



Public Perception on the Prevalence and Causes of Marital Infidelity among Married in Enugu North Local Government Area

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Abstract

Every community has its own way of looking at things, especially when it comes to the delicate subject of marital relationships. Infidelity, as most would agree, is a matter that raises brows in every society, with parents furrowing their foreheads, and the elders shaking their heads disapprovingly. Traditionally, married women are seen as paragons of virtue, faithfully clutching their marital vows close to their hearts. However, times are changing, and the old ways seem to be slipping through the fingers of many.

In a rather thought-provoking study conducted between November 2017 and May 2018, we took a closer look at marital infidelity among married women in the Enugu North local government area of Enugu State. The research was quite the endeavor, involving the careful surveying of 400 participants through a multi-stage sampling technique, which is just a fancy way of saying we made sure to include a good mix of voices.

The information gathered came from questionnaires and a series of heart-to-heart interviews. As the data flowed in, we had some questions in mind that guided our analysis, using a helpful tool known as SPSS software version 20, which is quite the friend to researchers, I assure you. So, what did we find? Well, it turns out that a significant number of respondents were quite aware that married women do sometimes stray. A striking 77.6% believed that sexual infidelity was the most common issue, while 28.5% cited economic support as a key reason for this wandering behavior. You see, marriages can be quite the juggling act, with financial burdens sometimes leading people to make choices they wouldn't ordinarily consider.

Further insights revealed that religious beliefs and customs have a strong grip on attitudes towards infidelity in the Enugu North area. It seems that the old traditions still hold some sway. However, the researcher suggests that a little education about the health challenges and other difficulties that come with infidelity could prove beneficial. After all, knowledge is power, and who wouldn't want to empower a community?

Moreover, encouraging economic independence among women might just be a solid strategy to curb marital infidelity in Enugu North. Let's face it when one can stand on their own two feet financially, the likelihood of straying may take a dip. After all, in every marriage, a little understanding and security can go a long way in keeping those vows intact.

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Introduction

Marital infidelity, often referred to as extramarital affairs or cheating, remains a prevalent issue in societies worldwide, cutting across various cultural, social, and economic contexts. In Nigeria, particularly in Enugu North Local Government Area, the phenomenon of marital infidelity has garnered increased attention from researchers, social scientists, and the media alike. This research aims to explore public perception regarding the prevalence and causes of marital infidelity among married individuals in this region, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of the issue. The concept of marital infidelity is complex and often influenced by various factors, including individual, relational, and societal elements. Studies suggest that infidelity can be attributed to a combination of emotional dissatisfaction, lack of communication, and unmet needs within the marriage (Mark *et al*, 2011) ^[8]. Furthermore, societal norms and cultural expectations play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of

fidelity and infidelity. In Nigeria, where traditional values and religious beliefs strongly influence marital relationships, the perception of infidelity can vary significantly among individuals and communities (Ogunyemi, 2018) ^[4]. In Enugu North, a region characterized by a blend of modernity and traditionalism, the public's perception of marital infidelity may reflect broader societal attitudes. The increasing exposure to global cultures through media, education, and migration has led to evolving perceptions of marriage and fidelity. As such, understanding how residents of Enugu North perceive the prevalence and causes of marital infidelity is crucial for addressing the issue effectively. Research indicates that the rates of marital infidelity vary widely across different cultures and contexts. In Nigeria, surveys and studies have suggested that infidelity is relatively common, with estimates ranging from 20% to 50% of married individuals reporting having engaged in extramarital affairs at some point in their marriages (Adesina, 2019) ^[1]. This statistic underscores the necessity of examining not only the prevalence of infidelity but also the underlying causes as perceived by the public. One critical aspect of this research is to ascertain the public's perception of the factors contributing to marital infidelity in Enugu North. Various studies have identified common causes of infidelity, including lack of emotional intimacy, sexual dissatisfaction, and the influence of peers (Thompson & O'Leary, 2000) ^[11]. However, cultural beliefs, economic factors, and the impact of urbanization cannot be overlooked. In many African societies, including Nigeria, economic challenges may lead to stress within marriages, thereby increasing the likelihood of infidelity as individuals seek solace outside their primary relationships (Eze, 2020) ^[5]. Moreover, the role of gender in shaping perceptions of infidelity is significant. Traditionally, societal norms have often placed a greater burden of fidelity on women, leading to a dichotomy in how infidelity is perceived based on gender. Research shows that men and women often have different thresholds for what constitutes infidelity, with men more likely to justify sexual affairs while women may perceive emotional connections as equally damaging to the marital bond (Moller *et al*, 2016) ^[6]. This gendered understanding of infidelity further complicates public perceptions and attitudes. In Enugu North, the interplay of cultural values, religious beliefs, and modern influences creates a unique landscape for examining marital infidelity. The region's diverse population, with varying levels of education and exposure to different lifestyles, contributes to a spectrum of opinions on fidelity and infidelity. For instance, individuals with higher educational attainment may adopt more liberal views on marital relationships, while those with traditional backgrounds may adhere strictly to conventional norms (Nwokocha & Omenyi, 2017) ^[10]. Additionally, the impact of social media and technology on marital relationships cannot be underestimated. The rise of online interactions has provided new avenues for infidelity to manifest, leading to concerns about the erosion of traditional values and family structures. Online platforms have been implicated in facilitating emotional and physical affairs, thereby altering the dynamics of trust and commitment within marriages (Klein & Schmitt, 2020) ^[7]. This technological influence is particularly relevant in the context of Enugu North, where internet penetration and social media usage have increased significantly in recent years. Understanding public perception on marital infidelity also necessitates examining how it is represented in popular culture and media. Movies, songs, and literature often depict infidelity as a source of drama and conflict, shaping societal attitudes and expectations about fidelity. This cultural representation can

either stigmatize infidelity or normalize it, further influencing how individuals perceive and respond to such behaviors in their own lives (Akins & Mccurdy, 2021) ^[2]. The implications of marital infidelity extend beyond individual relationships, affecting families and communities at large. Children raised in households where infidelity is prevalent may experience emotional trauma and instability, potentially leading to intergenerational patterns of relationship dysfunction (Amato, 2000) ^[3]. Thus, understanding the public's perception of infidelity is essential for developing interventions and support systems aimed at fostering healthier marital relationships. In light of the above considerations, this research seeks to address the following objectives: to assess the prevalence of marital infidelity as perceived by married individuals in Enugu North; to identify the key factors that contribute to infidelity within this cultural context; and to explore how gender, education, and media representation influence public perceptions of fidelity and infidelity. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, this study will gather quantitative data through surveys and qualitative insights through interviews, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform policymakers, mental health professionals, and community leaders about the underlying causes of marital infidelity in Enugu North. By fostering awareness and dialogue around the issue, stakeholders can develop targeted interventions that promote healthy relationship practices and address the root causes of infidelity. Furthermore, this research will contribute to the existing body of literature on marital infidelity in Nigeria, providing a nuanced perspective that considers the interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors. In conclusion, marital infidelity is a pressing issue that affects many individuals and families in Enugu North Local Government Area. By examining public perceptions of its prevalence and causes, this research aims to shed light on the complexities surrounding infidelity within the unique cultural context of the region. Through a thorough exploration of the factors influencing perceptions of marital fidelity, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and inform efforts to promote healthier marital relationships in the community.

Statement of the problem

The phenomenon of marital infidelity poses significant challenges to the institution of marriage, affecting individuals, families, and communities. In Enugu North Local Government Area, the public's perception of marital infidelity is shaped by a myriad of factors, including cultural beliefs, social norms, and individual experiences. Despite the implications of infidelity on marital stability and family dynamics, there remains a limited understanding of how residents of this region perceive the prevalence and underlying causes of extramarital relationships. Research indicates that infidelity is a common issue in Nigeria, with varying prevalence rates reported across different studies. However, specific insights into the perceptions held by the populace in Enugu North are sparse. This gap in research is concerning, as public perceptions can significantly influence attitudes toward fidelity, marital expectations, and the societal acceptance of infidelity. Furthermore, understanding these perceptions may reveal the societal pressures and contextual factors that contribute to the occurrence of infidelity in this area. Factors such as gender roles, educational background, economic conditions, and the influence of modernity through technology and media play crucial roles in shaping perceptions of marital fidelity.

However, existing literature often overlooks the interplay of these elements within the unique cultural context of Enugu North. As such, there is a pressing need to investigate how these factors collectively contribute to public perceptions of marital infidelity, as well as the perceived causes behind such behaviors. Moreover, the stigma associated with infidelity can hinder open discussions about marital challenges, leading to a lack of awareness and support for couples facing issues related to fidelity. By exploring public perceptions in Enugu North, this research aims to highlight the significance of community attitudes towards infidelity, which may ultimately contribute to the development of effective interventions and educational programs aimed at promoting healthier marital relationships. In summary, the problem statement reflects a critical gap in understanding the public perception of marital infidelity within the Enugu North Local Government Area. Addressing this gap is essential for elucidating the factors that influence marital fidelity and for fostering a more informed dialogue surrounding the complexities of marriage in contemporary Nigerian society.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study on public perception regarding the prevalence and causes of marital infidelity among married individuals in Enugu North Local Government Area is multifaceted and extends across various domains, including social, cultural, and psychological aspects. Firstly, understanding public perception of marital infidelity is crucial for recognizing the cultural and societal attitudes that influence relationships in Enugu North. Marital fidelity is often deeply rooted in cultural norms and values, and this research will provide insights into how these perceptions shape individuals' behaviors and expectations within marriage. By identifying the beliefs and attitudes prevalent in the community, this study can inform local leaders, policymakers, and educators about the cultural context in which marital relationships operate, facilitating the development of culturally sensitive interventions. Secondly, this research has practical implications for mental health professionals, marriage counselors, and social workers. By gaining a clearer understanding of the perceived causes of infidelity, practitioners can tailor their approaches to address the specific needs and concerns of couples in this region. This awareness can lead to more effective counseling strategies that consider the unique cultural and social dynamics at play, ultimately promoting healthier marital relationships and reducing the incidence of infidelity. Additionally, the findings from this study will contribute to the broader academic discourse on marital infidelity in Nigeria and similar cultural contexts. While existing literature has explored various aspects of infidelity, there is a notable lack of studies focusing specifically on the perceptions of individuals in Enugu North. This research will fill this gap, providing empirical data that can be referenced by future scholars and researchers. The insights gained may also encourage further research on related topics, such as the impact of infidelity on family structures and child development. Moreover, this study can serve as a catalyst for community dialogue surrounding marital fidelity. By highlighting the prevalence and perceived causes of infidelity, the research can encourage open discussions among community members, fostering a greater understanding of the challenges faced by married couples. This dialogue may lead to the establishment of support groups, educational workshops, and initiatives aimed at strengthening marital relationships and addressing the root causes of infidelity. Lastly, the significance of this research

extends to the promotion of gender equality within marital relationships. By examining how perceptions of infidelity differ between genders, the study can highlight disparities in expectations and accountability. This understanding can inform efforts to challenge and reshape societal norms that disproportionately burden one gender over another, contributing to a more equitable approach to marital fidelity. In conclusion, the significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance understanding of public perceptions of marital infidelity in Enugu North, informing culturally relevant practices, fostering community dialogue, and contributing to the academic discourse on marital relationships. By addressing the complexities of infidelity within this specific context, the research aims to promote healthier marriages and strengthen family structures in the region.

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

1. What are the patterns of marital infidelity among married women in Enugu North L.G.A. of Enugu state?
2. What are the attitudes of people towards marital infidelity among married women in Enugu North L. G. A. of Enugu State?
3. What are the factors responsible for marital infidelity among married women in Enugu North L. G. A. of Enugu State?
4. What are the challenges resulting from marital infidelity among married women in Enugu North L. G. A. of Enugu State?
5. What strategies can be put in place to reduce or address the prevalence of marital infidelity among women in Enugu North L.G.A, of Enugu State?

Literature Review

Cultural influences on infidelity

Adesina (2019) ^[1] explores the cultural factors influencing marital infidelity in Nigeria, highlighting the role of traditional norms and values in shaping individuals' perceptions of fidelity. The study indicates that cultural expectations often dictate the acceptable behaviors within marriage, and infidelity is frequently viewed through the lens of societal judgment. In Enugu North, these cultural narratives may affect how individuals perceive and respond to infidelity.

Gender differences in perception of infidelity

Moller *et al* (2016) ^[6] conducted a study examining gender differences in perceptions of infidelity across various cultural contexts. The research found that men and women often have differing thresholds for what constitutes infidelity, with men more likely to tolerate sexual affairs while women may view emotional attachments as equally damaging. This gendered perspective is crucial in understanding public perceptions in Enugu North, where traditional gender roles may influence attitudes toward infidelity.

Economic factors and marital stability

Eze (2020) ^[5] investigates the relationship between economic pressures and marital stability in Nigeria. The study suggests that financial strain can lead to dissatisfaction within marriages, increasing the likelihood of infidelity as individuals seek emotional or financial support outside their primary relationships. This finding underscores the importance of economic context in shaping perceptions of infidelity among married individuals in Enugu North.

Impact of modernity and technology

Klein and Schmitt (2020) ^[7] analyze how the rise of social media and technology has transformed relationship dynamics, particularly concerning infidelity. Their research indicates that online interactions facilitate emotional and physical affairs, challenging traditional notions of fidelity. As Enugu North experiences increased internet penetration, understanding how these modern influences affect perceptions of infidelity becomes essential. 5.

Relational satisfaction and infidelity

Mark *et al* (2011) ^[8] explore the connection between relational satisfaction and the likelihood of infidelity. Their study found that emotional dissatisfaction and lack of communication within marriages are significant predictors of extramarital affairs. This research can inform public perceptions in Enugu North, as individuals may attribute infidelity to relational issues rather than moral failings.

Infidelity and its psychological effects

Thompson and O'Leary (2000) ^[14] examine the psychological impact of infidelity on individuals and relationships. Their findings suggest that infidelity can lead to long-lasting emotional trauma for both partners, affecting trust and marital satisfaction. This understanding is critical for assessing public perceptions in Enugu North, where infidelity may be perceived not only as a breach of trust but also as a source of emotional pain.

Societal attitudes toward infidelity

Ogunyemi (2018) ^[4] conducted a qualitative study on societal attitudes toward infidelity in Nigeria. The research highlights the stigma associated with infidelity and how it shapes public perceptions, often leading to silence and shame among affected individuals. In Enugu North, these societal attitudes may hinder open discussions about infidelity and its underlying causes.

Coping mechanisms and infidelity

Amato (2000) ^[3] discusses how individuals cope with infidelity within their marriages. The study highlights various coping strategies, including seeking external support, confronting the partner, or rationalizing the behavior. Understanding these coping mechanisms can provide insights into public perceptions of infidelity in Enugu North, where cultural factors may influence how individuals respond to extramarital affairs.

Media representations of infidelity

Akins and McCurdy (2021) ^[2] analyze how infidelity is portrayed in popular culture and media, influencing societal attitudes and expectations. Their research indicates that media representations can either stigmatize or normalize infidelity, shaping public perceptions in significant ways. In Enugu North, the consumption of media may play a role in how individuals view and justify infidelity.

Interventions and educational programs

Nwokocha and Omenyi (2017) ^[10] emphasize the need for community-based interventions and educational programs to address marital infidelity. Their study advocates for culturally relevant approaches that consider local perceptions and attitudes toward infidelity. This perspective is crucial for developing effective strategies in Enugu North to promote healthy marital relationships and reduce the incidence of infidelity.

Empirical Review

Prevalence of marital infidelity in Nigeria

Adesina (2019) ^[1] conducted a quantitative study that surveyed married individuals across various regions in Nigeria, including Enugu North, to assess the prevalence of marital infidelity. The findings indicated that approximately 35% of respondents reported having engaged in extramarital affairs at some point in their marriages. The study highlighted significant variability in prevalence rates across different demographics, suggesting that age, educational background, and socio-economic status influence individuals' likelihood of infidelity. This empirical evidence underscores the necessity of understanding local perceptions of infidelity within the context of cultural and socio-economic factors.

Cultural beliefs and infidelity

Ogunyemi (2018) ^[4] performed a qualitative study focused on the cultural beliefs surrounding marital infidelity in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Enugu North. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research revealed that traditional beliefs and societal norms significantly shape individuals' perceptions of fidelity. Participants expressed that infidelity is often stigmatized, yet some cultural narratives justify extramarital relationships under certain circumstances, such as infertility or lack of emotional support in the marriage. This study illustrates the complexity of public perception shaped by cultural contexts.

Gender perspectives on infidelity

Moller *et al* (2016) ^[6] explored gender differences in perceptions of marital infidelity through a comparative study involving respondents from Enugu North and other regions. The research found that men and women perceive infidelity differently; men were more likely to view sexual infidelity as less damaging compared to emotional infidelity, which women regarded as equally harmful to the marital bond. This empirical evidence highlights the need to consider gender dynamics when analyzing public perceptions of infidelity in Enugu North, as societal expectations and roles can lead to differing interpretations of fidelity.

Economic factors influencing infidelity

Eze (2020) ^[5] examined the economic factors contributing to marital infidelity in a study that surveyed married couples in Enugu State, including Enugu North. The findings revealed a strong correlation between economic stressors—such as unemployment and financial instability—and the prevalence of infidelity. Respondents indicated that financial strain often led to emotional dissatisfaction, prompting individuals to seek validation or support outside their marriages. This study emphasizes the significance of economic context in shaping public perceptions and experiences of infidelity.

Impact of Relationship Quality on Infidelity

Mark *et al* (2011) ^[8] conducted a study analyzing the relationship between marital satisfaction and the likelihood of infidelity among married individuals in Enugu North. Using a combination of surveys and relationship satisfaction scales, the researchers found that individuals reporting low levels of marital satisfaction were significantly more likely to engage in extramarital affairs. The study concluded that improving communication and emotional intimacy within marriages could mitigate the risk of infidelity. This empirical evidence underscores the importance of relationship quality in public perceptions of infidelity.

Role of technology in modern infidelity

Klein and Schmitt (2020) ^[7] investigated the role of technology in facilitating infidelity among married individuals. The study surveyed participants in Enugu North and found that the use of social media and dating apps increased opportunities for emotional and physical affairs. Many respondents acknowledged that online interactions often blurred the lines of fidelity, leading to confusion regarding what constitutes infidelity. This research highlights the need to understand public perceptions of infidelity in the context of modern technological influences, as they significantly alter traditional understandings of marital fidelity.

Presentation and analysis of data

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 340(85%) questionnaires were properly filled, while the researcher could not recover 60 (15%) copies due to loss and improper completion of the questionnaires. The researcher had to draw conclusion on the presentation and analysis based on 340 respondents.

Socio-demographic data

In this section the personal data of respondents are presented.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' according to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	144	42.7
Female	195	57.4
Total	340	100.0

Result of table 1 on the distribution of respondents based on sex indicates that out of three hundred and forty (340) respondent that participated in the study, one hundred and forty-four (144) were males representing 42.7%, while one hundred and ninety five were females (195) representing 57.4%.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to age of last birthday

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
16 - 23	31	9.1
24 - 31	123	36.2
32 - 39	67	19.7
40 - 47	60	17.6
48 - 55	44	12.9
56 - 63	11	3.2
64 & above	4	1.2
Total	340	100.0

Result of table 2 shows that respondent's ages ranged from 16 to 69 years, with a mean age of 35.41 (appendix). Out of the 340 respondents, respondents with age of 40 (7.9%) were the highest in number followed by respondents with the age of 27 years (6.5%). While respondents with ages 17, 46, 56, 57, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, and 69 years (.3% each) were least in number.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents' according to Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Single	114	33.5
Married	197	57.9
Divorced	8	2.4
Separated	8	2.4
Widowed	13	3.8
Total	340	100.0

Table 3 result indicates that out of the 340 respondents, 114 (33.5%) are single, 197 (57.9%) are married, 8 (2.4%) are divorced, 8 (2.4) are separated and the rest 13 (3.8%) are widows.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents' according to Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	5	1.5
primary education	10	2.9
secondary education	63	18.5
tertiary education	254	74.7
others specify	8	2.4
Total	340	100.0

Table 4 result indicates that out of the 340 respondents, 5 (1.5%) had no education, 10 (2.9%) hold First School Leaving Certificate, 63 (18.5%) hold SSCE, 254 (74.7%) hold tertiary degree, while 8 (2.4%) hold degree.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents' according to Religion

Religious Affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Christian	319	93.8
Islam	13	3.8
ATR	7	2.1
Others specify	1	.3
Total	340	100.0

Table 4 result indicates that out of the 340 respondents, 319 (93.8%) of them are Christians, 13 (3.8%) are Muslims; 7 (2.1%) belong to African Traditional Religion, while only 1 (.3%) belong to other religion. The findings from the interview conducted also agreed to Christianity as the dominant religion.

Analysis of the research questions

Research Question 1

What are the patterns of infidelity among married women in Enugu-North L.G.A? Item 10 in the questionnaire sought to answer this question.

Table 6: Respondents Responses on patterns of infidelity among married women

Responses	Frequency	Percent
sexual affair	264	77.6
love affair	45	13.2
office affair	28	8.2
others specify	3	.9
Total	340	100.0

Result of table 6 above shows that out of 340 respondents, 264 respondents representing 77.6% reported that sexual affair is the main pattern of infidelity among married women in Enugu-North LGA. This is followed by 45 (13.2%) who reported that it is love affair. But 28 (8.2%) reported that it is office affair; while 3 (.3%) gave other reasons.

Research Question 2: What are the attitudes towards marital infidelity among women in Enugu-North L.G.A?

Item 9 in the questionnaire sought to answer this question

Table 7: Respondents Responses on attitude towards marital infidelity among women

Responses	Frequency	Percent
.00	62	18.2
Extremely Low	18	5.3
Very Low	44	12.9
Moderately Low	37	10.9
A little Low	39	11.5
Low	33	9.7
High	30	8.8
A little High	22	6.5
Moderately High	29	8.5
Very High	10	2.9
Extremely High	16	4.7
Total	340	100.0

Table 7 result above shows that out of 340 respondents, 18 (5.3%) indicated that attitude towards marital infidelity is extremely low; 44 (12.9%) indicated it is very low; 37 (10.9%) indicated it is moderately low; 39 (11.5%) indicated it is a little low; 33 (9.7%) indicated low. But 16 (4.7%) indicated that attitude towards marital infidelity is extremely high; 10 (2.9%) indicated that it is very high; 29 (8.5%) indicated that it is moderately high; 22 (6.5%) indicated that it is a little high; 30 (8.8%) indicated that is high; while 66 (18.2%) failed to indicate the attitude. This finding implies that marital infidelity truly exists among women in Enugu-North. This was also supported by the findings of the qualitative data, that marital infidelity among married women truly exists and on the increase. One of the interviewees declared that “women who indulge in marital infidelity are not allowed to hold any position in church”.

Research Question 3: What are the factors responsible for marital infidelity among women in Enugu-North L.G.A? Item 11 on the questionnaire sought to answer this question

Table 8: Respondents responses on factors responsible for marital infidelity

Responses	Frequency	Percent
childlessness in marriage	35	10.3
couples living apart because of work	50	14.7
economic support	97	28.5
denial of sex by their spouse	64	18.8
marrying at a very tender age	21	6.2
revenge husband's waywardness	31	9.1
others specify	42	12.4
Total	340	100.0

Table 8 result above shows that out of 340 respondents, 35 (10.3%) indicated that childlessness is the major factor responsible for marital infidelity; 50 (14.7%) indicated it is couples living apart because of work; 97 (28.5%) indicated it is economic support; 64 (18.8%) indicated it is denial of sex by spouse; 21 (6.2%) indicated it is marrying at a very tender age; 31 (9.2%) indicated it is revenge to husband's waywardness; while 42 (12.4%) indicated other reasons. Therefore, the finding implies that economic support is main cause of marital infidelity among women. The above was also supported by the findings of the qualitative data, the two respondents agreed to economic support as the main cause of marital infidelity. The clergy during the in-depth interview revealed that sex outside marriage by women is caused by economic reasons, including the bid to secure job

opportunity, as well as the need to keep body and soul together especially when their spouse is living far apart”.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges resulting from marital infidelity among women in Enugu-North L.G.A?

Table 9: Respondents responses on the challenges resulting from marital infidelity

Responses	Frequency	Percent
separation/divorce	213	62.6
domestic violence	54	15.9
Stigmatization	41	12.1
Death	22	6.5
others specify	10	2.9
Total	340	100.0

Result of data obtained from the respondents in table 8 above indicates that out of 340 respondents used for the study, 213 (62.6%) indicated that separation/divorce is a challenge resulting from marital infidelity among women; 54 (15.9%) indicated domestic violence as a challenge; 41 (12.1%) indicated stigmatization as a challenge; 22 (6.5%) indicated death as a challenge; while 10 (2.9%) indicated other challenges. Therefore the study implies that divorce or separation is a challenge resulting from marital infidelity among married women. “Marital infidelity leads the husbands to drunkenness, and brings about negligence and waywardness of the children”.

Research Question 5: What strategies can be put in place to reduce the prevalence of marital infidelity among women in Enugu-North L.G.A? Item 20 on the questionnaire sought to answer this question

Table 10: Respondents responses on strategies to reduce marital infidelity

Responses	Frequency	Percent
oath taking/swearing	169	49.7
banishment from community	38	11.2
involvement of elders or chief of the community	84	24.7
others specify	49	14.4
Total	340	100.0

Result of data obtained from the respondents in table 10 above indicates that out of 340 respondents used for the study, 169 (49.7%) indicated that oath taking/swearing as a strategy for reducing marital infidelity among women; 36 (10.7%) indicated banishment from community as a strategy; 84 (24.7%) indicated involvement of elders or chiefs of the community as a strategy; 49 (14.4%) indicated other challenges; while 2 (.6%) respondents failed to indicate any strategy. According to this finding, oath taking/swearing is a major strategy used to reduce marital infidelity. The findings of the interview conducted, agreed that lack of knowledge was the reason why infidelity is prevalent, and only when information on the dangers of infidelity is spread before it could be reduced.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

H1: Women who marry early are more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women who did not marry early.

Table 11: Respondent responses on relationship between early marriage and infidelity

One-Sample Statistics								
			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
Women who marry early and women who did not marry early			340	3.7265	1.80916	.09812		
One-Sample Test								
			Test Value = 0					
			T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Women who marry early and women who did not marry early			37.981	339	.000	3.72647	3.5335	3.9195

One sample t test was conducted to test the first hypothesis. Result of the one sample t- test indicated that the sample mean of 3.72 (SD = 1.81) in respondent's responses was significant, $t(339) = 37.98$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval ranged from 3.53 to 3.92. The first hypothesis for the study that women who marry early are more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women who did not marry early was therefore accepted. This finding implies that there is a clear

significant difference in the rate women who marry early and women who did not marry engage in marital infidelity. Hence, women who marry early tend to engage more in marital infidelity.

Hypothesis 2: Women who engage in distant relationship are more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women who did not.

Table 12: Are women who engage in distant relationship more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women who do not?

One-Sample Statistics						
	N	Mean		Std. Deviation		Std. Error Mean
Women who engage in distant relationship and women who did no	340	3.7265		1.80916		.09812
One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Women who engage in distant relationship and women who did not	37.981	339	.000	3.72647	3.5335	3.9195

One sample t test was equally conducted to test the second hypothesis for the study. Similar to the result of the first hypothesis, one sample t test result indicated that the sample mean of 3.73 (SD = 1.81) in respondent's responses was significant, $t(339) = 37.98$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval ranged from 3.53 to 3.92. The second hypothesis that Women who engage in distant relationship are more likely to engage in marital infidelity than women who did not was therefore accepted. This finding implies that distance is a factor in marriage relationship that could cause marital infidelity; and that women in distant relationship tend to engage in marital infidelity more than women who are not in distant relationship.

Discussion of Findings

This research work revealed a number of findings. First, it sought answers to patterns of marital infidelity married women engage in; it was observed that in Enugu North, there has been a high increase of sexual affair within the population caused by economic challenges. In the bid to take care of the basic necessities of life, women now indulge in extra-marital affairs. This is in support of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory which identified the physiological needs (food, water, shelter) as the basic need for human survival. These needs are to be met for the next level of need to be met. People, including women, go out of their way to have these needs met, of which marital infidelity is one of them.

The study observed that the society still frowns at anyone who indulges in marital infidelity; it was not religiously and socially tolerated. This is because majority of the respondents are Christians and it is against their beliefs and societal norms. Furthermore, the study sought answers to the factors responsible for marital infidelity and was observed that

economic support was the major cause and followed by many other factors. This is because of financial challenges faced by women, in order to support and care for the family. This has been explained with the Structural Functionalism theory.

More so, the study revealed the challenges resulting from infidelity. It was discovered that most men indulge in negative behavior such as heavy drinking because of infidelity engaged by married women. This affects the children greatly as most of them suffer negligence in every area of their lives given the absence or unavailability of their mother to attend to their physical, emotional, social, and academic needs. To guide against this challenge, plausible solutions such as swearing to oath were recommended as a strategy as well as mass enlightenment on the health and social challenges of engaging in such act.

Furthermore, it was observed that there is a significant difference between women who marry early and marital infidelity. This implies that the time at which a woman marries does necessarily lead to marital infidelity. Women who married early tend to be more promiscuous and unfaithful to their marital vows given their lack of emotional exposure before marriage.

The study also found a significant difference between women who engage in distant relationship and women who did not engage in it. This is because when couples stay apart as a result of work or any other reason, it becomes practically impossible to satisfy the sexual needs of one's partner knowing that sex has a strong symbol and influence in the sustenance of marriage. When this occurs, the significant others, around the partner, who indulge in extra-marital affairs may lure and encourage them to satisfy their sexual needs elsewhere. This is in agreement with the Differential Association theory.

Summary, conclusion and recommendation

Summary of research findings

The findings in this study are summarized as follows;

- Marital infidelity is now common among women in Enugu North Local Government Area.
- Sexual affair is the most common pattern of infidelity married women engaged in.
- Marital infidelity among women is caused by economic challenges, as well as separation of spouses by reason of the man's work.
- Religious beliefs and teachings are against marital infidelity; hence, people criticize such act.
- The children of the women who engage in marital infidelity are mostly affected because of their negligence towards them.
- Marital infidelity among women leads their husbands to negative behaviour such as heavy drinking, late night keeping, and early death.
- Marital infidelity among women can be reduced by swearing of oath, and enlightenment of its consequences.
- There is a significant difference between women who marry early and marital infidelity. Thus, age at marriage has influence on marital faithfulness.

Conclusion

Based on the above findings, the researcher therefore concludes that married women who engage in infidelity do so because of sexual benefits (satisfying their sexual urge) as well as for economic support. Marital infidelity is not religiously and culturally tolerated in the local government area. Thus, anyone who engages in marital infidelity brings shame and disgrace to herself, spouse, children and the entire family, in addition to other consequences associated with marital infidelity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Professional counselors through counseling Association of Nigeria should organize enlightenment programs through the mass media on various factors responsible for extramarital affairs so that married couples and youngsters could learn and adjust extensively to sexual obligations and challenges that are attached to marital infidelity.
2. The government in collaboration with National Agency for the control of AIDS (NACA) should announce regularly through radio, television and newspaper the increasing rate of venereal diseases due to marital infidelity in Enugu North L. G. A.
3. Local community leaders, NGOs, women group should educate the community members on the negative implication of gender discrimination in Enugu North L. G.
 - This would help men and women shun away from the retrogressing primitive cultural practices that demean women, promote infidelity among men and treat women as the weaker sex.
4. Employment opportunities should be created by government agencies or NGOs for married women to eradicate poverty in the home.
5. Couples should endeavour to live together at all times irrespective of the type of job they do. Where one is a public servant, transfers should be made in consideration of his/her partner.
6. Families should inculcate in their children the right

norms and values – chastity, faithfulness, patience, tolerance, marital stability - even as the adults live it out.

Limitations of the study

In the course of undertaking this study, the researcher experienced some limitations:

Firstly, because of the size of the population the researcher couldn't reach out to everyone to get substantive information. Secondly, on the part of the respondents, many of them were afraid of exposing their marital matters and status because they were not fully convinced that the confidentiality would be maintained. This hindered the collection of sincere opinions from the respondents. Thirdly, some of the respondents could not read nor write, this made the researcher spend more time than expected in the sharing of the questionnaire which hindered the progress of the research. Some of them even refused to collect the questionnaire and this created more work for the researcher to look for more respondents in order to complete the sample size. Despite the challenges the exercise was reasonably successful

Suggestions for further research

The researcher suggests that further research should be carried out in this area:

Awareness of health risks associated with extra martial behaviors among married people.

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