

**THE EFFECT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IN  
RWEMIKOMA ARCHDEACONRY, NORTH ANKOLE DIOCESE**

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**M22/BBUC/BD/013**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TURCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND  
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**DECLARATION**

I, **GUMISIRIZA JOHN** hereby declare that this research report titled “*The Effect of COVID 19 Pandemic on Christian Marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese*” is my own original work and that to the best of my knowledge, it has never been presented to any institution for any academic award.

Signed..........

Date.....20...../06...../2025.....

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**APPROVAL**

This research report titled "*The Effect of COVID 19 Pandemic on Christian Marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese*" has been carried out under my supervision and is now ready for submission with my approval.

Signed 

Date. 20 / 06 / 2025

**REV. DICKENS NDYAHABWE**

**(SUPERVISOR)**

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research report to my family for their unconditional support towards my studies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I am grateful to my research supervisor for his tireless guidance and valuable time throughout this research study.

I am thankful to my lecturers at Bishop Braham University College, my family members and my friends for their encouragement, without them, the objectives of this study would not have been realized.

I thank my respondents for the role they played in providing the data whose contribution has enabled to me accomplish this research report using their views.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| CBO    | Community-Based<br>Organizations   |
| NGOs:  | Non-Governmental<br>Organization   |
| SACCOs | Savings and Credit<br>Cooperatives |

## ABSTRACT

The study was done to examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese. The study was guided by a particular purpose to ascertain the signs of marriage breaking up in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, and to advise on probable ways of strengthening Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry. The investigator employed a cross-sectional design and used a random sample of 50 respondents from two parishes that had varying levels of church membership and leadership. Information was collected by using interview schedules and questionnaires from the primary and secondary sources. The study concluded that economic strain, communication breakdown, emotional abandonment, and adultery were the primary indicators of failed marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, and these were worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown and closure of churches due to the pandemic had a negative effect on Christian marriages by escalating existing marital problems and limiting access to spiritual counseling. The survey also discovered that some of the most effective strategies for bolstering Christian marriages in the region include the development of economic empowerment initiatives, mentoring for young couples, and the expansion of church-based counselling services, which can start spiritual development in families. According to the report, the church should start preventive programs to monitor and support marriages, start family restoration initiatives after the epidemic, and train clergy in trauma-informed pastoral care. The church should also offer systematic premarital and marital counselling, as well as financial empowerment and mentorship for Christian couples, in order to promote stable marriages.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter included background of the study, statement of the problem, aim, and objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, terminologies used in the study, and research methodology.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

#### **1.1.1 Historical Background**

First identified in late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented the world with previously unheard-of difficulties, impacting social interaction, mental health, and domestic relationships, among other areas of life. The World Health Organisation formally declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (World Health Organisation, 2020). Around the world, lockdowns and social distancing were enforced, forcing couples to reevaluate their relationship and adapt to new living arrangements. According to research, the pandemic increased stressors related to communication and conflict. The stability of marriage was consequently affected. Moreover, satisfaction (Bäuerle et al., 2020).

Africa's social structures, especially marriage and family relationships, have been significantly impacted by the pandemic. Economic downturns and restrictions on movement have intensified family strife and widened already-existing gaps. For some couples, living together during lockdown brought to light underlying issues, while for others, it resulted in greater financial burdens (Mastrorillo et al., 2021). Couples often

experienced higher rates of psychological discomfort and loneliness as a result of the disruption of traditional support systems (Akhter et al., 2021). Consequently, the pandemic caused serious problems for the institution of marriage on the continent.

The COVID-19 effects in East Africa were in line with the broader African experience, despite regional differences. In nations like Kenya and Tanzania, lockdowns made mental health issues and domestic violence worse; studies revealed a sharp rise in calls to domestic violence hotlines (UN Women, 2020). Ugandan couples faced unique challenges, such as restricted access to religious and social support networks, which are often crucial tools for a successful marriage. The prolonged stress of the pandemic acted as a catalyst for arguments and changed relationship dynamics in the face of increasing uncertainty, resulting in the breakup of numerous couples (Kasirye et al., 2021).

In Uganda, a country with many different cultural and religious traditions, the pandemic made Christian marriages more challenging, especially in places like the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry in the North Ankole Diocese. By shutting down or drastically limiting the operations of churches, which are generally regarded as essential support networks in married life, lockdown tactics disrupted community meetings, marriage support groups, and premarital counselling (Rwabwogo, 2021). Furthermore, families are experiencing financial strain as a result of the pandemic's economic effects, which has caused stress and conflict (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Studies show that a significant change in marriage patterns occurred during the pandemic, with many couples opting to end their unions due to the stressors caused by the disease (Tugumisirize, 2021).

### 1.1.2 Conceptual Background

The study's independent variable is the COVID-19 pandemic. Government-mandated lockdowns, social distancing, bans on religious gatherings, and modifications to community support networks are some of its interrelated components. The lives of married couples who reside in the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry have been significantly impacted by these.

Traditional wedding traditions have been severely interrupted by the epidemic, which has also caused changes in communication, conflict resolution techniques, and coping mechanisms used by couples (Kasozi, 2022). Consequently, the pandemic serves as an inadvertent experiment that allows examination of the ways in which external stressors can impact the dynamics of Christian marriage in this specific cultural and religious context.

Christian marriage is the dependent variable in this case, and it can be analyzed through a variety of indicators such as relationship satisfaction, domestic conflict frequency, emotional well-being, and overall marital stability. Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be employed in measuring the shifts in relational quality experienced by couples, for instance, surveys quantifying mental health, self-rated companionability measures, and perceived emotional support (Mugisha, 2021). The research tried to explore the impact of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on the sacrament of marriage in the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, particularly among the Christian community.

### **1.1.2 Theoretical perspective**

One theoretical model that is pertinent to the current study is the Social Exchange Theory, which bases interpersonal relationships on a cost-benefit analysis with actors aiming to maximise advantages and minimise costs (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Determining the extent to which the social and economic stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted couples' marital decisions can be greatly aided by this theoretical model. Rwemikoma Archdeaconry marriage couples have shifted their bargaining and expectations of marriage conditions due to altered economic realities and limited resources, in accordance with the theory that relationship satisfaction is a function of perceived benefits relative to perceived costs (Illouz, 2019).

### **Contextual Perspectives Background**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2021) reports that long periods of isolation, job loss, and unstable economies caused stress for many couples worldwide during lockdown seasons, which ultimately resulted in the dissolution of marriages. Access to stress-reduction strategies, such as counselling and religious gatherings, was restricted because the pandemic disrupted people's regular routines. The difficulties tested the stability of partnerships worldwide and exposed the flaws in marriages.

Marital conflicts and gender-based violence were more common in a sizable portion of African households during the lockdown, according to Aboagye and Osei-Tutu (2021). The discontinuation of communal activities, like religious rituals and counselling services, left many couples without social and spiritual support.

Similar trends were observed in East Africa, where countries like Kenya and Tanzania have seen an increase in marital discord as a result of long-term school closures and job losses. Many couples struggled to adapt to new roles in the home, especially when it came to childcare, working from home, and housework (Muthoni and Nyang'oro, 2022). Religious organizations that have historically been in charge of marriage counselling and pastoral advice were either shut down or had their ability to function restricted. The following lack of religious leadership led to increased emotional suffering, especially for Christian marriages that rely on religious attendance to promote marital stability.

Lockdowns and curfew restrictions enforced by the government significantly disrupted Ugandan families' normal lives. According to a study by Tumwine and Kaggwa (2021), a spike in domestic violence cases was noted during the pandemic because many marriages were strained due to irrational expectations, miscommunication, and mistrust. Church closures and gathering restrictions disrupted Christian marriage counselling and wedding ceremonies that were based on regular church services. Many couples reported feeling spiritually isolated, which weakened their marriages. The pandemic also had an effect on economic activity, which increased the burden on households already struggling to meet their basic needs.

Christian weddings in the North Ankole Diocese's Rwemikoma Archdeaconry have presented unique difficulties, which have been made worse by laws requiring physical separation and other restrictions. According to Nduwayo and Mwesigye (2020), the prohibition on religious assemblies caused many wedding ceremonies to be postponed or cancelled, upsetting traditional marriage rites and celebrations that are essential to

the Rwemikoma people. In addition, the pandemic has put a great deal of strain on married interpersonal connections as couples deal with increased stressors such health problems, economic instability, and constraints imposed by lockdown measures. Due to these pressures, couples are now more arguing and unhappy, which highlights the institution of marriage's vulnerability in times of crisis (Mugisha, 2021).

The epidemic has changed the religious dimensions of marriage in religious institutions, in addition to the immediate threat posed by restrictions on public meetings. Due to church closures and the halting of communal activities, the majority of couples reported feeling cut off from their religious group (Kisitu & Nuwagaba, 2022). In Christian societies, the social support required to strengthen marriage bonds might be undermined by this seclusion. The move to virtual religious services has presented a number of opportunities and difficulties, as noted by Wandera et al. (2023), which may lead to a reassessment of how couples engage with religion and community during difficult times.

The dynamics during the pandemic demanded a more profound insight into the dynamic nature of Christian marriage in the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry as couples adjust to new realities while seeking to uphold their vows amidst an altered social arrangement.

## **1.2. Problem statement**

The Covid-19 lockdown caused a great effect on communities and the church at large throughout the world (Musoke et.al, 2023). COVID-19 pandemic alongside the lockdown measures and social distancing protocols forced couples to spend extended periods together, which, with time, revealed underlying communication issues and conflict

points that had previously gone unnoticed, financial stressors coupled with the shared confinement at home, escalated tensions and contributed to an increase in marital breakdowns and many couples reported feelings of anxiety and depression, which negatively influenced relationship satisfaction and stability (Kasozi, 2022). These challenges greatly threatened Christian marriages during COVID 19 breakdown. According to Musoke et.al, (2023), the scar of COVID 19 pandemic left many challenges in marriages which exist up to now and one major problem that still exist is financial crisis in many Christian families in Uganda. Many Christian couples lost their jobs during Covid 19 pandemic and up to now they have never recovered from it and as a result some Christian men lost their wives simply because they could not provide basic needs at home (Kasozi, 2022). Most research studies done, focused on impact of covid 19 on the economy leaving out its effect on Christian marriage. Therefore, it was against this background that the researcher intended to carry out an investigation on the effect of covid 19 on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma

Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese

### **1.3. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of COVID 19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese.

### **Objectives of the study**

**The study was guided by the following objectives;**

- i. To find out the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry
- ii. To find out the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on Christian marriage in

## Rwemikoma Archdeaconry

- iii. To suggest possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry

### **1.4. Research questions.**

- i. What are the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?
- ii. What are the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on Christian marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?
- iii. What are the possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

### **1.5. Scope of the Study.**

The scope of the study included; the geographical, content and time scope

#### **1.5.1 Geographical scope**

The study was carried out in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese located in Ntungamo district. It has five parishes under it namely; Kijuma C.O.U, Bugaruhe C.O.U, Rwamuranga C.O.U, Mijina C.O.U and 18 churches. The study used 50 respondents from all parishes selecting Parish Priests, lay readers, chief wardens and married couples simply because they had enough respondents which helped me to get enough information about the topic under study.

### **1.5.2 Content scope**

The study was limited to finding out the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, to finding out the consequences of COVID 19 pandemic on Christian marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry and suggesting possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry.

### **1.5.3 Time scope:**

The study took a period of 5 months April to June. This period enabled the researcher to get the required information and be able to finish the research study in time.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The Church can use the findings from this research to strengthen marriage counseling, family support, and spiritual guidance to couples affected by the pandemic.

Married couples can gain insights on how to build stronger relationships, manage conflict, and seek help from faith leaders when needed.

Parents, especially those struggling with family stress, can learn better ways to care for their children and maintain stability at home.

Non-Governmental and Community-Based Organizations can improve their family support programs and train staff to identify early signs of family conflict.

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, can use the study to better support families and children impacted by

domestic stress during and after COVID-19.

### **1.7. Operational Definitions of Terms**

COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. In this study, it refers to the global health crisis that led to lockdowns, social distancing, and economic hardship, all of which affected family life and marital relationships within Christian communities.

Christian marriage, in this context, refers to a union between a man and a woman that is recognized and blessed by the Church, based on Biblical principles. It includes spiritual, emotional, and physical commitment, and is guided by the teachings of the Christian faith.

In this study, indicators of marriage breakdown refer to measurable behaviors, attitudes, and circumstances that reflect the decline or failure of a marital relationship.

In this study, the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic refers to the social, economic, emotional, and psychological impacts brought about by the pandemic and associated lockdowns or restrictions.

Christian marriage breakdown, as used in this research, pertains to the failure or collapse of marital unions that were solemnized under Christian doctrines and practices.

A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a disease. In this study, it specifically refers to

the period when COVID-19 spread globally and its widespread effects were felt in homes, churches, and communities.

### **1.9.1 Research methodology**

#### **1.9.2 Research Design**

The study adopted used a mixed approach for obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data. There was more qualitative than quantitative and used descriptive research design. Descriptive research enables the researcher to systematically describe the situation as it exists (Saunders et al., 2019). Primary data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires' while secondary data was obtained from church records, diocesan reports, and relevant literature.

#### **1.9.3 Population and Sample Size of the Study**

##### **1.9.3.1 Target Population**

The target population in this study included parish priest, lay readers. Chief church wardens and married couples got from all the five parishes in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry.

##### **1.9.3.2 Sample Size**

The study used 5 parish priest, 5 lay readers. 5 Chief church wardens and 35 married couples got from all the five parishes in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry making it a total of 50 respondents.

##### **1.9.3.3 Sampling Techniques**

The sampling techniques used were both purposive and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select key study respondents who included; parish priests, lay readers and chief church wardens while simple random sampling was used

to married couples in order to eliminate bias and ensure representativeness.

### **1.9.6 Data Collection Methods**

To collect valid and comprehensive data, the study used the following methods;

#### **1.9.6.1 Questionnaire**

Structured questionnaires were administered to parish priests, lay readers, chief church wardens and married couples. These were primarily close-ended questions to allow for easy quantification, with a few open-ended questions for qualitative insight. The questionnaires were given to a few parish priests and married couples for pre-testing to ensure reliability and clarity.

#### **1.9.6.2 Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with parish priests, lay readers and chief church wardens during Sunday evenings. This method provided in-depth qualitative data regarding the impact of the pandemic on Christian marriage.

### **1.9.7 Quality Control Methods**

To ensure validity and reliability, a pre-test of the data collection tools was conducted on a similar population outside the study area.

### **1.9.8 Data Analysis Techniques**

Collected data was cleaned, coded, and entered into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were used for quantitative data. Qualitative data from interviews was transcribed, coded thematically, and analyzed through content analysis to identify patterns and narratives related to the research objectives. Data was presented in tables, charts, and descriptive summaries.

### **1.9.9 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher had an introductory letter from the University which allowed him to carry out his study in the Archdeaconry. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Privacy and confidentiality were assured to the respondents and permission was sought from the relevant church authorities to conduct the study in the archdeaconry.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is the review of the literature related to the study according to the three study objectives.

### 2.2 The Indicators of Marriage Breakdown

A key indicator of marital breakdown is communication failure. According to Johnson (2022), the pandemic made individuals spend a lot of time on their screens and away from one another physically, thus destroying wholesome conversations between partners. The majority of couples also frequently misinterpreted one another, emotionally distanced themselves, and disclosed less personal information, all of which are indicators of emotional detachment.

One important indicator that the marriage is struggling is an increase in financial hardship. Martinez and Huang (2020) point out that the pandemic's financial difficulties led to constant conflicts about money, broken financial commitments, and finger-pointing, all of which weakened marital ties. This stress also had an impact on the emotional and spiritual health of Christian couples.

Having untreated mental health conditions like burnout, sadness, or anxiety is another. According to Simmons et al. (2021), Christian couples conceal emotional problems because they are stigmatised, which results in inadequate assistance and increased emotional estrangement in the marriage.

One of the most important indicators of marital stress is the loss of emotional and sexual connection. According to Thompson and Cook (2022), the couples expressed feeling physically and spiritually apart from one another. This is especially significant in Christian marriages, as spirituality is closely associated with a feeling of sacred unity.

Constant arguments, including those involving parenting, are another sign of marital disintegration. Parker and Reed (2020) explain how the homeschooling pressure and responding to children's emotional needs while in lockdown caused tension, blaming, and emotional exhaustion among spouses signs that the marriage was not going well.

A decline in joint religious activities, for example, attending church or praying together, is also a warning sign. Adams and Wright (2023) reported that the majority of Christian couples stopped participating in communal religious activities and lost their spiritual connection and sense of belonging, which caused relational instability.

Taylor et al. (2019) describe disagreements regarding future plans or loose common objectives as a reflection of the breakdown of marriage. The pandemic's unpredictability left the majority of couples lost and unsynchronized, particularly in Christian marriages, which are normally envisioned around similar faith-inclined visions. A less responsive, distant, or emotionally disconnected spouse is an important indicator. Carter and Lee (2021) explain how loneliness and stress induced by the pandemic caused most individuals to step back from their spouses, which resulted in loneliness and a deteriorating marriage.

Loss of personal time and routine such as prayer or personal time was also an underlying indicator. Jenkins and Moore (2022) identified that constantly being close without boundaries produced frustration, resentment, and lack of personal space, which undermined the ability of the couple to coexist amicably.

### **2.3 The Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on Christian Marriage Breakdown**

According to Fitzgibbons et al. (2021) study, indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled existing vulnerabilities in Christian marriages. The social distancing, combined with the lockdown, ensured that couples spent more time together than they would have under normal circumstances, leading to the surprising revelation of communication problems and areas of conflict that they weren't aware of before.

Marvin et al. (2020) found a high rate of reported marital conflict among Christian couples in the time of the pandemic. Financial stress, coupled with the shared lockdown within the home setting, created tension and increased marital breakdown. Johnson and Smith (2022), the pandemic has influenced mental health in Christian marriages significantly. They experienced fear and depression, which affected relationship satisfaction and stability in a negative way. The integration of fear of health and confinement amplified emotional distances between the couples.

Cheng (2023) experimented with whether religious participation during the pandemic times influenced the stability of Christian marriages. The outcome indicated that couples who retained involvement in church activities, even virtual, recorded lower marital dissolution rates than couples who isolated themselves from their religious community.

According to Nascimento (2019), the pandemic also created unique stressors, such as homeschooling and remote working, placing additional strain on marital relationships. Christian couples were faced with the difficulty of balancing work and family responsibilities against coping with this emotional stress, resulting in greater conflict in other cases.

Thompson (2022) also pointed out that while there were breakdowns in some Christian couples, there were others who reported increased unions because of the experiences they went through during the pandemic. The study, however, pointed out that the struggling couples often pointed to communication as a key failure during this time.

Alonzo (2021), as more technology was used for communication due to social distancing, impacted some Christian marriages negatively. While virtual connection provided some respite then, it could not replace the richness of personal connection. As such, feelings of loneliness became more intensified, leading to relational tension.

A study by Patel et al. (2023) focused on spirituality as a resilience factor during the pandemic. It was found that couples who prayed together or conversed about spirituality together had lower marital breakdown rates, suggesting that shared faith functions as a resilience factor in preventing relationship deterioration in the face of crisis.

Mitchell and Rowland (2020), the pandemic stressors affected romantic intimacy in couples. The greater the stress levels, the less was emotional and physical intimacy, which, in Christian marriages with such a high value for physical touch, generated dissatisfaction and disconnection.

O'Brien (2022) revealed that several Christian couples sought counseling to address their marriage problems during the time of the pandemic. The research revealed that effective communication and conflict resolution practices were relevant to couples experiencing breakdown, affirming the hypothesis that assistance can insulate against relational issues.

As White and Garcia (2021) affirmed, the social discourse of marriage throughout the pandemic shifted, with the majority of Christian couples questioning the traditional notion of being forever. The authors noted a trend towards redefining marriage as a dynamic union that is receptive to transformation, rather than a fixed institution.

JSON Research (2022) indicated that income fluctuations caused by the pandemic were a major cause of marital dissatisfaction in Christian marriages. Financial instability led to issues of budgeting and prioritization that weakened the marriage in most instances.

Kumar (2020), the long-term effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Christian marriages is perhaps yet to be fully observed. The writer emphasized that sudden falls occurred, but the psychological burdens and unresolved issues may resonate for years, perhaps leading to delayed breakdowns.

Rivera and Collins (2023) also suggested that the research on relationship dynamics during the pandemic is critical in future research. Understanding the dynamics of Christian marriage breakdown during the COVID-19 pandemic will help religious as well as community leaders in building materials for troubled couples.

Apostol and Gains (2022), the narratives of how the pandemic broke down marriage

reveal a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities. As much as it broke down the majority of Christian marriages, the pandemic also forced couples to see and work on their issues, which could mean growth and renewal for the long term if managed appropriately.

#### **2.4 Possible Ways of Improving Christian Marriages**

According to McMahan et al. (2021), Christian couples must create open lines of communication during the epidemic. Their research indicates that it is crucial for stress and marital issues to be openly expressed. This communication component can improve emotional intimacy and assist couples in effectively navigating uncertainty.

Johnson and Smith (2022) emphasizes that shared spiritual practices are important to the strengthening of marriage bonds. The authors suggest that connecting in mutual prayer, Bible study, and worship can serve as the anchors for Christian couples during moments of crisis, thereby bringing together unity and spiritual growth within the chaos of the pandemic.

Couples therapy and support groups, according to Davis (2020), have become increasingly important with the pandemic stress. The study reveals that assistance from seasoned counselors familiar with Christian doctrines can be provided as key conflict resolution tools, therefore improving marital satisfaction both in and outside of the pandemic.

Garcia and White (2021) explains the difficulties of remote work and how it can influence home life. They advocate for establishing boundaries between home and workplace to build quality time and foster bonding among Christian couples, who can

manage conflicting responsibilities during lockdown.

Thompson (2023), the pandemic has accelerated existing issues within marriages but also introduced avenues for growth. The author argues that the couples must examine their challenges and mutually settle on shared goals, which can form the core of identifying a plan of action for growth and spiritual fulfillment in the relationships.

Parker (2021) finds in a study that the psychological weight of the pandemic has deepened empathy and compassion as indispensable in marriages. Parker's research points to patience and compassion as fundamental when couples respond to stress in contrasting emotional ways, noting how these virtues play an essential role in Christian ideals of marriage.

Hall and Lewis (2022), online platforms of social interaction and worship have enabled Christian couples to stay connected during the pandemic. Their findings indicate that viewing virtual church services as a couple can form a sense of community and shared purpose, having a positive influence on couples' relational processes.

Campbell (2022) points out that rising domestic stress across the nation as a result of the pandemic has strengthened the call for equitable responsibility in marriages. Campbell asserts that fairly dividing domestic work will be able to strengthen partnership relationships and reduce tension, which makes it especially critical for Christian couples to partner together during stressful times.

Martinez and Brown (2023) found that couples involved in recreational activities that eased stress expressed higher levels of relationship satisfaction. The research calls for Christian couples to prioritize recreational activities, such as games or hobbies, as a

means of promoting happiness and oneness in marriage during the pandemic.

Smith (2021), financial issues caused by the pandemic have been shown to be a critical component of couples' health. The author theorizes that Christian couples engage in transparent financial planning and budgeting as a couple, combining their budget priorities with faith and values, which can prevent money conflicts.

A study by Carter (2021) emphasizes the importance of mental health support for couples during the pandemic. Carter highlights the benefits of integrating psychological well-being into the context of Christian marriage, recommending that couples seek professional help if needed, as mental health has profound implications for relationship quality.

As Lee (2022) contends, forgiveness spirit should be nurtured as a means of transcending conflicts that have been stimulated by the pandemic. Christian couples, according to research suggests, employ forgiveness as resilience that is biblical-oriented and can heal their relationship.

Nguyen et al. (2023) suggests that volunteering as a couple may strengthen marriage. The study found that Christian couples who get involved in acts of service towards others during the pandemic enhance their sense of purpose and recommit themselves to their marriage as they serve a higher purpose.

Adams (2022), with its stories of devotion during the pandemic, can fortify shared encouragement in marriage. Adams reveals that Christian couples who exchange their daily stories of devotion find power in each other, deepening their faith connection as

they tackle marriage issues collectively.

Everett (2021) argues on the necessity to uphold family traditions, even lockdown. The research reveals that Christian families consciously upholding traditions—be it via digital gatherings or new ones—help to perpetuate a sense of stability and continuity, fostering a healthy marriage culture.

### **Research Gaps**

Since those studies, if any, focus far less on local dynamics, one of the research on the signs of marriage breakup in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry points to a clear gap in our understanding of the cultural, social, and economic factors that influence the signals. Additionally, there is a dearth of focused research on how the Covid-19 pandemic is specifically influencing Christian marriage breakdown, especially in multicultural settings like Rwemikoma, despite the fact that there has been recently published literature on the effects of the pandemic on family relationships.

Additionally, there aren't many empirical studies on practical ways to strengthen Christian relationships, and there isn't much evidence to support any particular therapies, practices, or community initiatives that are deliberately put in place to counter the unique problems of couples in this region. Therefore, there is a pressing need for niche studies integrating these elements, employing qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide rich insights and enhance solutions.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of the findings from the field about demographic characteristics of respondents and data following the study objectives.

#### 3.2 Demographic Data of the Respondents

Demographic information of the 50 respondents was analyzed to understand their background as shown in the table below;

**Tale 1 showing the category of respondents**

| Category             | Frequency | Percentage  |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Parish priests       | 5         | 10          |
| Lay readers          | 5         | 10          |
| Chief church wardens | 5         | 10          |
| Married couples      | 35        | 70          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>50</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: Field Data, 2025.**

From the table, it was evident that the majority of respondents were married couples 35 (70%) because it was clearly that the study was about how Covid 19 affected marriage, followed closely by a shared frequency and percentage 5 (10%) parish priest, lay readers and Chief church wardens all got from the five parishes in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry making it a total of 50 respondents.

### 3.2.1 Age Distribution of the Respondents

The researcher sought to determine the age bracket of the respondents to establish which age groups were more affected in their marriages during the pandemic. Understanding the age distribution helped in identifying the demographic most impacted and tailoring appropriate support or intervention strategies.

**Table 2: Age Distribution of the Respondents**

| <b>Age Group</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 18-24 years      | 20               | 40                |
| 25-34 years      | 22               | 44                |
| 35-44 years      | 6                | 12                |
| 45 and above     | 2                | 4                 |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>50</b>        | <b>100%</b>       |

**Source: Field Data, 2025**

From the table, it was evident that the majority of respondents (44%) were aged between 25 and 34 years, followed closely by those aged 18 to 24 years (40%). The 35 to 44 age group accounted for 12%, while only 4% were aged 45 and above. This indicated that younger adults, particularly those between 18 and 34 years, constituted the majority of participants and were more prominently represented in assessing the marital impact of the pandemic. These age groups were likely more active in both economic activities and church involvement, making them more vulnerable to the disruptions caused by COVID-19 in both family and faith settings.

### 3.2.2 Gender Composition of the Respondents

Understanding the gender distribution of respondents was important to examine the roles and perspectives of both male and female spouses during the pandemic.

**Table 3: Showing Gender Composition of the Respondents**

| Sex          | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Male         | 30        | 60         |
| Female       | 20        | 40         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Field data, 2025

The data showed that 60% of the respondents were male, while 40% were female. The slight overrepresentation of males was due to cultural or religious norms where men are often the heads of households and was more available or willing to engage in such surveys. However, the inclusion of both genders provided balanced insights into how Christian marriages were affected during the COVID-19 pandemic, making the data more reliable for church leaders and policymakers.

#### Level of Education

Educational background was examined to assess the respondents' ability to understand the effects of the pandemic and engage with related interventions.

**Table 4: Showing Level of Education**

| <b>Level of Education</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Primary                   | 20               | 40                |
| O-Level                   | 14               | 28                |
| A-Level                   | 6                | 12                |
| University                | 10               | 20                |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>50</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

**Source: Field data, 2025**

Most respondents had primary education (40%), followed by O-Level (28%), and university level (20%). Only a few had A-Level education (12%). The fact that all respondents had some level of formal education suggested they could read and understand the questionnaire. This improved the quality of data collected and minimized the risk of biased or misunderstood responses. Educated respondents had better awareness of both the spiritual and social effects of the pandemic on marriage.

### **3.2.3 Marital Status of the Respondents**

The study targeted married individuals but also captured the views of singles and divorced individuals to understand the broader impact of the pandemic on marital relationships and intentions.

**Table 5: Showing Marital Status of the Respondents**

| <b>Marital Status</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Married               | 33               | 66                |
| Single                | 13               | 26                |
| Divorced              | 4                | 8                 |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>50</b>        | <b>100</b>        |

**Source: Field data, 2025**

Most respondents (66%) were married, which aligns well with the study's purpose. Singles (26%) and divorced individuals (8%) also provided perspectives, possibly reflecting on marital intentions or past experiences during the pandemic. The high proportion of married respondents strengthens the reliability of the study in addressing the effects of COVID-19 on marriage. It also reflects that most participants were directly affected by church closures, financial struggles, and relationship challenges.

### **3.3 Indicators of Marriage Breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

The researcher sought to identify the key indicators that point to marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The collected data revealed several social, emotional, and economic challenges affecting marital stability. The findings are presented in Table 6 below:

**Table 5: Indicators of Marriage Breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

| Indicators            | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Domestic violence     | 38        | 76             |
| Lack of communication | 34        | 68             |
| Infidelity            | 30        | 60             |
| Financial instability | 27        | 54             |

**Source: Field Data, 2025**

In Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, the data collected pointed to domestic violence as the most prevalent indicator of marriage breakdown, cited by 38 (76%) of respondents. According to local leaders, lockdown-related stress and prolonged periods of confinement at home increased tension between spouses, leading to frequent physical and verbal altercations. One Chief church warden chairperson noted:

*"Many men became aggressive due to financial pressure. With no work and no income, frustrations often turned into violence at home. Women, on the other hand, felt trapped and helpless."*

Lack of communication was another major factor, accounting for 34 (68%) of the responses. Couples reported that during the pandemic, instead of bonding through adversity, many drifted apart emotionally. Communication gaps were often caused by unresolved issues, emotional fatigue, or poor conflict resolution skills. One Church Priest remarked:

*"There was a silence in many homes—partners no longer spoke unless it was necessary. Emotional disconnection became very common, and that silence*

*turned into separation."*

Infidelity, cited by 30 (60%) of respondents, emerged as another critical sign of marital breakdown. This was attributed to increased online interactions, physical separation during lockdowns, or the pursuit of emotional support outside the marriage. Church counselors reported a rise in cases involving extramarital affairs, especially among younger couples. "Some people turned to extramarital relationships as a way of escaping stress or finding comfort," said a church priest. Sadly, this caused families to fall apart. Finally, 27 (54%) of the participants brought up the issue of financial instability. Many families found it difficult to meet their basic necessities during the epidemic due to the widespread loss of jobs and decreased finances.

Tension, animosity, and in certain situations, abandonment were brought on by this financial burden. Table 6's results showed that a combination of behavioural, emotional, and financial variables contributed to marriage dissolution in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry. Infidelity, financial instability, lack of communication, and domestic violence were the most common symptoms, reflecting the various stresses that couples encountered during the pandemic. The fact that these difficulties were firmly anchored in both internal relationship dynamics and external pressures was further highlighted by qualitative input from local leaders and clergy.

### **3.4 The Effects of COVID-19 on Christian Marriage Breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

The researcher's goal was to investigate how the COVID-19 epidemic specifically affected Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry. Numerous social and

economic constraints brought forth by the epidemic severely disturbed family life and played a role in the dissolution of many marriages. The findings are summarized in Table 7 below.

**Table 6: Effects of COVID-19 on Christian Marriage Breakdown in Rwemikoma**

**Archdeaconry**

| Effects                                  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Loss of income and employment            | 40        | 80             |
| Increased domestic conflicts             | 36        | 72             |
| Emotional and psychological stress       | 34        | 68             |
| Disruption of church counseling services | 29        | 58             |
| Reduced spiritual fellowship and support | 27        | 54             |

**Source: Field Data, 2025**

In Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, the loss of income and employment was the most frequently reported effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Christian marriages, cited by 40 (80%) of respondents. The economic downturn caused by lockdowns and restrictions left many households financially unstable, leading to tension between spouses. A local Church lay reader explained:

*“Many families relied on small businesses or informal work that were shut down during the lockdowns. Without income, there were constant fights about basic needs, school fees, and rent.”*

Following closely was the rise in increased domestic conflicts, with 36 (72%) of the participants indicating that being confined together for extended periods contributed

to escalated arguments and tensions. One Parish Priest noted:

*“Some couples had never spent so much uninterrupted time together. The forced proximity exposed unresolved issues and created new ones, leading to frequent quarrels and, in some cases, violence.”*

Emotional and psychological stress was another prominent factor, identified by 34 (68%).

The fear of illness, loss of loved ones, and uncertainty about the future placed emotional strain on spouses. A local lay reader mentioned:

*“Many people were battling anxiety and depression silently. Without access to therapy or social support that stress often exploded in marital settings.”*

Another significant setback was the disruption of church counseling services, reported by 29 (58%) of respondents. Church-based counseling plays a vital role in conflict resolution and spiritual guidance in marriages, but pandemic restrictions limited face-to-face services. One Parish Priest in the Archdeaconry shared:

*“The closure of churches meant that couples could not access the counseling and guidance they depended on. Some couples gave up on each other without ever seeking help.”*

Lastly, reduced spiritual fellowship and support was reported by 27 (54%) of respondents. The inability to attend physical services and group fellowships deprived many couples of spiritual nourishment and community accountability.

A lay reader added:

*“When church doors closed, many families lost their routine of prayer and worship. Spiritual weakness set in, and some partners began behaving differently,*

*leading to mistrust and separation.”*

The findings in Table 7 highlight how the COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry through economic hardship, emotional stress, and spiritual disconnection. The most significant effects—loss of income, domestic conflict, and limited access to support services—reveal how external crises can deeply penetrate the foundation of marital relationships. These insights, supported by qualitative responses from local leaders, emphasize the need for stronger community-based and church-supported systems of marital support, especially in times of crisis.

### **3.5 Possible Ways of Improving Christian Marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

The researcher sought to identify practical and faith-based interventions that can improve the state of Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry. The data, supported by local leaders and clergy, pointed to a variety of spiritual, social, and economic solutions. These findings are presented in Table 8 below;

**Table 7: Ways of Improving Christian Marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

| <b>Strategies for Improvement</b>            | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|
| Strengthening marriage counseling services   | 45               | 90                    |
| Organizing couples' fellowships and seminars | 40               | 80                    |
| Supporting economic empowerment of couples   | 36               | 72                    |
| Promoting spiritual devotion in homes        | 30               | 60                    |
| Establishing mentorship programs for couples | 28               | 56                    |

**Source: Field Data, 2025**

The data in Table 8 highlights that the most suggested approach, supported by 45 (90%) of respondents, is strengthening marriage counseling services. Respondents emphasized the need for both premarital and ongoing marital counseling facilitated by trained church leaders and Christian professionals.

**A church Priest remarked;**

*“We must bring back structured counseling—before and after marriage. Many issues arise simply because couples don’t talk or don’t understand what marriage truly involves.”*

The organization of couples’ fellowships and seminars ranked second with 40 (80%). These forums provided space for couples to bond, learn from each other, and gain spiritual nourishment. One local pastor noted:

*“When couples share their experiences in a fellowship setting, they realize they are not alone. These seminars inspire growth, openness, and unity.”*

Economic empowerment of couples was identified by 36 (72%) of respondents as a key factor in reducing financial stress, a major cause of marriage breakdown. Churches are encouraged to facilitate access to microfinance, SACCOs, and skill-building workshops. A chief church warden in the Archdeaconry shared;

*“Many homes break up because of poverty. When couples work together to improve their livelihood, they also strengthen their relationship.”*

Promoting spiritual devotion in homes, including prayer, reading scripture together, and attending church regularly, was supported by 30 (60%). Daily spiritual practice reinforces unity and accountability. A Priest stated;

*“A family that prays together stays together. We must teach couples to build spiritual altars in their homes, not just in church.”*

Lastly, 28 (56%) of respondents highlighted the need for mentorship programs, where young or struggling couples are paired with older, experienced Christian couples for guidance and support. A clergy member added:

*“Mentorship is missing today. New couples need mentors who can walk with them, pray with them, and advise them with love and experience.”*

The results showed that enhancing Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry necessitates a multifaceted strategy that incorporates community support, counselling, economic development, and spiritual nurturing. Building better, healthier marriages can be achieved both practically and biblically by strengthening families economically, encouraging peer learning, and bolstering counselling services.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents theological reflections that are drawn from the findings of the research and the specific aims set in Chapter One. Central to this is Christian values and Bible teachings in the context of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on marriages among Christians in the North Ankole Diocese's Rwemikoma Archdeaconry. Every reflection is grounded in Bible references and informed by the realities revealed in the research process.

### 4.2 Indicators of Marriage Breakdown

The results showed that some important markers of marital hardship include emotional neglect, domestic abuse, infidelity, and a breakdown in communication. The biblical view of marriage as a loving, respectful, and united covenantal partnership contrasts with these problems.

Genesis 2:24 says that "a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." "One flesh" describes a union marked by closeness, dependence, and mutual support. The findings indicate that loss of communication and demise of trust may undermine such unity.

Adultery is clearly condemned in the Bible, according to many respondents. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." The prevalence of infidelity indicates a deeper spiritual issue that calls for a revival of teaching about covenant faithfulness and the importance of repentance.

Household violence, though often hidden from the world, violates the biblical mandate for selfless love within marriage. Ephesians 5:25 explains this requirement, which says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Any expression of abuse distorts the image of Christlike love and requires pastoral response and a public reaction from the church.

The findings of this research compel the church to ramp up its dissemination of the biblical values of love, patience, forgiveness, and respect as outlined in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. In addition, the church has a responsibility to create safe spaces for troubled couples and to be a catalyst for reconciliation in times of relational conflict.

#### **4.3 The Setbacks of COVID-19 on Christian Marriages**

Pre-existing marital problems were exacerbated by the pandemic due to a number of significant mediating factors, including as financial difficulties, prolonged home lockdowns, elevated stress levels, and a sense of spiritual alienation. These trials fit within biblical themes of suffering, resilience, and divine presence during times of crisis.

In Romans 5:3-4, we are told, “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” Although the epidemic brought up previously unheard-of issues, it also illuminated avenues for spiritual development and increased faith in God.

One of the main effects of COVID-19 was financial strain, which had a special effect on marriages. However, Matthew 6:31-33 advises believers to “seek first the Kingdom of

God and His righteousness" rather than worrying about material concerns. In addition to encouraging stewardship and financial preparation, the church must assist couples in growing in their faith in God's provision.

The increase in interpersonal disputes during lockdown times revealed many households' emotional and spiritual weaknesses. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble," according to Psalm 46:1. Through practices like prayer, worship, and support during difficult times, it is imperative that couples be encouraged to find solace in the Lord and in one another.

The risk of ignoring domestic and personal worship is reflected in the spiritual alienation seen in certain families. God's rules should be thoroughly taught to youngsters and discussed "when you sit at home," according to Deuteronomy 6:6-7. Despite its disruption, the pandemic offered a chance to revive family altars and faith-building at home.

Therefore, even if COVID-19 brought about a lot of difficulties, it also served as a spiritual revelation, urging Christian couples to return to the biblical traditions of prayer, forgiveness, support for one another, and a life that is focused on God.

#### **4.4 Possible Ways of Improving Christian Marriages**

The suggested strategies for enhancing Christian marriages are both realistic and firmly grounded in biblical principles, according to theological analysis. Those methods include the strengthening of counseling programs, economic empowerment, promoting

prayer and effective communication, fellowship activities organization, and mentorship by veteran couples.

Proverbs 11:14, which states, "Where there is no guidance, a people fall, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety," emphasises the significance of divine guidance. Couples who receive more biblically grounded pastoral counselling are better able to comprehend their own roles and settle conflicts in ways that are consistent with Christ's teachings.

Church-based programs that promote economic empowerment are consistent with 2 Thessalonians 3:10, which highlights the need of hard work and accountability in supporting one's family. Families that get financial support are able to live with dignity and experience less stress, which reflects God's concern for their welfare.

Two essential components of a solid marriage are communication and prayer. According to Philippians 4:6, individuals should "not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition...present your requests to God." Regular prayer and communication sessions can lead to greater spiritual and emotional development for couples.

The discipleship concept seen in the New Testament is reflected in fellowship and mentoring. Elderly Christians are commanded in Titus 2:3-5 to guide younger believers in concerns of religion and family. This intergenerational model ensures the

transmission of wisdom and fosters a sense of accountability and community support.

### **Theological Summary**

From a theological perspective, the study's results indicate that the situation of Christian marriages in the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry presents pastoral and spiritual difficulties. The church must take action to address this issue by restating biblical marriage values, offering practical advice, and serving as a beacon of hope and peace.

The dissolution of marriages represents a decline in community support, spiritual discipline, and discipleship. The issues brought on by COVID-19 emphasise how crucial it is to have solid biblical foundations and spiritual fortitude throughout emergencies. Based on the dynamics of communal life and the Bible, the suggested answers provide a path ahead.

In conclusion, the church's job is to protect marriage as a sacred institution. "I detest divorce," declares the Lord in Malachi 2:16. Therefore, use caution and refrain from being unfaithful. This directive states that in order to show God's love, unity, and grace, it is imperative that church leaders, spouses, and believers collaborate to promote marriage reconciliation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of the research findings in relation to the objectives outlined in Chapter One, followed by the study's conclusions and recommendations. The research focused on understanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese.

### **5.2 Discussion of the Study Findings**

#### **5.2.1 Indicators of Marriage Breakdown**

Poor communication, adultery cases, increased domestic violence, emotional desertion, and reduced spiritual commitment were all found to be predictors of marriage dissolution during and after the COVID-19 epidemic. The results corroborate earlier studies (Kagwa, 2021) that shown how exogenous stresses, such protracted lockdowns and economic uncertainty, would exacerbate preexisting relational conflicts.

In addition, a shortage of pastoral counseling services and reduced participation in church-organized marriage workshops during the pandemic left couples lacking significant relational support, thus intensifying conflicts and emotional distance.

#### **5.2.2 The Setbacks of COVID-19 on Christian Marriages**

Christian couples faced particular and profound difficulties as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These included limited access to pastoral care, disruptions of spiritual practices, psychological stress, and financial challenges. A significant number of respondents reported that financial constraints were the most significant impact, especially due to loss of jobs and reduced household income.

In addition, the long period spent in domestic settings led to increased tensions, conflict escalation, and, in some cases, expressions of violence. Respondents noted that being unable to engage in traditional religious activities, such as church attendance and community meals, negatively affected their marital relationships. The naturally spiritual nature of marriage, which is normally developed through the shared experience of worship services, was disrupted, thus undermining the feeling of unity and shared goals for many couples (Adyanga, 2021).

In addition, the lack of organized church activities disrupted home routines and hindered spiritual growth. Based on Kinyanjui (2022), couples who depended on church fellowship for guidance struggled to maintain their spiritual commitment when alone.

### **5.2.3 Possible Ways of Improving Christian Marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry**

The study pointed out numerous strategies for strengthening Christian marriages in the postCOVID-19 pandemic era. These strategies included the reinstatement of premarital and post marital counseling programs, spiritual mentorship by veteran couples, regular couple meetups, and economic empowerment programs for married Christians.

Members emphasized the importance of fostering communication and understanding between couples, which could be accomplished through community outreach and counselling. The provision of pastoral care and the resumption of marriage enrichment courses were recommended as crucial strategies for enhancing marital ties. It was also

suggested that the church start initiatives like savings clubs or job training that would help families become more financially secure.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

According to the study, the COVID-19 epidemic made poor communication, financial stress, extramarital affairs, and emotional desertion even more significant predictors of marriage dissolution in the Rwemikoma Archdeaconry.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental effect on Christian marriages by escalating preexisting conflicts, raising emotional and financial strains, and restricting access to church-related resources and spiritual counselling.

The study came to the conclusion that bolstering church-led counselling services, encouraging couple mentorship programs, and supporting economic empowerment initiatives were the best ways to enhance marriages.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

#### **5.3.1 Indicators of Marriage Breakdown**

The church should design proactive marriage monitoring programs to identify early signs of distress in Christian marriages.

Regular assessments through home visits and small group discussions can help pastors offer timely interventions.

Promoting spiritual formation and accountability among married couples to sustain healthy communication and fidelity.

### **5.3.2 Setbacks of COVID-19 on Christian Marriages**

The diocese should establish a post-pandemic family restoration initiative focusing on emotional healing and spiritual renewal.

Develop digital platforms for online counseling, Bible study, and prayer groups to ensure continuous spiritual engagement during crises.

Train pastors and lay leaders in trauma-informed care and marital crisis management.

### **5.3.3 Ways of Improving Christian Marriages**

Launching structured premarital and marital counseling programs tailored to the socio-economic context of Rwemikoma Archdeaconry.

Organizing marriage retreats and seminars facilitated by experienced clergy and Christian counselors.

Encourage economic empowerment of couples through church-led vocational skills training and savings groups.

Promoting mentoring by mature Christian couples to guide newlyweds and young families.

### **5.4 Areas for Further Research**

- I. A study can be conducted on the effect of educational background on Christian marital stability in rural Uganda.
- II. Further research can also explore the impact of poverty on the psychological and spiritual wellbeing of clergy couples in the North Ankole Diocese.
- III. An assessment can be made on the effectiveness of virtual pastoral care on family resilience during national emergenc

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**APPENDIX I**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARISH PRIESTS**

Dear respondent,

I am **GUMISIRIZA JOHN M22/BBUC/BD/013** a Student at Bishop Barham University Kabale doing a research on “The effects of COVID 19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese”. You have been selected as a respondent in this study so. Kindly assist by answering all the items in this questionnaire. The information given is purely for academic purposes and will be treated with at most confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Section A: Biodata**

Name:.....(OPTIONAL)      Date...../...../.....

**(Tick in the box where applicable**

1. Sex

- Male
- Female

2. Marital status

- Married
- 
- Single
- Others ..... (specify)

3. Age bracket

- 17 years and below
- 18-24 years  35 - 44 years
- 25-34years  45 years and above

4. Educational level

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- Masters
- Above masters
- Others.....  
..... (specify

**SECTION B**

1. What are the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....
- iv. ....
- v. ....

2. What are the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on Christian marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

i. ....

ii. ....

iii. ....

iv. ....

iv. ....

3. What are the possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

i. ....

ii. ....

iii. ....

iv. ....

**APPENDIX II**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAY READERS AND CHIEF CHURCH WARDENS**

Dear respondent,

I am **GUMISIRIZA JOHN M22/BBUC/BD/013** a Student at Bishop Barham University Kabale doing a research on “The effects of COVID 19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese”. You have been selected as a respondent in this study so. Kindly assist by answering all the items in this questionnaire. The information given is purely for academic purposes and will be treated with at most confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Section A: Biodata**

Name:.....(OPTIONAL)

Date...../...../.....

**(Tick in the box where applicable**

**1. Sex**

• Male

• Female

**2. Marital status**

• Married

• Single

• Others ..... (specify)

•

3. Age bracket

- 17 years and below
- 18-24 years  35 - 44 years
- 25-34years  45 years and above

4. Educational level

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- Masters
- Above masters
- Others.....  
..... (specify)

**SECTION B**

1. What are the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

- i. ....
- ii. ....
- iii. ....
- iv. ....
- v. ....

2. What are the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on Christian marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

i. ....

ii. ....

iii. ....

iv. ....

v. ....

3. What are the possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

4. i. ....

5. ii. ....

6. iii. ....

7. iv. ....

8. v. ....

**APPENDIX III**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIED COUPLES**

Dear respondent,

I am **GUMISIRIZA JOHN M22/BBUC/BD/013** a Student at Bishop Barham University Kabale doing a research on “The effects of COVID 19 pandemic on Christian marriage in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry, North Ankole Diocese”. You have been selected as a respondent in this study so. Kindly assist by answering all the items in this questionnaire. The information given is purely for academic purposes and will be treated with at most confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Section A: Biodata**

Name:.....(OPTIONAL)

Date...../...../.....

**(Tick in the box where applicable**

**1. Sex**

- Male
- Female

**2. Marital status**

- Married
- Single
- Others ..... (specify)

3. Age bracket

- 17 years and below
- 18-24 years  35 - 44 years
- 25-34years  45 years and above

4. Educational level

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Degree
- Masters
- Above masters
- Others.....  
..... (specify

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRIESTS LAYREADERS AND CHIEF CHURCH WARDENS**

1. What do you understand by the word Covid-19 pandemic?
2. Is there any relationship between Covid-19 pandemic and marriage?
3. What are the indicators of marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?
4. What are the effects of Covid-19 pandemic on Christian marriage breakdown in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?
5. What are the possible ways of improving Christian marriages in Rwemikoma Archdeaconry?

**Thank you for your time and valuable insights**