


Chapter 14

The Erosion of Traditional Marital Beliefs: A Consequence of Modern Influences

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ABSTRACT

In many African cultures traditional marital beliefs have passed through generations, providing a sense of continuity and identity. Modern influences continue to erode these beliefs, leaving young people navigating the complexities of marriages without guidance of traditional wisdom. This chapter examines the erosion of traditional marital beliefs as a consequence of modern influences, focusing on how modern technologies amplify gender-based violence in marital relationships. Through desktop research, the study explores the shifting dynamics of respect and power within marriages, highlighting how digital platforms and contemporary societal norms contribute to the normalization of violence. It reveals that the intersection of traditional expectations and modern realities creates a complex environment where gender-based violence can thrive, often exacerbated by the anonymity and reach of online interactions. The findings underscore the urgent need for interventions that address these modern influences while respecting cultural contexts, aiming to foster healthier marital relationships.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In an era defined by rapid technological growth, the landscape of romantic relationships has undergone a profound transformation, particularly among young generation. This transformation and the widespread adoption of technology has enabled new forms of connections, fundamentally changing the way people meet, interact, and form romantic relationships (Kakembo, 2024). According to Stewart and Linden (2022), social media such as online networking sites have been successfully integrated into everyday lives of almost every individual on the planet (Baloyi, 2022; Kakembo, 2024). The shift towards social media interactions has fostered a new era of relation-building, as it facilitates communication and connections mostly among young people (Kakembo, 2024; Stewart & Linden, 2022). Online platforms are re-shaping the way individuals initiate and develop romantic relationships, by passing conventional methods of courtship. Stewart and Linden (2022) say that, a few of the usual and extensively made use of social media sites platforms include Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and several among others. These platforms resulted in a transformation of personal life and connection (Kakembo, 2024). Although these platforms have opened up new opportunities for social connection, they have also contributed to the erosion of traditional marital beliefs.

With the shifting cultural paradigms, and advanced globalization, the traditional beliefs surrounding marriages are increasingly being eroded by modern influences (Ainamon et al., 2022). The fabric of traditional beliefs that once guided societal norms and values in marriages is increasingly frayed by forces of modernity. Societal norms are what people believe “should” happen. These beliefs, often steeped in historical context and societal norms, have long served as the bedrock of marital relationships, guiding behaviors, expectations, and roles within the union (Ainamon et al., 2022; Ogoma, 2014). The profound shifts in communication, lifestyle, and cultural exchange have led to an unprecedented erosion of traditional beliefs that once served as cornerstones of identity, community, and moral guidance (Ogoma, 2014). As societies become increasingly intertwined with technology, the foundational beliefs that once guided interpersonal relationships are being changed, and in many cases, eroded. This erosion of foundational cultural tenets, particularly within indigenous and marginalized communities, is not merely a matter of cultural loss; it carries profound implications for interpersonal relationships and social dynamics.

In the Zimbabwean Shona culture, marriage has traditionally been a communal affair, involving not just the couple but also their families, and communities. According to Mawere and Mawere (2010), African traditional marriages are considered sacred and highly respected institutions, governed by traditional customs and rituals that emphasize the importance of family, community, and social harmony. Ainamon et al. (2022) assert that marriage in traditional African society is performed with

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