Couples' Perceptions Of Factors Influencing Marital Conflict In Selected Local Government Areas Of Rivers State: Implication For Family Counselling

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine Couples Perception of Factors Influencing Marital Conflict in Selected Local Government Area of Rivers State: Implication For Family Counselling. Five research objectives and research questions were raised and researcher used descriptive survey for the study. The entire population of 2,230 was not studied by the researcher as sample size of 20 percent with a total of 446 respondents was studied. The instrument used was Couples' Perception of Factors Influencing Marital Conflict in Selected Local Government Area of Rivers State Questionnaire (CPFIMCQ). A 4-Point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used and the respondents were requested to select one of the four (4) options. 446 copies of questionnaire were distributed and 398 retrieved for analysis. Test-re-test method was used for the reliability test which yielded reliability co-efficient 0.77. The Mean score was used in analyzing the research questions, while the z-test was used in testing the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that lack of sexual satisfaction, Intimacy, in-law influence, Social media, distance marriage, poverty among others these factors generate crisis and conflicts that are detrimental to marital relationships such as desertion, negligence, malicious beating, child abuse, abscondment, assault, disobedience and several other feature in martial relationship. It was therefore recommended that counselors should create awareness for married people on available conflict resolution strategies. This awareness can be done during pre-marital education, through seminars, workshops.

Keywords: Couples, Perception, Factors Influencing Marital Conflict

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern society the role of family is diminishing. Relationships are also vulnerable. In every society the numbers of separations, divorces, dissolutions and family conflict have been rising. Family is a prime social institution where human beings feel security and comfort. In other words, we can say that a family is a training institute, services center and a safe place. The home atmosphere should be healthy in order to develop an ethical and moral individual. In most cases if the relationship of a couple is strong, this provides an advantageous atmosphere for their children, Maduakonam (2010). Many people view conflict as an activity that is almost totally negative and has no redeeming qualities. Conflict results from human interaction in the context of incompatible ends and where one's ability to satisfy needs or ends depends on the choices, decisions and behaviour of others. It is therefore, possible to argue that conflict is endemic to human relationships and societies. It is the result of interaction among people, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions and an expression of the basic fact of human interdependence (Adejuwon & Okewale, 2009). Some scholars posit that there is need to occasionally stimulate it so as to have innovations and improvements in organization or society as a whole.

Conflict is common occurrences in life, it arises within and among people, be it married, family or community, it

involves apparent but not always actual opposition between two people. Ezegbe (2007) opined that conflict is the mutual hostility at inter-personal, inter-human, inter-actions levels. This mutual hostility can be verbal, physical or emotional depending on the nature of the conflict. Within the marital setting verbal hostility could be expressed in form of rebukes, insults, name-calling etc. while physical hostility is expressed in the form of fighting, inflicting injuries, termination of relationship etc. Conflicts are bound to emanate from marriages and can arise when misunderstanding is the order of the day between spouses. In some families, especially the illiterate or poor families who understand marriage as the avenue for baby making, the pre-requisites of a peaceful home via happiness may not be a vital condition to be met. There may be presence of marital conflicts in such marriage where relationships such as parent-child, spouse-spouse, spouse in-law relationships lack peace and harmony.

According to Sholfer and Shoben (2014), couple experience crisis and conflicts that sometimes result in divorce, separation, broken homes, violence against women or men, child neglect and several other devastating effects of intra-marital conflicts. In spite of the fact that couples are aware of the intimate contract they are into in marriage and the implication of this contract to their lives, they encounter challenges that they sometimes cannot handle. The survival of such marriages largely depends on how effective the couples are in managing their marital relationship.

There are so many factors affecting marital relationships. According to Onyechi (2012) such factors include lack of sexual satisfaction, childlessness communication gap, in-law influence, poverty among others. These factors generate crisis and conflicts that are detrimental to marital relationships such as desertion, negligence, malicious beating, child abuse, abscondment, assault, disobedience and several other features in martial relationship. There are however some positive factors such as good communications, martial intimacy among others that tends to strengthen marital relationships. Nwobi, (2010) observed that over the years, the society has witnessed an alarming rate of divorce, marital dissatisfaction, loss of affection between couples and cases of marital violence. These ugly situations that are caused either by the spouse, their parent or friends result to maltreatment, desertion, ejection, negligence, children custody, child abuse, child neglect, abscondment, malicious beating among others (Nwobi, 2010),.

Nwobi (2010) also stated that the effects of social media on couples marriage can be drastic. It can be a point of contention which could even lead to divorce. With over I billion people on facebook, chances are that one or both members of a relationship are updating, checking, or changing their status, pictures, or profiles on facebook on a regular basis. Agupugo (2008) emphasized that marital conflict is on the increase, and the society needs efficient and effective marital counselors to handle these problems before they get out of control. Also, Garba (2013) asserts that at the initial time couples have high opinion of each other, they overflow with joyous thoughts. Each has a firm intention of pleasing and nourishing feelings of affection and love towards a person who is about to be a partner for life. Some years after, the newlyweds discover that they have entered into an entirely different world and that nothing is quite the same as it was before marriage. He went further to say that as time goes on, things begin to change, the warm and romantic relationship once enjoyed begin to fade as they may be living in a chronic situation of hate, fear and confusion resulting in an unending conflict. It is inevitable that individuals involved in ongoing relationship will experience marital conflict.

Omeje (2010) rightly observed that conflicts could lead to couples separation, divorce and maltreatment of various sorts that affect the children socially, morally, physically and emotionally. Marriage is the oldest social institution ordained by God as a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife. Marriage as ordained by God gives legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction for legitimate children (Sarker, 2007). Marriage is the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife for the purpose companionship, procreation maintaining a family (Gove, 2006). However, marital Infidelity has become a thing of concern in this contemporary society and this is associated with separation, divorce, and widowhood. Other scholars define infidelity as a violation according to the subjective feeling that one's partner has violated a set of rules or relationship norms; this violation results in feelings of sexual jealousy and rivalry. In marital relationships, exclusivity expectations are commonly assumed although they are not always met. When they are not met, research has found that psychological damage can occur, including feelings of rage and betrayal, lowering of sexual and personal confidence, and damage to self-image. Depending on the context, men and women can experience social consequences if their act of infidelity becomes public. The form and extent of these consequences are often dependent on the gender of the unfaithful person.

According to Turner (2012), marital conflict resolution is important because it prevents marital conflicts from degenerating into total collapse of the marriages and abuse of children from such marriages. It also ensures that none of the parties in the conflicts will have his or her self-image damaged. The aim of any marital conflict resolution is to minimize misunderstanding and enhance cordial relationship between the couples. Intimacy is the expressive and pleasurable feeling from an emotional attraction towards another person often associated with sexual attraction. In the context of romantic love relationships, Intimacy usually implies an expression of one's strong romantic love, or one's deep and strong emotional desires to connect with another person intimately or romantically. To him peace advances development, growth and progress in marriage. The researcher had observed that marital conflicts had led to divorce, separation, violence against wife and sometimes children gang up with their mother against their father. When the home is in turmoil, with no peace and is bedeviled with conflicts between spouses, there can never be peace and progress in that family. Based on this, the researcher is interested in finding out the Married Couples' perception of factors influencing marital conflict in selected Local Government Area of Rivers State: Implication for family counseling.

II. IN-LAWS AND MARITAL CONFLICT

Marriage, as wonderful as it can be, certainly has its challenges — especially when you throw your relationship with your mother-in-law into the mix. Whether you get along with your mother-in-law most of the time, some of the time, or rarely, this relationship is like no other relationship you have. You may think you can turn to your husband for help maneuvering around the landmines — after all, he knows you, and he knows his mother (Ango, 2007). For most marriages, the relationships with in-laws need negotiation and renegotiation over a lifetime. These relationships are often the cause of conflict in a marriage, and it is unfair to expect a daughter or son to view their parents in a very negative light, so trying to get your partner to agree with your disapproval is unlikely to be a useful way forward. Instead, perhaps you could work on your own relationship with your mother-in-law; this entails having an adult, direct engagement with her.

The aim is not to get your mother-in-law to see the error of her ways (which is unlikely), but to recruit her as an active participant in making everyone happier. If at all possible, get her to come up with ideas for the way forward (that you agree with), such as you and your wife spending more time alone together. The intervention does not end there; you will have to follow up with approval for her help and arrange to meet again to review the situation. My guess is that she will be pleased with this important position and might buy into it.

III. MOTHERS-IN-LAW AFFECT A MARRIAGE

Mothers-in-law can actually have a strong impact on how a marriage relationship develops and whether it ends in lifelong commitment or divorce. Although men and women differ in the effects that a mother-in-law has on them, they both need to understand how setting boundaries with their in-laws -- both physical and emotional -- can help them protect their own relationship. There are a lot of problems that occur within a marriage. Some of them are in your control but others are not, and sometimes it can be difficult to determine which ones you have control over and which ones you do not. When your Mother-In-Law comes into your life and takes over, there are a number of feelings that are associated with her presence that can destroy your marriage. In fact, one issue that married couples argue about more than money is in-laws (Garba, 2005). Other problems with a Mother-In-Law exist besides who takes whose side. A lot of the time, either the husband or the wife will allow their mother to move-in with them. In the beginning the couple may be in agreement about letting the mother stay in their home with them temporarily; however, that temporary situation usually finds a way to be more permanent. Either the mother is going through a rough patch and is struggling financially or there is some other issue that has caused her to ask if she can live with her children. After a couple of months of the mother living there though, problems start occurring in the marriage and couples start looking for a way to fix them.

IV. INFIDELITY AND MARITAL CONFLICT

Infidelity is a violation of a couple's assumed or stated contract regarding emotional and/or sexual exclusivity *(Weeks, Gambescia & Jenkins, 2007)*. Other scholars define infidelity as a violation according to the subjective feeling that one's partner has violated a set of rules or relationship norms; this violation results in feelings of sexual jealousy and rivalry. What constitutes an act of infidelity is dependent upon the exclusivity expectations within the relationship. In marital relationships, exclusivity expectations are commonly assumed although they are not always met. When they are not met, research has found that psychological damage can occur, including feelings of rage and betrayal, lowering of sexual and personal confidence, and damage to self-image *(Leeker, & Carlozzi, 2012)*. Depending on the context, men and women can experience social consequences if their act of infidelity becomes public. The form and extent of these consequences are often dependent on the gender of the unfaithful person.

V. INTIMACY AND MARITAL CONFLICT

Marriage stands amongst the deepest and most complex relational factor amongst the human beings and marital satisfaction is a condition in which the spouses are mostly happy and satisfied with one another. Intimate relationship can have great role in the welfare of couples by satisfying their main needs including independence, altruism, kindness, etc. (Heavey, et al., 1993). Healthy marriage seeks for intimacy in its verbal, emotional and physical aspects which passes through love, resolving disputes, compromise, negotiating the differences, agreement, honesty, love, affection and commitment.

Intimacy includes different meanings based on age, sex, education, and culture, and there is no consensus among researchers on the root concept of intimacy which makes its definition difficult (Martin & Tardif, 2014; Mitchell, 2007). Bagarozzi (2001) defined intimacy as proximity, similarity and a personal romantic or emotional communication that requires knowledge and understanding of another person to express thoughts and feelings (Bagarozzi, 2001). Intimacy is strongly associated with the quality of couples' life and is often referred to as a basic psychological need and one of the key characteristics of marital communication which impacts on marital adjustment and mental health, such as reducing the risk of depression, increasing happiness and well-being, and providing a useful satisfactory life of a person. Besides, it is a strong predictor of physical health, such as low level of diseases and impoverishment of diseases (Boden, Fischer, & Niehuis, 2010; Dandurand & Lafontaine, 2013; Moreira, Crespo, Pereira, & Canavarro, 2010; Nainian & Nik-Azin, 2013).

VI. LACK OF INTIMACY

THE SEXUAL SIDE OF A PERSON IS AN ASPECT OF 'WHO' THEY ARE, MAXINE ASTON STATES AND CONTINUES

Intimacy is often the very thing that can be lacking from the sexual side of the relationship and this can, in time, have a detrimental effect upon the quality, ore willingness of either partner to participate in making love. Often it is not realised by the AS partner that sexual acts may need to be precipitated by emotional closeness and that a lack of this can result in their partner's reluctance to make love (Alan & Johnson, 2004).

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARITAL CONFLICT

Social media has changed the way we meet and interact with each other. It provides a platform to learn more about people you associate with. This can be a problem, however, when it comes to romantic relationships. The effects of social media on a couples' marriage can be drastic. It can be a point of contention which could even lead to divorce. With over 1 billion people on facebook, chances are that one or both members of a relationship are updating, checking, or changing their status, pictures, or profiles on facebook on a regular basis (Amao & Kehinde, 2009). Social media websites can have a negative impact on a relationship. Facebook, for example is such a great way to enhance relationships – to keep in touch with family and friends (Filani, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many factors have combined to affect marriage institutions thus causing many problems which both young and old married couples must contend with. Marital conflicts can be the state of tension or stress between marital partners as the couple try to carry out their marital roles. The fact that two people agree or plan to live together as husband and wife calls for different expectations and hopes, some of which might be fulfilled while others remain unfulfilled. Since couples are humans and no gods, it is only natural to expect that there will be differences in opinions, values, needs, desires and habits that are the stuff of everyday living. Marital conflicts abound everywhere, and Bonny, Degema and Okirika Local Government Areas of Rivers State are no exception. In an attempt to resolve marital conflicts, some couples employ different strategies depending on their experiences and personal characteristics. Often times, these strategies do not help in ameliorating the problem as many couples end up getting more maladjusted through the use of inappropriate strategies.

There are so many Problems affecting Married couples. Infidelity, Intimacy, in-law influence, Social media, distance marriage, poverty among others these factors generate crisis and conflicts that are detrimental to marital relationships such as desertion, negligence, malicious beating, child abuse, abscondment, assault, disobedience and several other feature in martial relationship. In contrast, lack of intimacy is one of the most common causes of distress and collapse among couples, negatively impacting on relations between the couples and, thereby, leading to incompatibility and causes stress, and brings about psychological maladaptation, depression, and emotional disorders mental disorders (Duffey, Wooten, Lumadue & Comstock, 2004; Kim, 2013; Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day & Gangamma, 2014). As a counsellor, it is sad to see maladjusted couples adopt these wrong strategies that rather aggravate the conflict situations. In addition, strategies used in resolving conflicts appear to be predicted on some personal factors such as gender, age, length of marriage, educational level and experience among others. Hence it becomes expedient that the relationship between couples personal factors and marital conflict strategies. In view of the fact that a conflict ridden marriage cannot perform its function effectively most families therefore, look for ways of resolving their conflicts. The problem of this study therefore is to determine the couples perceptions of factors influencing marital conflict in selected local government areas of Rivers State: Implication for family counselling.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine couples' perception of factors influencing marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State: Implication for family counseling. Specifically, the study seeks to:
- ✓ Examine the extent to which in-laws influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Determine the extent to which infidelity influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State
- ✓ Ascertain the extent to which social media influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Examine the extent to which Intimacy influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Ascertain the extent to which distant marriage influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study provided answers to the following research questions:
- ✓ To what extent do in-laws influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State?
- ✓ To what extent does infidelity influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State?
- ✓ To what extent do social media influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State?
- ✓ To what extent does Intimacy influence martial conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State in selected Local Government Area of Rivers State?
- ✓ To what extent does distant marriage influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State?

HYPOTHESES

The study tested the following hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.
- ✓ In-laws do not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Infidelity do not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State
- ✓ Social media do not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Intimacy does not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.
- ✓ Distance does not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

VII. MATERIALS AND METHODS

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The descriptive survey design was adopted in this study. A survey research design is an attempt to gather and interpret data about a social institution, an event, a group or an area (Dike, 2017). This design is therefore, suitable for this study on couples' perceptions of factors influencing marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State: Implication for family counselling.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study is 2,230 couples drawn from three selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State; namely, Bonny, Degema and Okirika. The couples are in various work areas which includes complete farm work, full civil service job and self-employment.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study used the sample size of 446 married couples (both young and old) which was selected from Bonny, Degema and Okirika Local Government Areas of Rivers State using simple random sampling technique.

INSTRUMENTATION

A self-structured instrument titled: Couples' Perception of Factors Influencing Marital Conflict Questionnaire (CPFIMCQ) was used for data collection. The questionnaire was made up of sections A and B. Section A focused on the respondents' bio-data, while section B centered on perceived factors influencing marital conflict. Section B contains 20 items prepared on a 4-point modified likert scale of Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3points), Disagreed (2 points) and Strongly Disagreed (1 point). The maximum obtainable marks is 80 (4 marks X 20 items) while the minimum obtainable marks is 20 (1 mark X 20 items).

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument was validated by two experts in counselling psychology and measurement and evaluation, all in the faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The experts ascertained the face and content validities of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test re-test method. The scores of the respondents were coded and correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained.

VIII. RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: To what extent do in-laws influence marital conflict in selected LGAs of Rivers State?

S/N	Items	Male			Female		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Response	$\bar{x}$	SD	Response
1	The relationships with in-laws causes conflict in a marriage	3.45	0.68	Agreed	3.27	0.77	Agreed
2	The relationships with in-laws need negotiation and renegotiation over a lifetime	3.44	0.64	Agreed	3,70	0.55	Agreed
3	Mother-in-law can actually destroy their marriage	3.20	0.93	Agreed	2.79	1.13	Agreed
4	Relationship With In-Laws Impacts How Long Marriage Lasts	3.23	0.88	Agreed	2.89	1.12	Agreed
	Total Mean/S.D	13.32	3.13		12.15	3.57	
	Grand Mean/S.D	3.33	0.782		3.037	0.892	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2018.

Table 1: Mean analysis on in-laws influence marital conflict in selected LGAs of Rivers State (N = 398)

The results of table 1 which is for research question one, shows that all the items in the table indicates a positive response with mean scores of 3.45,3.44, 3.20, 3.23, 3.27, 3.70, 2.70, 2.79 and 2.89 respectively. The response of the respondents shows that the relationships with in-laws cause conflict in a marriage and Mothers-in-law actually have a strong impact on how a marriage relationship develops and whether it ends in lifelong commitment or divorce. Although men and women differ in the effects that a mother-in-law has on them, they both need to understand how setting boundaries with their in-laws -- both physical and emotional -- can help them protect their own relationship. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 3.33.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: To what extent does infidelity influence marital conflict in selected LGAs of Rivers State?

SN	Items	$\bar{x}$	Male SD	Response	$\bar{x}$	Female SD	Response
1	The marital infidelities of many famous people have been dealt with publicly	2.67	1.27	Agreed	3.80	0.37	Agreed
2	Infidelity is by no means exclusive to certain groups of people; its perception can be influenced by other factors.	2.64	1.21	Agreed	3.41	0.67	Agreed
3	The act of infidelity is dependent upon the exclusivity expectations within the relationship	3.41	0.68	Agreed	3.63	0.31	Agreed
4	Men and women can experience social consequences if their act of infidelity becomes public	3.30	0.90	Agreed	3.32	0.84	Agreed
	Total Mean/S.D	**12.02**	**4.06**		**14.16**	**2.19**	
	Grand Mean/S.D	**3.005**	**1.015**		**3.54**	**0.547**	**Agreed**

Source: Survey Data, 2018.

Table 2: Mean analysis on how infidelity influence marital conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State (N = 398)

The result of table 2 shows the mean rating of variables. The four items in the table were remarked accepted. In all, the respondents indicated that Infidelity is by no means exclusive to certain groups of people; its perception can be influenced by other factors and also the act of infidelity is dependent upon the exclusivity expectations within the relationship. This was confirmed by the grand mean of 3.005 and 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.015 and 0.547.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: To what extent does Intimacy influence martial conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State?

S/N	Items	$\bar{x}$	Male SD	Response	$\bar{x}$	Female SD	Response
1	Intimate relationship is a prevalent component of human experience	3.21	0.73	Agreed	3.52	0.54	Agreed
2	Lack of intimacy has a detrimental effect on the quality of relationships between couples,	3.39	0.71	Agreed	2.67	1.21	Agreed
3.	Lack of intimacy affect willingness of either partner to participate in	3.29	0.85	Agreed	2.67	1.21	Agreed
4	love making The distinct qualities that lead to satisfaction in relationship intimacy	3.41	0.68	Agreed	3.08	0.95	Agreed
	Total Mean/S.D	**13.3**	**2.97**		**11.94**	**3.91**	
	Grand Mean/S.D	**3.325**	**0.742**		**2.985**	**0.977**	**Agreed**

Source: Survey Data, 2018.

Table 3: Mean analysis on how Intimacy influence martial conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State (N = 398)

The results of table 3 which is for research question three, shows that all the items in the table indicates a positive response with mean scores of 3.21, 3.39, 3.29, 3.41,3.52,2.67,2.67 and 3.08 respectively. The response of the respondents shows that intimate relationship is a prevalent component of human experience, lack of intimacy has a detrimental effect on the quality of relationships between couples, lack of intimacy affect willingness of either partner to participate in love making and the distinct qualities that lead to satisfaction in relationship intimacy. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 3.325 and 2.985.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: To what extent do social media influence marital conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State?

	ITEM	$\bar{x}$	MALE SD	RESPONSE	$\bar{x}$	FEMALE SD	RESPONSE
1	Social media has changed the way we meet and interact with each other	3.10	0.99	Agreed	2.63	1.25	Agreed
2	The effects of social media on a couples' marriage can be drastic	2.71	1.14	Agreed	3.24	1.11	Agreed
3	Social media websites have a negative impact on a relationship	3.06	0.86	Agreed	2.95	1.17	Agreed
4	social media can quickly cause a rift between a couple and lead to even bigger problems (such as divorce) down the road	2.90	0.89	Agreed	3.36	0.79	Agreed
	Total Mean/S.D	**11.77**	**3.88**		**12.18**	**4.32**	
	Grand Mean/S.D	**2.942**	**0.97**		**3.045**	**1.08**	**Agreed**

Source: Survey Data, 2018.

Table 4: Mean analysis on how social media influence marital conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State (N = 398)

The results of table 4 which is for research question four, shows that all the items in the table indicates a positive response with mean scores of 3.10, 2.71, 3.06, 2.90, 2.63, 3.24, 2.95 and 3.36 respectively. The response of the respondents show that Social media has changed the way we meet and interact with each other. Social media can quickly cause a rift between a couple and lead to even bigger problems (such as divorce) down the road. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 2.942 and 3.045

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: To what extent does distant marriage influence marital conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State?

	ITEM	MALE			FEMALE		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	RESPONSE	$\bar{x}$	SD	RESPONSE
1	Distant spouse can be a source of significant unhappiness	3.07	1.08	Agreed	3.71	0.36	Agreed
2	Distant in marriage causes stress and conflict in marriages and families	3.38	0.68	Agreed	3.59	0.53	Agreed
3	The pain of loneliness, insecurity, mistrust and anger caused by the distant spouse can lead to a desire to separate or even divorce	3.26	0.78	Agreed	3.01	1.06	Agreed
4	the distant spouse can intensify over the years of marriage	3.37	0.77	Agreed	3.41	0.71	Agreed
	Total Mean/S.D	13.08	3.31		13.72	2.66	
	Grand Mean/S.D	3.27	0.827		3.43	0.665	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2018

Table 5: Mean analysis on how distant marriage influence marital conflict in selected LGA of Rivers State (N = 398)

Table 5 which is for research question five shows that four items in the table were accepted. In all the respondents accepted by their responses that Distant in marriage causes stress and conflict in marriages and families and the distant spouse can intensify over the years of marriage. This confirmation was made by the grand mean of 3.27 and 3.43.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS 1: In-laws do not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State.

Variables	N	x	SD	Std Error	df	p	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	198	7.2	0.83	0.6572	396	0.05	2.78	1.96	Sig
Female	200	4.2	0.85	0.6134					

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2018

Table 6: Z-test analysis of influence of in-laws on marital conflict among couples in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State

The data in table 6 revealed that the calculated z-test value of male couples was 2.78, while the critical z-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant influence between In-laws on marital conflict among men and women couples in selected local government in Rivers State.

HYPOTHESIS 2: Infidelity does not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Variables	N	x	SD	Std Error	df	p	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	198	78	0.73	0.6578	396	0.05	2.41	1.96	Sig
Female	200	62	0.71	0.6156					

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2018

Table 7: Z-test analysis of the influence of infidelity on marital conflict among couples in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State

The data in table 7 revealed that the calculated z-test value of male and female couples in Rivers State was 2.41, while the critical z-value was 1.96 at a degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant influence between infidelity on marital conflict among male and female couples selected local government in Rivers State.

HYPOTHESIS 3: Social media do not significantly influence marital conflict in selected Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Variables	N	x	SD	Std Error	df	P	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Male	198	7.8	0.88	0.6584	396	0.05	2.07	1.96	Sig
Female	200	4.6	0.86	0.6175					

Sources: Field Survey Data, 2018

Table 8: Z-test analysis of the influence of social media on marital conflict among couples in selected Local Government Areas of Rivers State

The data in table 8 revealed that the calculated z-test value of male and female couples in Rivers State was 2.07, and mean scores 7.8 (male) 4.6 (female) respectively, while the critical z-value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 198 at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there was significant influence between Social media on marital conflict among male and female couples in Rivers State.

IX. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study investigated and obtained information on Couples perception of factors influencing marital conflict. The study revealed that couples experience marital conflicts under physical, social and economic causes. It was also discovered that marital conflicts were caused majorly by the inability of the couples to meet each other's sexual needs, infidelity, social media and especially the inability of the family heads to provide for both economic and social needs of the family among other causes. In an agreement with Garba (2005) who opined that Mother-In-Law exist besides who takes whose side. A lot of the time, either the husband or the wife will allow their mother to move-in with them. In the beginning the couple may be in agreement about letting the mother stay in their home with them temporarily; however, that temporary situation usually finds a way to be more permanent.

Findings from the research questions indicated that Couples are greatly helped by understanding their vocation to self-giving and receiving through the romantic aspect, friendship and betrothed love in their marriage. Both marital happiness and personal fulfillment are dependent to a great extent upon a spouse developing a healthy adult personality open to give oneself completely and to receive in kind (Agupugo, 2008).

Findings from the research questions indicated that Social media has changed the way we meet and interact with each

other. It provides a platform to learn more about people you associate with. This can be a problem, however, when it comes to romantic relationships. The effects of social media on a couples' marriage can be drastic. In agreement with Amao and Kehinde (2009), social media websites can have a negative impact on a relationship. In addition, Bornstein and Bornstein (2006) opined that social media provides easy access for a jealous or suspicious spouse to seek out information about the interactions of a significant other.

Findings from the research questions also indicated that distant spouse can be a source of significant unhappiness, stress and conflict in marriages and families. Most often, we hear wives make this complaint about their husbands' behaviors. The pain of loneliness, insecurity, mistrust and anger caused by the distant spouse can intensify over the years of marriage and can lead to a desire to separate or even divorce. Unfortunately, in many marriages there is a failure to honestly discuss and address this weakness in self-giving. The good news is that this serious marital conflict can be uncovering and resolved through the hard work of growing in virtues. This is in contrast with the findings of other scholars like Undiyaundeye & Ugal (2006) in the counselor (2006) who carried out a study to test the educational levels of couples and their effectiveness in handling marital conflicts and discovered that educational attainment goes a long way in affecting the ability to handle marital conflicts.

X. CONCLUSION

From the study, it was obvious that conflicts in marriage are inevitable. However, marital conflicts can be managed when they occur or prevented in resulting to partial or total collapse of homes. This will depend largely on the couple's mutual understanding and handling. Marital success results from a lot of endurance, tolerance, patience and effective management of individual differences. Successful marriages as opined by Nadir (2003) are not those in which there has never been conflict but those in which conflicts have served useful purposes. Hence in order to foster marital stability and satisfaction, couple should learn to be fair, objective and realistic when dealing with their partner's behaviors. They should learn to see their partner's short comings as natural by-product of every human interrelationship where nobody can be perfect at all times and in all things. There is the need for right and decodable signals to be sent and well received by both partners involved in the marital relationship. This is how we can prevent or manage marital conflicts in our homes.

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of this study.
- ✓ There is need for counselors to create awareness for married people on available Conflict resolution strategies. This awareness can be done during pre-marital education, through seminars, workshops.
- ✓ In view of the need for creating awareness on the available conflict resolution Strategies, there is need for

collaborative efforts as it is involving. The government, churches, NGOs and social clubs should team up in realization of the above objectives.
- ✓ Counselling centers aimed at helping married couples in conflict situation should be established in our different communities by the government. The idea of seeing counseling services as associated to student's growth should be disabused to allow for full patronage.
- ✓ Regular seminars and workshops should be organized for couples on issues that have to do with conflict resolution and marital harmony. Such seminars could be organized and conducted by government at various levels (Federal, state, and local councils), religious bodies e.g. churches and mosques, and nongovernmental organization (NGOs).

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