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Virginity, Sex and Marriage through all is Well that Ends Well by William Shakespear

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Abstract- The issue of sex, virginity, and marriage has been an important issue in many societies may they be traditional or modern. The situation becomes a national challenge when it has to do with young men of both sexes. Nowadays, many young men more or less of sixteen years old are already sexually active. In some African societies, before the wedding ceremonies, there was a step called linen ceremony aiming to control whether the woman was virgin before she gets married. So the first night with her husband is a purpose to sex. This gets made parents not to speak of sex to their children for fear not to make them know about it and abuse before the right age in order to preserve not only the honor of the family but also the one of their daughter. Although this practice is not the case in some European countries, it is a wonderful pride for parents to marry their daughter knowing that she preserves her virginity. But nowadays things have significantly changed. Sexuality, which has been a core of many taboos in many societies, is no more hidden. It seems while to be an act of no boundary, no age. It has become a source of many worries, from parents. This article, therefore aims at addressing the issue of Virginity, Sex and Marriage in general and Benin and British young men in particular with the emphasis on the challenges towards a right use of sex outside marriage through William Shakespeare's All is well that ends well.

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Virginity, Sex and Marriage through all is Well that Ends Well by William Shakespeare

Dr. Alidou Razakou Ibourahima Boro

Abstract- The issue of sex, virginity, and marriage has been an important issue in many societies may they be traditional or modern. The situation becomes a national challenge when it has to do with young men of both sexes. Nowadays, many young men more or less of sixteen years old are already sexually active. In some African societies, before the wedding ceremonies, there was a step called linen ceremony aiming to control whether the woman was virgin before she gets married. So the first night with her husband is a purpose to sex. This gets made parents not to speak of sex to their children for fear not to make them know about it and abuse before the right age in order to preserve not only the honor of the family but also the one of their daughter. Although this practice is not the case in some European countries, it is a wonderful pride for parents to marry their daughter knowing that she preserves her virginity. But nowadays things have significantly changed. Sexuality, which has been a core of many taboos in many societies, is no more hidden. It seems while to be an act of no boundary, no age. It has become a source of many worries, from parents. This article, therefore aims at addressing the issue of Virginity, Sex and Marriage in general and Benin and British young men in particular with the emphasis on the challenges towards a right use of sex outside marriage through William Shakespeare's *All is well that ends well.*

Keywords: virginity, sex, marriage, young men, modern and traditional society.

Résumé- La question du sexe, de la virginité et du mariage est une question de grande préoccupation dans de nombreuses sociétés, qu'elles soient traditionnelles ou modernes. La question devient un défi national lorsqu'il s'agit des jeunes des deux sexes. De nos jours, de nombreux jeune de plus ou moins seize ans sont déjà sexuellement actifs. Dans certaines sociétés africaines, avant les cérémonies de mariage, il y avait une étape appelée cérémonie de lendemain visant à contrôler si la femme était vierge avant de se marier. Donc, la première nuit avec son mari a pour principal l'activité parler de sexe à leurs enfants de peur de ne pas leur faire sexuelle. Cela a fait que beaucoup de parents n'osent pas savoir et leur donner le goût avant le mariage. Tout cela vise à les faire pour garder leur honneur et celui de leur fille. Bien que cette pratique ne soit pas observée dans les pays européens, c'est une grande fierté pour les parents de marier leur fille sachant qu'elle a conservé sa virginité. Mais aujourd'hui, les choses ont considérablement changé. La sexualité, qui était un véritable tabou dans de nombreuses sociétés, n'est plus cachée. Il semble que ce soit un acte de frontière, pas d'âge. Il est devenu une source de nombreux soucis, des parents. Cet article vise donc à aborder la question de la virginité, du sexe britanniques en particulier, en mettant l'accent sur les défis à et du mariage en général de la perception des jeunes l'égard d'un usage responsable du sexe en dehors du mariage à travers le roman *Tout est bien qui finit bien* de William Shakespeare.

Motsclés: virginité, sexe, mariage, jeunes hommes, société moderne et traditionnelle.

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I. Introduction

All's Well That Ends Well is one best Shakespeare's works. The play is full sexual dramas. The play explores women virginity and tresses on how and when a woman should lose her virginity. This has been the main topic around which all the conservations between characters focused. In the play Shakespeare linked in some bizarre ways sex and warfare and the problem of gender. *All's Well That Ends Well* presents marriage as a means for social harmony and integration. The heart of the play although being written in the past century, the developed themes are the going concerns of our time. The whole society has been consumed with the medicalization of sex. Prostitution was flourishing, and sexual politics, rights for women sex was the central social concern Vancouver director Rachel Ditor[1]"*William Shakespeare's tricky All's Well that Ends Well are still relevant.*" Very instructive, the most of the play's scenes and expressions are related to the difficulties and situations that young men face today in their love affairs. The question is how do young men perceive marriage, sex and virginity? Without ignoring the fact that some factors are causes of sex used by young men and women before getting married, the aim of the paper is to find out young women perception of sex, and marriage today. And since the play under study is a problem pay that seeks to put a stress on how young men in general and women, in particular, decide to lose her virginity, this article will address also the challenges targeting young women use of sex and their desire to get married.

II. Study Methods

For this research work, I have passed through documentary research, and then I went through books and plays pointing up the issue of sexuality and some notions about the conception of sexuality in love relationship of young people. I find it necessary to get students point of view on such a topic. To reach my goal, I have elaborated a series of questionnaires I have

[1] Vancouver director Rachel Ditor"William Shakespeare's tricky All's Well That Ends Well are still relevant"

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addressed to first and second year students. They are about 200 students selected randomly at University of Parakou. I then made a comparison between documentary information on former thought and realities of youth sexuality and the interviewees' conceptions in order see the similarities. The above method has been used taking into account my understanding of the book under study.

III. Study Results

In Africa, it was considered as a curse to talk about sex for the statement is that there is a punishment to taboos when doing so. Teenagers are defended from debates about sexuality. An old man I met during this study said "*It is by hearing and by talking about such a topic that our children will undoubtedly create circumstances of shame and give themselves to forgiven deeds and fornication. That is not part of our customs and values"*. The old man claimed that Virginity constitutes the pride of a maiden it is preserved for the honor of the bride family and in particular the one of the girls. As you can see, sex was to stay untouched before marriage and to be only for married two partners. In some African and European societies, before the wedding ceremonies, there was a step called *linen ceremony* aiming to control whether the woman was virgin before she gets married. The first night with the groom is of sex purpose. That was the reason why parents do nottalk about sex to their daughters for fear not to make them know about it and use it before marriage to keep their honor and the one of their family. These taboos of human sexuality have been similar in all African countries as well as in many other countries in the world.

Unfortunately things have greatly changed nowadays. According to the result of my field investigation about seventy percent unmarried young girls lose their virginity before marriage. Sexual intercourse seems to be the reason whythey get engaged love relationships. The deplorable matter isthat most of them started using sexbetween twelve and seventeen years old. The obvious consequences of such a situation are often the multiplication of divorces, the proliferation of diseases.

a) *Virginity, Sex and Marriage through All is Well that Ends Well*

All's Well That Ends Well is an interesting play by William Shakespeare. In this play Shakespeare shows through that play how young people conceive sex in getting love relationship. This work as well as others from the author may be part of strategic documents for youth sexuality change in their love relationships. Love and sex have been the main topic of the play. Because of *Love"* Helena used all means to get the King's assent for her relation with Bertram though their social class difference, and despite his disagreement she fulfilled his challenge to get him as her love. Because of this love she was ready to lose her virginity for the sake of that toward the countess' son. *"Let me ask you a question*; *Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?*[2]" Another behavior from that is regular today is her capability to replace Diana on the bed to lose her virginity by having sex with Bertram to meet her challenge. Sexual intercourse becomes a challenge for young men, for some of it becomes a must and an object of competition. Overall, while numerous topics from the play drawn modern critics, the subjects of sexuality continue to draw the attention of many researchers today and give rise to much commentary.

Sexuality analysis, and its consequent concerns with the themes of love relationship has provided the dominant model of contemporary critical analysis about the play. Helena's strong attachment to Bertram and all she is able to do to get the man she desires, show much when a women is in love she is ready for any sacrifice. Peter Erickson commented on how Helena's sexualized actions toward Bertram upset the dominant patriarchal order. David McCandless studies Helena's infamous "bed-trick" and the tensions it raises concerning conventional distinctions between masculine and feminine roles as far as sexual relations are concerned. Jonathan Hall takes a somewhat different approach, seeing Helena's active sexual pursuit of Bertram as posing a symbolic threat to patriarchy that in her later renunciation of "ambitious love" ultimately serves to re-establish traditional social hierarchies. The analysis of the character of Helena led to different opinions about her virtue and ambition. Levin argues that Helena uses guile and dissimulation throughout the drama, seeing her as a master of intrigue who carefully orchestrates Bertram's acquiescence to her passions. David McCandless takes an opposing point of view. Interpreting All's Well That Ends Well as essentially a romance, rather than a "defective festive comedy," McCandless perceives Helena's purity as an indication of the play's romantic theme of redemption.[3]

Peter Ericson (1991) David McCandless (1994), Jonathan Hall (1995), David McCandless (1990) Kinsey reported that about 67-98% of men had had premarital sex, depending on socioeconomic status, and around 50% of women had engaged in premarital sex. From what have been said above, it appears that men are those who lead their relative to sex. Sexuality may be on a perpetual change because of the different lifestyle. For example, a rich man or a married man when approaching a young girl pretending to love her does not gain her trust easily, but a young boy with an

[2] Helena in Act 1 Scene 1 "*All's Well That Ends Well*" 1603 P9 FTLN 0117 to FTLN 0118

[3] Peter Erickson (1991), David McCandless (1994), Jonathan Hall (1995), David McCandless (1990)

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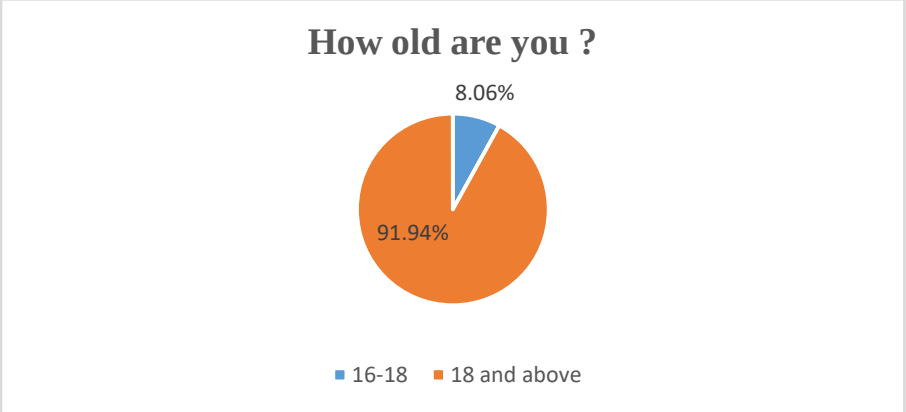
apparent serious face can gain her easily because for her it is possible to get true love relationship with the latter. All these facts show that it is by the aim of getting love women fall into sexual affairs whereas men target sex firstly toward the girl they find attractive.[4]

From the above ideas, one can realize the effectiveness of the changes in history of sexual and the use of sex through history. Love and Sexuality are not easily expressed even though things seem to have changed today. I think that there are enough to go dealing with the way young men are going with love affairs. As I mentioned above the use of sex has become a game for young men in many societies. There is a need to do something to help the new generation to get involved in mutual trust love relationship.

IV. Results of Field Investigation

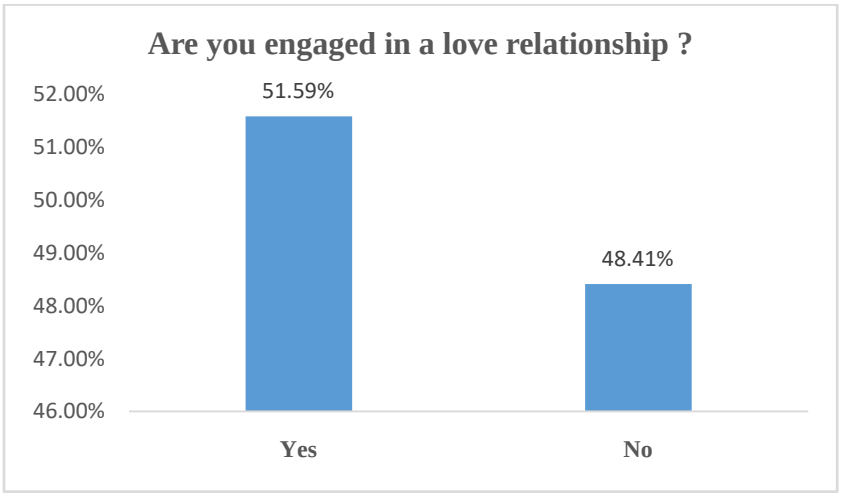
To check my hypothesis about youth sexuality in their love relationship I elaborated a questionnaire I have distributed to two hundred young men andhundred young women. I got all of them submitted the answer sheet. Below are the descriptive analysis and the interpretation of the obtained results. I first try to group my target population according to their age. The below figure shows that 8% of interviewees are between 16 and 18 years old. 92% of them are above eighteen.



Source: field investigation data

Graphic 1: age apportionment

To the question, are you engaged in a love relationship? Out of the 200interviewed, 51.59% are having a love relation. 48.41% are still waiting or hesitating to get involved.



Source:filed investigation data

Graphic 2: Distribution of the interviewees according to whether they are engaged in a love relationship or not

When I ask the question: *At what age did you start sexual intercourse*?65% of the interviewees said they have started before the age of 18. On the opposite, 35% of them have affirmed having sex at eighteen or above.

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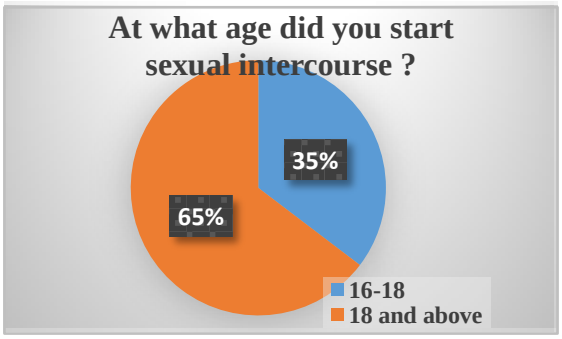
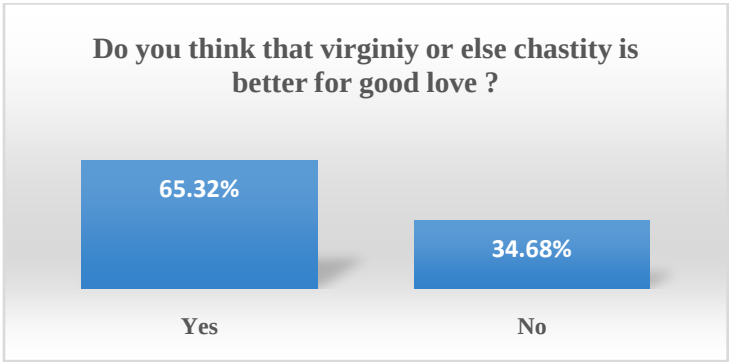


Source: filed investigation data

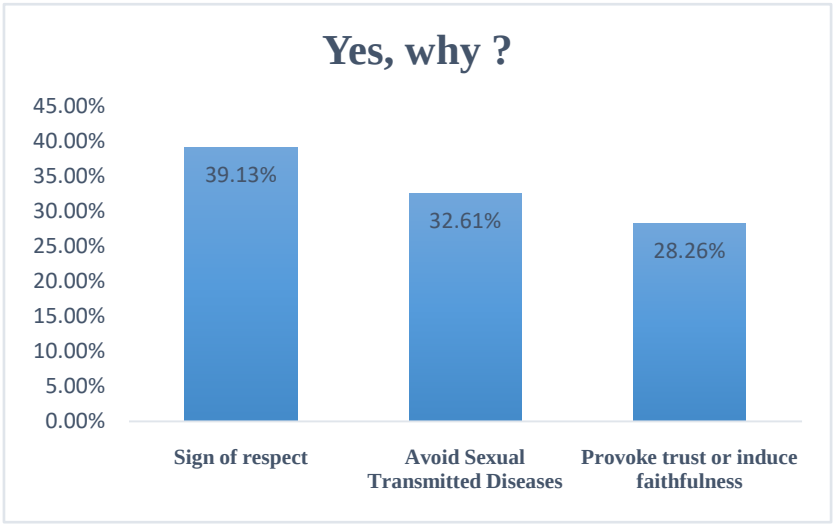
I try to figure the perception of the interviewees about virginity. I put the question; *do you think that virginity or chastity is better for good love?*

Almost two third (65.32%) of the interviewees think that staying far from sex is good for a love relationship.on the contrary more than a quarter (34.68%) have a different perception about the subject.



Source: Field investigation data

Of those who think that chastity is good in a relationship, 39.13% say that this behavior is a sign of respect between partners. For 32.61%, this behavior can helpto prevent Sexual Transmitted Diseases. As for the rest (28.26%), chastity or being a virgin creates trust or fidelity among partners in their relationship. (See the below chart)



Source: Field investigation data

Among those who think that chastity or being a virgin is not good for a relationship, 75% point out that this behavior does not allow knowing the sexual performance of your partner. Moreover, 25% of those think chastity or being a virgin cause's mistrust within the partners. (See the below chart).

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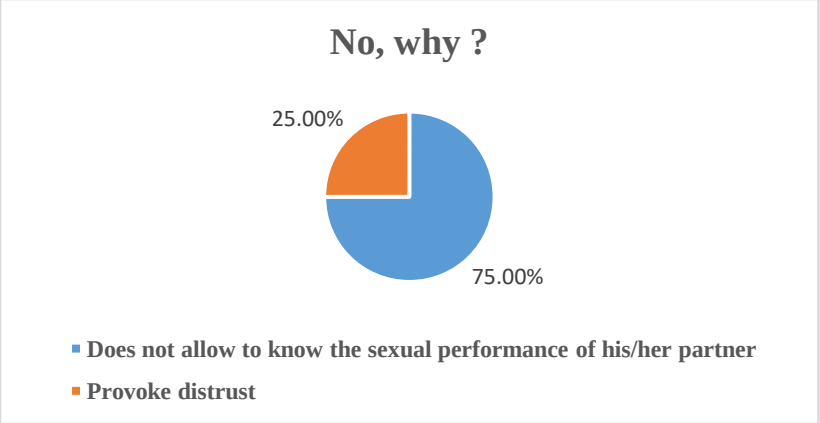
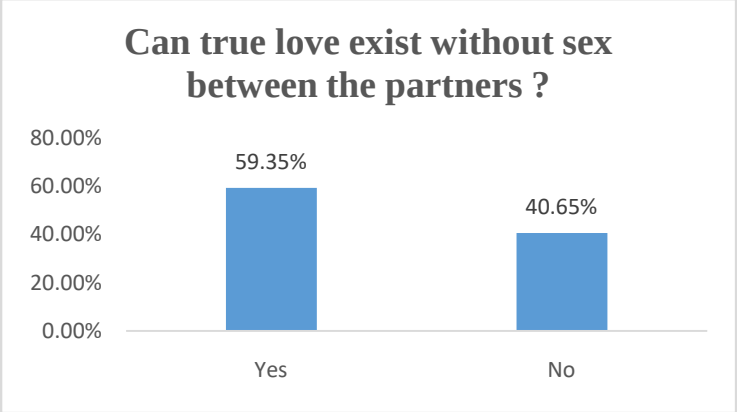


Source: Field investigation data

a) *Can true love exist without sex between the partners?*

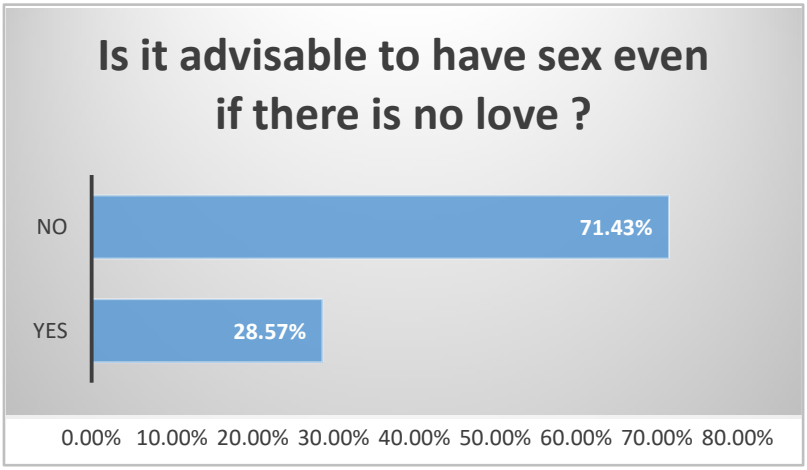
Almost 60% of the interviewees believe that true love can exist without sex between partners.While about 40% think the opposite.



Source: Field investigation data

b) *Is it advisable to have sex even if there is no love?*

About 29% of respondents think it is advisable to have sex even if there is not love.



Source: Field investigation data

c) *For you is sexuality a need or justa pleasure without importance?*

Most of the interviewees (80.16%) think that sexuality is a necessity. Others (about 20%) think it's just a pleasure.

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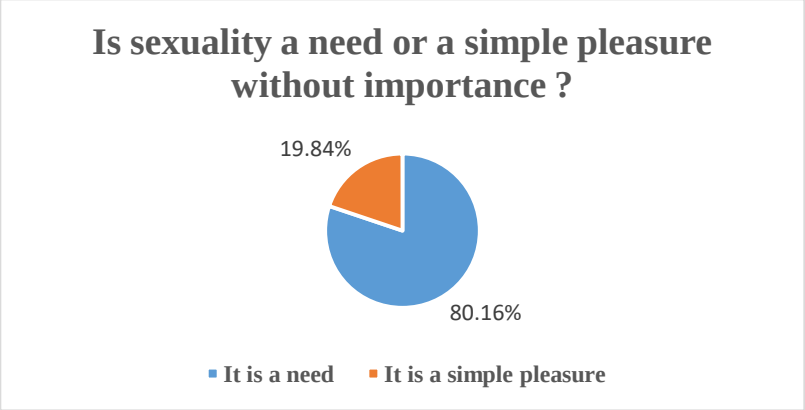

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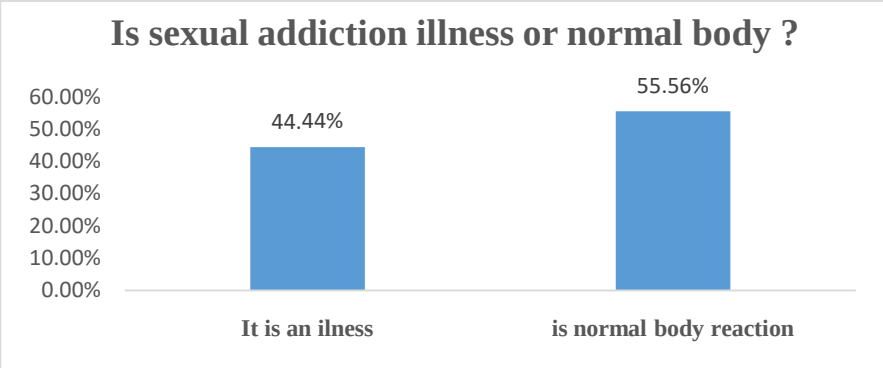
d) Is sexual addiction illness or a normal body?

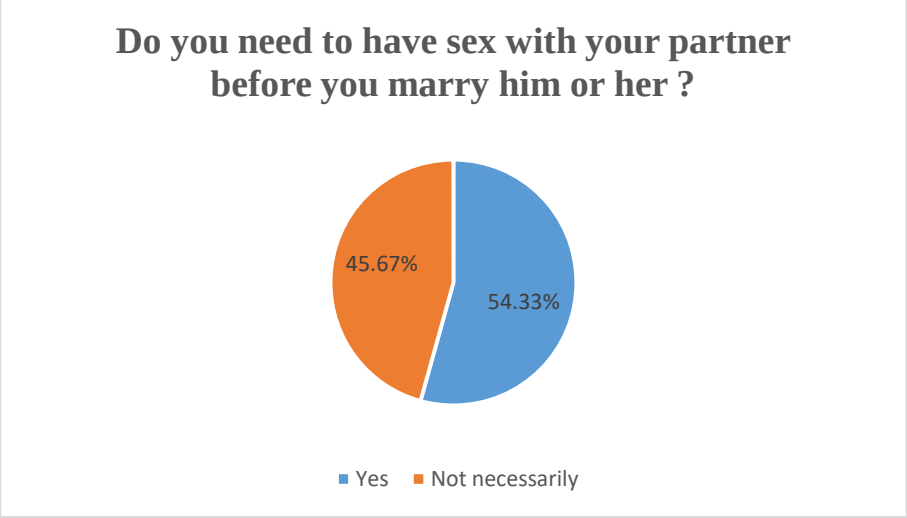
Nearly 45% of respondents believe that sexual addiction is a disease.On the other hand, more than 50% think it is a natural reaction of the body.



Source : Field investigation data

e) Do you need to have sex with your partner before you marry him or her?

More than 50% of the interviewees believe that having sex with your partner is necessary before you get married.



Source: Field investigation data

f) Necessarily, why?

Among those who think that it is necessary to have sex with their partner before they get married, 78.57% declared that it allows them knowing in advance the capacity or the sexual performance of their partners. For others (21.43%) this helps to keep his / her partner or not to lose his / her partner.

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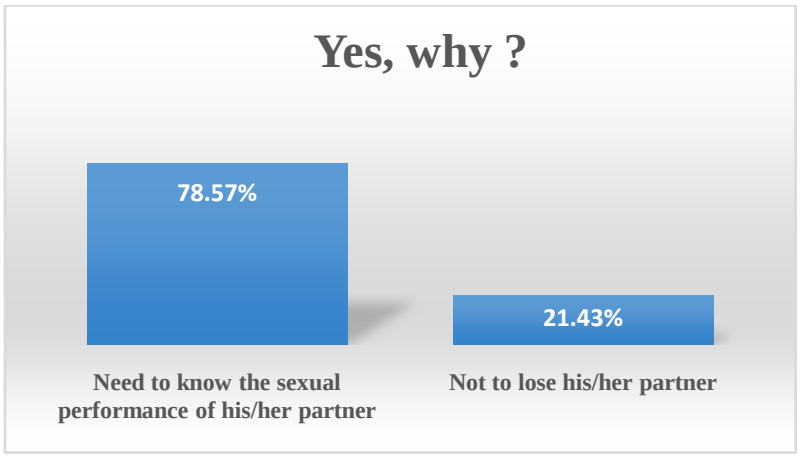
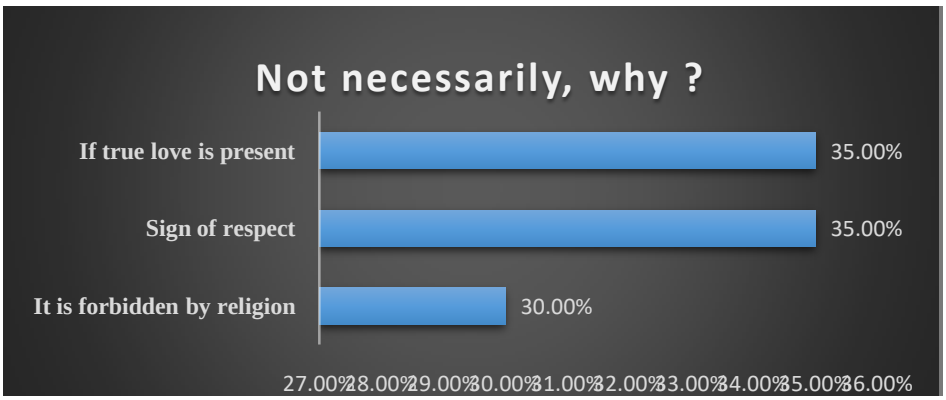


Source: Field Investigation Data

g) Not necessarily, why?

Among those who think that it is not necessary to have sex with your partner before you get married, 30% believed that going to sex before marriage is not allowed by religion. For some (35%), maintaining oneself until marriage is a sign of respect among partners. On the other hand, for the rest (35%), partners do not need to go to sex before marriage if they love each other.



Source: Field investigation data

V. Results Interpretation

From the analysis of field investigation it appears that about 52 % of respondents are engaged in a love relationship. This represents a total number of 104 interviewees out the 200.The remaining 48% are still hesitating to get involved to a love relationship. This statistic includes both men and women. It results from this analysis at that young men get engaged in love relationship earlier. This could have an impact on the normal evolution of their studies. A great number of the interviewees (65%) affirmed that having sex before the age of 18. This is completely the opposite of African culture realities which puts a stress on virginity and chastity before marriage. Only 35% of my target is still waiting for marriage before having sex. Some of them argue that it is also to avoid sexual transmitted diseases. It worth to mention that of the 54.5% who started their relationship before age 18, about 61.5% are men while 38.5% are women. Does this mean that women are more serious than men?

Seventy percent (70%) of the interviewees believe that using sex is crucial for a good relationship. For 140 respondents of the 200 or 70%, chastity or being a virgin is good for a good relationship. More precisely, of these 140 respondents, about 57% are women while about 43% are men. Most respondents (65%) think that true love can exist without sex between partners; 35% have of them had a different opinion. They believe it is advisable to have sex without love. According to some them, having sex is just a sharing of pleasure and joy. One of them said "*the desire to have sex is an illness and a necessity*" considering the range of age of my interviewees I think actions should be taken to help young men have responsible sex contact.

Half of the respondents (50%) say they need sex with their partners before marriage. According to 50% of the respondents, it is necessary to have sex with their partner before marriage. While some of them have a completely different position. In their majority men (90%), believe that it is necessary to have sex with their partner before marriage. Women represent only 10% on this subject.

All's Well That Ends Well has a reputation for being one of Shakespeare's most sexually charged

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dramas. In the play, female sexuality is under constant scrutiny; the question of when and how a woman should lose her virginity or useful her sex is. From the results of this paper, it appears that young men do not no more consider sex as a taboo. Having and talking about sex seems to have no meaning for them. It is impossible to ask them to stop using their sex, but I do believe that to continuous sensitization on sex use could be useful.

VI. Conclusion

The findings from documentary researches on the issue of sexuality focus more on youth sexuality. Humans' beings need to have sex; but the fact of having sex too young takes many dimensions that could be deplorable. Since the Shakespearean era debate on sexuality has been a big concern of many scholars. Shakespeare himself had many works touching on sex matters. This research work principal objective is to help young men of the way of changing their mentality and their perceptions about sex and virginity. I do believe that new technology and the abusive use of social networks have an impact on such behaviors. Sensitization and education on sex could help them to preserve their health. They should understand that sex is not an object or a toy they use to play game. Parents help and contributions become a must for a sustainable guidance of the future generation.

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