

ABSTRACT

The present paper sought to establish the extent to which the Indigenous Knowledge Systems 'IKS', preserved in Shona proverbs, as opposed to other knowledge systems, are relevant in counseling contemporary Zimbabwean youths on issues relating to love courtship and marriage and family life conflicts. Through desktop research, the questionnaires and focused group discussions methods, the researchers compiled an inventory of proverbs that embody IKS or traditional wisdom. An interrogation of these proverbs clarifies the distinction between IKS and other knowledge systems. The role of proverbs as a repository of IKS relevant in the counseling of youths today at strategic stages is asserted and the writers dispel the myth that IKS are static and backward. Proverbs are proved to be a relevant guide in 'matters of the heart. The writers conclude that with appropriate adjustments, IKS based counseling will remain as relevant today and tomorrow as it was in the past. Furthermore, the writers conclude that IKS can help uphold values that promote the sanctity of marriage and the family unit in Zimbabwe.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present research is focused on the contemporary Zimbabwean society. The society can be viewed as a fusion of the western and Zimbabwean cultures. Such hybrid societies are typical of post-colonial states today. In such societies, the cultural conflict of norms, beliefs and values is evident in the behavior patterns of societal members in in love, courtship and family life. Such conflict begs for sustainable, culture-sensitive counseling strategies.

Cultural conflict is a manifestation of conflicting knowledge systems. The attraction to be like the colonizer who is depicted in glorious colours of luxury and luster on the television and mass media, rather than the colonized, depicted in unglamorous colours of poverty and dejection, is always there. Consequently, a sphere for the contestation of the two knowledge systems; the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) and the modern knowledge systems is created. The research was focused on the contemporary Zimbabwean setting as the site for the struggle that shapes the true African identity.

It was assumed that the same colonial influences, noted by Chikowero (2007), as always accompanying political domination, slavery and colonization in Latin America, are common in all post-colonial states like Zimbabwe. Investigating the conflict that results from contending knowledge systems is therefore a worthy area for scholarship and the present research was therefore conceived in this light.

The research focused on the adolescent and young adult's life challenges, a stage at which Chigwedere (1996) contends, the challenges are most acute. He aptly sums up the adolescence predicament in UNICEF (1996) as a stage that