict at some point. They can be familiar with each other but boundaries should be clear and with respect. (KII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix (F).

This could have been the reason as to why RUC husband felt not appreciated. The conflict de-escalation cues are also one sided because according to RUC narration, the wife did not bother to find out nor do anything that would make her husband feel appreciated. Leaving such complaints unattended to show a misunderstanding in their communication and also creates a possibility for the same conflict escalating.

4.5 To investigate whether or not conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting couples, and if so, how

Anger et al (2011) observed that couples engage in conflict through communication processes that are direct or indirect, manipulative or flexible, verbal or nonverbal,

metaphorical or concrete, demanding and/or withdrawing. In the end, marital conflicts give couples new perspectives towards marriage as a social institution depending on their experiences during and after the conflict. Some experiences toughen the couple and bring them closer, thus, they are able to understand each other better while other experiences break the marriage for good. Hence, there are different perspectives about marriage especially after a marital conflict. This study used Carroll's et al (2013) to analyse communication behaviour redefining marriage, at every stage of the conflict cycle as observed in Table 4.5.1 below:

Table 4. 4 Communication behavior redefining marriage at various stages of the conflict cycle

Stage	Latent Stage:	Emergency Stage:	Escalation Stage:	Polarization Stage:	Entrapment Stage:	De-escalation Stage:
Redefining communication behavior	Caution Change of password. Keen. Trust is tricky. Know your partner better.	Less trust. Defensive. Criticism. Sarcastic. It hardens one. Waste of time.	Communication between couple is hostile. Aggressive towards each other. Confrontational. Scary. Prison. Makes one have low self-esteem. Marriage involves more than one party.	Irresponsible Disrespectful Frustration. Challenging. Not necessary for opposite sex Business. Contract. Scam. Infidelity is real. Distractive. Suffocating. Oppressive. Involves insecurity. Can make you become a different person either in a good or bad way. Involves many men.	Inclusivity. Language of Torrance. Adjustment. Eg family and social life, financially. Set boundaries. Disagree to agree. Compromise. Disillusions. Embrace change. Learn not to assume. Understanding. Business. Contract. Learning process.	Learn to forgive. Accept and move on. Adaptation. Patient. Embrace personal space. Secure. Empathetic. Independent. Respectful. Forgiveness. Rekindles love. With proper communication marriage is a beautiful thing. Hard work. Needs pruning. Needs to be nurtured.

Source: (Researcher, 2020)

Couples tend to have different attitudes towards marriage especially after their conflict. Thus, this leads to different perceptions of marriage. At the latent stage, marriage is defined as the partners try to know each other better. As the level of trust within the marriage is put to test, others strategize on being cautious and may change their passwords

as others keep their eyes peeled towards their spouse's moves. For instance, the following SCI quote fitted to be used during this stage because it coincided with the communication behaviours presented during the latent stage:

My husband become withdrawn, quiet he also put password on his phone and yet we shared and also exchanged our handsets once in a while, then he started answering some phone calls from outside and when asked why he was doing that he said he had gotten a deal that was expected to bring in more cash and was protecting his phone from his friends and I believed him. (SCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (d).

Clearly, the SCI husband was being cautious to the point that he decided to a put password on his phone. On the other hand, his wife was very keen as she noticed the change of his behaviour considering that they used to change their handsets once in a while. However, there was a misunderstanding because the wife believed his reasons as to why he had put a password. If that was indeed the reason, then he should have shared the password with his wife. But he didn't do that neither did the wife bother to ask for it or raise such concerns. She was content with his answer even though it indicated that they were coming to a conflict. KII argued that such behaviour of a couple sharing a phone escalates conflicts.

"They answer each other's phone, the husband picks the phone or laptop and starts going through, this will bring some conflict at some point." (KII).

During the Emergency stage, the couple exhibit less trust towards each other. Marriage is redefined by communication behaviours depicting defensiveness, criticisms, sarcastic, waste of time and can sometimes harden someone. DCI communication behaviours reverberated those in stage 2 according to the following excerpt:

It reached a time when she seemed to be bored or tired with me. She didn't even want to spend time with me or stay close to me, she even stopped cooking and washing clothes for me. This was a clear sign that our relationship was not in good condition. We went on I tried my best to make her happy only to discover that she had asked for a job transfer to Mombasa this was very disturbing and when I asked her she said she wanted to give us space with my brother. I talked to her and her boss but she could not hear of it. (DCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (g).

The first sign of a defensive behaviour could be spotted when she said that she was transferring so that she could give the husband and his brother a space. In the real sense if one had to move, then it should have been the husband's brother. Thus, her argument was also sarcastic. Although DCI had sensed that their marriage was not in good condition and even made some efforts to de-escalate the conflict, he was not able to salvage the situation because the wife was being dodgy. She asked for the transfer behind the husband's back and even when the husband noted about it, she did not give communication a chance about the matter. That showed that there was a miscommunication between them. Their misunderstanding eventually led to their and he said to him marriage is just a waste of time considering his wife's behaviour.

Communication behaviour redefining marriage during the escalation stage is attributed to the hostile communication between the couple, confrontations and aggressiveness towards each other. Thus, those directly involved tend to redefine marriage as scary, prison, makes one have low self-esteem and marriage involves more than one party. Their definition is due to the harsh experience within their marriage during this stage. CCI definition of marriage below fitted during the escalation stage:

For me marriage is like a prison and it can be condoned by fools because if you outsmart your man you are seen as a threat instead of the man embracing a clever woman. Marriage is suffocating and can cause one to have low self-esteem, well I

am here because I do not want my girl to grow without a father figure and I also feel wasted for investing heavily in our projects. Am just holding on here hoping that he will change completely because I know with love and understanding marriage can be a beautiful engagement. (CCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (a).

Despite these, CCI was hopeful that the husband will change completely because according to her with love and understanding, marriage can be a beautiful engagement. Thus, it was clear that their marriage lacked love and understanding. She felt that she was not loved and understood. Lack of love and understanding was the root cause as to why CCI felt like marriage as, suffocating. Even though she defined marriage as such, she was not ready to let it go because she did not want their daughter to grow without a father figure and also because she had invested heavily in their projects. Evidently, their marriage could be said to be ailing from misunderstanding emanating from their misinterpretation of each other's communication cues.

For instance, when the husband rejected the idea of fixing a door at a corridor, the wife misinterpreted that he didn't have money so she decided to use her money to fix it. Conversely, the husband misinterpreted his wife's act that she was showing off that she had money. Therefore, CCI's perspective towards marriage was narrowed through the same lens of their misunderstanding.

Communication behaviour redefining marriage during the polarization stage is based on frustrations, irresponsibility and disrespect that one has been subjected into by their partner. Thus, it is from such mistreatments within a marriage institution that one redefines marriage as a business, contract, scam, distractive, oppressive, involves insecurity, infidelity is real and can make someone change positively or negatively. An

example fitting this kind of communication behaviour redefining marriage during this stage was DCII who defined marriage as a big scam in the following excerpt:

We used to fight and move houses because of shame; my first born who is 13 years he has attended 8 different schools because we used to fight and move from that locality and again move the school because even the teachers knew we were fighting through the kids. I have moved on and we are at peace without him. My child looks happier and we do not miss him at all. To me, I can say that marriage is a big scam and if I were to get married again it would be like a business. I would become a gold digger interested in money. He would be like my business project. (DCII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (b).

DCII marriage was marred with misunderstanding right from the time the husband transferred. She tried to understand what was making her husband behave weirdly.

However, just before she could fish it out, she assumed that whatever would make her happy was also going to make him happy as well. Consequently, even though she had noted some change in him in terms of his verbal and non-verbal cues by the fact that he was not even amused when she told him that she was promoted at work, she went on with her idea of getting pregnant even though the husband did not approve it. The fact that they were not able to agree whether they should or should not have another baby depicted a misunderstanding.

Entrapment stage is characterized by language of tolerance, inclusivity and adjustments. The communication behaviour defining marriage during this stage shows understanding, setting boundaries, embracing change and learning not to assume. For instance, SCII depicted these communication behaviour redefining marriage in the following excerpt:

Whenever she calls asking me to come back I always tell her to wake up and smell the coffee while it's fresh. Am happy and well taken care of. I have a lot of resentment towards my wife. She is so destructive and arrogant and about coming back together I cannot tell at the moment. To me marriage entails a lot of trust and once broken to amend is not easy. Marriage involves a lot of insecurity and one needs to set boundaries, be

understanding and also embrace personal space. It needs a lot of pruning. (SCII). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (h).

SCII stated that understanding is key in a marriage, yet he failed to make his wife understand that Mary was just a colleague during the onset of their conflict. The fact that the wife kept asking him about Mary, it showed that she was not comfortable with their closeness. But instead of him making her understand why he was showing her around, he just laughed it off. Laughing it off left SCII's wife with a lot of assumptions and jealousy towards Mary.

Their misunderstanding brought unnecessary turmoil for both families. There was a need for SCII to make his wife understand why he was helping his colleague instead of letting her fill in the gaps. Maybe he should have organized a meeting between him, Jane and Mary since they were working in the same organization. Jane would have had a chance to ask those questions directly to Mary and maybe they could have ended being even friends. SCII should have taken Mary for a tea together with his wife; this would have softened the situation. Their misunderstanding on who Mary was to SCII was very detrimental for both marriages. Thus, SCII defined marriage based on the fact that they were unable to understand each other's verbal and non-verbal communication within their marriage.

In the last stage of the conflict cycle. The communication behaviour redefining marriage here depicted optimism in marriage. At this stage, couples may decide to reconcile divorce or separate. However, whichever way they choose leaves one optimistic especially when they have resolved their conflict amicably. The caption below shows how DCI redefines marriage:

My ex messed up her life, that man left her and she stalks me once in a while and there is a day she had send some thugs to harm my new girlfriend but instead they told her what was happening and I took her to court and was arrested and ordered never to interfere with my life again because she had her chance and wasted it and again choices have consequences. I can conclude by saying to me marriage is challenging and one should learn to accept what comes their way and move on and assumption kills the sacred union. (DCI). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (g).

DCI had healed from his toxic past marriage, thus, he holds an optimistic perspective towards marriage. He seemed to have gotten over his ex-wife and was ready to give marriage another chance although with another partner. That showed that he had accepted that his marriage with his first wife failed and had decided to move on.

During this stage, proper communication is said to make marriage a beautiful engagement. However, DCI marriage lacked proper communication as the wife became withdrawn and asked for a job transfer behind the husband's back. Even before she left for Mombasa, DCI tried to persuade her to change her mind and resolve their conflict but his plea fell on her deaf ears. Instead, she was very sarcastic with the reason as to why she wanted the transfer. According to DCI, "*she said she wanted to give us space with my brother.*" This shows that there was no proper communication within their marriage. In this case It was the brother who was supposed to move out if she was not comfortable with having him around but she used him as an excuse to live separately with her husband. She sacrificed her rightful space for her brother in-law. There was need to discuss their priorities but miscommunication led to their divorce. However, after their divorce, DCI was reported to feel happy and free as he had moved.

Thus, this study has found out that couples who resolve their underlying differences are able to start over again and live in harmony with each other because they see marriage

from a positive angle. Same case with those who have separated or divorced and have decided to let their former spouses start a life with whoever they want. However, some find it hard to let go and still cling on the past bitterness hence they are pessimistic towards marriage.

The study's findings have shown that the separated and the divorced couples view marriage negatively after their marriage has been dissolved. They said that marriage is a scam, it's for fools, it's like a business, a waste of time, it's like a prison, it's suffocating. They tend to look at it negatively. While the couple who were ready to reunite tend to view marriage positively as a beautiful encounter if nurtured. For instance RUC said:

Marriage is sweet but can be very tricky and very involving. Our children are very happy and eagerly waiting for the big day. All I can say is he has learnt his lesson and has learnt mine too and I am wiser and I know patience is a must in every marriage and for me and my partner we were meant for each other regardless of the circumstances. (RUC). Please find the rest of the story in Appendix E (f).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the study revealed the study's findings that were presented in summary according to the research objectives. Conclusions and recommendations that were relevant to the justification and significance of the research were also made.

5.1 Summary of the research

The research findings revealed that couples in conflict do not really understand each other's communication cues as intended. The verbal and non-verbal cues change with the level of the conflict. Misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the verbal and non-verbal cues according to this study is responsible for conflict escalation from one stage to the other. The moment a couple is able to understand each other's communication cues, the conflict is bound to cease.

5.1.1 Verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of the conflict cycle

Latent stage

The study found out that there are different verbal and non-verbal cues, at different stages of the conflict cycle. Latent is the first stage of conflict whereby the couples are in harmony but there is that feeling of everything is not alright there is something that is wrong but one cannot really pinpoint or lay a hand on it. The verbal cues during this stage may include; Why! Really! Never mind! I'm struggling to see your point and such like

words while non-verbal cues include avoidance, lost in thoughts, fidgeting, rolling of eyes among others. Verbal and non-verbal cues during this stage involve intrapersonal communication.

Even though there are verbal and non-verbal cues during the latent stage showing that the couple is getting into a conflict, the couples tend to believe that avoiding talking is the best way to resolve conflict. However, according to this study, avoidance leads to misunderstanding which fuels the inbound conflict to the next level and that lack of attention and misinterpretation of verbal and non-verbal cues lead to misunderstanding between conflicting couples.

Emergency stage

In Emergency there are clear signs that conflict is coming up, couples do not take these communication cues seriously even though there is evidence of conflict triggers and usage of abusive words. Couples blame each other and no one is ready to own up their mistakes. Couples misinterpret it as a way of venting for the current misunderstanding but not something that is progressing. The conflict during this stage involves interpersonal communication and verbal cues such as the following are used: what! Seriously! This is your fault, stop it! What's your problem! Non-verbal cues during this stage are: silence, distance, walks away, bangs doors, fault finding, blame game, weird facial expression, clicking among others.

Escalation Stage

Here the verbal and non-verbal cues depict that their conflict is getting out of hand. Hostilities intensify marked by collective grievances and accusations and other parties such as friends or family are involved. Verbal words include: good for nothing, vampire, nasty, lazy sucker, liar, fool, idiot, illiterate, pig, big headed and such like words. While non-verbal cues include; moody, edgy, sleeping separately, drinking too much, not picking phones, and serving food in plastic plates.

This study has observed that couples do not understand each other during this stage because of the assumptions that they make from each other's communication cues. Although there may be things that do not add up to certain issues, couples feign to understand by filling in the gaps. Misinformation is created out of that and sometimes there is an ambush of a suspected cheating spouse which leads to intensified hostility.

Polarization stage

During the polarization stage, verbal and non-verbal cues depict that their conflict is already out of hand. The marriage becomes a battle field as the couple verbal and non-verbal cues show that they want nothing to do with each other. There is exchange of dehumanizing statements, deliberate hurting and public humiliation during this stage. Life is at stake during this stage. Ugly and uncalled for scenarios are witnessed during this stage. There seems to be no more love between the couple, thus, everything is blown out of proportion. No one wants to eat the humble pie.

Generally, communication is misdirected, strained and very hostile. For instance, doing something to hurt the other makes one feel satisfied or when the other is in pain. To

achieve this, some collude with criminals to harass the other or make moves to embarrass their partner in public. Words used during this stage include; I regret knowing you, disgusting, cheap, prostitute, couch potato, devil, sadist, poisonous, criminal, abort the child. I'm not your dad; I'm not an ATM among others. Non-verbal cues include sleeping out, not eating at home, marital rape, not supporting family, blocks one another, pours cold water in bed, spit on my face, took poison, disappears for months from home, confiscation of the others phone and throwing baby on the sofa.

Entrapment stage

The verbal and non-verbal cues during entrapment stage shows tolerance and honorable withdrawal is impossible. At this point the couples would want to divorce or separate and go their way but are tied together either by family, society, children, finances and properties. Thus, even though one is not happy with their marriage, one has got no choice but to live with it even if that is not easy either.

Verbal cues during this stage are: you are not reasonable, don't be selfish, mean, self-centered, bossy, I'm done with you and such like words. Non-verbal cues include: anxious, facial displeasure, attending family meetings together, taking care of a sick person, and autonomous space among others. These verbal and non-verbal cues show that one is willing to put up with a dysfunctional marriage for the sake of reasons beyond them. This study has established that some of these reasons cited during this study included: for the sake of children, because of the projects that one has invested in while in that marriage and because of the wedding vows.

Conflict resolution stage

During the de-escalation stage, this study has established that verbal and non-verbal cues depict that the conflict is over. The couples may engage in dialogue or negotiation to reduce, resolve or end conflict. Thus, the conflict could be over because the couple has decided to forgive each other and start afresh or the couple has gone through a divorce or they have decided to separate and move on with their lives separately. Verbal and non-verbal cues during this stage exhibit healing process. Verbal cues may include: my love, darling, sweetheart, my king, sorry, forgive me; I love you, never meant to hurt you, it will never happen again and such like words. While non-verbal cues include: a wink, hug and kisses, coffee and dinner dates, holding hands, helping in house chores, paying bills, spend time together, clean and tidy house buys gifts among others.

Whether one has divorced, separated or are planning to get back together with their spouse, this study has observed that all acknowledged that they have learnt a lesson out of their conflict. This study has also observed that marital conflict is escalated due to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of verbal and non-verbal cues between the couple. More so, it is easier to resolve conflict during the latent stage than any other stage in the conflict cycle. Thus, couples should pay much attention to their spouse's verbal and non-verbal cues and seek clarification without assuming that they understand.

This study also observed that theory of social exchange contradicted with CCII who was in entrapment stage as the caption below indicates:

I have to nurse him every day and night. My life has become a nightmare as I see him suffer and go through a lot of pain. He has really drained me emotionally mentally and financially. I feel misused and not appreciated. This man has 10 siblings and no one has ever volunteered to come and help me nurse him. My work revolves around Kenyatta National Hospital, work and home it's not easy. (CCII)

The theory states that most relationships are made up of give-and-take, thus, if one party feels they are not getting enough, they can quit the relationship. Yet CCII stood by her husband and yet she was not gaining anything.

5.1.2. Dominant attitude cues conflicting couples manifest towards each other during conflict

The second objective according to the study shows that there are two types of attitudes; negative and positive. This study has shown that attitude can escalate or de-escalate conflicts. When the attitude is negative it tends to trigger the conflict but when positive tends to lighten up the atmosphere hence improving communication. The study has shown that from the first to fourth stage attitude is negative while during the fifth stage the attitude is neither negative nor positive and in the last stage the attitude is positive, hence, the dominant attitude here is the negative attitude. Thus, the study has concurred with Moore (2014) that conflicting couples show different dominant attitudes cues depending on the stages of their conflict.

DeMaris, Mahoney & Pargament (2010) argued that communication can deteriorate if married couples do not pay attention to each other's words and feelings. On the same vein, this study has observed that this tends to bring about negative attitude towards the conflicting couple. It is even more dangerous when the conflicting couple is adamant to keep on clinging on to their negative attitude towards their partners with no efforts to resolve their conflict. Thus, this study has conformed to Fincham (2003) study that partners

are more likely to respond in a negative manner when their partner is being negative with them.

The study also observed that conflicting couples start having a positive attitude towards each other the moment they resolve their underlying conflict. Couples begin to understand each other better after conflict. They are able to understand the likes and dislikes of the other because conflict takes away the veil of ignorance. Thus, comprehensive communication reinstates a positive attitude between the conflicting partners. Therefore, this study has concurred with Dalgeish et al (2015) that miscommunication and misinformation cause conflicts.

The theory of social exchange agrees with the research and also the study by Bradbury & Karney (2013) arguing that the relationship between positive and negative actions will differentiate between happy marriages and unhappy marriages. During conflict resolution, thus, unhappy pairs have more negative conduct of communication and less constructive communication behavior than those of reasonably happy pairs.

5.1.3 Verbal and non-verbal communication cues used in conflict resolution (de-escalation)

The third objective of the study showed that those who are getting back together portray verbal and non-verbal cues indicating forgiveness, and tend to view marriage as a beautiful engagement, and those who have separated or divorced some tend to view marriage negatively after a conflict, while others saw divorce and separation as a way of conflict resolution. More so, different verbal and non-verbal communication cues are used in conflict resolution at different stages of the conflict.

This study has observed that verbal and non-verbal de-escalation cues used at every stage depends on the intensity of the conflict. Thus, during the onset of conflict, polite verbal and non-verbal cues are used to calm down the developing conflict. Generally, during de-escalation the cues were positive from stage one to the last stage. This made RUC to forgive each other and agreed to start afresh.

5.1.4 To investigate whether or not conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting couples, and if so, how?

The fourth objective of the study has established that conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting couples and that couples change their perceptions toward marriage after conflict. The divorced, separated and conflicting couple redefined marriage negatively for example some said marriage is a scam, waste of time, suffocating and it is for fools while others saw divorce as a way of conflict resolution. The reuniting couple said marriage is a beautiful engagement if nurtured.

This study used Expectancy Violation Theory and Social Exchange Theory. These two theories conformed to the study. Theory of Expectancy Violation was useful during the analysis of this study as it assisted to examine how couples respond to unanticipated verbal and non-verbal cues from their partners during conflict. This study established that feuding couples respond to unanticipated violations of social norms and expectations through change of attitude towards each other which is manifested through their verbal and non-verbal cues.

Theory of Social Exchange was useful in examining couples' attitude towards each other especially after their conflict. The way one reacts will determine the way they will

behave. The attitude towards each other is communicated through the couples' behaviour. Couples evaluate their spouses' impact in their lives which determine whether the couple will remain together or dissolve their marriage to end their conflict. Couples are bound to reconcile if they still hold a positive attitude towards each other. Positive attitude is cultivated through a communication behaviour that is characterized by positive verbal and non-verbal cues.

5.2 Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to examine communication cues in marriage conflicts among conflicting middle class couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. The findings revealed that couples in conflict do not really understand each other's communication cues as intended and verbal cues trigger and influence conflict escalation more than non-verbal cues.

The study has also established that conflict redefines communication behavior among conflicting couples. This study found out that couples change their perceptions toward marriage after conflict. DeMaris, (2010) argued that communication can deteriorate if married couples do not pay attention to each other's words. The most cited issues leading to misunderstanding in marriage according to this study include: infidelity, job transfers, in-laws, negligence, physical abuse, insecurity, too much alcoholism and too much familiarity.

However, this study has established that good communication between the couple, economic emancipation, reliable social network, and counseling for both partners reduces conflict escalation within marriage. Conversely, comprehensive communication between

spouses was given much salience in avoiding and resolving conflicts. Thus, the study has shown that proper interpretation of verbal and non-verbal cues create understanding in communication thus lessen conflicts.

Lastly the study shows that disagreeing is expected in relationships and what matters is not the conflict itself but how it is handled. Conflict is not always negative; it can strengthen a union and divorce and separation can be a way of conflict resolution.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Hindman (2015) also argued that there has to be intentional plans to talk every day, and talk about anything and everything since communication can reduce after marriage as the spouses start living together. The researcher recommends Couples to embrace Consistent communication showing a clear verbalization of what couples are thinking, feeling and experiencing as a way of resolving a conflict.
- ii. Marriage is a lifetime commitment; hence the couple should invest in nurturing it through routine counseling and active listening.
- iii. In addition to that, marriage counselors should include the verbal and nonverbal cues in their teachings to ensure that spouses understand and interpret each other's verbal and nonverbal cues correctly especially during conflict. More so, this study recommends that if possible couples should stay together.

5.4 Recommendation for further research

Notably, this study concentrated on middle class couples only. Therefore, the same should be done among the lower or upper class couples.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introductory Letter

University of Nairobi

P. O. Box 30197 - 00100

NAIROBI

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW

I am a student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Communication Studies. I am conducting a research study on Communication cues in Marriage Conflicts among Middle Class Couples in Embakasi Constituency in Nairobi County. I hereby request you to assist me in sharing your experiences by answering the questions honestly, to enable me accomplish the objectives set for this study. I wish to guarantee that all data and information collected here will be treated with confidentiality and used exclusively for the purpose of this research. Your assistance and support is highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Lilian K. Mutiso

K50/11370/2018

Appendix B: Interview guide questions for respondents

These will lead the researcher to probe further if they are not sufficiently expressed
Section A: Verbal and non-verbal cues used in communicating differences at various stages of conflict cycle.

1. What kind of words do you use to express your displeasure against your spouse when communicating differences?
2. What are the non-verbal signs that show your spouse is in conflict with you?
3. How do you deal with proxemics during a conflict?

Section B: Dominant attitude cues conflicting middle couples manifest towards each other

4. Whenever you have differences (or conflicts), what specific attitude does your partner manifest towards you?
5. Based on your experience does familiarity contribute to conflict escalation?

Section C: Whether or not conflict redefines the meaning of communication behavior among conflicting couples and if so how

6. How does conflict redefine the meaning of marriage?
7. How has advancement in communication technology influenced the way you communicate during a conflict?
8. Discuss the situation of give and take between you and your partner during a conflict?

Section D: Verbal and non-verbal communication signs used in conflict resolution (de-escalation)

9. What gestures indicate to you that your spouse is de-escalating the conflict?
10. What are the specific communication behaviours that could de-escalate conflict between the two of you?

Appendix C: Interview guide questions for key informants

1. What position do you hold in your organization?
2. Have there been couples in your church/organisation with marital conflicting issues?
3. What age bracket of the couples are mostly challenged by marital conflicting issues did you attend? 20-35 years, 30-50 years, Over 50 years
4. What are the main marital conflicting issues have you handled?
5. Do you think verbal and nonverbal communication influence conflict escalation among couples in reference to those you have attended to before?
6. Based on the reported cases you have attended to before, what do you think causes conflict to escalate among couples?
7. According to your opinion and experiences, how does attitude interfere with marital relationships?
8. In your experience does familiarity contribute to conflict escalation between the spouse, Please explain.
9. In what way does conflict redefine marriage among couples according to the cases you have attended to before?
10. How do you help the conflicting couples to resolve their differences?
11. How do you rate the role of communication between spouses in conflict escalation among couples?

Appendix D: Conflict Cycle Stages

Stage	Latent – experience of communication breakdown	Emergency – evidence of conflict triggers: Abusive words	Escalation – hostilities intensify/ alliance building Communication is misdirected Misinformation and assumptions Increase in demands e.g. Fees, food, insurance, rent	Polarization – relations breakdown, hurting deliberate. Public humiliation Hire criminal to hurt the other.	Entrapment - Honorable withdrawal impossible, revenge and re-creating new grievances. Humiliating.	De-escalation – interventions begin to reduce, negotiations, dialogue applied at this stage
Communication – verbal	Am Not sure Why? Doubting me? Really? Don't believe it's you. Think about it? Tricky. Absolutely no. Petty. It's a pity. Surprised. Can't understand. Struggling	What!! Seriously!! Have always suspected you. Irresponsible. silly Never like your food. Impatient. Wait a bit. I have no money now. This is your fault. You woman. What's	What the hell. Good for nothing Sucker. Nonsense. Rubbish. Dare me. Liar. Lazy. Illiterate. Idiot. Fool. Nasty. Useless. Crook. You are not man enough. I know that you are	Stupid. Poison . Ugly. I regret knowing you. Disgusting. Cheap. Don't care. Prostitute. Am tired of you. I don't know what I saw in you. Dog.	Let's hear what you have to say. You are not reasonable. Don't be Selfish. Mean. Self-centered. Agreeable . Fair. Don't care about you. Bossy. Big headed.	My love. Darling. Sweetheart My king. Precious. My world. Queen. Babe. Baby Bae. Sorry. Forgive me. I love you. Can we talk. Never meant to hurt you. It will

	to see your point. Ooh ok. I see. Think through it first. Oh my God. I saw this coming. You. Never mind.	your problem? Stop it!! Whatever!! Grow up. Boring. Careless. I don't know you anymore. Get out of my sight. Go away. Cockroach	cheating on me. Thief. Big headed. Thick. You are taking. Advantage of me. You never listen. What kind of a woman are you. Let me save my breath. Shut your beak. Your work is to eat. Hate you.	I will kill you. Sick of you. Couch potato. Mad. Devil. Bitch. Witch. Snake. Loser. Sadist. Poisono us. No body. You used me. Player. Fool. Criminal . Abort the child. Mamas boy. Am not your dad. Am not an ATM.	Help me understand. You are petty. What can we do to improve the situation. Lets give each other a break. Forget it. Am done with you. Am the man listen. What do you mean. I hate your friends. I warned you. Why don't you go away. Still call hostile mother in law.	never happen again. Deeply sorry. Regret my actions. Will make it up to you. I did it out of anger. I will support you. Finally we are back together. I understand why you are upset. We should stop fighting. Let's forget the past. Am relieved.
Communication cues non-verbal	Avoidance Fidgeting Eye sizing Keep distance. Shaking of head. Eye rolling. Look down. Uh	Silence. Distance. Nonpayment of school fees. Not buying food. Not paying rent. No Flowers. Frown.	Cold. Moody. Irritated. Edgy. Shouting. Yelling. Sleeping separately. Drinking too much. Not spending	Sleeping out. Coming home late. Too much drinking. Not eating at home. Rape	Autonomous space Staring. facial displeasure fear. Guilt. Shy. Anxious. Confused.	Polite eye contact. Smile more. Wink. Calm talk. Hug. Kiss. Buys gifts. Coffee date.

Scratching head Lost in thoughts. Sigh. Not respond to texts. Takes time to answer the door. Less attention.	Banging doors. Comes home late. Comes home drunk. Weird facial expressions . Clicking. Clapping. Throwing of hands. Walks away. Fault finding. Blame game. Escapism eg Leaving house early. Over sleeping. Spending a lot of time on social media or the T.V. Cold body language. No touching. Stops praying together. Carry his phone even in the bathroom. Answers	time together. Walks out of a talk. Stops supporting the family. Spending most of the time with friends. Not picking calls. Not texting back. Sleeping on the couch. Forces me to clean house. Serve food in plastic cups and plates. Serve him cold food. Hit him with object. Shouts at the children. I dress very smart.	within marriage . Destroy furniture . Physical Fights. A lot of anger. Crying. Bitterness. Frustrated. Breathing heavily. Keeps my phone with him. Not dropping and picking me from work. Don't cook for him. Not supporting the family. Packs clothes. Dresses sexy. Go out with my friends. Does very nice	We need to agree on this. Seek intervention from family, church, friends or counselor. Pray God we separate. Crashes phone. Breaks the table. Take him to court. Attach his salary for child support. Attend family meeting by force and pretend things are ok. Take care of a sick man who neglected us. When his family come visiting I have to feed and house them.	Help in kitchen. Intimate space. Holding hands. Thumbs up. Prolonged eye contact. Increased time spend together. Cook favourite meal. Clean and tidy house. Listen keenly. Call and text back. Go for dinner. Take a vacation. Buys nice clothes, shoes, jewelry. Gives me cash. Fuels the car. Buys food. Pays rent. Pays school fees. Cleans up our
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		calls away from me.		make up. Block her from my phone. Doesn't want children to play. No child should cry. Will not eat until he says so. Family meetings till wee hours. Poured hot tea on him. Spit on her face. Took poison. Disappears for months. Throw baby on the sofa.		bedroom. Folds clothes. Cooks. Bathes me. Shows respect.
Attitudes of conflicting partners	Watchful. Disillusion . Silence.	Sudden mood change. Irritation. Ignorance. Resentment . Defensive. Competitiveness. Withdrawal Hatred.	Annoyance . Ungrateful. Anger. Controlling . Careless. Irresponsible. Disrespectful. Pride.	Unforgiving. Boastful. Don't care. Arrogant . Heartless. Sarcastic . Explosiv	Selfishness. Gratitude. Nervous. Confident. Domineering. Perseverance. Humility. Ignorance Manipulat	Joyful. Forgiving. Acceptance Passionate . Loving. Caring. Submissive Respectful .

				e. Destructive. Aggressive. Recklessness Suicidal.	ive	
De-escalation verbal cues	Initiate a talk Can we talk? It's important to talk. Do have you a minute. No need to use such tone.	It's not my mistake. Stop crying. Tell me what irritates you most about me. On this point you are right. The devil is bad.	I recognize your efforts. Am sorry for hurting you. Am embarrassed for my actions. I think I was blind I didn't see it coming. Please understand me. Forgive me.	Can we talk? Never meant to hurt you. I did it out of anger. Regret my actions. You are passionate. It was not intentional.	How can we fix this? I understand your point. What can we do to change this? You are generous. It is workable. Let's try for the sake of the children. I can't handle this alone.	It will never happen. Deeply sorry. Regret my actions. Will make it up to you. Let's work on this together. My queen. My apple. Can't live without you. Promises to change.
	De-escalation non-verbal cues	Polite eye contact. Mild smile. Talks politely.	More smile. Wink. Calm talk. Call more. Text back immediately. Asks the children to go and kiss mum for dad.	Hug. Kiss. Touch. laugh Share a meal. Hold hands. Sit close together. Playing. Sends cash. Supports children.	Buys gifts Help in kitchen. Stops yelling Pat on the back. Wash his clothes. Covers me when sleeping on the	Eat together. Active listening. Keeps time. Tidy house. Fuels my car at full tank.

				couch. Moves to a better house. Buys good furniture . Visit parents. Pays dowry.		ask for pardon. Sets up business for me. Pays my debts.
Redefining communication behavior	Caution Change of password. Keen. Trust is tricky. Know your partner better.	Less trust. Defensive. Criticism. Sarcastic. It hardens one. Waste of time.	Communication between couple is hostile. Aggressive towards each other. Confrontational. Scary. Prison. Makes one have low self-esteem. Marriage involves more than one party.	Irresponsible Disrespectful Frustration. Challenging. Not necessary for opposite sex Business . Contract. Scam. Infidelity is real. Distractive. Suffocating. Oppressive. Involves insecurity. Can make you become	Inclusivity. Language of Torrance. Adjustment. Eg family and social life, financially. Set boundaries. Disagree to agree. Compromise. Disillusions. Embrace change. Learn not to assume. Understanding. Business. Contract. Learning process.	Learn to forgive. Accept and move on. Adaptation. Patient. Embrace personal space. Secure. Empathetic. Independent. Respectful . Forgiveness. Rekindles love. With proper communication marriage is a beautiful thing. Hard work.

				a different person either in a good or bad way. Involves many men.		Needs pruning. Needs to be nurtured.
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Source: researcher (2020)

Appendix E: Respondents Narrations

Appendix E (a)

CC1

My marriage has been a bliss for the better part of it, but when I got heavy, my husband began to change slowly by slowly I could see things were not as normal but nothing serious to worry about. So when the baby finally came he started to **come home late** and other **times sleep in a different room** when I asked he said the baby was **crying too** much and **he needed enough sleep because he was working early mornings**. For me I thought for sure he needed **peace** so I would excuse him knowing that the baby would outgrow the colic that was causing all the crying. As time went by **he started drinking** which he never used to before and when I asked he said he **feels lonely, abandoned and unwanted** I felt **confused and some resentment**. I thought he was becoming **selfish** because this was something new to all of us and I expected him **to understand and encourage me**. This hurt me and I kept **quiet and avoided** him.

One day I wanted to take the baby for the normal clinics, I asked him **to drop us at the hospital** he **laughed out loud** and said when I was having the baby I knew what I was getting myself into so I should **carry my own cross**, this shocked me thought he was joking but true to his word he left us behind. I took the baby and we came back and she was even crying more because of the discomfort that comes with the vaccine. My husband came back from work **very moody** and food was not ready because most of the time I was nursing the baby's swollen thigh, asked why I had not cooked, before I answered he started calling me names like **pig, lazy, good for nothing , my work is to eat** he went ahead to say that **I think I was a married by a fool**, and **he regrets marrying me, I did not say a word**, I continued soothing the baby to sleep so that I can start cooking, he **suddenly grabbed the infant and threw her on the couch** I was terrified he was acting like a mad person. He continued abusing me saying **I was a sucker, ugly, vampire, I cried** the whole night because clearly this is not the person I once knew.

Throwing the small innocent creature on the sofa was the most degrading thing that ever happened. The following morning he **didn't talk to me, he didn't take breakfast**, he prepared himself and **banged the door** as he was leaving. My day was very dull when he came back from work he got in the **house smiling shyly carrying a lot of shopping; he even helped in cooking and candled the baby to sleep**. My heart was still heavy but I didn't want issues. I slept over it.

When the girl was around 4 months my mum wanted to visit with her friends and family as most of the Kenyan mothers do. I shared with him about my mum's intention and he refused. He said his child was not a doll for people to play with and when I Insisted **a slap land on my face** he said I was **big headed, rude and disrespectful**. I didn't take this kindly **I shared with a close friend** because I was wondering what to tell my mother, we agreed with my friend to **keep quiet** and let mum come as planned. When the visitation date was nearing I talked to him again thinking he would have reconsidered his decision and he said since I wanted to have my way it is fine. I thanked God that he finally agreed. So a day before the great day I asked him for some cash to go and buy food and drinks. He kept quiet and **woke up early** on the material day in a jovial **mood singing**. I thought he was ready for the day. He offered to go and buy the food himself so that I don't get tired

and I was also waiting for my two friends who were to help me in cooking. When he stepped out I thanked God that he was ready to support me.

My husband took long and my friends arrived before he returned we waited in vain I **called and texted no answer eventually he blocked me**, my friend decided to sort me out we did a simple menu my visitors arrived they were excited and when they asked about the father to my child I lied that he was on duty and would be joining us anytime soon. I went straight to the kitchen. I **wept bitterly**, I felt **embarrassed, rejected and cheated**. The visitors left and my husband came back **very late, drank and noisy** and we started a fight I called him all sort of names like **irresponsible, heartless, cursed, sadist, mean, don't care** and he said I was **stupid and an illiterate, idiot, thick, witch** and he **spend the night watching movie and the volume was high** and he could not turn it down keeping in my we had a small baby. The following day he was very **moody and we didn't talk for a week**, I thought he was going to at least explain what happened instead he became **very busy with his phone to a point of smiling alone**.

Lillian you see the problem with my wife is that she **doesn't listen. She thinks she is the head and the tail. She doesn't understand that I am the man of the family and the word submissive is a vocabulary in her world**. You see even as we discuss here she does not want to give me time to talk let her continue as usual. One time she gave me the baby and I was busy replying to my client and she assumed that I was ignoring her she is **not patient she started yelling at me, calling me a prostitute, player and that I was talking to my side chicks**. Let me step out as you continue because I feel like it's going to end badly.

Well when asked him to take the baby as I finished some work he said that I should **carry my own cross** I asked for it, I got so worked by **and hit him with a pan and he spat on my face** as he tried grabbing me, we fought and enough was enough **I called my parents** and explained what has been happening including their visitation which was not welcomed. When he was asked by my father what the problem he said he was not ready for a baby who came in very fast and he felt like an **intruder** in his own house and I was not respectful so he was advised to call his parents and organise for another meeting involving all parents. When his parents came his mother took sides, she said she knows his son very well am the one who is bad and if can't listen to him I can go he is young he can remarry my parents were shocked and said they were leaving with me and the child when I went to pack my husband promised to change and asked me to ignore his mother and stay we try working on our marriage. He started **coming home early, stopped the everyday drinking, called many times in a day** to see how I was faring on , **texted back immediately, he bought me gifts, held my hand smiled more he became playful called me darling, princess, honey-pie,**

When the baby was around one year my father advised that I look for some job and employ a nanny to take care of the baby, my husband said he didn't have money to pay a house help, my parents chipped in and said they will be paying the house help and luckily I got a very well-paying job and took over some responsibilities and things settled for a while. We have done a **few projects together we built our town home and I needed a door fixed at a corridor that was leading to the living room he said there was no need and refused, so I thought maybe he didn't have cash I called a 'fundi' and bought a nice door only to find the 'fundi' fixing it almost halfway done he ordered him to remove it and go**

away never to be seen In that compound again. Immediately he started yelling saying I felt like I had a **lot of money and power** so I can do what I want, he even **accused my friend and said she was poisoning me and misadvising me** and that the door will never be fixed without his permission. From that day henceforth I decided that I will not do any project or even buy the slightest thing even buying utensils so my **attitude changed to negative** and I **became withdrawn** and he **became careless, more controlling and boastful**, everything that had we bought together or developed he said to his friends he did that by himself.

For me marriage is like **a prison and it can be condoned by fools** because if you outsmart your man you are seen as a threat instead of the man embracing a clever woman. Marriage is **suffocating and can cause one to have low self-esteem** well am here because I do not want my **girl to grow without a father figure** and I also **feel wasted for investing heavily in our projects**. Am just holding on here hoping that he will change completely because I know with love and understanding marriage can be a beautiful thing.

Appendix E (b) DCII

I don't know where to start because I have had so many incidences of conflict, but the marriage conflict started when my husband was **transferred** to a different station outside Nairobi. He used to come every Friday and leave on Monday morning, and then he graduated to visiting after two weeks then after a month and started getting concerned when I asked he said he was new in a new post so he was very busy trying to learn and catch up with the office work which was too much. Before long he was not coming home as often, so I suggested that we be alternating he comes and I also go, he agreed but I could read his **body language and facial expression** which suggested that there was more than I thought.

So we struggled with our union and asked him to look for a transfer and after a long wait he finally came and we were back together, I noticed that **he was always very smart he took extra care of himself to an extend of ironing his inner wears, I thought because he was staying alone maybe that's why am seeing like he is acting weird**. I was **promoted at work** I came with the good news but he was **not amused**. I asked him we get another baby he declined but I went ahead and got pregnant when I told him he become **very moody, distanced himself avoided me**, when I tried to find out what was the problem he said he was fine, one day I asked him to walk me to the supermarket he quickly said he can't walk with a person who walks like a **penguin and untidy and my age is not supposed to be giving birth** we are past that, so he refused to take me I asked for the cash I go myself he said he didn't **have money**, they became worse to a point that he didn't want to hear or see the **others play, he stopped talking the children and he wanted a spotless clean house which is next to impossible with children in the house**. At times he would **pour water on the side of bed where I sleep and on the sofa he wanted me to sleep standing**.

When I was about to get the baby I requested him to be coming home early in case of anything in fact it's like I told him to disappear. On my due date I called and he **didn't pick my calls** and he knew very well what was happening. A neighbor took me to the hospital and got the baby and wrote him **a text message he never replied and never came**

to see us after a day I called him and asked about the naming. He said I can name the baby after whoever I wanted I can even call him **moon, star, earth or monster**. My sister came on the discharge day and helped me around and I was wondering where to go to but I had no choice but to go to my home when we got there, shock on us we were told they shifted. I almost **collapsed I felt cheated, confused and embarrassed**. We went to my sister's place and her husband took upon himself to look for my husband and talk to him and find out why he was acting **recklessly**.

When he was confronted he said he was told by my close friend that I had an affair with his friend and the baby is not his, this was too much to bear I called my relatives and his too and I asked him to do a DNA which he refused after a long talk he finally allowed us back and slowly he started accepting the child he **bought him clothes, bought me a nice watch, he gave me back my car and fueled it to full tank** called me good names and soon we were a neat family again.

We went on with life and when the boy was around three years old he started commenting on his look that he **does not resemble anyone in the family** and I was wondering where this was coming from I thought we had moved on. He would even **go for shopping and buys the rest clothes and toys and leave the small one out**, there a time they went with the baby to the mall and **they locked him in the car**, went with the rest bought goodies for them and left the small boy out, when they came home he was crying and he was **shouting at him to keep quiet**. He also developed this habit of calling **for family meeting often**, the meeting involve him, myself and the children and the lectures would start at 7 pm to 3 or 4am and no one was **allowed to give out their views or feeling nor are we allowed to sleep** even the small boy whenever the children slept he would yell and pull them to keep awake. This case issue really affected my children emotionally mentally and became afraid of their monster dad.

Our conflict grew worse I asked him to **go for counseling he aside he did not have a problem**. The **physical fights became frequent. We fought and broke almost all the furniture**. We used to fight and **move houses because of shame**; my first born who is 13 years and he has attended 8 different schools because we used to fight and move from that locality and again move the school because even the teachers knew we were fighting through the kids.

I have moved on am better and we are at peace without him my child looks happier and we do not miss him at all. To me I can say **that marriage is a big scam** and if I was to get married again it would be like a business.

Appendix E (c)

DC III

I enjoyed every bit in my marriage until my husband started **becoming busy** most of the weekends and he was saying it was work that made him that busy, but when **he started visiting our rural how every weekend** and yet we had **no active project** I sensed something, when I asked him he said he wanted **to say hello to his dad**, the dad had passed on a few months so I **thought to myself it was a way of mourning him**, so I **kept quiet** although deep down I was disturbed. Unfortunately or fortunately he got greener pastures and went to work in Mombasa and whenever he visited he would come **in the evening**

then leave very early in the morning, heading to our rural home, meaning he had **no time with his children**.

This habit went on until one day a lady called me from our rural home asking why I visited and I did not say hi, I told the lady it was long since I visited but my husband visits most of the weekends. Another issue I noticed was that my husband had this habit **of carrying his phone with him even in the bathroom** and one day he forgot it on the table and a **message love comes in from lady**, the way she misses him asking when he was going up country, that is when I knew most of the time he was not even going home, when I confronted him he started calling me names like, **liar, lazy, idiot, cheap, ugly, disgusting he said he was sick of me and I called him womanizer, dog, devil, prostitute** I demanded to know who this lady was he didn't hide he told me it was someone I knew, immediately I went to her home and I found her washing clothes I, **poured the dirty water on her** and brought a lot of commotion the husband who was in the house, he came out and I told him the whole story he was also a friend to my then husband. The husband went to attack my then husband and **threatened to kill him** if he did not leave his wife alone. He later **went to the priest and reported** what was happening and they later broke up.

I kept **wondering why he was cheating on me, was I dressing badly, I decided to change my wardrobe and started taking good care of myself** he soon became **jealous** and kept on asking why I had changed my dressing and he started **tracking me and threatening me that one day he will kill me**. One day as we were urging **he took away my phone and kept it for a week, this really hurt me**.

On another incident I was called again from our rural home a lady was asking if I was around because she **saw clothes washed and hanged** I told the lady that I was in Nairobi she confirmed to me that there was a lady there, I called my husband and funny enough he did not deny he said there was a woman yes, just doing cleaning when he came we fought he even said after I called I **spoiled everything and they broke up**, mind you this is a different lady, I **broke his phone** I remember praying to God to help me separate with him and from that day we started **sleeping in separate rooms**.

I called for a meeting involving **his mother, my parents and some of our uncles** and when they heard that he was taking other women to our rural home my uncles could not take it and when he was asked he didn't deny he said the very woman even got married and **my relatives dissolved our marriage immediately and later filed for a divorce** which took time but finally happened. He stopped **educating his kids and stopped supporting us completely**.

Marriage to me is not easy especially if one partner is not committed, it **makes one grow a thick skin** and a possibility of **becoming a criminal** trying to defend it, and I never thought that I would fight. **Marriage is a learning process, it is oppressive** but I can say it **is a beautiful engagement** and it can work if both parties are committed. A woman wants to feel loved, pampered and a man wants to be treated like a king and respected. Given another once I don't think I can ever get married.

Appendix E (d)

SCI

I got married at a young age by my childhood friend, whom we grew up together in the same neighbourhood and our parents knew each other well so. My father did not oppose to my getting married to a boy he knew since his birth and he was a committed Christian, but my mother did not approve of it she said that I was too young and didn't see a wife in me at my age, I had just cleared my O' levels and was yet to join college, my in laws were quick to say that they will educate me so my mother should stop worrying about that.

So we lived together happily for like 2 years then I started having a funny feeling. I could feel that things were not right but I couldn't tell what was happening. My husband become **withdrawn, quiet** he also put password on his phone and yet we shared and also exchanged our handsets once in a while, then he started **answering some phone calls from outside** and when asked why he was doing that he said he had gotten a deal that was expected to bring in more cash and was protecting his phone from his friends and I believed him.

I can quickly say our problem was mainly pegged on finances when **we were broke we were fine** but when he started getting money from his side hustle which was singing he completely changed and started **abusing me physically** called me names **like ugly, cheap, poor, illiterate, you have no brains, you are not my class and he began sleeping out for** me I saw a devil in him and I started praying for my family. When I got our baby he said it's good I go to **their rural home to get help and advice from his mum** since this was our first born. Months passed by when I asked when we should be joining him he said he wanted to open a business of my choice and see how it goes, if it does well he will take a **loan and boost it**, I agreed since we were getting along with his mum. The business was doing fine he came home with the loan as promised and told his mother his intentions. The mum declined and advised him **to buy a big TV set and a car** to enjoy the things that he didn't get when growing up, so the plan changed and was deeply hurt. He went back to work and I was determined to make the business flourish even more and for sure it did very well and it reached a **point he stopped sending me cash, he stopped buying food** and when I asked **he said I was rich I had enough cash so we should start sharing responsibilities**. I refused we quarreled he called me **dog, big headed, useless, he said he hated me** and I called him **prostitute, couch potato, mama's boy, mad, also told him I regret knowing him**, from there he didn't **come to visit for a two weeks then for a month when I called he didn't pick nor return my calls**.

I shared what I was going through with his mother of which somehow she knew what was happening since we stayed in the same house. To my disbelief the mother said I would leave his son alone for as long as I was the legitimate wife. I let his son enjoy life with whoever pleases him. This was too much for me to bear. I couldn't even share with my mom because she was against our union from the word go. I became depressed. The business started going down and soon it collapsed. I was very broke and I packed my bags and came to Nairobi without telling him. I regret going here I found another woman busy cooking she welcomed me and the baby calmly and called my husband babe come and see our visitors, when he came he looked down and the girlfriend was confused we started a fight the girl said he told her that **his wife died while giving birth** she didn't know we

existed. The lady fled and he followed her, I cried the whole night and the fact that he said I was dead made me mad, the following morning I **bought poison** and took it, I just wanted to die but fortunately or unfortunately a neighbor came in and found me in bad shape and rushed me to hospital where I got help. My husband came to the hospital and when we came back home he promised to change and said he was **very sorry** and that will **never happen again** and **he still loved me and our baby**. He asked me not to tell anyone what had happened. He even **paid the remaining dowry, visited my parents and sent them cash, we moved to a bigger and better house. He said we will always stay together.** We settled our issues and I got heavy with our second born and trouble began again he said he was not ready for another baby and I should **abort the child**, he became very **reckless, disrespectful, I started harboring a lot of hatred and I slept on the couch** and one morning he told me that he didn't need a wife I can go, **so he packed my clothes** and went back to his mother and I told him it's fine when he feels like having a family we will be waiting for him. He **blocked me from his phone**, we stayed there for 6 months and when I couldn't stomach this anymore I carried my baby and left my first born with his grandmother, I came to Nairobi life was hard I even ended up in the streets and was saved by a watchman who was guarding a nearby church, he introduced me to the pastor the following morning and he counseled me they gave me a few stuff and some money to start a small business after a few months I got enough money to rent a small house and went for my first born and remaining furniture my mother in law refused with my things but gave the baby back to me I continued hustling and this man appeared again and was begging to get back with me I refused but he persisted and become very nice, he bought new furniture rented us a better house, bought food and he moved in with us. He boosted my business. It was doing great and we opened a joint account and agreed that the cash was for building our home. One day he decided to use our joint account cash to release his first album without my knowledge.

He moved out and blocked me as usual and I continued with life I heard that **he had a girlfriend** whom they were staying together and I also got myself **a boyfriend** and one day our last born got sick and was admitted in the hospital when I was asked for NHIF details I said that they were left at home since I didn't think it was an admission case, they admitted him and asked to send for the cards later, when we were being discharged I was called in the finance office because both the **NHIF and insurance cards were reading different names** that's when I realised he had removed me and the children from the cards and instead put his mother and the new girlfriend. Well the bill was too high I called him as usual blocked I called his brother to tell him what was happening he informed him, he didn't call us, instead came to the hospital **and settled the bill, gave me some cash and left**, I was thankful for that gesture. The same year during Christmas he called me to meet him at someplace and he instructed me not to go with the kids so when I went he gave me cash to buy clothes and shoes for all of us and some extra cash to enjoy ourselves. My first born birthday was approaching and he instead on talking with the dad I called he didn't pick then blocked but later called back I told him it's our son who wanted to talk to him the small boy asked for birthday cake he was very rude to the boy to an extent of telling him that he was **not his father** and he was **not an ATM machine**. I was **very bitter and regretted having known him**. I **talked to a friend who advised me to take him to court for them to attach his salary for child support** I tried but his boss was covering

him up and this was frustrating then another friend advised me to leave him alone because he is a senior police officer and he might decide to hurt us. But I thank God I have a supportive boyfriend and my business is doing very well and am happy and at peace now. **To me marriage is not easy, it's scary, a waste of time and it's not for one woman, it involves more than one woman, it is distractive and infidelity is real and I wouldn't want to get married again am not ready for a serious partner.**

Appendix E (e)

CCII

Got married to a church guy, he first introduced me to his pastor that's how serious things were. Let me start by saying that marriage is bitter but it can be a good thing when nurtured. I got married when I had a stable job. So we visited both families for blessing to wed.

My problems started immediately after our wedding, we went for honey moon and I came back pregnant, but my mother in law did not accept me for no reason, he loved her son very much, my husband was a mama's boy even during our dowry, my mother in law said it's not a must for women to be given dowry. Friction started from that time but I thought it was a normal thing and this was because he really loved his son.

I got our baby boy and one time we went to church and met my mother in law and on our way out she asked us to go and see her grandson who was admitted in a nearby hospital we refused because we were not in good terms with the family, she instead and took away my 3 months old son and said, if we thought he was special and he cannot get sick and be admitted, I stepped aside my husband went inside to see the nephew and did not take long he came back took our baby and of we went home.

After 3 days my son became sick his body turned yellow I took him to the hospital and called my husband who came in immediately we were admitted, he passed on the following morning and I remembered my mother in law words very clearly. We started funeral arrangements and my mother in laws could not stop abusing me she said I was **poisonous a devil** to her family. She disrupted the meetings and said we did not need money from any one we can handle all the expenses.

Two weeks after the funeral my mother in law called her son to have a talk, he went the mum locked him in her house **kept the keys under her breast** and started giving him lectures the way he should leave me and marry another wife he came back a very frustrated man. I asked my **mother and sister** to go and seek peace on our behalf, when they got home **she ignored then and walked out** and said she had a church meeting instead they left as bitter people. My people were confused because for sure my husband was a good person and they loved him but the mother was a **monster**.

After six months I conceived again and lost the baby at exactly six months, that day I had gone to a super market where I met my mother in law at the counter and she started her **sneering and made weird facial expression** immediately I developed labor pains and miscarried. We talked about it with my husband who was very supportive although I did not feel like he was serious at times because he allowed his mother to do all silly things to me. After that I lost 3 more babies **we called the pastor and family member's to intervene** the pastor promised to stand with us, when the meeting started as usual my mother in laws who was in fact a church elder **started her drama the manager of the**

hotel was called to calm the situation she was evening **hitting the tables all over** the pastor was very firm he read lots of bible verses and counseled our mum who later become remorseful and was ordered to bless us and pray while holding my tummy and she **forgave us**.

Later I was blessed with a girl and a boy. We **did not name my mother** and she started her dramas again but we stood firm and named her blessing because to us she was a true blessing. My husband moved to Nairobi on promotion when he told his mother it was not easy we had a shop that I had used my cash to start and had a loan I was paying so I told my husband we sell it because he used to run it. My mother in law **refused with the business and I asked my husband to let it go**.

After my husband moved to Nairobi he used to **come every weekend but after two years** I started noticing a change he cut his visits and eventually he **stopped buying food, paying rent and eventually stopped communication** I remember many a times we **slept hungry** because I was not working then so **friends and my sister** used to help me. When I did my investigations I released this man had **an affair with another woman** no wonder I used to call him and I could **hear a baby crying from the background** when I asked he said **it was a neighbors child**. When I went to visit him I asked where was the child who used to cry he did have answers. **I involved his mother and our best couple** when they talked to him he said his father was **polygamous** so what makes him different I could not believe my ears.

We arrived at a decision that we needed to join him in Nairobi he came and helped me move. He stayed with us for 2 months and moved to his girlfriend's house, we suffered we **even went hungry friends used to buy us food and to make it worse he used to come during the day to see his kids empty handed**. I luckily got a job salary was very little but better than non. I worked very hard and I was soon promoted to a manager, We became comfortable and I started **ignoring** him and **did not call** him anymore. I was tired of calling him because the **girlfriend would pick his phone** and ask me why I was disturbing her husband and **at times pick and not talk he wanted me to listen to what was happening in the bedroom** and even after all that he would come and **rape me at his will**. That was the most degrading thing my husband could do to me.

So one day I decided to **confront this girls they ganged up against me she started shouting that I had come to still her husband the public was watching** we went inside the house she **grabbed a knife to stab** me I rushed out and **went starting to the police station** and they were immediately summoned they came **holding hands**. I found a very understanding police man whom I explained everything to, he didn't spare my husband he **said men have affairs but a man enough does not disrespect his first wife** and that he **was embarrassing the male kingdom** and they were both throwing in the cells.

I called our best couple who tried to talk to him and **even played wedding tape, to remind him of his vows he said he was just acting and that's not him**. He called me all sorts of names like **snake, bitch, ugly, devil, disgusting, no body and he doesn't see what he saw in me**, I felt used I was **shocked** beyond words. From that day I decided to let go and concentrate on taking of my children.

After a few months he called me that they were coming over my place **dropping a sack of charcoal** and I wondered after all those months anyway, I let him come and his friends brought in the charcoal and when I was about to close the door he came in and what I saw

was a version of him he looked **so frail, worn out and very sick** he sat down and I was expecting him to leave with his colleagues, I asked him what was the problem he said he got sick I **gave him some food and gave him a blanket to cover himself on the sofa** and I went to sleep. The following day in the morning I woke up as usual prepared some breakfast **I offered him tea** he drank and vomited and when I took a keen look on him his body was all **yellow and very weak** I told him I was going to work and he said he was going to work too but asked him **to go to the hospital first which he declined**. During the day I wanted to find out how he was doing so **I called he never picked I texted he never replied I thought at first that's his usual behavior but I was concerned because of the way he looked** so I ended up **calling his colleagues** they said he went to work buy left early and said he was going back home now my place, I called the house help he was not there I called his father he said he had not seen him then after two days my mother in law calls me to say that he had been there and am the one who gave him poison but they will take him to south African for further treatment, this was not adding up.

My husband came back to Nairobi again I wanted to ask him why his mother has not taken him to South Africa. Well I **asked him where his girlfriend was** and all he could do **was cry**, I did not know what to do, if to shut him out on the other hand the kids were so excited to see their dad, so I just let him in and that was the beginning of **nursing him**. He **slept on the sofa** in the morning he took tea and vomited again his legs were so swollen to a point he couldn't wear shoes and his eyes were very yellow I called his friend to help me take him to the hospital and was admitted immediately. **None of his family members not even his mother came to visit him yet he stayed in the hospital for more than 3 months.**

I came to discover that he had liver cancer and what pains me most I have to **take care of the person who abandon us when we needed him most** I do this because of the **vows I made during our wedding**. We go for family meetings together and pretend that we are very happy couple but in our house we are strangers. We also **attend school functions together when he can**. Right now he is **bed ridden** this has **taken a toll on me** I have to wake up very early prepare him his special food which is always blended, I **take him for his chemotherapy all by myself**, his family does not support us in any way not even giving us moral support at least someone to help me take him for his clinics while I go to work. My friends and family who supported me when he was not there fill betrayed and are bitter about my actions. I am a manager in big reputable firm I have to go for huge meetings and I have to smile to friends colleagues and my juniors and the society at large but am really hurting inside.

I have to nurse him every day and night my life has become a night mare as I see him suffer and go through a lot of pain. He has really **drained me emotionally mentally and financially**. I feel **misused and not appreciated**, this man has 10 siblings and no one has ever volunteered to come and help me nurse him my work revolves around Kenyatta National Hospital, work and home it's not easy.

To me marriage is **pure love** and requires **crazy patience**

Appendix E (f)

RUC

Marriage, if protected, is a good thing. My conflict started like a joke, my husband all over a sudden started mentioning a certain lady who was his colleague, her name was all over my house and I started feeling insecure. It happened this lady was staying in our neighborhood, my husband used to drop me to work in the morning then go to his work; slowly he introduced the plan to be picking the lady to work since they were in the same office and staying in the same neighborhood. I kept quiet, then one day I didn't manage to prepare myself on time and he started complaining I was delaying him and he was getting late.

He told me that he will be picking his colleague, and there was no point of leaving her since they work together, but whenever I delayed a bit he would **shout** at me saying his colleague got to the picking point early and she might be feeling cold and it was not fair, this went on and one day **he left me** I went to work alone, he started **coming home late and would sleep on the sofa and claimed he was watching football** as he relax because he felt worn out. **We use to pray together which stopped**, because he was **moody** and **quiet** most of the times and when he **came home early he would sleep early and wake up early**, so he **stopped dropping and picking me from work**, when I asked he said he realised I was **lazy, disorganized** and he likes organized people. Things got thicker **I talked to her mother** who is very understanding, she summoned him and was not amused, and asked me if I was married to him or his mother, he said he didn't want anyone knowing his things he called me **foolish, dog** and for the first time he started **sleeping out and stopped eating my food**.

I called our best man to intervene. He said I **never appreciate him** and I was very **nagging** we talked about why he stopped dropping me to work and I thought instead of fighting over it let me buy myself a car. I tried **avoiding** him because I did not want any more conflict, he started accusing me of having an affair and said I had changed, but to me I was giving him the space he wanted. He began **calling me all the times wanting to know my whereabouts** I thought he had started caring about me and wanted us to reconcile only for me to discover he was doing that to know how far I was because he had an affair with the house help, I was even told by the gate man that whenever I go to work he comes back to the house and leaves again. I decided to investigate, he acted very concerned with girl even asked we raise her salary I agreed I did not want him to suspect I knew anything, so one day he goes to work as usual, I also left but left the back door opened this door was always closed, hid somewhere I saw him come back I gave him few minutes and I sneaked in through the back door I found them in the house helps bedroom, I didn't say a word I **banged the door** behind me **broke utensils damaged his** car and I went straight and rented a small house I came back in the evening we **didn't talk** and the house help was gone. The following day when he left I packed my belongings and took my kids to our new house.

He called **our pastor** but was not telling him the truth he said I got annoyed because he used to lift his friend to work. He told the pastor he **cannot leave without me and the children**, am the **only person who understands him and only death that will separate us**. He started **visiting us frequently**, he would ask the children to come and **kiss mummy** for him and he would even **cover me when I was taking a nap on the sofa, be played a**

lot with the kids. He even gave me money to pay for my rent and bought food and supported us in everything he said he really **misses us** we talked about it and we agreed we start afresh and forget about the past.

I **employed a house boy** and things were ok we enjoyed each other's company and it felt as though I was on a honey moon once more. This did not last long before I noticed that he was always on the **social media** and again he **put a password on his phone and waited** when he was deep asleep I took his fingerprint to unlock his phone I forwarded the messages to my phone and deleted the forwarding. I read the messages the following day only to discover that he was involved with the very colleague. That evening I was very annoyed I called him a prostitute and asked why he was cheating on me.

I **packed my bags** and off I went with my children and I **blocked** him from my phone and took the **kids to a different school**. It was not easy for my kids, especially the last one who kept on asking where daddy was and why he was not staying with us, I told her he was working far away and one day he will come to stay with us. It has been three years now and when I thought he had moved on, his mother visited my parents and was pleading for them to call for a meeting as he had realised his mistakes. We met he **was crying uncontrollably** and what he said is what shocked us, that his mum and the aunty advised him to marry another woman since we had girls only and I had refused to try getting a boy, mind you this is whole grown man who is well educated, I asked for some time to think through.

He changed a lot **he respects me, visits all the time, foots all my bills, calls me babe, honey, my pie, takes me out for dinner**, there is a time he came when I was not in the house **he folded all my clothes neatly, cooked** for the kids and when I came he offered to **wash me**. He has worked hard to bring his family back to his life. About how I see marriage after all these is that **marriage is sweet** but can **be very tricky and very involving**. Our children are very happy and eagerly waiting for the big day, all I can say is he has learnt his lesson and have learnt mine too and I am wiser and I know **patience** is a must in every marriage and for me and my partner we were meant for each other regardless of the circumstances.

We have organised **a family meeting and we are attending counseling sessions** which we are about to finish. We have decided **to lay down rules and regulations that will govern our union** because we believe marriage is meant to be for better for worse. Thank you.

Appendix E (g)

DCI

In my first year of marriage my wife was **very warm** she used to send me **sweet and romantic messages** and called to ask what I would **love to have for super**, she welcomed me home **warmly, gave me tea, did a foot massage as I was taking my tea and as we chatted endlessly**, this went on for about 3 years and she stopped calling regularly as she used before and there was no more foot massage and within a short while things changed and I thought to myself may be it is because we had invited my small brother to come and stay with us as he attended college.

It reached a time when she seemed to be **bored or tired with me. She didn't even want to spend time with me or stay close to me; she even stopped cooking and washing clothes for me**. This was a clear sign that our relationship was not in good condition. We

went on I tried my best to make her happy only to discover that she had asked for a **job transfer** to Mombasa. This was very disturbing and when I asked her she said she wanted to give us space with my brother. I talked to her and her boss but she could not hear of it. Finally I allowed her to go and we promised to keep in touch and call as much as possible we agreed on that and I helped her to relocate, but my mind was full of questions. During the first month things were normal we **called each other almost all the time and at night we would do a video call**, all over a sudden the **regular calls became irregular**, by the second month things started going astray, my wife could **not receive calls during the night**. When I asked the reason for doing so she **complained about the job and the way she was tired**. I knew this was a lie and I wondered the reason behind that, but I could not ask and I didn't want to start accusing before I knew exactly what was happening. One time I called her and she received her phone in a very noisy place and I started adding one and one together, something fishy was going on.

I told her I was going to pay a visit she agreed but **sounded shaken**. When I got there everything seemed to be ok. Something strange is that my wife could never leave her phone behind even in the **kitchen** but that was not a huge problem to me, the problem came when she **carried her phone to the bathroom**. This **irritated me** and I decided to investigate.

One night my wife woke up when I was sleeping and went to the washroom. I pretended to be dead asleep, immediately she entered the washroom, I took her phone only to see a message on upper most part of the screen written honey. I locked the bedroom door and started to read the chats between her and her other man whom they were planning to fly out together pretending they were going on a business trip. **I was breathing fire, we fought like hell** I told her I didn't know that I had married a **prostitute, I wanted to kill her, I felt so cheated, used and disrespected**, I mean I gave her everything and she was doing all this behind my back. Well I travelled back to my place she **couldn't call** our best couple nor could she call her parents she was **ashamed** I went straight and filed for divorce she was hesitant in signing but she had no choice, Finally we divorced and I thank God I noticed things early before she wasted my time am happy and free, I moved on and currently am dating and am hoping this one is the owner of my rib.

My ex messed up her life, that man left her and she stalks me once in a while and there is a day she had send some **thugs to harm my new girlfriend** but instead they told her what was happening and I **took her to court and was arrested** and ordered never to interfere with my life again because she had her chance and wasted it and again choices have consequences.

I can conclude by saying to me marriage **is challenging** and one should **learn to accept what comes their way and move on** and **assumption** kills the sacred union.

Appendix E (h)

SCII

It all started at work when a new lady colleague was posted into my service area and I was assigned to take her through induction. We started well; I showed her around and took her for tea, just to make her familiar with the environment. I worked in the same organization with my wife and she started becoming **moody**, and kept on asking questions about the new colleague. I **would laugh it off**, little did I know she was harboring **hatred and was becoming jealous out of nothing**.

Assumptions and jealousy became too evident with my wife, these pushed her to an extent of going to retrieve personal information about my colleague, she got her husband's number called him and organized to meet him up. They met; she told him that my colleague had destroyed her marriage because I was going out with her husband.

Let me name my colleague Mary and my wife Jane. When Mary went home her husband was **breathing fire** he **was very furious** he told her everything and threw her out together with her two children, the husband did not even want to listen to anything. She slept at a neighbors place she didn't come to work for 3 days I tried calling her she didn't answer and all this time I was not aware of what was happening but **Jane's body language** could tell me she was up to something, she asked about Mary I told her have not seen her for 3 days she laughed out loud I asked why and said she deserves what she is going through.

Finally, Mary came to the office she looked very **unhappy** and did **not talk to me**, I later asked her what was wrong she started crying saying Jane had finished her family, she narrated the whole story I felt very sorry for and apologized on behalf of Jane. That day as we were going home with my wife she **looked a bit disturbed, worried and silent and avoided my conversations**. **When we got home she seemed very busy** in kitchen I called and told her that I wanted us to talk, I asked her why she did what she did, **she kept quiet I asked again she gave me a weird look**, that is when I got **so irritated and gave her a hard slap on her face**, and hell broke loose, she started crying and abusing me saying that I was a **player, womanizer a fool, and I told her that I don't think I knew her any more, called her an hypocrite, she continued yelling that night she did not eat and she slept on the sofa**.

The following morning, **she woke up earlier than usual, got ready, did not talk to me, she didn't take breakfast** and left for work. I later followed her. When I got to work I asked Mary to give me her husband's mobile number so that I could explain things, I called we organized to meet the four of us but Jane was **reluctant**, when we got to the hotel we found Mary already seated then the husband joined us later, we started our conversation and Mary's husband could not hear anything I explained very well what was happening **he walked out of the meeting leaving us stranded**. Jane wanted us to leave too so I asked Mary we go together but she refused and when I insisted Jane stood and left too .we later left.

After a few months Mary approached me again about a meeting she wanted this time we met Jane and I, she was still **very mad at my wife**. We met after work, Mary was breathing fire, **and she looked very bitter and miserable**. Mary did not mince her words and went straight to the point and said my wife broke her marriage, for no apparent reason and that she cannot stay alone. She needs a companion and that companion is going to be me, I almost fainted I asked **what!** How can that be honestly I was not expecting such. Jane was

very shocked and Mary said whether we like it or not that's how things are going to be because she cannot go round looking for men and was there. Of course we did not agree and left the meeting halfway. Jane become very **disrespectful and noisy** and on the other hand, the innocent Mary started carrying breakfast for me, we would take it together in the office, instead of me going to the hotel and before I knew it I had started developing some feelings for her, **I started resenting** my wife and before long my feelings for her were dead. **I started taking Mary out for dinners, started drinking, coming home late and other times spending the night at Mary's.**

Jane involved **our pastors and her parents** she accused me for **neglecting her and the children** but she was not saying the root cause, so when I told the story everyone was shocked, her mother suggested we call Mary's husband which we did, he refused to meet us and said he had moved on we can have her. After that meeting our conflict flared up. We fought almost **daily, the environment was toxic, when I went out drinking Jane would do the same, when I came home later she even made sure she came after me.** I got **tired and moved out, Jane would track me and send some young men to harass me whenever I was with Mary. She would also call in the middle of the night when I slept out just to disturb my peace.** I asked for a **transfer and gained my freedom and peace.** We separated and **I stopped helping her and the children** although Mary insisted that I have to perform duties as a father, in fact this made me fall in love with her completely, because it is not easy to hear such after what Jane put her through. I decided to introduce Mary to my Mother and sister and surprisingly my mum likes her more than my wife she says she is **generous and respectful** now the rest of the family members like her very much.

I detached myself from my family I stopped all the support and Jane attached my salary so I now support the kids by force which is unfair to me because Jane knows that I am servicing a loan which I took to build our rural home while her salary is free. **I feel trapped because we still go for family meetings together and attend school clinics, and sports day together, we sit and eat together.**

Sometimes I **visit my children,** my wife complains a lot but she **has to carry her cross.** Whenever she **calls asking me to come back I always tell her to wake up and smell the coffee while it's fresh.** Am happy and well taken care of. **I have a lot of resentment towards my wife she is so destructive and arrogant** and about coming back together I cannot tell at the moment.

To me marriage entails a lot of trust and once broken to amend is not easy, Marriage involves a lot of insecurity and one needs to set boundaries, be understanding and also embrace personal space. It needs a lot of pruning

Appendix F: Key Informant I

Professional Counselor.

“I am a senior counselor, trainer and mentor in our institution. Most of our clients come with presenting problems then we look at the underlying problem to come up with a concrete solution.

We all experience depression, loneliness, stress and relational conflict at some point in life and a person who seeks help we consider him or her very bold. Different clients come seeking different answers to their problems some are looking for happiness, better intimate relationships, self-awareness and understanding, better sex lives, others want to gain control, and others fighting anxiety and worry the list is endless.

Counseling is a process we aim to assist and guide people in need to resolve their personal and psychological issues. We have different kinds of counseling. We assess a client and know what suits them best. We follow a sequence, what we call stages of counseling process, we start with creating a relationship with the client to make them feel safe and open up, then we do assessment and diagnosis, followed by intervention and problem solving and after we are done with the sessions we do follow up just to get to know how our clients are doing.

The age group that I see most is between 30 to 50 years, this is mostly because of midlife crisis and more responsibilities. 25 to 35 years are still immature, still developing and discovering themselves while others are looking for freedom.

The main marital conflicting issues that have been handled include mostly child support, infidelity, negligence and withdrawal of family support.

Verbal communication triggers and influences conflict escalation more while nonverbal communication takes longer to fuel conflict among couples.

Based on the reported cases that I have attended to, what causes conflict to escalate among couples mainly is social economic status that's finances and sources of finances. For example if the man lost his job this is the biggest trigger, another issue is family size this translates to more responsibilities, some men will tend to elope just to get away with the huge load. Living with relatives is another huge problem that escalates conflict and last but not least transfers, you find that the family is living together happily but once one partner is transferred or relocates to a different location temptations are high and they find themselves getting involved elsewhere.

According to my own opinion and experiences, attitude can interfere with marriage in that, when the attitude is negative it tends to trigger the conflict but when positive tends to lighten up the atmosphere hence improving communication. It can either move from negative to positive or vice versa. Attitude emanates from maturity, experience, spirituality, culture, education and number of children.

Culture is the way of life, the way one was brought up their beliefs and norms, In some cultures opinion from women do not matter, education background helps if both parties are educated its easier at times to reason together but when one is less educated they might feel intimidated and looked down upon. The number of children also matter, when the children are many, most of the women become busy and switch their energy towards their children and neglect the man of the house. And on the other hand men tend to change because of the responsibilities at hand. Maturity and experience will also determine how they react to

issues and how best to handle them to avoid conflict. Different levels of spirituality will also affect the way couples behave.

Familiarity does contribute to conflict escalation between spouses, some couples start assuming things or responsibilities for example a man helps his wife once in a while in house chores and the wife takes full advantage of that. Another scenario they answer each other's phone, the husband picks the phone or laptop and starts going through this brings some conflict at some point. They can be familiar with each other but boundaries should be clear and with respect.

Conflict can make or break a marriage, it can lead to separation, conflict depends on the characteristics of the person, it is a form of spiritual guidance and help. Conflict can be traumatizing when it involves abuse either emotionally, physically and mentally.

The best way we help conflicting couples resolve their differences is by doing counseling and give them a support system, we encourage them to take up small jobs and we also encourage them to go back to school or take small courses if they can. They need to be to be financially empowered especially the women so that they can reduce the financial burden and support their families.

Lastly I would say communication is key in any marriage and I would rate communication to be 90%.”

Appendix F: Key Informant II

Church Counselor

“I am a catholic nun in charge of counseling and marriage encounters at St. Jude Donholm catholic church. In our parish we have many couples going through marital conflict, but those who seek help are mostly women.

Most conflicting couples are entrapped in sore marriages because of different reasons like personal issues, status, religious matters, and social expectations. Entrapment is experienced because of fear of the unknown.

Well the age bracket of couples mostly challenged by marital conflict in our church is between 25 to 35 years. This group is in their youthful years and is still looking for freedom and some are still discovering themselves. They gauge their partners with their parents for example the man tends to want to marry a replica of the mother and vice versa. The main conflicting issues that have been handled are due to misunderstanding which leads to Communication breakdown that leads to revenge in extra marital affairs, physical fights that end up in separation.

Verbal and nonverbal communication really influences conflict escalation. Nonverbal is the loudest and it is the worst, for example the wife calls the husband and the husband looks at her with bad eyes, bangs the door and walks out, for revenge the husband comes home hungry with food, the wife refuses to cook or to serve him. What triggers the nonverbal is the state in which the other person is in, and it can either be positive or negative.

The most pronounced marital conflicting issues that have been handled are mostly interference from in-laws, infidelity, and alcoholism to an extent of not supporting the family.

Attitude interferes with marital relationships. Attitude can be negative or positive and it can be categorised in terms of educational background, spiritual virtues, age and sometimes how one was raised up. If a spouse with a negative attitude will tend to always put their spouse down, despise them, then from there respect is compromised, the bond is weakened and they stop admiring each other. If the attitude is right or positive the couple will understand each other better and mind about their feelings. They will correct their shortcomings with love and understanding.

Too much familiarity creates conflict. Couples start taking each other for granted, the small things that they used to enjoy together becomes just normal and meaningless, simply because I do this and I know how my partner will react. For example for ladies, one goes for a new hairdo or gets a nice dress and there are no more compliments. Then the wife gets compliments out there and tends to start believing, that is what the husband does to compliment other women and this can cause conflicts.

Marriage is a beautiful thing when nurtured and only if spouses are in an honest and constant communication. Some conflict makes relations better, so not all conflict is bad. Conflict is good for growth, the challenges make spouses to get closer and know how to handle and solve their own problem.

How we help couples solve and heal from marital conflict is, one to encourage them to seek help together, encourage them to join small Christian groups for support and spiritual growth, encourage them to choose good friends who add value in their lives, we do follow up to see how they are doing and lastly encourage for financial independence.

Good communication is vital in any relationship and I would rate communication in marriage to be 95% and above.