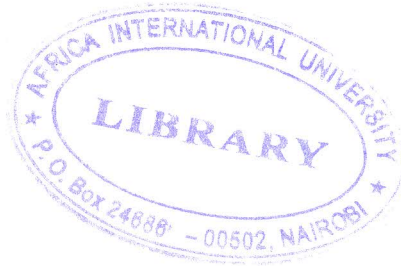


AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXAMINATION INTO THE INTERPRETATION OF
TAQWA AS TAUGHT IN THE MADRASSA SCHOOLS AMONG ORMA
MUSLIM WOMEN, IN TANA RIVER COUNTY, KENYA

BY
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A Dissertation submitted to the University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Inter-Religious Studies



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July 2021

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the interpretation of *taqwa* as taught in the madrassa schools among Orma Muslim women in Tana River County. Different sources examined bears witness that *taqwa* is not a new theme within the Islamic spheres. However, empirical studies probing the meaning and interpretation of *taqwa* among Orma Muslim women in their indigenous context is non-existent. Hence, the purpose of this study is to empirically examine the interpretation of *taqwa* as taught in the madrassa and analyze it within the milieu of the Orma Muslim women. The researcher looked at the Islamic primary sources in order to get a grip of how the Orma Muslim women understood, believed, and interpreted *taqwa* in their everydayness. The study is qualitative in nature. The framework is adapted from the indorsed Synthetic Triangular Approach as proposed by Kim (2014). The method is useful while studying religio-cultural portents among the Muslims from an anthropological standpoint. The study further adopted phenomenology research design and engaged ethnography tools such as participant observation, interview questions, and focus groups as the main tools in data collection. Purposive sampling technique was adopted due to the probability of all the subjects in the population to give insights into the study. Data was analyzed using Thematic Coding Analysis (TCA). In understanding the phenomena, various theories have been used. Human Attachment Theory helped to analyze how the Orma Muslim women related with *taqwa* in their everydayness. *Taqwa* is a canonical concept that is highly entrenched in the Islamic teachings. In order to understand how the term has been interpreted, the researcher used Historical Critical Interpretation theory. The theory is useful in understanding religious terminologies whose meanings are not readily accessible. Weiber's Theory of Personification has also been used in analyzing the extent to which the Orma Muslim women experienced *taqwa*. Findings of this study are presented in different chapters. Chapter Five describes the Islamic understanding of *taqwa* as fashioned by the madrassa teachers, who are the main custodians of *taqwa* in the madrassa schools in Tana River County. Chapter Six gives a description of how the Orma Muslim women amalgamate *taqwa* within the backdrop of their religio-cultural locale. Chapter Seven offers a comparative investigation exposing the role of religio-cultural rituals in the interpretation of *taqwa* among the Orma Muslim women. A theory as to how the Orma Muslim women experienced *taqwa* is formed. Findings indicate that in interpreting *taqwa*, the Orma Muslim women replace official Islam with the Orma traditional rituals. Hence, making it easier to meet their felt needs which are otherwise not met by official Islam in their inculcating of *taqwa*.