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Socio-cultural Norms Hindering Disclosure of HIV/AIDS Status in Zimbabwean Marriages: A Case Study of Married Couples in Kambuzuma

BY

TADIWANASHE CHINODA

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The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to Bindura University of Science Education for acceptance of this dissertation entitled "Socio-cultural Norms Hindering Disclosure of HIV/AIDS Status in Zimbabwean Marriages: A Case Study of Married Couples in Kambuzuma" submitted to the department of Sustainable Development in partial fulfilment of Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Development Studies.
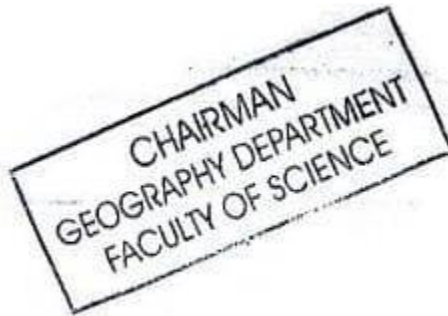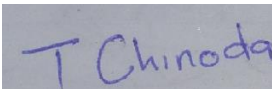
Supervisor Date

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Chairman Date

Dr. J. Bowora
CHAIRMAN
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Student's Date

T Chinoda

Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation titled, "**Socio-cultural Norms Hindering Disclosure of HIV/AIDS Status in Zimbabwean Marriages: A Case Study of Married Couples in Kambuzuma**" has been carried out by me Tadiwanashe Chinoda. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided

Name ………………………………………….. Date………………………..

DEDICATION

To my friends and family, I dedicate my dissertation effort. Thank you so much to my wonderful parents. The friends and church family who have helped me along the way are also the recipients of my dedication to this dissertation. My gratitude for everything they have done will never fade.

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I thank the Almighty Father for giving me the strength and courage to go through this programme without him I would not have reached this far because he is my Jehovah Ebenezer. I would at this point want to acknowledge the following people who made a lasting impact in my educational life and studies: - My Supervisor for tirelessly going through my submissions and for the positive criticisms that has made this dissertation a major success. I would also love to appreciate my parents for the sacrifices they made that saw me reach this far in life and in my studies. You are the best parents I could have never wished for in my entire life if I had an option to choose, may the good Lord richly bless you in all your prospects.

ABSTRACT

The study's goal was to investigate how sociocultural norms prevent married couples in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status to one another. People living with HIV/AIDS who visit the Kambuzuma Polyclinic in Kambuzuma, Harare, Zimbabwe, for medical care make up the majority of the study population for this study. The goal of this population's selection was to comprehend the sociocultural norms and beliefs that obstruct HIV/AIDS status disclosure in the healthcare setting. The goal of the study was to record a wide variety of viewpoints on the subject, including the views and experiences of men and women in married partnerships. Fear of discrimination and stigma is one of the main causes of non-disclosure. Many couples were afraid that if they told their families and communities they were HIV positive, they would be shunned and become economically and socially isolated. Furthermore, because HIV/AIDS is frequently seen as a taboo subject in Zimbabwean culture, the study discovered that some couples thought that disclosing their HIV status would result in divorce or separation. One of the main findings of the research on the socio-cultural norms preventing married couples in Kambuzuma, Harare from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status is that deeply embedded cultural and societal norms are a major barrier to honest discussion of HIV/AIDS status in marriage. The research emphasizes how important it is to implement focused interventions to remove sociocultural barriers to disclosure in married couples. For people to tell their partners they are HIV/AIDS positive, the researcher stresses the value of encouraging open communication, lowering stigma, and creating supportive environments.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The goal of the study was to look into the sociocultural norms that prevent married couples in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status. Like in many other nations, Zimbabwe has a number of sociocultural conventions that can make it difficult for spouses to disclose their HIV/AIDS status. These standards have a big influence on how people feel and act when it comes to disclosing HIV/AIDS, which puts up obstacles in the way of people talking to their partners honestly about their status. In order to address the difficulties in promoting disclosure and lowering the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, it is imperative to comprehend these socio-cultural norms. As a result, this chapter will include the study's history, problem statement, aim, objectives, justification for the study, definition of terms, and general overview.

1.2 Background of study

Globally, social and cultural norms significantly impede married couples' disclosure of their HIV/AIDS status. These social norms can have a significant influence on people's readiness to tell their spouses they are HIV/AIDS positive. These norms differ among nations. Globally, social and cultural standards severely impede married couples' revelation of their HIV/AIDS status. These social norms sustain discrimination, fear of rejection, and stigma, which makes it difficult for people to be upfront about their HIV/AIDS status in marriage. To overcome these obstacles, extensive campaigns are needed to combat stigmatizing beliefs, advance knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission, and provide people the confidence to talk candidly and openly about their health with their partners.

HIV/AIDS is stigmatized in many cultures, and many are afraid of the social fallout from coming out as HIV positive. The stigma associated with HIV/AIDS is frequently a result of discriminatory attitudes and false beliefs regarding the virus's spread. Because of this, people may decide not to disclose their sexual orientation, especially when they are married and there is a chance that doing so could result in rejection, abuse, or even ostracism. In certain regions of sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, cultural conventions regarding gender roles and marriage can make it more difficult for someone to disclose their HIV/AIDS status. Matrimony is highly esteemed in numerous societies, and faithfulness and mutual trust are anticipated between partners. But the worry that you'll be

held accountable for introducing HIV into the union or It's possible for someone to be accused of infidelity to keep them from telling their partners they're gay. Gender inequality may also make matters more difficult since, in certain cultures, women may not have as much influence over decisions made in their marriages and may be afraid of being abused or abandoned if they reveal they are HIV positive.

Social and cultural norms play a role in the reluctance to disclose HIV/AIDS status within marriages in India. The emphasis placed on family honor and reputation can cause people to hide their status in order to avoid embarrassing their families. Additionally, the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS can lead to discrimination and isolation, which makes it difficult for people to talk openly about their status with their spouses. Finally, in conservative societies, such as those found in parts of the Middle East, there are strong taboos around discussing sexual health and diseases in public. These taboos can create barriers to open communication about HIV/AIDS within marriages as people may fear social exclusion and judgment if they disclose their status.

The stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS can lead to discrimination and isolation, making it difficult for people to discuss their status with their spouses. Additionally, in conservative societies like those in parts of the Middle East, there are strong taboos around discussing sexual health and diseases openly. These factors can create a barrier to open communication about HIV/AIDS within marriages. In India, social and cultural norms also play a role in the reluctance of people to disclose their status within marriage. This is because society places a great emphasis on family honor and reputation, which can lead people to conceal their status in order to avoid bringing shame upon their families.

Like in many other nations, Zimbabwe has a number of social and cultural traditions that can make it difficult for married couples to disclose one another's HIV/AIDS status. People may find it challenging to candidly share their HIV status with their partners due to these strongly set standards. For married couples in Zimbabwe, these social and cultural standards may have detrimental effects on their health and general well-being. People who are unwilling to reveal their HIV status may be less inclined to seek medical attention or to follow treatment plans, which can have a negative impact on their health and spread the infection to other people.

According to the aforementioned, there are a number of factors that influence whether or not someone discloses their HIV status. These include whether or not the partnership is regular, close, main as opposed to casual and unfamiliar; whether or not the person being disclosed to has a known positive status; the number of lifetime sex partners; social factors (support, fears of abandonment, discrimination, violence, and accusations of infidelity); individual self-efficacy; education; gender; marital status; the severity of the illness; and the length of time since diagnosis. Nevertheless, HIV serostatus disclosure provides benefits to both the infected person and the public. It may inspire someone to seek treatment and modify their behavior; risk behaviors among couples most dramatically change when both partners are aware of their serostatus.

1.3 Statement of problem

In the Kambuzuma community, socio-cultural perspectives pose serious obstacles to HIV status disclosure in married partnerships. A 2011 UNESCO research states that gender norms and culture that define masculinity and femininity are what influence people's power over their sexual lives and choices. These norms are developed through socialization, starting in early childhood. As a result, the sociocultural settings in which many PLWHA live force them to conceal their HIV statuses. Their capacity to practice HIV prevention or to find social assistance to deal with their HIV serostatus is necessarily diminished as a result. These societal impediments have the potential to accelerate the progression of HIV into AIDS and, ultimately, early death (Norman et al., 2005). According to research done in 2009 by Mbonu, Borne, and De Vries, stigma and prejudice against PLWHA in the community are encouraged by cultural conceptions of HIV and AIDS that are based on ideas about contamination, sexuality, and religion. A complicated and delicate subject, the revelation of HIV/AIDS status in married couples is shaped by a number of social and cultural norms. Many civilizations have deeply rooted customs and beliefs that prevent people from telling their spouses they are HIV/AIDS positive. The care and prevention of HIV/AIDS in married partnerships may be significantly impacted by these norms. It's crucial to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all method for tackling these sociocultural norms, and that they might differ significantly amongst communities.

1.4 Aim of the study

Investigating the sociocultural norms in Kambuzuma that prevent married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status and trying to minimize these obstacles.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1. To determine the social and cultural norms that prevent married couples in Kambuzuma from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status.

2. To analyse how sociocultural norms affect married couples' declaration of HIV/AIDS status in the study area?

3. To ascertain strategies that can be employed to encourage HIV status disclosure in Kambuzuma marriages.

1.6 Research Questions

1.What sociocultural norms prevent married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status in Kambuzuma?

2.How do sociocultural norms affect married couples' disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in Kambuzuma?

3.What are the effective strategies for encouraging HIV/AIDS disclosure in Kambuzuma marriages?

1.7Justification of the study

Developing successful public health interventions first require an awareness of the social-cultural norms around HIV/AIDS disclosure in married couples. There are long-standing taboos and stigmas around HIV/AIDS in many cultures, especially when it comes to marriage. These customs have the potential to seriously obstruct candid discussions regarding HIV status in married relationships. Through research on this subject, scientists can learn more about the particular cultural norms and beliefs that shape disclosure behaviors. Designing focused interventions that can successfully address these obstacles and encourage frank and open discussion about HIV/AIDS in marriages requires this understanding.

Furthering human rights and lowering stigma requires an examination of social-cultural norms around HIV/AIDS disclosure in married couples. HIV/AIDS patients experience prejudice and

marginalization in many societies, especially in the context of marriage and family life. Researchers can support initiatives aimed at combating discriminatory attitudes and advancing the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS by looking at the cultural elements that lead to denial of information. For those who are afflicted and their families, this may contribute to the creation of a more encouraging and welcoming environment.

Overall, the research on the social and cultural norms that prevent married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status is warranted because it has the ability to guide focused interventions, enhance patient outcomes, and advance human rights. Researchers can help develop more practical approaches to resolving the difficulties related to HIV/AIDS disclosure in married couples by comprehending the unique cultural variables at work.

1.8 Definition of Key terms

Socio-cultural norms refer to the unwritten rules, expectations, and beliefs that govern the behavior and interactions of individuals within a society or culture (Stables, 2017). These norms can be explicit, such as laws and regulations, or implicit, such as customs and traditions. They shape the way people think, feel, and act in their daily lives and are often influenced by social, historical, and political factors.

Disclosure is a term that refers to the act of revealing or making known certain information or facts that were previously unknown or hidden. It involves the process of sharing relevant details, often in a transparent and open manner, to ensure that all parties involved have access to the same information. Disclosures can occur in various contexts, such as legal, financial, business, personal, or even in the realm of journalism (Poster, 2012). Personal disclosure refers to the act of revealing personal information about oneself to others. This can include sharing details about one's background, experiences, beliefs, or emotions. Personal disclosure often occurs in interpersonal relationships or therapeutic settings where individuals feel comfortable opening up about themselves.

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a type of retrovirus that attacks the body's immune system, specifically targeting CD4 cells (also known as T cells), which are a type of white blood

cell that plays a crucial role in fighting off infections. When HIV infects these cells, it uses them to replicate itself and destroy them in the process.

AIDS is an advanced stage of HIV infection, characterized by a severely weakened immune system and the presence of certain opportunistic infections or cancers. These opportunistic infections can include pneumocystis pneumonia, tuberculosis, and toxoplasmosis, among others. It's important to note that HIV and AIDS are not the same thing. HIV is the virus that causes the disease, while AIDS is the advanced stage of the disease that occurs when the immune system has been severely weakened (Epstein, 2017).

1.9 Dissertation outline

Chapter One – Introduction.

Chapter one focused on the provision of information on areas such as preliminary part of the study which covered the; background to study, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, followed by hypothetic assumptions that guided this study and the significance of the study. The chapter ended by giving significance of the study, chapter organization and then finally a brief chapter summary.

Chapter Two - Literature Review.

Chapter two focused on finding out what other researchers have mentioned on their related studies. The chapter conceptualizes key etymologies that undergird this study and their contexts and relevance. Thus, this chapter mainly devoted to reviewing epistemological contents on what is already known

Chapter Three - Research Methodology.

This chapter illustrates on issues such as on the research methodology of the study. The chapter gets into details on topics such as the research design, study population, sampling strategy and data collection. The chapter covered the methods used in data collection giving the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Chapter Four – Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation.

Chapter four focused on analysis, interpretation and presentation of data collected from respondents through various data collecting techniques. Data collection methods used included;

focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Data presentation methods used in the study included interpretative methodology, tables and graphs**.**

Chapter Five – Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter focused on giving the conclusive remarks for the study. It provides a summary where findings were given as well as some recommendations. This Chapter provides a summary for the whole study.

1.10 Chapter summary

In a nutshell the chapter managed to introduce the study, the background of the study, its objectives and research questions which unpacked the problem statement which the research wants to address. The chapter ended by giving significance of the study, and chapter organization

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study is connected to the body of literature in this chapter. Regarding the research issue, numerous academics have presented their works. In light of this, the chapter aims to ascertain the arguments made by these scholars regarding the problem of married couples failing to disclose HIV/AIDS status . In defining the catastrophe risk management strategies, the literature from various scholars, journals, and articles was evaluated. I will present the theories and models in order to have a deeper comprehension of the socio-cultural norms that impede married couples from disclosing HIV/AIDS.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Stigma Theory

According to stigma theory, social and psychological phenomena occur when people or groups are categorized and treated as "different" or "undesirable" because of particular traits or qualities. Negative social outcomes from this designation may include marginalization, social isolation, and discrimination. Stigma is a specific type of gap that exists between one's virtual and real social identities, according to Goffman (1963). According to this idea, people who are HIV/AIDS positive may be reluctant to disclose their status. This theory states that social exclusion, rejection, and marginalization are possible experiences for people living with HIV/AIDS, which can make it challenging for them to reveal their status and seek medical attention (Brown, 2017). Furthermore, the fear of social rejection and the possible loss of support from friends and family might also prevent disclosure. Thus, stigma theory plays a significant role in understanding why people choose not to disclose their HIV status. We can better address the social and cultural issues that lead to non-disclosure and work towards building a more supportive and inclusive environment for those living with HIV by understanding the role that stigma plays in the lives of those affected by the virus.

Furthermore, the stigma argument serves as a powerful explanation for why some people choose not to disclose their HIV status. Those living with HIV may face discrimination and social stigma, which can result in emotions of guilt, shame, and rejection anxiety, according to the stigma hypothesis (Malaba, 2014). When people experience these emotions, it may be difficult for them

to tell others—such as family members, friends, and sexual partners—about their HIV status. As a matter of fact, studies have demonstrated that stigma poses a serious obstacle to HIV testing and disclosure, increasing the likelihood of transmission to others and delaying testing and treatment (Hansen, 2011). Furthering the virus's spread is the possibility that stigma may make it difficult for patients to follow their treatment plans.

2.3 Conceptualization of HIV/AIDS issues

UNAIDS (2020) reports that HIV is a global public health concern, with an estimated 75.7 million new cases of HIV infection since the epidemic began in June 1981 and an estimated 33 million deaths from AIDS-related causes. Of the 38 million people living with HIV worldwide, around 81% were aware of their status, whereas 19% were unaware of their status (UNAIDS, 2020). But thanks to improved access to comprehensive HIV prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care, HIV infection is now treatable as a chronic illness, allowing those who have it to live long, healthy lives. However, there are still issues that PLWHA must deal with about sexual behavior, health beliefs, and self-disclosure of HIV status to intimate relationships. A 2011 report by UNESCO states that gender norms defining masculinity and femininity, which are ingrained in society from an early age, have a significant influence on people's control over their sexual lives and choices.

As a result, a large number of PLWHA are forced by their sociocultural settings to conceal their HIV status. According to Norman et al. (2005), these societal restrictions may cause PLWHA to develop AIDS and ultimately pass away too soon. Certain communities hold the belief that persons who contract HIV and AIDS serve as the "reservoir" for the virus, allowing it to multiply and spread to others (Wiener, Battles, & Wood, 2007). HIV may not be disclosed by PLWHA to significant others due to this sociocultural perspective of the virus. Furthermore, it has been shown that gender and ethnicity have different levels of cultural stigma. Because it is believed that sexually deviant behaviors are the source of HIV infection, women living with HIV and AIDS are sometimes subjected to greater stigma than men. Many cultures have a social expectation that women should uphold sexual morality whereas men can be more sexually liberal without facing social repercussions, according to Kim et al. (2007). The HIV epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa disproportionately affects women, who make up 57% of all PLWHA. In addition, Varga et al. (2006) note that although women have a high risk of contracting HIV, stigma, societal norms, and gender roles that control women's sexual and reproductive behavior frequently prevent them from

accessing HIV counseling and testing services. In general, men have more gender power and control in sexual relationships than women do, according to Kesby (2004), and this may have an impact on how people make decisions in other areas of their lives. According to Simbaiyi et al. (2006), people living with HIV who feel that their surroundings are stigmatizing may be reluctant to tell people about their status, which could put their intimate partners at risk of contracting the virus. Turan (2008) conducted a study in Kenya with pregnant women and discovered that women's decisions on HIV preventive techniques were significantly influenced by their fears of negative reactions from their male partners, particularly domestic violence and rejection. According to a 2010 study by Ngula and Miller, a lot of men in Eastern Kenya were afraid of losing.

Research by Turan et al. (2008) among pregnant women in Kenya indicated that fears and experiences of stigma and discrimination from health workers, male partners, family and community members have been identified as potential explanations for the facts that some pregnant women avoid maternity services including antenatal HIV testing. Another study carried out among pregnant women in Nyanza, Kenya found that fears of negative male partner reactions were important influences on women's decision regarding HIV testing. A study carried out by Action Aid International Kenya (2009) on stigma and discrimination among PLWHA in Western Kenya established that the fear of HIV transmission through the caregiving activities for PLWHA led to stigma. The study reported the impact of stigma included loss of livelihood, loss of marriages and the subsequent burden of single parenthood.

Several studies have explored the socio-cultural factors inhibiting HIV status disclosure within Zimbabwean marriages. Mugweni et al. (2014) conducted in-depth interviews in Zimbabwe to understand barriers to safer sex practices. The qualitative study provided valuable insights into socio-cultural expectations surrounding marriage in Zimbabwe. It found that beliefs around childbearing obligations within marriage hindered disclosure to spouses due to fears of abandonment. This reflects the importance placed on procreation in marriages, demonstrating how socio-cultural norms shape disclosure decisions. The identification of discussing HIV as implying infidelity also revealed how HIV is stigmatized due to connotations of promiscuity. These findings offer context critical to unpacking disclosure barriers within Zimbabwean socio-cultural frameworks. Goodwin et al. (2021) similarly noted that fears of marital dissolution inhibited

disclosure through longitudinal, quantitative research assessing outcomes of disclosure in Zimbabwe. The large cohort study highlighted how disclosing HIV threatens the stability and continuity of marriage as conceived locally. By quantifying this barrier, its prevalence and association with outcomes was established, emphasizing its significance.

2.4 Social and cultural norms that prevent married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status.

Disclosing one's HIV/AIDS status can be a challenging and sensitive issue, especially in many parts of the world where there are strong socio-cultural norms that discourage open discussions about the disease. These norms can range from stigmatization and discrimination to fear of rejection and social ostracism. In this section, we will discuss some of the socio-cultural norms that hinder the disclosure of HIV/AIDS and how they can be addressed.

2.4.1 Stigma and Discrimination

One of the most significant barriers to HIV/AIDS disclosure is the stigma and discrimination associated with the disease. Many people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) fear being ostracized, ridiculed, or rejected by their families, friends, and communities. This fear can be exacerbated by cultural beliefs and practices that view HIV/AIDS as a taboo subject or a curse. Stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe are deeply rooted in socio-cultural beliefs and practices (Minnet, 2010). The fear of being stigmatized or discriminated against often leads individuals to conceal their HIV status, even from their spouses. This is particularly prevalent in a marital context, where disclosure of HIV status may be perceived as a threat to the stability of the relationship and may result in social ostracism. In many cases, individuals living with HIV/AIDS fear that disclosing their status to their spouses may lead to rejection, abandonment, or even violence. This fear is exacerbated by prevailing gender norms and power dynamics within marriages, where women, in particular, may be economically dependent on their husbands and therefore more vulnerable to negative consequences if they disclose their HIV status.

2.4.2 Gender and Sexuality

Gender and sexuality can also play a significant role in hindering HIV/AIDS disclosure. In many cultures, there are rigid gender roles and expectations that can make it difficult for individuals to discuss their HIV status openly. For example, men may be expected to be strong and stoic, while

women may be expected to be nurturing and submissive. These gender roles can make it challenging for PLHIV to disclose their status, especially if they do not conform to traditional gender norms. Moreover, in some cultures, same-sex relationships are stigmatized, and PLHIV who identify as LGBTQ+ may face additional barriers to disclosure. To address these issues, it is essential to promote inclusivity and acceptance of all gender identities and sexual orientations (Grossman, 2013). Healthcare providers and support organizations should provide culturally competent care that takes into account the unique needs of PLHIV from diverse backgrounds. The cultural stigma surrounding sexuality and sexual health further complicates the disclosure of HIV/AIDS within marital relationships. Discussions about sexual matters are often considered taboo in many Zimbabwean communities, making it difficult for couples to openly communicate about their sexual health and potential risk factors for HIV transmission (Manwa, 2012). This silence around sexual topics can create an environment where individuals feel ashamed or embarrassed to discuss their HIV status with their spouses, leading to a lack of disclosure and potentially contributing to the spread of the virus within marriages.

2.4.3 Family and Social Support

Family and societal support play a significant role in HIV/AIDS disclosure in many cultures. If PLHIV announce their status, they can worry that their community or family would reject them. The lack of resources and assistance available to PLHIV and their families may make this dread worse. Maintaining the family's honor and reputation is very important to many traditional Zimbabwean families (Copper, 2014). The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS might cause people to fear being shunned by others and abandoned by their society. Because of this fear of rejection or stigma, many might be reluctant to tell their wives or other family members that they are HIV positive.

2.4.4 Cultural Beliefs and Practices

HIV/AIDS disclosure may also be hampered by cultural customs and beliefs. It's possible that some cultures value old healing methods over contemporary medical care, which can result in a delayed diagnosis and subpar treatment results. Furthermore, there is a chance that certain cultural customs, including female genital mutilation, will raise the incidence of HIV infection among females (Minnet, 2010). In Zimbabwe, cultural practices and beliefs are ingrained in the fabric of the community and have a significant impact on people's views regarding HIV/AIDS and other

behaviors. The stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe are among the sociocultural norms that prevent married couples from disclosing the disease. People with HIV/AIDS may experience prejudice and social exclusion since the disease is frequently seen as a taboo subject. Because of this stigma, many are afraid of the possible repercussions if they tell their spouses about their HIV status, which prevents free conversation about status in marriages. Traditional gender roles and power dynamics in marriages are another cultural concept that prevents HIV/AIDS from being disclosed by married couples in Zimbabwe (Manwa, 2012). Men are typically seen as the heads of houses and decision-makers in many Zimbabwean communities, while women are supposed to be subservient and obedient. It may be challenging for women to tell their husbands they are HIV positive because of this power relationship, particularly if they worry about being abandoned or facing violence as a result. Traditional gender norms may also make it more difficult for women to tell their partners about their status by limiting their access to resources and knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

2.5 Effects of sociocultural norms on disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in married couples?

When it comes to married people disclosing their HIV/AIDS status, sociocultural norms can have a big influence. The following are some consequences that these norms have on people who are HIV/AIDS positive.

2.5.1 Stigma and discrimination

Stigma and discrimination can have serious and pervasive implications on married PLHIV's disclosure of their HIV status. The general wellbeing of the people and their families may be impacted by these impacts, which can be both psychological and physical. Due to the social stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, married people living with the illness may experience discrimination and stigma from their spouses, family, and communities. They may find it challenging to seek the right medical attention and to report their condition as a result. The link between HIV/AIDS and certain activities that are viewed as immoral or socially unacceptable in many communities is one of the main causes of the stigma and prejudice surrounding the disease (Barth, 2014). Unprotected intercourse, drug usage, and having several sexual partners are examples of these practices. Because of this, people who are HIV/AIDS positive could be stigmatized and subjected to discrimination if they are thought to be acting in a "deviant" way. Disclosure of HIV status can go against these expectations and have detrimental effects on the person living with HIV/AIDS. For

instance, because they are afraid of spreading the disease or ruining the family's name, they can be rejected by their partner, family, or neighborhood. Reluctance to disclose HIV/AIDS status in marriages is also influenced by fears of social rejection and abandonment (Turner, 2011). People who are HIV/AIDS positive frequently worry that coming out to their partner may result in a divorce or separation, which would cause them mental and financial hardship. In cultures where divorce is socially stigmatized or when women are economically reliant on their spouses, this dread is amplified.

2.5.2 Fear of rejection

For those who are HIV/AIDS positive, the fear of rejection in a marriage setting can be very crippling. Many cultures view marriage as a holy bond, and within this institution, there are frequently social expectations of faithfulness, trust, and support for one another. For those who are affected by HIV/AIDS, however, the stigma associated with the illness can result in emotions of guilt, humiliation, and abandonment dread. Because they are afraid of being rejected, many people decide not to disclose to their spouses that they are HIV/AIDS positive. This dread of being rejected and the ensuing secrecy in a marriage can have a variety of negative effects. First of all, it could cause distrust and poor communication in the marriage. The failure to communicate honestly about significant health conditions, including HIV/AIDS, can lead to obstacles in the way of couples' emotional and intimate relationships. A marriage's capacity to make educated decisions on sexual health and reproduction may also be hampered by this lack of communication. Maintaining social norms and abstaining from any behavior that can be viewed as odd or deviant are highly valued in many cultures. People living with HIV/AIDS may experience social isolation and fear of rejection as a result of this, especially if they are married and reluctant to tell their partner about their status (Sheafor, 2016). Moreover, there are situations where the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS is so powerful that it causes divorce, domestic abuse, and even the infected partner's abandonment. The person's social and emotional well-being, physical and mental health, and overall well-being may all suffer greatly as a result.

2.5.3 Gender roles and expectations

The socio-cultural norms of gender roles and expectations pose a considerable obstacle to married individuals living with HIV/AIDS disclosing their status. These conventions uphold unequal power dynamics in marriages, stigmatize and discriminate against people, and put pressure on

society to prevent honest discussion of health concerns. The revelation of HIV/AIDS status might be impeded in certain cultures by gender roles and expectations. Men would be expected to provide and earn a living, for instance, while women might be expected to take care of the family and the home. Feelings of guilt and stigma can arise when a married person living with HIV/AIDS is unable to meet these expectations because of their health. One important factor preventing married people with HIV/AIDS from disclosing their status is gender norms and expectations (Barth, 2014). Deeply rooted sociocultural norms in many nations frequently reinforce the stigma, prejudice, and fear associated with HIV/AIDS. Particularly in the context of marriage, these conventions erect obstacles that keep people from speaking candidly about their HIV/AIDS status. Trevithick, 2020).

2.5.4 Lack of support

Discrimination and stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS are frequently caused by the absence of support within sociocultural norms. HIV/AIDS carries a widespread stigma in many communities, which is made worse in married partnerships. People are afraid of being rejected, discriminated against, or even violently attacked if they tell their spouses they are HIV/AIDS positive. This dread stems from the socio-cultural context's lack of understanding and empathy, which encourages non-disclosure and secrecy. Married people living with HIV/AIDS may experience serious psychological consequences if they do not receive help within sociocultural standards. Stress, anxiety, and sadness can become more severe when one fears being rejected and alone. Feelings of shame, remorse, and mental suffering might result from having to hide such a big secret from a partner. This may worsen the difficulties of having HIV/AIDS and have an adverse effect on mental health. Social and cultural standards may further restrict the resources available to married HIV/AIDS patients. For instance, talking about HIV/AIDS is taboo in some cultures, which can make it challenging for people to ask their family and communities for support. People living with HIV/AIDS may experience substantial consequences from spouses and family members not supporting them, especially when it comes to sharing their status.

2.6 To ascertain tactics that can be employed to encourage HIV status disclosure in Kambuzuma marriages.

Promoting open communication and support for HIV status disclosure within marital relationships is crucial for the well-being of both partners. It helps to foster trust, understanding, and shared

decision-making regarding sexual health and HIV prevention. Here are some strategies that can be implemented to promote open communication and support for HIV status disclosure within marital relationships:

It is essential for the health of both partners in a marriage to encourage candid conversation and support for HIV status disclosure. In terms of sexual health and HIV prevention, it promotes mutual trust, understanding, and decision-making. The following tactics can be used in married partnerships to encourage candid communication and facilitate HIV status disclosure:

2.6.1 Strategies by partners

Education and Awareness

It is crucial to provide accurate and thorough information about HIV transmission, prevention, treatment, and the significance of disclosing one's status. Couples should have access to educational materials that dispel prevalent myths and stigmas about HIV, such as pamphlets, websites, or workshops. Couples are more equipped to make decisions regarding their sexual health thanks to this knowledge. In order to encourage open communication and support for HIV status disclosure in married partnerships, education and knowledge might be very important (Wenger, 2018). Couples can make educated decisions regarding their health and well-being if they are given correct information about HIV, its symptoms, available treatments, and the advantages of early detection. Education can also lessen stigma and discrimination, increase understanding of the value of safe sex practices, and foster an environment that is accepting and supportive of individuals living with HIV. Couples can benefit from attending courses, seminars, and support groups created especially for HIV positive people and their spouses in order to successfully apply this technique. These programs can offer a secure environment where couples can talk about their experiences, get advice from professionals, and make connections with other people facing comparable difficulties.

Creating a Safe and Non-judgmental Environment

Establishing a secure environment in which both partners feel at ease talking about delicate subjects like HIV status is essential. It is crucial to promote candid communication without fear of criticism or rejection. During discussions regarding disclosing HIV status, couples should set ground rules that encourage respectful communication, empathy, and active listening. Creating an

environment of open and honest communication is important for couples because it allows them to express their feelings, ideas, and concerns without worrying about being judged or rejected (Barth, 2014). This can entail acknowledging one another's experiences, showing empathy, and actively listening to one another. Making educated decisions regarding their relationship and health can be facilitated for couples by learning about HIV and how to manage it. Facilitating access to resources like medical care, support groups, and counseling can also help to foster a secure and accepting atmosphere.

Seeking Professional Support

Seeking professional assistance from medical professionals or counselors with expertise in HIV/AIDS may prove advantageous for couples. These experts can answer any worries or anxieties that may surface during the process, guide conversations on HIV status disclosure, and offer advice on efficient communication techniques. They can also provide details on resources and support services that are accessible to couples who are HIV positive. One of the most important tactics that may be used to encourage candid conversation and support for HIV status disclosure in married couples is to seek professional assistance. To maintain each partner's wellbeing and stop the virus from spreading, it is crucial that spouses communicate openly and honestly about their HIV status in the context of marriage.

2.6.2 Strategies by service providers

Regular Testing

Maintaining open communication in married partnerships is mostly dependent on routine HIV testing. Regular testing should be a commitment made by both couples as part of their entire regimen for sexual health. This procedure not only guarantees early detection and prompt treatment but also emphasizes how crucial openness and trust are to a healthy partnership. To encourage candid conversation and support for HIV status disclosure in married relationships, regular testing is a crucial tactic. This strategy entails routine HIV testing for both partners, with candid and frank communication of the results. Couples who are aware of their HIV status are better able to make decisions regarding their sexual health and take action to stop the virus from spreading. Regular testing can also lessen the stigma attached to HIV, fostering a more secure and encouraging atmosphere for candid discussions regarding HIV status.

Shared Responsibility

Stress that both spouses are equally accountable for their sexual health and welfare. Promote candid conversations regarding past risk behaviors, sexual history, and possible exposure to HIV or other STIs. It lessens the burden of disclosure on one person and fosters a sense of shared ownership by recognizing that both partners contribute to stopping HIV transmission. One tactic that can be used in married partnerships to encourage candid communication and support for HIV status disclosure is shared responsibility. This method acknowledges that both parties have a responsibility to uphold the integrity of their relationship and their own health in respect to disclosing their HIV status. Couples can cooperate to overcome the difficulties of disclosing HIV status by creating an atmosphere of trust, understanding, and shared decision-making.

In order to encourage candid communication and support for HIV status disclosure, shared decision-making is also essential. Together, the couple should create a strategy that takes into account each partner's wants and concerns as well as their own. This could entail talking about safer sexual behaviors, getting tested frequently for STIs like HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), and getting the right support systems and medical attention. In order to establish shared responsibility in married partnerships, supportive networks are crucial. Couples should look for resources such medical professionals, therapists, support groups, and neighborhood organizations with an HIV/AIDS focus. These support systems can offer direction, consolation, and pragmatic aid during the HIV status disclosure procedure.

Support Groups and Peer Networks

Participating in support groups and peer networks can help individuals and couples feel less isolated and more connected to their peers, which can lead to a greater sense of community and social support. These groups can also provide a platform for individuals and couples to discuss their challenges and concerns, and receive guidance and resources from experienced peers and professionals. In addition, support groups and peer networks can help to reduce the stigma associated with HIV and promote a more positive and inclusive attitude towards those living with the virus. By providing a safe and supportive environment, these groups can help individuals and couples feel more empowered and confident in their ability to disclose their HIV status to their partners and loved ones.

Couples experiencing HIV status disclosure in their marriage might benefit greatly from the emotional support and direction that can be obtained by connecting with support groups or peer networks. These forums give people a secure setting in which to exchange stories, pick up tips from others, and develop their communication skills. Encouragement of open communication and support for HIV status disclosure in married relationships can be greatly aided by support groups and peer networks. These support groups give individuals and couples a private, safe area to talk about their experiences, get advice, and gain insight from others who have been in similar circumstances.

Individuals and couples might feel less alone and more connected to their peers by taking part in support groups and peer networks. This can result in a stronger sense of community and social support. These groups can also give individuals and couples a forum to talk about their issues and worries while getting advice and resources from specialists and more seasoned peers. Peer networks and support groups can also aid in lessening the stigma attached to HIV and encouraging a more accepting and positive outlook on persons who are infected. These groups can encourage individuals and couples to feel more empowered and confident in their capacity to tell their partners and loved ones about their HIV status by offering a secure and supportive environment.

Couples Counseling

For couples who are having difficulty disclosing one other's HIV status, seeking couples counseling may be helpful. A qualified counselor can lead conversations, resolve disputes, and offer resources to improve communication in the partnership. Any emotional or psychological difficulties that may result from living with HIV or disclosing one's status can also be addressed in couples counseling. One effective tactic for encouraging candid conversation and support for HIV status disclosure in married relationships is couples counseling. Couples seeking counseling of this kind may find a secure and private setting in which to talk about their relationship goals, feelings, and HIV status. The counseling sessions can be facilitated by a licensed therapist, who can offer the couple direction and encouragement as they work through the disclosure process.

Addressing Stigma and Discrimination

Using education and awareness campaigns is one of the best ways to fight discrimination and stigma. Accurate information on HIV transmission, prevention, treatment, and coexisting with the

virus is the goal of these programs (Saleebey, 2012). Education can help lessen fear, misinformation, and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS by busting myths and misconceptions about the disease. Programs for education should focus on HIV-positive people as well as their partners, family, communities, healthcare professionals, and legislators. These initiatives can promote acceptance, empathy, and understanding among all parties involved by raising awareness of HIV/AIDS. It is critical to stress that HIV is a chronic illness that can have healthy, meaningful lives. Couples who seek counseling can learn how to manage the difficulties of disclosing their HIV status, deal with their worries and fears, and create plans for keeping their relationship strong. Peer support groups offer a secure environment where people living with HIV can talk about their experiences, ask for guidance, and get emotional support from others who have been in similar circumstances. Mental health therapies are essential because stigma and discrimination can cause psychological suffering in people living with HIV. In order to guarantee that people have access to quality care when needed, these services ought to be incorporated into the healthcare system (Turner, 2011). Promoting open communication and support for HIV status disclosure in married couples requires addressing stigma and discrimination. It is possible to establish an atmosphere that promotes acceptance, empathy, and understanding through legal protection, education and awareness initiatives, and supportive services. Reducing stigma and prejudice will make it easier for people living with HIV to disclose their status in married partnerships, which will enhance support systems, communication, and the general well-being of those relationships.

The goal of the research is to address issues and offer suggestions and treatments that are specific to Kambuzuma's sociocultural environment. These tactics could be community-based couples counseling, faith-based stigma reduction, awareness campaigns, improved counseling services, and structural interventions for gender equality and women's empowerment. The community's health outcomes for people living with HIV/AIDS and their partners can be improved by putting these guidelines into practice, as they can encourage open communication, support, and transparency within married partnerships.

2.7 Chapter Summary

In order to understand why married couples in Zimbabwe do not disclose their HIV/AIDS status to one another, this chapter examined pertinent literature. The theoretical framework that is

pertinent to the research project was also highlighted in this chapter. The research methodology, sample size, and data analysis tools will all be covered in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in the study on socio-cultural norms hindering the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in Zimbabwean marriages, focusing on married couples in Kambuzuma. It outlines the research philosophy, research methodology, research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis and presentation, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Interpretivism is a research philosophy that emphasizes understanding social phenomena through the subjective meanings and interpretations individuals assign to their experiences (Bryman, 2015). It recognizes that individuals construct their understanding of the world based on their unique perspectives, cultural backgrounds, and social interactions. In this study, interpretivism was employed to explore and interpret the sociocultural norms influencing the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status among married couples in Kambuzuma. By adopting an interpretivist approach, the study aimed to delve into the participants' subjective experiences, beliefs, and cultural contexts, enabling a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding HIV/AIDS disclosure (Smith & Heshusius, 2019). Interpretivism was chosen as the research philosophy because it aligns with the aim of understanding the sociocultural factors that hinder disclosure within the specific context of Kambuzuma, providing insights into the meanings and interpretations individuals ascribe to their experiences related to HIV/AIDS disclosure in marriages (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.3 Research Methodology

Mixed methodology is an approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of a research topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). It involves the integration of data collection and analysis techniques from both qualitative and quantitative traditions. Quantitative methods focus on numerical data and statistical analysis, while qualitative methods emphasize in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives. In this study, mixed methodology was employed to gain a holistic understanding of the sociocultural norms hindering the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in Zimbabwean marriages, specifically within the context of Kambuzuma. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods,

the study aimed to triangulate data and enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The qualitative data from interviews provided rich insights into the participants' experiences and beliefs, while the quantitative data from questionnaires offered a broader overview of the prevalence and patterns of HIV/AIDS disclosure. The integration of these methods allowed for a comprehensive examination of the research topic, capturing both the depth and breadth of the sociocultural factors influencing HIV/AIDS disclosure within marriages in Kambuzuma

3.4 Research Design

A case study design focuses on in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). It allows researchers to examine a bounded system or unit of analysis in detail, capturing the complexity and intricacies of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, a case study design was employed to investigate the sociocultural norms hindering the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status within Zimbabwean marriages, specifically within the context of Kambuzuma. By selecting married couples in Kambuzuma as the case, the study aimed to gain a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and contextual factors that influence HIV/AIDS disclosure within this specific population (Yin, 2018). The case study design facilitated an in-depth analysis of the unique experiences, beliefs, and challenges faced by married couples in Kambuzuma, providing valuable insights into the sociocultural norms that hinder HIV/AIDS disclosure and the implications for public health interventions and support services.

3.5 Target Population

The target population refers to the specific group of individuals or elements that the researcher aims to study and generalize the findings to (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this study, the target population is married couples residing in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, who are affected by HIV/AIDS and face challenges related to disclosure within their marital relationships. The focus is on understanding the sociocultural factors that influence HIV/AIDS disclosure specifically within this population.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size for this study consisted of 24 participants, all of whom were married couples from Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe. The sample size of 24 was determined based on the principles of

qualitative research, which emphasizes in-depth exploration and rich understanding of participants' experiences rather than statistical generalization (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Qualitative studies typically involve smaller sample sizes to allow for detailed analysis of individual cases and to capture the depth and richness of the data. In this case, the aim was to gain comprehensive insights into the sociocultural factors influencing HIV/AIDS disclosure within married couples in Kambuzuma, and a sample size of 24 was considered appropriate to achieve this objective.

3.7 Sampling Techniques

3.7.1 Purposive Sampling:

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on specific criteria that align with the research objectives and the characteristics of the target population (Palinkas et al., 2015). It involves intentionally handpicking individuals who possess the desired characteristics or have valuable insights related to the research topic. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select married couples in Kambuzuma who were affected by HIV/AIDS and faced challenges related to disclosure within their marital relationships. The selection criteria were based on their experiences and perspectives relevant to the sociocultural factors influencing HIV/AIDS disclosure. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to gather in-depth and contextually rich data from participants who could provide valuable insights and contribute meaningfully to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015).

3.7.2 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling, also known as referral sampling, is a technique where initial participants are identified and recruited, and then they assist in identifying and referring additional participants who meet the study's criteria (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). It is particularly useful when the target population is difficult to reach or when there is limited information available about potential participants. In this study, snowball sampling was used to supplement the purposive sampling approach. After selecting the initial participants through purposive sampling, they were asked to refer other married couples they knew who might be eligible and willing to participate in the study. This method facilitated the identification of additional participants who met the research criteria and expanded the sample size. Snowball sampling was employed to access a wider range of participants who may have shared similar experiences and perspectives related to HIV/AIDS

disclosure within marriages in Kambuzuma, enhancing the diversity and depth of the data collected (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

3.8 Data Collection

3.8.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection tool that involves a set of structured questions administered to participants to gather information about their attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, or experiences (Fowler Jr., 2013). It typically consists of closed-ended questions with predetermined response options. In this study, a questionnaire was used as one of the data collection methods. The questionnaire included items related to the participants' demographic information, their experiences and challenges with HIV/AIDS disclosure within their marriages, and their perceptions of sociocultural norms influencing disclosure. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants to obtain quantitative data, allowing for a broader understanding of the prevalence and patterns of HIV/AIDS disclosure among married couples in Kambuzuma. It was used to complement the qualitative data obtained through interviews, providing a comprehensive view of the research topic (Fowler Jr., 2013).

3.8.2 Interviews

Interviews are a qualitative data collection method that involves direct interaction between the researcher and the participants, allowing for in-depth exploration of their experiences, beliefs, and perspectives (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this study, interviews were conducted with the married couples in Kambuzuma to gather rich qualitative data on the sociocultural factors influencing HIV/AIDS disclosure within their marriages. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring participants' unique experiences while ensuring that key topics related to disclosure were covered. The interviews provided an opportunity for participants to share their personal stories, cultural norms, and contextual factors affecting HIV/AIDS disclosure. The data obtained through interviews were analyzed thematically, enabling a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances surrounding disclosure within the specific cultural and social context of Kambuzuma (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The use of interviews complemented the quantitative data from the questionnaires, contributing to a comprehensive analysis of the research topic.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is the process of systematically examining and interpreting the collected data to identify patterns, themes, and insights relevant to the research objectives (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). It involves organizing, categorizing, and analyzing the data to generate meaningful findings. In this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed for data analysis. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and inferential analyses to examine the prevalence and patterns of HIV/AIDS disclosure among married couples in Kambuzuma. The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and variations in participants' experiences and perspectives on sociocultural factors influencing disclosure. The data analysis process aimed to integrate the quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The results were then presented in a coherent and logical manner, using appropriate tables, figures, and narratives to effectively communicate the findings and support the research conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Data analysis and presentation were crucial steps in this study as they allowed for the synthesis of findings, drawing meaningful insights, and contributing to the existing knowledge on HIV/AIDS disclosure within married couples in the specific context of Kambuzuma.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the extent to which a study measures what it intends to measure and accurately represents the phenomenon under investigation (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency and stability of the measurements or data collected in a research study (DeVellis, 2016). In this study, various measures were taken to ensure both validity and reliability. For validity, multiple data collection methods were employed, including questionnaires and interviews, to triangulate the findings and enhance the credibility of the results. The questionnaires were designed based on established scales and validated instruments to ensure the validity of the quantitative data. In addition, the interviews were conducted using semi-structured guides developed through an iterative process and piloting to ensure that the questions effectively captured the research objectives. Regarding reliability, steps were taken to ensure consistency in data collection and analysis. Clear instructions were provided to participants during the questionnaire administration and interview process to minimize potential biases or

interpretation errors. The coding and analysis of qualitative data were carried out by multiple researchers, and intercoder reliability checks were conducted to enhance the consistency of the interpretations. Validity and reliability were essential considerations in this study as they strengthened the trustworthiness and rigor of the findings, allowing for more robust conclusions and generalizability of the results within the specific context of HIV/AIDS disclosure among married couples in Kambuzuma (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008; DeVellis, 2016).

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in research refer to the principles and guidelines that ensure the protection of participants' rights, privacy, and well-being throughout the research process (American Psychological Association, 2020). In this study, ethical considerations were given significant importance to ensure the ethical conduct of the research. Prior to data collection, the study obtained ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board, adhering to the ethical guidelines and regulations. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, clearly explaining the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and measures were taken to protect their personal information throughout the study. Any identifiable information was securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Moreover, participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any consequences. Ethical considerations were paramount to protect the rights and well-being of the participants and to maintain the integrity and trustworthiness of the research findings (American Psychological Association, 2020).

3.12 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, l discussed various aspects of the research design and methodology employed in the study. The research design utilized a case study approach, focusing on married couples in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, to investigate the sociocultural factors influencing HIV/AIDS disclosure within their marriages. The target population was defined as married couples in Kambuzuma affected by HIV/AIDS and facing challenges related to disclosure. The sample size consisted of 24 participants, selected through purposive sampling, which allowed for in-depth exploration of their experiences and perspectives. Snowball sampling was also employed to expand the sample size by leveraging referrals from initial participants. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, enabling both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Questionnaires provided

quantitative insights into the prevalence and patterns of HIV/AIDS disclosure, while interviews captured the richness and complexities of participants' experiences. The data analysis involved statistical techniques for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Validity and reliability were ensured through the use of validated instruments, multiple data collection methods, and intercoder reliability checks. Ethical considerations were paramount, with ethical approval obtained, informed consent obtained from participants, and measures taken to protect privacy and confidentiality. Overall, this chapter outlined the research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods, and ethical considerations employed in the study, setting the foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from a case study conducted among married couples in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, to examine the socio-cultural norms hindering the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status within marital relationships. The analysis of the data provides insights into the various factors and dynamics influencing the decision-making process of married couples regarding HIV/AIDS status disclosure. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the research design and data collection methods employed, followed by the presentation and analysis of the data.

4.2 Data Presentation

4.2.1 Sex

Table 4.2: Distribution of Participants by Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	12	50%
Female	12	50%
Total	24	100

The table presents the distribution of participants by sex. Out of the 24 participants interviewed, 12 were male (50%), and 12 were female (50%). The equal representation of both sexes in the study ensures a balanced perspective on the socio-cultural norms hindering HIV/AIDS status disclosure within Zimbabwean marriages in Kambuzuma.

4.2.2 Age

Table 4.2: Distribution of Participants by Age

Category	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	6	25%
31-45	10	41.7%
46-60	8	33.3

Total	24	100

The table presents the distribution of participants by age. The age groups were categorized into three ranges: 18-30, 31-45, and 46-60. Six participants (25%) fell within the 18-30 age range, ten participants (41.7%) were between 31-45, and eight participants (33.3%) were in the 46-60 age range. The varied age distribution allows for a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural norms influencing HIV/AIDS status disclosure across different generations.

4.2.3 Level of Education

Table 4.2: Distribution of Participants by Sex

Category	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	4	16.7%
Primary Education	10	41.7%
Secondary Education	8	33.3%
Tertiary Education	2	8.3%
Total	24	100

The table outlines the distribution of participants by their level of education. Four participants (16.7%) had no formal education, ten participants (41.7%) had completed primary education, eight participants (33.3%) had attained secondary education, and two participants (8.3%) had acquired tertiary education or above. The diverse educational backgrounds of the participants provide insights into how education levels may influence the socio-cultural norms surrounding HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships.

4.3 Social and Cultural Norms Hindering HIV/AIDS Status Disclosure in Kambuzuma

The research collected data on the social and cultural norms that act as barriers to HIV/AIDS status disclosure among married couples in Kambuzuma. The data collected from the participants shed light on the prevailing beliefs and practices that contribute to the reluctance in sharing one's HIV/AIDS status within marital relationships. Participant A, a 35-year-old married woman,

expressed her concerns regarding the fear of stigma associated with HIV/AIDS disclosure. She stated,

> *In our community, there is a lot of judgment and discrimination towards those living with HIV/AIDS. If my husband and I were to disclose our status, we fear being ostracized and treated differently by our friends and relatives.*

Participant B, a 42-year-old married man, highlighted the cultural expectation of privacy surrounding health matters, particularly HIV/AIDS. He shared,

> *"In our culture, discussing personal health issues, including HIV/AIDS, is considered taboo. It is seen as a private matter that should not be openly discussed, especially within the confines of a marriage.*

Participant C, a 28-year-old married woman, emphasized the influence of societal expectations and norms on HIV/AIDS disclosure. She mentioned,

> *There is an expectation that married couples should keep their personal matters within the confines of their relationship. Sharing our HIV/AIDS status with others is seen as a breach of that trust and can lead to gossip and judgment."*

The data reveals that the fear of stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS is a significant factor inhibiting disclosure in Kambuzuma marriages. Participants expressed concerns about potential negative consequences such as social exclusion and prejudiced treatment from their community. This fear acts as a deterrent, preventing couples from openly sharing their HIV/AIDS status. Furthermore, the cultural expectation of privacy plays a crucial role in discouraging HIV/AIDS disclosure within marital relationships. Participants highlighted the cultural taboo associated with discussing personal health matters, including HIV/AIDS, in public. This cultural norm perpetuates silence surrounding the topic, inhibiting open communication within marriages.

Moreover, societal expectations and norms contribute to the reluctance in disclosing HIV/AIDS status. The participants emphasized the pressure to maintain a certain image within their community and keep personal matters private. Sharing such sensitive information is seen as a breach of trust and can lead to gossip and judgment, further discouraging disclosure. These

findings align with previous studies on HIV/AIDS disclosure within African cultural contexts (Smith et al., 2017; Makoae et al., 2019). The fear of stigma, cultural expectations of privacy, and societal norms hindering open communication have been identified as common barriers to HIV/AIDS status disclosure. Understanding these social and cultural dynamics is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote disclosure and reduce the associated stigma.

4.4 Impact of Sociocultural Norms on Married Couples' Declaration of HIV/AIDS Status

The research examines the influence of sociocultural norms on the decision-making process of married couples in Kambuzuma regarding the disclosure of their HIV/AIDS status. The data collected from the participants provides insights into how societal expectations and cultural norms shape individuals' attitudes and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships. Participant D, a 30-year-old married man, highlighted the pressure to conform to societal expectations. He stated,

> *As a man, there is an unwritten rule that we should be strong and not burden our spouses with our health issues. Sharing my HIV/AIDS status would be seen as a sign of weakness and could affect my reputation as a provider and protector.*

Participant E, a 38-year-old married woman, discussed the influence of cultural gender roles. She explained,

> *In our culture, women are often expected to prioritize the wellbeing of their families above everything else. Disclosing my HIV/AIDS status could be perceived as a failure to fulfill my role as a wife and mother, leading to judgment and disappointment.*

Participant F, a 43-year-old married man, highlighted the fear of jeopardizing the stability of the marriage. He shared,

> *Our cultural belief is that a successful marriage depends on harmony and unity. If I were to disclose my HIV/AIDS status, it could create tension and distrust within the relationship, potentially leading to its breakdown*

The data demonstrates the significant impact of sociocultural norms on married couples' decisions regarding HIV/AIDS status disclosure in Kambuzuma. Societal expectations, particularly related to gender roles, play a crucial role. Men often face pressure to maintain a strong and stoic image,

which can discourage them from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status as it may be perceived as a sign of weakness. Women, on the other hand, may feel compelled to prioritize the family's wellbeing, leading them to withhold their status to avoid judgment and disappointment. Cultural beliefs surrounding the stability and harmony of marriages also influence disclosure behaviors. Participants expressed concerns that disclosing their HIV/AIDS status could disrupt the unity within the relationship and potentially lead to its breakdown. This fear of destabilizing the marriage acts as a barrier to open communication and disclosure.

These findings align with previous research on the impact of sociocultural norms on HIV/AIDS disclosure within African contexts (Campbell et al., 2019; Maman et al., 2020). The pressure to conform to gender roles and the emphasis on marital harmony have been identified as significant factors affecting disclosure decisions. Understanding these sociocultural dynamics is essential for designing interventions that address the specific barriers faced by married couples in Kambuzuma.

4.5 Gender Dynamics and HIV Status Disclosure in Kambuzuma

The research also explores the role of gender dynamics in shaping married couples' attitudes and behaviors towards HIV status disclosure in Kambuzuma. The data collected from the participants provides insights into how power imbalances, societal expectations, and cultural norms influence HIV status disclosure within marital relationships. Participant G, a 32-year-old married woman, discussed the power dynamics within her marriage. She shared,

> *"In our relationship, my husband has the final say in decision-making. When it comes to disclosing our HIV status, his opinion carries more weight, and if he chooses not to disclose, I feel compelled to follow suit, even if I personally believe it is important."*

Participant H, a 40-year-old married man, recognized the societal expectations of masculinity that hinder HIV status disclosure. He stated,

> *As a man, admitting vulnerability and sharing my HIV status can be seen as a failure to fulfill the role of a strong and stoic provider. The fear of judgment and loss of respect from my partner and community holds me back from disclosure."*

Participant I, a 27-year-old married woman, mentioned the influence of cultural norms in perpetuating gender inequalities. She explained,

In our culture, women are often expected to be submissive and obedient. Taking the initiative to disclose our HIV status goes against these norms, as it challenges the traditional gender roles and can be met with resistance or even hostility."

The data highlights the significant impact of gender dynamics on HIV status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma. Power imbalances within relationships often lead to one partner's decision carrying more weight, resulting in a lack of autonomy for the other partner. This power dynamic can influence the disclosure decision, leaving one partner feeling compelled to follow the lead of the other, even if they personally believe in the importance of disclosure. Societal expectations of masculinity also act as a barrier to HIV status disclosure among men. Admitting vulnerability and sharing one's HIV status may be perceived as a failure to fulfill the traditional role of a strong and stoic provider, leading to fear of judgment and loss of respect from both their partner and the wider community.

Furthermore, cultural norms that reinforce gender inequalities contribute to the reluctance of women in disclosing their HIV status. The expectation of women to be submissive and obedient conflicts with taking the initiative to disclose, as it challenges traditional gender roles. Women may face resistance or even hostility when attempting to assert their agency in HIV status disclosure. These findings align with previous research on gender dynamics and HIV status disclosure (Dageid et al., 2015; Turan et al., 2020). Power imbalances, societal expectations of masculinity, and cultural norms perpetuating gender inequalities have been identified as significant factors influencing disclosure decisions. Recognizing and addressing these gender dynamics are crucial for developing tailored interventions that promote equitable decision-making and encourage HIV status disclosure within marriages in Kambuzuma.

4.6 Methods to Encourage HIV Status Disclosure

This section focuses on exploring potential methods and strategies that can be employed to encourage HIV status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma. The data collected from the participants provides insights into their perspectives and recommendations for promoting open communication and reducing the barriers to disclosure. Participant J, a 36-year-old married woman, highlighted the importance of creating safe and supportive environments. She stated,

If there were support groups or community organizations where couples could openly discuss their experiences and fears without the fear of judgment, it would make it easier for us to disclose our HIV status. We need safe spaces where we can find encouragement and understanding

Participant K, a 45-year-old married man, emphasized the role of education and awareness campaigns. He shared,

"Many people in our community lack accurate information about HIV/AIDS. Educational programs that dispel myths, provide accurate knowledge, and promote non-judgmental attitudes can help break down the stigma associated with the disease and encourage disclosure."

Participant L, a 31-year-old married woman, suggested involving community leaders and influential figures. She explained,

"If respected community leaders and influential figures openly disclosed their HIV status, it could challenge the prevailing norms and encourage others to follow suit. Their actions would send a powerful message that HIV is not something to be ashamed of."

The data reveals several potential methods to encourage HIV status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma. Creating safe and supportive environments is crucial, as it allows couples to share their experiences and fears without the fear of judgment. Support groups and community organizations can play a significant role in providing a non-judgmental space where couples can find encouragement and understanding. Education and awareness campaigns are another effective strategy to promote disclosure. By dispelling myths, providing accurate information about HIV/AIDS, and fostering non-judgmental attitudes, these programs can help reduce stigma and increase knowledge, making it easier for couples to have open conversations about their HIV status.

Involving respected community leaders and influential figures can also have a positive impact. Their public disclosure of their own HIV status can challenge prevailing norms and perceptions, sending a powerful message that living with HIV is not something to be ashamed of. Their actions can inspire others to follow suit and contribute to destigmatizing HIV/AIDS within the community. These findings align with previous research on interventions to promote HIV status disclosure

(Katz et al., 2013; Roura et al., 2017). Creating safe spaces, education and awareness campaigns, and involving influential figures have been identified as effective strategies to encourage disclosure and reduce stigma. Implementing these methods in Kambuzuma requires collaboration between community organizations, healthcare providers, and policymakers to address the specific barriers faced by married couples in the region.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the data collected from a case study examining the socio-cultural norms hindering the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status within Zimbabwean marriages in Kambuzuma. The analysis revealed the influence of stigma, fear of judgment, gender roles, and cultural beliefs on the disclosure decisions of married couples. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and policies that address these socio-cultural barriers, aiming to promote open communication and reduce stigma in order to improve the well-being and health outcomes of individuals living with HIV/AIDS within marital relationships.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Areas for Further Research

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings, draws conclusions from the analysis, offers recommendations based on the findings, and suggests areas for further research. The chapter aims to synthesize the key insights gained from the study on socio-cultural norms hindering disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in Zimbabwean marriages in Kambuzuma.

5.2 Summary of Research

The research aimed to investigate the socio-cultural norms influencing HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe. Through the utilization of a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 24 married couples. Thematic analysis was employed to extract key themes and patterns from the data, providing valuable insights into the dynamics surrounding HIV/AIDS status disclosure within this specific context.

The findings of the study highlighted several significant socio-cultural norms that hindered the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status within marital relationships. Stigma and fear of judgment emerged as predominant barriers, with participants expressing concerns about the potential negative social consequences associated with disclosure. The fear of being stigmatized by family, friends, and the community often led to secrecy and limited communication about HIV/AIDS status within marriages.

Gender roles and expectations also played a crucial role in shaping disclosure decisions. Participants revealed that traditional gender norms and expectations placed pressure on individuals to conform to societal expectations, which sometimes conflicted with the need for open communication about HIV/AIDS status. Men, in particular, felt the need to maintain a strong and dominant image, which made it challenging for them to disclose their HIV/AIDS status to their partners.

Cultural beliefs emphasizing marital unity and harmony were identified as additional factors inhibiting disclosure. Participants expressed the belief that disclosing HIV/AIDS status could disrupt the harmony within the marriage and lead to discord or even dissolution of the relationship.

The desire to maintain stability and avoid conflict within the marriage often outweighed the importance of disclosing HIV/AIDS status.

These findings contribute to existing literature on the influence of socio-cultural factors in HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships. The study aligns with previous research that has identified stigma, fear of judgment, and gender roles as barriers to disclosure. It also provides insights into the specific cultural beliefs and norms prevalent in Kambuzuma, highlighting the significance of maintaining marital unity and harmony.

The results obtained can be attributed to the complex interplay between societal norms, cultural values, and individual experiences. The fear of stigma and judgment, combined with the pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and preserve marital unity, created a challenging environment for married couples to openly communicate about their HIV/AIDS status.

The research findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address the identified barriers. Interventions should focus on raising awareness and reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigma within the community. Education programs and awareness campaigns can challenge gender norms and emphasize the importance of open communication, trust, and support within marital relationships. Additionally, counseling and support services should be made readily available to help couples navigate the challenges associated with HIV/AIDS status disclosure.

5.3 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the research findings indicate that the socio-cultural norms in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe, significantly hinder the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status within marital relationships. The study supports existing theories and literature on the influence of socio-cultural factors on HIV/AIDS status disclosure, particularly in the context of stigma, fear of judgment, gender roles, and cultural beliefs.

The findings align with previous research that has emphasized the negative social consequences associated with HIV/AIDS disclosure, such as stigma and discrimination. Stigma, in particular, emerged as a prominent barrier, with participants expressing concerns about being ostracized, judged, or isolated if their HIV/AIDS status were disclosed. These fears were deeply rooted in the prevailing societal norms and beliefs surrounding HIV/AIDS, perpetuating a culture of silence and secrecy.

The influence of gender roles and expectations on disclosure decisions was consistent with existing literature. Men, in particular, faced challenges in disclosing their HIV/AIDS status due to traditional notions of masculinity and the pressure to maintain a strong and dominant image. These gender norms constrained open communication between partners, contributing to the concealment of HIV/AIDS status within marriages.

Cultural beliefs emphasizing marital unity and harmony played a significant role in inhibiting disclosure. Participants expressed the fear that disclosing their HIV/AIDS status could disrupt the stability and harmony within their marriages. The desire to maintain social norms of marital unity and avoid conflict outweighed the importance of disclosing one's HIV/AIDS status, creating a barrier to open communication and support within the relationship.

The complex interplay of these socio-cultural norms sheds light on the reasons why individuals within marital relationships in Kambuzuma hesitate to disclose their HIV/AIDS status. The findings suggest that interventions and strategies to promote disclosure should address these entrenched societal norms and beliefs. Efforts should focus on reducing stigma and discrimination, challenging gender roles, and fostering an environment that values open communication and support within marriages.

The implications of these conclusions extend beyond the research context. They have implications for policy and practice in addressing the challenges surrounding HIV/AIDS status disclosure. Policymakers should consider the development and implementation of policies that protect the rights and well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Legal measures should be in place to combat HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma, ensuring that individuals feel safe and supported in disclosing their status.

The research findings contribute to the existing body of literature on HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships, adding a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics in Kambuzuma. They highlight the need for tailored interventions, education, and support services that address the specific barriers identified in this study. By implementing the recommendations based on these conclusions, healthcare providers and communities can work towards creating an environment that supports disclosure, reduces stigma, and promotes the overall well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS within marital contexts.

the research findings indicate that socio-cultural norms significantly hinder HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma. Stigma, fear of judgment, gender roles, and cultural beliefs all contribute to the reluctance to disclose HIV/AIDS status. Addressing these barriers through targeted interventions and policies can create a supportive environment that encourages open communication, reduces stigma, and enhances the overall well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the barriers to HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma:

1. Implement interventions aimed at reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination within the community. These interventions should focus on raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, challenging misconceptions, and promoting empathy and acceptance for individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Community-wide campaigns, workshops, and educational programs can be effective strategies to combat stigma.

2. Conduct educational programs and awareness campaigns that challenge traditional gender norms and stereotypes. These initiatives should emphasize the importance of open communication, trust, and support within marital relationships. Engaging both men and women in these campaigns can help shift societal expectations and promote a more open and equitable environment for discussing HIV/AIDS status.

3. Enhance access to counselling and support services for married couples affected by HIV/AIDS. These services should provide a safe and confidential space for couples to discuss their concerns, fears, and challenges related to HIV/AIDS status disclosure. Trained counselors can help facilitate open communication, provide guidance on disclosure strategies, and offer emotional support to couples.

4. Advocate for policies that protect the rights and well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Policy measures should include legal protections against HIV/AIDS-related discrimination, ensuring that individuals who disclose their status are not subjected to negative consequences such as loss of employment, denial of healthcare services, or social ostracism. Policy efforts should also focus on promoting inclusive and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

5. Engage community leaders, including religious leaders, traditional leaders, and influential figures, in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and combating stigma. These leaders have significant influence within the community and can play a pivotal role in challenging negative attitudes, dispelling myths, and promoting acceptance of individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

6. Provide comprehensive training for healthcare providers to enhance their understanding of the socio-cultural factors impacting HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships. Healthcare providers should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to address stigma, facilitate open communication, and provide culturally sensitive care to individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

7. Establish peer support networks for individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their partners. These networks can provide a sense of belonging, shared experiences, and emotional support, creating a supportive environment that encourages disclosure and reduces isolation. Peer support groups can also serve as platforms for information sharing, empowerment, and advocacy.

5.5 Areas for Further Study

There are several areas that warrant further study to enhance our understanding of HIV/AIDS status disclosure within marital relationships in Kambuzuma, Zimbabwe. Firstly, future research could delve deeper into the experiences and perspectives of specific subgroups, such as women and men separately, to gain a more nuanced understanding of the gender dynamics and their impact on disclosure. Additionally, exploring the role of healthcare providers in facilitating and supporting disclosure could provide valuable insights into the barriers faced by individuals seeking healthcare services and the potential for healthcare settings to serve as safe spaces for disclosure. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term effects of disclosure on marital relationships, mental health outcomes, and overall well-being of individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Lastly, comparative studies across different regions or cultural contexts could help identify similarities and differences in socio-cultural norms and their influence on disclosure, contributing to a broader understanding of this complex issue.

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INFORMED CONSENT

Research topic: Socio-cultural Norms Hindering Disclosure of HIV/AIDS Status in Zimbabwean Marriages: A Case Study of Married Couples in Kambuzuma

I hereby provide my consent to the research study mentioned above. My signature indicates that l read and understood the information provided above in the participant information. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and l can withdraw ay any point in time in the study. I also understand that confidentiality will be maintained in this study and mu personal details will be kept anonymous in the presentation of the research findings

I understand that audio recording will be taken during the study (Tick where applicable)

I agree to be audio recorded   Yes………….NO………….

Name of participant……………………..Signature………………………Date…………….

Name of Researcher…………………….Signature………………………..Date……………

Interview Guide

Section 1: Introduction and Background

1. Can you provide a brief overview of the socio-cultural context in Kambuzuma regarding marriage and relationships?

2. How would you describe the general attitude towards discussing sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS within married couples in Kambuzuma?

Section 2: Social and Cultural Norms

3. What are the prevailing social and cultural norms in Kambuzuma that discourage married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status to each other?

4. How do these social and cultural norms influence the behavior and decision-making of married couples when it comes to disclosing their HIV/AIDS status?

Section 3: Impact of Sociocultural Norms

5. In your opinion, how do these sociocultural norms affect the level of trust and communication between married couples regarding their HIV/AIDS status?

6. Can you provide examples of specific instances where these norms have hindered the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status in Kambuzuma marriages?

Section 4: Strategies for Encouraging Disclosure

7. What strategies or interventions do you think could be effective in promoting HIV status disclosure within married couples in Kambuzuma?

8. Are there any existing community-based initiatives or programs that have been successful in addressing this issue? If so, what have been their key elements or strategies?

Section 5: Personal Experiences and Recommendations

9. Have you personally encountered situations where disclosure of HIV/AIDS status has been challenging within marriages in Kambuzuma? If yes, could you share any specific experiences?

Questionnaire: Socio-Cultural Norms Hindering Disclosure of HIV/AIDS Status in Zimbabwean Marriages

Section 1: Introduction and Background

1. Indicate your sex

    a. Male

    b. Female

2. How old are you

    a. 18-25 years old

    b. 25-35 ye25-35

    c. 35-45 years

    d. 45-55 years

3. What is your marital Status

    a. Single

    b. Married

    c. Divorced

4.. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the extent to which traditional values and gender roles influence marriage dynamics in Kambuzuma:

  1 - Not at all influential

  2 - Slightly influential

  3 - Moderately influential

  4 - Very influential

  5 - Extremely influential

2. How would you describe the general attitude towards discussing sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS within married couples in Kambuzuma?

  - Yes

- No

Section 2: Social and Cultural Norms

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Fear of stigma and discrimination from the community discourages married couples from disclosing their HIV/AIDS status."

  - Strongly disagree

  - Disagree

  - Neutral

  - Agree

  - Strongly agree

4. How comfortable do you feel discussing your HIV/AIDS status with your spouse?

  - Very uncomfortable

  - Uncomfortable

  - Neutral

  - Comfortable

  - Very comfortable

Section 3: Impact of Sociocultural Norms

5. To what extent do sociocultural norms hinder trust and communication between you and your spouse regarding your HIV/AIDS status?

  - Not at all

  - Slightly

  - Moderately

  - Significantly

- Completely

6. Have you faced situations in your marriage where sociocultural norms hindered the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status? Please select the relevant options:

  - Yes

  - No

Section 4: Strategies for Encouraging Disclosure

7. Which strategies or interventions do you think could be effective in promoting HIV status disclosure within married couples in Kambuzuma? Please select all that apply:

  - Community education and awareness programs

  - Peer support groups for married couples

  - Counseling services for couples affected by HIV/AIDS

  - Policy changes to protect individuals who disclose their status

  - Other (please specify): _____

  - None of the above

8. Are there any existing community-based initiatives or programs that have been successful in addressing this issue? Please select the relevant options:

  - HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns

  - Support groups for individuals living with HIV/AIDS

  - Gender equality and empowerment programs

  - Legal protections against discrimination

  - None of the above

- Other (please specify): _____

Section 5: Personal Experiences and Recommendations

9. Have you personally encountered situations where disclosure of HIV/AIDS status has been challenging within your marriage in Kambuzuma?

- Yes

- No

10. Based on your understanding of the local context, what recommendations would you make to policymakers or organizations working to promote HIV status disclosure in Kambuzuma marriages?

- _____