

Full Length Research Paper

Patterns of marital instability among married couples in Lagos, Nigeria

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This study investigates the patterns of marriage instability in modern African society, especially Lagos metropolis, and the implications on marriage counseling. Two hundred and fifty married men and women were selected in Lagos metropolis, using purposive and convenience sampling technique. Among the participants were: one hundred and eleven married men (44.4%) and one hundred and thirty nine married women (55.6%) respectively. The mean of the respondents' age was 39.96, while the standard deviation was 8.44. The major instrument used was marriage instability scale (MIS) constructed and validated by the researchers with a coefficient alpha of .848. Five null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using ANOVA and t-test statistics in testing the hypotheses. The results obtained showed that; there was no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with polygamous family background and couples with monogamous family background. There was no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different social status. There was no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different religious background. There was no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different careers. There was no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different educational background. The findings of the research have various implications for couples in modern African society; there is need for them to visit a professional marriage therapist for marriage assessment. The findings of the study were discussed and suggestions were made for further studies.

Key words: Patterns, marital instability, married couples, polygamy, monogamy.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of culture and human relationships have made researchers to observe many influences, manifestations, happenings and occurrences in marriage stability within the African society. These manifestations and occurrences have significant impact on marriage within the African modern society. The impacts have been both positive and negative. However, a recent observation on people's attitude to marriages in African modern society, suggest an alarming negative effect of these impacts (Borgatta and Edgor, 2000). According to Gove (1986), marriage is described as the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife; the mutual relation of the husband and wife; the institution whereby men and women are joined in a

special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family; an act of marrying or rite by which the married status is effected.

From a societal level of analysis the institution of marriage represents all the behaviours, norms, roles, expectations, and values that are associated with legal union of a man and woman. It is the institution in society in which a man and woman are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence to found and maintain a family. For most people, getting married and having children are the principal life events that mark the passage into mature adulthood. Marriage is considered to represent a lifelong commitment by two people to each other and it is signified by a contract sanctioned by the state (and for many people, by God). It thus involves legal rights, responsibilities, and duties that are enforced by both secular and sacred laws. As a legal contract ratified by the state, marriage can only be dissolved with

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state permission (Borgatta and Edgor, 2000; Asana, 1990).

Every culture of the world recognizes some form of the institution of marriage. In most cultures, (societies) and religions neither man nor woman is considered complete, after reaching maturity, without a spouse. Many (societies) religions consider marriage as a sacred act that originates from God or as the union of souls or spirits with the sacred realm. Jewish beliefs trace the origin of marriage to Adam and Eve and view their union as a part of the fabric of creation. The nuptial blessings emphasize marriage in the scheme of creation and speak of the state of marriage as paradise regained. As a blessing from God, Jewish marriage should only perpetuate humankind but should also enhance and complete the partner's personal growth, (Smith, 1981).

Christian marriage is identified with the sacred union of Adam and Eve and is regarded as a vocation. The ceremony joins the bride and groom into one spirit in union with Christ and God. In Christianity, marriage is also a metaphor for the marriage of the church to Christ. In this sense, the bride and groom became the "bride" of Christ and are heirs together of the grace of life through the Spirit of Christ (Eliade, 1993). Allusion is made to some cultural traditions while conducting wedding in the Christian Community. These traditions are: (1) Roman Catholic Church belief and conduct of wedding; (2) Eastern Orthodox Church's belief and practice; (3) Protestantism as represented in Anglican Church, Methodist Church, Baptist Church etc; (4) Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal Churches, represented by the new generation churches.

Among the Hindus, marriage is a sacred Institution whereby man and woman become one in spirit. Hindu marriage is also a social duty, and in the Vedic period it was a moral and religious obligation as well. Marriage is the siring of the male children; it was also the only possible way in which a man could repay his debt to his ancestors (Brooke, 1989).

Factors that are inhibiting the quality of marriage within African modern society of the twenty-first century has been a recent discussion among, African clinical and social psychologists, religious authorities, behavioral scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and environmental psychologists. There had not been an analytical research on the causes of marriage instability in the modern African society, but there had been some works on marriage crisis and management. Sotonade (1998), and Amao-Kehinde (1998) had worked on marital conflict resolution and strategy among selected couples in Ijebu-Ode; Ibokete, (2000) worked on battering among some married women in Lagos metropolis; Olarinmoye, (1991) worked on psychological and social consequences of divorce in Ibadan.

African society is generally characterized with arranged marriages, polygynous marriage and others. Though there are different groups, traditions and different

marriages but they have one specific thing in common and that is the changes of the weddings and marriages pattern, which are influenced by the Western societies. It is happening rapidly and the old traditions are constantly fading away. The old tribal traditions are disappearing and the tribes are more likely to live after the Western rules of society and by that people are having more western traditional wedding, (Aiyetan and Kolapo, 2005).

Holley (1981) addressed the question of; how mechanization and the factory system influence family life in modern society. He maintained that the biggest single influence on the families of skilled workers was the size of the wage the head received at work and the resulting standard of living which it permitted. When a skilled worker head the family, his own income predominated in determining the family fortunes, even when children in the family were also old enough to earn wages. The sheer size of the skilled worker's pay package was the most important thing for such families. These families avoided poverty during their neediest years. The incidence of poverty in the modern industrial society shows that families of skilled workers did not have to worry about developing any strategy to survive when only their head brought any income home. The head income was a "family wage" that is, a wage high enough to keep a whole family at a passable living standard without the wife or very young children having to work (Holley, 1981). However, the families of unskilled labour suffer poverty and inadequacies when they try to pattern their style of living to that of the family of skilled labours. This situation offers a good ground for factors that impede marriage stability to multiply.

Patterns of urban family life are closely connected with the nature of economy, including its configurations of high income and low-income sectors. Economically marginal urban populations, among whom there is high unemployment, are available for casual work as maids and "garden boys" thus affecting the manner in which wealthier families are run (Smith, 1981). These effect and manner had been responsible for the multiplication of factors that destabilizes marriage in modern African society, hence, marriage instability.

In the developing field of family history the major question has been whether industrialization in modern society did, or did not, transform family relations. Whether stated in terms of modernization theory, psycho-social analysis or demography, family history in those areas, primarily has been concerned with the family's relation to changing patterns of work, urbanization, altered life expectancy, increased social and geographical mobility and loss of functions to schools, factories, hospitals, fast-food franchises and other agencies of social welfare (Parker, 1991).

In the modern African society, the multiple institutions, daily springing up of new industries, packing and liquidation of some industries, the rising of various organizations buying companies from the former owners,

increase in knowledge, exposure to necessary information, multi-ethnicity, high evangelization of poly-religious faith and tenets are all having dominating influence on marriage. The modern African society is a re-evolvement of ancient African societal values, norms, beliefs and practices. It is also an absorption of other cultural and traditional values, norms, beliefs, practices of other religion and culture of other tribes that later infiltrate African culture and practices. Among these are Christianity, Islam, white men of various tribes who came with their various religious and cultural thinking; to sojourn in Africa. They did not only influence African in the area of marriage, they were also influenced by the African concept of marriage; because, they intermarried with Africans (Dunkins, 2000).

This exchange of marital ideas gave rise to the modern concept of marriage in African society. These exchange of ideas and values of marriage led to a rich thinking and multiplication of ideas that depicts quality of marriage. However, despite the positive effect that recent observations had shown; there had been increase in number of factors that are seriously threatening stability of marriage in Africa. Most of these factors are traceable to some inherited behaviour and thinking from the ancient African society, and imported ideas from other sources that are beyond the African concept of marriage. These factors are the significant causes of marriage instability in modern African society; as a result of their functions and effects within a home.

Abu (1983, in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1990) noted that the conjugal family is weak in residential and economic terms when compared with the matrilineage. Asare cited in (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1990) observed that families nowadays seem not to care about their wards' marriages because in most cases, the choice of partner is made by the wards themselves contrary to tradition, where a choice was made by parents. The trend now is that men and women marry where they are working or studying. Individuals become detached from their traditional environment as a result of education, urbanization and industrialization. Boakye, cited in (Ardayfio, 1985) asserts that young African now consider most; educational status, beauty or handsomeness and religious involvement as necessary conditions to decide their marriage partners. Almost, in the same vein Boateng, (reported in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1990) reported his observation on African family system; He opined that evidence gathered shows that family background and ethnic origin which were of considerable importance in traditional marriage practice have been replaced by love and affection between partners.

Danso, cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf (1990) claims; in spite of its indispensability, marriage has been beset by many problems that have threatened its usefulness and very existence. He attributes the high rate of divorce to inadequate length of courtship before marriage, dissimilarities between spouses in social and economic

characteristics such as social class, ethnicity, religion and age. Other causes include sterility, adultery, desertion and excessive cruelty as well as default in remitting the family practices. His work reveals a high rate of divorce among the young highly educated women with few children than among the old, illiterate women with many children. His work (as reported in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1990) points out that the greatest pressure on divorcees to seek new marital partners is economic. A minority of wealthy divorced women, however, prefers to stay single.

Analyzing the nature and content of marital relationship in the 'modern' West African family, Kabwegyere (1972), examine the connection between the notion of romantic love and the social aspirations of the educated young married couples. He cited field works conducted by some authors especially in Ghana and reported that the connection largely explains the contemporary popularity of monogamous marriages. Romantic love, which hitherto was not significant is now the prelude to marriage. It was further noted that very often, some parents do not want their daughters to associate with men until they are engaged. Also a man will not marry his fiancée until she is pregnant. This is a security against the restrictions of ordinance marriage on divorce especially on the grounds of infertility. He notes that since traditional norms continue to influence and regulate the extra familial relationship of a husband and wife, the organization of modern marriages generally involves a segregation of roles between the spouses. It was observed that West African marital behaviour shows close semblance to the British family organization in that most married couples live exclusive of their parental direction.

The fragility of the marital bond is a notable feature of the contemporary world. It spares no continent and is present at every level of society. It makes society fragile and even jeopardizes the education task and the trust that sustains a home. All too often it leads to numerous separation as well as divorce. One sometimes has the impression that separation and divorce are considered the only way out of marital crisis. This is part of the growing "divorce mentality" which is the product of marriage instability. Difficulties frequently lead to real friction and conflicts that in the "new mentality" (corruption of proper thinking and conception as a result of problem from marriage instability) lead to separation, divorce, even murder, where a man kills his wife or the wife killing the husband.

It is obvious from increasing rate of divorce, (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1994), cases of single parents (Bledsoe, 1993; Blankenhorn, 2003), Wife battering (Olarinmoye 1998); that these are among the resultant effect of marriage instability in modern African society. Marriage instability has made us to currently witness the invasion of many areas of human activity by a radical individualism; economic life, excessive competition etc. This individualism certainly does not encourage generous, faithful and permanent self-giving. This has

resulted in marriages characterized by individualism and excessive competition between spouses. It also cuts across every race, economic status, educational or social status, even religious status. The endemic nature of the factors that impede marriage stability made it alarming especially in Africa where marriage is religiously adored. This mind troubling issue has motivated the researchers to work on the topic; patterns of marriage instability in modern African society, stressing the implications for marriage counseling.

Objective

The objective of this study was to investigate the patterns of marriage instability in modern African society, using Lagos metropolis as a case study.

Hypotheses

Five null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. They are:

1. There is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with polygamous family background and couples with monogamous family background.
2. There is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different social status.
3. There is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different religious background.
4. There is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different careers.
5. There is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different educational background.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted is the descriptive survey, which involves a systematic observation of events that are under study. Descriptive survey method attempts to observe the elements within a particular population with immense accuracy (Akinboye, 1982). The study population covers married couples in Lagos metropolis; Lagos State of Nigeria. Knowing well how congested Lagos metropolis is; the researchers decided to target his audience at Ikeja, Surulere, Apapa, Mushin, Lagos Island and Somolu area of Lagos metropolis. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were adopted in selecting participants for this study. Purposive in the sense that only married individuals were used, and convenience in the sense that married individuals in different offices who created time in responding to our questionnaires in Lagos metropolis were used. The total number of the respondents were 250 married men and women.

The researchers developed a marriage instability scale. The scale has six sections. The first section is on the demography of the respondents, section two focuses on the marital history of the couple's parents. The aim of this section is to help the researcher to know the possible influences of the couple's parent marital history on the respondents home. The third section focuses on the couple's courtship history. The purpose of the section is to look at

situation and environmental influence on the choice of respondent's spouse. The fourth section x-rays the spousal attitude towards marital relationship, having known that attitude is a personal expression of various understanding, knowledge, exposure of an individual on a giving subject. Section five is based on spousal' response to the "inevitable" social environmental influences. The expectation here is that the instrument will help to unveil the environmental influence on marriage instability. The last section considers possible response of couples to the alternative negative options that could be available on the day of crisis. After a random selection of six key areas in Lagos metropolis used for the study, the researchers targeted private organization offices, public offices, schools and other establishments to administer the questionnaire. Considering the nature of life in Lagos, the researchers tried to get a contact person in all the establishments where they are targeted for the administration of the questionnaire. The researchers explained the contents and the purpose of the questionnaire to the contact persons and advised that the instruments be administered during office hour at these establishments. The researchers prepared and administered 350 questionnaires out of which only 250 answered questionnaires were conveniently gathered to test the findings. The researcher explained the purpose of the questionnaires to their audience through the contact persons. The respondents were encouraged to express their sincere opinions in their ratings.

Data analysis

The T-test statistic was used to test whether there existed any significant difference between two variables (like, couples family background, and religious background) in some of the hypotheses. The ANOVA was used to test different levels of marriage instability among some variables, such as social status, different career, and educational background.

RESULTS

The first hypothesis states that, there is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with polygamous family background and couples with monogamous family background. In testing this hypothesis, T-test at 0.05 alpha level was the statistical method utilized for the quantification of data for comparison. The detail of the findings is indicated in the Table 1.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with polygamous family background and couples with monogamous family background. From the Table 1, it show that the calculated value is less than the critical value. Hence the acceptance of the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different family background.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant difference in marriage instability

among couples with different social status. Work cadre was considered for the social status of various respondents. The one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at the 0.05 alpha level was the statistical procedure utilized in quantifying the available data for testing the hypothesis. The findings following the computation are as shown in the Table 2. The observed value is significant at 0.05; therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different religious background. T-test at 0.05 alpha level was the main statistical method used to test this hypothesis. The finding following the outcome of the test is presented in the Table 3. With reference to the Table 3, the calculated value is less than the critical value, hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis four

There is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different careers. Various occupations in which the respondents are engaged are considered as career. The statistical method used to test the hypothesis is Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level. The result is presented in the Table 4. The F observed value is not significant at 0.05; therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis five

There is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different educational background. The Analysis of Variance at 0.05 alpha level was the considered statistical method employed for the quantification of available data. The details of the findings are as indicated in the Table 5. The F observed value is not significant, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different educational background.

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study is to highlight and the patterns of marriage instability in modern African society, using Lagos metropolis as a case study. The hypotheses were constructed in a way to see how various couple's involvements and social status could affect the level of their vulnerability to marriage instability.

Hypothesis one

The first hypothesis states that, there is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with polygamous and monogamous family background. The results upheld the hypothesis. This confirms that there is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different family backgrounds. This could be best explained by asserting that all couples are exposed to the same type of life involvement and environmental influence. In fact, a good number of the respondents have parents with the same religious background, while majority claimed that their parents are not from the same village; their spouse's parents are not from the same village. Some respondents claim that their parents and spouse's parents have the same religious background, also that their parents have the same religious affiliation with their parent-in-laws. Evidence from this study shows that family background does a little in shielding the newly wedded couple from the marriage instability that pervade the modern African society. This result negates the claims of (Lehrer and Chiswick, 1993; Heaton, 1984; Heaton, Pratt, 1990, cited in Call and Heaton, 1997) while asserting that heterogamy is similarities in race; religion and social status; denominational affiliation, attendance and beliefs are all dimensions of religiosity which promote similarities between a husband and wife, and hence a more stable and satisfactory marriage.

Hypothesis two

The second hypothesis states; there is no significant difference in marriage instability' behaviour among couples with different social status. The aim of this hypothesis is to test whether the social involvement and functions of husbands or wives in the modern African society has any impact on the exposure of family to marriage instability. The work cadre was used as the social status. It ranges among junior staff, senior staff, executive officers and management. The result of the second hypothesis sustains the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different social status. This in a way corroborates the fact that the work level of the spouses may deny them an opportunity of spending a quality time together (Rabiot and Jack, 1992). This may cause poor communication (Rabiot and Jack, 1992). The solitude in which couples often find themselves as a result of their job demands, leaves them closed-in on their problems, especially when families do not support them; this often cause new couples to see no alternative to divorce or separation as a solution to their suffering. The possible explanation to this result is that the level of one's social status is not an automatic antidote to marriage instability. As high social status persons may be vulnerable so also the low social status persons may

Table 1. Comparison of marriage instability behaviour between couples from monogamous and polygamous family backgrounds.

Variable	Family background	N	X	SD	DF	T.obs	T.crit.	P.	Rmk
Marital instability	Monogamy	170	85.5412	17.379	248	0.97	1.96	NS	>0.05
	Polygamy	80	85.3000	20.211					

(0.97 < 1.96, Hypothesis accepted).

Table 2. Comparison of marriage instability among couples with different social status.

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P	RMKS
Main effects	812.722	3	270.907	0.808	NS	
(Soc. Status)	812.722	3	270.907	0.808	NS	
Explained	812.722	3	270.907	0.808	NS	>0.05
Residual	82501.454	246	335.372			
Total	83314.176	249	334.594			

(F (3,246) = 0.808 (p > 0.05). (Hypothesis accepted).

Table 3. Comparison in marriage instability between couples with different religious background.

Variables	Background	N	X	SD	DF	T.obs	T.crit.	P.	Rmk
Marital Instability	Christianity	225	85.498	17.940	248	0.87	1.96	NS	>0.05
	Islam	25	85.160	21.625					

(0.87 < 1.96). (Hypothesis accepted).

Table 4. Comparison in marriage instability behaviour among couples with different careers.

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P	RMKS
Main effects	1383.656	5	276.731	0.824	NS	
Diff. Careers	1383.656	5	276.731	0.824	NS	
Explained	1383.656	5	276.731	0.824	NS	>0.05
Residual	81930.520	244	335.781			
Total	83314.176	249	334.594			

F (5,244)=0.824, p > 0.05. (Hypothesis accepted).

be vulnerable.

Hypothesis three

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in marriage instability between couples with different religious background. The aim of this hypothesis is to test the role of religion in either promoting or checkmating the spread of the marriage instability and also to see whether a particular religion could do well by checkmating the spread of the causes of the instability. The result informs the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference in the instability of marriage between couples

with different religious background As Muslims are vulnerable, so also Christians, and African traditional religious persons are vulnerable. 90% of the respondents who volunteered to return their questionnaire are Christians. This result confirms the thinking that informs this study that despite all the behavioural modification agents that we have in Africa, there is need for professional counseling psychology. Thus, confirming Abane (2003) that family members unspoken thoughts and feelings play an important role in family relationship with one another. This means that there are areas and issues that religion will not handle well in marriage, may be due to its dogmatic approach to issues. Burchinail and Chancellor (year unknown), cited in Kerckhoff (1976), found that after seven years, 96% of catholic marriages,

Table 5. Comparison in marriage instability among couples with different educational background.

Source of variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P	RMKS
Main effects	749.195	5	149.839	0.443	NS	
Diff. Ed. Bgrd	749.195	5	149.839	0.443	NS	
Explained	749.195	5	149.839	0.443	NS	>0.05
Residual	82564.981	244	338.381			
Total	83314.176	249	334.594			

F (5,244)=0.443, P > 0.05. (Hypothesis accepted).

86% of protestant marriages, and 78% of catholic/protestant marriages had survived. Of those interfaith marriages they found that 80% survived if the wife was catholic, and 75% if the husband was catholic. A thorough look at the courtship history of the respondents, show that 80% of the respondents claimed to have met either in a church, mosque or school fellowship. Also four of the respondents indicated that their religious leaders introduced their spouses to them. This number forms 1.6%, in addition, 83 out of 250 which forms 33.2% indicates that the religious inclination of their spouse attracted them. Only 116 out of 250 that is 46.4% said that they went through counseling session in church, mosque and school fellowship before marriage. This result confirms a study carried out by Bennet (2004) on effect of religious value on marriage satisfaction.

Hypothesis four

The fourth hypothesis states that, there is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different careers. The aim of this hypothesis was to test whether there could be a job in which African married people are engaged that could be very helpful in making their home non conducive for marriage instability. Careers that Africans had been engaged in before the Western intervention in Africa were among the list of jobs. Attention was also given to modern day jobs. These jobs are; Civil service, Business, Clergy, Banking, Insurance, Stock-Broking and Farming. The retired persons were considered alongside.

The result of the hypothesis affirms that, there is indeed no significant difference in marriage instability' behaviour among couples with different careers. This means that the careers considered here are not in any means an escaping route from marriage instability. This result corroborates Kabwegyere (1972) in a wider sense. Because he opened that it is the desire after a white-collar job that has exposed young African couples to marriage instability. However, this study shows that as a man who has gone out for a white collar job is vulnerable so also the one that choose to stay in the village. 60.8% of the respondents are Civil servants 14.0% are Businessmen, 11.6% are Clergymen, 11.2% are Banker/Insurers, 0.4% are Farmers while 2.0% are

Retirees.

Hypothesis five

The fifth hypothesis states: there is no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different educational backgrounds. This hypothesis aims to test whether the educational qualification of couples in modern African society could play a role in affecting the level and spread of marriage instability. The educational background considered for this study are; Primary school certificate, Senior Secondary School Certificate, Nigeria College of Education Certificate, Ordinary National Diploma, Certificate in Nursing, Higher National Diploma, First degree or equivalent, Master's degree and Ph.d. 3.6% of the respondents holds primary school certificate; 7.6% hold, Senior Secondary School Certificate 21.2% hold National College of Education Certificate Ordinary National Diploma or Nursing Certificates. 46% hold first degree or equivalent; 21.2% hold masters degree while 0.4% hold doctoral degree.

The result of this hypothesis confirms that there is no significant difference in the level of marriage instability among couples that have different educational background. This result confirms an alarming signal that educational qualification does not insulate the present husbands and wives in the modern African society from marriage instability. This result shows that educational attainment does not really make one completely free from marriage instability, except possibly by the sacred laws (Borgatta, 2000) or constant visit to a professional marriage counselor for a consistent marriage assessment (Rabiot and Jack, 1992).

Implication of the study

This study has serious implications for the married couples, marriage counsellors, counselling psychologists and the society in general. Marriage therapists need to be more prominent and available in African society. It seems marriage counselors have been operating behind the scene in the modern African society unlike in other countries of the world; where marriage counseling is accessible to the entire populace. There is a provision of

online service, one can easily locate marriage-counseling clinic. Attending to marriage issue is not exclusively reserved for the pastors though a large number of pastors are exposed to skills in counseling psychology.

The results obtained in this study have demonstrated the realities of marriage instability among couples in Lagos metropolis. The findings from the study have great multi-dimensional implications for marriage counselors, spinsters and bachelors, married couples as well as the government. This is because the problems that confront marriages are direct concern of the entire society. It therefore means that, to ensure marital stability, couples should be encouraged to make a deliberate decision of meeting a marriage counselor for their marriage assessment. The findings also corroborate the fact that marital instability in modern African society is the result of several factors; some of which have nothing to do with spiritualism. The main implication of the study for the nation is that, if the causes of marriage instability were addressed at the appropriate levels and quarters, it would not be too difficult for the government to achieve her initiated war against corruption. The war would be won with little or no stress.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this study demand urgent attention by all concerned, including counseling psychologists, marriage counselors, religious leaders, married couples and the entire public. This is because the study has revealed and confirmed the reality of marriage instability. Prevention they say is better than cure. Therefore, the results from this study should be of paramount interest and concern to marriage counselors.

Therefore, in order to reduce these causes of marriage instability to the barest minimum, the researcher feels that religious leaders should be recommended for training in counseling psychology, because evidence abound that some issues that are spiritualized needs not to be spiritualized but be addressed psychologically. To do this properly, the religious leaders will do well by acquiring some professional counselling skills.

Having observed from the findings, the ignorance of the causes of marriage instability as displayed by large number of the respondents in a city where the general slogan is "shine your eyes" the researchers feel that the voice of the counselling psychologists who specialize in family life and marriage is not well heard. Therefore, the researcher believes that more families would be saved from marriage destroyers if counseling psychologists choose to speak beyond the classroom environment and speak to the public; taking advantage of the media houses. It would not be out of place if marriage counseling psychologists could organize marriage seminars both at schools and at religious houses so as to sensitize couples on how marriage instability subtly creeps into families.

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