

EXTRA MARITAL BEHAVIOURS AND FAMILY INSTABILITY AMONG MARRIED PEOPLE IN OWERRI EDUCATION ZONE, IMO STATE.

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Abstract

This correlational survey study investigated the relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability among married people in Owerri Education Zone, Imo State. Four research questions and three null hypotheses tested at .05 level of significance guided the study. Using Multi-Stage Sampling technique, 450 respondents were sampled from the total population of 603588 married people in Owerri Education Zone. The instruments for data collection was a researcher structured questionnaire titled Extra Marital Behaviours and Family Instability Questionnaire (EBFIQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. This instrument was trial tested and Cronbach Alpha reliability statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and an overall reliability Co-efficient value of 0.80 was obtained. The major findings of the study indicated that both married men and women exhibited various forms of extra marital behaviours, it also showed that inability of husbands in providing family needs, husband initiating sex always among others were factors responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviours among couples, and that there is a significant relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability, among others. Based on the findings and implications of this study, the researcher recommended among others, that husband and wife should respect their marriage vows to avoid extra marital behaviours that may ruin their families.

Key Words: Extra Marital Behavior, Family Instability and Married People.

Introduction

Marriage is one of the oldest institutions associated with human society. It is one that has repeatedly been emphasized in every society and constitutes the yardstick for the determination of responsibility in the families. Society prescribes the duties associated with and governing the institution of marriage

to ensure that the children born into the families are well trained, fed and protected. According to Addai (2015) marriage is a legitimate way of establishing close romantic relationship between two or more people. Nwoye (2014) pointed out that it is a sacred and permanent contract which is enacted when two people decide on their own volition to express their love and sharing of access with each other for the purpose of growth and welfare of each other in marital life; to fulfill their promise in the present of witness especially during wedding. Furthermore, Nwoye explained that marriage is the social approved sexual union of two or more people for the purpose of procreation in the society. Thus, marriage is a union between a man and a woman as husband and wife for the purpose of procreation and establishment of a family or families.

Whenever marriage takes place in any particular setting, the husband and wife will then live together and enter into marital relationship, which is meant for procreation and satisfaction of urge, love, feelings and desire. The sexual intercourse involve in it will then turn the partners into one flesh, forming a union and this will strengthen the marital status by sealing it, constituting it and making it fruitful for the glory of God and for human appreciation (Harmon, 2012). Therefore from this union of husband and wife comes up the children which make up the family.

Family is the most important primary group and the smallest social unit in any particular society. It has its roots in the human biological and physical nature. It is universal in the sense that no human society exists or has existed without some form of family organization. Family is any group of people who interact and communicate with each others such as husband, wife and children in organizational settings (Akubue & Okolo, 2016). It is also the primary institution that socializes and protects the behaviours of the young ones and their parents. Okorodudu (2012) stated that, it is the role of the family to see that the child is nurtured and shielded from all forms of physical, mental, social attack and see to the growth and development of the child in the society. In the context of this study therefore family is a group of people who are united for the purpose of living together as husband and wife with children and other members such as siblings, uncles and grandparents each exhibiting the appropriate behaviour accepted by the culture.

Behaviour is the action of human being under specified circumstances (Farlex, 2012). Behaviour is any activity of an organism which is either overt or covert towards a particular event or situation. Overt behaviour is one that can be observed and is frequently recorded, while covert behaviour is one that is concealed and done secretly (Essuman, Nwaogu & Nwachukwu, 2015). Behaviour is the response of an organism to both internal and external stimuli, which may be observable or inferred. Thus, behaviour is any change in life space which is subject to psychological laws; the change may be in relation to location of a person and his environment, or a restructuring of his person including any change in valence of any part of his life space. There are behaviours that are appropriate in marital relationship such as having sex, fondling of breast, deep kissing among others; which becomes extra marital if exhibited outside marriage and can cause problems like quarrelling, fighting among couples.

Extra marital behaviour is the violation of set rules or relationship norms expected of married people, which results in feelings of sexual jealousy and rivalry. The violation can be sexual in nature, for example kissing, fondling or having sex with another individual outside of the relationship (Leeker & Carlozz 2012). Schneider, (2015) stated that it is a relationship between a person and someone other than his spouse that has an impact on the level of intimacy, emotional distance and over all dynamic balance in the marriage. Modie-moroka, (2016) has it that people who engage in extra marital behaviours are at high risk for Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) infection and transmission. Extra marital behaviour is therefore the violation of the marriage vows made in the presence of witnesses to be faithful to one's husband or wife, it can be sexual or non sexual in nature. Extra marital behaviours have been one of the social problems resulting from hazardous life style though it has many forms; it deals with all sexual relations outside marriage in every life endeavour. (Bucher & Trotter, 2011).

There are many factors that lead to and increase the likelihood of anyone engaging in extra marital behaviours. Such factors include exhibiting sexually permissive attitude, being educated, living in an

urban center, less religious, poor communication and self esteem problems among others (Feldman & Cauffman, 2013). Blow and Hartnett, (2016) stated that marital problems and being too older than one's spouse are also other factors that cause and affect the likelihood of one being involved in an extra marital behaviour.

Extra marital behaviour exposes spouses to a lot of physiological, sociological and psychological problems that may lead to family instability (Obi, 2012). Physiological problems are concern with such basic activities that take place in living organisms (married people) during the performance of life functions such as reproduction, growth among others. In this effect, extra martial behaviour predisposes married people to the risk of contacting sexually transmitted infections like gonorrhea, syphilis, Human Immuno Virus, Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome and candidiasis among others as a result of increased rate of hotels in the area which lure married people into unprotected sex with multiple partners especially in Owerri education zone of Imo state. All these reproductive tract infection can lead to infertility (Obi, 2012). Furthermore, Obi explained that Human Immuno Virus and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome is a deadly disease which has become a challenge to the whole world in general. Obi further noted that unwanted pregnancy may result from this, thereby leading to abortion with its complications or even death, on the other hand, an illegitimate child is born.

Instability is a mental condition in which somebody's behaviour is likely to change suddenly (Hornby, 2010). It is the quality or a state of being inconsistent, unstable, lack of reality or firmness in any particular setting. An unstable family therefore is a family characterized by inconsistence, distress, crisis, absence of rule, delinquent adults and children, inefficient performance of functions expected of families which in often cases lead to family instability.

Family instability is a social evil which has adverse effect on both parties concerned and the society; however this study is concerned with the instability in every family. According to Ackerman, Kogos, Youngstrom, Schoof and Izard, (2014) family instability is viewed as an aggregate of several kinds of events that challenge the daily continuity and cohesiveness of family life. Lansky, (2015) pointed out that family instability therefore involves any misunderstanding among married people. Lansky indicated that when same pattern of disputes occur repeatedly and there are no new ways of dealing with them, the tendency is that instability creeps in to threaten the entire relationship thereby resulting in quarrels, sighing, fighting, decline in levels of affection and consistent rejection of food among others, which are the indicators of family instability. In the context of this study family instability is any quarrel, poor communication, fighting, frowning and refusal to eat food cooked by spouse among others that challenges the daily cohesiveness of the spousal relationship in the family. It can result in dissolution of social roles, as husband or wife fail to perform their expected family roles as promised on wedding day despite the length of marriage.

Length of marriage is the measurement or extent to which formal or legal union of husband and wife (marriage) has lasted and a vital issue in this study. According to Ambarekederemo, (2015) it is an important predictor of extramarital behaviours and family instability hence some married people, not minding the gender (husband or wife) who have stayed long in marriage shift love, for their spouse to children there by exposing their spouse to dangers of seeking comfort outside marriage.

Gender is the socially learned behaviours and expectation associated with males and females. Polland and Morgan (2012) in a related explanation, conceptualized gender to mean the socially constructed behavioural expectations for male and female, as well as the rights and obligations granted to them by the society. However, gender describes the biological sex of individuals in terms of being male or female. Azikiwe (2013) is in agreement with this position. Thompson (202) opined that gender is an important variable to consider in any investigation of extra marital behaviours and family instability. A study conducted by Amaro (2015) showed that males engaged in extra marital behaviour than females. Marriage is meant not only to be a sacred and permanent union between husband and wife but also a socially approved union between husband and wife for the purposes of marital intimacy, sexual relationship, procreation and socialization of children who will eventually contribute their quota to the society. Implicitly, exhibition of extra marital behaviour is not part of the things expected in marital

relationship of couples. In recent times, there has been public outcry against the alarming rate of extramarital behaviour among married people. Mass media, government and the society at large have frowned at the occurrences of marital behaviours, such as extramarital sex, kissing and romancing among others. These have predisposed married people to the risk of contracting reproductive tract infections like Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) which results in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) when fully blown and other sexually transmitted diseases like Syphilis, gonorrhea among others. These diseases not only threaten family stability but also expose children to unhealthy behaviours such as prostitution, aggressiveness, drunkenness to mention a few.

It is worrisome to observe that married people still indulge in extra marital behaviours despite its negative effects on the health of their family members and the society at large. The researcher was poised to ask: why do married people still indulge in extra marital behaviours? Could it be that married people are lacking some fundamental needs in family relationship which they seek to satisfy from external sources? It is in view of these concerns that this study was carried out.

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability among married people in Owerri Education zone of Imo State Nigeria. Specifically the study

1. Identified forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women in Owerri education zone, Imo state.
2. Determined forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women in Owerri education zone, Imo state based on length of marriage.
3. Ascertained factors responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviours by married people in Owerri education zone, Imo state.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adapted a correlational survey design. Correlational survey design according to Nworgu, (2015), is a research design that is interested in establishing the relationship between two or more variables in relation to the population. This research design was chosen because it provides the researcher the opportunity of sampling the opinions of a number of the population considered significant to determine if relationship exists between the independent variable (Extra marital behaviour) and the dependent variable (family instability).

The study was carried out in Owerri education zone of Imo state. Owerri Education zone is made up of nine (9) Local Government Area –Aboh Mbaise, Ahiazu Mbaise, Ezinihitte Mbaise, Ikeduru, Mbaitolu, Ngor-okpala, Owerri municipal, Owerri north, and Owerri west. This area is a cosmopolitan zone which houses many colleges and universities. The choice of this area of study is based on the observed increasing rate of extra marital activities of married person as well as marriage discord among married couple in the study areas.

The population of this study comprised 603,588 married people living in the nine local government's areas in Owerri Education zone of Imo state. (Sources: Imo state Bureau for Statistics, (BFS), 2013). The sample for this study comprised 450 married people. A multi stage sampling procedure was adopted to arrive at the sample size. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select three Local Government Areas (L.G.As) in the zone. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in order to give every L.G.As equal opportunity of being selected. In the second stage, purposive sampling procedure was used to select three communities each from the three local government areas randomly selected. In the third stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to select fifty married people in each of the communities randomly selected. Thus, arriving at the 450 stated married people. The instruments that was used for collecting data ARE questionnaire titled "Extra Marital Behaviours (EMQ) and Family Instability Questionnaire" (EBFIQ). The questionnaires were developed by the researcher and generated from the background and literature review.

The questionnaire is made up of three parts. Part A elicits information on the demography of respondents such as gender and length of marriage. Part B contains 30 items put into three clusters. Cluster one, contains 10 items which elicit information on forms of extramarital behaviours exhibited by married people. Cluster two also contains 10 items which focus on the factors responsible for

exhibition of extra marital behaviours. Cluster three, contains 10 items which elicit information on indicators of family instability. The items in cluster one, two and three are placed on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), which was weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Research Question 1

What forms of extra marital behaviours are exhibited by married men and women in Owerri Education zone, Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and standard deviation of respondents on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women.

S/N	Item Statements Forms of Extra-marital Behaviours	Men: n = 157			Women: n = 293		
		X ₁	SD ₁	DEC ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	DEC ₂
1.	Deep kissing with people other than your husband or wife	3.66	0.76	A	3.52	1.02	A
2.	Folding of breast with people other than your husband and wife	3.75	0.78	A	3.47	1.04	A
3.	Dancing closely with people other than your husband and wife	3.30	0.69	A	3.33	0.93	A
4.	Having sexual affair with people other than your husband and wife	3.83	0.70	A	3.52	1.08	A
5.	Touching of sensitive body parts in other to arouse people other than your partner	3.70	0.6	A	3.47	1.04	A
6.	Prolonged hugging of people other than your partner	3.62	0.69	A	3.37	1.01	A
7.	Using eye contact to share deep affection for people other than your partner	3.43	0.79	A	3.38	0.99	A
8.	Having oral sex with people other than your husband or wife	3.55	0.74	A	3.09	0.96	A
9.	Having casual sex with people other than your husband or wife	3.60	0.88	A	3.25	1.21	A
10.	Chatting with people other than your husband or wife	2.41	1.18	A	2.17	1.24	A
	Custer mean	3.49	0.52	A	3.26	0.81	A

X₁ = mean, SD₁ Standard Deviation, DEC₁ = Decision.

Result on table 1 showed the mean and standard deviations of respondents on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people in Owerri education zone. Result shows that items 1 – 9 had mean ratings of 3.66, 3.75, 3.30, 3.83, 3.70, 3.62, 3.43, 3.55 and 3.60 for men and 3.52, 3.47, 3.33, 3.52, 3.47, 3.37, 3.38, 3.09 and 3.25 for women respondents. Since the mean values are above 2.50 set as criterion level, this means that both men and women agreed that the items are forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people in Owerri education zone; However, only item 10 with mean of 2.41 and 2.17 for men and women respectively showed they are below the set criterion of 2.50. This implies that the respondents disagreed with those items being forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women in Owerri education zone.

Research Question 2

What forms of extra marital behaviours are exhibited by married men and women in Owerri Education zone, Imo state based on length of marriage?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and standard deviation of respondents on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women based on length of marriage.

S/N	Item Statements Factors responsible for exhibition of Extra marital Behaviours	Men: n = 157			Women: n = 293		
		X ₁	SD ₁	DEC ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	DEC ₂
11.	Deep kissing with people other than your husband or wife	3.10	1.20	A	0.80	0.99	A

12.	Folding of breast with people other than your husband or wife	2.80	1.23	A	0.74	0.98	A
13.	Dancing closely with people other than your husband or wife	2.98	0.91	A	0.73	1.00	A
14.	Having sexual affair with people other than your husband or wife	3.05	1.41	A	0.81	1.06	A
15.	Touching of sensitive body parts in other to arouse people other than your partner	2.95	1.30	A	0.77	0.96	A
16.	Prolonged hugging of people other than your partner	2.76	1.07	A	0.76	0.92	A
17.	Using eye contact to share deep affection for people other than your partner	2.56	1.00	A	0.79	0.93	A
18.	Having oral sex with people other than your husband or wife	3.15	1.29	A	0.79	0.99	A
19.	Having casual sex with people other than your husband or wife	2.76	1.39	A	1.01	1.13	A
20.	Chatting with people other than your husband or wife	2.56	1.02	A	1.22	1.11	A
	Custer mean			A			A

X₁ = mean, SD₁ Standard Deviation, DEC₁ = Decision.

Result on table 2 showed the mean and standard deviations of respondents on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people in Owerri education zone based on length of marriage. The cluster mean of 2.87, 3.49 and 3.14 for respondents that have length of marriage below 10 years, 10years to 20 years and 21 years to 30 years respectively showed that all the items on table 1 are forms of extra marital behaviour exhibited by married people in Owerri education zone. This is because the mean values are greater than 2.50 set as criterion level. Only people who are married between 10 to 20 years disagreed that Chatting with people other than your husband or wife is a form of extra marital behaviour exhibited by married people. This is because the mean value of 1.99 is less than 2.50.

Research Question 3

What factors are responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviors by married people in Owerri Education zone?

Table 3: Mean Ratings and standard deviation of respondents on factors responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviors.

S/N	Item Statements Indicators of Family Instability	Men: n = 157			Women: n = 293		
		X ₁	SD ₁	DEC ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	DEC ₂
21.	Lack of good communication between the husband and wife	3.10	1.20	A	0.80	0.99	A
22.	Childlessness in marriage	2.80	1.23	A	0.74	0.98	A
23.	Inability of the husband to provide for the family	2.98	0.91	A	0.73	1.00	A
24.	Quarreling or fighting between husband and wife	3.05	1.41	A	0.81	1.06	A
25.	Husband or wife living in different locations	2.95	1.30	A	0.77	0.96	A
26.	Incompatibility in educational level	2.76	1.07	A	0.76	0.92	A
27.	Inability of the husband or wife to satisfy each other sexually	2.56	1.00	A	0.79	0.93	A
28.	The husband initiating sex always	3.15	1.29	A	0.79	0.99	A
29.	Husband and wife having specified time for sex	2.76	1.39	A	1.01	1.13	A
30.	Non involvement of the wife or husband in decision making	2.56	1.02	A	1.22	1.11	A
	Custer mean			A			A

X₁ = mean, SD₁ Standard Deviation, DEC₁ = Decision.

Result on table 3 showed the mean and standard deviations of respondents on factors responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviours by married people in Owerri education zone. Result shows that all the items except item 16 for both men and women had mean ratings above 2.50 set as criterion level. Since the mean values are above 2.50. The means that all the respondents (both men and women) agreed that the following are factors responsible for extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people with the cluster mean of 2.94 and 3.02. However, the women disagreed that husband and wife having

specified time for sex is a factor responsible for extra marital behaviour. Also, both men and women disagreed that incompatibility in educational level is a factor responsible for extra marital behaviours.

Discussion of Findings

With reference to research question one, which dealt with the forms of extramarital behaviours, the respondents held the view that deep kissing, fondling of breast, dancing closely with people, having sexual affair, touching of sensitive body parts, prolonged hugging, using eye contact to share deep affection, having oral sex, having casual sex, and chatting with people were forms of extra marital behaviour. However, the result showed that chatting with people other than the husband or wife was not a form of extra marital behaviour. These findings are interesting as they are in consonance with early findings of Leeker and Carlozz (2012) which showed that, the above except chatting with people other than ones husband or wife are forms of extra marital behaviours.

The t- test analysis of the men and women on forms of extra marital behaviour exhibited by married people showed that the calculated t- value of 3.19 with the associated probability value of 0.004 is less than 0.05. There is a significant difference between the mean ratings of men and women on forms of extra marital behaviors exhibited by married people with the men having slightly higher mean rating. This is because their male reproductive organs are external

The Findings of the study as reflected in table 2 dealt on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married men and women based on length of marriage, the respondents held the views that deep kissing, fondling of breast, dancing closely with people, having sexual affair, touching of sensitive body parts, prolonged hugging, using eye contact to share deep affection, having oral sex, having casual sex and chatting with other people other than the husband or wife are extra marital behaviours often been exhibited by married people despite the length of marriage. However, people who are married between 10-20 years disagreed that chatting with people other than the husband or wife is a form of extra marital behaviours. The findings also agree with the findings of World Health Organization W.H.O, (2011) which showed that length of marriage has influence on forms of extra marital behaviours. The Anova analysis of the forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people based on length of marriage showed that f-ratio of 20.612 with the value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. There is a significant difference on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people based on length of marriage with those between 10 years to 20 years of marriage having slightly higher mean rating.

The findings of the study in items 11-20 state as follows, lack of good communication, childlessness, inability of the husband to provide for the family, quarrelling, living in different locations, incompatibility in educational level, inability of the husband or wife to satisfy each other sexually, husband initiating sex always, having specified time for sex, non involvement of the wife or husband in decision making shows that the items are factors responsible for exhibition of extra marital behaviours by married people. However, respondents disagreed that husband and wife having specified time for sex and incompatibility in educational level is a factor responsible for the exhibition of extra marital behaviour by married people. The findings agreed with the findings of Anyanwu and Offordile, (2012) which showed that, the above except having a specified time for sex and educational incompatibility are factors responsible for extra marital behaviours.

The findings of the study in items 1 –10 and 21-30 were used to answer this research question 4. Items 1-10 has been listed in the findings of research question one, so items 21-30 state as follows, refusal to eat food cooked by spouse, using dangerous items in fighting spouse, husband or wife keeping late night, attending of social activities without spouse, poor communication, husband and wife not going together for recreational activities, sexual withdrawal from the spouse, non involvement of spouse in family roles, non exhibition of affection to spouse's health problems. This reveals that there is moderate relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability. The findings agreed with the findings of Mbiti, (2016) which showed that family instability is one of the consequences of extra marital behaviours among married people. The regression analysis of the relationship between extra

marital behaviours and family instability shows that an f-ratio of 155.367 with the value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. There is significant relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability.

Conclusions

The researcher therefore conclude that;

Both married men and women in Owerri Education Zone exhibited all forms of extra marital behaviour except chatting with people other than ones husband or wife.

Married men and women in Owerri Education Zone exhibited all forms of extramarital behaviour despite their length of marriage.

Inability of the husband to provide for the family, husband initiating sex always among others are factors responsible for extramarital behaviours among married people in Owerri Education Zone.

There is moderate relationship between extra marital behaviours and family instability in Owerri Education Zone.

There is a significant difference between mean ratings of men and women on forms of extra marital behaviours exhibited by married people with the men having slightly higher mean rating.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the educational implications the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should sponsor professional Guidance Counsellors in conducting Seminars and workshops all year round for married people informing them on the dangers of extra marital behaviours.
2. Married people should be reminded often of the vow they made on their wedding day and religious leaders should also give proper counselling to the spouse before marriage (Premarital counselling) so as to avoid cheating on each other.
3. The government in collaboration with National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) should announce regularly through radio, television and newspapers the increasing rate of general diseases due to extra marital behaviours in Owerri education Zone.

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