

Exploring the Intersection between Mental Health and LGBTQ+ Identity in Jude Dibia's *Walking With Shadows*

Ngozi Jacinta Ozoh

Abstract

Intersectionality is one of the current issues that LGBTQ + are facing. It looks at the interconnectedness of this group of people that can result in overlapping systems of injustice and discrimination. Jude Dibia's novel Walking with Shadows provides an examination of the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Nigeria, where laws and social norms frequently support marginalization and discrimination. This analysis explores the novel's relationship between mental health and LGBTQ+ identity, emphasizing Adrian coping mechanisms, challenges, and resilience. The relationship between LGBTQ+ identity and mental health is examined in Jude Dibia's book Walking With Shadows. The novel, which is set against the backdrop of Nigerian society, illuminates the intricacies of LGBTQ+ experiences by showcasing the hardships and tenacity of people navigating a culture that frequently stigmatizes and rejects same-sex relationships. The book illustrates the ways in which stigmatization exacerbates tension, anxiety, and emotions of guilt and self-loathing. The ultimate goals of this research are to examine the overlapping issues, question gender roles / injustice and social expectations. It will also advance a more compassionate and inclusive society by fostering a greater

knowledge and empathy for LGBTQ+ experiences. On the other hand, it emphasizes how crucial community and supportive

99

relationships will help in fostering resilience and mental health. Using trauma and minority stress theories and qualitative content analysis research method to x-ray the difficulties LGBTQ+ people in Nigeria face and the significance of creating welcoming and supportive environments by examining the overlapping discriminatory and unfair systems affecting LGBTQ+. This work acknowledges the intricate connections between identity, experience, and mental health rather than drawing a distinction between mental health and LGBTQ+ and concludes that mental health activism, policy, and practice should aid LGBTQ+ receive affirming and culturally responsive support services.

Keywords: *LGBTQ, mental health, intersection, identity, marginalization and discrimination.*

Introduction

It has long been known that members of the Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other non-heterosexual or noncisgender people (LGBTQ+ community) are more susceptible to mental health issues. An American Psychological Association report in an article titled ‘Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity’ explains that ‘some examples of sexual orientation are

lesbian, gay, heterosexual, straight, asexual, bisexual, queer, polysexual, and pansexual (also called multisexual and omnisexual).’ It goes on to explain that these people frequently experience particular difficulties that may affect their mental health.

Faderman (2015) writes that LGBTQ+ people experienced severe marginalization and persecution prior to the 1960s but midway through the 20th century, a number of occasions and turning points helped shape the current gay rights movement. Nonetheless, there were early indications of action and resistance, such as the early 20th-century efforts of German campaigner Magnus Hirschfeld. One of the first gay rights groups in the US was the Mattachine Society, which was founded in Los Angeles, (Duberman, 2019). Its goal was to increase awareness and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. In June 28, 1969 the Stonewall Riots in New York City were a turning point in the contemporary gay rights movement. After LGBT bar patrons at the Stonewall Inn rebelled against police harassment, rioting and protests broke out for several days. Duberman goes ahead to conclude that the LGBTQ+ community was energized by the Stonewall Riots, which resulted in the establishment of numerous advocacy organizations and the rise of a more coordinated and outspoken movement. ‘Gay freedom Front’ a radical activist organization was established in New York City with the goal of promoting LGBTQ+ freedom and challenging social conventions in 1969 while the first parade (Gay Pride Parade) took place on 28 June

1970 in New York City commemorating the Stonewall Riots and a pivotal point in the history of the movement.

With the above mentioned events, the homosexual rights movement spread throughout the world, with different nations and areas going through their own distinct set of challenges and victories. Since its inception, the gay rights movement has advanced significantly, with continuous initiatives to advance LGBTQ+ people's human rights, equality, and acceptance around the globe. In spite of all these advancements, LGBTQ+ people still have to deal with marginalization, violence, and prejudice.

Then in 1980, according to <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Human-Rights-Campaign>, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a political advocacy group based in the United States works to advance equality for LGBTQ people and communities to fight discrimination and injustice against them. American gay rights activist, Steve Endean established the above mentioned group in 1980 as the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), a group that supported and provided funding to political candidates who were committed to eradicating discrimination against homosexuals in the workplace and in healthcare.

Higher prevalence of mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders might be caused by, stigma, discrimination, prejudice, and a lack of support. YiLung Chen et al. support the above challenges as sources of mental stress for this group of people and are of the view that the LGBTQ+ people are more than twice as likely to suffer from

mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. 2019 National Institute of Mental Health research centered on how Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM) people including LGBTQ+ people face mental health inequalities and how their prevalence of mental health problems, substance use disorders, and suicidal thoughts and actions are higher than that of their heterosexual and cisgender peers. Furthermore, Mengxia Sue's (2023) research indicates that LGBTQ+ youth are four times more likely than their straight counterparts to attempt suicide, making them especially vulnerable.

According

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LGBTQ+ kids often have a greater prevalence of mental health conditions like despair and anxiety, heightened vulnerability to bullying and harassment, and challenges with family acceptance. They practically experience bullying or overt discrimination, very little or no family assistance, and insufficient assistance from educators and school officials.

Main causes of the disparities in mental health that the LGBTQ+ population face are stigma and prejudice. Feelings of humiliation, low self-esteem, and loneliness can result from people being marginalized and excluded from society. Caroline Medina & Lindsay Mahowald (2022) write that the key finding of the Center for American Progress's (CAP's) 2022 survey is that LGBTQI+ people continue to face much greater rates of discrimination than non-LGBTQI+ people. This pattern is seen in

almost every environment examined, including public places, jobs, housing, and health care. Economic, physical, and emotional health are all significantly harmed by this kind of prejudice, and many LGBTQI+ people change their behavior to prevent it. Therefore, it is obvious that lack of support from friends, family, and the community can make them feel bad or even worse and leave them feeling as though they have nowhere to turn. The value of environments that encourage supportive settings can be extremely important in fostering LGBTQ+ people's mental health and general well-being. Dibia portrays the difficulties his protagonist, Ebele (Adrian), faces as he navigates a culture that rejects and marginalizes his sexuality.

In 'Jude Dibia's *Walking With Shadows* and the Representation of Queerness in the Nigerian Contexts' Okpiliya explains that gays would remain on the periphery of Nigeria's sexual landscape because the country's law forbids same-sex relationships. Ashish Santhosham, et al in their article, illustrate that a person's genuine emotions should always take center stage and be communicated, regardless of the situation. They write that numerous issues, have been given significant attention in the book, thus, *Under the Udala Trees* by Chinelo Okparanta is a potent book that gives voice to those who are urged to suppress their actual emotions and live their lives in accordance with social norms. Cédric Courto concludes that the text explores same-sex sexuality in the country through a combination of poetics and politics, having been written in the wake of the country's "SameSex Marriage Prohibition Act." Akpan Isonguyo et al in

their article write that due to other socio-political challenges in African nations, it is imperative that African writers and critics abandon the long-standing culture of silence and start examining sexual identities. Ozoh et al. argue that society will ease life for all genders if they can choose.

Minority Stress and Trauma on Mental Health

The term “minority stress” describes the ongoing stress that members of stigmatized minority groups, such as members of racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, and people with disabilities, experience. This stress, which can have a significant effect on mental health, can be brought on by bias, discrimination, and stigma. *Minority Stress: What Is It?* A theoretical paradigm known as “minority stress” explains the connection between mental health outcomes and minority status. Social welfare, public health, psychology, and sociology are the theoretical foundations of minority stress. In 2003, Meyer offered the first integrated articulation of minority stress as an explanatory theory that comprehends the structural, psychological, and social elements responsible for the disparities in mental health that sexual minority populations face. This theory states that expectations of stigma and rejection (stress and anxiety can result from expecting stigma, discrimination, and rejection), shame and anxiety as a result of hiding one’s identity or minority status, self-stigma, mental health problems, and ideas about one’s own identity contribute immensely to stress among minority individuals. The

fact that minority stress stems from stigma and discrimination sets it apart from ordinary stress, which can affect everybody.

Therefore, a stressor, like losing one's job, may be classified as a minority stressor or a general stressor based on whether it was driven by discrimination against members of sexual and gender minorities as opposed to, say, economic downturns that affect everyone, independent of sexual and gender identity. Both proximal and distal stress pathways were explained by Meyer (2003). Stressors that come from individuals or organizations that affect LGBTQ people are referred to as distal stressors. Among these are laws and policies that discriminate, significant acute life events for example losing one's job or experiencing assault, as well as long-term stressors like poverty and less severe, "everyday" instances of discrimination or micro aggressions like receiving unfair or disrespectful treatment or even non-events (anticipated good encounters or occasions that were prevented because of stigma and prejudice). Then sources of proximal stressors are people who identify as sexual and gender minorities learning to reject themselves for being LGBTQ or developing expectations of being stigmatized because they are aware of the prevalent social stigma. They may also conceal their LGBTQ identity in order to protect themselves from distal minority stressors.

The narrative of *Walking with Shadows* centers on Adrian, a young man who is truly accomplished but who must face his sexuality in both public and private settings. Adrian tries to conceal his sexuality and main identity by changing his name.

Proximal stressors are at play here as Adrian does everything humanly possible to reject his real self. In this book, Dibia employs his considerable literary flair to creatively introduce us to a recognizable character who is totally estranged, shunned, and disenfranchised in society due to his sexual inclination. In this work, renaming, which has been believed to be a decision one must face, is seen as having worsened one's social standing. Adrian believes that adopting a new name entails denying oneself his core desires:

Ebele was going to die today. He knew it. He welcomed it. He was simply going to let it happen so that Adrian could be born. He only hoped it would be painless....this was a day for rebirths and it was a good enough day to be reborn and Ebele could not have chosen a better location for this. His ten yearold mind was in a hurry to rid itself of the pathetic person it had always known as Ebele (1).

After changing his name from 'Ebele Njoku' to Adrian Njoku' his problems multiplied. Effiong, a gay also changed his name to 'George' to change his identity (153) but his challenges become worse.

Minority Stress and Trauma Minority Stress can be significantly influenced by trauma, especially for those who have gone through firsthand encounters with bias and discrimination. Minority Stress Theory explains that members of marginalized minority groups suffer from long-term stress as a result of their

social standing, which causes inequalities in mental health. Being the victim of hate crimes, bullying, or harassment can cause stress and suffering. Vicarious trauma is the result of witnessing or learning about painful experiences that other members of one's community have had. Minority populations have endured intergenerational trauma as a result of historical occurrences like colonization, slavery, or genocide. Effects on mental health stress and trauma experienced by minorities can significantly affect mental health by raising the risk of anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Trauma and ongoing stress can weaken coping mechanisms and resilience. Stress and trauma experienced by minorities can raise their risk of substance use and addiction. Adrian started smoking again to find solace (118).

The Difficulties the LGBTQ+ Face in *Walking With Shadows*

In *Walking With Shadows*, Dibia depicts the challenges faced by his main character, Ebele (Adrian), as he makes his way through a society that marginalizes and rejects him. Ebele's experiences with social isolation, family rejection, and (police brutality meted out on another homosexual couple) (141) serve as an example of how minority stress negatively affects mental health. Adrian's concealment of his true identity causes all of his history to come back to haunt him, particularly when he believes he has the ideal life, a loving wife, a lovely daughter, and an excellent career status at the corporation he works for.

His quest to uncover a fraud case at work compromises his integrity, which ultimately leads to his downfall. Adrian believes

it is his responsibility to reveal the evil deeds of Tayo Onasanya, one of the top management officials, who is implicated in the company's ongoing fraud. To Adrian, he did not institute the investigation nor did he contribute to the outcome (139) but what he did was 'to verify information passed to my department ' (69) by the head office. As a result, Tayo Onasanya is fired. Tayo chooses to reveal Adrian's secrets because he feels obligated to exact revenge for what he perceives to be treachery. He threatens Adrian, 'You bastard! ...I am going to tell them' (20). Tayo believes that Adrian's queer sexuality has these secrets, and who should be the first to know? It is Adrian's spouse and all those who are somehow associated with him. To Tayo, revenge is sweet because Adrian's entire life, family, and social standing fall apart as a result of Tayo's act of telling, and his wife, Ada is devastated by this discovery. Adrian, on his side, tries to avoid the catastrophe that this news may have brought about by accepting the fact that he has always been gay but chose to stop eight years ago, particularly after falling in love with Ada. He confesses to Ada, 'I was a lot of things before I met you... Being gay was my past' (23). As a result, he publicly shares with his wife and extended family how he lived a life that defied gender norms in order to face his hunting shadows.

His coming clean, however, has disastrous repercussions. He loses the affection and solace of his cherished daughter Ego after his wife, Ada, divorces him. He asks himself many questions that he could not even answer (p26), he gets more confused. After that, Adrian feels compelled to visit his long-lost gay buddies, (Abdul

and Femi) who hated Adrian's way of life and believed he had quit. One of his gay friends, Abdul tells Adrian the pain of gay people, trying to convince Adrian that he must face rejection by trying to live as a gay, which is the right thing to do. He says

You sound like it is a curse to be homosexual and you should be punished for your crimes... every day in a gay man's life, he is constantly hurt by people he loves most. His family. His friends. And even society. We have to live with the rejection every day and that hurts. We have to grin and bear it constantly so that other people are comfortable at our expense... you can't help it but hurt people you love sometimes (33-34).

Abdul advises him to be truthful to himself for once and face every challenge before him by accepting his sexuality, and definitely life will go on. 'But you must be true to yourself...If you can only think of what is the worst thing that can happen, then you will be fine' (p 33).

Adrian's experience in *Walking With Shadows* serves as an example of the significant harm that social stigma causes to mental health. In Nigeria, where same-sex relationships are frequently frowned upon by cultural and religious conventions, the story depicts the terrible realities of being an LGBTQ+ person.

Adrian's brother, Chinedu took him to a pastor to deliver him from the devil that is possessing him, the pastor flogged the living

hell out of Adrian to the extent that he has bruises and becomes sick.

Then there was the first sharp and searing lash of the whip on his bare back. It was an unbelievable pain, going straight to Adrian's head and making him suck in his breath sharply. He ground his teeth tightly and tried writhing away from the hands that bound him to the floor. With the next lash, his eyes flew wide open and he cried out in an agonizing shrill that momentarily startled the pastor who was in the motion of whipping him again. But the pause was just momentary, as the pastor continued in his mad fervour. Stroke after stroke, Adrian sensed himself drifting in and out of consciousness. Sometimes he felt the pain of the whip when it licked his torso and ripped open a patch of flesh. Other times he drifted off with no sense of coherence. In his subconscious, he saw Christ in his passion, suffering in the hands of the Jews as they tortured his frail body. "Banish the devil from your heart!" the pastor was screaming, "and accept God in your life." (175)

Stress and trauma experienced by Adrian are so unbearable that he becomes sick for weeks, this takes his brother, Chika, and his gay friends' love to bring him back to life. Promoting mental health and well-being among minority people can be achieved by recognizing the causes of minority stress and trauma and addressing them through culturally competent care, traumainformed care, community-based initiatives, and legislative reforms. Noticing that he (Adrian) cannot cope with

the stress given to him by his wife, family and colleagues in the office, he divorces his wife and travels abroad to enable him to live his 'normal' life and accept his sexuality openly rather than living in denial or committing suicide.

The minority stress hypothesis, which contends that ongoing stress brought on by social stigma raises the prevalence of mental health problems, is best illustrated by Adrian's experiences with family rejection, and social isolation. Disparities in mental health outcomes and care access among various communities are referred to as mental health inequalities. One such group that experiences notable disparities in mental health is the LGBTQ+ community, (like Adrian, Abdul, Femi, George, Anthonio and others in the text under study), which has a greater prevalence of mental health problems than its heterosexual and cisgender counterparts. Adrian, knowing well that he is gay, gets married because he is afraid to accept himself (p 50) and he is so scared to reveal his true sexuality to his brothers. LGBTQ + people are more likely to experience mental health problems such as substance use disorders, anxiety, and depression. Mental health conditions can negatively affect their relationships, everyday functioning, and general well-being. LGBTQ+ people, especially young people, are more likely to engage in suicidal behavior. Abdul, a gay man and a chain smoker, complained bitterly about how LGBTQ people face rejection daily from their loved ones.

Every day in a gay man's life, he is constantly hurt by the people he loves the most. His family. His friends. And even

society. We have to live with rejection every day and that hurts. We have to grin and bear it constantly so that other people are comfortable at our expense (33).

According to a 2020 American Psychological Association report, LGBTQ+ people are over twice as likely as their heterosexual counterparts to suffer from mental health problems. Research indicates that LGBTQ+ youth are four times more likely than their straight counterparts to attempt suicide, making them especially vulnerable. The text under study reveals how a homosexual couple is disgraced; they almost committed suicide. They are beaten up and stripped naked by their neighbours, who finally take them to the police station.

In fact, there was a law against homosexuality! He vividly remembered reading on the front cover of a Sunday newspaper some years back about how a homosexual couple was paraded naked. The story had a lewd headline and detailed how the couple had been hounded by their curious neighbours who did not understand what kind of relationship the two men shared, and how they had broken into their two-room apartment one night to catch the men in bed together. They were beaten out of their flat and marched to the nearby police. (141)

LGBTQ+ people face a lack of support. Mental health problems may worsen if there is a lack of supporting friends, family, and the community. As if the challenges Adrian is facing are not enough, he is forced to take a two-week leave from his office when they notice his sexuality (143). He is given a few weeks to prove that the scandal involving him in the office is wrong or face whatever repercussions the firm has in store for him, and he becomes a victim of yet another nightmare from the organization where he had worked for a long period. To heighten his case, a security guard (a male) in his workplace accuses him of harassing him sexually (140). Adrian's wife, Ada, is not exempted from the scandal since her husband's sexual orientation makes her the center of attention at all social events.

Rotimi, Adrian, and his homosexual pals demonstrate how young, athletic men may have a highly perplexed existence in terms of their sexuality. When Rotimi (Adrian's colleague) learns of Adrian's homosexual relationship, he approaches Adrian and promises to stand by him in spite of the scandals. Rotimi tries to relate to Adrian's nature later on in the narrative by claiming that although he likes ladies, he had a gay encounter with a close buddy. Despite identifying as straight, he is shown attempting to entice Adrian to have another affair with him (p 147). However, in his heartbroken state, Adrian declines his offer and tries to counsel him to go and thoroughly examine himself and stop misbehaving. Internalized homophobia and transphobia are another serious issue that affect them negatively. Self-stigma and

mental health problems can result from internalizing negative attitudes and ideas about one's own identity.

Intersectional Experience and LGBTQ+ Mental Health via Nigerian Literature.

Bisexual people and queer people are examples of subcommunities within the LGBTQ+ community that deal with particular issues that are related to their identities. Numerous things, such as cultural stigma, ignorance, and insufficient support networks, might have an impact on these difficulties. Adrian feels very much alone when he separates from his wife on the issue of his lifestyle. Dibia writes 'Now, he felt very alone. Abandoned. And it was scary' (25). Adrian lost support networks; he does not have the courage to tell anyone. The difficulties LGBTQ+ people face among the many difficulties are a lack of understanding, prejudice, and misconceptions that result from a lack of knowledge about the realities of LGBTQ+ persons. Adrian's wife, Ada, could not comprehend her husband and her world when she first learned about her husband's sexual inclination. She feels betrayed, rejected, and ashamed of herself. Thus, she asks herself How would she face the world and hold her head up proudly? How would she face her family, his family? How would she tell her daughter that her father was a fraud? How could she continue to live with him?' (24).

Discriminatory treatment is a common obstacle that transgender people must overcome. Bisexual people face biphobia

and a lack of visibility or the dread and distaste of people who are attracted to more than one gender, as their barriers.

Providing a secure and welcoming atmosphere for people from a variety of backgrounds, such as members of LGBTQ+ people, requires affirmative care and support. Samantha A Moran et al (2024) highlight how state policies influence LGBTQ+ youth mental health symptoms through closer-in circumstances and stress the significance of putting legislation into practice when they are passed. Dibia is of the view that he interacted with some gay men and women in his research for the novel, and his findings justify the pains they undergo. He recognizes the value of honoring each person's identity, experiences, and values. Hear him,

I had the opportunity of interacting with quite a number of gay males and females. My discussions with them opened my eyes to a lot of truths and pains encounter. It can never be easy to be stigmatized and eternally condemned or simply being tagged "queer." One of the quotes in my novel -- the last chapter when Adrian explains to Ada, his estranged wife, what it meant to be gay -- was a direct quote from one of my sources. I couldn't change anything... it was so beautiful the way and the passion my source framed that explanation. (BBC Interview, April, 4. 2006)

In addition to acknowledging each person's identity and experiences, affirmative care and support offer a basis for

fostering trust and advancing mental health and wellbeing. Affirmative care: what is it? An approach to care known as affirmative care recognizes and honors each person's identity, experiences, and values. It entails establishing a welcoming and secure atmosphere that fosters sentiments of support, acceptance, and validation. Affirmative care can be offered in a number of contexts, such as community organizations, healthcare, education, and mental health services. Increased feelings of safety and trust are one of the advantages of affirmative care. Affirmative care fosters a secure and welcoming atmosphere that encourages sentiments of validation and trust. This may include using inclusive language and steering clear of stigmatizing or marginalizing words and instead using inclusive language.

A distinct viewpoint on the mental health issues that the LGBTQ community in Nigeria faces may be found in Nigerian literature. Works like *The Death of Vivek Oji* by Akwaeke Emezi, *Under the Udala Trees* by Chinelo Okparanta and *Walking With Shadows* by Jude Dibia provide light on the difficulties of love, identity, and resiliency in the face of prejudice and social stigma. Dibia in an interview was asked how he was inspired to write extensively on homosexual couples knowing fully well Nigeria's stance on homosexuality, he answers:

It was quite easy really. The society today in Nigeria is changing quite a lot. It would be rather naive if one pretends not to notice the growing trend of gay men and the ordeal they have to live through. I was intrigued by this and also

by the other side you know... how their wives/girlfriends feel if they were all of a sudden challenged with this reality; I couldn't pass up the possibility. (BBC Interview, April, 4, 2006)

According to the minority stress model, LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience mental health problems as a result of ongoing stress brought on by societal stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. But Jude Dibia's interview with the BBC on April 4, 2006, provides insightful information about the complexity of LGBTQ+ issues in Nigeria. Through examining the difficulties LGBTQ+ people encounter and emphasizing the value of visibility and representation, Dibia's conversation contributes to the advancement of empathy and understanding.

Mental health can be significantly impacted by internalized homophobia, which is the internalization of unfavorable societal perceptions about one's own LGBTQ+ identity. In *The Death of Vivek Oji*, Emezi delves into the intricacies of identification and the battle to be accepted in a culture that disapproves of queerness. The conflict between cultural norms and individual identity is highlighted in Vivek's story, which results in emotions of guilt, shame, and self-loathing. Many LGBTQ+ people build resilience and coping mechanisms to manage their mental health in spite of the difficulties caused by internalized homophobia and minority stress. Nigerian authors honor the richness and beauty of LGBTQ+ experiences in Nigeria in *A Feel-Good Book*, an anthology on queer delight. This piece demonstrates the value of social support systems and communities in fostering mental health

and questioning social norms. The promotion of mental health and well-being requires affirmative treatment, or care that is customized to the unique needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ people. In their writings, Nigerian writers such as Romeo Oriogun and Unoma Azuah stress the value of affirmative care, emphasizing the necessity of relationships that are affirming and helpful in order to improve mental health results. The reverse is the case in the text under study, as Chiedu and Chika (Adrian's brothers) have always understood that Adrian is totally different and very far from being a normal person, and throughout the book, we see that the older brother Chika genuinely feels sorry for Adrian because he understands how difficult it is to be "different." He attempts to discuss it with him and find out what went wrong. Chiedu believes Adrian needs deliverance, so he sets up a deliverance session for him. The result is a severe thrashing meant to get rid of the "evil spirit" that is torturing Adrian. However, Adrian is not relieved of the evil spirit. Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* narrates the tale of Ijeoma, a young Igbo girl who battles her same-sex inclinations in a culture that forbids such partnerships. Ijeoma must face the expectations and conventions of society that threaten to destroy her as she negotiates her relationships and identity. The book offers a strong and moving depiction of a young woman's quest for selfdiscovery in a Nigerian setting.

Conclusion

The detrimental impacts of stigma and prejudice can be lessened when people feel heard, seen, and embraced. This might involve access to inclusivity and help from friends and family. Adrian learns coping mechanisms and perseverance to manage his mental health in spite of the difficulties brought on by internalized homophobia and social stigma. The story emphasizes the value of community and supporting relationships in fostering mental health. Adrian finds strength and validation in his relationships with friends and allies like Abdul, Femi and Chika which helps him deal with the challenges of his identity. The book also examines the issue of internalized homophobia, in which Adrian finds it difficult to reconcile his identity with the unfavorable views that society has about same-sex partnerships. Feelings of guilt, shame, and self-loathing are brought on by this internal conflict and can make mental health problems worse. Dibia's depiction of Adrian's internal conflict emphasizes how critical it is to treat internalized homophobia in order to support mental health and well-being.

Finally, there are many facets and complexities surrounding mental health and the LGBTQ+ population. There are numerous obstacles to overcome, but there are also plenty of chances for development and assistance. We may endeavor to create a more welcoming and supportive society for everyone, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity, by tackling institutional hurdles and biases, fostering friendly surroundings, and offering affirmative and inclusive mental health care. Nigerian literature

offers a compelling perspective for analyzing the LGBTQ community's mental health issues. Through examining the lives of LGBTQ characters in the novel under study, we can better comprehend the intricate problems involved. We may endeavor to assist the mental health and well-being of LGBTQ people in Nigeria by training well-being health professionals in LGBTQ+ topics, offering inclusive, affirming treatment, addressing minority stress, encouraging affirmative care, and cultivating social and community support.

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Ngozi Jacinta Ozoh is a lecturer in the department of English Language and Literature Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3490-2577>.