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# THE EFFECTS OF CHILDLESSNESS ON MARITAL COHESION IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNITIES

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**Abstract:** This study examines infertility as a significant factor contributing to marital instability, influenced by primordial beliefs and modern technological advancements. Since reproduction is a key component of marriage stability, infertility often challenges this foundation. Previous research has focused mainly on divorce among women and polygamy among men, reflecting limited understanding of the broader effects of infertility on marriage. This study explores how infertility leads to issues such as loss of affection, mistrust, extramarital affairs, depression, and emotional distress within marriages. Additionally, it investigates how religion, education, and socio-economic status of couples influence the relationship between infertility and marital instability. The findings aim to provide empirical insight into the complex interplay of these factors in marital relationships.

**Keywords:** infertility, marital instability, marriage, culture, socio-economic status

## INTRODUCTION

Every marriage has a fundamental purpose for its existence. It is through this purpose of existence that such marriage could weigh its relevance especially within an environment or a larger society from which it draws its existence. It relations with that environment so such that the goal, function or target that reset, is accomplished. The degree to which marriage accomplishes its goal is crucial in determining the stability of such marriage. Isiugo-Abanihe (1984) reinforces this assert that stability helps in understanding whether marriage is performing well and achieving the one of the basic reason why contracted. For a marriage to be stable, reproduction by giving birth to offspring play crucial role. The fertility factor is important consideration in marriage stability. It then follows that fertility is important as any other relationship in marriage stability.

The improvement of blissful marriage in all ramifications, therefore rest on the fertility of couple. The direct consequence of this factor that reproduction occupying the top objectives of marriage, in ensuring that is successful and stable ( in fertility often times result to disintegration of love and marriage, though, marriage is a lifelong contract based on the tenet of “for better for worse”. However, the expectation of the wedlock goes with corresponding result exhibited by given birth to a child, or children.

Crucial to infertility in marital instability are a number of variables. These variables could range from lack of love to insincerity, extra marital affairs, depression, polygamy and divorce. The more the variables are perceived

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as impacting on the terms of determining instability. According to Isiugo-Abanihe, (1998) these challenges and pressures are part of the instability. He further opined that the infertility can be wholly accepted and managed by the couple as a marital challenge in their enduring love but pressure from society/ extended family weaken the relationship. The marital instability and the inter play of the various variables prevalent in infertility as viewed and experienced by couple and society are relevant to the study.

### **Statement of Problem**

It is therefore necessary to empirically study how these factors contribute to the challenges of infertility and marital instability, consequently, the study also examine the influence of religion, educational level and socio-economic status of the couple on infertility and its effect on marital instability.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of infertility on marital instability in a modern societies. Consequently, this chapter reviews the relevant literature under the following sections as: concept of infertility, problems of infertility, problems of infertility in marital instability, empirical study on infertility and marital instability.

#### **Concept of Infertility**

Infertility is one of concept used in the study of marital instability. Infertility has been most frequently presented in the literature in theories of reproductive health. As a concept infertility falls within the broad spectrum of health care system as it relates to reproduction. It could be viewed as a result and consequence of the couple not being able to produce a child. It could also be viewed from the health perspective and natural cause. The infertility can be of source in the wife or the husband and at times on both husband and wife (Abanihe, (1994). There are different definition for the concept of infertility. They are from various perspectives from which it could be viewed as the “lack of health effectiveness to effect reproduction. It was also considered as a situation unfavorable and inability to have a baby. The emphasis within their definitions is the feeling attached to health of the masculinity and femininity traits of the individual and the same time his/ her dispositions towards reproduction. He also explained the term within the feelings which couple has about his or her marriage or marriage experience in relation to having an offspring. He had earlier defined infertility as a poor state of health of the husband or wife in relation to their reproductive organ which invariably contribute to not able to pregnate or conceive.

In line with the feelings of African belief and culture, Abanihe uche (1994) defined infertility as a link to ancestral cause, link to taboo or superstition. He went further to explain that when a cause of barrenness place on a family or individual as a result of any misgiving, this can lead to infertility in both man and woman. It could also be a taboo committed by the mother, which negate the spirit of the land and thereby the punishment result to infertility of the affected baby unless the “god” is appeased and all sacrifices performed. However, emphasized and explained infertility as only a symptom related to malfunction of reproductive organ of either of the partner or both partners.

The various definitions and explanation above suggest that there is no universally accepted definition of infertility manly because of the difficulty of defining the concept in precisely meaningful terms. Also, the individual’s expression of the term is effective, emotion a personal response to the estimation of the degree to which some

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medical aspects are attached. Infertility therefore represent a complex assemblage of both medical and traditional belief.

### **Infertility in Woman and Man**

A couple is considered infertile if they have not had a pregnancy after one year of unprotected sexual intercourse. It may be possible to discover an easily treatable cause for infertility by taking a careful history and performing a good examination (Shodeinde et al 1995). Infertility in woman may be due to:

- i. A hormonal Problem: if her menstrual cycle is normal, her hormones are probably normal
- ii. A physical problem: An abnormality in any of the female organs can cause infertility
- i. Infection: An infection in the vagina or cervix can affect sperm movement, tubes infection can cause blockage of the tubes and a uterine infection can prevent implantation of the fertilized egg.
- ii. Sexual Habits: The most favourable position of sexual intercourse for conception is with the man on top and woman lying on her back. The woman should remain lying down for at least ½ hour after sexual intercourse. Sexual intercourse should be encouraged during the woman's fertile period, mid-way between her menstrual periods (day 10 to day 18). They should have intercourse every other night during this period.

o confirm any of the above cause of infertility in woman, the following must be examined menstrual history, gynecology history, obstetric history, contraception history, sexual history and medical history.

Shodeinde et al (1995) observed that infertility in man may be done to blockage in the tubes, chronic illness, and mumps after puberty, congenital malformation including undescended testes how or absent sperm count.

Male infertility can be explained as in ability to initiate a pregnancy after one year of unprotected regular intercourse. It affects approximately 15% of couple, many of whom have medical history to suggest the likelihood of reproductive disorder. According to Obi (2005), 30% of infertility in couples is caused by male factor alone. In another 20% both the partners have detectable abnormalities. Thus, a male factor play a prominent role in about 50% of infertile couples.

### **Infertility and Marriage**

The role of infertility in marriage in sub-sahara Africa is becoming increasingly important in the context of marital instability. Infertility studies in the recent past, however, have been dominated by findings almost exclusively from women (Bankole 2003). Regrettably policies and programmes based on such findings have not had expected success in increasing the infertility problem on man and simultaneously reducing overall marital instability in sub-Saharan Africa, analysis of man infertility on marriage could assume an essentially prominent effect on the individual marital stability. It is assumed in African context that women are the determinant factor of infertility. Most studies carried out in Nigeria and other African countries. Abanihe uche, (2000); have all asserted the domineering infertility factor on women.

Due to the fact that most infertility problem, in African are adduced to women, the marital instability are pronounced in the areas of polygamous practice, divorce, extra marital affairs, suspicion and maltreatment. These assertions are also corroborated by Todaro (2003) who he concluded in his study that men negative attitude and belief in infertility in men is a major reason why their wives are always pointed out to be infertile, even when orthodox medicine prove it that the problem is with the men.

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The persistence of infertility and marital instability in sub- Sahara Africa and Nigeria in particular has been the subject of considerable investigation during the past decade Abanihe uche, (2000). Socio- cultural forces, educational and poverty are the major factors to the problem.

✓ Socio-cultural factor: The African culture never accepted that problem of infertility stem from the man. The general belief is based on the fact that the infertility is mostly women problem. If couples cannot produce a child with a limited period of marriage, the man will be encouraged to marry another wife. The African culture belief in 'chain' generation to maintain the family lineage and tie.

However, when a new wife come in the family setting is becoming threatened with suspicion, rivalry, hatred, enmity and others which contribute to marital instability (Olufemi, 2004).

✓ Education: the level of education contribute immensely to the low awareness on infertility. This result to general belief that infertility is the problem of women as such nothing is wrong with men when it comes to infertility issue. The low level of infertility awareness contribute to marital instability.

✓ Poverty: The abject poverty in the Nation is a major factor of infertility. Lack of money to carry out extensive medical test to determine the infertile couples result to unethical practice and the bias in concluding that infertility is limited to thhe women. This, therefore, greatly contribute a threat to marriage (Becker and Oni, 2001).

All the factors above have a dire consequences on infertility and thus invariably have effect on marital instability.

### **Empirical Studies on Infertility And Marital Instability**

Many studies are conducted on infertility and marital instability, it is therefore necessary to empirically discuss them. Donovan (2005) conducted a study on infertility and marriage in Kenya , the study used twenty – eight (28) families, the results indicated divorce, lack of affection and prevalence of polygamy which threatened marital instability.

In another studies carried out by Salvacy (2001) on infertility in Niger State. The result show a significant effect of infertility on marital instability which manifest in hatred, suspicion, lack of affection and love, divorce and extra marital affairs.

Anikpo mark (2003) carried a studies on infertility and women. According to the results of their studies, women are always subjected to different threats, abuse and ill-treatments for a cause that is not their own. These assertions are also supported by Allen and Sulaimon, (2005) that infertility contribute greatly to marital instability and the effects are pronounced on high rate of divorce, poverty, polygamy, anger and hatred, lack of affection and love.

### **CONCLUSION**

There is nexus between infertility and marriage instability in this empirical studies. Therefore, modern technological advancement to a large extent reduced the risk of infertility. The study also emphasized the fact that cultural, religious and economy belief system stem from family ancestral causes is a possible impediment. But, educational background of couples has also reduced the incidencies of marital instability and increase in knowledge to modern techniques. In developed countries, the problems of infertility has been overcome with science and this is also snowballing into the rest of the world.

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