



Traditional and biblical concepts of marital infidelity among Igbo people of Nigeria in the face of Covid 19

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Abstract

Infidelity in marriage has long been a problem among married men and women in Nigerian society and globally. The study explores traditional and Biblical notions of marital infidelity in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the goal of identifying some of the key reasons and effects of infidelity among Nigeria's Igbo people. For data analysis, the study used a qualitative phenomenological research design and a descriptive approach. Personal interviews were the major source of data collecting, whereas library materials including academic articles, the media and books were the secondary sources used. According to the research, many spouses in traditional Igbo Cultural Marriage spend time away from each other for farming and other hobbies. Couples were spending more time together than normal during the Covid-19 epidemic. Domestic violence suffered during the pandemic, as a result, may have led to one partner seeking love, care, and support outside of the marriage union, culminating in infidelity. Financial uncertainty, as well as other factors such as unemployment, a lack of social support, and heightened stress, are all factors that contribute to marital infidelity during a pandemic and at other times. The study proposes that both the male and female in a marriage should have correct religious and social attitudes and dispositions in order to have a healthy and prosperous family during times such as the Covid-19 pandemic and at all times.

Keywords: Traditional, Biblical, marital, infidelity and Covid-19.

Introduction

Igbo people comprise of five states: Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Owerri, and Ebonyi, all of which share a worldview based on African traditional beliefs. During the Covid-19 epidemic, marital infidelity was discovered to be widespread among the population. This could be ascribed to socioeconomic reasons that led to adulterous sexual conduct among some couples in the area. Isiugo-Abanihe (2004) discovered that the rate of marital infidelity is increasing at an alarming rate. The inference is that many married people are disloyal to their partners. In the same line, marital infidelity is a serious problem. Nnodum (2004) discovered, among other things, that marital infidelity is more common in Imo state than in the other four states that make up Nigeria's Igbo population. According to him, there is a gender difference in the characteristics that impact marital infidelity involvement, with men being more involved than women.

In traditional Igbo society, adultery in marriage is a socially shameful phenomena for couples, but especially for women who have experienced it. When a family discovers infidelity, they are confronted with tremendous and overpowering feelings such as shock, rage, hurt, and despair,



which often lead to surrendering and a desire to isolate themselves from one another (Abrahamson et al, 2012 online). During the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, it was observed that many sexually promiscuous couples engaged their spouse in consistent sex. This attitude can sometimes lead to marital infidelity, where one spouse may avoid the other while claiming to be observing social distancing by having extramarital affairs with a matching opposite sex. As a result, the study investigates why marital infidelity persists among Nigeria's traditional Igbo people despite the Covid-19 pandemic. Given these circumstances, the purpose of this article was to critically explore the traditional and biblical concepts of marital infidelity among Nigeria's Igbo people in light of Covid 19.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative phenomenological research design and descriptive method of data analysis. Personal interviews were used and were the primary sources of data collection with 9 informants chosen at random for the interview. They were given code names which range from informants 1 to 9. These informants were diverse in terms of distribution of five states of Igbo land, gender, occupation, and religious affiliation with particular regards to Christianity and African Traditional Religion. The interview questions were semi-structured. This allowed the researcher to follow up on similar groups of interview questions based on the respondent's responses. All relevant issues guiding the ethical conduct of the interviews were followed. It was made known to the informants that the information obtained from them would be solely used for this research. The period of the research was from 2020 to 2021 when field work was conducted for the research.

Definition of the related terms

Marital Infidelity

The adjective "marital" is used to describe the noun marriage. It refers to anything that having to do with or is related to marriage. Marital is defined by Mish et al (1990), as "of or connected to a spouse and his function in marriage" (p .728). As a result of the preceding, marital also refers to the wife and her position in the marriage. As a result of our definition thus far, we may discuss things like marital vows, marital love, marital rights and responsibilities, marital fidelity, marital union, and so on. Marriage, according to Kunhiyop (2008), is "an exclusive heterosexual bond between one man and one woman, authorized and sealed by God, proclaimed by a public leaving of parents in return for a permanent mutually supportive partnership, generally topped by the gift of children" (p.227). In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus approved this form of connection. The church must likewise support this view because marriage is God's design. The polar opposite of faithfulness is infidelity. Fidelity is defined as commitment and constancy. As a result, infidelity would imply unfaithfulness and disloyalty. Infidelity is defined as "disloyalty or unfaithfulness; adultery: conjugal infidelity; infidelity to one husband or wife" by Hornby, Cowie, and Gimson (1982: 436). It's amazing to see how they quickly connect the concept to marriage, which is relevant to our discussion and demonstrates the importance of our topic. Mish et al (1990), despite broadening the breadth of the notion, did not neglect to connect it to marriage. Thus, it denotes "lack of conviction in a religion,... disobedience to a moral obligation: DISLOYALTY:... marital unfaithfulness or an incident of it" for them. (p. 619).

Covid-19

"Corona virus disease 2019 (Covid – 19) is described as illness caused by a novel corona virus currently known as severe acute respiratory syndrome," according to the World Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Corona virus 2 (SARS-Cov-2, formerly known as 2019-ncov) was initially discovered in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, during an outbreak of respiratory ailment cases. On December 31, 2019, it was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), and on January 30th, 2020, the WHO formally proclaimed the Covid-19



outbreak a global emergency" (MERS-cov 2020), and on March 11th, 2020, the WHO designated Covid-19 a global pandemic (MERS-Cov 2020).

Following its discovery, a slew of preventative measures, including social separation, travel limitations, conference cancellation, and a slew of other hitherto unheard-of precautions, were enacted at homes and workplaces. The corona virus is a broad family of zoonotic viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to serious respiratory disease, according to most health scientists. Because these viruses can be transmitted from animals to humans, they are called Zoonitic.

The Concept of Marriage among the Igbo people of Nigeria before the Covid-19 pandemic

Marriage is a social, legal, and religious institution in which men and women are tied or wedded for the goal of establishing and nurturing a family. According to Aghamelu (2004), "a legal marriage is considerably more than a mere consent between a man and a woman in the specific Christian understanding." It's a covenant, a sacrament, a reality that expresses a divine-human bond" (p. 54). In the concept of exclusivity, the joining of a man and a woman in marriage is based on their agreement, their consent to live together and be for each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually, but Islam and African traditional religions that allow polygamy cannot speak of absolute exclusivity, at least on the part of the man. Pahayampallil (1997) describes Christian marriage as "an enduring and exclusive bond of love is the basis of marriage" in the Christian sense. Christian marriage is also a man and woman's lifelong partnership; it is monogamous and indissoluble in nature, and it is supposed to be enjoyable and fruitful (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Romans 7:2-3). Marriage is not solely for the purpose of settling down, gaining social and economic prestige, or legitimizing the practice of sex in the eyes of society. While all of these things are present in marriage, it extends beyond them and is based on love for strength and purposefulness; otherwise, it will quickly disintegrate and fade away. As a result, Gaudium et Spes (1965) states: Married life is an eminently human love since it is attachment between two individuals established in the will and it embraces the complete person's welfare. That kind of love, which brings the human and divine together, guides the partners' actions and pervades their entire lives; further, the exertion of this love really develops and increases it. This is not the same as erotic attraction, which is pursued selfishly and quickly fades away in misery (p.49).

If marriage, particularly Christian marriage, has such dignity, it is not a subject for tiny children; it has serious ramifications with significant responsibilities, and hence the willingness to fulfill specific tasks is frequently asked of the couple at marriage. Couples agree to take each other as husband or wife in fidelity, love and hold, cherish and respect each other in sickness and in health, in property and in adversity till death do them part. As a result, according to Orabuchi (2007), "'Till death do us part' appears to be a catch-all phrase demonstrative of how profoundly in love bride and groom are with each other when making vows in front of a priest, family members, friends, and well wishers" (p.1). When this promise is followed, love is pure and sincere, society is ordered, and harmony may be maintained. Marriage's beauty is revealed in this way. The most common way to keep this vow is through sexual fidelity. For the sake of Gaudium et Spes (1965), The partners' joy and thankfulness are enriched by the authentically human performance of these acts, which nurtures the self-giving they represent. This love, which is endorsed by reciprocal loyalty and, above all, is consecrated by Christ's sacrament, abides faithfully in mind and body through prosperity and hardship, excluding both adultery and divorce (p.49).

Despite the awareness of the beauty of fidelity in marriage, it appears that adultery in marriage is a typical occurrence.



Marital infidelity among the Igbo people in the face of Covid-19

Many partners in traditional Igbo cultural marriages spend time away from each other for farming and other hobbies. Couples are spending more time together than normal during the Covid-19 epidemic. The importance of taking time off is that it allows both the husband and the wife to think about and reflect on the issues of family life. Marriage infidelity is a socially shameful phenomenon among Nigeria's Igbo people, especially for women who have experienced it. In any family, the revelation of infidelity causes tremendous and overpowering feelings such as shock, rage, hurt, and despair, which often leads to surrendering and a desire to isolate oneself from one another (Abrahamson et al., 2012 online), which can lead to divorce. True, when infidelity is discovered, it has a variety of negative implications for both spouses and the partnership (Cano & O'Leary, 2000).

"The present epidemic (Covid-19) may be placing couples at risk for infidelity," Campbell (2020) claims. "One survey indicated that 69 percent of employees identified the current pandemic as the most stressful time in their career," he continues. The increased stress from the Covid – 19 pandemic may be contributing to more negative perceptions of both their partner and their relationship, according to this research from the United States. Individuals who are currently dissatisfied in their marital relationship are more likely to explore alternative options, and the increased stress from the Covid – 19 pandemic may be contributing to more negative perceptions of both their partner and their relationship, according to this research from the United States.

Another negative impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on most families is that many families have lost their jobs or had their wages reduced as a result of the pandemic. "Significant financial loss is also a regular consequence of infidelity," according to Crouch (2016). He went on to say that this could put these couples at danger of financial uncertainty during this period. Interpersonal violence has been linked to issues such as unemployment, a lack of social support, and heightened stress, all of which are frequent during pandemics (such as Covid-19). According to Campbell (2020), study data from nations affected by Covid – 19, such as China, France, Brazil, and Italy, show a 50 percent rise in domestic violence reports during the pandemic. This may lead to one partner seeking affection, attention, and support outside of their marriage, ending in infidelity. It's vital to remember that adultery is a painful and tragic scenario for couples in cultures all over the world, even under the best of conditions. All is not lost, however, and there is hope for couples to heal throughout this pandemic, as the book finds its advice and conclusion in the Bible.

Some of the causes of Marital infidelity among the Igbo people of Nigeria

The causes of adultery in Nigeria cannot be separated from the causes of adultery around the world, because what is true at the microcosm in this case is written huge at the grandiose size of the macrocosm. The following are some of the causes of marital infidelity in Nigeria, which are not exhaustive.

Denial of sex by one partner

Men deprive their wives of sex as a form of punishment for one or more misdeeds; many of these men are already participating in extramarital relationships. By depriving their wives of sex, they put them at danger of finding it elsewhere. On the other hand, some women deprive their husbands of sex as a means of retaliation or as a negotiating chip. Some guys will seek sexual fulfillment elsewhere as a result of this. Okika (2008) says "Never use a woman's sex as a negotiating chip. It is not the moment to demand intorica, hollandies, shoes, money, or anything else" (p.4). Because of the pandemic's closeness, those who are currently dissatisfied in their marriage are more likely to experience adultery during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Inability of either party to satisfy the other sexually

Some women are cold and uninterested in making love, which the man finds repulsive. On the other side, some guys are impatient and speed through tasks. "Some men believe they know everything about sex," writes Cullen (1980). They cram everything in before, after, and while sleeping, leaving their women dissatisfied and unhappy" (p. 17). Whichever party is to blame, if one party is dissatisfied and it persists, the party may seek satisfaction elsewhere. As the Melbourne Age (2004) points out: "The scandalous filmic nature of an illicit affair may certainly whisk a person out of the coma of an unfulfilling marriage and into the grips of a passionate, real-life drama in which snatched moments with lovers become epic, life-changing, important acts" (p. 1).

Desire to "Eat the Prohibited Fruit" As stated in the preceding sentence, "snatched moments with lovers' epic" and fascinating, leading to cheating between couples.

Nagging:- When a woman nags, the male may avoid returning home and seek safety in the arms of another woman. According to Paul Nworah (Personal Communication, March 4th 2020), they occurred most frequently during the Covid-19 pandemic, owing to an extended period of looking down. He went on to say that it can occasionally escalate to domestic violence, with divorce as a result.

Dirtness:- Dirtness on either couple's part may cause the other to seek out more glamorous people outside. This may be the cause for Informant 1 argument in (Personal Communication April 4, 2020), in which he stated that during this time, some ladies grew lethargic even to take care of themselves owing to long periods of looking down. This, he claims, leads to marital infidelity, in which the male seeks for more attractive people with whom to have affairs than his wife.

Woman's Inability to Cook:- As a result, the man frequents beer halls and restaurants, putting him in risk. According to Informant 2 (personal communication, May 8, 2020), many couples have lost their jobs as a result of long periods of national depression, some have been underpaid, and these victims, particularly women, may no longer have the financial muscle to care for their families, especially if they are the family's bread winner. He concluded that because of the unpleasant circumstance, some men may attend beer parlors and restaurants, exposing them to the risk of marital infidelity.

Inconsideration:- Despite the fact that, according to Cullen (1980), "she may have one child in the womb, two on the floor, and one in school," some men are cruel and never pity their spouses. She's cooking, selling, cleaning, and washing, all while caring for a sick child at night" (p.14) When males do not offer respect, love, or pity, women may look for it elsewhere. Some women also do not show concern for the male in terms of their demands, which can lead to men despising them.

Lack of Mutual Compliments:- When the outsider compliments either or both of the pair, there is a natural propensity to gravitate toward that outsider (Personal Communication, Informant 3 June 1st, 2020). It was noted that when couples look down, they always see themselves, and that the compliments they receive from one another are declining, which could lead to a lack of enthusiasm in having sexual intercourse with one another. He went on to say that this experience could lead to people having affairs with one other, which would encourage increased marital infidelity during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Errant Eros:- Some people, according to Adaora Nweke (Personal Communication, June 6th, 2020), are basically 'sex machines' who can't be satiated by just one person. During the pandemic, this can heighten stress, increasing the chance of interpersonal violence and the harmful consequences of infidelity.



Prayerlessness:- Informant 4 (Personal Communication July 6th, 2020), one of the researcher's correspondents and a priest of God, stated that when God is not the pivot around which the family swings, anything is possible.

Male – Chauvinism:- In a similar line, a priest, Informant 5 (Personal Communication traditional August 8, 2020), remarked in a conversation with the researcher that some men believe they have the right to have extramarital affairs while women should not. Should a man be policed about this? This concept is prevalent in many cultures and poses a threat to marital fidelity.

Loss of Job: According to Informant 6 (Personal Communication September 8th, 2020), a businessman headquartered in Nigeria's Onitsha Anambra state, stated that households that lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 outbreak may face substantial financial hardship. This could also place the couples at a higher risk of adultery, according to Solomon.

This is because many people lost their jobs, were underpaid, and so on during the lockdown, and in order to make ends meet, some women engage in extramarital relations, especially if they are the family's bride winners.

Consequences of marital infidelity among the Igbo people of Nigeria

Disease:- Hirsch et al (2007) state that “In rural Mexico, marriage is the single highest risk factor for HIV infection among women” (p.1). Anizoba (2022) also stated that, this is due to the fact that the guys go out, become sick, and then return home to infect their spouses. Other venereal illnesses are similar to HIV. In his research, Isiugo-Abanihe (2004) discovered that most men and women identify having several sexual partners. The majority of men and women believe that HIV infection is linked to having several sexual partners.

Family Strife and Divorce:- “Marital infidelity is leading a great majority of Nigerian marriages to flag with the certainty of catastrophic collapse” (Orabuchi, 2007). In Section 1 he listed some of the ramifications of marital infidelity on the family and society as a whole.

Death:- When their wives realize that they are cheating on them, some men kill them, and vice versa. Many people have divorced. In an interview with Informant 7 (Personal Communication September 9th, 2020), a medical doctor stated that many chronic diseases have been observed to be caused as a result of marital infidelity. These diseases, according to Anizoba (2023) include Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) / Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Chronic infections that may lead to infertility, and others. This, without a doubt, will result in the death of the individual in question.

Poverty:- Resources intended for the family are dispersed abroad, resulting in hunger and other shortages in the home. According to Informant 8 (Personal Communication September 9th, 2020), marital infidelity has turned some families unhappy during the Covid-19 pandemic. He claimed that many families were unable to pay their children's school fees following the look down because some spent money lavishly outside their homes in search of sexual partners, which had a significant impact on the family.

Poor Education of Children:- Informant 9 (Personal Communication September 9th, 2020) further mentioned that, due to the poverty that comes with squandering family resources outside of the home due to infidelity, it may be difficult to even pay the rent. Because of adultery's moral weakness, the guilty party may lack the moral authority to correct children's abnormal sexual behavior, especially when the error is known. She said that the children's psychology had been influenced. According to her, both during and after the epidemic, children's academic performance is significantly impacted. Children will be without basic necessities such as a pen, pencil, and other items that they utilize in class. Even such children may not always be able to buy a face mask. During the Covid-19 pandemic, several students would be routinely late to school, impairing their academic performance.



Biblical Concepts of Marital Infidelity among Igbo People of Nigeria in the face of Covid 19

“You must not commit adultery,” says this passage of scripture (NJB, or New Jerusalem Bible) In biblical times, this rule prohibited sexual contact between a man and a married woman. As a result, it appears that a married Hebrew man was free to sleep with another woman as long as she was not another man's wife. As a result, according to Nzomiwu (2008), the Hebrew male does not sin against his own marriage, but rather against the marriage of another Israelite. As a result, the commandment did not prohibit an Israelite from having sexual relations with a woman captured in battle or a prostitute. We must consider Deuteronomy 5:18 in the context of the Deuteronomistic history and conception of the Old Testament, rather than taking it as a stand-alone source. We now begin to see why Abram agreed to sleep with Hagar at his wife's insistence and gave birth to Ishmael in light of the foregoing (Genesis 16). Sarah could not have tolerated sleeping with another man in order to determine if Abram was at fault.

Again, we read in Genesis 29:31-30:24 how Rachel and Leah gave their maids to their husband Jacob, and he had offspring via them; children who were included among Israel's twelve tribes. In Genesis 38, Judah slept with a rumored prostitute. If the "prostitute" had not turned out to be his own daughter-in-law, he would not have been charged. As a result, only the Hebrew wife is permitted to sleep outside. For breaching marital fidelity, the Deuteronomistic narrative stipulates the death punishment. So, if a Hebrew wife had an affair with another man, both she and the guy would be stoned to death. The Hebrew man, on the other hand, will only be stoned to death if the woman he sleeps with is the wife of another man; both will be put to death” (Deuteronomy 22:22, NBB). However, if a married man sleeps with a woman who is not another man's wife, he is unaffected. Rape is another occasion in which a Hebrew male may be sentenced to death for ravishing a woman (Deuteronomy 22:23ff).

Nicolaides (2015: 2) states: “In the Mystery of Marriage, God the Holy Spirit by His grace unites two people, man and woman, for the special purpose of replenishing the Church of God according to His commandment (Genesis 9:1). This Holy Mystery was ratified by Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:5-6). He sanctified the spiritual and physical bond of marriage through His presence at the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John, 2:1). The Apostle Paul also declared to us that marriage is a great mystery (Ephesians 5:32)” and these important aspects to bear in mind and meditate upon. Jesus imparts to us the uniqueness of Marriage as the most perfect natural expression of God's love for humanity. Christ also teaches that if spouses are to love each other as God anticipates, their marriage is to be durable, unique and everlasting (Nicolaides, 2015).

Appraising Marital Infidelity in Nigeria in the light of Deuteronomy 5:18.

Existence of Marital Infidelity:- The researchers have convincingly proved that marital infidelity is widespread in Nigeria and the rest of the world. It was also existent during the time of the Old Testament. It was sufficiently present for God to enact a law against it, the penalty for breaking which was death. Informant 1, on the other hand (Personal Communication) On July 6th, 2020, he stated that traditional Igbo community does not tolerate death as a result of marital adultery. This is because most men who cheat on their wives claim to have good motives for doing so. He claimed that one of the reasons provided by men who have extramarital encounters is that their first wives have not given birth or that their wives exclusively give him girl infants. As a result, having extramarital affairs exposes them to the possibility of having a male child outside of marriage and marrying the woman. This set of beliefs and practices existed both before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The punishment for the offence:- In the deuteronomistic tradition, the punishment for adultery is particularly harsh. The perpetrators were sentenced to death. It is not suggested that criminals be executed in Nigeria, neither in the traditional environment nor in Christianity.



At least for Muslims in Northern Nigeria, Sharia law, which has Semitic origins as Jewish law, attempted to impose the death sentence for defaulters. It was met with fierce opposition both worldwide and in Nigeria. So, according to Deuteronomistic tradition, the punishment for adultery in Jewish law is more severe than in Nigerian law. According to Informant 2 (Personal Communication, July 6th, 2020), in Igbo traditional society, infidelity is punished by divorce. Occasionally, though, the gods of the area will be appeased through a series of offerings before the perpetrator is exonerated. He further stated that the penalty meted out to women is not the same as that meted out to men. This is because men may elect to marry the person, obviating the need to ask the gods for the sacrifice. This mentality can be found both before and after a lockdown.

The Gender Issue

Extramarital affairs are forbidden for both men and women in Nigeria, where Christians account for almost half of the population. It is illegal for both men and women among Muslims, yet a man may marry up to four women. So, in terms of marital fidelity, Christians in Nigeria, at least in theory, view both genders equally. When it comes to variety, Islam favors the man, but when it comes to the permissible marriage, it is equally fair to both genders rather than Judaism, which permits men to go outside for 'fun'. In reaction to the gender issue, Solomon Informant 1 (Personal Communication) On September 8th, 2020, stated that marital infidelity is entirely abhorrent in traditional Igbo society, both before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this, the epidemic period has exacerbated marriage infidelity among Nigeria's Igbo people as a result of the country's extended national lockdown.

The relationship between Igbo traditional beliefs and biblical marriage

In many ways, Igbo traditional society and the deuteronomistic tradition have similar views on marital fidelity. A traditional Igbo, like the Hebrews, is not allowed to sleep with another man's wife, albeit, unlike the deuteronomistic tradition, he and the lady will not be murdered if detected. By sleeping with his wife, an Igbo man may historically help raise children for a neighbor who was impotent or infertile. However, unlike in the deuteronomistic environment, it is not permitted for a traditional Igbo man to sleep with prostitutes. However, the concept of "Ana- eji nwoke nche" (Why should a man be policed about) is generally accepted. Both traditional Nigerian thought (at least among the Igbo) and deuteronomistic thought apply. In traditional Igbo community, a man is allowed to marry more than one wife, according to Informant 3 (Personal Communication September 8th, 2020). According to him, this is due to the nature of their profession. They are mostly farmers, and in order to boast about their agricultural productivity, many of them marry multiple women in order to have a large number of children to assist them in their farm job. Unlike the biblical tradition, they do not advocate extramarital affairs.

Similarity on the causes of marital infidelity

Both the Nigerian and the primitive deuteronomistic Hebrew situations will be affected by the causes listed in the section on things that lead to marital infidelity. This is due to the fact that humans are essentially the same all throughout the world. As a result, Malinowski believes that all people at all levels think in the same way. According to Informant 2 (Personal Communication September 8th, 2020), the causes of marital infidelity are different during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to him, there was a national lockdown during the epidemic, which damaged the national economy and caused most employers of labor to retrench their employees, affecting the financial strength of certain families and exposing them to extramarital relations.



Some of the consequences of Marital Infidelity are Identical

The repercussions of marital adultery are practically the same for both today's Nigerian circumstances and the Hebrews of the Deuteronomic period, namely, domestic strife, disease, poverty, death, inappropriate childrens education, and so on. Diseases and poverty have been identified as a key result of marital infidelity both in the traditional and biblical perspectives, according to Informant 3 (Personal Communication March 4th, 2020). He claimed that many of the sexually transmitted infections that have been reported during the Covid-19 pandemic are as a result of poverty induced by job loss or retrenchment as a result of the country's lockdown.

Discussion

Infidelity to the vows and state of marriage, often known as marital infidelity, is in direct opposition to God's plan for marriage. God's aim for marriage unity and true love is expressed in Genesis 2:24, which demands that a man and his wife become "one body." It is caused by both the male and the woman in the marriage having inappropriate attitudes and dispositions. It causes chaos and unrest in the home and has an impact on society as a whole. The phenomenon is both ancient and current, and it occurs all throughout the world. Every community establishes rules to defend the marriage institution from collapse, and one of these laws is the prohibition against marital infidelity, which exists in both traditional and modern Igbo society, as well as in Deuteronomy 5:8 in Hebrew civilization. Every community promotes marital faithfulness, while some societies place a greater emphasis on one feature over the other. In light of Deuteronomy 5:18, the researcher amply established this in his assessment of marital infidelity in Nigeria. Even in the face of Covid-19, we believe that marital infidelity is wrong. It is forbidden in Nigerian culture, Christianity, Islam, and Igbo traditional beliefs. It is forbidden in Deuteronomy 5:18. As a result, even in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the unpleasant trend of its continuation must come to an end, because it not only disorganizes society but also displeases God. Marital infidelity has extremely detrimental physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual ramifications for both men and women and children in families. It has major societal consequences as well. As a result, all types of marital infidelity must be eliminated. Couples should be able to suffer some of the factors that drive them to infidelity in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic for the sake of God, their souls, and the blessings of our God-given society.

Recommendations

1. The work suggests that the government improve the economic and social conditions of young people, widowers, and married men and women, particularly during pandemic periods, in order to keep them away from things that can tempt them to commit infidelity.
2. The church may also promote Igbo traditional family values, which offer fundamental security and protection for women, by using the gospel as a vehicle to alter the hearts of individuals who are involved in adultery. The church must also vigorously oppose all sorts of contemporary doctrines that encourage individuals to engage in infidelity.
3. The Nigerian Federal Government should relax the curfew so that people can go out and look for respectable sources of income rather than engaging in extramarital affairs to make ends meet.
4. Employers of labour should also be aware that it is not anyone's fault if a worker fails to show up for work. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, lowering salaries or even firing people will not only raise the level of domestic violence seen during the period, but it may also lead to marital adultery.

Conclusion

The institution of marriage is a natural one. It is also seen as a divine institution because it was established by God. According to the Bible, God created male and female human beings



and commanded them to be prolific and multiply (Genesis 1:28). It denotes the love between Christ and his church in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:21-33). Nigeria's religious authorities should elevate it to the status of a sacrament. As a result, this institution is deserving of the highest regard. Respecting it means that those who are a part of it must adhere to its vows and duties, while those who are not a part of it should not tamper with its sacredness. Infidelity, on the other hand, is sadly the norm in Nigeria and around the world. During the Covid-19 pandemic, there are more sexual scandals than ever before. The national lockdown imposed during the pandemic undoubtedly contributed significantly to the rise in marital infidelity not only among Nigeria's Igbo people, but also globally. Those who are not sexually active find it difficult to cope with their partners' increasing demands for sex, which can lead to social distance between them and, as a result, marital infidelity from the sexually weak partner.

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LIST OF INFORMANTS

S/N	NAMES	AGE	STATUS	PLACE	MODE	VALUE	DATE
1.	Informant 1	58	Farmer	Owerri	Direct	Reliable	4/3/2020
2.	Informant 2	80	Pastor	Abakiliki	Direct	Reliable	9/4/2020
3.	Informant 3	70	Civil servant	Awka	Direct	Reliable	8/5/2020
4.	Informant 4	82	Medical Doctor	Abagana	Direct	Reliable	1/6/2020
5.	Informant 5	62	Nurse	Umuahia	Direct	Reliable	6/6/2020
6.	Informant 6	54	Priest	Nsukka	Direct	Reliable	6/7/2020
7.	Informant 7	42	Traditional Doctor	Nnewi	Direct	Reliable	8/8/2020
8.	Informant 8	38	Business man	Onitsha	Direct	Reliable	8/9/2020
9.	Informant 9	60	Medical Doctor	Umuahia	Direct	Reliable	9/9/2020

Conflict of Interest Statement: *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



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