

**MEDIA INFLUENCE ON HIV/AIDS AWARENESS AND RESPONSE  
SERVICES: A CASE STUDY OF UBUNGO HIV/AIDS SUPPORT CENTRE  
IN DAR ES SALAAM REGION, TANZANIA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
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**2024**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled; **“Media Influence on HIV/AIDS Awareness and Response Services: A Case Study of Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania”** in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art in Mass Communication of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

Dr. Henry L. Mambo  
(Supervisor)

.....

Date

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I, **Grace Daniel Mollel**, declare that, the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication of the Open University of Tanzania.

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Signature

.....

Date

**DEDICATION**

Firstly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to almighty God, the creator and master of everything. Secondly, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my lovely parents Mr. Daniel Mollel and Ester Msangi for their endless love and care. Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my lovely friend Mr. Raphael Rutaihwa and my sons Justin Shirati and Daniel Shirati for their tireless support and encouragement until completion of this dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which media campaign on HIV/AIDS awareness had impacted the community to respond to HIV/AIDS interventions. The general objective of the study was to assess media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services with special reference to a selected HIV/AIDS support centre in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: identification of the media strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services, examination of whether there were available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services. The third specific objective assessed the challenges that result from media facing members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS services. The study used exploratory approach whereby non-probability purposive sampling was used to enroll the participants. Study findings showed that mass media used different strategies to reach the community for increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS and response services. Further, findings indicated the presence of supportive infrastructures for media to perform their duties in terms of the availability of tools and programmes and increased of the community awareness in the reduction of stigma and discrimination to people living with HIV/AIDS. Conclusively, the study has identified that media has helped to reach majority of people within a short period of time. The study recommends that, an emphasis must be kept on the use of pre-exposure prophylaxis and Post exposure prophylaxis to reduce the risk of transmission in vulnerable environment, increase content for increasing the awareness of using ART's and the mass media content creators have to conduct a thorough research before releasing the content.

**Keywords:** *Media Influence, HIV/AIDs Awareness, HIV/AIDS Response Services, Ubungo HIV/AIDS.*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARVs	Antiretroviral
CHAC	Council HIV/AIDS Coordinator
PLHIV CLUSTER	National Council of People living with HIV at Municipal Level
CTCs	Care and Treatment Centers
CSO	Civil Social Organization
DACC	District AIDS Control Coordinator :
FBO	Faith Based Organization
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity)
MC	Municipal Council
NACOPHA	National Council of People Living with HIV
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PREP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis :
PLHIV	People living with HIV
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TAs	Treatment Advocates
TACAIDS	Tanzania Commission for AIDS
WLHIV	Women Living with HIV
URT	United Republic of Tanzania

UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Chapter Overview**

Chapter one consists of the background to the study. The second content of the chapter is the statement of the problem. The third section of this chapter includes the research objectives, the research questions, significance, scope of the study, study limitations and relevance of the study to the global community.

#### **1.2 Introduction**

The study is about media influence on HIV /AIDS awareness and response services and the way media has created awareness and facilitated partnership among different sectors including people living with HIV/AIDS. The media has been instrumental in exposing cultural influences and practices that are responsible for the spread of HIV and advocated for policy changes towards responding to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) adherence, (Tham & Zanuuddin, 2015). HIV/AIDS has been a global health concern since its emergence in the early 1980s. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), an estimated 38 million people were living with HIV worldwide as of 2019, (Aghaei, *et al.*, 2023).

The media has played a critical role in disseminating information, raising awareness, and combating stigma associated with HIV/AIDS on a global scale. Various forms of media, including television, radio, print media, and digital platforms, have been utilized to reach diverse populations with prevention messages, treatment information, and support services, (Agegnehu & Tesema, 2020).

Sub-Saharan Africa has been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS

pandemic, accounting for the majority of global HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, (Yasin, 2021). The region faces unique challenges, including cultural beliefs, limited resources, socio-economic disparities, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure. However, media campaigns and initiatives have been instrumental in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention strategies, and access to treatment and support services, (Iqbal *et al.*, 2019). Media outlets have collaborated with governmental and non-governmental organizations to disseminate accurate information, challenge stigma, and empower communities to take proactive measures in fighting the pandemic.

HIV/AIDS has had a significant impact on East Africa, and mass media has played a crucial role in raising awareness and addressing the pandemic in the region. East Africa has been disproportionately affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with countries such as; Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda experiencing higher HIV prevalence rates compared to other regions, (Buluba, *et al.*, 2021). The prevalence rates vary across countries, but the impact of the disease remains a significant public health concern. Mass media, including television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms, have been primary sources of information about HIV/AIDS in East Africa. Media campaigns have played a crucial role in disseminating accurate information, promoting prevention strategies, and providing access to HIV testing, treatment, and support services, (Ledin, 2023).

Mass media campaigns have contributed to increasing awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS in East Africa. These campaigns have helped to dispel myths, reduce stigma, and promote behavior change by emphasizing safe sexual practices,

condom use, regular testing, and the importance of early treatment, (T. Zhang *et al.*, 2019). Media messages have also addressed issues related to mother-to-child transmission, prevention among key populations, and the importance of community support and engagement. Mass media has the advantage of reaching a wide audience across urban and rural areas, including populations that may have limited access to healthcare facilities or formal education, (Muslimin *et al.*, 2022). With the growing penetration of digital platforms and mobile technology in East Africa, media campaigns have extended their reach even further, enabling the dissemination of HIV/AIDS-related information to remote and marginalized communities.

Tanzania has a significant burden of HIV/AIDS, with an estimated 1.4 million people living with the virus as of 2021, (Ajayi *et al.*, 2019). The pandemic has had a profound social and economic impact on the country. Addressing HIV/AIDS is a national priority, and efforts have been made to increase access to prevention, testing, treatment, and support services. Mass media, including television, radio, newspapers, and digital platforms, have been instrumental in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, (Mwammenywa, 2019). These outlets have served as important sources of knowledge and played a crucial role in raising awareness, promoting behavior change, and reducing stigma associated with the disease.

Tanzania has developed a National HIV/AIDS Communication Strategy that recognizes the power of mass media in reaching diverse populations. The strategy emphasizes the use of mass media channels to deliver targeted messages on prevention, testing, treatment, and support services, (Tomar & Bansal, 2021). It also

highlights the importance of community engagement and involvement in media campaigns. Public service announcements and advertisements on television and radio are commonly used to convey HIV/AIDS-related messages to the general population, (Masese, 2022). These short messages aim to educate the public about prevention methods, encourage HIV testing, promote condom use, and address misconceptions and stigma. Advertisements may also highlight available support services and treatment options.

Tanzania's 95-95-95 concept aims to have 95% of people aware of their HIV status, 95% of them on sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 95% achieving viral suppression by 2030. The 95-95-95 policy is a key strategy adopted by Tanzania in its efforts to control and eliminate HIV/AIDS by the year 2030, aligning with the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (Buluba, *et al.*, 2021). The 95-95-95 policy is aligned with global efforts, such as the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, which aim to achieve similar outcomes worldwide, (Mwammenywa, 2019). Mass media plays a vital role in achieving the 95-95-95 targets in Tanzania's HIV/AIDS control efforts.

Through widespread dissemination of information, raising awareness, promoting behavior change, reducing stigma, and mobilizing communities, mass media campaigns have the potential to significantly impact the diagnosis, treatment, and viral suppression rates among PLHIV. By disseminating messages through television, radio, newspapers, online platforms, and mobile technology, mass media campaigns can reach a wide audience, including remote and marginalized communities. These campaigns can educate the public about the benefits of HIV

testing and encourage individuals to get tested, contributing to the first "95" target of diagnosing 95% of PLHIV, (Njau, *et al.*, 2022).

Media campaigns can address misconceptions, reduce stigma, and highlight the importance of timely initiation and adherence to ART, contributing to the second "95" target of having 95% of diagnosed PLHIV on treatment, (Lazuardi, *et al.*, 2019). By employing compelling storytelling, entertainment-education programs, and relatable characters, media messages can encourage individuals to adopt safer sexual practices, consistently use condoms, and adhere to their treatment regimens. Mass media campaigns can address social norms, dispel myths, and provide practical guidance, contributing to the third "95" target of achieving viral suppression among 95% of PLHIV on ART, (Yasin, 2021). By leveraging the reach and influence of mass media, Tanzania can strengthen its HIV/AIDS response and move closer to the goal of controlling and eliminating the epidemic by 2030.

The Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre, located in the Dar es Salaam Region of Tanzania, has been actively involved in HIV/AIDS awareness and response services, (Masese, 2022). The center utilizes various media platforms, including radio programs, television advertisements, print materials, and community outreach activities, to disseminate information, promote prevention strategies, and provide support to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS, (Mude *et al.*, 2020). Understanding the influence of the media in the context of the Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre provides insights into the effectiveness of their communication strategies and potential areas for improvement.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

HIV/AIDS continues to be a significant global public health challenge, with Tanzania being one of the countries heavily impacted by the pandemic. The Dar es Salaam region, specifically, experiences a significant number of HIV/AIDS cases, which highlights the need for comprehensive efforts to increase awareness and deliver effective response services (Cifor & McKinney, 2020). While various strategies have been implemented to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, there is a critical knowledge gap regarding the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness and the utilization of response services in this specific context. Media platforms play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and disseminating information, making them potentially powerful tools for raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, (Mukhtar, 2022).

Television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms have the ability to reach a wide audience and convey vital knowledge about prevention, testing, treatment, and support services. However, the extent to which media effectively fulfills this role in the Dar es Salaam region remains unclear. Understanding the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness is fundamental to developing targeted and impactful awareness campaigns that maximize reach and effectiveness. Furthermore, while awareness is essential, it is equally crucial to explore the impact of media on the utilization of HIV/AIDS response services, (Aghaei *et al.*, 2023).

Despite the presence of support centers, such as the Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre, there may still be barriers preventing individuals from accessing these vital

services. Media platforms have the potential to motivate individuals to seek support, engage with support centers, and access essential services. Investigating the influence of media on the utilization of response services is vital for identifying gaps, understanding challenges, and developing strategies to improve service uptake, (Agegnehu & Tesema, 2020).

Thus, this study examined the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services, focusing on the case of the Ubungu HIV/AIDS Support Centre in the Dar es Salaam region of Tanzania. By conducting an in-depth case study, the research explored the experiences, challenges, and successes of the support center in utilizing media platforms to raise awareness and promote service utilization, (Yasin, 2021). The findings provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of media strategies employed by the support center and identified opportunities for improvement. Ultimately, this study seeks to bridge the knowledge gap regarding the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services in the Dar es Salaam Region. By understanding the impact of media on awareness and service utilization, the research aims to contribute to evidence-based strategies that enhance HIV/AIDS awareness and response efforts, leading to improved health outcomes and a reduction in the burden of HIV/AIDS in the region.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

##### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to assess media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services with special reference to a selected HIV/AIDS

support centre in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To identify the media strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services;
- ii. To examine whether there were available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services; and
- iii. To assess the challenges that were the result of media, facing members of the Community while responding to HIV/AIDS services;

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What strategies that were devised to ensure that media enhances people's awareness and response towards HIV/AIDS services?
- ii. Were there any available media, tools and infrastructures to provided sufficient awareness programmes that could sensitize people to respond to HIV/AIDS services?
- iii. What were the media challenges facing members of the community when responding to HIV/AIDS services?

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

This study expands the understanding of importance of media influence in health promotion and disease prevention, HIV/AIDS response inclusive. The study is useful to show the power of media on reporting and awareness promotion on



HIV/AIDS and the extent to which can be a tool to help those who are HIV positive to live with friends, relatives and neighbors who are not affected. The research is very significant since it has never been conducted on this area of identifying powerfulness of media influence on health-related matters HIV/AIDS in particular. The findings of this study would contribute to an improved understanding of the role of media in HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. The results can inform the development of evidence-based strategies to enhance media campaigns, improve accurate information dissemination, and reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and similar contexts. Ultimately, it aimed to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support initiatives, leading to better health outcomes for affected individuals and communities.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study focused specifically on the Dar es Salaam Region in Tanzania. According District Health Information System (2022) this Region has a high burden (11% of national wise) of HIV/AIDS cases and was therefore a relevant context for examining the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. The research concentrated on the Ubungu HIV/AIDS Support Centre as a case study within this region. The study investigated the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. It explored how media platforms, such as television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms, contributed to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and shaping public perceptions regarding the disease. Additionally, the study examined the impact of media on the utilization of response services, particularly focusing on the Ubungu HIV/AIDS Support Centre.

## **1.8 Study Limitations and Delimitations**

### **1.8.1 Limitations**

The study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the use of self-report data and interviews introduces the possibility of biases, such as social desirability or recall bias. Participants may have provided responses they perceived as socially acceptable or may not have accurately recalled their experiences, which could have influenced the validity of the collected data. Secondly, the study's sample size and selection may limit the generality of the findings. The participants were drawn from a specific population and geographical area, and their perspectives may not fully represent the broader context. Lastly, the study relied on data collected at a specific point in time, which may not capture potential changes or developments that have occurred since then.

### **1.8.2 Delimitations**

The study acknowledges limitations in data collection, including potential biases due to the use of self-report data and interviews, such as social desirability or recall bias. Efforts were made to mitigate these biases by designing interview protocols to encourage honest responses and employing multiple data collection methods. The study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of this specific context. Data collection was limited to a specific timeframe, potentially overlooking changes in media influence, awareness levels, or response services utilization beyond that period.

These limitations and delimitations were important considerations for interpreting

the study's results and drawing conclusions. They provided a framework for understanding the boundaries and potential constraints of the research and highlighted opportunities for future studies to address these limitations and expand upon the findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature review that relates to this study. It incorporates studies that were conducted in different parts of the world on related topics. The chapter identifies, evaluates and synthesizes the relevant literature within a particular field of research. The aim of presenting the reviews is to obtain broader insights of what had already been documented so far by different researchers on the studies relating to media and HIV/AIDS. It helps in providing an overview of the impact of HIV and AIDS and discusses various strategies that have been used by media to address HIV/AIDS and the chosen theory for this study was Agenda Setting Theory. The chapter concludes with a description of the research questions and hypotheses for this study.

#### **2.2 Definition of Key Terms**

In this section, the key terminologies which apply to this dissertation have been explained based on previous studies and according to the context of the current study.

### **2.2.1 Mass Media**

Mass media is virtually a current awareness service informing people about current events and activities of human beings and about every significant natural phenomenon of the public interest. It encompasses almost every conceivable subject and the focus is on a wide audience, irrespective of their background and knowledge. Scholars, lay persons, professionals, scientists, artists, musicians, in fact, every group of persons get something of their interest provided by mass media, (Aghaei, *et al.*, 2023).

### **2.2.2 Media Influence**

Media influence refers to the power of television, radio, newspapers, and online platforms to shape public opinions and behaviours, (Iqbal *et al.*, 2019). In this study, it explores how media in Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania, contribute to HIV/AIDS awareness and influence individuals' utilization of response services at the Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre. It examines the effectiveness of media in educating the public and promoting behavior change regarding HIV/AIDS.

### **2.2.3 Human Immunodeficiency Virus**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the immune system, specifically targeting CD4 cells (T cells). It weakens the immune system over time, making individuals more susceptible to infections and diseases, (Buluba, *et al.*, 2021). HIV is primarily transmitted through unprotected sexual contact, sharing needles, and from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding,

(Mwammenywa, 2019).

#### **2.2.4 HIV/AIDS Awareness**

HIV/AIDS awareness refers to the level of knowledge, understanding, and recognition that individuals, communities, and societies have regarding HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), (Cifor & McKinney, 2020). It encompasses awareness of how HIV is transmitted, methods of prevention, available testing, treatment options, and the impact of the disease on individuals, families, and societies, (Zhang *et al.*, 2007). HIV/AIDS awareness aims to promote education, reduce stigma, and encourage proactive behavior towards prevention, testing, and support.

#### **2.2.5 HIV Response Services**

HIV response services refers to a range of medical, social, and support services designed to address the needs of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, (Ledin, 2023). These services include HIV testing and counseling, access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), medical care, mental health support, prevention education, condom distribution, harm reduction programmes, community outreach, and support groups, (Jones *et al.*, 2019). HIV response services aim to enhance the quality of life for people living with HIV/AIDS, promote adherence to treatment, prevent new infections, and reduce the impact of the disease on individuals and communities.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework provides a theoretical lens through which the study is

conducted, offering a framework for understanding and interpreting the research findings, (Varpio *et al.*, 2020). In this study, the researcher has adopted the Agenda-Setting Theory. This theory suggests that media channels have the power to influence public opinion and prioritize specific issues by determining which topics receive prominence and attention, (Gilardi *et al.*, 2022). By adopting the agenda-setting theory, the study seeks to explore how media platforms contribute to HIV/AIDS awareness and shape the utilization of response services at the Ubungo Support Centre.

### **2.3.1 Agenda Setting Theory**

The agenda-setting theory, first introduced by McCombs and Shaw in 1972, posits that the media has the power to influence the public's perception of salient issues by determining the prominence and importance given to certain topics, (Gilardi *et al.*, 2022). The theory suggests that media agenda has a significant impact on the public agenda. According to the agenda-setting theory, the media's ability to prioritize and highlight specific topics influences the public's perception of the importance and relevance of those issues, (Mohammed & McCombs, 2021). McCombs and Shaw 2021 identified two primary components of agenda setting:

**Media Agenda:** This component refers to the issues, events, and topics that receive extensive coverage and emphasis in the media. The media agenda is shaped by various factors, including; news values, editorial decisions, media ownership, and audience demand, (Barberá, *et al.*, 2019). Certain issues are highlighted while others are downplayed or ignored, leading to the public's perception of the relative

importance of various topics.

**Public Agenda:** This component represents the issues and topics that the public considers significant and worthy of attention. The public agenda is influenced by exposure to media content and the salience given to specific issues in media coverage, (Langer & Gruber, 2021). The media's emphasis on particular topics can influence the public's perception of what is important, shaping their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. In the context of this study the agenda-setting theory provides a lens to understand how media platforms influence HIV/AIDS awareness and the utilization of response services.

Through the agenda-setting theory, it can be observed that media platforms play a crucial role in shaping the public agenda related to HIV/AIDS. The media's selection of HIV/AIDS as a prominent issue through news coverage, documentaries, and educational programmes can raise awareness and increase the perceived importance of HIV/AIDS in the public's mind, (Borualogo & Casas, 2021). By providing extensive coverage on prevention strategies, testing services, treatment options, and support services, the media can influence the public's knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding HIV/AIDS.

Moreover, the media's role in highlighting the Ubungo HIV/AIDS Support Centre and its services can contribute to the utilization of response services. By giving visibility to the support centre through media platforms, individuals may become aware of the available resources, leading to increased engagement with the centre's

services. By adopting the agenda-setting theory, the study acknowledges the media's influence in shaping HIV/AIDS awareness and response services utilization. It recognizes the media's power to set the public agenda by emphasizing certain issues and topics, including HIV/AIDS, (Langer & Gruber, 2021).

## **2.4 Empirical Literature Review**

Empirical literature review involves review of information from the previous scholarly publications related to the role of mass media so as to increase awareness on HIV/AIDS as per the specific objectives.

### **2.4.1 Media Strategies Devised Towards Enhancing Response to HIV/AIDS**

#### **Services**

In order to identify the media strategies devised towards enhancing the response to HIV/AIDS services, a comprehensive review of the existing literature was conducted. This section of the literature review aims to provide an empirical review of relevant studies that examined the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness, stigma reduction, knowledge, attitude, and education prevention. Aghaei *et al.*, (2023) conducted a study in Iran Tehran on the influence of mass media in stigma reduction. The study explored how mass media campaigns can effectively reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. Their findings highlighted the importance of targeted messaging, accurate information dissemination, and community engagement through various media channels. This study's insights could provide valuable insights into media strategies that can be utilized to enhance the response to HIV/AIDS services.

Iqbal, *et al.*, (2019) conducted a study on knowledge and attitudes toward HIV/AIDS



in Pakistan. This study focused on understanding the role of the media in shaping knowledge and attitudes related to HIV/AIDS. The findings emphasized the need for effective media campaigns to dispel myths, promote accurate information, and improve overall knowledge and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. These findings can contribute to identifying media strategies that can be employed to enhance response services by addressing knowledge gaps and changing attitudes. Cifor & McKinney, (2020) conducted a study in Washington, exploring the impact of media campaigns on HIV/AIDS awareness and behavioral changes. The study examined the effectiveness of different media platforms, such as; television, radio, and mass media, in disseminating information and encouraging positive behavioral changes related to HIV/AIDS prevention and testing. Their findings can inform the design of media strategies that can effectively reach and engage the target audience in enhancing response services. Zhang, *et al.*, (2019) conducted a cross-sectional study in western China, investigating the role of media in HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

The study examined the influence of media exposure on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS prevention among the general population. The findings highlighted the positive impact of media campaigns in improving HIV/AIDS knowledge and promoting preventive behaviors. This study's insights can contribute to identifying effective media strategies for enhancing response services by targeting specific populations and addressing cultural factors. Muslimin *et al.*, (2022) conducted a study in Indonesia on the effects of HIV/AIDS education prevention. This study examined the impact of media-based HIV/AIDS education

programmes on knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions among young adults. The findings emphasized the importance of utilizing various media channels, including mass media and traditional media, to deliver culturally appropriate and engaging HIV/AIDS education content. These findings can inform the development of media strategies that effectively engage the target audience and enhance response services.

#### **2.4.2 Availability of Media Resources, Tools, Programmes and Infrastructures for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

Literature review was done to examine whether the media resources, tools, programmes, and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services were available. This section of the literature review provides an empirical review of relevant studies that have explored the availability and utilization of media resources for HIV/AIDS awareness and services. Ledin, (2023) conducted a study on HIV prevention in Scotland, to examine the availability and effectiveness of media resources in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and promoting prevention strategies.

The study explored the utilization of various media platforms, including traditional media, mass media, and community outreach programmes. The findings shed light on the importance of adequate media resources and infrastructure to effectively reach the target audience and disseminate information. This study's insights can contribute to understanding of the necessary media resources and tools required for HIV/AIDS awareness and services. Jones, *et al.*, (2019) conducted a cross-sectional study in the USA, focusing on the attitude towards HIV testing and awareness of HIV campaigns

through social networks. The study explored the use of mass media platforms as a potential resource for HIV/AIDS awareness and services. The findings highlighted the potential of social networks in disseminating information, promoting HIV testing, and engaging individuals in HIV/AIDS campaigns. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the role of social media as a media resource for HIV/AIDS awareness and services.

Ajayi *et al.*, (2019) conducted a quantitative study in South Africa, examining the achievement of the first goal of the UNAIDS strategy in relation to HIV/AIDS. The study assessed the availability and utilization of media resources and programmes in achieving the goal of raising awareness about HIV/AIDS. The findings emphasized the importance of media campaigns, educational programmes, and infrastructure in reaching the target population and achieving the desired outcomes. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the link between media resources and the achievement of HIV/AIDS awareness goals.

Lazuardi, *et al.*, (2019) conducted a cross-sectional study in Indonesia, exploring HIV/AIDS awareness and services. The study assessed the availability and utilization of media resources, including television, radio, and community-based program. The findings highlighted the importance of tailored media campaigns, effective messaging, and community engagement in raising awareness and delivering HIV/AIDS services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the role of media resources and program in enhancing HIV/AIDS awareness and services. Bago & Lompo, (2019) conducted a study in Uganda to explore the linkage between exposure to mass media and HIV/AIDS awareness. The study examined the

availability and utilization of mass media resources, such as; television, radio, and print media, in Tanzania. The findings emphasized the need for sustained media campaigns, resource allocation, and infrastructure development to ensure effective HIV/AIDS awareness and services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the significance of media resources and infrastructures in supporting HIV/AIDS awareness efforts.

#### **2.4.3 Challenges from Media, to Members of the Community while Responding to HIV/AIDS Services**

This part assesses the challenges that result from media and are faced by members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS services. It provides an empirical review of relevant studies that have explored the challenges arising from media in the context of HIV/AIDS services. Agegnehu & Tesema, (2020) conducted a mixed-approach study in Ethiopia, investigating the effects of mass media on comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The study explored the challenges that individuals may face when receiving information through mass media channels. The findings highlighted potential challenges such as; misinformation, stigmatization, and limited access to media platforms. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the challenges faced by community members in interpreting and responding to HIV/AIDS services mediated by the media.

Mude, *et al.*, (2020) conducted a cross-sectional study in South Sudan, focusing on HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes, and assessment among childbearing women. The study examined the challenges faced by women in accessing and utilizing media resources for HIV/AIDS information. The findings highlighted barriers such as

limited access to media platforms, cultural norms, and gender inequalities that hindered effective response to HIV/AIDS services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding of the challenges faced by specific populations in accessing and utilizing media resources for HIV/AIDS services.

Birdthistle, *et al.*, (2022) conducted a quantitative research study on the effect of a multimedia campaign on HIV testing. The study assessed the challenges faced by individuals in engaging with media campaigns and accessing HIV testing services. The findings emphasized issues such as low media literacy, language barriers, and limited awareness of available services as potential challenges that affected response to HIV/AIDS services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the challenges that individuals encounter when trying to respond to HIV/AIDS services mediated by multimedia campaigns.

Youssef, *et al.*, (2021) conducted a study on the attitude and awareness of HIV/AIDS in relation to the influence of mass media in Lebanon. The study examined the challenges faced by individuals in accessing accurate and reliable information through mass media channels. The findings highlighted challenges such as conflicting messages, lack of trust in media sources, and social stigma that affected individuals' response to HIV/AIDS services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the challenges arising from media influence and its impact on individuals' response to HIV/AIDS services.

Lazuardi, *et al.*, (2019) conducted a study on understanding social influences on engaging key populations with HIV prevention in Indonesia. The study examined the

challenges faced by key populations in accessing and responding to HIV prevention efforts mediated by media platforms. The findings emphasized challenges such as social stigma, discrimination, and limited representation in media campaigns that hindered effective response to HIV/AIDS services. This study's insights can contribute to understanding the challenges faced by marginalized populations in accessing and engaging with media-driven HIV/AIDS services.

## **2.5 The Conceptual Framework**

According to Kumar (2011), a concept is a word or phrase that symbolizes several related ideas that are used as a vocabulary for understanding the research problem. He further says that a conceptual framework is a set of ideas and principles that represents specific direction by which the research would have to be undertaken. In other words, it describes the relationship between variables identified in the study and forms the basis of the research. A conceptual framework was applied in this study as it visualises the research project and put it into action. It defines the relevant variables and mapped out how they related each other.

The dependent variable in this conceptual framework is focused on understanding the effectiveness of media strategies in influencing HIV/AIDS response services. It encompasses various aspects of media initiatives aimed at addressing HIV/AIDS-related issues. These strategies include efforts to promote awareness, reduce stigma and discrimination, increase utilization of services, and engage the community in dialogue. The dependent variable seeks to assess the impact and outcomes of these media strategies in achieving their intended goals.

This independent variable refers to the availability of media resources, tools, and programmes that can be utilized for HIV/AIDS awareness. It encompasses factors such as; funding, technology, equipment, and platforms necessary for developing and disseminating effective media campaigns. The variable acknowledges that the availability and accessibility of these resources can significantly influence the design and implementation of media strategies to influence HIV/AIDS response services.

This independent variable focuses on the specific media programmes and initiatives that are employed to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote related services. It encompasses the content, format, and delivery channels of these programmes. Examples may include television or radio campaigns, online initiatives, documentaries, or public service announcements. The variable recognizes that the characteristics and nature of these media programmes play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of the strategies employed.

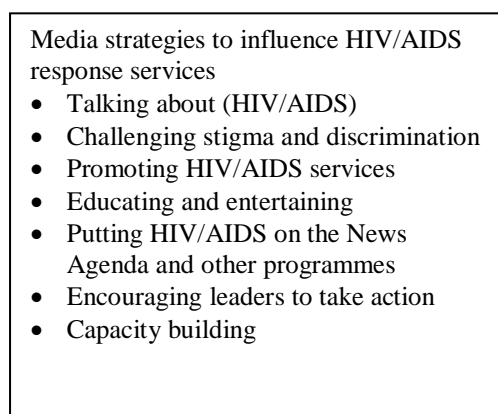
The independent variable addresses the presence of adequate media infrastructures necessary for effective HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. It encompasses factors such as; broadcasting networks, internet connectivity, media outlets, and distribution channels that facilitate the dissemination of HIV/AIDS-related information. The variable acknowledges that the availability and functionality of these infrastructures impact the reach, accessibility, and impact of media strategies in influencing HIV/AIDS response services.

This independent variable recognizes the challenges faced by community members,

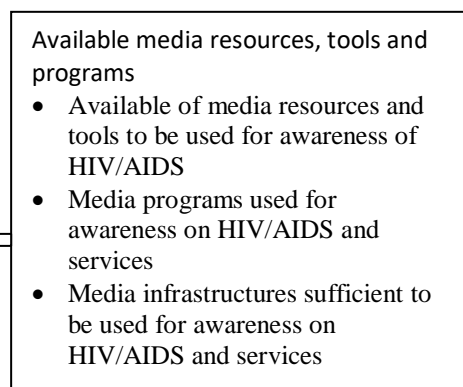
particularly people living with HIV/AIDS, as a result of media representations. It encompasses issues such as increased discrimination and stigma perpetuated through negative portrayals, sensationalism, and misinformation in media coverage. The variable also acknowledges the potential impact of misleading information related to HIV and AIDS disseminated through media platforms. These challenges highlight the contextual factors that can affect the effectiveness of media strategies and their influence on HIV/AIDS response services.

In the conceptual framework, the independent variables i.e. available media resources, tools, and programmes; media programmes used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services; media infrastructures are considered influential factors that shape the implementation and outcomes of media strategies aimed at influencing HIV/AIDS response services. The challenges resulting from media faced by community members, including PLHIV, are contextual factors that can impact the effectiveness of these strategies. By exploring the relationships between these variables, the framework aims to provide insights into the role of media in raising awareness, reducing stigma, and promoting effective responses to HIV/AIDS.

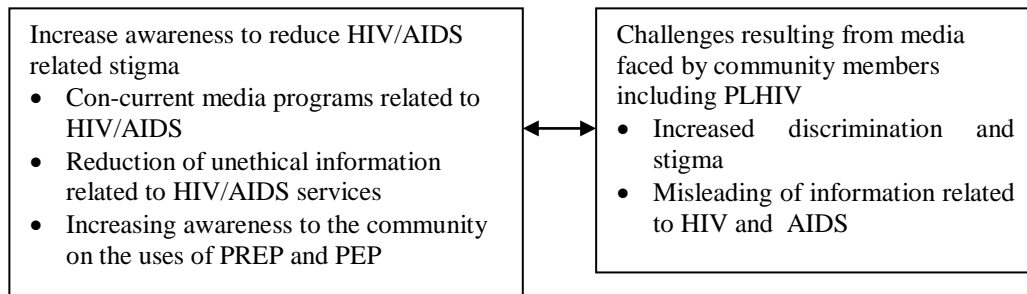
### Dependent Variable



### Independent Variable







**Figure 2.1: The Conceptual framework as adopted from Agenda Setting Theory**

**Source:** Researcher, 2023

## 2.6 Knowledge Gap

The literature review presented above highlights several key studies that contribute to understanding the role of media in HIV/AIDS awareness and response services, as well as the challenges faced by community members in accessing and utilizing media resources. While these studies provide valuable insights, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed. One research gap is the need for more comprehensive studies that examine the effectiveness of media-based HIV/AIDS education programs in different cultural contexts.

The study by Muslimin, *et al.*, (2022) focused on young adults in Indonesia, emphasizing the importance of utilizing various media channels to deliver culturally appropriate education content. However, further research is needed to assess the effectiveness of media strategies in other regions and among diverse populations. Understanding the cultural nuances and preferences regarding media consumption can help tailor interventions to specific communities and enhance their impact.

Another research gap is the limited understanding of the long-term effects of media

campaigns on HIV/AIDS awareness and behaviour change. While studies like Jones *et al.*, (2019) explored the potential of social media platforms in disseminating information and engaging individuals in HIV/AIDS campaigns, there is a need for longitudinal studies that assess the sustained impact of media interventions. Examining the durability of knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions over time can provide insights into the effectiveness of media-based strategies and inform the development of long-term interventions.

Additionally, there is a research gap regarding the challenges faced by specific populations, such as marginalized and vulnerable groups, in accessing and engaging with media-driven HIV/AIDS services. Studies like Lazuardi *et al.*, (2019) highlighted challenges such as; social stigma, discrimination, and limited representation in media campaigns. However, further research is needed to understand the unique barriers faced by different populations, including LGBTQ+ individuals, sex workers, and people living in remote or underserved areas. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure equitable access to HIV/AIDS information and services.

Furthermore, there is a need for studies that explore innovative media approaches and technologies in HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. While the reviewed studies focused on traditional media platforms like; television, radio, and print media, there is limited research on the potential of emerging technologies such as mobile applications, social media influencers, and virtual reality. Investigating the effectiveness and reach of these new media approaches can provide valuable insights

into their potential to enhance HIV/AIDS education and engagement.

In summary, the literature review highlights several research gaps in the field of media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. Addressing these gaps through comprehensive studies in diverse cultural contexts, examining long-term effects, understanding population-specific challenges, and exploring innovative media approaches can further advance our understanding and inform the development of effective interventions in this critical area of public health.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the procedure that was involved in carrying out this study. It presents the research design, methods, and techniques used in data collection and analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative research methodology to examine the role of mass media in increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS and reducing stigma. Qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting social phenomena through in-depth exploration and analysis of individuals' perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study utilized various qualitative data collection methods, including interviews, focus groups, and content analysis of mass media messages. These methods allowed the researchers to gather rich, detailed information about participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences related to HIV/AIDS and the impact of mass media on awareness and stigma reduction.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals living with HIV/AIDS, healthcare providers, media practitioners, and support center representatives. These interviews provided an opportunity to explore participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and perspectives on the role of mass media in addressing HIV/AIDS-related issues. Focus groups were also conducted to facilitate group discussions and capture collective perspectives. These discussions allowed participants to interact with one another, share their views, and generate insights about the influence of mass media

on HIV/AIDS awareness and stigma reduction.

In addition to the interviews and focus groups, content analysis was performed on mass media messages related to HIV/AIDS. This involved systematically analyzing the content of radio programming and other media materials to identify recurring themes, messages, and strategies employed to increase awareness and reduce stigma. Through these qualitative research methods, the study aimed to gain understanding of how mass media contribute to HIV/AIDS awareness and stigma reduction. By exploring participants' lived experiences and perceptions, the researchers sought to identify effective strategies, challenges, and potential areas for improvement in utilizing mass media as a tool for HIV/AIDS education and stigma reduction efforts.

Overall, the qualitative research methodology employed in this study provided a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the role of mass media in increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS and reducing stigma. It allowed for a more understanding of individual experiences and perspectives, shedding light on the potential impact and limitations of mass media interventions in addressing this critical public health issue.

### **3.2 Study Design**

Research design, in the context of increasing awareness related to HIV/AIDS through mass media, refers to the systematic plan or approach that outlines how the study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of using mass media to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. Kothari (1990) defined research design as the plan on how the researcher systematically collected and analyzed data needed to answer research questions. He added that, research design is a framework or roadmap

through which a research process is conducted to explain the social phenomena under investigative. The research adopted qualitative approach under exploratory case study design to examine the media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services in Ubungo PLHIV Cluster Center. Case Study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth , multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real life context (Ames *et al.*, 2019).

A case study is depicted as a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context, (Alderson, *et al.*, 2022). Ames *et al.*, (2019) offers a more detailed and technical definition of a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context specifically when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

### **3.3 Study Area**

This section focuses on the study area, which includes the Ubungo Cluster in the Dar es Salaam region. The study was conducted at Ubungo District Municipal. Its selection was due to the higher number of People Living with HIV in that areas and considering that some of the cluster members are University Students who are the main users of social media and other media. Their potentiality and experiences in relation to media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services are particularly valuable in understanding the dynamics within this specific population.

The population of interest in this study comprised of individuals living with HIV in this area, as well as officials who were directly involved in providing support to them.

According to the statistics from the Tanzania HIV Impact Survey, the prevalence of

HIV in Tanzania was estimated to be 1.4 million, with approximately 40% of those affected being youth (Tanzania Ministry of Health, 2022). This high prevalence among youth underscores the importance of conducting the study at the Ubungo Cluster/HIV Support Centre, which serves a large number of people living with HIV (PLHIV), particularly youth. The center provides critical support and resources to this vulnerable population.

To reach a wide audience the study involved two prominent mass media outlets: Radio One and Wasafi Radio. These two radio stations were selected because they have dedicated sessions for HIV discussions where radio one reaches different age groups and Wasafi radio at most targets the youth. Their extensive reach makes them effective channels for disseminating information and engaging with the community. According to a study by Smith et al. (2020), Radio One and Wasafi Radio are among the most tuned radio stations in Tanzania, with a significant listenership across various age groups, including the youth.

The inclusion of these media outlets in the study was based on their ability to effectively reach and engage with the target population. By leveraging their popularity and specific programs focused on HIV and youth-related topics, the study aimed to maximize its impact and ensure that the findings and interventions reached a broad audience. This strategic selection of media outlets aligns with evidence from previous studies highlights the influential role of mass media in disseminating HIV-related information and promoting behavior change among youth (Muessig et al., 2015; Noar et al., 2016).

### **3.4 Population of the Study**

The population of this study was people who were living with HIV, clusters officials and Journalists. This was done so as to be availed with information on how media has been a tool for their services and to get information concerning challenges which they encountered in their day to day activities emanating from the media. Other groups were media personnel and health provider who were dealing with HIV/AIDS issues that were also responsible in resolving HIV/AIDS as they were well experienced and had enriched information on media involvement and its associated advantages and disadvantages.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Sampling is the process of selecting a sample from a population Loru, (2020). According to Ames *et al.*, (2019) a sample is a subset of people, items, or events from a larger population that you collect and analyze to make inferences. Purposive sampling, a method employed in this study, was used to select participants who were most likely to provide appropriate and useful information. Purposive sampling involves intentionally choosing individuals or cases that possess specific characteristics or qualities that are relevant to the research objectives.

The study aimed to effectively allocate limited research resources by focusing on participants who could offer valuable insights and contribute to the study's objectives, (Ames *et al.*, 2019) whereby the purposive selection of participants involved the PLHIV who participate in media sessions on HIV/AIDS awareness/sensitization, as well those who were interested/following the information from media, Alderson, *et al.*, (2022) defined that purposive sampling as the



technique of how the researchers select the person or the group as the sample based on their purposes and opinions. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys.

Through purposive sampling, the study recruited a total of 36 participants. Out of these participants, 16 individuals living with HIV/AIDS were selected for in-depth interviews. Among the 16, two were health providers. Additionally, four mass media workers, including one presenter and one content editor from each media outlet, were chosen for key informant interviews. The remaining 16 participants were involved in focused group discussions, each group consisting of eight participants.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods**

This study utilized multiple data collection methods to gather rich and comprehensive information. These methods included; in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focused group discussions. By employing a combination of in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and focused group discussions, the study aimed to collect diverse and comprehensive qualitative data from different perspectives. This multi-method approach allowed for the exploration of individual experiences, expert insights, and group dynamics, providing a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic.

#### **3.6.1 In-depth Interview**

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique used to conduct detailed interviews with a small number of participants. Primary data was collected using in-depth interviews with people living with HIV, content editors of mass media and radio presenters or journalists. The method was used because it helped in acquiring the detailed information that sheds light on an individual's perspective, experiences, feelings, and the derived meaning about a particular topic or issue. Therefore, it helped in uncovering the issues in order to obtain detailed results and this method allowed to gain insight into the experiences, feelings and perspectives of the interviewees. The in-depth interviews involved PLHIV with the previous history of media influence of HIV/AIDS, health provider and media personnel. Key informant interview (KII) was also conducted to explore more information. It was a scheduled interview.

### **3.6.3 Focused Group Discussion**

Focus group discussion (FGD) is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Hayward, Simpson, & Wood, 2004). Focused group discussions were employed to actively engage participants in discussing a specific topic or issue, allowing them to express their perspectives on the influence of media on HIV response services. The study involved cluster leaders, PLHIV who shared their experiences, views, and opinions on media influence on HIV/AIDS.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Plan**

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the findings obtained from the study. This approach searched for emerging themes that described the phenomenon under investigation. To begin with, primary coding categories within themes were identified after examining the transcripts to obtain codes and sub codes. In the process of coding, a codebook containing identified coding categories and newly emerging themes was developed and attached in the proper code. This helped to systematically group the text data into few content related themes that are indistinguishable, which helped in familiarization with the collected data. Here the researcher read the notes taken and went through the transcripts repeatedly to transform all data into written form and made initial list of potential codes. After listing to the themes, the researchers searched for themes among codes to expand patterns in data, integrating the coded data with the preferred themes which helped in examining the relationships between codes and themes and between contrasting levels of existing themes.

Thereafter, themes were reviewed which entailed searching for data that had description on the study objectives. This allowed further expansion on and revision of the themes. As such; this involved defining and refining existing themes in analysis. Later the information under major and sub themes were presented in summaries and narrative text, then final report was written. Thematic analysis was to assess the media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services.

### **3.8 Data Reliability and Validity**

According to Kyngäs *et al.*, (2020), the concept of trustworthiness is defined as the

demonstration that the evidence for the results is strong and that they provide what is wrong or right. Therefore, trustworthiness in qualitative research supports the argument that the inquired findings are worth to what is estimated. In this regard, (PDF) *Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects*, n.d.) mentioned four criteria which are used to develop trustworthiness in qualitative research namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

In agreement with Creswell, (2011), the researcher applied the following to ensure credibility. First, data collection instruments were reviewed and adjusted by researcher' supervisor and by peers to ensure that they collected relevant information. Secondly, the researcher assured credibility by asking similar questions to all participants and use of different methods of data collection i.e. methodological triangulation. This enabled a researcher to analyze evidence from the data collection methods to develop a report which was precise and credible.

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

In qualitative research, consistency and reliability of the research findings depends on the truth of the procedures (Moon & Blackman, 2014). In order to ensure dependability in this study, the researcher improved transparency by interpreting and explaining in details the purpose of the study. Thus, the researcher needed to report on the steps taken both to manage and reflect on the effects of their philosophical or experimental preferences. During interviews, the researcher used both Kiswahili and English languages to collect information and give participants freedom in expressing

their opinions.

### **3.8.3 Transferability**

The researcher ensured that the research study findings were applicable in other contexts with similar situation, similar population, and similar phenomenon through thick description. According to (Loru, 2020) thick description is achieved by a providing detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit patterns of cultural and social relationship and puts them in context.

### **3.8.4 Conformability**

Researcher ensured that the study findings were based on participants' words. Researcher avoided reflexivity during data collection. According to Kyngäs *et al.*, (2020), in ensuring conformability, audit trail can be used so that the research findings can be confirmed by the other researcher.

## **3.9 Ethical Clearance**

The study secured permission from the Open University of Tanzania to undertake the study at the Ubungo centre for PLHIV. The information was obtained under the consent of the study participants. In addition, information that directly exposed respondents' personalities was not interrogated. Furthermore, collected information from respondents were treated as confidential and used for research purposes only.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the findings obtained during the study are presented, analysed and discussed. The findings obtained from the study were presented in this section after selecting main themes from encoded subthemes followed by the analysis and discussion. The findings were based on the specific objectives of the study which were; identification of media strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services, examining whether there are available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services, assessment of challenges that were the result of media facing members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS services and provision of an overview of media initiatives which sought to increase awareness and to reduce HIV related stigma.

#### **4.2 Identification of Media Strategies Devised Towards Enhancing Response to HIV/AIDS Services**

The primary aim of this study was to explore the media strategies implemented to enhance awareness and response to HIV/AIDS services. Within this objective, the study identified several key themes encompassing various strategies. These strategies included promoting open discussions about HIV/AIDS, combating stigma and discrimination, raising awareness of available HIV/AIDS services, using education and entertainment approaches, highlighting HIV/AIDS in news coverage, encouraging leaders to take proactive measures, and promoting capacity building

initiatives.

#### 4.2.1 “Talking About It” Programme (HIV/AIDS)

During the study it was found out that, one of the strategies made by the mass media particularly of Radio one and Wasafi fm was to talk about HIV/AIDS in order to increase awareness. The talks about HIV/AIDS included the ways of protection, meaning and the use of retroviral drugs. It reduced the stigma which existed within the community of people who were living with HIV. For example, in Wasafi media had the radio session with the name of “Tuzungumze” which in English meant “let’s talk”. During that session, discussions centered around HIV/AIDS and its various aspects, particularly those concerning individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Additionally, Radio One conducted a programme titled "*Tanzania bila UKIMWI inawezekana*" (meaning "HIV/AIDS free Tanzania is possible" in English). This programme covered a wide range of topics related to HIV/AIDS, including prevention methods, transmission mechanisms, governmental strategies, and the use of antiretroviral drugs. During the interview a participant from Wasafi radio said the following:

*“The role of Mass media is to provide knowledge to the community and providing information. There are other roles like entertainment and related functions. In this media, we decided to join efforts with the government to deteriorate stigma among the community to PLHIV and increasing awareness to HIV/AIDS. This is done through the radio session we introduced with the name of ‘Tuzungumze kuhusu HIV/AIDS’,( Lets us Talk About HIV/AIDS) and through that we believe the whole community will be reached”.* **(Male radio presenter/Wasafi FM/IDI/April 2023)**

The finding highlights the role of mass media, specifically a radio session called

*'Tuzungumze kuhusu HIV/AIDS,( Lets us Talk About HIV/AIDS)'* in providing knowledge, information, and entertainment to the community. The interviewee mentioned that their organization had joined efforts with the government to combat stigma towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and increase awareness about HIV/AIDS within the community.

The findings acknowledged the role of mass media, including the radio session, in providing knowledge and information to the community. This indicated that mass media platforms were utilized as a means of disseminating accurate and relevant information about HIV/AIDS to raise awareness and educate the community. The findings suggested that mass media, including the radio session, serves not only as a source of knowledge but also as a medium for entertainment and related functions. This implied that the mass media organization recognized the importance of engaging the community through entertaining content that could capture their attention while addressing HIV/AIDS-related issues.

The findings highlighted the collaboration between the organization and the government in their efforts to combat stigma and increase awareness about HIV/AIDS. This collaboration indicated a joint commitment to addressing the issue at a broader level, potentially leveraging government resources, policies, and support to amplify the impact of the organization's initiatives. The findings emphasized the organization's objective of deteriorating stigma towards PLHIV within the community. By utilizing mass media, particularly the radio session, the organization aims to challenge misconceptions, promote understanding, and foster a more supportive and inclusive environment for PLHIV. The finding expressed the belief



that through the radio session, the organization would be able to reach the entire community. This suggests that the organization aims to have a broad community impact by utilizing a popular and accessible medium like radio. By reaching a wide audience, they could effectively disseminate information, combat stigma, and increase awareness about HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlights the role of mass media, specifically the radio session, in providing knowledge, addressing stigma, and increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS within the community. The collaboration with the government and the belief in reaching the entire community through the radio session reflect a comprehensive approach to media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. The finding demonstrates the organization's commitment to utilizing mass media as a powerful tool for education and entertainment, while also leveraging partnerships and community engagement to maximize their impact. The same findings were obtained by Agegnehu & Tesema, (2020) that the most important thing required to combat HIV/AIDS is to increasingly increase awareness to the community by talking about it.

#### **4.2.2 Challenging Stigma and Discrimination**

Mass media are the main tools which can be used to reach the whole community in a simplest way for a short period of time. Utilizing popular mass media platforms enhances the likelihood of reaching a larger number of community members with the intended message. For instance, Wasafi Radio and Radio One had employed combat stigma and discrimination towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This approach was necessitated by the fact that many community members possessed limited

knowledge about HIV/AIDS, resulting in higher levels of discrimination and stigma towards those affected. During the interview with the Radio one presenter he had the following to say;

*“One of our strategies is to ensure that stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS no longer exists in our societies. Instead of relying solely on government regulations to penalize those who stigmatize individuals with HIV, it would be more effective to invest further in education to increase public awareness”.* **(Male radio presenter/Radio One/IDI/April 2023)**

The finding emphasized the organization's strategy to eradicate stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS in society. Instead of relying solely on regulatory measures, the interviewee suggested investing more in education to increase awareness among the general population. The finding highlights the organization's objective to eliminate stigma and discrimination towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Stigma and discrimination can have detrimental effects on the lives of people with HIV/AIDS, including barriers to accessing healthcare, social exclusion, and psychological distress. By addressing these issues, the organization aims to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The finding suggested that the organization views education as a key strategy for reducing stigma and discrimination. By investing in education, the organization aims to increase awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS among the general population. Education can play a crucial role in dispelling misconceptions, challenging stereotypes, and promoting empathy and acceptance. It empowers individuals with knowledge, enabling them to make informed decisions and contribute to a more compassionate society. The finding implies that the interviewee

sees the government's role as more focused on implementing regulatory measures rather than solely relying on them to address stigma and discrimination. While regulations can be important in combating discrimination, the interviewee suggests that investing in education is a more effective and sustainable approach. This viewpoint suggests a belief in the power of education to bring about long-term societal change and shift attitudes towards HIV/AIDS.

The finding reflected a holistic approach to addressing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS. Instead of solely relying on punitive measures, the organization recognizes the importance of comprehensive strategies that tackle the root causes of stigma. By focusing on education, they aim to change societal attitudes and behaviors, fostering a culture of acceptance, support, and empathy towards people living with HIV/AIDS. The finding suggested that the organization envisions a transformation in societal attitudes and behaviors towards people living with HIV/AIDS. By addressing stigma and discrimination, they aspired to create a society where individuals with HIV/AIDS are treated with dignity, respect, and equality. This transformation aligns with the broader goal of achieving social justice and inclusivity for marginalized populations.

The finding highlights the organization's strategy to combat stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV/AIDS through education and societal transformation. It underscored the belief that investing in education is crucial for increasing awareness, challenging stereotypes, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. The finding reflected a comprehensive and proactive approach that goes beyond punitive measures, aiming for long-lasting change at the

societal level. The findings were also obtained by Iqbal *et al.*, (2019) who conducted a study on the determinants of HIV/AIDS under the media influence to the community and found out that one of the greatest roles of mass media was to challenge stigma and discrimination.

When the participants were asked to explain the role of media in the reduction of stigma and discrimination, they had the following to say;

*“Mass media has played a significant role in reducing discrimination rates and stigma within the community towards people living with HIV/AIDS. Although the situation is not completely eradicated, the efforts of mass media have been effective in mitigating these issues. This is primarily due to increased awareness among the public that it is possible an HIV-positive mother to give birth to an HIV negative child, through Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) service, that individuals can live fulfilling lives with HIV, and that anyone can be at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. As a result, mass media's contributions have been instrumental in diminishing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.”* (Male/ PLHIV/IDI/April 2023).

The finding suggested that mass media, through their role in disseminating information and raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, had contributed to a reduction in the discrimination and stigma towards people living with HIV/AIDS in the community. The interviewee emphasized that although the situation was not completely alleviated, the awareness created by mass media had played a significant role in changing perceptions. The interviewee stated that mass media had contributed to reducing discrimination and stigma towards people living with HIV/AIDS in the community. This indicated that the media's efforts in disseminating information and shaping public perceptions had been effective in challenging misconceptions and fostering a more inclusive attitude towards individuals with HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlights that the media's role in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS

has led to increased knowledge in the community. People are now aware that it is possible for an HIV-positive mother to give birth to a child without transmitting the virus. This awareness helps combat the stigma associated with mother-to-child transmission and dispels misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. The interviewee mentioned that media coverage had helped people understand that it was possible to live with HIV and that individuals with the virus could lead to fulfilling lives. By showcasing stories of individuals living with HIV/AIDS who were thriving, the media has played a role in reducing the fear and discrimination associated with the virus.

The finding implied that mass media, as a widely accessible platform, had played a crucial role in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS. This accessibility ensured that a larger portion of the community could access accurate and up-to-date information, which might contribute to changing attitudes and reducing stigma. While acknowledging the positive impact of mass media, the interviewee noted that the situation was not completely alleviated. This suggested that despite the progress made in reducing discrimination and stigma, there might still be lingering challenges and further work to be done.

The finding highlights the positive influence of mass media in reducing discrimination and stigma towards people living with HIV/AIDS. By increasing awareness, dispelling misconceptions, and showcasing positive examples, the media had contributed to changing attitudes and fostering a more inclusive society. However, it also acknowledged that there was still a work ahead to further alleviate discrimination and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. The results in this study are

supported by those which were obtained by (Akankunda, *et al.*, 2022) that, a key way to reduce stigma and discrimination to people living with HIV/AIDS is by using mass media to increase awareness to the community members.

#### **4.2.3 Promoting HIV/AIDS Services**

Promotion of HIV/AIDS services was a strategy set by the selected mass media (Radio One and Wasafi media). The HIV/AIDS services included; HIV primary care, including ARV treatment, retention interventions, re-engagement interventions, adherence interventions, STD screening and treatment, partner services. Others were, behavioral risk reduction interventions, screening patients for behavioral health and social services needs, linkage to behavioral health and social services, navigators to assist linking to HIV care services and accessing behavioral health and social services, navigators to assist enrollment in a health plan. The above mentioned HIV/AIDS were promoted by the named mass media in order to maintain the health of people living with HIV/AIDS. The participants had to say the following during the interview;

*“We have developed a strategic plan to promote HIV/AIDS services. It has come to our attention that some patients are hesitant to seek check-ups and access antiretroviral therapies (ARTs) due to the fear of being identified. Additionally, individuals residing in remote areas may face challenges in receiving specific information related to HIV/AIDS services. Consequently, we are committed to ensuring the widespread dissemination of information and ensuring equitable access to services for People Living with HIV (PLHIV).” (Male radio presenter/Wasafi FM/IDI/April 2023)*

The findings highlighted the organization's strategic plan to promote HIV/AIDS services in order to address barriers that prevent some patients from seeking check-ups and accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART). The interviewee mentioned that fear

of being known and living in remote areas contributed to those barriers, and the organization aims to ensure equitable access to information and services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV).

The interviewee emphasized that the organization had developed a strategic plan to promote HIV/AIDS services. This suggests a deliberate and thoughtful approach to addressing the challenges faced by PLHIV in accessing healthcare. By focusing on promotion, the organization aims to increase awareness, encourage regular check-ups, and facilitate access to treatment and support services. The quote highlights that fear of being known or facing stigma may deter some PLHIV from seeking check-ups and treatment. This fear can arise from concerns about confidentiality and potential social repercussions. By implementing strategies to address this fear, such as ensuring privacy and promoting a non-judgmental environment, the organization aims to encourage PLHIV to seek the necessary healthcare services.

The interviewee mentioned that living in remote areas posed a specific challenge in accessing HIV/AIDS-related information and services. Remote areas might have limited healthcare infrastructure, fewer resources, and difficulties in disseminating information effectively. By recognizing this challenge, the organization is acknowledging the need for targeted interventions and tailored approaches to reach and support PLHIV in these areas. The quote highlighted the organization's commitment to spreading information about HIV/AIDS services to ensure equitable access. By disseminating information widely, the organization aims to bridge the information gap that may exist for PLHIV, particularly those in remote areas. Equitable services refer to provision of the same level of care and support to all

PLHIV, regardless of their location, socioeconomic status, or other factors.

The interviewee's mention of promoting equitable services indicated a recognition of health inequalities that might exist in relation to HIV/AIDS. The organization aims to address these inequalities by ensuring that all PLHIV have access to the same quality of care and support services. This might involve outreach programmes, mobile clinics, or other initiatives tailored to the needs of individuals in remote areas. The finding highlighted the organization's strategic approach to promoting HIV/AIDS services, addressing barriers to accessing care, and ensuring equitable access to information and healthcare services for PLHIV. By acknowledging the impact of fear and remoteness, the organization demonstrated a commitment to understanding and addressing the specific challenges faced by PLHIV. The quote reflects a comprehensive and inclusive approach that aims to reach and support all individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, regardless of their circumstances. The findings obtained in this study are dissimilar to those by (Agegnehu *et al.*, 2020).

#### **4.2.4 Educating and Entertaining**

To be effective, messaging about HIV/AIDS must be both educational and entertaining. These two goals should not be mutually exclusive. A number of programmes have served to inform their audiences about the virus while, at the same time, achieving market success. Mass media provides information, and information leads to knowledge and skills. Mass media is used by health experts to educate the community on HIV/AIDS, students at home, care givers and bringing hope to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Mass media provides information on all topics related to HIV/AIDS particularly



people living with HIV/AIDS. The role of mass media in entertainment is to both inform and to entertain. Mass media provide information about HIV/AIDS prevention, transmission and care to PLHIV. Because of mass media, people know more about HIV/AIDS and increasing awareness to PLHIV. The following message was given by one of the content editors;

*“Due to the limited understanding of HIV/AIDS within the community, mass media has taken the initiative to provide education through various means. In order to reach people of different age groups, we utilize humor and artistic expressions. Additionally, entertainment serves as a valuable strategy to enhance awareness regarding HIV/AIDS and HIV response services.” (Male/editor/IDI/April 2023)*

The findings obtained from the in-depth interview highlights the use of various educational approaches by mass media to increase understanding and awareness of HIV/AIDS in the community. The interviewee mentioned the utilization of jokes, art, and entertainment as strategies to reach different age groups and effectively communicate information about HIV/AIDS and HIV response services. The findings suggested that there was a lack of understanding in the community regarding HIV/AIDS. This lack of understanding could contribute to misconceptions, stigma, and ineffective prevention strategies. The interviewee recognizes this gap and emphasized the importance of providing education to address this issue.

The finding indicated that mass media employs diverse educational approaches to reach the community with HIV/AIDS information. By using jokes and art, they aimed to capture the attention and interest of different age groups. This approach recognized that different people respond to different forms of communication, and utilizing humor and creative elements can enhance engagement and understanding. The finding emphasized the use of entertainment as a strategy for increasing

awareness of HIV/AIDS. Entertainment platforms, such as television shows, movies, and music, have a wide reach and influence in shaping public perceptions.

By incorporating HIV/AIDS-related messages into entertainment content, mass media can effectively communicate information in a way that is engaging, relatable, and memorable. The interviewee highlighted the importance of tailoring educational efforts to reach people of various ages. Different age groups might have different levels of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS. By utilizing different communication approaches, such as jokes and art, mass media can effectively engage and educate diverse age groups, ensuring that the information is accessible and relatable to all.

The main objective of employing these educational approaches is to increase awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS and HIV response services. By using creative and engaging methods, mass media seeks to capture the attention of the community and ensure that the information is understood and retained. This increased awareness can contribute to better prevention practices, reduced stigma, improved access to services, and overall improved health outcomes.

The finding highlighted the efforts of mass media to address the lack of understanding regarding HIV/AIDS in the community. By employing various educational approaches, including the use of jokes, art, and entertainment, mass media aims to increase awareness and knowledge among different age groups. This approach recognizes the importance of engaging and relatable communication methods to effectively reach and educate the community about HIV/AIDS and HIV

response services. These findings collaborated to those which were obtained by Jiang *et al.*, (2022) who conducted a study on the role of news and information from the mass media in relation to HIV/AIDS and obtained that, mass media played a vital role in the provision of education to the community.

Moreover, during the study one of the participants from PLHIV were asked if the mass media had contributed on the provision of education related to HIV/AIDS. The participant explained that media had increased awareness on HIV/AIDS related matters and had gained confidence to test for HIV/AIDS and about taking drugs. The following words were spoken by one of the participants;

*“I truly believe it was a divine intervention because I vividly recall the moment I intended to tune in to a particular radio programme. However, before I could switch to the desired frequency, I stumbled upon a session on Radio One that was dedicated to explaining HIV/AIDS. The invited individuals articulated the topic exceptionally well. That day, I was truly convinced to undergo an HIV test, and it turned out that I am HIV positive. Without any delay, I immediately commenced antiretroviral therapy (ART). Hence, it is evident that mass media plays a significant role in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS within the community.” (Female/PLHIV/IDI/April 2023)*

The finding showed a personal experience where the interviewee credits mass media, specifically a radio programme, for increasing their awareness of HIV/AIDS and ultimately led them to get tested and start using antiretroviral therapy (ART). The interviewee emphasized the significant contribution of mass media in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community. The findings underscored the impact of mass media, in this case, a radio programme, in increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS. It suggests that the information provided through this media platform played a pivotal role in educating the interviewee about the disease and its implications. This highlights the power of mass media in disseminating crucial

health information to a wide audience.

The interviewee shared a personal experience where they were influenced by the information presented in the radio programme. This indicated that the programme resonated with the interviewee and motivated them to take action. Personal experiences often have a strong impact on individuals' perceptions and behavior, and in this case, it led to the decision to get tested for HIV. The interviewee stated that they were convinced to go for HIV testing after listening to the radio programme. This suggested that the programme provided compelling and accurate information that dispelled any doubts or uncertainties the interviewee may have had. This conviction led to a proactive decision to seek testing, demonstrating the influence of mass media in shaping individual behavior related to HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlighted that the interviewee became aware of their HIV-positive status on the same day they decided to get tested. This suggested that the information provided by the radio programme prompted timely action, leading to early diagnosis and initiation of ART. Timely awareness and testing are crucial in managing HIV/AIDS, as early detection and treatment can significantly improve health outcomes. The interviewee explicitly stated that mass media, particularly the radio programme, has a significant contribution to increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS in the community. This implies that the information provided through mass media platforms plays a vital role in educating and empowering individuals, potentially leading to behavior change, improved health-seeking behavior, and reduced stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlighted the transformative impact of mass media, specifically a

radio programme, in increasing awareness and influencing behavior related to HIV/AIDS. The personal experience shared by the interviewee underscores the power of accurate and engaging information dissemination through mass media platforms. By providing accessible and informative content, mass media can contribute to raising awareness, promoting testing, and facilitating early initiation of treatment for HIV/AIDS in the community. The findings obtained supports the results which were reported by Haque *et al.*, (2018) that, education provision should be one of the goals of mass media to increase awareness to HIV/AIDS to the community.

#### **4.2.5 Putting HIV/AIDS on the News Agenda**

Another key area for media involvement in AIDS education efforts is ensuring that the topic is kept at the top of the news agenda. In recent years, several leading broadcasters from around the world have found out innovative ways to report on the pandemic. During the interview with Radio one editor, he had the following to say;

*“One of the primary roles of media is to establish channels of communication and encourage dialogue surrounding HIV and interpersonal relationships. Incorporating discussions about HIV/AIDS within entertainment programmes can have a profound impact on societies facing the risk of infection. Researchers have extensively observed the influential impact of the radio soap opera "Twende na Wakati" (Let's Go with the Times), which initially aired in 1993, in significantly increasing listeners' willingness to engage in conversations regarding HIV-related issues. In essence, the show successfully stimulated dialogue among its audience. Following several seasons of the programme, evaluations indicated that 65% of respondents had engaged in conversations about "Twende na Wakati," (Let's Go with the Times), and over 80% reported adopting HIV-prevention measures as a direct result of listening to the show.” (Male/editor/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding obtained culminates the role of media, specifically in this case, the

Radio Tanzania soap opera "Twende na Wakati" (Let's Go with the Times), in opening channels of communication and fostering discussions about HIV/AIDS and interpersonal relationships. The finding also emphasized the significant impact that addressing HIV/AIDS in entertainment programmes can have on a society at risk. Evaluations of the soap opera indicated that it not only increased listeners' willingness to discuss HIV-related issues but also led to the adoption of HIV-prevention measures by a significant majority of respondents.

The finding suggested that one of the primary roles of media, in this case, the soap opera, is to open channels of communication about HIV/AIDS and interpersonal relationships. By addressing these topics through entertainment programmes, media can create a safe and engaging platform for individuals to discuss and explore sensitive issues. This can help break down barriers, reduce stigma, and promote dialogue within the community. The finding highlighted the significant impact that addressing HIV/AIDS in entertainment programmes can have on a society at risk. The example of the soap opera "Twende na Wakati" (*Let's Go with the Times*), demonstrates that media has the potential to reach and influence a large audience. By incorporating HIV-related storylines, the programme engaged listeners and prompted discussions on the virus and related issues. This indicates the power of media in shaping public perceptions, knowledge, and behaviors regarding HIV/AIDS.

The finding indicated that the soap opera led to an increased willingness among listeners to discuss issues related to HIV/AIDS. This suggests that the programme created a sense of openness and comfort, allowing individuals to initiate conversations about a previously sensitive and stigmatized topic. Increased

discussions can contribute to the dissemination of accurate information, dispelling myths and misconceptions, and promoting a better understanding of HIV/AIDS. The evaluation of the soap opera revealed that a significant majority of respondents, more than 8 in 10, reported adopting an HIV-prevention measure as a result of listening to the show. This indicated that the programme had a direct impact on listeners' behaviors, leading them to take proactive steps towards preventing HIV transmission.

Such measures could include practicing safe sex, getting tested for HIV, or using condoms, among others. The finding accentuates the role of entertainment programmes in influencing public attitudes and behaviors. By incorporating HIV/AIDS-related storylines and characters, media can engage audiences emotionally and intellectually, making them more receptive to the messages being conveyed. Entertainment programmes have the potential to inspire empathy, challenge social norms, and motivate individuals to take positive actions related to HIV/AIDS prevention and support.

The finding highlighted the significant role of media, particularly entertainment programmes like the soap opera "*Twende na Wakati*," (*Let's Go with the Times*), in addressing HIV/AIDS. By opening channels of communication, fostering discussions, and influencing behavior change, media can play a crucial role in raising awareness, reducing stigma, and promoting HIV/AIDS prevention measures within a society at risk. The example of the soap opera demonstrates the potential of media to reach a wide audience and create meaningful impact in the context of

HIV/AIDS. The similar findings were obtained by Masese, (2022).

The Wasafi FM fosters an environment in which young people can explore delicate and intimate issues. Wasafi team and Radio one had the range of sessions and also produced a weekly radio programmes in Swahili and sometimes in English. Through the radio programmes such as; ‘WASAFI AFYA’ programme, made by and for young people, listeners could hear their peers discuss sex and relationships in a clear and straight forward manner, as well as how to keep themselves safe. Mass media can be instrumental in breaking the silence that surrounds the disease and in creating an environment that encourages discussion of how individuals can protect themselves and change their behaviour, if necessary. While this may mean combating existing social norms, values and conditions, it is not necessarily as difficult and daunting as it might appear.

#### **4.2.6 Encouraging Leaders to Take Action**

HIV/AIDS is triggering national emergencies around the globe. It has destroyed the lives of individuals and communities, wiping out hard-earned economic and social development gains and threatened social and political stability. Even the worst-case scenarios of a decade ago underestimated the severity and scale of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As morbidity and mortality rates rise and the effects cascade through societies, the pandemic has been weakening countries’ institutions, and reversing decades of much-needed progress in health, education, literacy, and human and economic development. A journalist who was a participant in this study had the following insights to share;

*“Every step forward in the global fight against HIV/AIDS has been driven by exceptional leadership. The triumphs have relied upon the*



*unwavering commitment and bravery of visionary individuals. Among them are influential figures such as political leaders, religious leaders, international icons, and high-ranking officials. Equally important, though less widely recognized, are the unsung heroes: the dedicated workers, students, business professionals, entertainers, politicians, community activists, and village leaders who have made impactful contributions through their actions. Their collective efforts have played a crucial role in advancing the cause of HIV/AIDS prevention and support at all levels of society..”*  
**(Male/Journalist/IDI/April 2023).**

The finding revealed the crucial role of leadership in the global struggle against HIV/AIDS. It emphasized that every advance in this fight has been marked by the presence of visionary and courageous individuals. These leaders come from various domains, including politics, religion, entertainment, community activism, and more. The finding acknowledges the diverse range of leaders, both high-profile and less visible, who have made significant contributions to combatting HIV/AIDS. The finding emphasizes the importance of leadership in the global struggle against HIV/AIDS. It suggested that progress in this field had been driven by the actions and initiatives of individuals who have taken on leadership roles. Leadership in this context involves demonstrating vision, courage, and a commitment to addressing the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

As well, the finding recognized that leaders in the fight against HIV/AIDS come from various backgrounds and sectors. It mentions high-powered political and religious leaders, international icons, workers, students, business people, entertainers, politicians, community activists, and village leaders. This diverse range of leaders reflects the importance of collective efforts in addressing the multifaceted aspects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Also, the finding acknowledged that while some leaders have high visibility and occupy influential positions, others may have a lower

profile but are equally effective in their actions. This highlights the fact that leadership in the context of HIV/AIDS can manifest in different ways and at various levels. It recognizes the important contributions made by individuals who may not have prominent roles but have been instrumental in driving change within their communities or specific domains.

Moreover, the finding emphasized that successful leadership in the global struggle against HIV/AIDS has been marked by perseverance and effectiveness. This suggests that leaders have displayed determination, resilience, and a commitment to their cause. Their actions have resulted in tangible outcomes and positive impact in terms of prevention, treatment, support, advocacy, and community mobilization. The finding highlighted that leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS is not limited to a specific group or profession. It encompasses a wide range of individuals, including those from different sectors and walks of life. This broad spectrum of leadership reflects the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to address the complex challenges associated with HIV/AIDS.

The finding underscored the critical role of leadership in advancing the global struggle against HIV/AIDS. It acknowledges the diverse range of leaders who have made significant contributions, both high-profile and less visible. Their perseverance, effectiveness, and commitment have been instrumental in driving progress in areas such as; prevention, treatment, support, and advocacy. The findings emphasized the need for continued leadership at various levels and across different sectors to sustain and further enhance the efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. The findings collaborates with those which were obtained by Tham & Zanuiddin, (2015) that, one

of the major roles of mass media found was to inculcate leaders and drive them into actions for the prevention of HIV transmission and increasing awareness to HIV/AIDS.

#### **4.2.7 Capacity Building**

Broad, symbiotic alliances with NGOs, government departments and foundations, for instance, can bring significant benefits for both parties. Broadcasters can trade resources with campaign partners, such as access to airtime, and in return receive the expertise that partners have to offer on HIV advocacy. One of the journalists said;

*“The creative teams involved in producing drama series can receive comprehensive briefings on conveying valuable messages and effectively reaching specific target audiences. Similarly, editors, producers, and reporters can be provided with guidance on highlighting the most urgent and pertinent aspects of the HIV issue from a fresh and innovative perspective. This collaborative approach ensures that the media professionals involved are well-informed and equipped to address the evolving challenges surrounding HIV/AIDS in a manner that resonates with their respective audiences.”*  
(Male/Journalist/IDI/April 2023).

The finding obtained from the interview highlighted the importance of providing guidance and information to creative teams, editors, producers, and reporters in order to effectively communicate useful messages about HIV/AIDS to specific audiences. It emphasizes the need to approach the HIV issue from a fresh perspective and focus on the most pressing and relevant aspects. However, the finding suggested that communication efforts regarding HIV/AIDS should be tailored to specific audiences. By briefing creative teams on drama series and providing guidance to editors, producers, and reporters, it becomes possible to reach the intended audience more effectively. This approach recognizes that different segments of the population may require different strategies and messages to effectively engage with and address their

specific needs and concerns.

Nevertheless, the finding highlighted the importance of involving creative teams, such as those working on drama series, in the communication process. By briefing them about useful messages and strategies, these teams can incorporate HIV-related themes and storylines into their productions. This approach allows for the integration of HIV/AIDS messaging into popular entertainment mediums, which can have a significant impact on audience engagement and awareness. It emphasizes on the role of editors, producers, and reporters in shaping public perceptions of HIV/AIDS. By advising them on the most pressing and relevant aspects of the HIV issue, it becomes possible to present the information from a new perspective. This approach encourages media professionals to explore innovative angles, highlight emerging issues, and provide accurate and up-to-date information to their audiences.

The finding suggested that approaching the HIV issue from a new perspective is crucial for effective communication. By providing guidance and information, creative teams, editors, producers, and reporters can challenge existing narratives, dispel myths, and shed light on lesser-known aspects of HIV/AIDS. This can help generate interest, increase understanding, and promote positive attitudes and behaviors related to HIV prevention, treatment, and support. The finding inculcates the importance of addressing the most pressing and relevant aspects of the HIV issue. By focusing on timely and critical topics, media professionals can ensure that their content remains informative, engaging, and impactful. This approach acknowledges that the landscape of HIV/AIDS is constantly evolving, and it is essential to adapt communication strategies to address emerging challenges and

priorities.

By providing guidance to creative teams, editors, producers, and reporters, it becomes possible to reach specific audiences, present information from a fresh perspective, and prioritize the most relevant aspects of the HIV issue. This collaborative approach between communication experts and media professionals can contribute to increased awareness, improved understanding, and positive action towards HIV prevention, treatment, and support. This was also suggested by (Yasin, 2021) in his study conducted on the role of integrating mass media to increase community awareness on HIV/AIDS.

### **4.3 Availability of Media Resources, Tools, Programmes and Infrastructures**

#### **Sufficient for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

The second objective of the study was to examine whether there were available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services. The objective was answered under three subcategories or subsections which included the available media resources and tools to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS, media programmes used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services and media infrastructure sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services.

#### **4.3.1 Availability of Media Resources and Tools for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

Mass media is increasingly used to deliver HIV interventions for key populations worldwide. However, little is known about the specific uses and effects of mass media on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) interventions. Mass media used to

develop intervention materials for promoting HIV services, mass media used to establish virtual peer-mentored or online communities that promote HIV interventions, mass media as a platform to offer HIV-related services, such as HIV self-testing kits order and request, and mass media as a platform to disseminate HIV-related information. One of the participants had the following to say;

*“When faced with a dire and escalating crisis, it is essential to utilize every available resource. HIV/AIDS stands as the most severe pandemic humanity has ever confronted, surpassing other diseases in terms of its extensive spread, rapid transmission, and long-lasting catastrophic consequences. Its impact has emerged as a formidable barrier to development. Broadcast media possesses an immense reach and influential power, particularly among young individuals who represent both the future and the linchpin in any effective battle against HIV/AIDS. Thus, it is imperative to actively involve these influential media organizations as equal partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS, focusing on raising awareness, prevention efforts, and educational initiatives. Together, we can strive to curtail the spread of HIV/AIDS and bring about positive change.” (Male/Editor/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview emphasized the urgent need to utilize all available tools in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It highlighted the severity of the pandemic, describing it as the worst humanity has ever faced, with wide-reaching and long-term catastrophic effects. The finding recognized the significant impact of HIV/AIDS as a barrier to development and emphasized the importance of broadcast media in reaching and influencing young people, who play a crucial role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It calls for engaging media organizations as full partners in raising awareness, preventing new infections, and educating the public about HIV/AIDS.

The finding stressed the importance of utilizing every available tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This implied that a comprehensive approach is necessary,

involving a combination of strategies, interventions, and resources to effectively address the pandemic. It recognizes that a multifaceted response is required to combat the complex challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

The finding described HIV/AIDS as the worst pandemic humanity has ever faced. This highlights the gravity of the situation and underscores the urgent need for action. By characterizing it as the most devastating disease in terms of its spread, speed, and long-term effects, it emphasized the severity of the impact on individuals, communities, and societies at large. The finding recognized that HIV/AIDS had become a significant obstacle to development. By undermining the health and well-being of individuals, it hampers progress in various sectors, including education, economy, and social welfare. This understanding highlights the need for comprehensive approaches that address the interplay between HIV/AIDS and broader development goals.

The finding acknowledged the tremendous reach and influence of broadcast media, particularly among young people. It recognizes the power of media organizations to shape public perceptions, knowledge, and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS. By effectively utilizing broadcast media, it becomes possible to engage and educate a large audience, especially the youth who are vital in driving successful efforts against HIV/AIDS. The finding emphasized on the importance of treating media organizations as full partners in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This implied involving media entities in a collaborative manner, recognizing their potential to contribute significantly to awareness, prevention, and education efforts. By actively engaging media organizations, it becomes possible to leverage their influence and resources to

amplify messages, disseminate accurate information, and promote positive behavior change.

Overall, the finding showed the urgent need for comprehensive action in combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It highlighted the severity of the pandemic and its impact on development. The finding recognized the influential role of broadcast media, particularly among young people, and emphasizes the importance of engaging media organizations as full partners in raising awareness, preventing new infections, and educating the public about HIV/AIDS. By utilizing all available tools and harnessing the power of media, it becomes possible to address the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and work towards halting the pandemic. In contrast to the earlier findings obtained by Kudrati *et al.*, (2021) in the study associated with media campaign exposure and HIV/AIDS prevention that, available tools were not useful if there was no concrete information delivering process to the community.

#### **4.3.2 Media Programmes Used for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

The media had a pivotal role to play in the fight against AIDS. It is often said that education is the vaccine against HIV. Many media organizations were rising to the challenge by promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating listeners and viewers about the facts of the pandemic and how to stop it. The importance of mass media in health promotion and disease prevention was well documented, since both routine were exposed to strategic use of mass media and played a significant role in promoting awareness, increasing knowledge and changing health behaviors.

*“The primary role of journalists is to contribute to HIV/AIDS prevention. This is accomplished through delivering accurate and comprehensive coverage of HIV/AIDS, which serves to increase*



*public awareness and ultimately shape desired public opinion, attitudes, and political support. By effectively educating the public, journalists play a crucial role in addressing the syndrome and its impact on society.” (Male/Journalist/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding obtained accentuated the primary role of journalists in HIV/AIDS prevention. It emphasized that journalists were expected to contribute to prevention efforts by providing accurate coverage of HIV/AIDS, raising public awareness, and influencing public opinion, attitudes, and political support. The goal is to educate people about HIV/AIDS and its impact, ultimately leading to positive behavioral change and effective response to the syndrome. The finding emphasized that journalists have a crucial role to play in HIV/AIDS prevention. This suggests that their work goes beyond reporting news and extends to actively contributing to efforts aimed at reducing new infections, promoting safe behaviors, and addressing the social and cultural factors that contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. It recognizes the influence journalists have in shaping public perceptions and the potential impact they can have in preventing HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlighted the importance of accurate coverage of HIV/AIDS by journalists. This implied the need for responsible reporting, fact-checking, and providing reliable information about the syndrome. By ensuring accuracy, journalists can effectively raise public awareness about the realities, risks, and preventive measures associated with HIV/AIDS. Accurate coverage is essential in countering misinformation and stigma surrounding the syndrome.

The finding suggested that journalists had the responsibility to generate desired public opinion, attitudes, and political support through their coverage of HIV/AIDS.

This implied the influence they can exert in shaping public sentiment and mobilizing support for effective policies, programmes, and resources to combat HIV/AIDS. Journalists can encourage empathy, understanding, and an environment conducive to addressing the syndrome. The finding presented the importance of education in tackling HIV/AIDS. Journalists are expected to contribute to this by informing the public, providing accurate information, and raising awareness about the syndrome.

By educating people about the risks, transmission modes, prevention methods, and available support systems, journalists can empower individuals to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to prevent HIV/AIDS. The finding recognized the significant societal role of journalists in addressing public health issues like HIV/AIDS. Journalists are seen as key stakeholders in disseminating information, shaping public discourse, and holding policymakers accountable. They have the potential to bridge gaps between scientific knowledge, policy, and public understanding, playing a vital role in promoting evidence-based approaches to tackle HIV/AIDS. It highlights the importance of accurate coverage, raising public awareness, and influencing public opinion, attitudes, and political support.

Journalists are expected to contribute to education by providing reliable information and countering misinformation. Their role extends beyond reporting news and encompasses active engagement in shaping public awareness, behavior change, and effective response to HIV/AIDS. The findings are supported by those which were obtained by (Hamid & Sule, 2021) in the study conducted to obtain the role of mass media in the reduction of HIV/AIDS. The previous study found out that, mass media programmes had influence to change the community and impart knowledge

particularly those related to HIV/AIDS issues.

### **4.3.3 Media Infrastructures Sufficiency for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

Media infrastructures are foundation technologies, services, facilities and outlets that are critical to the communication of information, opinion and expression. Radio is the major source of information in sub-Saharan Africa, and television is the second major source of information. Infrastructure is not limited to the traditional media components of broadcast and print. It may include the transportation system, the telecommunications system, which has been rapidly converging with broadcast and cable to form the backbone of the digital information era, cable and other networks, radio towers, financial infrastructure, and even social institutions such as literacy and the culture of communication in a country.

*“Infrastructure in the context of media can include a wide range of components, ranging from multi-user transmission systems to individual stations and studios. Constructing a transmission system often involves engaging in various consultations with different stakeholders. These consultations may involve discussions with the national government regarding laws and regulations, local governments regarding land use considerations, the intended users of the system, and the surrounding community. It is important to note that the community, which is often overlooked in these consultations, should be actively involved in the decision-making process regarding media infrastructure.” (Male/Editor/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding showed the significance of infrastructure in the context of transmission systems, stations, and studios. It emphasized that infrastructure development involves various consultations and considerations, including engagement with national and local governments, intended users of the system, and the surrounding community. It also highlighted the often-overlooked role of the community in the consultation process. It recognized the importance of infrastructure in the context of

transmission systems, stations, and studios. Infrastructure refers to the physical components and facilities necessary for the functioning and operation of broadcasting systems. It is a critical aspect of establishing and maintaining effective communication networks.

The finding suggested that building a transmission system entails multiple consultations with various stakeholders. This implied that the process of infrastructure development is complex and requires engagement with different entities to ensure coordination, compliance with regulations, and alignment with the needs and expectations of relevant parties. It highlights the need for consultations with the national government concerning laws and regulations. This indicates that infrastructure development in the broadcasting sector is subject to legal and regulatory frameworks that govern the establishment, operation, and management of transmission systems. It underscores the importance of compliance and cooperation with relevant government bodies.

The finding emphasized the importance of engaging with local governments regarding land use issues. Infrastructure development often involves the use of physical space, including land, which may require permits, zoning considerations, and adherence to local regulations. Collaboration with local authorities is crucial to ensure that the infrastructure is appropriately situated and complies with relevant guidelines. It suggests that consultations with the intended users of the system are necessary. This implied that the design and implementation of the infrastructure should consider the specific requirements, preferences, and technical needs of the users. Collaboration with the intended users ensures that the infrastructure is tailored

to their operational and functional requirements.

The finding highlighted the frequently overlooked role of the surrounding community in the consultation process. This suggested that the opinions, concerns, and perspectives of the local community should be taken into account when developing infrastructure. Engaging with the community fosters transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the decision-making process. The finding emphasized the importance of infrastructure in broadcasting and communication systems. It underscores the need for multiple consultations with stakeholders, including national and local governments, intended users, and the surrounding community.

Engaging with these various entities ensures compliance with regulations, alignment with user requirements, and the involvement of the community in decision-making processes. By considering these factors, infrastructure development can be more effective, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all relevant parties. The media infrastructure on the role of increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS to the community as a finding it is dissimilar to the findings which were obtained by Mukhtar, (2022) that, there were other factors for increasing community awareness to HIV/AIDS and did not mentioned media infrastructure to be one of the components.

#### **4.4 Challenges to Media When Face Members of the Community on HIV/AIDS Services**

The third objective of the study assessed the challenges that were the result of media facing members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS. Despite mass media being the great factor for the increase in the awareness of community

members and PLHIV to HIV/AIDS, there were some noticeable challenges which were noticed due to mass media programmes. The challenges affected both groups of people, those who were living with HIV/AIDS and those who were HIV/AIDS negative. Two challenges were identified from people living with HIV/AIDS. It was found out that some of the mass media led to the increase in discrimination and stigma and another associated challenge was misleading of information related to HIV/AIDS. The presentation and description of responses were given in the following sub-sections per each theme obtained from the findings.

#### **4.4.1 Increased Discrimination and Stigma**

Stigma refers to an attitude or belief, discrimination is the behaviors that result from those attitudes or beliefs. HIV discrimination is the act of treating people living with HIV differently than those without HIV. Stigmatization that is associated with AIDS is underpinned by many factors including lack of understanding of the illness, misconceptions about how HIV is transmitted, lack of access to treatment, irresponsible media reporting on the pandemic, the incurability of AIDS and prejudice and fears relating to a number of socially. Irresponsible reporting of the media contributes into increased discrimination and stigma. One of the participants had the following to say;

*“At times, the mass media can irresponsibly portray the negative aspects of diseases, even though they have the ability to reach diverse audiences with varying perceptions. For instance, when the media presents factors associated with HIV/AIDS transmission without considering scientifically established factors, it can contribute to increased stigma and discrimination against People Living with HIV (PLHIV). It is crucial for the media to exercise responsibility and accuracy in their portrayal of HIV/AIDS-related information to ensure that it does not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or contribute to*

*the marginalization of PLHIV.” (Female/ PLHIV /Health practitioner/ Ubungo/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview elaborates the issue of irresponsible presentation of disease-related information by the mass media. It suggested that the media, despite having a wide reach and influencing people with different perceptions, sometimes presents the negative aspects of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, without considering scientific-based factors. This can lead to an increase in stigma towards people living with HIV (PLHIV) and discrimination. It shows that the mass media sometimes irresponsibly presents the negative aspects of diseases. This implied that media outlets may focus on sensationalism, fear-mongering, or biased reporting when it comes to diseases like HIV/AIDS. Such presentation may exaggerate risks, highlight only negative outcomes, or perpetuate stereotypes, which can contribute to misconceptions and misinformation among the public.

The finding acknowledged that the media had a wide reach, reaching different kinds of people at various levels with different perceptions. This recognizes the power of the media to influence public opinion and shape individual attitudes towards diseases like HIV/AIDS. It underscores the importance of considering the diverse audiences and their varying perspectives when presenting disease-related information. The finding illustrated that the media sometimes presents associated factors of HIV/AIDS transmission without considering scientific-based factors. This implied that media coverage may focus on non-scientific or inaccurate information regarding the modes of transmission. This can lead to misunderstandings, misperceptions, and the perpetuation of myths and stereotypes

associated with HIV/AIDS.

The finding showed that irresponsible presentation of disease-related information by the media can result into an increase in stigma towards PLHIV and discrimination. Stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, and discrimination directed towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. By presenting information irresponsibly, the media can contribute to the perpetuation of stigma, further marginalizing and isolating PLHIV from society. The finding drew attention to the negative consequences of irresponsible presentation of disease-related information by the mass media, specifically focusing on HIV/AIDS. It highlighted the need for responsible reporting that is based on scientific evidence, accurate information, and sensitivity towards the experiences of PLHIV.

Responsible media coverage can help reduce stigma, combat discrimination, and promote a more accurate understanding of HIV/AIDS among the general public.

As shown in the findings above, mass media might result into the spread of information which is not scientifically proved and that information creates tension to the community as a result it increases the rates of stigma and discrimination to PLHIV. During the focused group discussion one of the participants said;

*“Unfortunately, there are instances where we experience stigma and increased discrimination from the community due to the information they receive from the mass media. This can be attributed to the lack of proper training among some journalists. When the society is consistently exposed to negative and biased information about HIV/AIDS, it ultimately affects People Living with HIV (PLHIV) the most. As a result, we face direct stigma within the communities we reside in. It is crucial to address these issues by promoting accurate and unbiased reporting, as well as providing journalists with proper training on HIV/AIDS to ensure the dissemination of factual information and to combat the harmful impact of stigma and discrimination on PLHIV.” (Male/PLHIV/Ubungo/FGD/April, 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview sheds light on the harmful impact of stigma



and discrimination faced by people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) due to the type of information they receive from the mass media. It suggested that inadequate training of some journalists can lead to the dissemination of negative information about HIV/AIDS, resulting in direct stigma and discrimination against PLHIV within their communities. It highlighted that stigma and discrimination were experienced by PLHIV. Stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors directed towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Discrimination refers to the unfair treatment or exclusion of individuals based on their HIV-positive status. The finding suggested that these negative experiences were directly influenced by the information conveyed by the mass media.

The finding suggested that the mass media plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. The type of information disseminated by the media can have a profound impact on how PLHIV are perceived and treated within their communities. This highlights the power of the media in influencing societal attitudes and behaviors. The finding indicated that some journalists may lack proper training when it comes to reporting on HIV/AIDS. This suggests that the dissemination of negative information could be a result of a lack of understanding, sensitivity, or knowledge about the subject matter. Insufficient training can lead to biased reporting, perpetuation of stereotypes, and the promotion of misinformation, all of which contribute to stigmatization and discrimination against PLHIV.

However, the finding suggests that negative information related to HIV/AIDS, when presented by the mass media, can have direct consequences for PLHIV. By portraying HIV/AIDS in a stigmatizing and discriminatory manner, the media

exacerbates existing prejudices and reinforces harmful societal attitudes. This can lead to isolation, marginalization, and the denial of rights and opportunities for PLHIV within their communities. The finding highlights the vulnerable position of PLHIV within society. It indicates that they face direct stigma within the communities they live in, which can have detrimental effects on their well-being, mental health, and overall quality of life. The negative portrayal of HIV/AIDS in the media contributes to this stigma, further exacerbating the challenges faced by PLHIV.

The finding explicated the harmful impact of negative information about HIV/AIDS disseminated by the mass media. It emphasized the need for journalists to receive proper training to ensure responsible and accurate reporting. By promoting unbiased, evidence-based, and sensitive coverage, the media can play a crucial role in reducing stigma, combating discrimination, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for PLHIV. The same findings were obtained by (Oji, 2008) who conducted a study on (Tomar & Bansal, 2021) and found out that, mass media might result into the increased of psychological torture to PLHIV. Moreover, during the discussion with PLHIV they explained that some language constraints which have been noticed to be used by some of the mass media had led to the increase in discriminatory perception with the society.

Some of the media used languages which were discriminative in nature. For example, the words which were interpreted as the person with HIV/AIDS was infected or victim pronounced in Kiswahili language as '*muathirika*' or the

“affected” in its English translation. Labeling persons with HIV/AIDS as ‘*waathirika*’ or the “affected” in its English translation is a form of stigma. One of the participants was recorded saying;

*“One of the challenges we encounter from the community, influenced by the mass media, is the improper usage of terms that ultimately leads to stigma. For instance, we often hear certain media outlets referring to People Living with HIV (PLHIV) as "waathirika" or victims. This terminology is incorrect because having HIV does not make us victims. We are individuals who are living with HIV while maintaining good health conditions. It is important for the media to use accurate and non-stigmatizing language when discussing HIV/AIDS to promote understanding and combat the misconceptions surrounding the condition.” (Female/PLHIV/Ubungo/FGD/April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview highlighted the challenges faced by people living with HIV (PLHIV) due to the improper use of terms by the mass media. It suggested that the media's use of terms like "waathirika" (victims) to refer to PLHIV contributed to stigma. It emphasized that having HIV does not make someone a victim, but rather they were individuals living with HIV while maintaining good health. The finding pointed out that the mass media sometimes used terms incorrectly when referring to PLHIV. In this case, the term "waathirika" (victims) was highlighted as an example. The use of such terminologies could perpetuate negative stereotypes and contribute to the stigmatization of PLHIV. It suggested that the media should exercise caution and use appropriate language that respects the dignity and agency of individuals living with HIV.

However, the finding indicated that the improper use of terms by the media could lead to stigma. Stigma refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and discrimination directed towards individuals based on their HIV status. By labeling PLHIV as "victims," the media may inadvertently reinforce the perception that PLHIV are

helpless or deserving of pity, further marginalizing and stigmatizing them within society. The finding emphasized that having HIV did not automatically make someone a victim. It underscores the importance of recognizing the agency and resilience of PLHIV. By challenging the victim narrative, the finding aims to promote a more accurate and empowering representation of PLHIV in the media. It highlighted that individuals living with HIV could lead fulfilling lives and maintain good health conditions.

The finding also highlighted that PLHIV could have a good health conditions. This challenges the misconception that an HIV diagnosis is synonymous with poor health or impending deterioration. It aims to counter the perception that PLHIV were perpetually sick or incapable of leading productive lives. By emphasizing the positive health condition of PLHIV, the finding sought to combat stigmatizing notions and promote a more accurate understanding of HIV and its management. The finding underscored the significance of using appropriate and empowering language when discussing HIV. It emphasized on the importance of avoiding terms that perpetuate victimhood and stigmatization. By using respectful and accurate language, the media can contribute to reducing stigma, promoting inclusivity, and empowering PLHIV to live fulfilling lives.

Lastly, the finding highlighted the negative impact of the media's improper use of terms when referring to PLHIV. It emphasized on the need for the media to adopt language that respects the agency and dignity of individuals living with HIV. By promoting accurate, empowering, and non-stigmatizing language, the media can contribute to reducing HIV-related stigma and fostering a more inclusive and

supportive environment for PLHIV. The findings obtained in the current study on the improper use of words by mass media to facilitate stigma to PLHIV were consistent with the findings that were obtained by Choruma *et al.*, (2021) in the study associated with stigma and discrimination to people living with HIV/AIDS.

However, when the participants were asked on the challenges associated with mass media which led into stigma and discrimination, they mentioned openness. Openness is the source of stigma and discrimination because when the People Living with HIV have been exposed to the community through mass media, is when the stigma and discrimination starts. Their readiness and openness to educate and sensitize the community through mass media and exposing their status is good, but in a long run they become victims of their good decisions. During the interview, one of the participants said;

*“Despite my intention to raise awareness and emphasize the importance of ART and self-testing, disclosing my HIV status through mass media resulted in stigma and discrimination. The high level of stigma surrounding HIV-positive individuals in our communities necessitates education, compassion, and empathy to combat it.”*  
**(Female/PLHIV/Ubungo/IDI/April 2023).**

The finding obtained from the interview highlights the negative consequences experienced by an individual who disclosed their HIV status through the mass media. Despite the intention of increasing awareness and promoting the use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and self-testing, the result was stigma and discrimination. The interviewee mentioned being subjected to pointing fingers, being stigmatized in their presence, and facing high levels of stigma within their community.

The finding suggested that the interviewee had positive intentions in disclosing their HIV status through the mass media. They aimed to increase awareness among the community and emphasize the importance of ART and self-testing. This highlights the proactive approach of the interviewee in wanting to contribute to HIV education and prevention efforts. The finding revealed that instead of receiving support or understanding, the interviewee experienced stigma and discrimination as a result of disclosing their HIV status. Stigma refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors directed towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Discrimination refers to the unfair treatment or exclusion based on HIV-positive status.

The interviewee's experience highlighted the persistent stigma and discrimination faced by PLHIV, even when their intention is to raise awareness and promote health-seeking behavior. Despite the negative response from others, the interviewee mentioned surviving the experience due to self-acceptance. This speaks to the importance of developing a positive self-image and maintaining personal resilience in the face of stigma. It suggested that self-acceptance can be a powerful coping mechanism for individuals living with HIV when confronted with societal prejudice. Nevertheless, the finding emphasized that the stigma faced by individuals who disclosed their HIV status was particularly high within their communities. This suggested that community-level attitudes and perceptions played a significant role in shaping the experiences of PLHIV. The fear of being stigmatized and discriminated against may discourage others from openly discussing their HIV status, further perpetuating the cycle of silence and stigma. The finding highlighted the challenges associated with disclosing one's HIV status.

It suggested that despite the potential benefits of HIV disclosure for increasing awareness and education, it could also lead to negative consequences such as stigma and discrimination. This underscores the need for creating safe and supportive environments that encourage open dialogue about HIV and foster acceptance and understanding. The finding highlighted the unfortunate reality that disclosing HIV status through the mass media can result in stigma and discrimination for individuals living with HIV. It underscores the urgent need to address and challenge the deeply ingrained stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS within communities. Efforts should be made to promote education, empathy, and acceptance to create an inclusive environment that supports PLHIV and encourages open discussions about HIV.

As shown in the finding above, that most of PLHIV suffered from stigma and discrimination due to exposing themselves in mass media. Another participant added by saying;

*"I faced immense humiliation and threats to my marriage after disclosing my HIV-positive status to my HIV-negative husband and extended family. Their mistreatment and exclusion caused immense difficulty, including being restricted from sharing the bedroom."*  
**(Female/PLHIV/Ubungo/IDI/April 2023).**

The finding obtained from the interview showed the distressing experience of an individual who disclosed their HIV-positive status to their husband and family members. The disclosure resulted in humiliation, marital strain, and restrictions imposed by the husband, which significantly impacted the interviewee's well-being and familial relationships. It revealed that the interviewee faced stigma and discrimination from their husband, mother-in-law, sister-in-laws, and other relatives

after disclosing their HIV-positive status. This suggested that the negative attitudes and beliefs associated with HIV/AIDS existed within the immediate family circle, leading to mistreatment and humiliation.

The finding indicated that the interviewee's disclosure jeopardized their marital relationship. The husband's reaction, characterized by humiliation and potentially the withdrawal of intimacy, created significant tension and strain. This highlights the challenges faced by individuals living with HIV in maintaining healthy and supportive relationships, particularly within the context of marriage. The finding implied that the experience was emotionally and psychologically difficult for the interviewee. The humiliation and mistreatment from family members, especially from the husband, likely resulted in feelings of shame, isolation, and low self-esteem. The imposed restrictions, such as being prohibited from sharing the bedroom, further exacerbated the emotional distress experienced by the interviewee.

The finding suggested that the interviewee did not receive the support and understanding they needed from their husband and family members. This lack of support can have severe consequences for the well-being and mental health of individuals living with HIV. It underscored the importance of fostering empathy, education, and open communication within families to create a supportive environment for individuals living with HIV. The finding indirectly touched upon the gender dynamics at play within the relationship. The power dynamics and societal expectations surrounding gender roles may have influenced the husband's reaction, contributing to the humiliation and restrictions placed on the interviewee. This highlights the wider social context in which the experience of stigma and



discrimination unfolds.

The finding exposed the distressing consequences of disclosing HIV-positive status within an intimate relationship and family. It underscored the urgent need for education, empathy, and support to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination within families. Efforts should focus on promoting open communication, breaking down misconceptions, and fostering acceptance to ensure the well-being and rights of individuals living with HIV are protected within their familial relationships. PLHIV have been mistreated even by their close relatives or their marriage partners particularly to those who are discordant couples, (Iqbal *et al.*, 2019). This is because of exposing their conditions to mass media. Some of the relatives consider it as a shameful scenario having a relative who is HIV-positive and exposing them in mass media.

During the interview another participant who experienced stigma and discrimination after been exposed in mass media had the following to say;

*"After disclosing my HIV-positive status through mass media, my vegetable sales plummeted. I used to sell up to twenty folds a day, but now I struggle to sell even half of that. Discrimination and stigma reached their peak following the media exposure." (Female/ PLHIV/Ubungo/IDI/April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview elucidates the negative impact of disclosing one's HIV-positive status through mass media on the individual's vegetable-selling business. Prior to the disclosure, the interviewee was able to sell a significant amount of vegetables daily. However, after the disclosure, there was a drastic decline in sales, resulting in financial losses. The interviewee attributed this decline to

discrimination and stigma that intensified after their HIV status became known to the community. Also the finding indicated that the interviewee experienced a significant decline in their vegetable sales after disclosing their HIV-positive status. This suggested that the stigma and discrimination faced by individuals living with HIV can have direct economic repercussions, impacting their livelihood and financial stability.

Moreover, the finding highlights the detrimental effects of stigma and discrimination on the interviewee's business. Stigma refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors associated with HIV-positive individuals, while discrimination refers to unfair treatment based on HIV status. The intensified stigma and discrimination following the disclosure resulted in a loss of customers and reduced sales, demonstrating how societal prejudice can directly affect one's economic opportunities. It suggested that the community's response to the interviewee's disclosure was negative.

The community's perception of HIV-positive individuals influenced their decision to refrain from purchasing vegetables from the interviewee. This indicated the need for community education and awareness to challenge stereotypes and reduce stigma surrounding HIV. The decline in sales could be attributed to fear and misconceptions surrounding HIV transmission and risk. The community's hesitancy to purchase vegetables from the interviewee might stem from unfounded concerns about contracting HIV through contact or association. This highlights the importance of accurate HIV education and dispelling misconceptions to combat stigma and

discrimination.

The finding accentuates the interconnectedness of health and livelihood. The interviewee's ability to sustain their business and generate income was directly affected by the disclosure of their HIV-positive status. This highlights the need for comprehensive support systems that address the economic impact of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, ensuring that individuals living with HIV have opportunities to maintain their livelihoods.

The finding sheds light on the negative consequences of disclosing HIV-positive status through mass media on the interviewee's vegetable-selling business. It emphasized the economic impact of stigma and discrimination, the influence of community perceptions, and the need for education and awareness to combat misconceptions. Efforts should focus on creating inclusive environments that support the economic well-being of individuals living with HIV and challenge the systemic barriers they face in their livelihoods.

The discrimination rate and stigma to PLHIV was still high in the community. As the findings suggested above, that majority of PLHIV after been exposed themselves about their condition to let others know, get awareness and confidence to accept their HIV-positive status. Through the same mass media and through the same community, the clients have fallen into stigma and discrimination. These findings coincides with those which were obtained by Odimegwu *et al.*, (2020) that, the community awareness through mass media reduce discrimination and increases stigma.

#### 4.4.2 Misleading Information Related to HIV/AIDS

It is a role of mass media to increase awareness related to HIV/AIDS to the community, but dissemination of misleading information related to symptoms, mechanism of transmission and prevention methods might lead into confusion for the particular matter. One of the participants said;

*"The mass media grapples with journalists' limited medical knowledge, leading to misinformation and manipulation around HIV/AIDS. Consequently, the community holds onto false information from trusted sources, making it challenging to rectify due to the wide reach of mass media within a short timeframe." (Male/Healthpractitioner/Ubungo/IDI/ April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview described the issue of shallow understanding and misinformation about HIV/AIDS within the mass media. The interviewee suggested that some journalists lack in-depth knowledge of medical facts related to HIV/AIDS, which can lead to the manipulation of information and the dissemination of false information to the community. This misinformation is challenging to rectify due to the wide reach of mass media and the trust placed in these sources by the public. The finding suggested that some journalists within the mass media had a limited understanding of medical facts related to HIV/AIDS. This indicated a potential knowledge gap among the media professionals responsible for reporting on health issues. The lack of comprehensive understanding could result in inaccurate or incomplete information being conveyed to the public.

The finding implied that the limited understanding of medical facts can lead to the manipulation of information about HIV/AIDS. This manipulation may occur due to

various reasons, such as; sensationalism, lack of proper research, or an attempt to fit the information into a particular narrative. The manipulation of information could contribute to misconceptions and false beliefs within the community. The finding suggested that the dissemination of manipulated or inaccurate information by the mass media can mislead the community. The community relies on trusted sources, including the mass media, for information about health-related issues. When this information is flawed or misrepresented, it can perpetuate misconceptions and hinder accurate understanding of HIV/AIDS.

The finding highlighted the difficulty in rectifying misinformation spread through mass media. Mass media platforms have a wide reach and can quickly disseminate information to a large audience. Once false information is circulated, it can be challenging to correct or counteract the misconceptions that have been formed. This underscores the importance of ensuring accurate reporting from the outset and minimizing the spread of misinformation. The finding suggested that the misinformation spread through mass media could influence public perception and beliefs about HIV/AIDS.

If false information is consistently presented or reinforced by trusted sources, it can shape community attitudes, behaviors, and responses to HIV/AIDS. This highlights the responsibility of the mass media in providing accurate and reliable information to promote informed decision-making and understanding among the public. Generally, the finding underscored the need for improved understanding and responsible reporting within the mass media regarding HIV/AIDS. Journalists and media professionals should be equipped with accurate knowledge and resources to

effectively communicate information to the public. Efforts should be made to bridge the gap between medical experts and the media, ensuring that accurate and evidence-based information is disseminated to counter misinformation and promote informed awareness within the community. These findings were similar to the findings which were obtained by (Tomar & Bansal, 2021) and (Kiran & Iqbal, 2019).

Moreover, the findings obtained showed that, there were some media programmes which could mislead the community in one way or another. Because some of the actors which were involved in HIV/AIDS drama series were not experts. In some media, participants were not HIV positive. Due to the mentioned factors, the participants said, it created ambiguity in explanation and delivering of some information related to living with HIV and the use of ARV. For example, the drama series associated with HIV/AIDS involved HIV negative actors who did not have the real experience of living with HIV/AIDS. The participants said the following;

*"Utilizing drama series on radio and television to convey information about HIV/AIDS is vital. However, the lack of lived experience among non-PLHIV actors poses a challenge in delivering accurate messages to the community. Their reliance on imagination and unrealistic portrayals can result in deviation from the truth." (Female/PLHIV/Ubungo/FGD/ April 2023).*

The finding obtained from the interview explained the importance of using drama series in radio and television to deliver information about HIV/AIDS. However, it pointed out a concern regarding the lack of personal experience among actors who were not people living with HIV (PLHIV). The interviewee suggested that without firsthand experience, these actors might struggle to accurately convey the intended message to the community. The use of imaginary thoughts and unrealistic portrayals

in the absence of real-life experiences could potentially lead to a deviation from the truth. The finding acknowledges the significance of drama series in radio and television as a tool for delivering information about HIV/AIDS. Such programmes have the potential to reach a wide audience and engage viewers or listeners in an entertaining and informative manner. Drama series can effectively communicate important messages, raise awareness, and promote behavioral change regarding HIV/AIDS.

The finding showed a concern regarding actors who do not have personal experience as PLHIV. Without live experience, these actors might lack the depth of understanding necessary to authentically portray the challenges, emotions, and experiences associated with HIV/AIDS. This can result in portrayals that may not accurately reflect the realities faced by PLHIV, potentially leading to misleading or unrealistic depictions. The finding suggests that without personal experience, actors may rely on fictional and imaginary thoughts when portraying characters in HIV/AIDS-related dramas. This reliance on imagination could lead to the portrayal of situations or scenarios that have not been experienced in real life. Consequently, the message delivered to the community might deviate from the truth, potentially perpetuating misconceptions or misrepresentations of the lived experiences of PLHIV.

The finding emphasized on the importance of authenticity and realism in portraying HIV/AIDS-related content. To effectively communicate the message and accurately represent the experiences of PLHIV, it is crucial to involve actors who have personal

knowledge or are directly affected by HIV/AIDS. Their firsthand experiences might contribute to a more genuine portrayal that resonates with the community and fosters understanding and empathy.

The finding substantiated the significance of using drama series in radio and television for HIV/AIDS education. However, it raised concerns about the potential limitations when actors without personal experience as PLHIV are involved. The use of imaginary thoughts and unrealistic portrayals might compromise the accuracy and authenticity of the message conveyed to the community. To ensure the effectiveness of such programme, it is essential to prioritize the inclusion of actors who possess personal experience or a deep understanding of the realities of living with HIV/AIDS. By doing so, the portrayal of characters and situations can align more closely with the truth, promoting accurate education and fostering empathy within the community.

As shown in the findings above, delivered messages related to HIV/AIDS to the community by drama series in radio or television might be factual or real due to the nature of actors. This is because; involvement of HIV negative clients (actors) will not play a role of HIV-positive person in its reality. As a result, due to imitation and copying of un-experienced life situation, it might lead into addition of unrealistic content and mislead the community. These findings were in contrast with those which were obtained by (Alemu *et al.*, 2013) that, the misleading of information was due to unprofessional broadcasters and not HIV-negative actors.

#### **4.5 Discussion of the Findings**



This section discusses the study findings. The discussion delves into the key themes and patterns that emerged from the data, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of various media strategies and interventions. By engaging in this discussion, a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between media, HIV/AIDS awareness, and response services can be deeply understood, ultimately informing the development of more effective media-based interventions in combating the pandemic.

#### **4.5.1 Identification of Medical Strategies to Enhancing Response to HIV/AIDS Services**

This section provides discussion of the findings related to the specific objective of identifying medical strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services. The main themes that emerged from the data included the "Talking About It" programme, challenging stigma and discrimination, promoting HIV/AIDS services, educating and entertaining, putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda, encouraging leaders to take action, and capacity building.

The findings revealed the effectiveness of the "Talking about It" programme in raising awareness and promoting discussions surrounding HIV/AIDS. This strategy involves open and honest conversations about HIV/AIDS, addressing misconceptions, and encouraging individuals to seek testing and treatment. Previous studies have also highlighted the positive impact of communication campaigns in reducing stigma and increasing HIV/AIDS awareness, (Akankunda, *et al.*, 2022). The "Talking about It" programme aligns with the agenda-setting theory, as it aims

to influence public discourse and prioritize HIV/AIDS as a pressing issue in society.

The findings underscored the importance of challenging stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS. Various strategies, such as community-based interventions, media campaigns, and advocacy efforts, have been employed to combat stigma and discrimination. These findings are aligned with previous studies, (He, 2021) that have demonstrated the detrimental effects of stigma on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. By addressing stigma, these strategies aimed to shape the public agenda, emphasizing the need for inclusive and supportive responses to HIV/AIDS.

The findings highlighted the significance of promoting HIV/AIDS services to ensure access and utilization. Strategies such as targeted awareness campaigns, mobile clinics, and community outreach programme have been effective in increasing service uptake. Previous studies Hedge *et al.*, (2021) have also emphasized on the importance of comprehensive service promotion to reach vulnerable populations. These findings are aligned with the agenda-setting theory, as they aim to prioritize HIV/AIDS services on the public agenda and advocate for increased resource allocation.

The findings indicated the effectiveness of using educational and entertaining approaches to engage audiences in HIV/AIDS messaging. Strategies such as; utilizing storytelling, interactive media, and culturally relevant content have been successful in capturing attention and delivering key messages. Previous studies (Andrew *et al.*, 2020) have also recognized the importance of using engaging and entertaining formats to enhance information retention and behavior change. These

findings are aligned with agenda-setting theory by influencing public discourse and shaping attitudes towards HIV/AIDS.

Further, the findings revealed the impact of media coverage in putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda and increasing public awareness. Media outlets play a crucial role in disseminating information, highlighting key issues, and shaping public opinion. Previous studies (Shamu *et al.*, 2020) have shown that media coverage can influence public perception and policy priorities. Putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda aligned with the agenda-setting theory, as it sought to influence the salience and prominence of HIV/AIDS issues in the public sphere.

The findings emphasized the importance of encouraging leaders to take action in addressing HIV/AIDS. Strategies such as; advocacy campaigns, engaging policymakers, and fostering political will have been effective in driving policy change and resource allocation. Previous studies Lazuardi *et al.*, (2019) have highlighted the role of leadership in shaping the response to HIV/AIDS. By encouraging leaders to take action, these strategies are aligned with the agenda-setting theory, as they aim to influence the policy agenda and prioritize HIV/AIDS as a public health concern.

Study findings showed the significance of capacity building among healthcare providers and community organizations to enhance the response to HIV/AIDS services. Training programme, workshops, and knowledge sharing platforms have been effective in improving service delivery and quality of care. Previous studies (Birdthistle *et al.*, 2022) have also recognized the importance of capacity building in

strengthening healthcare systems and improving outcomes. These findings are aligned with the agenda-setting theory, as they contribute to the prioritization of HIV/AIDS services and the allocation of resources for capacity-building efforts.

In summary, the findings related to the identification of medical strategies towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services have highlighted the effectiveness of various approaches, such as the "Talking about It" programme, challenging stigma and discrimination, promoting HIV/AIDS services, educating and entertaining, putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda, encouraging leaders to take action, and capacity building. These findings are consistent with previous studies, (Birdthistle *et al.*, 2022; (Lazuardi *et al.*, 2019); Shamu *et al.*, 2020) which had also recognized the importance of these strategies in addressing HIV/AIDS. Moreover, the discussion of these findings are aligned with the agenda-setting theory, as the strategies aim to shape public discourse, influence policy priorities, and prioritize HIV/AIDS as a critical public health issue.

#### **4.5.2 Availability of Media Resources, Tools, Programme and Infrastructures, for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

Findings under this part revealed the presence of various media resources and tools that could be utilized for raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and related services. These resources included; television, radio, print media, online platforms, mass media, and mobile applications. Comparing these findings with previous studies, it becomes evident that media resources had evolved and expanded over time, reflecting advancements in technology and changes in media consumption patterns. This suggested that there was a broader range of options available compared to earlier

studies. Agenda-setting theory suggested that the availability and utilization of diverse media resources could influence the attention given to HIV/AIDS issues and shape public opinion and policy agendas.

The findings highlighted the use of specific media programme and campaigns designed to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and related services. These programmes included; documentaries, talk shows, public service announcements, educational videos, and social marketing campaigns. Comparing these findings with previous studies, it is evident that media programmes has continued to be an effective method for disseminating HIV/AIDS information, (Youssef *et al.*, 2021). However, there might be variations in programme formats and content based on cultural, regional, or target audience considerations. Agenda-setting theory supports the idea that media programme can influence public perceptions and policy priorities by setting the agenda and framing the discourse on HIV/AIDS.

The findings shed light on the sufficiency of media infrastructure to support awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and related services. This included the availability of broadcasting networks, production facilities, trained personnel, and technological infrastructure. Comparing these findings with previous studies (Agegnehu & Tesema, 2020), it is observed that media infrastructure has improved in many regions, including increased access to broadcasting networks and the proliferation of digital platforms. However, disparities may still exist in certain areas, particularly in underserved regions or low-resource settings. Agenda-setting theory emphasizes on the importance of media infrastructure as a facilitator for disseminating HIV/AIDS information and shaping public discourse by amplifying

certain issues.

Agenda-setting theory provides a valuable lens to understand the link between the findings and the influence of media on HIV/AIDS awareness. The availability of media resources and tools, as identified in the findings, is significant as they contribute to the prominence and salience of HIV/AIDS issues in public discourse. Comparing these findings with previous studies helps to establish the evolving nature of media resources and their impact on agenda-setting. By utilizing diverse media platforms and tools, awareness campaigns can generate public attention and influence policy agendas, aligning with the agenda-setting theory's assertion that the media plays a critical role in determining what issues receive attention and how they are framed.

Similarly, the findings related to media programmes Mude *et al.*, (2020) used for awareness and the sufficiency of media infrastructure also align with agenda-setting theory. Media programmes serve as vehicles for disseminating HIV/AIDS information and shaping public perceptions, reinforcing the theory's premise that media can influence public opinion by setting the agenda and framing the discourse around HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the sufficiency of media infrastructure is crucial for effective dissemination of awareness campaigns, ensuring that information reaches diverse audiences and contributes to the agenda-setting process.

Through linking the discussion of these findings to agenda-setting theory, it became evident that media resources, programmes, and infrastructure were integral

components in shaping public awareness, influencing policy priorities, and addressing HIV/AIDS-related issues. Understanding the interplay between media and agenda-setting theory could inform strategies to enhance the utilization of media resources, improve programmes effectiveness, and address any gaps in media infrastructure, ultimately contributing to more comprehensive and impactful HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives.

#### **4.5.3 Challenges that Media Encounters When Face Members of the Community While Responding to HIV/AIDS Services**

The findings revealed that members of the community face increased discrimination and stigma when accessing or engaging with HIV/AIDS services. This discrimination and stigma can manifest in various forms, such as; social ostracism, rejection by family or friends, workplace discrimination, and denial of healthcare services. Comparing these findings with previous studies such as a study conducted by (Ajayi *et al.*, 2019), it is evident that discrimination and stigma remain persistent challenges in the context of HIV/AIDS. However, the nature and extent of these challenges might vary across different regions and communities. Agenda-setting theory emphasizes that discrimination and stigma can influence public perceptions and shape policy agendas by reinforcing negative stereotypes and limiting the attention given to HIV/AIDS issues.

The findings highlight the presence of misleading information circulating within the community regarding HIV/AIDS. This misinformation can contribute to misconceptions, myths, and beliefs that hinder accurate understanding of the disease and its prevention, testing, and treatment. Comparing these findings with previous

studies such as; Lazuardi *et al.*, (2019), it is apparent that the presence of misleading information had been an ongoing challenge in HIV/AIDS responses. However, the sources and dissemination channels of such information may have evolved with the advent of mass media and online platforms. Agenda-setting theory suggests that misinformation can distort public perceptions and policy agendas, as media plays a significant role in shaping public understanding and influencing policy priorities.

Agenda-setting theory provides a framework to understand the link between the findings and the influence of media on the challenges faced by members of the community in responding to HIV/AIDS services. The increased discrimination and stigma faced by individuals accessing HIV/AIDS services, as identified in the findings, can be perpetuated and reinforced by media portrayals and public discourse. Comparing these findings with previous studies such as (Ledin, 2023) helps to establish the persistence of these challenges and the need for continued efforts to combat discrimination and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. Agenda-setting theory emphasizes that media can contribute to reducing discrimination and stigma by framing HIV/AIDS issues in a way that promotes empathy, understanding, and positive social attitudes.

Similarly, the presence of misleading information related to HIV/AIDS, as highlighted in the findings, underscores the role of media in shaping public understanding and awareness. Comparing these findings with previous studies such as the study which was done by Jones *et al.*, (2019) revealed the ongoing challenge of addressing misinformation within the context of HIV/AIDS. Agenda-setting theory suggests that media has the power to influence public opinion and policy



agendas by either reinforcing accurate information or perpetuating misconceptions.

It emphasizes on the importance of media literacy and responsible journalism in countering misleading information and promoting accurate knowledge about HIV/AIDS. By linking the discussion of these findings to agenda-setting theory, it becomes evident that media can either exacerbate or mitigate the challenges faced by members of the community in responding to HIV/AIDS services. The negative effects of discrimination, stigma, and misleading information can be addressed through media interventions that promote accurate information, challenge stereotypes, and foster empathy. Understanding the role of media in shaping public perceptions and policy agendas is crucial for designing effective strategies to overcome these challenges and create an environment that supports equitable access to HIV/AIDS services and accurate information dissemination.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarized the study findings as per the specific objectives, the second section concludes the findings followed by the study recommendations and the final part of this chapter suggests the gaps to be covered by the future studies.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The main objective of the study was to assess the media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services with a case study of Ubungo HIV/AIDS support centre in Dar es Salaam. This case study design had the following three specific objectives which were; identification of media strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS services, to examine whether there were available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services, and to assess the challenges that were the result of media facing members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS services.

##### **5.2.1 Identification of Media Strategies Devised Towards Enhancing Response to HIV/AIDS Services**

From the findings, two mass media were selected (Wasafi FM and Radio One) for the study to represent other media. The criterion of selection was based on the community interest to the media and the number of clients receiving information from the selected media. The media that participated in the study were Wasafi FM and Radio One Tanzania. From the two mass media, several themes and sub-themes were obtained. The themes which explains the strategies of media towards enhancing

responses to HIV/AIDS were the medias to Talk about HIV/AIDS, the media focus to challenge stigma and discrimination, focusing on promoting HIV/AIDS services, educating and entertaining, putting HIV/AIDS on the news agenda, encouraging leaders to take action and capacity building in the prevention of deadly pandemic.

### **5.2.2 Availability of Media Resources, Tools, Programmes and Infrastructures for Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Services**

In this objective, the study intended to examine whether there were available media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services. The themes obtained in this objective included; the media resources available were the farmers themselves, media programmes used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services and media infrastructure were sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS services. Media resources and tools helped the media to engage in the broadcasting process of information. In this case, it included the related information to HIV/AIDS control, prevention and the response services to be given to the client.

### **5.2.3 Result of Media Facing Members of the Community while Responding to HIV/AIDS Services**

The assessment of challenges that were the result of media facing members of the community while responding to HIV/AIDS services included all related factors which were attributed by the presence of mass media during the pandemic era. The challenges included; the increase in stigma and discrimination and the provision of misleading information related to HIV/AIDS. An example of the misleading information was the one which was perceived that, individuals with blood group ‘O’

could not contact the disease and if they get disease, it won't be pathogenic to them and it won't be able to replicate in the cells.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

From the findings, the conclusion is drawn according to the main themes obtained during the study. In identification of media strategies devised towards enhancing response to HIV/AIDS. It was found that, the media focused on the contents about HIV/AIDS to increase awareness. It played a role in challenging stigma and discrimination which was a vital problem in the community against PLHIV. The media promotes HIV/AIDS services, educating and entertaining as a means of communicating with the community on the issues related to HIV/AIDS. It is designated to encourage leaders to take action and the capacity building process to PLHIV so that they might live happily and bringing hope to continue with their life.

Regarding availability of media resources, tools, programmes and infrastructures sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS and services, the study concludes that, available media resources and tools used for increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS to the community were satisfactory but not sufficient. This was because, the information was still not obtained in remote areas and by some of the community members. Media programmes used for awareness on HIV/AIDS to the community were essential part of lowering the prevalence of HIV. Therefore, it was essentially important to inculcate the broadening of the programmes to reach the majority. In the study findings it was found that media infrastructures were sufficient to be used for awareness on HIV/AIDS because of equitable technological needs and human

resource.

From the study, it was also noticed that, the media resources might have contributed into challenging scope of HIV/AIDS awareness to the community. This was because, the lack of exposure to HIV/AIDS concept to some of the journalists and radio presenters, who tended to mislead the community unknowingly during the presentation. This might have led into the increase in discrimination and stigma within the community to people living with HIV/AIDS. Because of incompetent information sharing, the study concludes that, unethical presentation of issues related to HIV/AIDS attributed to misleading of information and increased discrimination and stigma against HIV/AIDS.

Based on the review, it is deducted that media exposure was a necessary but not a sufficient precursor for HIV/AIDS awareness and safe behaviour. Media exposure reinforces other components of HIV/AIDS awareness and perhaps, interpersonal discussions on HIV/AIDS vide media agenda setting to affect HIV/AIDS awareness and response services and forgetting other areas such as, attitude and perceptions particularly on the use of ARV.

In spite of well acknowledged potential of mass media in HIV/AIDS awareness, little is known in terms of the knowledge gap on HIV/AIDS that exists in societies as a result of disparities in media exposure and the concomitant effect of HIV/AIDS media use on attitude and behavior regarding HIV/AIDS. This study was a response to such paucity in literature. It is also concluded that fusing HIV/AIDS-related information could narrow the gap in HIV/AIDS knowledge in a given social milieu,

and as well address the challenges of negative HIV/AIDS attitudes and risky practice. The mass media remains a major source of HIV/AIDS information for majority of people particularly PLHIV. In line with the improvements in literacy and media exposure among PLHIV still the press was needed to pay more attention to HIV/AIDS protective or preventive stories instead of overemphasis on care for people living with HIV/AIDS which was a reactionary approach.

#### **5.4 Study Recommendations**

Based on the findings in this study, it is hereby suggested that strategy must be adopted in HIV/AIDS media messages conceptualization process to emphasize messages that advance the knowledge for PLHIV on HIV/AIDS specific issues of prevention, transmission, demography and epidemiology and deemphasize those that directly instruct them to use ARTs. This was largely because this study established that HIV/AIDS response services and awareness by the influence of mass media were mainly for PLHIV. By assessing media's influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services, this study contended that the life of PLHIV was guaranteed.

The media can also emphasize on issue-specific knowledge on the use of PEP and PREP and increasing the awareness to the community on the understanding that HIV/AIDS transmission can be prevented and the epidemiological prevalence of people with viral loads can be lowered. HIV/AIDS messages producers and reporters must research the interpretations of target audiences of such messages before any media campaign slogans are released. If possible misinterpretations are not controlled; the campaign messages are less likely to reap the desirable impact. Again, HIV/AIDS campaign producers and news reporters should consider

campaigns that are acceptable to all ranges and they would not be misinterpreted according to different kinds of culture or religious perspective. This is because some religious perspectives are against use of ART's, therefore, the mass media has the role for emphasizing and providing education on ART's without interrupting someone's religion but saving PLHIV in a particular religious belief which is noxious.

The press in Tanzania should emphasize stories on the risks of HIV/AIDS and publish adequate editorials and features with mobilizing information in order to help the public to translate such information into meaningful health actions. Newspaper reporting on HIV/AIDS should also avoid concentrating in the urban centres. Serious effort should be made to reveal the overall comprehensive outlook of the HIV situation down to the grassroots. Mass media should employ designate professional health reporters as that would increase awareness of HIV/AIDS and encourage the mass media to have editorials with informed opinions and official stand over issues concerning HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, editorial design and production of newspapers should pay close attention in page layout emphasizing HIV/AIDS stories on upper left quadrant of pages, accompanying the stories with attention capturing devices such as colour, picture and cartoon and most importantly by accentuating the stories on front pages.

Finally, the media have to elongate the time for HIV/AIDS sessions. For example, Radio one programmes can be extended from half an hour to one hour, instead of once per week it can be every day. Additionally, the Government through Tanzania Commission for AIDS can provide a regulation to all media to include the

HIV/AIDS content in their programmes this is to make sure that all groups and all community members are enriched with the knowledge of HIV/AIDS. In spite of traditional media, the digital media also have to be used in order to increase awareness among the PLHIV and the community in general. The involvement of professional presenters/journalists is important with testimonial from People living with HIV.

The policy makers with responsible ministry have to put more emphasis on the improvement of information sharing by using the available mass media. The policy must direct the ways of information provision and the necessity for sharing the information about the pandemic to reduce the prevalence rate. The Governmental organizations such as; Tanzania commission for AIDS (TACAIDS) must consider the role of mass media in the deprivation of stigma and discrimination to PLHIV. The committee with cooperation of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology have to introduce the programmes for HIV/AIDS awareness as a compulsory note to the media nationwide.

### **5.5 Area for Further Studies**

This study has mainly dealt with the assessment of media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. It analysed the factors for awareness, challenges, responses and all associated tasks of media influence to HIV/AIDS awareness and response services. There are some other areas which need to be studied where this study did not touch. For example, the future study can be conducted on the attitude and awareness in the application of PREP and PEP to lower HIV/AIDS transmission.



Moreover, there is a need for the future study to be conducted on the psychological factors associated with the use of ARVs to children among the PLHIV. The study also suggested a further research to be conducted on the role of mass media in improving adherence to Anti Retrovirus (ARV) and changing of HIV/AIDS related behaviour. This is in inclusion of Seroconversion among the Serodiscordant couples and health maintenance to discordant couples. The areas above are necessary to be covered because they are among of the con-current issues related to HIV/AIDS not covered by this study and they are concordance with the role of mass media.

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## APPENDICES

### INTERVIEW GUIDE ON MEDIA INFLUENCE ON HIV/AIDS

#### AWARENESS AND RESPONSE SERVICES

My name is **GRACE D.MOLLEL**, a Student from Open University of Tanzania, Pursuing Master's Degree in Mass Communication. I am conducting a research on the *Media influence on HIV/AIDS awareness and response services a case study of Ubungo HIV/AIDS support centre in Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania*. I kindly request your participation in responding to the study question. I assure you that the information obtained shall be kept confidential and will be only for the purpose of this study.

**Whom to contact:** In case you have any question regarding this study, either during the period of study or after the study is completed, please contact me. My phone number is +255755 468227

I will be happy if you are willing to participate.

**APPENDIX I: In-Depth Interview (IDIs) with PLHIV**

1. Your name, place of work ad contact
2. What do you understand about HIV and AIDS?
3. What are the contribution of media in the HIV/AIDS awareness and response?
4. What are the challenges that are facing members of community as a result of media when responding to HIV/AIDS services?
5. What are social challenges have you ever experienced or you are experiencing after you were diagnosed and found to be living with HIV?
6. What are the impacts of media to the society in respect to PLHIV who disclose their HIV status?
7. What challenges do you experience as a result of media here at Ubungo support center/cluster?
8. What are the roles of media in responding to antiretroviral therapy (ART) services to PLHIV?
9. Which media platform are you interesting in listening, reading or watching?
10. Any other comments related to this topic or any other

*I thank You Very Much for your Time and Willingness to Participate*

**APPENDIX II: In-Depth Interview (IDIs) with Media Personnel (RADIO ONE  
& WASAFI)**

1. What are the contribution of media in the HIV/AIDS awareness and response
2. What are the impact of media to PLHIV in responding to ART Services
3. What are the role of media to community member in avoiding stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV?
4. What are the strategies that are devised to ensure that media enhances people's awareness and response towards HIV and AIDS services.
5. The role of media to PLHIV in responding to HIV services and methadone (I know that methadone is for drug addicts-how is this connected services.
6. To what extent has the mass media campaign increased the knowledge and response on HIV in the society
7. What are the contribution of media no HIV prevention and promotion of HIV and AIDS awareness.
8. Any other comments related to this topic or any other

**APPENDIX III: Focus Group Discussion with PLHIV and Cluster leader**

1. To what extent as HIV and AIDS awareness through media affect PLHIV depending to age, gender, level of education and economic status
2. What do you understanding about HIV and AIDS
3. What are the contribution of media in the HIV/AIDS awareness and response
4. Which media platform are you interesting in listening, reading or watching
5. In which media did you get the information about HIV awareness for the first time
6. What are the challenges that are facing members of community as a result of media when responding to HIV/AIDS Services
7. What are social challenges have you ever experienced or you are experiencing after you was diagnosed your Living with HIV.
8. What challenges do you experience as a result of media here at Ubungo support center/ cluster.
9. Is there the need of presence of media when attending to hospital for HIV related.
10. What are the role of media in responding to Antiretroviral therapy (ART) Services to PLHIV
11. To what extent has media contributed about raising HIV/AIDS awareness and response in Ubungo cluster?
12. What are the strategies that are devised to ensure that media enhances people's awareness and response towards HIV/AIDS services?