

Motivation for Extra-marital Relationship as Expressed by Married Women in Kwara State: Implications for Counsellor Training and Integrative Marital Counselling

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Abstract

In this part of the world, marriage is considered to be a union of matured opposite sex individuals who have consented to live together as husband and wife. The functions of marriage include provision of outlet for sexual satisfaction and emotional support. The relationship between the couple is expected to endure beyond the period needed for procreation and child-upbringing. Faithfulness is considered to be an essential ingredient for marital success and durability. However extra-marital relationship is regarded as a destructive development capable of undermining conjugal bliss of the couple. This descriptive study examined the motivation for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women in Kwara State and its implications for counsellor training and integrative marital counselling. The 600 participants for the study were drawn from 12 secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of the state through the use of purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Data collected were analysed through the use of mean scores and mean ranking of items in the questionnaire, as well as I-test. It was revealed that sexual dissatisfaction, long time separation between couples and communication gap are the major motivations for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women irrespective of their age. It was, however, found that married women differ in their expression of motivation for extra-marital relationship based on family type or educational attainment. This finding has implications for counsellor training and integrative marital counselling. Specifically, the findings of this study implies that counsellor-trainees

must be enlightened on the salient issues related to extra-marital relationship, its effects on the women, the children and the society at large. This is achievable through a broad base counsellor education curriculum for all counsellor-trainees. Similarly, the findings of this study have implications for the provision of marital counselling to couples. As matter of fact, integrative marital counselling needs to be provided, in order to assist couples appreciate the motivating factors for extra-marital relationship and devise their own means of addressing the problem.

Introduction

The counselling profession and by extension the curriculum of its counsellor trainers are reflections of its overriding assumption that every individual in any society has had, is having and will have a problem that he (or she) alone could not solve (Makinde in Idowu, 2004). Marriage, in the opinion of Oniye (2008), is a dynamic association engaged in by adults and it represents an important point of personal-social re-organisation that has attracted the attention of many social scientists. Marriage exists as an avenue for couples to meet the satisfaction of security and of enduring affection and companionship, sexual relationship and the building of the home and the family. According to Munroe (2003), marriage is a religious duty and is consequently a moral safeguard as well as a social necessity. It serves as a moral safeguard because it acts as an outlet for sexual needs and regulates man's sexual desire/ expression, so that man does not become slave to his desire (Oniye, 2008).

It has been observed that sex life colours marriage from top to bottom and as a matter of fact, it is the most powerful 'marital glue' a couple can have. The implication of this assertion by Leman (2005) is that a lot in marriage depends on ability of couples to manage their sexual life for marital harmony. Inversely, their inability to handle sex constructively could automatically spell doom for their union and by extension their family and the society. According to Leman, a sexually-fulfilled man will normally be a better father and a better employee while a sexually (satisfied) fulfilled woman will have less stress and more joy in her life. It has been further noted that to get married is to commit oneself to a regular time of sexual intimacy. In a similar vein, it has been said that marital sex is the most important and the only appropriate kind which unfortunately gets ignored with the consequence that both the couple and the society get to pay and very dearly too for this neglect. It has been observed that sex (especially between the couple) makes everything nicer, representing a microcosm of their marriage. The centrality of sex to marriage is such that men ought to realise that everyday their wives internally ask them "Do you really love me?" "Do you really care?"

Background to the Study

Counselling as a helping relationship is a process by which an individual is assisted to evaluate his/her opportunities, i.e. make feasible choices in the light of his/her unique characteristics and opportunities, to accept responsibility for his/her choices and initiate a course of action that is in consonance with any given choice (Oniye, 2004). Marriage is a common institution to all human societies seriously advocated and supported by the major religions, especially on the African continent namely: African Traditional Religion; Christianity; and Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) was quoted to have said: *marriage is my tradition whosoever keeps away from therefrom is not amongst me*. It is not unlikely that an understanding of this prophetic injunction is the motivating factor for the Muslims' desire to get married to persons of their choice. Christians embrace marriage, especially because of the pronouncement in the Holy Bible that: *two are better than one; because they have good reward for their labour For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow; but! woe to him that is alone when he falleth for he hath not another to lift him up* (Ecclesiastes, Cll 4 vs 9|10). According to Felkins (2005), the reasons why we marry include the fact that to raise children, a stable mother and father relationship is very desirable. Felkins noted further that people get married for other reasons such as getting legal and job related benefits, establishment of permanent relationship, to get mutual help; to satisfy women and children's welfare; while other scholars (Oniye, 2004; Omari, 1991) opined that we get married, in order to keep the family name, comply with religious injunctions, satisfy/facilitate sexual gratification, meet economic or political reasons among others. Marriage is the foundation of any family. According to Olayinka & Ornoegun (2002), the family is the bedrock of any society. As a matter of fact, the family is a bio-social group, a network of persons intimately held together by a bond of social, kinship or blood relationship (like the bond between husband and wife).

Love and affection are two of the ingredients needed by a couple to foster harmonious interrelationship in their marriage. It is expected that husband and wife would learn to show affection to each other as well as being friendly with each other, Commitment to the union is another requirement for successful marital relationship. According to Yahaya (2008), when conflict occurs in marriage, the couple must be earnestly desirous of its settlement because of the emotional bond that goes with marriage. Nwoye (1991) noted that honesty and trustworthiness are other requirements of marriage. It is the willingness to give a true impression of one's feelings and motive. Communication which involves exchange of ideas and feelings is equally essential in marriage and that possibly explains why frank and sincere discussion between a husband and his wife is regarded as ingredient for marital harmony and stability. Thus, Olayinka (2000) encourages couples to

agree in principle the channel of communication for amicable resolution of conflicts noting that disagreements should always be kept open while the offending partner should be prepared to accept his/her fault and apologise. This stance by couple has the potential of entrenching intimacy between couples. According to Yahaya (2008), intimacy is closely related to sexual understanding and invariably satisfaction, thus his suggestion that marriage partners should seek knowledge about sex and acquire skills in sexual relationship. He went on further to assert that discussion on sex in marriage is often avoided; yet without sex, everything disintegrates. Essentially, he argued that sexual pleasure is an exclusive right of married couples since sex is the major distinction between married and single persons.

However, it has been noted by Nwabuisi (2010) that misconceptions about sex are not new. They arise, according to her, as a result of wrong attitude, traditions, taboos and myths. Nwabuisi asserted further that the main factor that leads to wrong conception about sex is ignorance of how the body works or functions in relation to sex and/or sexuality. Marital instability could arise as a result of sexual misadventure or lack of understanding. According to Kehinde-Amao (2002), of the 547 cases of marital conflict examined in Rivers State, 314 disintegrated based on incidence of marital infidelity. It was suggested that several factors could be responsible for this unwholesome situation such as anti-social behaviour, lack of love and trust, socio-cultural problems and more importantly, extra-marital relationship. Extra-marital relationship according to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* is "an act of not being faithful to one's husband or wife". This is said to occur when an individual is involved in unlawful sexual or emotional relationship with another woman or man other than his/her lawful marital partner. The factors motivating an individual involvement in extra-marital relationship are multi-dimensional and they include mid-life or pre-mid-life crisis, low self-esteem, lack of love and unbridled flow of anger, boredom, early marriage, peer pressure, disappointment in marriage and sexual addiction to mention but few.

It has been observed that marital infidelity or extra-marital relationship is one of the major causes of marital instability with its negative impact on the couple, the society and the children born into such a family. According to Olanrewaju (2002), marital infidelity could lead to conflict, misunderstanding, separation, constant nagging or divorce if not sustenance of injury or outright death. According to Ikulayo (2007), adultery, barrenness, impotency, sexual incompatibility or excessive sexual demands are factors that may cause marital instability among married couples.

The process of counsellor training and preparation requires introduction of comprehensive counsellor education curriculum robust enough to produce all-round counsellor for the task of counselling clients with educational, personal-

social and vocational challenges. The training programme to be instituted for the training of counsellors for Nigeria setting ought to be such that would empower them to meet the diverse needs of the multi-faceted clients who are likely to come for their help and service. The counsellors of this century require multi-skills and knowledge that would offer both preventive and curative counselling to victims of extra-marital relationship and those who perpetrate the practice willingly or unwillingly. It is imperative that providers of counsellor education must be conversant with the dynamics of marital counselling and challenges of marital interrelationship for their students to understand the concepts such as those of marriage, marital interrelationship, marital infidelity and motivating factors for marital infidelity. In order to achieve this, the use of Integrative Marital Counselling approach becomes essential. Integrative counselling approach otherwise known as multi-modal approach is good for handling relationship problems like extra-marital relationship because no particular therapeutic approach is appropriate in all circumstances. According to Martin (2012), the use of Integrative Marital Counselling approach implies that a marital counsellor dealing with relationship concerns would select therapeutic techniques from different bodies or theory according to the needs and profile of the client. Thus, in order to use this approach, the Integrative-oriented Marital Counsellor could select techniques from counselling theories like Person-centred Counselling, Bereavement Counselling, Transactional Analysis Psychotherapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Stress Therapy and many others. Another assumption underlining the use of this approach is that it would enable the counsellor to teach the client problem solving techniques, in order for him/her to learn how to handle (independently) specific (maladaptive) motivating factors. In-depth understanding of issues of marriage and extra-marital relationship has the potential of equipping counsellor trainees with skills and knowledge required for holistic counselling for effective service delivery to would-be couples, married couples, students and other stakeholders both within and outside the school setting.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage is the bedrock of the society and its success, according to Yahaya (2008), is dependent on sexual understanding and satisfaction among couples. Marital infidelity has been noted to be among the factors responsible for marital instability with so many factors motivating individuals engaging in the practice. According to Adegbola (2007), extra-marital relationship has caused lots of problems in many marriages resulting in incidence of conflict, misunderstanding, separation, divorce or death in certain situations. Some research works have been done on topics similar to this and they include prevalence and causes of marital infidelity by

Olanrewaju (2002), causes of extra-marital affairs as perceived by married men and women in Ilorin metropolis and causes and effects of extra-marital relationship as perceived by married men and women in Ilorin metropolis (Adegbola, 2007). The main focus of this study, however, is an investigation into the motivation for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women in Kwara State with special reference to its implication for counsellor training and integrative marital counselling

Research Questions

1. What are the factors motivating married people to be involved in extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference in the motivation for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women on the basis of age difference?
3. Is there any difference in the motivation for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women on the basis of family type?
4. Is there any difference in the motivation for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women on the basis of educational attainment?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between married women of different age groups in their expression of the motivation for extra-marital relationship.
2. There is no significant difference between married women of different family type in their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.
3. There is no significant difference between married women of different levels of educational attainment in their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Methodology

Sample and sampling Technique: the sample for the study comprise 600 married teachers drawn from 12 selected secondary schools across the three senatorial districts of the state using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The purposive sampling technique was used to select married women proportionately from the selected secondary schools while stratified random sampling technique was used to group the selected participants on the bases of age, family type and educational attainment.

Instrumentation: data for the study were collected through the use of a questionnaire titled 'Motivation for Extra-marital Relationship Questionnaire (MERQ). The questionnaire has two sections: sections A and B. Section A deals with Personal information of the respondents while section B focuses specifically on the motivating factors for extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women used for the study. The questionnaire is a fifteen-item instrument adopted from Zakariyah (2009) patterned after the four points Likert-type rating scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Results

Personal Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Age Difference

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Below 40 years	279	46.44
40 years and Above	321	53.56
Total	600	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Family Type

Family Type	Frequency	Percentage
Monogamous	357	59.52
Polygamous	243	40.48
Total	600	100.0

Table 2 reveals that 360 (60%) of the respondent are of the monogamous family type, thereby constituting the majority while 240 (40%) of the same group belong to the polygamous family type.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents Based on Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	frequency	Percentage
Below First Degree	259	43.16
First Degree and Above	341	56.84
Total	600	100.0

Table 3 shows that out of the 600 respondents, 260 (43.75%) have less than first degree as their highest education while 340 (56.25%) had either first degree or more. This implies that majority of the respondents are with first degree or something higher.

Table 4: Rank Order of Motivation for Extra-marital Relationship

S/No.	Item No.	Statement of Item	Mean	Rank
		People engage in extra-marital relationship due to:		
1.	3	Sexual dissatisfaction among the couple	3.58	1 st
2.	5	Long time separation of spouses by nature of their jobs	3.53	2 nd
3.	15	Communication gap between the couple	3.50	3 rd
4.	6	Clear case of impotence or sexual dysfunction	3.44	4 th
5.	4	Barrenness after years of marriage	3.31	5 th
6.	8	Husband's marital irresponsibility	3.24	6 th
7.	1	Desire to seek assistance to support the economic base of the family	3.23	7 th
8.	11	Exposure to serious economic hardship	3.23	7 th
9.	7	A spouse's excessive love of parties and ceremonies	3.18	9 th
10.	12	Peer influence	3.14	10 th
11.	9	Either of the couple not comfortable with the sex type of their children	3.13	11 th
12.	14	The spouse has exposure to sex-oriented practices like pornography and obscene music	3.08	12 th
13.	10	One of the spouse's desire to avenge a wrong done by the other spouse	2.98	13 th
14.	2	Lack of pre-marital sexual experience	2.86	14 th
15.	13	Close proximity of opposite sex at the office level	2.79	15 th

Table 4 shows that sexual dissatisfaction is the most ranked motivating factor for extra-marital relationship followed by long time separation of spouses by nature of their works and communication gap between the couples in order of magnitude, Inversely, the least ranked factors are those of close proximity of opposite sex at office, lack of pre-marital experience and desire by one spouse to avenge a wrong done by the other spouse.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 011e: There is no significant difference between married women of different age groups ill their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Table 5: Means, standard deviation and t-value on respondents' expression based on age group difference

Variable	No	X	DF	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value	SD
Age						
Below 40 years	279	29.67	598	1.25	1.96	6.66
40 years and above	321	28.42				7.30

*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 5 shows a calculated t-value of 1.25 and critical value of 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between married women of different age groups in their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between married women of different family types on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Table 6: Means, standard deviation and t-value on respondents' expression based on family type

Variable	No	X	DF	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value	SD
Family type						
Monogamous	357	77.98	598	3.03*	1.96	13.62
Polygamous	243	108.95	9.99			

*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 6 shows a calculated t-value of 3.03 and a critical t-value of 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between married women or different family types on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between married women of different levels of educational attainment in their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Table 7: Means, standard deviation and t-value on respondents' expression based on educational attainment

Variable	No	X	DF	Cal t-value	Crit. t-value	SD
Educational Attainment						
Below First Degree	259	73.22	598	2.74*	1.96	13.77
First Degree and Above	341	103.22	12.41			

*=Significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 7 shows a calculated t-value of 2.74 and a critical t-value of 1.96. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference between married women of different levels of educational attainment in their expression on the motivation for extra-marital relationship.

Discussion of Findings

It is clear from data collected that three main factors are central to the incidence of extra-marital relationship as expressed by married women in Kwara State and these are sexual dissatisfaction, long time separation of couples by nature of jobs and communication gap. This finding is in line with the submission of Yahaya (2008) that without sex, everything in marriage disintegrates. This may not be surprising bearing in mind the submission of Nwabuisi (2010) that a lot of misconceptions abound with respect to sex and/or sexuality. According to Nwabuisi (2010), these misconceptions arise as a result of wrong attitudes, traditions, taboos and myths. These predisposing factors are not new as observed by Oniye (2008) that it is tempting to hear making love is just doing what comes naturally-it is a myth. Oniye noted further that many, if not most couples, do not naturally take enough time when having sex and the truth is that good sex can't be rushed. It was found also that married women differ significantly in their expression of factors motivating people to engage in extra-marital relationship on the bases of family type and educational attainment. The implication of this finding is that married women are not united in their expression on issues of extra-marital relationship based on their family types and educational attainments. This is possibly due to the fact that perception of extra-marital relationship is attitudinal and culture-laden. It is not unlikely that difference in their expression is a manifestation of their social status as married individuals of different family life experiences and divergent educational exposure.

There are a number of implications inherent in this finding for counsellor education (training) and integrative marital counselling. The respondents are married women and teachers of students, implying that their emotions matter a great deal in the process of discharging their civic responsibilities. It is pertinent, therefore, that prospective counsellors and future teachers be trained in such a way that they would be able to appreciate the emotions of these women and those of their male partners who are likely to perpetrate this act. This understanding is essential for these counsellor trainees to be equipped with skills and knowledge of marital counselling, techniques of behaviour modification requisite for effective discharge of their duties as counsellors capable of providing educational, socio-personal and vocational counselling. The skills and knowledge so acquired would

enable them attend to emotional stress of women who are usually at the receiving end of extra-marital relationship, thereby assisting the victims to understand the predisposing factors for the behaviour. Sequel to this awareness creation, couples could be counselled on the nature of extra-marital relationship, the factors for its manifestation and intervention strategies.

Conclusion

Extra-marital relationship is motivated by several factors dominant among which are sexual dissatisfaction, long separation of couples by nature of their jobs and communication gap. While married women of different age groups are united in their expression of motivating factors for extra-marital relationship, they differ significantly in their expression on the bases of family type and educational attainment. The training of professional counsellors would be deficient without a systematic inclusion of marital counselling and counselling techniques in counsellor education programme. It is, therefore, recommended that marital counselling with broad-based integrative marital counselling as its focus should be incorporated into counsellor education programme of Nigerian universities.

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