

Real Life Relevance of Shakespear's Grown Up Daughters

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Abstract

Despite the fact that a single woman ruled England at the time of William Shakespeare, the Elizabethan society was patriarchal. Women were considered the weaker sex and in need always of being protected. When married, women were expected to bear children, for childbearing was considered an honour. Most women bore children every two years, but because so many children died, families were not large. As head of the household, the husband was allowed to chastise (reprimand) his wife, and often women were not allowed to inherit property.

This is contrary to our present society, though there are still places in rural Africa and Asia and Sierra Leone to be specific where women are still treated in such a horrible manner. Although the society was patriarchal, there were women who were highly educated.

However, women were not allowed into the professions, they were permitted to write literature, providing the subject was suitable; for this reason, young men played roles in Shakespeare's time. But women of our age had stamped on these barbaric attitudes of men

and they are now agitating for equality which so many governments in Africa and other parts of the globe refused to accept. In this vain, many of these women are now putting on rebellious attitudes at home, workplace, institutions etc. Girls are no longer submissive like those in Shakespeare's time. It is against this problem that the researchers are investigating the Real Life Relevance of Shakespeare's Grownup Daughters.

Key Words

Grown up Daughters, Will, Renaissance Period, Incipient Dramatist, Rhetoricians

Introduction

William Shakespeare is credited with the creation of 38 plays, hundreds of sonnets, and a number of poems. In the British education system, the 1990 National Curriculum in English lists Shakespeare as the only author that all British schoolchildren, over the age of 13, must study (Curtis, 2008). In America, according to The Washington Post, Shakespeare's works rank in the top 10 of high school theatre plays, and he has been on the list since the survey was first taken in 1937 (Strauss, 2010). In Sierra Leone also, the National Curriculum in English Literature lists Shakespeare as one of the few authors work students' should study for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) Language Arts and West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) English Literature Examination (MEST, 2004).

After all is said and done, William Shakespeare's influence on education arises not as the results of theoretical reasoning or practical experience but instead as a result of his prolific writing. Shakespeare's influence has shaped the education of generations of students, and it is for this reason that Shakespeare's own thoughts regarding education are of interest. In looking at education, there are two parts of Shakespeare's life, his childhood education in Stratford-upon-Avon and his plays, that work together to provide a larger picture of the playwright's stance toward education.

In the fifty-two years of Shakespeare's life, he has provided future generations coded inferences revealed in the text of his works - that explore the enduring state of human values and concerns. Consequently, whether his humanistic approach to life was merely accidental or purposely woven into his works, he has influenced literature through the development of characterization, plot, language, and genre (Chambers, 2007). Respected Shakespeare critic

and biographer, Harold Bloom (2002), contends, “Our education, in the English-speaking world, but in many other nations as well, has been Shakespearean. Even now, when our education has faltered, and Shakespeare is battered and truncated by our fashionable ideologues, the ideologues themselves are caricatures of Shakespearean energies.” Surprisingly as it may seem, researchers have concluded that almost 20,000 musical compositions were influenced by Shakespeare (Gross, 2003). The character of Hamlet enabled Freud to, in part, develop his theories of human nature and so emphasizes Bloom’s point (Paraisz, 2006). Shakespeare’s influence, as evidenced from the examples above, is far-reaching. Where, in Shakespeare, are these seeds of education theory sown?

Data Analysis

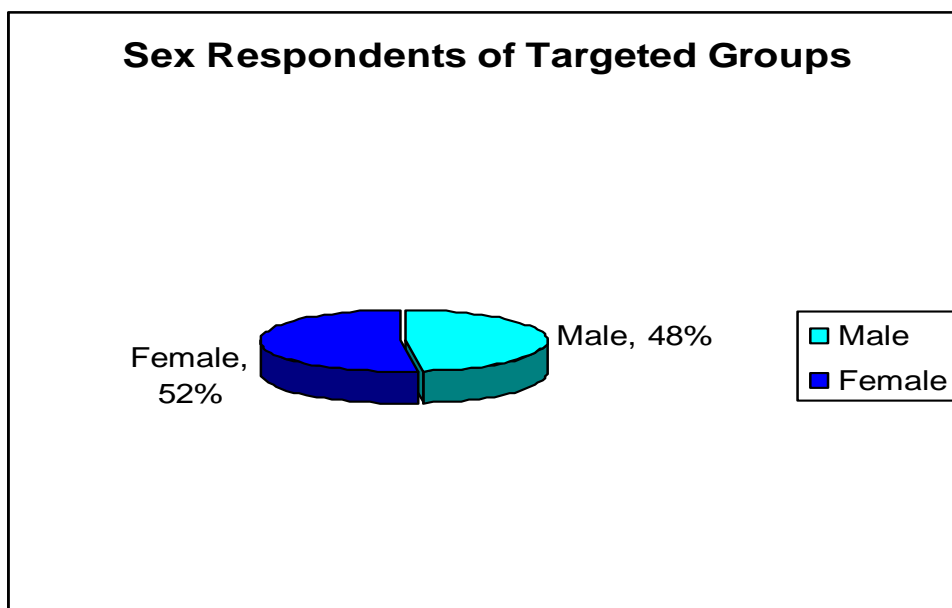
Data been captured from the questionnaire answered by the respondents were used in this study, using Excel research software to analyze and present the data in tabular form, and charts. Descriptive statistics shall be used to analyze the socio-demographic data and display the performance of the respondents on the single question examined. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses will be adopted for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sex distribution and frequency of respondents

Source: Author’s case study field data (2016)

| SEX | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 24 | 48 (%) |
| Female | 26 | 52 (%) |
| Total | 50 | 100 |



Percentage of the Sex of respondents

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

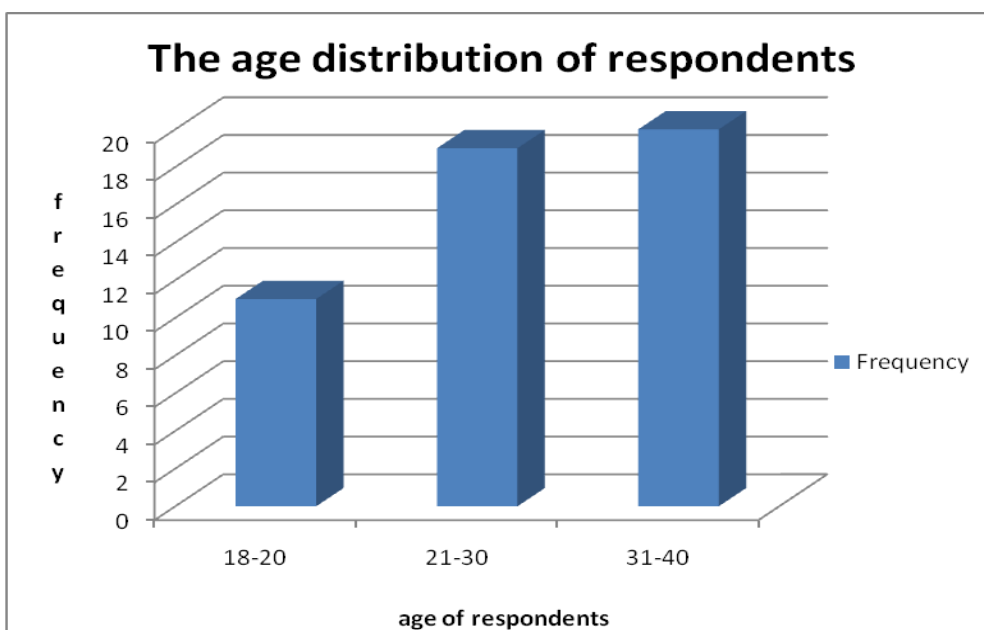
The sex respondents was measured based on whether the subject under investigation was either male or female. The sex of respondents was labelled as male and female and code such as A and B were assigned respectively for the calculation of the frequency and percentage distribution of each sex category. The study included 50 respondents. Among the respondents, there were 24 (48%) males and 26 (52%) female. The percentage distribution of respondent sex has been shown in Table 1 and Figure (4) above.

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Age distribution and frequency of respondents

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| Age group (years) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 18-20 | 11 | 22 (%) |
| 21-30 | 19 | 38 (%) |
| 31-40 | 20 | 40(%) |
| TOTAL | 50 | 100 |



Frequency of Age distribution of respondents

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

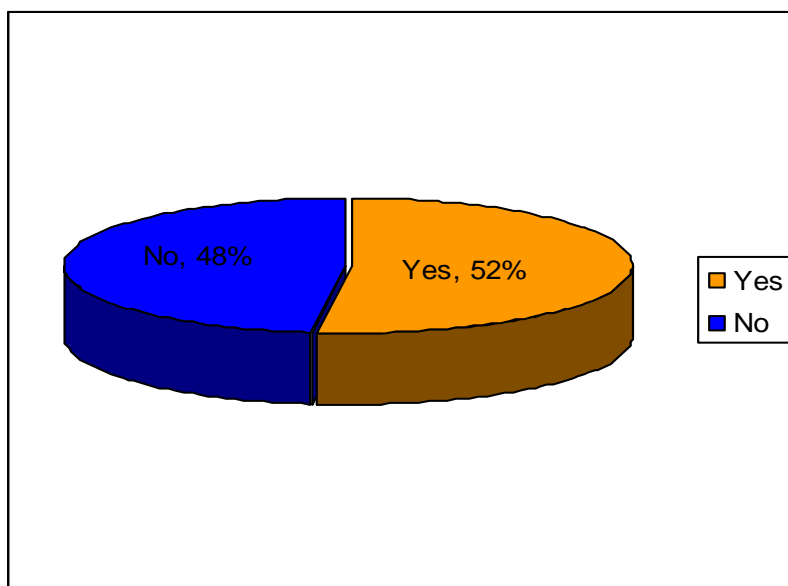
The table and bar graph above show the age distribution of respondents. Out of the 50 respondents, 11(i.e. 22%) fall within the age range of 18-20. 19(i.e. 38%) fall within the range of 21-30, 20(i.e. 40%) within the age of 31-40 none of the respondent was aged up to 41-44. This is done by the researcher for the reader to better understand the data analysed.

THE IMPACT OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARES WORK TO PRESENT DAY SOCIETY

Table 3: The frequency and percentage of religious conflict in society

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| Options | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 26 | 52 (%) |
| No | 24 | 48 (%) |
| Total | 50 | 100 |



The percentage of Religious conflict in the society

Source: Author’s case study field data (2016)

The table and pie chart above show the frequency rate and percentage of religious conflict in the society. As seen, the total of 26 (i.e. 52%) says that the religious conflict is becoming very common in the society, whereas, a total of 24 (i.e. 48%) of the respondents says, religious conflict is not a common problem in our society. This shows that the number of respondents who say religious conflict is becoming a common problem in our society outweighs those respondents who say No. Which means the majority carries the vote. Hence religious conflict is a common problem in our society.

From the questionnaires issued or administered to the respondents, we were able to know that this religious conflict ensued between the two major religions in the world i.e. ISLAM (Muhamadalism) and the CHRISTIANITY. This can be seen in the Christian Muslim conflict in central African Republic and some part of West Africa, Nigeria for instance.

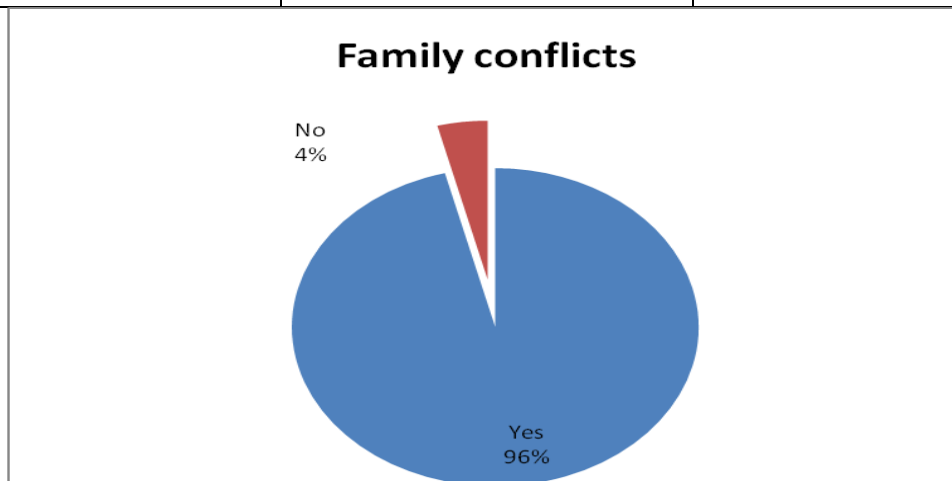
A TABLE SHOWING RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWER YES OR NO TO THE QUESTION WHICH ASKS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF FAMILY CONFLICT:

Table 4: Family conflict, Frequency and percentage at which it occurs within the society

Source: Author’s case study field data (2016)

| Options | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 48 | 96 (%) |

| | | |
|-------|----|--------|
| No | 02 | 04 (%) |
| TOTAL | 50 | 100 |



Percentage of family conflict in the society

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

The table and chart above show the number of respondents who actually agreed that family conflict is becoming a common problem in our society today. The number of respondents who say YES are 48 (i.e. 96%) and those who say NO are 02 (i.e. 04%). This means family conflict is indeed becoming a common problem in our society as it were in the days of Shakespeare, which is evident in one of his texts KING LEAR, wherein the decision taken by the king, with regards the distribution of his kingdom amongst his three daughters lead to bitter conflict in the family. Therefore, because what happened in Shakespeare's time, respondents have said it is still happening in our society today this goes to show the impact Shakespeare's work has on our contemporary society.

TABLE SHOWING FAMILY MEMBERS MOSTLY INVOLVED IN SUCH CONFLICT IN OUR PRESENT DAY SOCIETY.

Members of the family who are mostly involved in family conflict, the frequency and percentage

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| Options | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| a.) Father and Brother(s) | 05 | 10 (%) |
| b.) Father and Daughter(s) | 11 | 22 (%) |
| c.) Father and Son(s) | 06 | 12 (%) |

| | | |
|----------------------------|----|--------|
| d.) Mother and Daughter(s) | 14 | 28 (%) |
| e.) Brother and Sisters | 12 | 24 (%) |
| f.) Others | 02 | 04 (%) |
| TOTAL | 50 | 100 |



Members of the family mostly involve in family conflict and the frequency

Source: Author’s case study field data (2016)

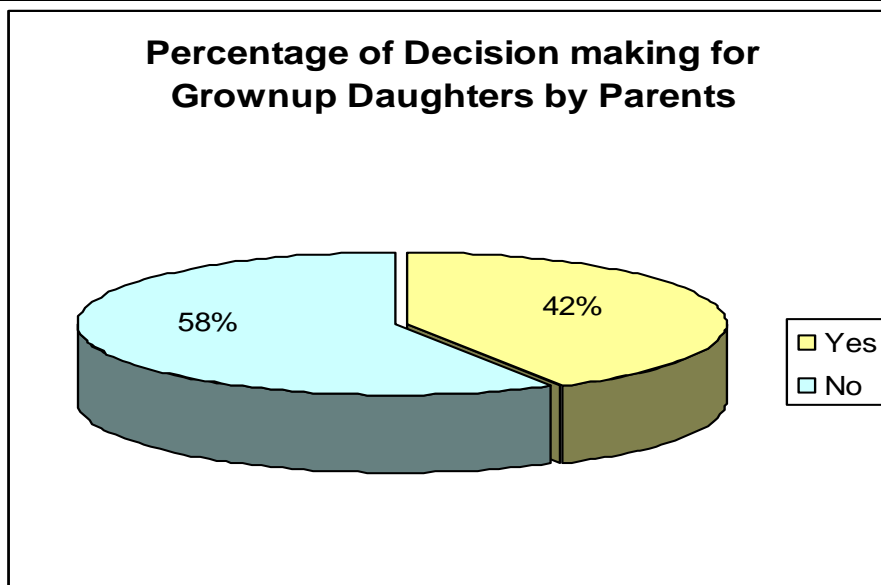
The table and graph above show the categories of family members who are mostly involved in family conflicts. From the questionnaires administered, we were able to know that this family conflict occurs mostly among the different members of the family. Out of the 50 respondents, 05 (i.e. 20%) say such conflict mostly occur between Fathers and Brothers, 11 (i.e. 22%) say Father and Daughter(s), 06 (i.e. 12%) say Father and Son(s), 14 (28%) say Mother and Daughter(s), 12 (24%) say Brothers and Sister(s), 02 (i.e. 04%) however, say such conflicts don’t happen at all, hence the majority opinion.

TABLE SHOWING THE DECISION MAKING FOR GROWNUP DAUGHTERSBY PARENTS

Decision making for grownup daughters by parents, frequency and percentage

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| Options | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 21 | 42 % |
| No | 29 | 58 % |
| Total | 50 | 100 |



Percentage of decision making for grownup daughters by parents

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

The question analysed in the table and figure above show the number of respondents who wants parents to be taking decisions for their grown up daughters as well as those who don't favour such idea at all. In the table and figure above, a comprehensive analysis shows that 21(i.e. 42%) of the respondents say decision making for grown up daughters should be done by the parents, 29(i.e. 58%) of respondents say that the grown up daughters should take decision for themselves, especially those that concern their marital lives. As could be seen from the table and figure, the respondents who support the idea of daughters taking marital decision for themselves outweighs those in support of the parents. This means that, parents should grant their grown up daughters the right to take up decisions for themselves especially those concerning their marital life.

COMPARING THE BEHAVIOURS OF WOMEN IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME TO THOSE IN OUR PRESENT SOCIETY

Behaviour of women in Shakespeare's time to those in our present society

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| Questions | Options | | | | | |
|--|---------|----|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Marital life | Distribution of properties | Maintaining family relationship | money |
| 26. Grown up daughter who followed their parents' will | 40 | 10 | | | | |
| TOTAL | 50 | | | | | |
| 27. If yes, what will would you follow? | | | 11 | 7 | 13 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 50 | | | | | |

The above table shows the comparison of the behaviours of women in Shakespeare's time to those in our contemporary times. The table gives the rate at which respondents believe grown up daughters follow the wishes of their parents whether alive or dead. Majority 40 of the respondents admit that there are grown up daughters who follow their parents WILL, while 10 of the respondents say no. Which means even today we have grown up daughters who follow the instructions of their parents like those in Shakespearean times in the like of Lady Portia in 'The Merchant of Venice'.

From the questions administered, out of the 50 respondents, 11 of the respondents say they would follow the WILL concerning their marital life, 7 distributions of properties, and 13 maintaining family relationships, and 9 in the area of money. From the above, it could be seen that marital decisions and family relationship are the areas in which grown up daughters often follow their parents instructions.

A TABLE SHOWING THE REBELLIOUS ATTITUDE OF WOMEN IN OUR PRESENT DAY AS COMPARED TO THE DAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

Rebellious Attitude of Women in our Present day as Compared to Shakespeare's Time

Source: Author's case study field data (2016)

| | | |
|--|--|---------|
| | | OPTIONS |
|--|--|---------|

| Questions | YES | NO | Rigidness of parents | Religious background | Indecent Nature of the suitor | Background of the suitor | Others |
|---|-----|----|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|
| 40. Are there grown up daughters who run away with their lovers against their parent's wish | 47 | 03 | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 50 | | | | | | |
| 41. If yes, what could be the reasons for this? | | | 27 | 18 | 01 | 01 | 03 |
| TOTAL | 50 | | | | | | |

The table above shows the comparison of the rebellious attitude of women in our present society to those of William Shakespeare.

The question analysed in this table was a deliberate inclusion made by the researcher to fish out from the respondent's possible hidden secrets that could otherwise only be indirectly manifested. Giving their responses to this question 47 answer 'yes' to the question for these grown up daughters who run away with their lovers against their parents wish. While 3 of the respondents, say 'no' to this question (40). In this same table different reasons were given by the respondents concerning the rebellious attitude of women in our present day society. 27 of the respondents say it is as a result of the rigidness of parents, 18 say it is as a result of religious background, 7 say it due to the indecent nature of the suitor, also 01 says it is as a result of the background of the suitor, while 03 say something different from the others. This is done by the researcher to make it clear for the better understanding of the reader.

The next chapter shall look at the summary, conclusion and recommendations of this study'

Summary of Findings

The researchers started off by identifying the Relevance of Shakespeare's work in our society today, how relevant are the female characters (grown up daughters) used in Shakespeare's

texts relevant to our contemporary society. This study also aims at examining the impact of Shakespeare's work to our society, compare the behavior of women in Shakespeare's time to those of this present society and examine the rebellions attitude of women in our present age in relation to those in Shakespeare's time. Consequently, the researcher develops hypotheses that needed a thorough examination through the scientific method of research, which is done by the collection and analysis of data derived from questionnaires in order to get results that would determine the beliefs people have about William Shakespeare, his works and the female characters used in his works.

Also the researcher during the course of this research, was able to discover some of the behaviors, parents adopt towards their grown up daughters, as well as the grown up daughters towards their parents. These behaviors were investigated and analyzed statistically.

However, in achieving the objectives of this study, certain limitations were encountered which includes: the limitation in the scope of study. That is, the study was only limited to central Bo City and not the entire city or other provincial cities like Kenema, Makeni and the likes. This coverage limitation was due to both the limited available research resources and time Constraints in working beyond one community. Another limitation was that the study paid more attention to parents who have grown up daughters as one of the target groups. The case study research design was used to carry out this study and central Bo City was selected as a case under investigation. For a sample size, fifty (50) respondents were giving questionnaires, used as unit of analysis.

The main Findings from the study were highlighted as follows:

There is some level of understanding with regards, the issues in Shakespeare's time, such as religious conflict, decision making by parents among other things in central Bo city; because majority of the respondents consented to the fact that, religious conflict is becoming a common problem today; there is high level of awareness about the existence of family conflict between and among family members. Respondents who affirmed to the occurrence of such conflict were found to have higher parentage than their counterparts, due to the rate in which such conflicts occur with society today.

More information was sourced from people within the young adult and adult stage (that is, 21-30 and 31-40). As people within these age brackets are considered to be either parents or grown up daughters who are capable of taking better decisions concerning their lives than those within the younger age bracket.

Mothers and their daughter, due to the type of intimacy that exists between these two, and the standards put in place by most mothers, so as to ensure the safety and security of their daughter, were found to have higher potential to generate more family conflicts as compared to brother(s) and sister(s), father and daughter(s), father and son(s), father and brother(s) and others.

Also, it was observed that decision making for grown up daughters by parents was not the right thing to be done at all. This was because such decisions taken by parents could be irrational and sentiment based. But if the grown up daughter could take decisions for herself then she would be responsible for her own actions not the parents. Therefore, it was suggested that grown up daughter be given the right to take marriage decision for themselves. Most grown up daughters were found to follow the instructions (will) left by their parents especially in the area of maintaining family relationships, marital life, money and distribution of properties.

High number of grown up daughters were found to have run away with their lovers against their parents' wish; due to the rigidity of parents, religious differences, indecent nature of the suitor, background of the suitor and the like.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

The most influential socio-economic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the research were sex, age, marital status, educational level, occupation and religion. All these factors provide background information about the participants.

This study will help motivate English teachers, pupils as well as students who study Shakespeare's works in their different institutions of learning, readers of Shakespeare's works, parents, grown up daughters and sons, including other researchers who may want to do a work similar to this; so as to broaden their understanding on the relevance of Shakespeare and his works on contemporary society.

It has also come to the conclusion that this research will help raise the standard place on Shakespeare's work by emphasizing on how relevant it could be to incorporate Shakespeare's work into almost every curricular by curriculum planners. The religious conflicts of today in Central African Republic and some parts in West Africa, Nigeria for example and other parts of the globe, is no strange happening at all for it has been occurring since ancient times.

Also, family conflicts and division between and among family members cannot be unconnected with happenings in past.

Parents should allow their grown up daughters and sons, to take decisions on their own; for they would be accountable for their actions. However, if the parents decide to will on their children, without considering their own rights and interests; there is bound to be serious misunderstanding.

There is a direct relationship between the behaviours of grown up daughter during Shakespeare's time to those in our present age and time. This intricate relationship can be realized in their dress codes, the affection they show for their lovers as against their parents wish, indulging in commercial sex and so on.

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