



## RAPID INCREASE OF INFIDELITY AMONG MARRIED WOMEN IN NIGERIA - CAUSES AND EFFECTS: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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### Abstract:

Marriage is a socially sanctioned union typically between one man and one woman usually called husband and wife. Marriage is a uniquely comprehensive union of hearts and minds, but also distinctively a bodily union made possible by sexual complementarities. It is more than physical attraction and biological union; it involves total commitment, self-donation to one another and taking responsibilities that lead to mutual well-being and marital stability. Infidelity among married couples has been responsible for most cases of marital separation and divorce. This study investigated the Rapid Increase of Infidelity among Married Women in Nigeria, and it was interested to find out the possible factors that are responsible; early marriage; imposition of marriage partners; sexual incompatibility; childlessness; uncaring attitude of a partner; hopelessness; depression; revenge; lack of preparation for marriage; and parental disapproval; that if found in family, will definitely drop the happiness of that family. The study also focused more on effects that are associated with infidelity, effects of major conflicts in spouses' relationship for social, cultural and psychological reasons, effects of extra marital affairs, different impacts on marital satisfaction and mental wellbeing. The study still considered some implication for counselling and recommendations that will help couples having infidelity related issues at homes.

**Keywords:** infidelity, causes, effects and counselling implications

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage also called matrimony or wedlock is a culturally recognized union of two people as partners in a personal relationship which historically and in some jurisdiction specifically involve a man and a woman. This most solemn, sacred and serious union into which people enter establishes rights and obligations between them as well as between them and their children, and between them and their in-law. It is sacred because it is established by God Himself. Serious because it binds the man and woman together in a relationship so close and intimate that their entire future will be profoundly influenced by it. The sacredness and sanctity of marriage is expressed in the marriage vow itself, *"To be my lawfully wedded wife and vow to be loyal to you in every way to comfort you to cherish you, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richness for poorer, in sickness and health and always to love you till death do us part according to God's holy ordinance to this I pledge myself."* Marriage connotes a life time of dedication and surrendering to each other. A life of sharing the pains, frustrations, disappointments, victory, joy and happiness of each other. It is a life total dependence on each other.

Getting married is a life time experience that is often cherished and looked forward to with great enthusiasm, hope and expectations of eventual fruitful married life. Okoie, Ukah and Nwoga (2016) asserted that when couples get married, they project establishing a happy and joyous home devoid of rancour, acrimony, violence, conflict or instability. However, the institution of marriage has been subjected to numerous challenges in recent times considering the fact that the challenges of the twenty first century contemporary societal expectations have made some marriages to experience distress, frustrations and uncompromising experiences that have had negative implications on them and caused marital instability. Entry into marriage is always an experience but it is often discovered that the journey through the marriage life is full of intricacies with unpleasant experiences one cannot deny.

In Nigeria, research studies have being conducted on family and marital problems. In view of these, there have been various research interests in the study of marriage problem so much that is no doubt that the country is beset with a rising incidence of separation and divorce cases after marriage (Audu, 2016). Problem of various descriptions for example locates infidelity in marriage as a major influencer of separation and divorce. Ayannuga and Adenuji (2017) noted that marital stability is the key factor in Nigerian marriages and it involves a lot of effort for its sustenance. Marital stability here is not only a value term but also a relative term which implies firmness and strength to endure under hard as well as easy circumstances. There is a strong alignment between healthy marriages and mental health. Successful marriage and married life will be able to meet many of mental and physical needs in a safe environment and significantly influence on individuals' mental health. Harley (1996) also noted that it is a wonder that after couples have made solemn and sacred contracts and have promised before accredited witnesses to live together for better and for worse till death part them, the

same couples became the architects of conflict and marital instability especially in present day Nigeria.

The marriage institution is in fact a reflection of the decadence and general disorder that is evident in the Nigerian society.

The norms and values which were once cherished in the olden days have been washed away as the society moves towards holistic, materialistic and cosmopolitan tendencies. Infidelity among couples is one of the most wrenching experiences a couple can endure. It can destroy families, crush spirits. It also can cause pain to the cheater. Hence, there is no other information about the origin of infidelity apart from the ones written in the Bible; therefore, the Bible remains the basis of information about the origin of infidelity among married couples. The Bible states that, marital infidelity is the unlawful relationship between a married person and another person of the opposite sex (Book of John 8:3). This is when a person is having an extramarital engagement with another person. Harley (1996) posited that marital infidelity as an affair is when a married individual has intercourse with a person to whom they are not married, that is to say that, it is an affair of two people who are married to different people of the opposite sex.

Nigeria is a religious nation and vast majority of Nigerians, take issues of religion and religious practice as very important aspect of their lives. Also, marriage and religion influence various dimensions of life, including physical health and longevity of life, mental health and happiness, economic well-being and raising of children yet infidelity amongst couples is a major threat to this belief system and poses a risk to marital happiness.

## **2. Concept of Marriage**

Marriage is an act by which a husband and wife make marital love, also makes new life, and strive to live together in harmony. Marriage is therefore inherently extended and enriched by family life which calls for all encompassing commitment that is permanent and exclusive. In short, Marriage is viewed as a sacramental perspective. Let us return in spirit to the wedding banquet at Cana in Galilee, the Holy Bible Gospel description of which allows man to reflect on marriage in a sacramental perspective. The Holy Bible used by Christians all over the World notes that a man leaves his father and mother be joined to his wife, and they soon become one flesh which implies oneness forever (Genesis 2:24). Newly wed couples would not on their own desire their marriage to be in disarray. For interfaith couples, the more congruent couples are in religious belief, the greater their marital satisfaction and religious commitment. However, instability is often experienced, the occurrence of which makes it necessary for counselling psychologists and significant others in the helping profession to understand possibly factors like infidelity that could negatively affect the romantic lifestyles of couples and make them vulnerable to mental health challenges (Okoiye, Ukah & Nwoga, 2016).

Marital stability is a key factor in marriage. Marital stability is interpreted as whether a couple in a marriage remains together instead of separating or divorcing. The

features of marital stability involves sensation of love, trust, admiration by the partner, respect and faithfulness by the partner, social support, dedication, equality of the task, gender roles and sexual relations Wikipedia (2010) defined marriage is a social union or legal contract between individuals that create kinship. It is an institution in which, interpersonal relationship, usually intimate and sexual are acknowledged in a variety of ways depending on the culture or sub-culture in which it is found. Such a union may also be called matrimony, which the ceremony that marked its beginning is usually called a wedding. Gruga (2010), stated that marriage is the place to start reading for anyone thinking about the words “lesbian, gay and marriage” in the same sentence. It is engaging, it is fun and it puts the lie to those prophets of gloom and doom who think every push for greater equality whether it be women’s suffrage, reproductive rights, or interracial marriage signals the end of civilizations.

Mba (2015) pointed that marriage is a sacred institution. This sacredness comes into greater focus where people live closer to nature. All events, all societies set great value on marriage, and individuals too. This can explain why people still marry and desire to marry despite the many headaches and heartaches that are connected with marriage and family life in the modern world, and despite the efforts by some secularists to strip marriage of all sacred connotations. Marriage is by its very nature ordered to the procreation and education of offspring, and therefore the connection of marriage with the deep human mysteries of the life and birth has always set it apart in man’s mind as something uniquely sacred and of divine origin.

Onwuli (2014) stated that marriage is an institution of nature and it must have its own inner principles and laws of existence and operation. These principles, man and society must discover and apply both in general and in particular case for their unflinching attainment of the ends and purposes of marriage. Also, these are far-reaching differences between the physical, anatomical levels but also from the psychological and sociological standpoints. These differences make for the complementary and gender roles man and woman as husband and wife play in the conjugal community. These differences are the basis of the adventures and the excitement of human love in marriage. However, the differences in no way imply inferiority or superiority as persons or sexes.

Gruga, M. D. (2010) described marriage as a covenant of love. A covenant signifies a partnership communion and love. Indeed, marriage is a covenant of love, an invitation of love. It is a privilege from which flows many sided blessings and far-reaching responsibilities. Hence it requires faithfulness, generosity, and undivided heart, and can be very demanding at times like all species of true love.

Burke (2016) pointed again that there is an element of contract in marriage, and it is a very important one, for specifying the nature of the marital relationship before the society, so that apart from the deep commitment of love and self-giving, human dignity may be safeguarded in case of the failure of trusting and committed love. Rights, duties and obligations are never evaded where true love is not eroded. However, where love and faith fail, law and custom should be evoked to provide justice and security.

According to the Bible, more than three thousand years ago, God addressed Himself to a group of people belonging to a country called Israel, who were experiencing oppression under the Egyptians, in whose land they had settled. Moved by their miserable conditions, God came to their rescue. Through a leader called Moses they succeeded in fleeing the country and set out towards the wilderness.

There, at the foot of a mountain called Sinai, God revealed to them His intension: *"Now, if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people"* (Exodus 19:5). After having set them free, God wanted to become their partner and friend forever. Through the covenant God commits Himself in a special way to Israel. Israel becomes His people and agrees to observe His commandments. As a sign of love, God brings them back into the beautiful land of Israel.

The covenant relationship in the Bible is often likened to a marriage bond. God is for Israel like a faithful loving husband, while Israel is a wife often unfaithful to Him and keen to run after other lovers, that is the pagan idols. The attitude of God is well expressed in these words: *"I will win her back with words of love, then once again, she will call Me her husband Israel, I will make you my wife. I will be true and faithful. I will show you constant love and mercy and make you mine forever"* (Hos. 2:14, 16, 19). The unfaithfulness of the people of Israel to God's covenant ultimately caused the loss of its privilege of being the only people of God. All nations have been called into Gods friendship and a new covenant has been made with them through Jesus Christ the Son of God. As He reveals God in human form, Jesus introduces Himself as the bridegroom who calls all men to His wedding feat (Mk. 2:19, Mt. 22:1 – 10).

The community of His disciples has become His faithful spouse. *"Christ loved the church and gave His life for her in order to present her to Himself in all her beauty, pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection"* (Eph. 5:25 – 27).

## **2.1 Factors Responsible for Infidelity Among Couples**

Marriage like many other institutions involving human beings has its own problems that have exerted much negative influence on it. One of these major problems as seen by various authors is the problem of marital infidelity. Schools also postulate that marital infidelity as the betrayal of trust in marriage. According to Little-White (2011), everyone in a relationship wants it better each day. Each set of New Year's resolutions is made with a view to keeping the relationship at its best. However, in many instances, there are some breakdown because of unfaithfulness also called infidelity or adultery, by one or both partners. He added that a part of many vows speaks to forsaking of all others, but how often are couples tempted to yield to temptation and become unfaithful? While monogamy is highly valued among couples, infidelity continues to increase.

Why are partners unfaithful to each other? According to Little-White (2011) a psychologist believed that one of the main causes or factors of multiple affairs is an attempt by man and woman to realize and satisfy all the impossible expectations that are missing or thwarted in a relationship. It is an attempt by the one who traps, to look

elsewhere for what is so badly wanted in the relationship and to find someone else to bring happiness.

The following are some of the factors or causes of marital infidelity as outlined by various authors:

### **2.1.1 Early Marriage**

Whether it happens to a girl or a boy, early marriage is a violation of human right. The free and full consent to a marriage is recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR) and in many subsequent human rights instruments. Consent that cannot be free and full, when at least one partner is very immature. For both girls and boys, early marriage has profound physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impact, cutting off educational opportunity and chances of personal growth.

Huse (2012) stated that marriage is one of the major events of life and should therefore be wisely prepared for. To marry while one is very young may cause some problems which do not arise if the person is older when he or she marries. Couples who marry at a very early age are more likely to have problems with infidelity in late years of marriage than those who married at a mature age.

Huse (2012) also added that all too often, impulse is the dominating factor in the selection of one's partner. The result of such hasty decision is often unsatisfactory leading to marital infidelity.

### **2.1.2 Imposition of Marriage Partners**

Imposition of marriage partners tends to create much havoc in marriage. Parents, especially the illiterate and poor ones give out their daughters in marriage when they are very young and unable to cope with family life. These teenage girls are at the mercy of their parents and their husbands. Love making is also new to them and they are forced to accepting whatever their parents and husbands may tell them.

This situation may lead to frustration and bickering especially when these teenagers see their mates who are still in school and move about without bounds.

On the part of the teenage boy, parental imposition of marriage partner is fraught with retardation. He becomes a father shouldering family responsibility. When he is overburdened with these enormous family responsibilities, he becomes aggressive to parents and wife and tries to free himself from the marriage look.

### **2.1.3 Sexual Incompatibility**

Little-White (2011) argued that as some partners age, there is often the need for young virile sexy lover. Men and women seek younger lovers to feel desirable and because their main partners may be sexually dysfunctional, or they have become complacent in sexual overturns and practices.

In longstanding relationships, the frequency of intensity and quality of the sexual contact often diminishes for many women, besides their recognition as a wife and mother, their sexual needs seek validation. In many instances, it is easy to develop an

intimate relationship with a younger colleague to camouflage time spent together in the affair. People misconstrue monogamy to mean a blank cheque for sexual escapades outside their matrimonial house. While some men have been known to wreck their houses by keeping late nights with lovers to the detriment of the family, their wives on the other hand, tend to pay back by joining the band wagon of fun seekers on the sex lust queue.

### **2.1.3 Childlessness**

Buss and Shackelford (2012) in a study also found out that childlessness among couples is one of the causes of marital infidelity. Childlessness is usually regarded as a tragedy to a married couple especially the wife. It causes a lot of domestic unhappiness, anxiety and ill health.

Buss and Shackelford (2012) reported that, traditionally children are of great importance to couples throughout Africa, because they are perceived by many as an affirmation of life, a sign of strength and an economic necessity. This is entrenched in our folklore, songs and adages like the Yoruba adage that says that *“children are the cloth of the body without children you are naked.”*

Continuing Buss and Shackelford (2012), said that in view of the importance of fertility to all societies, infertility has traditionally been a source of pain, anxiety and shame. And the more important children are to the society, the worse are the consequences to the infertile couple. Infertility is one of the factors militating against successful marriage and could lead either the man or the woman indulging in extramarital relationship, thereby causing infidelity.

### **2.1.4 Uncaring Attitude of a Partner**

Most marriage problems are as a result of the uncaring attitude of a partner in the family. The man as the head has to live up to the expectation of maintaining the home and in the situation where he cannot, the tendency is that the wife must look for a way of survival, and to maintain herself, therefore involving in infidelity.

He also agreed that household task should be shared between husband and wife equitably. Spouse feels bothered, tensed, worried, neglected, unhappy and frustrated if their partner expect more than they are willing to give, act like the only important person in the family and demand more compliance than they are willing to perform, the power division between husband and wife must be fair if the major decision does not manipulate behaviour hence the responsibilities are shared equally. If the household task is left for one partner, and without giving any assistance, the partner can take a decision of going outside to look for any other person who is ready to care and willing to assist.

### **2.1.5 Hopelessness**

Infidelity takes place when couples reach a point where they feel hopeless about things getting better in the relationship. Naturally, some will get depressed and resign themselves to the problem plaguing the relationship without seeking external

relationship. Such persons may be in a state of denial emotionally insulating partners from their own dissatisfaction that they become so vulnerable to temptations, surprising themselves when they end up having an affair.

Partners may fall prey to temptations because of a desire to prove their power and self-worth. Through sexual conquest women who have become sexually assertive in recent times are comfortable with initiating sexual contact.

Several women, frustrated with a partner who “cannot get it up” or who is sexually boring, find it exciting to turn on a man and become the dominant partner during intimacy. They also enjoy the fun of sexually conquering of the person of their desires in external affair. Hopelessness can occur when there is childlessness in the marriage and there is bound to be infidelity.

### **2.1.6 Depression**

This often manifests itself as boredom, lack of excitement and a feeling that life has little to offer. Depression is the result of hopelessness and unfulfilled expectations including sex. The partner is often blamed for problems in the relationship and subsequently looks for a high outside the relationship, ending up in an external relationship with someone who offers a shoulder on which to cry. There is often, despondency on one’s mate for happiness but some mates allow themselves to become dependent on their partner and will look outside the relationship for satisfaction when there seems to be little hope of finding emotional satisfaction in the current relationship.

### **2.1.7 Revenge**

Revenge is another reason why partners end up in external relationship with “if you can, I can” mentality as the notice. Jealousy, combined with anger and disappointment, are driving forces for affairs, commonly with a close friend of one of the partners.

Affairs are dangerous to an existing relationship as well as destructive to the individuals involved. Maintaining the secret and covering the tracks, living the double life; for example, dating your lover, going home to make love to your main partner and telling him or her “I love you” and other sweet words. Marriage and stable relationships become estranged because of disappointments, unfulfilled expectations, lack of trust and dishonesty.

Other causes of infidelity in marriage as pointed out by Buss and Shackelford (2012) is (1960) are:

### **2.1.8 Lack of Preparation for Marriage**

According to research and practitioner Burke (2003), most marriages go through at least three general stages of development: (1) romantic love; (2) disillusionment and distraction, and (3) dissolution adjustment with resignation, or adjustment with contentment. In the first stage of marriage, according to Larson, couples tend to be so caught up in passion and physical attraction that issues like sacrifice, selfishness, expectations, and crises are not faced or dealt with. When the honeymoon begins to wear



off, then these issues begin to influence and impact the relationship. Daily-life stressors and other crises often occur that require sacrifices to be made, selfishness to be checked and given up, and expectations to be discarded or modified. Such disillusionments and distractions can lead to less time spent together, less time spent on the relationship, a reduction in a couple's sex life, and sexual boredom.

Couples go through the courtship period thinking that everything will be perfect after they marry. They may have no special personality problems but are not prepared to face reality when it comes to building good husband-wife relationship. When they meet unanticipated problems in their marriage, they become discouraged and do not know how to handle the situation. In the process of looking for a better way of adjustment, each may end up in external affairs.

### **2.1.9 Parental Disapproval**

Parental disapproval is a strike against a marriage in that if parental opposition exists, whether or not it is justified, the young can hardly be unconscious of it no matter how independent they are. When adjustment's later have to be made in a marriage as happens in all marriage, the knowledge that the parents disapproved of the marriage may bolster the son or daughter in any unwillingness to make the necessary compromises. The son or daughter may think, it is probably as bad a marriage as my parents think it is, and we might as well call it off and quit rather than work his or her way through problems as would be done if everyone concerned believed the marriage to be a good one.

Also, Buss and Shackelford (2012) viewed marital infidelity as caused by: discrepancies in the attractiveness and mate value of the spouses, spousal personality, marital dissatisfaction, emotional stability and independent assessment of the couple's interaction quality.

Marital infidelity as caused by seduction by maids or dependent females in the norms. Familiarity with opposite sex at work or in the neighbourhood, promiscuous ladies and men whose eyes are full on adultery, useless visitations, unscriptural counselling, undue request for favour, gifts, helps like seeking likes in men's car, etc.

From the above it can be seen that marital infidelity has many factors that are cause of it and as a result exert some negative influences in home and families.

## **2.2 The Influence of Age on Infidelity among Couples**

Generally, there seems to be an equal basic towards the age of women and infidelity; nevertheless, young ladies still have more problems in their marriage due to their marital unfaithfulness as reviewed by Chike (2015) that younger women are likely candidates of marital infidelity than older women. According to him, 70 percent of infidelity among women is young ladies between the ages of 25 to 45 years. This view was supported by the American Associated Press (2016) that young women spend their 70 percent of time outside their home seeking for selfish gratification which in turn result into infidelity. The same is the case with Jaja (2002) who observed that older women who are fed with their mate do as well involve in the unfaithful relationship with another person.

However, Chike (2015) stated that whether old or young their attitude toward infidelity is the same, that age does not count because the cause of their action could be the same in nature.

The American Academy of Matrimonial lawyers, which conducted a study on infidelity states that infidelity is a way of life, they believe it is a diseases that cut across all levels of human beings, even the teenagers and the youths in their early sexual relationship does it. This seemed to be more accepted as cited by more experts like Harrey (1996).

Furthermore, having seen the opinion of different experts, it is believed that marital infidelity is not determined by age of an individual. Note that the above marital infidelity statistics of the prevalence of affairs were made more than five (5) years ago, based on changes in the society during the intervening years, the current percentage of the population who have had affairs is probably somewhat higher. For instance, the continuing increase of women in the work place and the increase of women that have affairs on the internet, shows that the number of women having affair has also increased.

### **2.3 The Influence of Educational Level on Infidelity Among Couples**

Experts like Atwood and Schwartz (2002) discovered that women education contribute to their being unfaithful to their partner. They said that “education of the work paid women, whether from personal experience or experimentation is a fact to marital infidelity that many who are exposed to variety of information could as well respond negatively through their actions. Atwood and Schwartz (2002) stated that most often, it is the education of women that gives them privilege to interact with different people.

Glass (2008) an expert in marital counselling stated that flexibility of women and their emotionality of feelings are still there to make most women what they are as well called “weaker vessels”, therefore with this their internal nature they are prone to infidelity outside their marriage. Furthermore, to educate this fact, they stated that the higher women go in their educational pursuit, the greater the chance of infidelity.

They also reviewed other forms of marital infidelity attributed to education of women as:

- 20 percent of women have used the internet to flirt.
- 25 percent of women have engaged in explicit online sexual conversation which results to reality.
- Evidence proves that there is a high correlation between on-line infidelity and subsequent real-time sexual affair.

### **2.4 The Influence of Number of Years in Marriage on Infidelity Among Couples**

Generally, there seems to be a consensus on length of marriage and infidelity. Nevertheless, young ladies have more problems in their marriage due to their marital unfaithfulness. As reviewed by Danfulari (2010), younger women are likely candidates of marital infidelity than older women. Danfulari (2010) believed that older women who feel unsatisfied with their husband after a longtime of marriage still involve in an

infidelity. The same is the case with Jaja (2002) that older women who are fed up with their mate do as well involve in the unfaithful relationship with another person no matter the length of marriage. Chike (2015) stated that whether old or young their attitude toward infidelity is the same that length of marriage does not count because the cause of their action could be the same. In nature many people seem to agree with Chike, as Cooper and Atkins (2005) survey showed that infidelity among women is a game for old or young because the meaning are the same, and also a disease that cut across all levels of human beings, which means that the length of marriage does not make any significant difference in the factors responsible for infidelity among young marriage women.

Length of marriage does not make any significant difference, hence young or old or small can commit the act of marital affairs even the teenagers and the youths in their early sexual or marital relationship do it.

The same record shows that old women of about 45 – 55 years who have no kids to care for spend much of their time outside their home seeking for selfish gratification which in turn results in marital infidelity.

One of the factors listed by Atwood and Schwartz (2002) was “culture”. According to him, culture influences women to think that they are meant to be taken care of by men, because of this; most women seek men with a large stock port folio outside their marital relationship.

Finally, having seen the opinion of different experts, it is believed that marital infidelity is not determined by the length of marriage of an individual. Therefore, whosoever that is guilty of it is guilty.

## **2.5 The Influence of Socio-Economic Background on Infidelity among Couples**

Experts in social psychology tend to attribute the increasing wave of infidelity to current economic recession playing most developing nations and its concomitant rise in the cost of essential goods and services, fall in the standard of living, inflation, unemployment, poverty and disease. This does not mean that infidelity is a disease of the third world nations; after all numerous literatures abound on incidence of marital distress in the United States of America.

One of the so-called developed nations Research Studies has it that in general the lower family income, the higher the rate of infidelity among couples. The effect of socio-economic factor on marriages compels one to a revisitation of the occupational issues in marriage. To this end, it becomes necessary to re-emphasize “what one does for living influences the chance that a marriage will end in unfaithfulness”. An examination of infidelity records in California assessed the risk of infidelity among professional groups. Force men, medical practitioners, and drivers had the highest rate of infidelity, while authors, social scientists and architects had the lowest.

This may not be unconnected with the employment status of the couple. Marriages in which both couples are periodically unemployed have higher rates of infidelity than when couples are steadily employed. The implication of these is that poor income, job

insecurity and other unfavourable occupational variables have a lot to do with the quality of marital satisfaction enjoyed by couples in the marital union.

Daily life experiences and common sense tend to confirm that when members of a given marriage or family lack enough financial resources for feeding, clothing and shelter, anger and frustration take the place of happiness and joy within the group while backbiting, nagging and grudges take the place of love and sharing. Under this condition, one can expect nothing less than infidelity in such marriage. Higher incomes for husband have been acknowledged to increase marital stability and happiness. Maurus (1995) stated that couples from both poor and rich home can also be engaged in infidelity. He further said that couples from poor background engaged in infidelity because of financial reasons while couples from rich background engaged in infidelity because of other factors such as: sexual incompatibility, childlessness, lack of preparation for marriage and peer influence, etc. Mba (2015) pointed that earnings have direct impact on family relations and that an increase in earning elevates the standard of living for the couples.

Most people, especially women go into marriage because of riches and wealth. Problem erupts when either of the spouses find out that the way it was glittering when viewed from outside, is not the same inside. By that, the marriage is no longer considered as having any binding power on parties concerned. Many couples marry because of financial reason without examining moral values. According to Onunga (1992), many people marry for wrong reasons and therefore, many couples do not love each other or are not even compatible.

Allen (1977) observed that for any marriage to be happy and successful, there should be trust among couples. This is because misunderstanding can set in and only communication can rectify or put such marriages back on the right paths.

In the home, as designed by God, the man is the head and the woman, a helper. The word of God made it clear in the Bible, in Ephesians 5:22 – 24 *“Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.”*

When a husband and wife love themselves, nothing, will make them to cheat on each other. Getting into any marital obligation without the necessary tools and skills does not make one a good couple or a successful marriage. Infidelity among couples is one of the most wrenching experiences a couple can endure. Infidelity erupts when either of the spouses find out that the way it was glittering when viewed from outside is not the same inside.

### **3. Reasons for Infidelity**

There are many reasons why Nigerian women will engage themselves in infidelity, some have been expressed below:

### **3.1 Ability to Deal with Changes**

Life throws changes at us almost every day. Most of us are able to deal with the small changes. But the bigger ones are tougher to deal with a serious illness in the family, death, loss of employment, financial loss, etc. Many turn to people, apart from their spouses to deal with such changes. They find more comfort in the arms of someone new, perhaps someone not connected to their tough circumstances in any way.

### **3.2 Personal Finances**

Difficulties in personal finances or lack of agreement on personal financial management can sometimes be the trigger for constant bickering with the four walls and at such a vulnerable time, anyone who gives a hearing to financial support might be certified for the game. Following the reasons for these problems which seems to be a threat to the unity of a family and the society in general, let us consider the concept of extramarital affairs in Igbo and Yoruba Culture.

### **3.3 Disagreements on Core Values**

Sometimes when you experience a tough situation in life, your core values are tested. And you have to make decisions which may not be palatable to your family — especially your spouse. Sometimes this could be the cause for irreconcilable differences, which triggers an extramarital affair.

### **3.4 Marriage**

It is the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law we considered as marriage. Formally arranged marriage goes through various experiences, thus requires careful handling of all the situations with patience and good understanding with related people which often become hampered. Another thing is people who marry in their early 20s would most likely have achieved some level of stability and social standing by their mid-30s. An interesting phenomenon is the deprivation of teenage relationship experience. This perceived feeling makes an individual careless enough to fall into an infidelity.

### **3.5 Sex**

Sex is perhaps one of the most important reasons, and it is an amalgamation of love and passion between two people. After a certain period, sex can become monotonous and if there is a lack of desire, passion, and romance in the relationship, then it may drive the person to seek it with someone else. Individuals with less self-control and deeper dissatisfaction of sexual desire have the common reason of intense sexual addiction to opposite sex as a fact of searching for extramarital relationship (Audu, 2016). Married for the wrong reasons Many people enter marriage for the wrong reasons like pressures from family and society. After a point, many people agree to marriage without even getting to know each other. High priority in searching always the best for himself or herself by an individual is another potential factor of causing extramarital relationship. Regardless of

the justification, even after being married, this poor tendency often creates emptiness to fill up which the individuals immediately get attracted to another person meeting their expectation and ultimately their previous relationship ends up.

### **3.6 Becoming Parents**

Newcomer parents experience rapid but practical changes in terms of pursuing responsibilities, changes in precedence order, time sharing, etc. The new environment requires tremendous efforts from the mother. Hence, incidences can be found where the male person may have perceived feeling of deprivation with less attention in terms of importance and can be driven to the involvement in infidelity in case of less consideration from the women.

### **3.7 Physical dissatisfaction**

It is the most penetrating issue for married persons' involvement in infidelity since fulfillment of sexual satisfaction remains as a key phenomenon to sustain physical relationship. Lack of sexual satisfaction ultimately causes expectation gap and married female were found highly sensitive to this issue in several previous studies. The same things can happen in case of male persons in terms of their desire to fulfill sexual discontent through making a new affair and procuring a more responsive partner.

### **3.8 Career Advancement**

Discord regarding the question of career and financial establishment is another pathetic reason but reality. It hampers economic solvency of a married couple and intensifies mismanagement of family finance issues triggering the onset of a continuous wrangling. After the effect of this volatile situation surely does not help the mutual cognitive understanding, as it constantly pressurizes the financial stability of the married couple. Long term impact of this issue creates acute scenario with severe conflict of intrinsic remorse and loyalty.

Need for excitement Human instinct is quite immeasurable, diversified, and it is impossible to fathom and predict the nature and depth of any desire. A result of which is the outbreak of an infidelity through searching for the opportunity of removing boredom, exhaustion as well as for recreation.

### **3.9 No Common Interests**

The role of negotiation and respect for each other's choice has no alternative to sustain peaceful coexistence in pursuing the conjugal life responsibilities. Any failure to recognize this fact and doing accordingly cause distortion the mutual interest and a sharp cut down in the personal time spending which can lead towards development of an infidelity after a certain period of time.

### **3.10 Self-esteem Problems**

Perceived recognition about self-esteem and cognition about individual's own behavioural aptitude requires balance to maintain sound level of personal judgment.

The apparent deprivation of being less or least loved by own husband or wife is a powerful phenomenon and can be easily driven by the feeling of deprivation of companionship and love from partner. Psychological deprivation is not an abstract phenomenon. Therefore, it is not possible to improve mental condition without positive conscience of the individual to overcome the threat of infidelity involvement.

### **3.11 Social Network**

The anonymity and easy availability of online dating now result in many more spouses looking for love outside marriage. In accordance with a recent survey of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML), for the last five (5) years, an astonishing scenario has been observed by the nation's 81% top divorce attorneys claiming that the easy availability of individual identity and contact in social media is the key promoter behind the rapid increase in divorce rate. Here Facebook remains as the undisputed pioneer with an awful 66% contribution to the online divorce evidence, according to the original source. Like Facebook, there are so many social websites where married persons can express themselves and seek for an extramarital relation. It is also important to consider the effects of infidelity among married couples as it lead to drop of relationship.

### **3.12 Effects of Infidelity among Married Women**

Psychologically speaking, only a small percentage of couples who experience infidelity can save their marriage after an affair and all marriage with infidelity do not end with divorce. According to Charny and Parnass, (1995), most of the studies about consequences of infidelity showed negative outcomes like: rage, lost of trust, decreased personal and sexual confidence, damaged self-esteem, fear of abandonment and surge of justification to leave the spouse. They also concluded that partners who divorce because of their spouse's infidelity experienced less depression than those who end their marriage for other reasons. The unfaithful spouse has initiated the divorce, but the faithful spouse is more likely to develop depression. When a person discovers a partner's infidelity, he should decide about forgiving the partner and remain together or end the relationship (Audu, 2016). He also found that men and women who face different adaptive problems over evolutionary history related to various types of infidelity have different reaction to partner's infidelity. It is more difficult for men to forgive a sexual infidelity than an emotional infidelity and they are more likely to end a current relationship following a partner's sexual infidelity.

Infidelity, regardless of the type, results in major conflicts in spouses' relationships. For social, cultural and psychological reasons, extramarital affairs may have different impacts on marital satisfaction and mental wellbeing for different couples Parental infidelity produces anxiety, confusion and distress among children It also increases the likelihood of adult children involving in marital betrayal themselves].

Infidelity has been associated with kinds of emotional responses and behaviors such as increased anxiety and depression, suicidal ideation, along threats of divorces and physical aggression. Schools also agreed that infidelity lead family conflict and distress. It may cause divorce, separation, and other family changes that its consequences are mental distress like anxiety in children.

Infidelity is highly undesirable in the marriage institution, and can negatively impact the level of trust between spouses. Infidelity is usually conducted in silence and therefore causes one partner to feel not only hurt, but also betrayed by the other. Infidelity happens in different social groups. A study showed when military couples are separated for long times, and have contact to the internet, it may not be odd for them to become emotionally engaged with cyber partners. Infidelity makes distress in partner intimacy and reduces relationship satisfaction in both spouses.

Further, the victims and doers of infidelity also frequently experience negative outcomes, for example decreased self-esteem, increased risk of mental health issues, shame and guilt feelings, and depression. Identifying psychological characteristics that may be associated with a risk of perpetrating infidelity may help interventions to better target at risk partners. Studies have shown that infidelity can have negative effects on the relationship, and may be the most fear and devastating experience threatening a marriage, which may lead to divorce.

Therefore, infidelity can display as a strong predictor of divorce. The impact of parental infidelity on children can vary based on the child's gender, age, and even culture. Children's' state of cognitive and emotional development during this sensitive period may inhibit or perpetuate the exercise of unilateral loyalty to a parent. It is also at this point we look at the counselling implications and recommendations as it will help us to counsel couples that are having infidelity problem in home.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Rapid increase of infidelity among married women in Nigerian with implications has been a major issue in some families. This indicates that infidelity is highly undesirable in the marriage institution, and can negatively impact the level of trust between the husband and wife. The individuals in a marriage are expected to enjoy a blissful relationship, but these expectations may not be realised when the marriage breaks down because of reasons which could be intolerance, infidelity, abuse, aggression, incompatibility amongst others. Members of the nuclear family especially the children are greatly affected by the consequences of infidelity at home. The attainment of marital stability could uniquely influence the quality of life of wedded couples than any other form of relationship. This makes issues of infidelity and faithfulness an important topic for researchers. However, the institution of marriage has for sometime been subjected to numerous challenges in recent times. Getting married is a lifetime experience that is often cherished and looked forward to but infidelity comes to break this harmony which often dash the beauty of marriage and subsequently lead to separation and divorce. The



challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary societal expectations have made some marriage to experience distress, frustrations and uncompromising experiences that have had negative implications on them. Consequently, marriage institutions need to employ the services of marital counselling as to handle infidelity cases in marriage.

#### **4.1 Implications for Counselling**

- 1) Pre-marital counselling should be provided for intending couples and also psychotherapeutic interventions should be made available to newlywed couple to help them develop necessary skills they could use to support the friendship, trust, affection and caring which they yearn for to overcome feelings of resentment, bitterness and rejection so as to become fulfilled in marriage.
- 2) In event of divorce resulting in infidelity, parents should be counselled to display an important role in easing the outcomes of divorce on children through helping to make a smooth transition for their children.
- 3) Counsellors should conduct regular workshops and seminars on marriage to help those families involved in marital infidelity to be aware of its consequences.
- 4) Pastoral counselling should be employed to help couples get out of infidelity and get close to God and also to make them to be aware of God's standard towards marriage.
- 5) Counsellors can employ self-management techniques in which the couples can be helped to apply self-monitoring on themselves. That is taking record of number of the time they get involved in infidelity, establishing a base line data and setting a goal on how to quit the undesirable behaviour. Gradual-reduction approach can also be employed by the counsellor.
- 6) Parents and children counselling should be encouraged on event of divorce through infidelity to avoid over compensation of their children. Parents should not compete for child loyalty with gifts and presents rather offer joint parenting and similar disciplinary styles.

#### **4.2 Recommendations**

- 1) Couples should consider marriage as an ordination by God and respect the sanctity of marriage. As such, newly wed couples should endeavour to be firm in their religious belief, be focused in their trust in God and be resolved to forgive each other's short coming, to make peace, love and stability reign in their family.
- 2) Couples should learn how to spend quality time together and avoid environmental cum self-centred distractive element that could cause disaffection in their marriage.
- 3) Couples should endeavour to be communicating their opinions about individual's actions in order to maintain stability of marriage and reduce risk of mental health problems.

- 4) They should be reduction in all negative interaction patterns and decrease marital stability both of which independently contribute to the development of infidelity and mental health problems.
- 5) Adequate communication skills which will enable couples to perform proficiently should be given by counsellors to couples, especially on how to handle unfaithfulness/ infidelity and infertility if such situation arises in marriage.
- 6) Marital counselling should be emphasized in handling infidelity and marital conflict in the homes. Couples should seek counselling services to help them rediscover their potentials and overcome their weaknesses so as to enjoy positive marital experiences.
- 7) Prospective couples should visit medical institutions for test running of their medical fitness before marriage.
- 8) Women should be able to harness the strength of their spouses in order to get the best marital relationship which can further result in marital fidelity and good mental health.
- 9) Couples should learn how to control their anxiety and avoid being unnecessarily anxious over the challenging experience of their transition into matrimony.
- 10) Government should establish counselling centres where couples with infidelity problems will be treated.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors whose names are listed below hereby disclose that they have no conflict of interest to declare and other potentially affiliation with or involvement in any organization or entity, including specifics or non-financial interest, relationships and affiliations in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscripts that could interfere with the publication of the article "Rapid Increase of infidelity amongst Married women in Nigeria: Causes and Effect" submitted and published under European Journal of Educational studies.

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