

**THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE TO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE:
BALANCING BRIDE PRICE DEMANDS IN HOLY MATRIMONY IN HOIMA
ARCHDEACONRY BUNYORO KITARA DIOCESE**

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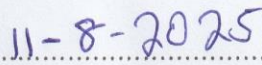
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DECLARATION

I Murungi Barnabas, declare that; I am the author of this dissertation and any assistance I received in its preparation is fully acknowledged and disclosed in the report. I also certify that this paper was prepared by me for the partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Divinity at Uganda Christian University, Mukono.

Signature.....


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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been approved by the undersigned person as the requirement for the award of Master of Divinity. As the candidate's supervisor, I agree to the submission of this research proposal.

Signature.....

Date.....11/8/2025

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(Supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Father and Mother who advised, supported and mentored me to go through education up to University level. I also dedicate this research to my Dear wife Murungi Annet for always being there when I needed someone and for motivating me to finish my research dissertation. Above all I thank the Almighty God for guidance and provision towards completion of this dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at navigating the influence of traditional marriage to Christian marriage: balancing bride price demands in holy matrimony in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. The study was guided by objectives which are; examining the influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages, analyzing the societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples and exploring how the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry. The study was carried out using a case study research design where qualitative research approach was also used. The data was collected using interview and focus group discussion guides and during the data collection, where both simple random and purposive sampling methods were used. A sample size of 46 respondents who include; married couples (40) from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and key informants (06) was used in the study. The study findings revealed that exorbitant bride price demands in Hoima Archdeaconry negatively affect the financial stability, marital harmony, and ethical dynamics of Christian marriages, often leading to debt, delays in church weddings, and gender inequality. Such customs have turned from symbolic to commoditized, fostering power inequalities and societal pressure. The Church is called upon to act proactively through pre-marital counseling, community sensitization, and collaboration with cultural leaders to reform bride price customs, promote affordability, and uphold Christian values of love, unity, and dignity. Finally, the study recommended that the Hoima Archdeaconry Church conduct culturally rooted premarital counseling, community sensitization, and collaboration with cultural leaders to reverse the negative impact of runaway bride price. It further suggests collaborative marriage preparation committees and re-educating elders to re-ignite bride price to its symbolic role and uphold Christian principles of love, unity, and dignity in wedding ceremonies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study was conducted in Hoima Archdeaconry. Hoima Archdeaconry belongs to Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, a diocese of the Church of Uganda, mid-western part of Uganda, covering administrative districts of Hoima, Hoima city, Kikube, Kagadi, Kakumiro and Kibaale. There are 8 local parishes and daughter churches in Hoima Archdeaconry. Hoima Archdeaconry holds tremendous cultural and religious importance within the local community. Customary marriage ceremonies, rooted in Bunyoro tradition, intersect with Christian marriage ceremonies in complex manners among this population. The fine balance between customary bride price requirements poses unique challenges to marriage relationships and societal norms within Holy Matrimony.

1.1 Background

Traditional marriage customs have generally been a major component of social structures, significantly impacting domestic and community way of life. Bilodeau & Cleveland (2021) pinpoint how traditional marriage customs are pillars of culture that determine roles and expectations in the family as well as foster communal cohesion and perpetuation. Among all these customs, bride price, where a groom's family gives a substantial sum in the form of payment or gift to the family of the bride, is extremely common in all societies. Lennon (2023) has referred to the custom as ensuring the commitment of the groom and families' assent, as a marriage legitimization requirement. Maua et al. (2020) also similarly indicate that bride price is a show of respect and legalizing union between two families. Both authors do mention concerns that the economic demands in the practice have mounted over time, creating tensions for the couples, especially in those regions where the levels of economic gaps are high. Asimwe (2013) also adds that in sub-Saharan Africa, bride price increases tend to weigh and delay marriage, particularly for youth couples with less economic endowments.

The blending of Christian teachings with time-honored wedding practices poses peculiar challenges. According to Fiedler (2024), such Christian teachings esteem the spiritual unity of

marriage and can be at odds with physical obligations involved in bride price customs. Such tensions are even more heightened in societies where religious teachings and common habits coalesce. Hamner et al. (2018) state that such differences have been a subject of discussion about the role of bride price in contemporary Christian marriage, with some viewing it as a cultural practice to be preserved and others as an impediment to true spiritual devotion.

Christian doctrines portray marriage in a different aspect, one based on religious principles and not material wealth. Matthew 6:19-21 instructs individuals to strive to lay up treasures in heaven and not earthly wealth, quoting the religious aspect of marriage. Similarly, Proverbs 15:27 instructs individuals not to be covetous and money-grabbing and that marriage is founded on love and religious principles. Ephesians 5:25-33 appeals to sacrificial love to which husbands should be devoted to their wives, as between Christ and the Church, advocating for marriage based on emotional and spiritual bonds. 1 Peter 3:3-4 goes as far as condemning the beauty of external beauty and riches, urging couples to desire inner beauty and goodness that transcends riches. These biblical precepts are pitted against bride price materialism, which appears to overshadow Christian wedding emphasis on spiritual union.

The bride price means differently across societies in view of differing cultural values and economic standing. Bride price, Mbiti (1990) asserts, is quite significant in the majority of African societies, which views it as a show of respect and family oneness. Whitesell and Faria (2020) also agree, noting that bride price promotes family bonding as well as cultural heritage. But Hamner et al. (2018) cautioned that its commodification in some instances has led to gender inequality and economic exploitation. Peterson & Peterson (2011) also point out that in Christian circles, bride price can be morally wrong, especially when it prevents marriage between couples who cannot afford the bride price. This conflict has the tendency to steer the conversation away from the religious and relationship aspect of marriage into its transactional form, according to Fiedler (2024).

The practice and utilization of bride price vary widely globally. Lennon (2023) writes that in Western societies, such archaic customs as dowries and bride price have significantly lost steam and are today replaced by more equalitarian approaches that stress partnership and common financial responsibility. On the contrary, Peterson and Peterson (2011) note that countries like

India and China still observe these traditions, although controlled or modernized, leading to financial strain or gender distortions in some cases. Mbiti (1990) further states that in sub-Saharan Africa, bride price remains at the center of marriage arrangements, both as a cultural and economic factor.

In Uganda and even in Hoima Archdeaconry that is in the Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, bride price still remains a part of cultural marriage rituals within the Banyoro community (Okweranga). Bride price is seen as an important element in marriage negotiations, where groom families are supposed to present gifts to the bride family as a sign of respect and commitment. Opiyo (2022) further posits that the practice is conducted as part of marriage ceremonies, cementing the ties of the family. Asimwe (2013) nevertheless observes that the additional economic strain the bride price causes has caused massive pressure on families, with payments ranging from UGX 5 million to UGX 15 million, according to Lennon (2023) and Fiedler (2024). These costs have led to delayed weddings and monetary strain, both among the groom and bride's families.

In Hoima Archdeaconry's Christian population, there is apparent conflict between Christian teachings on marriage and traditional bride price. Maua et al. (2020) reported that families fail to bring together the cash requirements of tradition and Christian teachings on marriage. The existing study endeavors to investigate these dynamics, finding a middle ground for religious teachings and traditional practices in Hoima Archdeaconry, noted by Opiyo (2022).

1.2 Statement of the problem

It is posited by Rwambale (2013) that in Uganda, increasing money demands in bride price payments have emerged as a major social and religious issue, particularly in Christian society. The practice, as important as it is in their culture, is to a greater extent causing financial instability and unfairly burdening the pockets of families, thus undermining the sanctity and viability of Christian marriages. Fiedler (2024) observes that bride price payments now lie between UGX 5 million and UGX 15 million, leading to unrelenting financial stress. Theologically, Hamner et al. (2018) believe that this is wrong because the material focus on bride price may overwhelm the spiritual dynamics of Christian marriage, which hinges on love, commitment, and respect, not money.

Moreover, Whitesell & Faria (2020) note that when a man cannot meet such demands, it can delay or even prevent the formalization of a Christian wedding since asking and obtaining an acceptance letter from the bride's parents is necessary as a prerequisite for the church wedding. As Opiyo (2022) identifies, this challenges the conflict between Christianity and customary practice where Christianity upholds the sacredness of marriage as a covenant before God and not dependent on one's financial ability. Hence, it was the aim of this research to examine how traditional marriage customs, namely bride price charges, influence Christian marriage, with focus on Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to navigate how traditional marriage has influenced Christian marriage in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese and found a solution to address its impacts, whether negative or positive.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese.
- ii. To analyze the societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry.
- iii. To explore how the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. How do traditional bride price demands influence financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese?
- ii. What are the societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry?
- iii. How can the Church intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry?

1.6 Justification of the study

The justification for undertaking this study was prompted by the imperative to react to the issues generated by the intersection of customary bride price and Christian marriage conventions within Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. Study was required because economic hardship imposed by high bride price has increasingly generated interruptions in marriage stability, undermined morality, and brought about disharmony between cultural conventions and Christian principles. In examining these challenges, the study aimed to provide insight into how these conflicting demands impact Christian marriages and how the Church can implement ways of blending strategies that achieve harmony between traditional practices and Christian principles, such that marriages are still culturally attuned and spiritually fulfilling.

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of the study covered three dimensions that were; content, geographical and time and these were discussed in detail below.

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study mainly focused on examining the influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages, analyzing the societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples and exploring how the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

Geographically, it was confined to the Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese located in Hoima district, providing a detailed analysis of marriage practices and their impacts on local couples.

1.7.3 Time Scope

This study focused on the period from 2014 to 2024, as it represents a decade during which traditional marriage practices, particularly the rising bride price demands, have been perceived to

increasingly influence Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. This timeframe was chosen to enable the researcher to analyze whether these practices have negatively impacted Christian marriages by comparing trends in the number of church weddings before and during this period. It helped determine whether the number of Christian marriages has declined, remained constant, or faced challenges within this ten-year span, providing a comprehensive basis for assessing the influence of traditional marriage practices on Christian marriages.

1.8 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is that it may offer a comprehensive description of how customary bride price demands influence Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. Through such a cross, the effects of the specific challenges on the Church would illuminate clergymen on how to handle such issues, offering insights into leading the balanced integration of culture and Christian teachings. In addition, it would equip Christian couples with information to negotiate these economic and cultural dynamics in a way that harmonizes their decision-making with their beliefs. In addition, the research would enrich cultural leaders' insights into the necessity to innovate old traditions to fit with new contexts, promoting positive debate on how to hold on to heritage without reducing people to poverty.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The subject of marriage, particularly in the context of traditional and Christian practices, has attracted several scholarly works, including books, journal articles, dissertations, and theses. However, there remain gaps in addressing the interplay of extravagance in traditional and Christian marriage practices, particularly in the Ugandan context. The literature review appeared as follows;

2.1 Literature to be reviewed on different themes

Al-Sharmani, M. (2018). *Marriage in Islamic Interpretive Tradition: Revisiting the Legal and the Ethical*. *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, 2(1-2), 76-96: This article reassesses Islamic tradition on marriage with an emphasis on congruence between law and ethics. It helped the researcher understand how religious meaning influences marriage practice, making the comparative framework available for the Ugandan Christian context.

Anderson, S. (2013). *Towards a Methodist Theology of Marriage in the 21st Century*. 13th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Theology and Ethics Working Group, Oxford, UK: This book explores Methodist theology's evolution of doctrine on marriage. It is important to study because it gives insight into how Christian denominations adapt marriage traditions to modern-day social changes, a question at the heart of trying to balance tradition and Christian values.

Asiimwe, H. (2013). *The Changing Dynamics, Trends, and Perceptions in the Bride Price Custom in Uganda: A Feminist Perspective on the Banyakitara Ethnic Group in Western Uganda*. *Unpublished document*: This study analyzes the bride price practice in Uganda, providing essential facts about its implications and evolution. It enabled situating the cultural dynamics of marriage practices and identifying areas that contradict Christian traditions.

Bilodeau, M., & Cleveland, K. (2021). *The New Wedding Book: A Guide to Ditching All the Rules*. Dundurn: This book denounces traditional wedding expectations and offers solutions. It played a crucial part in critiquing extravagance in wedding rites and how today's trends impact traditional and Christian rituals.

Dankwa, S., Odoom, V., & Eshun, I. (2022). *Dynamics that Exist in the Understanding and Reasons for the Performance of Parallel Marriage Ceremonies*. *Dynamics*, 68: This essay explores the reasons why traditional and religious wedding ceremonies are conducted. It educated the researcher on how dual ceremonies are perceived and their impact on resources used and expectations from the public in Uganda.

Dewall, C. (2016). *Traditional Marriage: From Abraham to the Present*. WestBow Press: The book gives a historical perspective of the customs of marriage from the Bible to the contemporary period. The book offered a foundation of knowledge of how Christian marriage customs originated traditionally and assisted in comparing the past and contemporary customs.

Fiedler, K. (2024). *For the Sake of Christian Marriage, Abolish Church Weddings*. *African Books Collective*: Fiedler advocates the removal of church weddings because they are excessive. The book played a significant role in evaluating whether church weddings align with biblical doctrine and how they help to fuel financial burdens.

Hamner, C., Trent, J., Byrd, R. J., Johnson, E. L., & Thoennes, E. (Eds.). (2018). *Marriage: Its Foundation, Theology, and Mission in a Changing World*. Moody Publishers: This book edited discusses the theological foundation of marriage. It helped the researcher to study how theology is reacting to the issues introduced by wedding ceremonies' cultural expectations.

Mbiti, J. S. (1990). *African Religions & Philosophy*. Heinemann: Mbiti presents a clear picture of classic African beliefs, for example, marriage rituals. The book was helpful in the analysis of how Christian teachings and traditional practices interact with one another in Uganda.

Rwambale, D. (2013). *The Unresolved Question on the Payment of Bride Price in Uganda*: This essay is critical of the bride price tradition, questioning its relevance and morality. It allowed for

the exploration of monetary expectations in traditional marriage practices and how they shape Christian marriages.

Witte Jr, J. (2000). *The Goods and Goals of Marriage*. *Notre Dame L. Rev.*, 76, 1019: Witte examines religious and social aspirations and benefits of marriage. The research facilitated the examination of how these aims disagree or agree with the expectations of traditional Ugandan marriages.

Witte, J. (2012). *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*. *Presbyterian Publishing Corp*: This book tracks the evolution of marriage from a sacramental to contractual regime. It allowed the researcher to understand how modern changes in legal and societal developments affect the marriage culture of Uganda.

2.2 Traditional bride price demands and financial stability in Christian marriages

Dankwa et al. (2022) in their work studied the impact of traditional bride price on financial stability in Christian marriages. They found that for most African societies, bride price has evolved from a symbolic custom to a burdensome economic demand, subjecting the groom's family to tremendous economic pressure. This economic burden will be able to generate indebtedness and, in some cases, affect the stability of the marriage itself. Likewise, Kauuova (1999) points out that in most African Christian societies, the bride price remains an obligatory tradition, which in certain instances compels men to delay marriage until they are able to meet the payment, causing delays in settling down in family units.

Maua et al. (2020) addresses how Christian theology influences bride price understanding and practice in North Teso, with findings showing that while Christianity encourages modesty, there remain high economic demands from traditional activity. This has caused conflict between the preservation of cultural demands and financial security in Christian marriages. Peterson & Peterson (2011) also argue that in the majority of Christian communities, the struggle between traditional practice and Christian teaching persists, particularly regarding financial commitments like the bride price. They note that unrealistically excessive claims are likely to undermine the economic foundation of a marriage, leading to long-term economic instability.

Bilodeau & Cleveland (2021) give a perspective on how modern weddings, including those that have been influenced by traditional practices like the bride price, are expensive. They argue that marriage commercialism, which is being triggered by cultural factors, tends to leave couples in debt before the marriage has even begun, compromising the financial stability of Christian marriages. Witte (2012) concurs with this, positing that the legal and commercialization of marriage, as exemplified in the form of bride price, will typically contradict Christian ideals of simplicity and financial prudence, leading to marital stress and economic instability.

Al-Sharmani (2018) is concerned with the economic expenditure of marriage in Islamic society, comparing it with the same kind of problems in Christian weddings, where bride price practices impose enormous financial burdens. The study finds that in either religious arrangement, economic extravagant expectations undermine the moral and spiritual foundations of marriage, leading to financial instability. Lennon (2023) also narrates the historical evolution of marriage practices as having witnessed the economic costs associated with traditional marriage rituals, like bride price, increasingly become inconsistent with modern Christian standards of marriage, mainly contributing to economic stress and conflict in marriage.

Opiyo (2022) examines the challenges Christian couples in Nairobi County, Kenya, encounter in balancing traditional and Christian marriage customs, including economic effects of bride price quotations. The study reveals that excessive bride price quotations result in debt and economic instability, which could stretch marital relations and contradict Christian teachings on financial stewardship. Hamner et al. (2018) agree with these observations, suggesting that economic costs of traditional marriage rituals, including bride price, oftentimes violate Christian teachings on restraint and financial prudence and lead to long-term economic instability in marriages.

Olaore & Agwu (2021) discuss the role of women in African marriage, paying attention to how bride price demands place excessive financial pressure on families. Their research indicates that economic insecurity caused by such demands has a tendency to put pressure on marriage, especially in Christian marriages where being frugal is a core value. Whitesell & Faria (2020) also talk about additional globalization of marriage tradition, such as the bride price, and how it contributes to economic security. They argue that the rising economic expense of traditional

marriage ceremonies, including those in Christian society, has led to growing marital debt and economic uncertainty.

Pallathadka et al. (2022) explain the variations in marriage ceremonies with diverse cultures, a matter of fact that in most African Christian societies, bride price remains a significant economic expense that leads to long-term financial insecurity. They argue that such financial demands are likely to be contrary to Christian precepts regarding simplicity and fiscal responsibility. Leatham (2017) further refers to the financial hardships of conventional wedding rituals in Western cultures and identifies similarities in the challenges Christian couples in Africa experience, where bride price demands lead to economic challenges and marital issues.

2.3 Societal and ethical impacts of bride price on marital relationships

Bilodeau & Cleveland (2021) in their paper noted the social and ethical implications of bride price demands in Christian weddings, emphasizing how these cultural traditions have the potential to subject the newlyweds to undue financial burden. Based on them, while bride price is meant to remit tribute to the bride's relatives, it has the potential to subject the couple to financial difficulties, thereby subjecting the marriage to stress and contention. Olaore & Agwu (2021) concur with this assertion, elaborating that the expense of bride price demands can perpetuate gender inequality in that the expense generally falls on the groom. Such an expense can create a power disequilibrium in the union, with the husband believing he has the right to control the wife due to the perceived "purchase" of her by the bride price. These are opposite to Christian values of respect and equality of marriage, and they make the couples end up with moral dilemmas while trying to balance both cultural values and religious doctrine.

Maua et al. (2020) discusses the power dynamics under the influence of bride price among Christian marriages. They found that the practice tends to instill patriarchal values, with the bride viewed as a commodity rather than an equal partner in the marriage. This is also emphasized by Opiyo (2022), who describes how bride price commodification may render women less valuable in the marriage relationship. To him, the demand for a bride price creates an environment where the contribution of finances by the husband is considered greater than that of the wife, resulting in an environment that is supportive of emotional and psychological abuse. These researches

show how bride price not only reaches the economic lives of Christian couples but also has deeper moral issues regarding the equality and respect which should characterize a Christian marriage. Peterson & Peterson (2011) examines the moral concerns Christian couples face in observing the practice of bride price. They believe that the practice can lead to a transactional marriage, which converts the relationship into an economic transaction and not a holy covenant. Such commodification of marriage violates Christian teachings, which value the spiritual and emotional bond between wife and husband. Pallathadka et al. (2022) also explain this by stating that the emphasis on financial transactions might cover up the spiritual aspect of marriage, thereby making it lead to material gain more than in creating a loving and caring relationship. The ethical implications of this shift are important because this can undermine the Christian values of respect for each other, love, and sacrifice, which form the bedrock of a healthy and enduring marriage.

Leatham (2017) analyzes the societal forces that have an effect on Christian couples in the issue of bride price and how this impacts their marriage. He also found that the need to fulfill cultural demands leads to couples accumulating significant amounts of debt in an attempt to fulfill bride price demands, subjecting them to financial pressure and marital conflicts. Asimwe (2013) also agrees, noting that the fear of fulfilling the demands leads to early marital breakdowns since the couples feel pressured by the emotional and financial burdens. The social pressure to conform to bride price traditions, even though they are bound to bring negative consequences, creates an ethical dilemma for Christian couples who must balance their culture with their Christian ethics. Such a dilemma has the ability to create a rift in marriage as couples struggle to balance their cultural obligations and the desire to build a safe and loving Christian home.

Whitesell & Faria (2020) examine the ethical implications of bride price within globalized Christian communities. They suggest that the greater the influence of Christian principles on cultural custom, the greater the tension between maintaining customary practice, such as bride price, and adhering to Christian doctrine that mandates respect and equality within marriage. Hamner et al. (2018) agree with this thesis, taking the view that the integration of Christian ethics into cultural traditions like bride price can prompt a re-definition of the same traditions, causing certain societies to abolish or modify the same in place of those better suited to Christian

morals. This re-evaluation process reflects the broader ethical debate among Christian communities on how cultural traditions are placed within the context of modern marriage, particularly if these traditions operate against the core principles of Christianity.

Fiedler (2024) writes about the ethical challenge that Christian couples are presented with when they are forced to participate in bride price rituals contrary to their Christian faith. He argues that such couples are bound to face judgment and ostracism from their societies if they choose to turn a nose up at bride price, leaving them socially ostracized and maritally strained. Mayer (2013) also adds that turning a nose up at bride price could further result in disagreement between the couple and their families because parents and relatives might view rejection as an act of disrespect or refusal to accede to cultural heritage. These studies highlight the predicament that Christian couples are in, forced to navigate the complex intersections of religious practice and cultural custom at the expense of social standing and household dynamics.

Dankwa et al. (2022) elaborates on how bride price assists in maintaining gender roles within Christian marriage. They argue that the practice also serves to perpetuate the notion that women are subordinated to men because the bride price payment is seen as a transaction aimed at making the husband control the wife. Thomas (2007) is in agreement with this, quoting that the gender roles that bride price has a tendency to reinforce can lead to the breakdown of mutual respect and equality in the marriage, which are foundational concepts of Christian precepts on marriage. The ethical implications of such a dynamic are deep, as it is contrary to the Christian ideal of a love, respect, and shared responsibility-based partnership. These results suggest that the existence of bride price in Christian marriage can perpetuate self-destructive gender stereotypes that are not compatible with the tenets of Christian marriage.

Kauuova (1999) investigates the long-term durability of Christian marriages touched by bride price. He concluded that couples who incur huge debt to cover bride price often suffer financial difficulties that can lead to marital conflicts and, in some cases, divorce. Dewall (2016) also elaborates that financial insecurity stress can erode the emotional bond of the couple, leading to strained communication and loss of trust. Such findings indicate that social pressure to conform to bride price practices can have disastrous consequences for Christian marriages' long-term stability, questioning the morality of cultural practices in the life of modern Christianity. The

struggle between maintaining cultural traditions and sustaining the couple economically and emotionally is a serious challenge for Christian couples and communities.

2.4 Church intervention in harmonizing tradition marriage customs and Christian marriage

Bilodeau & Cleveland (2021) in their study went into the details of merging Christian marriage practice with marriage practices in traditional contexts, noting that even though both traditions carry great cultural and religious weight, the Church must be cautious about any potential conflict between them. They argued that the Church can be used as a facilitator in ensuring that traditional practices such as bride price do not undermine Christian principles of equality and respect between the spouses in marriage. Olaore & Agwu (2021) also took into account how the African Church can be at the forefront in bridging the gap between these two forms of marriage by bringing communication and understanding between the spouses. They focused on teaching couples how to respect and blend elements of both traditions without compromising Christian values. This can be the most effective method to evade possible conflicts that may arise because of the expectations involved in traditional and Christian wedding traditions.

Pallathadka et al. (2022) introduced the role of the Church in a fair integration of the practice of marriage through the provision of pre-marital counseling that navigates both the Christian and traditional perspectives. They established that counseling sessions could help the couples navigate the challenge of bridging these practices by building mutual understanding and respect for each other's religious and cultural heritage. Likewise, Opiyo (2022) assessed the contribution of the Church in modern African Christian marriages and posited that the Church must play a more positive role in informing couples of the moral implications of customary practices, for instance, the bride price, which in certain instances runs counter to Christian doctrine on marriage (Opiyo, 2022). By providing them with clear guidelines on how they can balance these traditions with Christian morals, the Church can help couples build healthier, more cohesive marriages.

Lennon (2023) discussed the social history of marriage and the evolving role of the Church in reconciling the conflicts between old traditions and Christian marriage traditions. Lennon argued

that the Church needed to recognize the cultural significance of traditional marriage customs but insist on their reform to incorporate Christian values of love and equality in marriage. The study also emphasized the need for the Church to engage in community debate so that customary practices, such as bride price, do not become a source of conflict or inequality within Christian marriages. Another work by Mayer (2013) examined the struggles that multicultural and multifaith couples experience, highlighting the Church's role in helping such couples through the process of integrating their different wedding traditions. The study suggested that the Church could help couples by making resources and information on how to blend elements of both traditions in a way that honors both their Christian and cultural heritage available.

Hamner et al. (2018) explored the theological foundations of marriage and the role of the Church in promoting a balanced blending of traditional and Christian marriage rituals. They argued that the Church needed to focus on educating couples about the religious nature of marriage but also about the cultural importance of traditional practice. The Church, this study also assumed, would play a significant role in leading couples to navigate the complexities of merging these practices by providing a method that is respectful of both traditions but loyal to Christian values. Another study report by Dankwa et al. (2022) examined the dynamics of parallel wedding ceremonies and the mediating role played by the Church between Christian and traditional customs. Researchers found that the Church could help avoid misunderstandings between couples by ensuring open communication and respect for each other's religious and cultural beliefs. This approach would help couples to construct a greater harmonious marriage that involves both their Christian belief as well as their respective cultural backgrounds.

Peterson & Peterson (2011) focused on how developing realistic and positive expectations for Christian marriage, particularly when integrating traditional customs, was of utmost importance. They argued that the Church can help couples build a common understanding of the values and expectations that will govern their marriage, including how they are to incorporate traditional practices. This study also suggested that the Church could offer practical guidance on how to combine the requirements of traditional customs with the religious and ethical requirements of Christian marriage. In a parallel vein, Asiimwe (2013) wrote about the changing dynamics of bride price tradition within Uganda and its consequences for Christian weddings. Asiimwe

argued that the Church has a proactive responsibility to inform couples about the potential difficulties of bride price and how it can be adapted to coexist within a Christian model of equality and mutual respect. By doing this, the Church can help shape a marriage that is both culturally rich and spiritually fulfilling.

Witte (2012) examined the historical evolution of marriage as a sacrament and how the Church shaped contemporary marriage practices. Witte argued that the Church would have to continue to adapt its teachings to suit the changing social and cultural landscape without sacrificing the essentials of Christian marriage. This study suggested that the Church give the couples some advice on how to make room for the traditional practices by aligning them with Christian teachings about marriage. Another study by Kauuova (1999) looked at the role played by the Church in formulating Christian family life in the African context, focusing on how the Church has to engage with native culture in such a way that respects cultural heritage and yet reflects Christian faith. This study suggested that the Church can aid couples in building stronger marriages in terms of resources and assistance targeting the spiritual and cultural aspects of marriage.

Anderson (2013) discussed how a Methodist theology of marriage would evolve in the 21st century with an emphasis on how the Church can address issues of reconciling traditional practises and Christian marriage traditions. Anderson argued that the Church could take the initiative in teaching couples the moral and religious dimensions of marriage while also appreciating the cultural significance of traditional ceremonies. From this study, it would be possible for the Church to help couples deal with the challenges by offering information and guidance on how to include traditional ceremonies in ways that accommodate Christian teachings. Another article by Al-Sharmani (2018) examined the marriage practices in the Islamic tradition and the ethical dilemma of incorporating such practices in Christian marriage practices. Al-Sharmani felt that interfaith dialogue was to be carried out by the Church to promote mutual respect and awareness of diverse cultural and religious traditions, particularly in the case of marriage. This may help the couples construct a marriage that respects both of them, in terms of their cultural and religious values.

2.5 Summary

Within the literature review, some central texts will be key points of reference for this research on how indigenous marriage traditions, particularly bride price requirements, influence Christian marriages in Uganda. Anderson (2013) looks to the theological foundations of Christian marriage, learning about the way that marriage is conceived within the Methodist tradition. Fiedler (2024) provides a critical examination of rising financial costs of bride price and how these impact church weddings, and which will be valuable for understanding the broader societal implications of this practice. Whitesell and Faria (2020) discuss the intersection of traditional marriage customs and globalization, offering a contemporary view on how Ugandan marriage practices are evolving in response to external pressures. Rwambale (2013) addresses the unresolved questions surrounding bride price in Uganda, highlighting its social and cultural significance, which will inform the traditional aspect of this research. Opiyo (2022) examines the challenges and responses of contemporary African Christian marriages, providing a useful framework for understanding the conflict between traditional customs and Christian teachings. These sources will be instrumental in shaping the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach that was employed. It explained the methodology used for this investigation. The study demographic, study environment, study methodology, and sample size are all included. The sample process, variable definition, research tools, data analysis, ethical issues, and the study's boundaries and restrictions are also covered.

3.1 Research design

This study was conducted with the help of a case study research design. According to Creswell (2009), a case study as an empirical study possesses the following features: an inquiry in which an investigator studies a bounded system or multi-bounded systems; studies a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context and where boundaries between phenomenon and context remain unclear. The second set of traits is that of constructing context as a central concern in the research problem and to answer how and why questions; asking in depth through rich, detailed data collection involving multi sources of data (e.g. observations, interviews and documents and reports) and scrutinizing interaction between the variables responsible for the existing status or that influence change or development. Therefore, this present thesis employed a case study design because it was suitable in examining complex phenomena in their natural settings, providing qualitative insight into specific cases of interest.

Further, this study used qualitative research approach, which is particularly suited to examining complex events in depth as well as understanding the perceptions and experiences of the participants. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative inquiry is interested in making sense of the meaning people or groups attribute to a human or social concern. The approach allows freedom in exploring the vagueness of the research problem and is centered on the collection of rich, descriptive data using techniques such as interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. A qualitative study was employed in order to gather everyday life of stakeholders in marriage practice in Uganda with focus on how traditional marriage practices are responding to Christianity. Through direct involvement with participants, this approach enabled

the researcher to understand their perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes and thereby gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.2 Study Area

Geographically, it was within the Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese of the Hoima district, with a keen study of marriage traditions and how they impacted locals. Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese was formed on October 28, 1972, and was bifurcated from the Ruwenzori Diocese. The first bishop was Yustus Ruhindi. Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese has twelve archdeaconries, 58 parishes, and about 900,000 members. The study was thus conducted in the various churches of Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese.

3.3 Study Population

The sample size included 20 couples (40 individuals) aged 25-40 years both of whose marriage has been Christianized and whose marriage has been influenced by traditional marriage (10 couples each). The population for the study also included key informants like church leaders, local government/policy makers and community elders in the parishes within Hoima Archdeaconry.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample of 20 couples (40 respondents) was used for the study. These included 20 married women and 20 married men selected from the different churches within the parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese and these included both couples married through Christian marriage and those whose marriage has been influenced by traditional marriage. The study also included key informants who included church leaders, local government/ policy makers and community elders within Hoima Archdeaconry all totaling to 10. The sample size was represented in the table below;

Table 1: Categories and number of study participants

Category of respondents	Sample size	Sampling method
20 couples in Hoima Archdeaconry	40	Simple random sampling
Church leaders (Archdeacon & Priests)	5	Purposive sampling
Local government/ policy makers	2	Purposive sampling
Community elders	3	Purposive sampling
Total	50	

Source: *Primary data, 2025*

3.5 Sampling Method

Simple random and purposive sampling methods were both utilized to carry out the study. The selected married couples both those who have only done traditional marriage (these were believed to have been influenced by traditional marriage) and the married couples through Christian marriage from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese were selected by simple random sampling because these were large in numbers and selecting using this method made it easier and gave each a chance to be selected in the study, simple random sampling was employed because its procedure is unbiased and prevent bias in their work and makes research on a large population easier. On the other hand, key informants were selected purposively from among the local government/policy makers and community elders as well as the church leaders in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry. The key informants were chosen on the grounds that they are the leaders and the ones who should see to it that there is a proper balance between the Christian marriages and the traditional marriages.

3.6 Data collection methods and instruments

The researcher collected data from respondents by use of interviews and focus group discussions methods as the data collection methods.

3.6.1 Interviews (Key Informant Interview Guide)

Interview ranks amongst the best sources of information in a study. Interviews assisted by an interview guide were carried out to collect primary data that were utilized to hold face-to-face interviews with the key informants who are; church leaders, local government/policy makers and community elders in the parishes within the Hoima Archdeaconry. Interviews were preferred in gathering first-hand information about the topic under study and in mind that these are the people who have been tasked with ensuring that there was sufficient balance between the traditional weddings and the Christian weddings. Interviews also helped in coming up with first hand and credible information as the respondents gave an immediate feedback.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (Focus Group Discussion Guide)

It was used in this study to collect data from the chosen couples of married people in the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese. It was an open-ended questionnaire that was hoping to get information on how traditional marriage has influenced Christian marriage in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese. According to Robinson (2007), this helped the researcher design and analyses data from different subgroups of a population of study area. It also makes it easy to collect data regarding attitudes, values and opinions. Focus group discussions were conducted with the selected couples of the different churches in Hoima Archdeaconry. These groups consisted of 10 members in each group since the researcher sought to give each respondent a chance to participate in this study and as the groups contained only 10 members in total, the respondents had adequate time in order to give their views in relation to the subject of study. Therefore four focus group discussions with 5 couples (5 women and 5 men totaling 10 members in each group) were utilized.

3.7 Data collection procedure

After the research proposal was approved, the researcher obtained a recommendation and an introductory letter from Uganda Christian University for data collection. The researcher devoted time on fieldwork by carrying out in-depth key informant interviews with selected participants chosen from the parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese.

3.8 Data analysis

Process of data analysis was all about analyzing written text and audio data. It needed thorough understanding of the presented information. Data analysis was a continuous process that needed constant thought over the collected data, raising questions of analysis and making notes during the study period, and these were finally in the last report. Qualitative data analysis process, which started with the stage of data management, investigated the generative stage, interpretive stage, representing stage and theorizing stage as described below. The research was conducted by a hierarchical approach, moving bottom up. In it, the field notes taken by the principal researcher during interviews and reading documents were used to justify and authenticate the audio records that were deemed not clear by the researcher. Transcription was performed on a daily basis evening for each day's interviews. Apart from that, researcher's field notes were typed after every field visit to prevent loss of memory.

The researcher sifted through all the data that had been transcribed to obtain a general idea of the data that had been collected in the field and in consideration of the overall purpose of the research. This assisted the researcher in interpreting participants' views, the tone of their opinion and the sense of the overall depth, credibility and usability of the information. During the interview sessions, the researcher just kept taking down important points noted and general impressions about the analysis data later. The findings from the research were categorized by themes. Interpretation was the last step in processing the data to get meaning from that which was gathered. Lessons learned from the interpretation of the findings were grounded on the researcher's interpretation, experiences and sense gained through a comparison with the findings and knowledge acquired through literature. The findings helped to corroborate existing information and sometimes contradicted it. This phase of data analysis also suggested new questions the inquirer had not expected in the study.

3.9 Ethical consideration

To conduct research, ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of Uganda Christian University was requested. With that letter, the researcher got clearance to conduct research from Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese administration. The researcher made every effort

to ask about the study and also explained to the informants the purpose of the inquiry, his identity, why he selected the specific informants, advantages, disadvantages, and inconveniences of the research. Except for not inquiring about sensitive information like the name of the respondent, the researcher framed the questions in a manner that never encroached on informants' rights.

As concerns informed consent, all participants in this study filled out an informed consent form indicating the intent of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at all times since participants were required to provide written consent before participation. The participants were also told that their contribution towards the study was totally voluntary and that they would not be compensated in any way for it, and that they could withdraw at any time or decline to participate.

To make participant information confidential, a unique ID number was assigned to each record of the participants. Information that identifies an individual personally was available only to those individuals who participated in the study. Participants were given sufficient information about how the methods employed for collecting the data were, and the survey was anonymous as it did not contain any device for identifying the respondents. Making the reader of the report unable to identify any specific respondent ensured confidentiality. Community defilement acts were reported by codes such as respondent 1, 2, and 3, while the setting was discovered using the alphabetic letters A, B, C, D, and E. No individual was thus identifiable from any study report, and participant names and other subject identifying information were only given for assurance of quality.

3.10 Limitations of the study

There is a great likelihood that the researcher's research instruments would not be standardized. Thus, to provide a valid measure of research variables, a validity and reliability test was carried out to guarantee accuracy and consistency in data collection.

Where there were research assistants, inconsistencies were encountered in administering questionnaires for time, comprehension of the questions asked, and reasons given to the

participants. In a move to minimize this problem, the research assistants were adequately trained and equipped with clear guidelines on the procedure to be followed in data collection.

All interviews were not conducted due to the conditions of the respondents such as illness, travel, hospitalization, refusal, or withdrawal from participation. To offset this, more respondents were made available by the researcher when using a larger sample to account for non-responses. Additionally, respondents were requested not to leave any question blank, and the date of retrieval was tracked rigorously in order to enable complete participation.

3.11 Delimitations of the study

This study employed qualitative research tools, primarily interviewing, focus group discussion, and documentation analysis. The research did not involve the use of standardized quantitative questionnaires or advanced statistical models because its aim was to gather rich information rather than numerical data.

The study targeted respondents who directly experienced or had knowledge about traditional and Christian wedding rites in Uganda. The study did not target respondents who lack direct exposure to these wedding customs so that the data collected may be conducive to the purpose of the research.

In order to ensure quality responses, the research focused on a well-selected sample of religious leaders, married couples, and cultural elders. While a wide sample would provide more data, the research sacrifices breadth and aims higher on depth in an attempt to obtain rich, qualitative data and not broad statistics.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of analysis that has been done to look at the specific objectives of the study and in relation to the reviewed literature. The study was carried out using focus group discussions with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry plus interviews with the Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese totaling to 50 respondents. The findings are presented with the help of tables for purposes of clarity and interpretation.

4.1 Response rate

A total of 50 FGD respondents and interviews were meant to be conducted and all of them were conducted successfully as shown in Table 2 below in relation to the different categories.

Table 2: Response rate

Category	FGDs and KIIs conducted	FGDs and KIIs not conducted	Response rate (%)
Married couples	40	40	100
Key informants	10	6	60
Overall response rate	50	46	92

Source: *Primary data*

Response rate outcomes in the above table indicated that out of the sought 50 respondents, 46 were successful in responding adequately to the study, achieving a response rate of 92% in total. Most notably, all 40 married couples' focus group discussions (FGDs) were gathered, registering a 100% response rate in that category, but only 6 of the 10 planned key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted, registering a 60% response rate for key informants. Such a high overall

response rate indicates that the data collected are reliable and provide a good basis upon which to analyze and interpret.

4.2 Findings on demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the general background information about the respondents in relation to their gender, age, level of education, occupation and period spent in marriage as shown in the table below;

Table 3: Bio data of the married couples for the FGDs (n=40)

Item	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20	50.0
	Female	20	50.0
	Total	40	100.0
Age	20-29 years	4	10.0
	30-39 years	11	27.5
	40-49 years	15	37.5
	50 & above years	10	25.0
	Total	40	100.0
Highest level of education	Primary	8	20.0
	Secondary	16	40.0
	Tertiary	13	32.5
	No education	3	7.5
	Total	40	100.0
Occupation	Business owner	15	37.5
	Employed in public sector	11	27.5
	Employed in private sector	9	22.5
	Unemployed	5	12.5
	Total	40	100.0
Period spent in marriage	1-5 year	10	25.0

	6-10 years	16	40.0
	More than 10 years	14	35.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: *Primary data*

Findings in table 3 above show a gender balance among the respondents where both males and females comprised equal percentages of 50.0% among the married couples who participated in the focus group discussions. A gender balance implies that both men and women's opinions were accorded equal attention during the research to facilitate a complete understanding of how traditional marriage affects Christian marriage.

Age distribution of the respondents reveals that 37.5% of the respondents are aged 40–49 years, followed by 27.5% aged 30–39 years, then 25.0% aged 50 years and above, and lastly 10.05 of the respondents stated that they are aged 20–29 years. This means most participants were older and likely to possess extensive experience in marriage, thus conferring credibility on their opinion towards the impact of bride price demands in Christian marriage.

Moreover, most of the respondents by 40.0% stated that they have at least achieved secondary level of education, followed by 32.5% who have at least achieved tertiary level of education, followed by 20.0% who have at least achieved primary level of education, while a small percentage of 7.5% stated that they do not possess any formal education background. These findings are echoed by the fact that a large percentage of the participants were relatively well-educated, and this may have influenced their understanding and articulation of marital issues in question.

In addition, from the occupational point of view, the largest category of respondents covered by 37.5% reported that they are entrepreneurs, followed by government-employed respondents covered by 27.5%, followed by private-sector-employed respondents covered by 22.5%, while 12.5% of the respondents reported that they are unemployed due to the fact that some of them are housewives. This implies that the majority of the respondents had a source of income, which is relevant in examining the financial dynamics of bride price in Christian and traditional weddings.

Lastly, regarding the years they have been married, 40.0% of those surveyed said that they have been married for 6–10 years, followed by those with more than 10 years of marriage at 35.0%, and then those that have been married for 1–5 years at 25.0%. This spread means that most of the interviewees had considerable marriage experience and therefore were good informants to speak on long-term implications of bride price on Christian marriage.

4.3 The influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese

4.3.1 Financial implications of traditional bride price on Christian couples' economic stability

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on how paying bride price has impacted their financial situation as a couple and how traditional bride price demands affect the financial stability of Christian couples in their community respectively and their responses were as follows;

All the married couples who participated in focus group discussions stated that the extravagant demands of bride price have placed immense financial constraints on their lives. For them, spending money in traditional wedding rituals drained their savings, and they had to postpone essential family plans such as building a house or starting a business. Others indicated that they borrowed money to pay for these costs, and the repayment of these loans kept affecting them financially years after the marriage.

Others noted that bride price has also brought long-term instability, especially among couples who were yet to settle financially. They noted that families demand money, gifts, and cattle, which makes men feel compelled to deliver those goods even at the cost of selling assets or borrowing. This pressure does affect family budgeting and can be a cause of strain in the marriage, particularly if the family feels resentful that the woman was "bought dearly."

In addition to this, couples identified that such traditional expectations indirectly discouraged some men from getting their weddings conducted in church. The belief that one should only make all bride price engagements before a Christian wedding created a barrier for young couples who would wish to wed in church but lack the finances. Therefore, some couples cohabitate for years before they can afford to complete all conventions. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....We had to pause our house construction project for over a year just to complete the bride price payments. It was overwhelming.....” **FGD Respondent 1**

“.....My husband had to take a loan from a SACCO to meet the demands. Even after the wedding, we were struggling financially.....” **FGD Respondent 2**

Similarly, the key informants were aware that traditional bride price requirements have significantly contributed to the economic set-backs of the majority of Christian couples in the community. The church officials noted that the same financial expenditure is among the leading causes for which young women and men delay or forego sacred matrimony. They further noted that in the majority of cases, couples would already have married in the church earlier if not for the high cost of respecting bride price traditions.

The community leaders and local policymakers also observed that bride price has evolved into a commodified practice from its beginnings as a reflection of cultural heritage and is placing enormous financial pressure on men and their families. They observed that in certain homes, the negotiations are not any longer regarding affection or family bond but rather driven by profit motive and have created greater tension between Christian values and customary norms.

On the other hand, certain of the informants indicated that although bride price is a cultural icon, efforts need to be put in place to remind members of society about the cost and implications of overpricing. In their opinion, churches and traditional leaders need to come together and promote moderation and inspire couples wishing to enter Christian marriage without being weighed down by economic demands. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....Bride price has become a barrier to holy matrimony. Many couples give up or postpone because they simply cannot afford it.....” **Key Informant 1**

“.....What was once a token of appreciation has now become a financial trap, leaving many young men in debt before they even start a family.....” **Key Informant 2**

4.3.2 Experiences and observations on high bride price demands and occurrence of Christian marriages

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked to describe any financial challenges they have experienced due to bride price requirements in their marriages and how these challenges affect their families and decision-making process, plus sharing any experiences or observations where high bride price demands have influenced the timing or occurrence of Christian marriages and how the individuals or families involved responded to these challenges respectively and their responses were as follows;

The majority of the married couples in the focus group interviews lamented that unreasonable bride price demands had left them very cash-strapped in their initial years of marriage. Some of the couples reported that they borrowed or sold personal belongings to meet the bride price required by their in-laws, leaving them to pay the debt for many years. This monetary cost had a tendency to dampen other essential priorities in the family such as building a home, investing in productive ventures, or planning for children's education.

Apart from the bride price requirements, respondents also indicated that pressure had been stressing their relationships with their families, with some of them requiring more than the couple could even manage. The couples in other cases reported postponing the official church weddings or living together for several years before they were able to save up the goods needed for the traditional wedding ceremony. As a result, Christian marriage timing was often delayed, with some waiting until they could fulfill traditional expectations before receiving the sacrament of holy matrimony.

Further, couples noted that such economic requirements affected domestic decision-making in that most of the initial family resources went towards responding to traditional requirements. Not only did this impede economic growth within the household but also the couple's autonomy since some decisions needed to be sanctioned by members of the extended family who were involved in the bride price negotiations. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....We had to borrow money to complete the bride price list. It took us three years to clear the loan, and we only had our church wedding after that.....” **FGD Respondent 3**

“.....I wanted to marry in church earlier, but the bride price was too high. We first lived together for four years before we could afford everything required by her family.....”
FGD Respondent 4

Similarly, the key informants identified that inflated bride price demands have been a major hindrance to prompt Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry. Church leaders gave examples of couples who have cohabitated for decades without legalizing their marriage in church due to the inability to fulfill traditional bride price expectations. They described that the practice challenges the Christian teaching of marriage and most of the time causes moral and social problems among congregations.

Yet, policy makers and community leaders identified the broader community impact of these economic challenges. They explained that the commercialization of bride price has made it difficult for many young men to marry, resulting in skyrocketing levels of informal marriages and even domestic violence. Families usually respond, according to some informants, by negotiating or slashing things off the list, but in most cases, the demands remain a significant hindrance to Christian wedding ceremonies.

Community elders also added that while bride price is a respected cultural practice, over time the requests have been heightened to the extent that it has become more of a financial transaction and less a gesture of appreciation. This, they asserted, has generated tension in inter-family relationships and led to delays in marriages or other alternatives such as elopement or clandestine weddings without the full consent of the families. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....We have many cases where young people stay together without church blessings simply because the bride price is too high. It’s affecting how we guide them spiritually.....” **Key Informant 3**

“.....Bride price today is no longer a token, it’s a burden. Some families ask for things that even a working man can’t afford in a year.....” **Key Informant 4**

4.3.3 Strategies to manage the financial burden of bride price in Christian marriages

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on the adjustments they have had to make in their household finances due to the payment of bride price and measures that can be taken to ease the financial burden of bride price on Christian marriages respectively and their responses were as follows;

The focus group interviews with married couples from various churches in Hoima Archdeaconry revealed that most of the homes had to cut down spending priorities after meeting bride price. The couples reported cutting down such essential expenditure as home improvements, investing in small businesses, or even medical conditions in a bid to meet the bride price. The financial strain typically made couples delay or abandon big life plans, including the building of a house or planning for the schooling of future children. The weight of finance was especially harsh for young couples who were yet to attain financial security.

In the majority of cases, the couples admitted to borrowing or selling household property in order to settle the bride price, which kept them in debt at the onset of marriage. This created long-term economic stress that disrupted their ability to plan or grow economically. Most of the participants indicated that they were forced to relocate to more affordable locations of residence or to reduce on communal celebrations like wedding reception, which otherwise would have affirmed their social and religious bonds within the church community.

Participants also lobbied for action such as creating savings clubs within communities to help men prepare for marriage, supporting more modest and symbolic cultural ceremonies, and pressurizing the church to encourage family negotiations to reach reasonable bride price requests. Others went even further and recommended replacing cash transactions with non-cash items that symbolize respect but cut the economic burden on the groom's side. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....We had to postpone building our house after marriage because all our savings went into bride price. Even now, we are still recovering financially.....” **FGD Respondent 5**

“.....We started our marriage with debts from friends and a moneylender, just to meet the demands from my in-laws. It was tough.....” **FGD Respondent 6**

On the other hand, important informants like church leaders, governmental leaders, and elders shared the same attitudes. They observed that high bride price expectations were placing undue financial pressure on couples, causing delayed marriages or living together without full church sanctification. They noted that this custom is undermining Christian values and degrading the sanctity of holy wedlock among the young people in the Archdeaconry.

A few of the respondents indicated that the families perceive bride price as a wealth-acquiring and not symbolic exercise, contrary to humility and oneness teachings in Christianity. Others reaffirmed the need for the church to advance more forcefully through sensitization campaigns, counseling, and public debates to de-mystify economic realities of marriage. They demanded pre-marital financial planning to be part of church programs to equip couples with empowerment for a responsible family life.

Also, suggestions were made to incorporate community-based guidelines that regulate or curb bride price levels in agreement with the elders, cultural leaders, and religious organizations. Key informants further suggested engaging the local leaders to urge policy-level discussion on culturally responsive bride price reforms that are synchronized with the realities of today's economy. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The church must come in strongly to discourage the commercialization of marriage ceremonies. We are losing our Christian values.....” **Key Informant 5**

“.....We need to educate our people that bride price is not a business transaction. It's causing many of our young men to delay or fear marriage altogether.....” **Key Informant 6**

4.4 The societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

4.4.1 Effects of bride price on marital power dynamics and spousal relationships

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on how they think bride price affects the relationship between husbands and wives in Christian marriages and how bride price demands influence the marital dynamics between couples, especially in terms of power and responsibility respectively and their responses were as follows;

In the majority of married couples, bride price has been found to significantly contribute to power dynamics in Christian marriages. Some respondents in focus group discussions reported that following the payment of bride price, some of the husbands tend to feel a sense of ownership over their wives, which mostly leads to less communication and joint decision-making. Such a perspective based on tradition affects respect for each other and in some cases promotes control rather than partnership in marriage.

Also, some of the participants said bride price can pressure brides to be too submissive as they owe the husband's family. This has led to situations where women become less assertive in raising problems or inputting equally in household matters, which in turn affects emotional intimacy and household harmony. Otherwise, conflicts arise where the woman's family feels that they have been paid a "high price," and therefore the husband demands blind obedience.

Also, it was mentioned that bride price expectations sometimes distort the basis of marriage, from companionship and love to value exchange. Therefore, couples could face issues of mutual responsibility, with one partner typically the husband believing he has more rights within the relationship since he paid. This unbalanced exercise of power was quoted as one of the reasons for frequent quarrels and emotional dissatisfaction among Christian couples. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....After paying the bride price, my husband changed and started making decisions alone, saying he had ‘bought’ me.....” FGD Respondent 7

“.....I sometimes feel my opinions don’t matter because I didn’t contribute anything to the bride price. It’s like I owe him my silence.....” FGD Respondent 8

However, the identical issues were echoed by prominent informants such as local policymakers, church leaders, and community elders, noting that bride price has culturally placed men over women in marriage, with the tendency to subvert Christian values of equality and respect. They reminded us that the traditional building of bride price continues to reinforce male hegemony, at times in indirect emotional manipulation or overt authoritarianism.

Similarly, some of the church leaders observed that this belief that a man becomes completely in charge by paying bride price can be at variance with the Biblical view of marriage as an equality partnership. This way of thinking, they argued, works against spiritual oneness and offers fertile ground for women to feel belittled and unloosed to be themselves. They cited examples where these imbalances have created emotional distances and reduced cooperation in marriage roles.

On the other hand, the local leaders maintained that even though bride price is a culture whose purpose is appreciation, its misuse or exaggeration has had negative effects on interfamily relationship. They demanded sensitization programs geared towards forcing Christian couples to reinterpret the practice in light of mutual responsibility and Christian love, rather than economic right. This, they believe, would enhance healthier relationships and equitable authority within marriages. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The biggest problem is that bride price is no longer symbolic; it is commercialized, and this changes how men view their wives more like possessions.....” **Key Informant 1**

“.....Unless the church takes a stronger stand on redefining bride price from a Christian perspective, it will continue to cause power struggles in families.....” **Key Informant 2**

4.4.2 Societal pressures and challenges arising from bride price expectations in Christian marriages

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on the ways in which societal expectations around bride price create challenges in their marriages and the societal pressures that arise from the expectation of bride price in Christian marriages respectively and their responses were as follows;

Married couples, in the focus group interviews, indicated that attitudes among people towards bride price create enormous marital pressure. The majority of the couples indicated that the community perceives a "successful" marriage based on the amount of bride price paid, which creates undue pressure, particularly on the groom. Expectations at times drive families to spend beyond their means, leading to debts and fewer contributions from the extended family if the bride price was deemed to be low. This social benchmarking has made couples feel inadequate and ashamed when they could not maintain the high levels.

Members further discovered that social pressure often creates disagreements between spouses, especially where in-laws constantly remind the wife of her "worth" in accordance with the bride price paid. Dominance has been reported to be exercised by some men citing the bride price as a pretext for control, while women may feel pressured to prove themselves worthy to both biological and marital families. These relationships, respondents' opinions would have it, erode mutual respect and equality in the marriage, as they ought to be in Christian marriages.

In addition, couples said that even after many years of marriage, there is pressure from society especially during family reunions and clan meetings where the issue of bride price again surfaces. The ones who paid less money are often mocked, and the women are blamed for "settling cheaply." Such pressures from society have led some couples to go underground, with their social contact and marital happiness being negatively affected. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....Our families judged us because we didn't pay all the cows expected, so we've always felt like our marriage was second-class.....” **FGD Respondent 9**

“.....People constantly reminded me that I was 'bought cheaply', and that affected how I viewed myself in the relationship.....” **FGD Respondent 10**

On the other hand, important informants such as Church leaders, government policymakers, and elder members of society attested to these fears by commenting that social expectations of bride price are underpinned by ancient cultural practices that are contrary to Christian teaching on love, equality, and self-sacrifice. They attested to seeing many young men delaying or giving up Christian marriage because of shame and pressure of being unable to afford a bride price acceptable to culture. This, as a consequence, leads to cohabitation without benediction, which the Church does not approve.

Church leaders prominently noted that society's judgment is worse than religious counsel, where societies pay more attention to bride price than religious readiness and match. Local government leaders noted that these pressures even creep into decision-making at the community level, where the less they spend, some are excluded as being second-class. This decreases participation in communal and church responsibilities, causing social cohesion to be eroded.

Community leaders further stated that these social norms have escalated tensions between clans, especially when one feels insulted by the terms or offer of bride price negotiations. They pointed out examples where bride price demands have resulted in shattered engagements and enduring enmity between families. There were cutting calls for sensitization and moderation to restore the spirit of Christian marriage as a covenant and not a transaction. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The community sometimes respects the amount paid more than the character of the couple. That mindset damages the sanctity of marriage.....” **Key Informant 3**

“.....Young men fear approaching families for marriage proposals because they're already disqualified by societal standards they can't meet.....” **Key Informant 4**

4.4.3 Ethical concerns surrounding the practice of bride price in Christian marriages

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on the ethical concerns they have about the bride price tradition and its impact on their marriages and the ethical concerns they see in the practice of bride price, particularly in its impact on Christian marriages respectively and their responses were as follows;

Most of the married couples across various churches of Hoima Archdeaconry were worried that bride price has a tendency to unintentionally commodify marriage. They noted that when marriage begins with money, then it can create the wrong impression that women are being bought, which is contrary to the Christian doctrine that marriage is a sacred covenant. This is an impression that will introduce inequality within the marriage, especially where the husband feels he needs to control the wife due to the payment made.

Respondents also said that bride price places a financial burden on men, which sometimes transcends how they treat their wives. Some husbands resent or demand submissiveness from their wives because they believe that they "bought" them. Some women, however, feel that they owe or are subservient as their families attained a lot of material gain in the marriage process. The practice, respondents said, goes against the biblical principle of mutual respect and love between the husband and wife.

There were also concerns on how the practice promotes discrimination and delay of marriage among individuals who are unable to afford the expected bride price. Other women indicated that they feel commoditized, and this is responsible for loss of dignity and self-respect. The cultural

dimension on high bride prices also excludes poorer men from formal marriage, thus some simply cohabit without Church sanction. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....It’s like we are reduced to property because our families negotiate a price for us. That is not how Christian marriage should start.....” **FGD Respondent 11**

“.....After paying so much, I felt like she owed me something. Later I realized that thinking was not right, especially in church.....” **FGD Respondent 12**

On the other hand, the key informants noted that while bride price is a cultural practice rooted in the majority of societies, it represents a critical ethical issue to Christian marriage. The church leaders brought out the point that the practice, as it becomes largely commodified, goes against the biblical principles of love, grace, and equality. They believed that the rising materialism associated with bride price erodes the Christian marriage's moral foundation and gives more value to material goods than to spirituality and integrity.

Similarly, local leaders and politicians mentioned that they feared that bride price aggravates gender inequality, potentially expressed in domestic decision-making and gender relations. They said that others explain controlling their wives by using the payment, restricting women's autonomy. Those patriarchal views, they added, work against women's participation in domestic life and community life, contrary to the teachings of mutual partnership in the Church.

Community elders acknowledged that while the tradition was originally meant to create family ties, its moral basis has shifted. The elders further noted that increasing commercialization of marriage has bred ethics issues, especially among youth trying to balance cultural practices with Christian ethics. The majority of the elders encouraged reform or moderation of the practice to include dignity, love, and religious harmony. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....Bride price has moved from being a token of appreciation to a transaction, and that is ethically troubling for Christian marriages.....” **Key Informant 5**

“.....We are raising a generation that sees marriage as business, not as a holy commitment. That is a moral failure on our part as a community.....” **Key Informant 6**

4.5 How the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry

4.5.1 Church's role in balancing bride price traditions with Christian marriage values

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on the role they would like to see the Church play in balancing traditional customs with Christian marriage values and how they think the Church can help balance traditional bride price practices with Christian marriage values respectively and their responses were as follows;

All married couples in Hoima Archdeaconry held the expectation that the Church would be more involved in counselling and teaching Christians how to reconcile cultural tradition like bride price with Christian marriage's spiritual principles. They emphasized tradition but insisted that it be allowed not to override the underlying Christian principles of love, humility, and oneness of marriage. Pairs noted that the Church is able to bridge the gap through facilitating dialogue among custodians of culture and religious leaders towards mutual respect and understanding.

A number of the participants recommended that the Church implement premarital counselling that addresses the spiritual and cultural dimension of marriage. With these teachings, couples can be empowered to make knowledgeable decisions on bride price that are considerate but not expensive. Others felt that Church leaders ought to speak freely of the dangers of high bride price and how it is in contradiction with the spirit of a Christian wedding that should be founded upon grace rather than material exchanges.

Additionally, couples proposed that the Church has to lead by example in endorsing less costly and simple wedding ceremonies that are combined with Christian values and modest traditional customs. They indicated that when Church leaders officiate and bless marriages that fail to conform to the costly bride price patterns, they create a benchmark that slowly changes the general view of people. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....If the Church stood firm and said a marriage is valid with or without heavy bride price, many young men would be free to marry without fear of rejection.....” **FGD**

Respondent 13

“.....We want our leaders to teach that love is more important than money and cows. The Church can correct this by educating both families before marriage.....” **FGD**

Respondent 14

Similarly, the key informants observed the critical role the Church must play in bridging cultural customs to align with Christian values. Elders, policymakers, and Church leaders explained that bride price is a well-loved tradition in Bunyoro; however, its evolving commercialization goes against the biblical view of marriage. They advised that the Church must give uniform preaching on the sanctity of Christian marriages and stand firm against supporting exorbitant demands in the name of culture.

Simultaneously, cultural leaders and government officials at the local level emphasized the point that the Church needs to collaborate with cultural leaders in order to create community guidelines that make bride price symbolic rather than transactional. They presumed that if the Church launches community education campaigns especially on Sundays during church services, marriage conferences, and youth seminars, then it can increasingly change attitudes and initiate desired improvements.

Leaders in the community also pointed out that the Church should play a proactive role in counseling families and settling disputes, especially where conflicts over bride price would threaten marriage stability. They contended that Church leaders can be impartial mediators who are able to present both Christian teachings and cultural insight, thus ensuring harmony and comprehension. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The Church should not shy away from teaching against exploitation in the name of culture. Let them speak boldly and consistently.....” **Key Informant 1**

“.....We need to see the Church and cultural leaders working hand-in-hand, not in conflict, to restore dignity and balance in marriage practices.....” **Key Informant 2**

4.5.2 Church's role in addressing bride price pressures in Christian marriages

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on how they think the Church can help couples navigate the financial and social pressures of bride price in Christian marriages and the role Church leaders can play in addressing the challenges posed by bride price demands in Christian marriages respectively and their responses were as follows;

The majority of the married couples in the different churches of the parishes of Hoima Archdeaconry agreed that the Church must step in and help the couples overcome economic and social issues related to bride price. The stakeholders noted that the Church must offer premarital counseling sessions that challenge bride price expectations, encouraging moderation and respect between families. Partners noted that when the Church boldly speaks to the ramifications of outrageous bride price demands, it issues a call to young Christians to stand firm in the face of unrealistic demands without risking disrespect for tradition.

During the forum debates, a number of participants emphasized the need for the Church to engage intensively with clan and family leaders to help mediate expectation and catalyze cultural change. They suggested that Church leaders could actively evangelize simplified ceremonies over material restraint in favor of Christian content. Others have argued that through the provision of platforms for exchange of testaments and free speech, the Church helps to reduce stigma around modest or negotiated bride price forms, especially among people from low-income backgrounds.

The second recommendation was to include bride price negotiations in marriage preparation classes and Christian studies in unity, sacrifice, and stewardship. Young adults opined that the majority of young adults enter into marriage without a complete value appreciation for long-term costs of over-expenditure on bride price, and the Church can bridge the knowledge gap through faith-based financial education and mentorship programs. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....If the Church speaks out more strongly, people will start realizing that it’s not about how much you pay but how you live in the marriage.....” **FGD Respondent 15**

“.....We need our pastors to stand in the gap. When they guide our families, even elders begin to reconsider their demands.....” **FGD Respondent 16**

Similarly, important informants such as Church leaders, policymakers at grassroots levels, and elderly people have also understood that the Church has a critical role in intervening to reconcile Christian principles and cultural norms. They noted that there are couples who suffer silently due to fear of stigma or that denying bride price requests is tantamount to rebellion. Church leaders emphasized that when religious institutions speak in a common voice on such matters, they are capable of influencing not only individual practice but community values in general.

On the other hand, local leaders and seniors observed that the Church ought to organize public education campaigns that rebrand bride price purpose and shift the narrative away from commercialization towards appreciation for cultures. They argued that educating people through Church meetings, seminars, and sermons would reverse the current trend where bride price was being primarily used as a measure of a man's worth rather than an expression of respect.

In addition, the informants stressed collaboration between the Church institutions and government offices at the grass roots level in formulating policies or guidelines that discourage bride price exploitation. A few maintained that pastoral letters or Church guidelines on the matter would inspire Christians to stand against excessive requests. They also pressed the clergy to step in as necessary in marriage negotiations and offer mediation and biblical counsel in an effort to create equality. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The Church has moral authority when it speaks clearly, even cultural leaders listen. We need it to speak boldly on this issue.....” **Key Informant 3**

“.....It is our responsibility as religious and community leaders to protect families from financial ruin caused by exaggerated bride price demands.....” **Key Informant 4**

4.5.3 Church and community roles in harmonizing bride price traditions with Christian marriage values

From the focus group discussions conducted with married couples from the different churches in the different parishes in Hoima Archdeaconry and interviews conducted with the key informants who are Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese, they were asked for their views on how the Church can support couples in managing the challenges posed by bride price while still respecting cultural traditions and the practical steps that can be taken by both the Church and the community to ensure that traditional customs and Christian marriage practices are harmoniously integrated respectively and their responses were as follows;

During the focus group discussions with married couples from various churches in Hoima Archdeaconry, there was the common view that the Church has an essential role to play in reconciling cultural heritage and Christian doctrine. The majority of the couples wished that the Church could step in actively to educate both communities and families on the biblical aspects of marriage, stressing love, respect for each other, and unity against material requirements. They emphasized that premarital counseling also includes lessons on how to handle cultural expectations, especially bride price, in a godly and practical manner.

Members also suggested that the Church become a clearinghouse where negotiations can be facilitated between the couple and extended families from both sides, especially during moments of disagreement or unrealistic expectations about bride price. Some couples explained how church authorities helped facilitate negotiations, rendering the expectations reasonable. They applauded initiatives by some parishes where local Church leaders advocated low-key, faith-driven weddings that reduce inflated traditional expectations.

Besides, there was an objection by some of the participants that the Church will have to practice cooperation with the opinion leaders at the local level, e.g., clan leaders, to secure cultural reforms that sustain identity without jeopardizing economic and spiritual stability in Christian marriages. They further acknowledged the fact that bride price, when practiced in moderation, can be a sign of appreciation rather than a source of tension. Nevertheless, without church

intervention, harmful cultural excesses do not encounter resistance. Some of the respondents had this to say,

“.....Our church elder helped us talk to my wife’s family when they asked for too many items. He reminded them of the Christian purpose of marriage, and eventually, they agreed to reduce the bride price.....” **FGD Respondent 17**

“.....If the Church continues to teach about the biblical foundation of marriage and works with elders, things will get better. People respect the Church’s voice.....” **FGD Respondent 18**

Contrarily, main informants’ particularly Church leaders, policy-makers, and community elders were adamant that the Church must be proactive rather than reactive. They were adamant that the Church must always preach against commercialization of marriage and provide scriptural teachings that advocate for oneness, equality, and humility in relationships. To them, ongoing discipleship and family fellowships are means of combating damaging traditions while advancing respect between faith and culture.

Similarly, some parish leaders proposed marriage preparation committees comprised of religious and cultural representatives in parishes. These would help couples and their families navigate tradition and Christian doctrine in a way that offers a more formal and acceptable path to marriage. Such coordination, they contended, would prevent potential conflicts and unwanted requests from ever occurring.

Additionally, community elders contributed that reconciling culture with Christian marriage values also means re-education of the wider society, especially the older generation. They emphasized that the Church and society leaders work together through seminars at the community level and extension work to remind individuals about a changing reality, particularly financial difficulties that the young face today. The idea, they provided, is not to eliminate culture but to make it inclusive and sustainable. Some of the key informants had this to say,

“.....The Church should not shy away from cultural matters. It must engage actively to reform what is outdated while preserving what is meaningful.....” **Key Informant 5**

“.....When Church leaders and clan heads sit together, they send a powerful message one that tells young couples that it’s possible to honor both God and culture.....” **Key Informant 6**

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.0 Introduction

A Christian response to the mounting extravagance in traditional and Christian weddings with respect to bride price and banquet demands is not merely a cultural note or optional pastoral concern. It is a primary theological concern derived from the Church's understanding of marriage as sacred covenant, ordained by God and modeled after Christ's marriage to the Church (cf. Ephesians 5:25–33). In Hoima Archdeaconry, though, these customary practices tend to override the sacramental character of holy matrimony, finding expression in monetary outlays, delayed marriages, and misplacement of Christian virtues. Where theological fundamentals governing marriage are clearly enunciated and open to close examination under the auspices of local tradition, the Church is well-positioned to offer relevant counsel, guide reform, and promote an understanding of marriage that upholds both religious and cultural integrity. In doing this, the Church would have a deep impact on society and re-proclaim its witness to the sanctity and simplicity of Christian marriage.

5.1 The influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry

The concept of marriage in Christian theology is deeply rooted in covenantal love, mutual submission, and the unity of two individuals under God. The overburden that the high bride price requires, as demonstrated in the findings from Hoima Archdeaconry, presents a theological incongruence to Christians' vision of marriage as a divine partnership. Marriage, therefore, is not a commercial transaction but a sacrament a spiritual bond meant to represent Christ's love for the Church (Ephesians 5:25–33). As the economic demands of bride price become the dominant feature of this divinely established calling, it distorts the nature of holy matrimony and the spiritual integrity of the relationship. The bride-price commodification, however, not only economically burdens couples but theologically diminishes the sacrament to a socio-economic exchange.

From a theological ethics perspective, such economic burdens raise questions regarding justice, stewardship, and human dignity. The Church Fathers, e.g., St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom, instructed that marriage ought to be premised upon love and consent and not upon property or price. Furthermore, bride price driven to unjustified heights risks objectifying women and commodifying marriage, thus violating Christian principles of equality and humanhood. Catholic Social Teaching, especially as articulated in *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II), affirms that marriage should not undermine the dignity of either spouse and ought not to be frustrated by economic or social injustice. Excessive bride price can also be considered through kairology (global south justice theologies), whose practice has been to locate practices that oppress the poor or deny sacraments as moral injustices within the Church and society.

Theologically, it is also a problem which brings up the question of the doctrine of grace and inclusion. The Church is ordained to be a community where everyone, regardless of any economic standing, can have full access to the sacraments, including holy matrimony. Liberation theologians Gustavo Gutiérrez believe that the Church has an obligation to actively resist socio-cultural structures that exclude or marginalize the poor. Bride price, as it is done today in certain communities, disproportionately weighs on young and economically underprivileged couples, excluding them from full inclusion in the Church's sacramental existence. The call to the Church is, therefore, to be a liberative force tearing down barriers and creating systems of grace, justice, and love rather than burden and exclusion.

Pastorally, the Church must recognize that it is a healer and reconciler where there are cultural practices that conflict with Christian faith. As Paul Tillich has said, theology must address the existential situation of human beings, and economic duress that delays or foregoes marriage are existentially genuine crises for a majority of Christian couples. Pastoral ministry must, then, include budget planning, parish education, and intergenerational dialogue intended to restore Christian values and cultural expectations into consonance. Further, the Church may incorporate elements from contextual theology in order to promote inculturation marrying faith and culture without diminishing the key principles of Christian doctrine. Symbolic expressions of bride price in terms of honor rather than money can be promoted as culturally significant but theologically sound within this context.

Finally, the ecclesiological role of the Church herein is not only to bear witness but to prophetically engage. The Church as Body of Christ must function both as teacher and as reformer, governing mores of the community and protecting the oppressed. From global ecumenical movements such as those advocated for by the World Council of Churches and African theological currents, the Church in Hoima Archdeaconry is called to boldly address arrangements that empower marriage as a sacred covenant. Through collaboration with cultural leaders, shaping policy discourse, and producing theological solutions in justice, grace, and love, the Church can set in motion a rebirth of marriage culture that retains Christian holiness and cultural dignity.

5.2 The societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

The study illustrated that bride price has the effect of changing power dynamics in Christian marriages in that it entrenches male domination and diminishes mutual decision-making and spousal egalitarianism. Theologically, in Christianity, marriage is a covenant that is marked by mutual submission, respect, and equality, as noted in the works of the early Church Fathers and Karl Barth's theological anthropology. Barth contends that both man and woman are created *imago Dei*, equal in dignity before God. When bride price is permitted to be a transactional ground for marriage, it implicitly supports a patriarchal system that is incongruent with the Trinitarian model of mutual love and self-giving within the Godhead. Theologies of marriage such as those articulated in *Gaudium et Spes* (Second Vatican Council) stress marriage as a life and love partnership, rather than a hierarchy of authority. Thus, the domination generated by bride price runs counter to theological insight that both wife and husband are called to image the mutual and kenotic (self-emptying) love of Christ. Then it is required of Christian churches to recover the sacramental imagination of marriage, resisting those cultural practices which distort power balance and spiritual unity.

Furthermore, the findings affirmed that social pressure over the amount of bride price paid leads to shame, poverty, and social exclusion, especially for Christian couples who are unable to pay high demands. Therefore, commodification of marriage by bride price and its accompanying social pressure violates Christian ethics of justice, hospitality, and inclusion, as witnessed in

liberation theology and the praxis-oriented approach of theologians like Gustavo Gutiérrez and James Cone. In cultures where bride price becomes a yardstick for social status, the poor are systematically excluded from full sacramental life within the Church, including holy matrimony. This is an echo of the structural sin that Christian ethics should eradicate. Secondly, feminist theology, as advocated by scholars like Mercy Amba Oduyoye, condemns such traditions that alienate the poor and oppress women through economic valuation. Commodified bride price becomes a system of systemic inequality, something contrary to the mission of Jesus, who advocated for inclusion and human flourishing. The Church must be prophetic, not only in pastoral care but also in critiquing and transforming structures of injustice that are hindrances to the dignity and spiritual development of its members.

Also, bride price has introduced moral challenges in Christian marriages in the sense that it commodifies women and encourages a transactional, rather than a covenantal, interpretation of marriage. Morally, where bride price is in the form of a purchase, it reduces marriage from a covenant of love to an ownership contract contrary to Christian moral theology which upholds the inherent freedom and dignity of all human beings. Informed by theologians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christian ethics understands marriage in the light of a responsibility community created by grace, not ownership. Bride price objectifies women and thereby distorts agape the selfless love that is the mirror which Christian marriage is to reflect. Secondly, Christian existentialist theologians like Paul Tillich hold that commodification in human relations leads to "estrangement," which hinders authentic being and communion. By approximating marriage to a transaction, the ethical foundations of marriage as a sacrament are eroded, alienating couples from the supernatural fact of grace and love. The practice should thus be theologically reformed, under the light of principles of equity, spiritual maturity, and moral justice.

In addition, bride price has contributed to delayed or forgone Christian weddings, with many young people resorting to cohabitation due to the failure to fulfill exorbitant cultural expectations. The sacramental life of the Church ought to be accessible to all Christians regardless of economic status, as envisioned in the sacramental theology of Thomas Aquinas who upheld that grace is not restricted by wealth but by intention and faith. When high bride price prevents Christian marriage, the Church is inadvertently complicit in closing off the poor

from a basic sacrament. This is at odds with the ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium*, where the Church is supposed to be a sign and instrument of unity for the whole human race. African theologians such as John Mbiti have also warned against allowing cultural factors to eclipse the theological foundation of the Church. If young Christian couples cohabit without sacramental blessing due to cultural-economic barriers, it is a pastoral crisis that requires compassion and also reform. The Church must operate with a theology of accessibility one that proclaims that love, not economic ability, qualifies a couple for marriage in the eyes of God.

Lastly, it was revealed that the cultural value of bride price as a symbol of respect and unity has been undermined by commercialization, which takes away from Christian marriage's theological meaning and spiritual integrity. Inculturation, according to most African theologians such as Kwame Bediako, ought to preserve the symbolic core of cultural practices while interpreting them through the lens of the gospel. Bride price, in its pure form, was relational alliance and communal responsibility, yet when tainted by capitalism and social status, it is theologically and spiritually vacuous. The Church must follow critical inculturation, where cultural practices are not only accepted but also cleansed through theological reflection and discernment. It is written in the encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Paul VI) that the Gospel affirms and transforms cultures. Thus, the Church in Hoima and beyond must regain the redemptive potential of bride price, demanding it as a symbolic gesture of love, not an economic transaction. Through common theological education, liturgical training, and cultural dialogue, bride price can be refocused to meet the sacramental mystery of Christian marriage as a covenant grounded in God's love and mutual self-giving.

5.3 How the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry

The findings strongly indicate that the Church is strategically positioned to mediate between cultural practices and Christian teachings specifically in bride price. This role of mediation is in accordance with the theological principle of inculturation, which is a process of articulating the Gospel within a local cultural context without undermining its essential message. The Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes* and *Ad Gentes* emphasized that the Church ought not to reject culture but pastorally and critically address it. African theologians such as John S. Mbiti

and Kwame Bediako also argued that African culture is not a hindrance to the Gospel but a vessel through which the Gospel can be understood. Here, the Church's engagement with cultural marriage traditions like bride price is not an interference but a requisite task of theological and pastoral stewardship that ensures Christian marriages in Hoima are both rooted in spiritual integrity and attuned to cultural heritage.

The response of the married couples and the key informants was a desire for the Church to speak prophetically loudly against the commercialization of bride price. This desire identifies the prophetic role of the Church, which theologian Walter Brueggemann says is the ability to critique the prevailing socio-cultural norms and envision other, just possibilities. Bride price, when overemphasized and commercialized, has the potential to undermine human dignity and spiritual equality in marriage. Liberation theology, as especially formulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez, summons the Church to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and to denounce structures of oppression in this case, economic burdens that restrict access to marriage. The Church's theological voice, therefore, must echo this moral imperative, addressing distorted traditions not through condemnation but through transformative engagement out of justice and grace.

The sacramental theology of marriage teaches that marriage is a visible symbol of God's invisible grace, a principle that is both Roman Catholic and shared by various Protestant traditions. The research in Hoima shows how the material expectations of bride price can overshadow this sacramental truth, distorting marriage into a transaction rather than a sacred covenant. Christian marriage, theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer contends, is founded upon common discipleship in Christ and love for one another more than economic transaction. The Church therefore has a serious pedagogical task to redescribe marriage as a spiritual vocation rather than a cultural burden. This may be accomplished through regular catechesis, premarital counseling, and public teaching that advocates the theological precedence of unity, love, and stewardship. In so doing, the Church resettles couples and societies to value Godly principles over social pressures.

The findings require cooperation among Church leaders and cultural custodians, encouraging a model of cooperative inculturation. African theologians like Laurenti Magesa emphasize that

dialogue instead of confrontation must mark the interaction between tradition and faith. When Church leaders and clan leaders sit together, they are acting out the pastoral accompaniment, the key idea in Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, where the Church is called to accompany people in their cultural realities. Rather than imposing reforms, the Church needs to be a pastoral companion to reform from within, by calling on shared values of respect, community, and responsibility. This approach ensures that the changes in bride price practices are not perceived as foreign impositions but as spiritually significant, community-owned reforms.

Finally, the Hoima reflections illustrate a visionary aspiration: that African culture and Christian doctrine are not enemies of each other but can be harmonized through conscious, Spirit-led transformation. This theological aspiration is consonant with the eschatological dream in the theology of Jürgen Moltmann, who stresses that Christian faith is always oriented to the future, constantly anticipating transformation and renewal. The Hoima Church is not being called merely to react to the current moment but to imagine and create a future where Christianity and culture intersect in ways that deepen human dignity, spiritual equality, and divine destiny. In promoting simple, grace-filled weddings, in being involved in public education, and in resisting exploitation, the Church is fulfilling its calling as a force for change by not eradicating culture, but by redeeming it. By this vision, bride price ceases to be an obstacle, but a forgiven token of love, esteem, and marriage in the eyes of God.

5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, theological reflection guarantees that even if there are traditional marriage practices like bride price that carry deep cultural significances, their blind observance especially when commoditized brings up grave Christian marriage theological, ethical, and pastoral concerns. The Church as both prophetic and pastoral institution is divinely mandated to negotiate between culture and Gospel reality through an inclusion, justice, and grace theology. Through inculturation, catechesis, promoting symbolic rather than transactional traditions, and solidarity with the economically disenfranchised, the Church is able to redeem bride price practice and uphold the sanctity of holy matrimony. In doing so, it recovers marriage as a covenantal, grace-filled vocation that bears witness to Christ's love for the Church for all and founded on spiritual equality, not economics.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes all findings reported in chapter four according to questions of the study, draws conclusions, suggests recommendations and also proposes some areas for further study.

6.1 Summary of findings

6.1.1 The influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry

The findings from the research showed that the average bride price demands greatly impact the financial situation of Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro-Kitara Diocese. The majority of couples described that the economic strains incurred by paying bride price forced them into debts and discouraged them from saving, thus inhibiting common family goals such as house construction and business investment. These economic strains also bred marital tension as men were compelled to live up to unattainable standards, sometimes leading to household instability or postponement of formal Christian marriages.

Besides, the outrageous bride price requirements have influenced Christian wedding timing and frequency since most couples cohabit for years as they work to satisfy traditional expectations. Postponing this most commonly degrades Christian values and interferes with family decision-making since couples shift resource and control to satisfy extended family expectations. Church leaders and community leaders affirmed that bride price has transitioned from a ritual to a commercialized practice, which affects the spiritual and social sacredness of marriage.

To handle the economic burden, informants and couples put forth practical solutions including stimulating neighborhood savings clubs, rationalizing cultural practices, and getting the church to help negotiate bride price. There was a call for added caution against the negative effects of overcharging and the need to moderate culture. Churches and local leaders were called on to initiate sensitization campaigns, promote premarital economic planning, and establish

community-based policies or regulations that integrate bride price customs with existing economic realities and Christian teachings.

6.1.2 The societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

The findings indicated that bride price plays a significant role in determining the power dynamics of Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry. The majority of couples reported that once bride price is paid, some men feel the urge to own their spouses, which encourages discouragement of respect and joint decision-making. Women feel forced into submission, and this leads to emotional estrangement and reduced cooperation in marriage. Church leaders and the elders of the community recognized this sense of ownership as going against Christian principles of equality and togetherness in marriage.

Societal expectations regarding bride price also pose additional challenges for Christian couples. The society measures the success of a marriage in terms of the amount of bride price paid, placing financial burdens on grooms and affecting how the couples are perceived in society. Such expectations result in feelings of inadequacy, mockery in society, and exclusion from both family and society life, especially where the perceived bride price demands are not met. These social norms both delay weddings and cause them to have poor relationships with their spouses and be lonely.

Ethically, the bride price is objectionable since it commodifies marriage and treats the bride as a commodity rather than as a part of a sacred institution. Money transfer as bride price has the effect of creating resentment and expectation among husbands and feelings of subordination among wives. Church leaders, policymakers, and elders emphasized that the current materialistic attitude towards bride price encourages gender imbalance and contradicts biblical principles. They urged that the practice be reinterpreted or reformed to align with Christian values of harmony, love, and dignity.

6.1.3 How the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry

The findings of the focus group discussions and the key informant interviews in Hoima Archdeaconry are that both married couples and community leaders desire the Church to become more involved in the harmonization of traditional bride price practices and Christian marriage values. The respondents emphasized the Church's role in delivering premarital counseling that captures both the cultural and spiritual aspects of marriage. They also called upon the Church to foster dialogue between families, cultural leaders, and religious institutions in order to promote respect for each other's values and check outrageous bride price demands that undermine Christian values of love, unity, and humility.

A majority of respondents suggested that the Church, using its moral authority, encourage less expensive and simpler wedding ceremonies and discourage the commercialization of bride price. Through open sermons, community sensitization campaigns, and intervention in marriage negotiations, Church leaders can affect the change of community attitudes and empower couples to resist financially draining customs. Consultation with the local government and cultural institutions was also suggested to come up with guidelines that encourage symbolic instead of transactional bride price practices.

Finally, both Church leaders and elder members of society expressed the necessity for ongoing education, family meetings, and the establishment of shared committees for marriage preparation that would address both the religious and cultural components. These would act as mediators between expectations, advise, and avert conflict. Educating the wider community, for instance, older generations, through outreach and workshops was an important measure for balancing traditional and Christian values in the practices of marriage so that they would be relevant, respectful, and sustainable.

6.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that the traditional bride price payment is a significant economic burden to Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry, and it often leads to debt, delayed life plans, and delayed Christian weddings. The economic burden disrupts family stability and hinders spiritual

and family growth. Bride price has evolved from its historically cultural significance to a transactional necessity, contrary to Christian principles and doctrine. There is a growing need to re-evaluate these demands to reduce their adverse impact on the financial condition and future strategy of couples.

Further, the research highlights the negative social and ethical impacts of high bride price demands on marriage relationships. Once bride price is paid, some men exercise coercive control over their spouses, resulting in gender inequality, emotional distance, and little joint decision-making. High bride price demands result in pressure, isolation, and relationship tension, particularly when families fail to sustain the high demands. These dynamics erode mutual respect, equality, and spiritual unity, defying the biblical understanding of marriage as a union based on love and dignity.

Finally, the findings highlight the significant role that the Church may play in mediating traditional practice and Christian doctrine. Through pre-marriage counseling, lobbying, and education, the Church can promote simplification, symbolism of bride price, and establish dialogue between cultural and religious institutions. Cooperation with national authorities in developing culturally appropriate but economically sustainable guidelines is essential. Through community sensitization, continued spiritual growth, and establishment of general cultural-religious marriage committees, the Church may be able to assist in the development of marital traditions that promote Christian unity, dignity, and sustainability.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are provided towards the influence of traditional marriage to Christian marriage: balancing bride price demands in holy matrimony in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese;

The study recommends the need for the Church to engage in premarital counseling incorporating spiritual and cultural education. The counseling ought to address the issues of outrageous bride price demands and guide couples on how to harmonize traditional demands and Christian expectations. By educating couples early, the Church can improve decision-making, reducing financial pressure and the spiritual foundation of marriages.

The study also recommends that sensitization campaigns be conducted in the community to raise awareness of the negative effects of commercialized bride price practices. Youths and aged persons should be sensitized with campaigns to bring about an attitude shift from material expectations to symbolic appreciation. Families should be challenged with sermons, public forums, and community meetings to embrace love, respect, and unity over material expectations.

In addition, the study recommends that there is a need for the Church to collaborate with local and cultural leaders in the development of culturally sensitive policies or guidelines on bride price. The policies are to be formulated with the intent of limiting exorbitant demands as well as promoting modest and decent behavior that is accepting of Christian values. Such collaboration would act to reconcile the traditional practice with Christian doctrine towards understanding and balance.

In addition, the study implies the need for co-religious and cultural leaders to have joint marriage preparation committees. These would help to broker expectations, guide couples through negotiating traditional expectations, and reduce potential contention between families. Through encouraging collaboration, these institutions would ensure holy matrimony values in the light of cultural identity protection.

Lastly, the study proposes the need for continued education and reorientation of the community's elders about the original intention of bride price. The elders are opinion leaders when it comes to marriage traditions, and their re-education can revert bride price to its symbolic role. This would promote respect, equality, and sustainability in marriage, aligning cultural practice with the biblical principles of dignity and love.

6.4 Areas for further research

Since this study analyzed the influence of traditional marriage to Christian marriage: achieving a balance of bride price demands in holy matrimony in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese, the study recommends additional studies to be carried out in the following subject matters. The study recommends additional studies on the long-term effects of bride price tradition on the stability of marriages and gender roles in Christian households in rural Uganda. Subsequent research could also seek to explore the perceptions of younger generations regarding

shifting cultural and religious expectations of marriage, education level and economic level's impact on bride price attitudes, and comparative studies across various dioceses or cultural regions could provide greater general insight into how various communities are coping with the collision of tradition and Christian values in new forms of marriage.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

For the Key Informants (Church leaders, Local government/ Policy makers & Community elders)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Murungi Barnabas, a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of Master of Divinity. I am conducting a study on, “the influence of traditional marriage to Christian marriage: balancing bride price demands in holy matrimony in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese”. This should not take much of your time, and you can choose to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions if you like. Your responses are confidential, and your name will not be written down. I will use the information that you provide specifically for study purposes.

Section A: Introductions

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Occupation/ Position
5. Period spent working in that position

Section B: The influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese

6. How do traditional bride price demands affect the financial stability of Christian couples in this community?
7. Can you share any experiences or observations where high bride price demands have influenced the timing or occurrence of Christian marriages? How did the individuals or families involved respond to this challenge?
8. In your opinion, what measures can be taken to ease the financial burden of bride price on Christian marriages?

Section C: The societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

9. What societal pressures arise from the expectation of bride price in Christian marriages?
10. How do bride price demands influence the marital dynamics between couples, especially in terms of power and responsibility?
11. What ethical concerns do you see in the practice of bride price, particularly in its impact on Christian marriages?

Section D: How the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry

12. How do you think the Church can help balance traditional bride price practices with Christian marriage values?
13. What role can Church leaders play in addressing the challenges posed by bride price demands in Christian marriages?
14. What practical steps can be taken by both the Church and the community to ensure that traditional customs and Christian marriage practices are harmoniously integrated?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Focus Group Discussion Guide

With the couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

Good morning/afternoon, I am Murungi Barnanbas, a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of Master of Divinity. I am conducting a study on, “the influence of traditional marriage to Christian marriage: balancing bride price demands in holy matrimony in Hoima Archdeaconry Bunyoro Kitara Diocese”. The information given will be used only for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

I will ask you a series of questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I only want to learn what you think. If I ask a question that you would prefer not to discuss, you do not need to discuss that topic. If you find the discussion topic uncomfortable, you are welcome to withdraw from the discussion at any time. I will be recording this discussion so that we can be sure to have your opinion in your own words when I analyse the information later. OK, let’s get started.

Section A: Introductions

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Occupation
5. Period spent in marriage

Section B: The influence of traditional bride price demands on financial stability within Christian marriages in Hoima Archdeaconry, Bunyoro Kitara Diocese

1. How has paying bride price impacted your financial situation as a couple?
2. Can you describe any financial challenges you have experienced due to bride price requirements in your marriage? How did these challenges affect your family and decision-making process?
3. What adjustments, if any, have you had to make in your household finances due to the payment of bride price?

Section C: The societal and ethical implications of bride price demands on marital dynamics among Christian couples in Hoima Archdeaconry

4. How do you think bride price affects the relationship between husbands and wives in Christian marriages?
5. In what ways, if any, do societal expectations around bride price create challenges in your marriage?
6. What ethical concerns do you have about the bride price tradition and its impact on your marriage?

Section D: How the Church can intervene to promote a balanced integration of traditional marriage customs and Christian marriages within Hoima Archdeaconry

7. How do you think the Church can help couples navigate the financial and social pressures of bride price in Christian marriages?
8. What role would you like to see the Church play in balancing traditional customs with Christian marriage values?
9. How can the Church support couples in managing the challenges posed by bride price while still respecting cultural traditions?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 3: Time schedule for the Research

S/NO	Research Activity	Time
1	Research proposal	December 2024- February 2025
2	Collecting data	March 2025
3	Analysing the data and writing the Report	April 2025
4	Submission of final copy of the Research Report	May 2025

Appendix 4: UCU-REC Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE TO CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: BALANCING BRIDE PRICE DEMANDS IN HOLY MATRIMONY IN HOIMA ARCHDEACONRY BUNYORO KITARA DIOCESE

No.	Name of Investigator	Designation	Address/Telephone/Email	Institution of Affiliation
1	Murungi Barnabas	Principal Investigator	murungibro@gmail.com	Uganda Christian University
2		Co-investigator/ Academic supervisor		
3		Co-investigator		

1. Introduction and rationale of the Study

(Briefly introduce what the study is all about and its rationale in one or two brief paragraph(s))

2. Description of the Research

Briefly describe how the study/research is designed e.g. This is a Cross-sectional mixed design survey of Palliative Care Services in Hospitals and Health Centres level IV in Uganda covering both Public and Private facilities in the whole country.

3. Participation

Briefly mention who the participants are and why they are chosen to take part. E.g. Participants will be Head of Health facilities, In-Charges of Palliative care units where they exist, selected district Health Officers, and Ministry of Health Officials.

4. Potential Risks and Discomforts

Every study/research has a potential of being risky or some degree of discomfort or inconvenience. Mention any possible risk or discomfort as a result of one's participation. They could be minimal or otherwise, explain to the participant how they will be mitigated.

5. Potential Benefits

Mention the potential benefits that will be as a result of the research. The benefits can be directly or indirectly to the participants, their wider society, or for general good not necessarily to the participants.

Mention all possible benefits.

6. Confidentiality

The information you give us, will be confidential and only used for purposes of this study. In the process of report writing, your name will never be used and so everything you tell us will remain anonymous. We shall ask questions about availability and functionality of palliative care services in this health facility. If you do not want to respond to a particular question, you can simply say so, and we will not insist. Every participant will be asked to sign a written study informed consent form before participating in the study as this ensures voluntarism and acceptability to participate in the study.

7. Procedure

Inform the participant(s) how the study/research will be carried out. Will it involve injecting, questioning, and how long will the engagement be? Approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours?

8. Voluntary Participation

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to not participate in this study, it will not affect your work in any way.

9. Withdrawal from the Study and/or Withdrawal of Authorization

As a participant in this study, you can withdraw at any point if you choose not to continue. Give the participant confidence that they have rights and freedom on any decision they want regarding the study. Participants can even choose particular questions/engagements in the process not the entire time.

10. Reimbursements

Reimbursement which is equivalent to.....for you. This can be in transport, time compensation, drinks and food/snacks. Put a figure/an amount of what it will cost on a particular individual.

11. Whom to contact in case of ethical related concerns.

a) Prior Ethical approvals and permissions.

If the study has acquired any other foreign Research Ethics approvals, indicate the institutions details and contact people who can attest to that.

b) Local authorities and approvals.

This study was Approved by Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee (UCU-REC) and cleared by Uganda national Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), In case of any Ethical or your rights related concerns or inquiries, please contact UCUREC Chairperson; Prof. Peter Waiswa, 0772405357, pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug or UCUREC Manager, Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe, 0775737627 or oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug. UNCST: Tel; +256 414 705500, info@uncst.go.ug

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

Do you accept to be recorded?

Yes No

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research program; to tick appropriately

Yes No.

I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed Consent Form.

Name of Participant:

Signature: Date:

Name of Researcher/designee:

Signature: Date:

NOTE: Depending on the nature of participants, witnesses or guardians (for minors & other vulnerable groups) will be required.

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