Sexual Activities And Experiences

Human beings are sexual beings and this is expressed through feelings of attraction between two persons (either of the opposite of the same gender) at a particular point in time. Sexual activities and experiences including the ability to have control over sexual feelings, choice of a sexual partner, emotional attachments, trustworthiness as well as the actual sexual intercourse, and dealing with the consequences of sexual intercourse (pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual enhancement drugs) amount to one's sexuality. In other words, sexuality is a combination of various aspects of human beings' relationships over time.

In a conference proceeding by Fakeye, David O. "Globalization and cultural erosion: Impact on sexuality in Nigeria." (2016), the author notes that in most African countries, including Nigeria, the subject of sex and sexuality was to be discussed among the adults and married couples. The adolescents and the youth were excluded from these discussions due to the cultural restrictions in most African societies. It was held that the young girls were supposed to remain virgins for it was considered a precious gift to the would-be bridegroom. Sexual education was not integrated into the school syllabus and the traditions, as well as the church, were against such teachings.

Fakeye notes that contemporary Nigeria can no longer hold the argument of disallowing sexual education in primary and secondary schools. He argues that with the advent of globalization that has made it possible to communicate and travel across regions and continents, sexual education needs to be integrated into the school curriculum. This he says would ensure that African adolescents and youth have sufficient knowledge as far as sex and sexuality is concerned. Such an African would find it easy to make the right sexual choices whether in their countries or elsewhere in the world. The issue of cultural erosion is also being highlighted in the Fakeye conference proceedings. He says that the traditional African culture has changed and that the taboos associated with parents discussing sex and sexuality with their children have been eroded.

The conference proceeding by Fakeye provides the argument that the relationships choices that Ifemelu was making seem to be short-lived. First, she is with his Nigerian boyfriend Obinze and later breaks up and is seen later towards the end of the story trying to reunite after Ifemelu marries two other men while staying in America. Maybe if Ifemelu had sufficient sex and sexuality education right from her primary and secondary levels, she would make the right relationship choices that would lead to lasting marriage life. Obinze also would have had control of his sexual emotions when Ifemelu left his to America. He seems to be so attached to Ifemelu to a point of entertaining a possible reunion though he is married and with a kid.

Rowden, Trampas J., and Stephen F. Duncan. "Handling Conflict in Marriage." (2018) is a publication that supports the argument that a person equipped with sufficient sex and sexual education particularly the emotional control aspects would have conflict resolution abilities. The ability to resolve a conflict in marriage determines its success or failure. Conflicts may arise from basic issues such as the manner to prepare food, doing laundry to complex issues such as managing family finances. Whether basic or complicated issues crop up, they need to be resolved amicably. The author of this publication calls marriage a sacred union, ordained by

God, and should be perpetuated forever. This means that marriage failure should be avoided at all costs.

In the novel Americanah, we meet a number of couples whose marriages end up in divorce. The first is that between Ifemelu with his American boyfriend, Curt. Curt seems to love Ifemelu and wishes that she moves to Baltimore for possible marriage life. Ifemelu's feelings are the complete opposite of those of Curt. She is unable to address the related challenges. The union ends up broken. The second marriage that Ifemelu engages in is with Blaine. Again, Blain is unwilling to address his shortcomings in the marriage and it ends up in divorce.

The other marriage that ends up in divorce for failure to address conflicts is that between Aunty Uju with the Nigerian accountant living in Massachusetts. Aunty Uju is uncomfortable with the lifestyle her husband provides to her and their son Dike. She prefers to raise Dike as a single mother. The marriage between Obinze and his wife Kosi seems to be a success. They have a daughter called Buchi. This could mean that the couples are able to resolve their conflicts and uphold the sacred nature of marriage as an institution ordained by God as discussed in Rowden, Trampas J., and Stephen F. Duncan. “Handling Conflict in Marriage.” (2018).

The failed marriages witnessed in the novel Americanah should not demoralize the characters (Ifemelu, Aunty Uju, or Blaine) and the readers to fear marriage life. There are many cases of successful marriages. In the book by Wallerstein, Judith. The good marriage: How and why love lasts. Plunkett Lake Press, 2019, a number of successful marriages are documented. Despite the type of marriage (whether traditional, rescue, cohabitation, romantic), couples’ way of upbringing, schools attended, and so on, marriages can indeed be successful. The author of this book provides excellent reference material to all couples with the intention to make their marriages work.

Today’s male vulnerability has turned very challenging to the male gender. Army combats terrorism, political wars, robbery crimes, and other major social and economic ills are associated with males. The affirmative programs that offer an upper hand to the female gender in employment and educational scholarships opportunities have placed males in very vulnerable circumstances.

Nevertheless, the vulnerable male is expected to play his part in society in being the head of the family, the breadwinner, protector, and so on. The male gender continues to grapple with the changing world that has left most of them suffering depression and early and avoidable deaths. It is evident in most areas of the world where the life expectancy of males is on a downward trend.

In a publication by Beltran-Sanchez, Hiram, Caleb E. Finch, and Eileen M. Crimmins. “Twentieth-century surge of excess adult male mortality.” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 112.29 (2015): 8993-8998, there is an observed high rate of mortality in males compared to that of females. The research was carried out in 13 developed nations and it was found out that males are vulnerable to early deaths due to the increasing pressures of life. Diseases of the heart constituted much of the male deaths recorded. In a bigger context, there are much more contributors to male mortality including depression associated with a job loss that can lead to hypertension hence cardiovascular ailments. It was observed that there will exist a demographic disparity if the trends persist.

The research that demonstrated the high mortality rates in males is relatable to the death of the General, the husband to Aunty Uju. The General may have experience intense pressure from the demanding nature of his job. Additionally, the work of a General would involve army combats that can lead to loss of life. This demonstrates the vulnerability of males working in difficult professions such as the army, police, firefighters, scooper diving, and so on. These job preoccupations are mainly dominated by males. Though recently females have joined these preoccupations, the majority of them are still in “safe” preoccupations.

Obinze is another vulnerable male. Being in love with Ifemelu, he applies for an American visa to travel together with his lover. This was during that memorable instance of September 11 when America was hit by the worst terrorist act in history. The perception that males are dangerous leads to denial of visa to Obinze implying no denied entry into America. Obinze successfully moves to Britain to study with the hope of one day joining his girlfriend. The visa expires and Obinze extends his stay in Britain as an undocumented immigrant. Later, he is arrested and deported, an act that demoralizes him.

Despite the challenges, Obinze faces while abroad, he is seen becoming a successful real estate developer and marries back in Nigeria. This represents the resilient nature of Obinze. A source of inspiration can be drawn from Obinze encounters. He remains strong-willed to succeed despite the challenges. His longtime girlfriend Ifemelu is seen admiring his successes. Probably she would wish to be close once again.

The other example of a job loss-related vulnerability is encountered when we meet Ifemelu's father. He abruptly losses his government job, an act that drives him into depression. This is because he can no longer be the breadwinner of the family because of depressed finances. He becomes powerless and this is evident in the instance when he cannot stop his wife from being overly committed to religion while abandoning family chores. A male with no money and influence is like a wounded lion. this is likely to drive him into a depression that can lead to early death hence high male mortality.

Males experience vulnerability in love affairs. This is documented in a publication by Javaid, Aliraza. Masculinities, sexualities, and love. Routledge, 2018, where males are lamenting the pain of heartbreaks due to broken dreams of love and marriage. The author portrays a picture of a man who loves dearly and has invested his emotions, finances and any form of his possession to make the relationship blossom. He has hopes of a happy life with the woman of his dreams. The dreams are crushed and break into pieces that can no longer unite. This is especially the case in the 21st century where most females are marrying for material gains. Once the monetary possessions are depleted, she leaves as nothing existed.

In the Americanah, we see Obinze who is in love with Ifemelu. Obinze is so committed to the relationship to the extent of being willing to immigrate to America with his lover. When the visa is denied, Obinze proceeds to Britain to further his education to impress his girlfriend. His stay as an undocumented immigrant in Britain is probably to find a route of joining his lover in America. However, when he is deported and lets go of his great attachment to Ifemelu, he finds Kosi and marries her. Obinze is a representation of most men whose love is real and who is ready to defend and fight for it.

Curt, the first American boyfriend to Ifemelu, loves her. He is ready to use his influence in business to make Ifemelu obtain a job in Baltimore. He does this to bring her close enough to b

meeting her as frequently as possible. Despite his efforts and love for her, Ifemelu disappoints him by breaking this relationship. Later, Ifemelu marries another man, an act that leaves Curt wounded.

In conclusion, the issues of sex and sexuality are important and they ought to be incorporated into the school curriculum. This would make it possible for adolescents to obtain this important knowledge about themselves and others. The result is good choices in sex and sexuality. Also, outdated taboos and beliefs that condemn sex education to children need to be laid off and embrace the traditions that are progressive in nature. As for male vulnerability, deliberate interventions need to be put in place to take care of the male gender. They are as vulnerable as their female counterparts. The notion that males are strong is not entirely correct. Psychological support is of great assistance.