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"Ritualism and Spiritualism" The Modus Operandi of Fraudsters in Cybercrime Activities in Nigeria: Implications for Social Work Practices

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ABSTRACT

The Information Communication Technology otherwise called ICT has made human existence more meaningful in the twenty first century and, the entire universe has become a global village with all it needs at our finger tips. The unrestricting activity on the internet, through the use of various electronic devices between two or more communicators (via calling, chatting, messaging etc.) has enhanced human socio-economic endeavors either positively or negatively. Some internet users in cyberspace are well cultured, they use the web for productive purposes while other users are rebellious in nature, their greed trodden as they most often times use the web for series of obscured and shady deals such as promiscuity acts, black mailing, gambling, fraudster businesses, illicit drugs and arms dealing, and to mention just a few. Those that explore the internet and pervert for criminal opportunities are cyber-criminals. The study investigates the threat of ritualism and spiritualism in committing cybercrime in Nigeria. A subject that has not received sufficient academic attention and its social and economic disadvantages has largely been overlooked in government responses. Relying on available public data, this article examines the phenomenon of cybercrime among youths and the rate at which it has become intensified, using ritualism and spiritualism means to commit this heinous act. It becomes imperative to highlight the implications for society, security and possible way forward. The study adopted secondary data such as relevant journals, articles, online educational sites and print media. Anomie theory of Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton were used as theoretical explanation for the study. The study concluded that society is the womb of crime. Cybercrime is a worldwide problem and relatively new. The strategies it has taken in Nigeria through the involvement of ritualism and spiritualism is based on belief system and practice among Africans including Nigeria. However, the role of social workers is also discussed. Adequate attention in provision of employment or empowerment to graduate youths will go a large way in reducing ceaseless act of cybercrime in Nigeria.

KEY WORDS:

Ritualism; Spiritualism;
Fraudsters; Cybercrime;
Internet

Introduction

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has been on the increase in recent years across the globe. The increased access to the internet has opened a window for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. Dala (2006), observed that information technology is a double edged sword, which can have positive and negative impacts. To Dana (2001) a sizeable number of users in cyberspace are well behaved, engage the web for productive purposes and are law

abiding. Danguah&Longe (2011) posited that some internet users act improperly, go against the law and use dishonest means to cheat other internet users in the cyber world. Those who explore the internet and pervert it for criminal opportunities are cyber criminals. The new methods and strategies in committing internet criminality in Africa including Nigeria involved women menstruation pad, her breast, private parts and undies. In his study, Elusoji (2019) suggested that female undies (bra or pants) have become necessary demand items for ritualist and weight by internet criminals normally tag in Nigeria as Yahoo Plus. However, this undeserved threaten have created phobia into the heart of many women. According to Dala (2006) ladies between the ranges of 14-35years are mostly considered as required ingredients for money making by yahoo-boy. Their breast, menstruation pad, pants and their private part are highly demanded by yahoo-plus.

In Nigeria, the majorities of cyber criminals are young people and are found in tertiary Institutions (Adeniran 2008, Tade&Aliyu 2011). Their recent practice of the act of criminality seeks to combine spiritual element, ritualism and internet surfing (Adeniran, 2008). This is similar to what Warner (2011) reported in Ghana about the existence of a klepto-theological paradigm created to abet the perpetration of internet crime. He called this "sakawa". According to him, sakawa serves two main functions: It protects the cyber criminals and ensures their financial success. Melvin, Agunbiade&Ayotunde (2011), treat Yahoo boys as a unit and analyze it from purely philosophical and psychosocial perspectives. The blending of spiritualism, ritualism with machines to undo others (cybercrime-ritualism nexus) is seriously becoming a social problem in Nigeria. The Nigeria where this study is intended for has in recent times experienced a high invasion of cyber criminals. This study seeks to assess the effect of cybercrime related ritualism on socio-economic activities in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The study adopted secondary data such as relevant journals, articles, online educational sites and newspaper publications.

Conceptualizing Cybercrime

A number of researchers have reported that cyber-crime involves criminal activities, in which a criminal offence is committed with the criminal intention to harm an individual using the contemporary communication systems available in internet services and mobile phones (Wall, 2015). A survey such as that conducted by McGuire & Dowling (2013) showed that cybercrime could be cyber-dependent or cyber-enable crimes use computer and its related activities to carry out its illicit dealings, cyber-dependents rely on computer and its programs to carry out its activities (Such as, hacking and malware distribution). In recent year, crime associated with cyber has taken a new dimension internationally, particularly within students of under graduated tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Tade&Aliyu, 2011). In 2010, the National white cybercrime centre and the federal bureau of

investigation reported that Nigeria was ranked third in the world with the highest rate of cyber-crime, a phenomenon that is commonly known as yahoo-yahoo (Tade&Aliyu, 2013). Recent evidence suggests that improvement in technology has broadened the scope of communication across nations of the world aided primarily using internet system. Previous studies have reported that widespread adoption of the internet has brought about two different and separate events across the world; and first, it has helped in second, it has increased the rate of ill behaviors or unacceptable social behavior and crime particularly among youths. However, the usage (if not over use) of Internet has exposed many young people to activities related to cyber-crime (for example, yahoo-yahoo), a modern form of theft. It is within this confine that these segments review relevant literatures to problematize yahoo-yahoo as a distinct form of internet fraud (Okeshola&Adeta, 2013).

Globalization has led to rapid development all over the world, it has reduced stress and made our engaged a lot easier. Despite demerit brought by globalization, it also opens way for negativity. Internet use is one of the inventions introduced by globalization. The sole aimed is to bring the world together and to make gathering of information very easy and fast. The internet has created unlimited access for both legitimate and illegitimate transactions. Some group of people harness the positive use of the internet and use it for deceit. This gave birth to the phenomenon called cybercrime. It has become a significant area of interest as perpetrators, victims and motives vary greatly in cybercriminal activities (Adeniran, 2018)

Cybercrime-Ritualism

A number of researchers have reported that cyber criminality in Nigeria involves snatching of female under wears, sometimes at gunshot, allegedly for ritual purposes. The stealing of female pants for ritual has been on the rise because religious leaders no longer preach about the ills of the society. However, the veracity of the claims that such stolen undies are used for ritual purposes has not been established (Christians Press Association of Nigeria, 2019, Tade, 2003; Jaishanker, 2017). However, this ugly development has instilled fear into the heart of ladies. Dalal (2006) argued that, women between the ages of 14 and 37 are allegedly considered hot cake by ritualists. Their used pants are sold for as much As three hundred and fifty Thousand naira; the price can be higher, if it is confirmed to have body fluids. Recent evidenced suggests that many young ladies in Nigeria had taken to going out without wearing their undies, it caused quite a stir and trended on many online platforms. More so, some ladies think not putting on pants is the solution to the menace but being careful is the core solution (Ribadu, 2007).

A number of researchers have reported that recent action of ladies was to outwit the Yahoo-plus who had suddenly developed crazy love for undies worn by ladies, which they attempt to steal after having intimacy sessions with them (Christians Press Association of Nigeria, 2019; Adeta, 2014; Dalal, 2006). In some instance, the ladies were simply accosted on the road at gunpoint and ordered them to pull off and hand over their undies which Yahoo-plus hoodlums turned around to use

for rituals to bolster their fraudulent internet activities (Tade&Aliyu, 2011). There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving lady pants in recent cyber criminality that have reported that some ladies have become victims because they were looking for material things, especially female youth corps members, who intended to places in cities with believed to access social amenities and lived extravagant lifestyles . In the process, the people (cybercrime) are there to receive them, give them what they want and have what they needs from the victims (Vanguard, July 19, 2019).

A number of researchers have reported that people have been recruited to go for ladies pants for attractive prices; the fear of Yahoo Boys has become the beginning of wisdom in Nigeria. Many ladies pour anointing oil and sprinkle holy water on their pants before wearing them because of Yahoo Boys. The anointing oil and holy water had the capacity to neutralize any evil plan of Yahoo Boys on their pants (Tade&Aliyu, 2011; Joantine, 2016; Dalal, 2006). Recent evidence suggests that many ladies washed mostly on Saturday and sit by the rope until their pants get dried. There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving ladies pants in cybercrime that despite the seeming extra care on the part of many girls not to fall victim of yahoo ritualism, some of the yahoo boys or street boys as they are called in most state in Nigeria, Oftentimes boast that Baba God will always provide data for subscription; Data here means whatever they need for ritual while subscription means renewal of ritual to sustain cash flow (Ribadu, 2007; Jaishanker, 2017).

Cybercrime- Spiritualism

There are certain events in life that hard work or physical strength cannot achieve except one understand and possess some spiritual powers. Notably, some qualitative studies have indicated that the Nigeria cybercriminals use magical powers and human parts to defraud their victims all over the world (Malvin&Ayotunde, 2010; Ibrahim 2016). While some of these studies have implicitly observed the spiritual dimension of cyber-fraud (Aransiola&Asindemade, 2011; Ajirola, 2015; Ibrahim 2016; Lazarus &Okolorie 2019). Others have explicitly examined the same phenomenon (Melvin &Ayotunde, 2010; Tade, 2013). A number of researchers have reported that most of these victims are mainly swindled in the context of love and friendship (Trend Micro & Interpol, 2017).

Many cybercriminal (Yahoo-Boys) control their clients (victims) with various spiritual means, mostly called African jazz (Ajirola, 2015; Information Nigeria 2017). Such spiritual means include, for instance, putting spells on victims photographs in shrines and communicating with them via the telephone (Information Nigeria, 2017). Through words –of –power (Peavy, 2005), locally know as do as I say (Ajirola, 2015). The do as I say spell or words –of-power include the use of verbal postulations to unlock connect force that can make the spiritual manifest itself in the physical realm (Peavy, 2015). Concerning the role of charm and magic in online scam victimization, a surveys such as that conducted by

Lazarus and Okolories (2019) which interviewed 40 Economic and Financial Crime Commission agents, one of the ritual practices used by some Nigerian cybercriminals to manipulate their victims is to put victims picture under the laptop that is later after the spiritualist (native doctor) might have worked on the picture (cast a spell on it possibly in his or her shrine). It is then necessary and sufficient for fraudsters to simply place the photograph under the computer while chatting with the victims of the fraud. Cybercriminal normally not only used spiritual mean to fraud their victims but also to protect themselves at the process while carrying out their criminal activities (Adebayo, 2013; Lazarus & Okolories, 2019).

Effects of Cybercrime Activities in Nigeria

Cybercrime like every other crime that has no value in the scene of pride has become a burden on Nigeria and her populace. Across the globe Nigerians are given respite to prove the human in him/her before being partnered with. This was the more reason why Ribadu (2007) pointed that cybercrime has depict the image of Nigeria by discouraging business transactions such as trade and financial investment within the country and any foreign investors. This detriment is upon the citizens and the national security agencies as Nigerian bank drafts and checks are not suitable international instruments of finance. Nigerian Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and providers of email at a time were being blackballed all over the internet. And international companies and foreigners view Nigerians with distrust source. In his study Chawki (2009) argued that few organizations blocked a whole internet networks and traffic that are from Nigeria. And till date modalities is still ongoing in a bid to segregate and disconnect Nigerian email traffic due to cybercrime.

Many scholars across discipline have reported that Cybercrime has so far dented the current and potential capabilities of Nigeria in any nation. For instance, in India, majority of cybercrime offenders in Hyderabad city since year 2015 were Nigerians, showing that about 90% of foreigners apprehended for such crime were Nigeria citizens. It equally shows that out of the 67 aliens apprehended for cybercrime, 60 persons were from Nigerians while Cameroon has 5, and South Africans owns 2 (Lasania, 2016). More importantly is the assertion by Iroegbu (2016) on a report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies UK, dated 2014, it evaluate the yearly expense of cybercrime to Nigeria at about 0.08% of the GDP, resulting to about one hundred and twenty seven billion naira. And according to the 2014 Annual report of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) which signifies that, between year 2013 and 2014, cybercrime on e-payment of the Nigerian financial sector expanded tremendously. These negative effects show how intolerable cybercrime is to a nation and the entire universe at large (Iroegbu, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored by anomie theory which is deeply rooted in the

tradition of classical sociology of Emile Durkheim (1897/1951, 1893/1984) and Robert k. Merton (1968). *Anomie theory* posits how vast and visible social conditions control deviant behavior and crime. It extends to lack of commitment, shared values, standards, and rules that are paramount in regulating behaviors and aspirations of individuals. It is an intervening circumstance by which social (dis) organization impacts individual agony and deviant behavior. According to Durkheim (1984) anomie is an outcome of rapid social change and deterioration of morality that weakens traditional institutions which certainly causes a decline in authority of such institutions in the economic sphere which as well, changes the standards lurking social inequality. Durkheim's perspective of anomie centre on the normlessness in the society as an outcome of breakdown in morality, leading to pathological society.

From the sociological paradigm of Merton, imbibing selected themes from Durkheim's analogy of anomie theory, Merton posited that certain mal-integration of the culture structure influences modern society and increases crime rate due to great expectation from the people on both material goals and shared sensationalism on monetary successes that weakens individual commitment to social rules and produces an exact intense strain on individuals in disadvantaged social positions. Merton was concern on how social structure in itself breeds deviance as an outcome of lack of morality reinforced by developing goals and intercepting the means of achieving them by the society.

Merton's explanation of anomie theory best explains the Nigeria situation of crime and deviant behaviors among the youths and some elderly alike, holding to Merton's insinuations on the innovators as explained above. Anomie theory and cybercrime in Nigeria is an attempt to explain certain factors that encourages deviance in the society as a result of breakdown in moral constraint in the society. From the ongoing, Merton's perspective became a multilevel theory whereby the value commitments, structural positions, and behavior of individuals are nested within larger structures of shared values and unequal opportunities (Baumer2007). Therefore, cybercrime and all other nefarious behaviors innovated by the so called yahoo boys or better still can best be understood as a result of how poverty can cause youths involvement into crime in Nigeria. These youths subscribe to the culturally acceptable goal of economic/financial success. Thus, the culturally acceptable means of attaining this goal is not accessible to all due to different reasons of which, poverty is one. In an outcome, youths now participates in cybercrime, improvising diabolical means as an "innovator" in a bid to achieve economic/financial wealth, as it is appreciated by the society. Anomie theory best explains cybercrime, identifying that the society is the prime factor originating youths to engage in cybercrime.

Using Ritualism/Spiritualism by Fraudsters and Cybercrime Activities in Nigeria

Based on the belief system Nigerians and Africans share, the ritual and

spiritualism cannot be ruled out. In fact, it forms the greater part of an African man perspective of what happens around him. Therefore, cybercriminal seeking to maximize their success decided to combine the ritualism and spiritualism, in internet surfing to perpetrate crime on the cyber world. Recent evidence suggest that in some countries in West African, cyber-crimes are performed by people of all ages ranging from young to old, but in most instance, within the young (Information Nigeria, 2017). Studies of Young Entrepreneurs sphere (2012) show that several youths engage in cyber-crime with the aim of emerging as the best hacker or as a profit making venture since the tools for hacking in our modern world has become affordable by many.

Ribadu (2007) asserts that human parts are sold in some market in Nigeria and that fresh human head could sold for 70,000 and above while a skull is sold for 20,000. Fresh legs are sold for 30,000 each while decomposed leg is sold for 20,000. A fresh finger is sold for 4,000 while decomposed are sold 3,000. Fresh intestines are sold for 20,000 while dry ones are sold for 4,000. Pieces of fresh bones are sold for 2,000 and above. Recent evidence suggests that the nations Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) is not spared from the rising trend of killing for rituals that body of unidentified lady was recovered at the lower Usuma Dam junction, along Dutse-Bwari road, one of her breasts was cut off, while the rest of the body was cut into two from the abdomen, an indication that the killing was for rituals (Lazarus & Okolories, 2019).

A number of researchers have reported that female parts are more in demand than their male counterparts. This is because of what described as the potency of some parts like the breasts and lower private parts in money rituals and other purposed (Information Nigeria, 2017; Aransiola & Asindemade, 2011). There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving spiritualism and human parts in cybercrime that have reported that fear of juju and witchcraft in Nigeria and Africa is real and this has kept many young and old people away from their villages and this has serious negative implications for national development, particularly rural areas (Nwolise, 2012; Jegede & Olowookere, 2014; Malvin & Ayotunde, 2010). An underlying assumption for the continuous relevance of fortification throughout the life course is the philosophy of "Ogunlaye" that the world is full of battles and hurdles, and that, all social beings must be spiritually prepared to reduce or avoid mishaps in life. Even with the embracement of Christianity and Islam among Nigerians, Jegede & Olowookere (2014) asserts that the thoughts of people about life and their attitudes to it are still shaped by old world view.

However, they exhibit in their day-to-day interpersonal interactions within and outside the churches and mosques. Hence, it will safe to infer that spiritualism occupies a germane position in the world view of the Nigerian people particularly in achieving personal or collective goals. A number of researchers have reported that some acclaimed high and mighty indulge in ritual killings. Some politicians and government officials have been accused by arrested suspects and herbalist who

allege that they use human being for rituals in order to sustain their affluence as well as remain in position of power (Jegede&Olowookere, 2014; Tade&Aliyu, 2011). It is on this note that cybercrime in Nigeria cannot be condoned with levity, it had to a large extent, gone beyond fraudulent act alone, it had metamorphous from yahoo-yahoo to yahoo plus (+); meaning an additional input into the shady business of cybercrime by these criminals who now uses ritual and spiritual ends to justify their means ((Jegede&Olowookere, 2014).

Implications for Social Work Practices

This study revealed the ordeals committed by notorious gangsters who sought to make ends meet through cyber criminalities using human parts in both ritual and spiritual means. This ugly scenery has become prevalent within Nigeria society and it has also, tarnished the image of all and sundry Nigerians within the globe. Therefore, it has become imperative for trained professionals such as; the social workers who can provide the needed assessment, support, interventions, and social policies that could mitigate this social menace.

Social work in the womb of time is a discipline with dual opportunity, either as an educator or a practice based profession which is concern with welfare aids, support and assistance to the needy in a progressive manner and, to every other desired human being.

It is embedded by social science theories and guided by rules, standard and principles of social justice, respect for diverse culture, collective responsibility and human right principles. Social work implicates interplay between people and social structures in a bid to ameliorate challenges of life and social well-being (Forde & Lynch, 2013). By promoting and aiding socioeconomic growth and development, supporting grass root empowerment of people and facilities, social cohesion, liberation from oppression and abuses are all attribute of social work practice. Social workers' are people who practices as a professional with a degree in social work. The sole responsibility of social workers is to care for people or group of individuals and families that are confronted by problems affecting their livelihood. Therefore, cyber criminals are young youths who deserve care and concern via interventions. A practicing social worker must be skillful in knowledge to teach and develop methods or approaches in which clients' will find suitable in easing his/her plight and enhancing their lives and knowledge. Social workers are recognized as worthwhile game players in the society and as well as a very important agent of change who sees all cyber fraudsters as clients and ensure that they are well cared for by making them to understand their plights and also willing to put an end to their sufferings. However, social workers are involved in policy development, advocacy services and as well engage in research work (Cipolle, 2010) which can be of more relevance/significant to programmes and projects that will promote the livelihood of young cyber fraudsters in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The society is the womb of crime. Although cybercrime is a global

phenomenon and relatively new, the dimension it has taken in Nigeria through the involvement of ritualism and spiritualism is based on belief system and practice among Nigerians and Africans in general. It is very obvious that the level of youth involvement in cybercrime has reached an escalation stage. Youths today are no longer thinking of legitimate means of livelihood but the common and lucrative cybercrime, and to make it easier, many have adopted the use of spiritual means of convincing the targets to the craft.

Recommendations

The effort of law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system and the government has not been instrumental in curbing the menace hence, the continuous rise in the level of involvement in cybercrime. Therefore, there is need for adequate laws relating to cybercrime and religious practices to be made compulsory in all institution of learning where the virtues of good moral conducts would be preached while, job creation and proactive cyber surveillance are taken into cognizance in reducing the rate of youth's involvement in cybercrime perhaps to barest minimal. More so, the role of social workers should be enhanced by the government and the society at large in creating awareness, sensitization, educating and supporting the government and all security agencies within the society towards having a nation free of crime and social vices.

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Phenomenon of Elderly Male Couples in Ilorin Metropolis: Implications for Social Work

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ABSTRACT

From time immemorial, marriage between husband and wife had been filled with bundles of experiences ranging from love, enthusiasm, lost and melancholic feelings which every couple manage within their home in order to live a fulfilled life, be compatible and cohabit peacefully with one another amidst several challenges surrounding them. However, the objectives of this study identified the core anomalies confronting elderly male married couples in Ilorin metropolis. It also, states the causes and its health consequences on elderly male couples in a bid to proffer possible solutions via the significance of social workers. The study used a qualitative data collected from 12 elderly men residing in the three geographical locations of Ilorin metropolis (that is: Ilorin west, East, and South local government areas) through an in-depth interview guide. The collected data was transcribed and was coded, using Nvivo12 and was analyzed thematically. Result of the study revealed that elderly men between the ages of 60 and 69 years encounter series of problems ranging from boredom, lack of sexual intimacy, lack of regular communication, jealousy and anger. While among older adults between the ages of 70 years and above suffers problems such as difference in life style/stages, depression, high blood pressure, dementia and the host of other elderly anomalies bedeviling them due to the difficulties experienced from long lifespan marital stay. The study discussed the implications of the findings for social work practice and it also proffer recommendations to relevant agencies, family members, the immediate communities and concern aged couples. And more so, policies and programs that will enhance the role of social work practices should be formulated and upheld by the Nigerian governments, through professionalism of social work.

KEY WORDS:

Elderly male, married couples, older adults, Ilorin metropolis

Introduction

Since the creation of Adam and Eve on planet earth and since the being together of husband and wife in every human society, countless blessings, joy and tribulations have been occurring in individual's marital homes and, without leaving behind the rare challenges and difficulties associated with marriages across the globe. However, the journey of life begins with a step which as well involve travelling with a companion whom every individual (he/she) is expected to identify, communicate, interrelate and interdependent with. The companionship of an adult man and an adult woman is an indivisible union termed marriage (Osarenren (2002), in which one selects a life partner with virtually all unidentified roles. Marriage is a union of two like minds from different backgrounds/up bring,

that come together as husband and wife to live, stay to plan and setup their own family and till death do them part. Scholars' from different disciplines have argued so much on the importance of marriage in every society as a basic functional institution. According to Olugbenga (2018, p.306) marriage is a culturally, religiously and socially an acceptable union between a man and woman called husband and wife. It is seen and perceived as one of the relevant and fundamental human relationships that have the sole established right and obligations revolving between couples, their off springs and more so, between the couples and their in-laws.

Iriogbe (2015, p1) as cited in Onoyase (2017), posited that marriage is a social union that involves coming together of man and woman as husband and wife. Marriage on the other hand as posited by Okorodudu (2010), is a union agreed upon by husband and wife irrespective of all odds involved, with little or no idea. The reasons behind marriages are numerous and these includes; sexual satisfaction, procreation, economic integration, companionship and compatibility, to mention a few. The importance of marriage between husband and wife cannot be over emphasised, it is an intra generation transition programme that entails a life time planning, relationship, and procreation of future generation, (Olugbenga 2018) It has been investigated by several scholars in recent times that most men are disinterested in marrying because of reasons beyond their take, such reasons are: the increasing difficulties in maintaining a happy and stable home (Amato, Johnson, Booth and Rogers, 2003). This is so because, a reasonable amount of marriages today has collapsed due to marital disputes posing a serious threat to the life's of those involved, rather than having a peace, responsible, and satisfying married homes that ought to be pleasant to marital couples (Omeje 2014). Olson & Olson (2000) argued that, marital dispute and discontentment is observed as a major source of marital instability which transcends to divorce, abandonment, single-parenting, separation and marriage failures.

From the foregoing, other contending problems confronting couples decisions to stay/quit a marriage includes but limited to: lack of adequate communication, childlessness, unsatisfactory sex life, distrust, financial constraint/poverty, ignoring boundaries, impatient, emotional or sexual infidelity, boredom, selfishness/jealousy, and value differences, etc. Ojukwu and Obiji (2016) asserts that when partners in a marriage relationship developed displeasure about the character of his/her partner, what ensue negatively thereafter is poor communication. Effective communication connects, bond, and strengthen love and understanding in marital relationship from been broken. According to Esere (2002; 2006), incommunicado set into a marital relationship when there is the absence of effective communication within husband and wife which crumbles most marriages. Fifty percent (50%) of broken relationships today are caused by severe lack of communication between partners (Idowu and Esere, 2007). Again, poverty on the other hand is a daring issue in most marriages and according to Delving,

(2013) financial constraint cripples/breaks up most marriages. Going further is the issue of sexual satisfaction in most marriages, Oladapo (2012) assert that, sex among all other marital roles is classified the topmost aside food and that sexual contentment is a sanctification in marriage. Value orientation, in-laws intrusions, and psycho-emotional condition amounting from family responsibilities/pressure, all of which could cause fears and anxiety or emotional distress are some of the problems encountered in most marriages across board and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa countries, (Ojukwu and Obiji (2016). These problems and many others are the sole objective of this study because, it is pertinent to know what and why are the actual phenomenon's of elderly male couples aside the physical, psychological, socio-economic and health crisis bedeviling aged married men and more so, to identify the consequences and proffer serviceable recommendations with the relevance of social work practice.

Challenges of Elderly Persons

From the biological explanation, ageing comes as a result of the effect from amassing broad array of microscopic and organic deterioration over long period of time which increasingly diminishes the physical and mental competency of man. Becoming aged is neither categorical nor persistent. However, ageing come upon every human as we incline in years. The difference observed in ageing and among elderly people comes gradually and definitely. Furthermore, ageing is linked to other life miseries such as, loosing loved ones, traumatic pains, staying in a too comfort environment and retirement from active service, etc. Elderly people are fragile men and women whose wealth of experience is always handy to the upcoming adults. They are faced with so many difficulties ranging from physical, social, economical; psychological and above all, health challenges. Health challenges take the lead because, 'health' they say is 'wealth' and more so, the decline/diminishing impact from ageing lies most on health factors (WHO, 2021).

It is on this note that the following health challenges remains an issue to the elderly persons. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression, dementia, back, joint and neck pain; diabetes; osteoarthritis; hearing and vision impairment; cataracts and refractive errors etc. Elderly persons sometimes experience one or more of these health challenges at a time and this may as well, risen/ or worsen the severity of its intricacy, this state of health challenges among the elderly is termed geriatric syndromes which regular effects results into various underlying circumstances. This state of health may result to either urinary incontinence, delirium, frailty, pressure ulcers and falls (WHO, 2021). According to Roberts, Wise, & DuBenske (2009), health challenges among elderly couple is a great difficulty because it is only where there is a compassion love between aged couple that their health challenges can be ameliorated giving the fact that one couple may be free of health crisis and may pay attention to the other couple without any respite.

Compassionate love among elderly couples remains significantly relevant in time

of health challenges but, when there is no anomaly between both couples. (Hodes&Suzman 2007).

Material and Methods

Study area

The study was conducted in Ilorin metropolis. Ilorin is the capital city of Kwara state and in the north central region of Nigeria. Kwara state has a land mass of about 36825km² and with population of 2.37 million (2006 census). It is bounded to the North by Niger state, to the South by Osun and Ekiti states, to the East by Oyo state and to the West by Kogi state. The state has 16 local government areas in which one of its local government areas owes a boundary with the people Republic of Benin, a country within the West Africa region. Ilorin metropolis is largely dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group and with Baruba's and Fulani's as the minority group and with significantly Nupe tribes occupying the Northern part of the state. Therefore, the research was conducted in the three local government areas that comprises Ilorin metropolis (that is: Ilorin West, East, and South LGAs respectively) and the study area was purposively selected because it is the most densely populated part of the state where both indigenous and aliens dwell together irrespective of tribe or religion.

Sampling Procedure/Data Collection

The study adopted multi-stage technique, comprising cluster, simple random, and availability sampling methods. The existing local government areas (LGAs) were adopted as clusters, using simple random sampling method, three LGAs namely Ilorin West, East, and South local government areas were selected out of the 16 LGAs in Kwara state. In each of the selected local government areas, six communities were purposively chosen. To reach the participants, a major street was purposely selected and a snowball sampling method was used to select the eligible participants, who were within the age range of 60 years and above. While a total number of 12 male participants were used for the study. Ethically, the participants were told about the rationale for the study and gave their consents before the commencement of the interviews. The study also considered that a sample size of 12 is acceptable for a qualitative study to provide sufficient data for theoretical saturation (Nelson, 2017).

Qualitative method of data analysis was adopted and in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted with the twelve participants at different locations since response was based on trust. Audio recorder was as well, used to collect data from the participants. The audio records were transcribed and categorized into themes to shade more light on the outcomes and non-verbal cues, and other important information were also written on a field note pad.

Analysis

Using Nvivo 12, the data collected was coded inductively and a coding tree was built from simple descriptive codes to more analytical codes formed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and this involves sorting out, interpreting and reporting patterns of connotation (Ritchie et al., 2014). The relationship between the themes and research questions were checked, and labels adequately, indicating the codes were assigned. Labels were issued to the participants as means of identification and to guarantee anonymity according to their age and names answered. For instance, the abbreviation "Mukaila, Male, 65, Taxi driver" indicates a 65 years old male participant nicknamed as Mukaila whose source of livelihood is driving.

Findings

From analyzing the data, the following points arises: i- lack of sexual intimacy, ii- irregular communication, iii- neglect, iv- anger v- difference in life style, vi- depression and, vii- sudden death. All of these are as a result of lackadaisical attitudes of wives and discontented feelings towards husbands.

Phenomenon of the Elderly Male Married Couples

From the foregoing, elderly male married men go through so many challenges as husbands' on one hand and as father on the other, who had worked so hard in taking good care of their wife and children during their youthful age and after which, had absolute confidence and confinement in their respective homes for prosperous living but, many elderly male married men are finding it difficult to mend ways as several reasons are given towards this. A participant has this to say:

- "I am a retiree from the civil service and I had worked for 40 years, my children are grown up and my wife has become a grandmother. My wife and I are just the two left at home but yet I find it very difficult to understand her because she's no longer showing me love, we hardly sit long to discuss or gist as we use to before now. She only cook for me to her own taste and stays in her room to sleep at night, when I call her to my room or visit her in her own room she complains a lot and reject my offer. I hardly make love to her again, not occasionally even. (Ismail, Male, 67 years, retiree)".

According to another participant:

"It is just unfortunate that I am older than I was before, women called wives are ingrate beings that tend to punish their husbands when they become of age. They seize to show love and concern and as well switch the love to their children. No iota of care/attention is given adequately again. At worst, if any child of theirs gives birth to a baby, she leaves to take care of the baby and her child at the expense and detriment of her husband.

Staying there for weeks and if not months while, I faces the brunt. Even if our grown up children who stays apart from us visits, they only spend few time with me, the larger period of time is being spent with their mother in her room talking and laughing, leaving me to myself all alone and the next thing you see is for such a child to come and bid you bye. It's really annoying. (Johnson, Male, 67 years, trader)".

In the same vein, another participant also posits that:

"I made a mistake from the onset not to have married another wife, now am 70 years old and I am depressed by whom I called my wife. She hardly obeys me nor does she cook regularly. All she does is for her to warm up meals that have been cooked by a house made for some number of days and stocked in the fridge for me to eat. I no longer eat fresh meals again. During the day time she is either with a friend, watching films from the TV set, or making calls with her children/siblings. At night she sleeps deep without turning back and even snoring. All of which are scary to my likings. We only have sexual affair when she desires and deem fit to be. I am starved from both ends and never shown love like it was in the recent past. My wife is now my only problem at home, she talks to me without any regard in the presence of all. I derive joy when am with friends and loved ones. (Tunde, Male, 70 years, retired lecturer)"

Reasons for the Elderly Male Married Couples' Phenomenon

The problem associated with the elderly male married couples cannot be over emphasized without looking into the causes and consequences. Many aged men faces one challenges or the other, ranging from health, physical, psychological and to mention a few of these problems and coupled with the socio-economic/political instability in the country. However, many women pay no attention to what goes around with their husbands so long they are both aged. They seem to be less concern about the trauma/feelings that their husbands are undergoing. Women, be they as they are either old or young are ought to be a comforter, a giver of warmth and inspiration. Many elderly men die a natural but unduly death holding to high blood pressure, depression, neglect and abandonment caused on them by their so called wives, especially at older age. Two participants have these to say in an interview session:

"The reason why I had to marry a second wife at my late forties was because my wife started showing me she cares more importantly for the children than me.

We both met initially and love one another but I was able to reason it out that she may later have no time to show me love. She calls upon the grown up child then, to attend to my needs while she stay aside. She would not want me to scorn at any erring child. She does as if the children are for her alone, the *disrespect* knows no bound and *we hardly communicate* fluently as intimate lovers. At a point, she tend to *starve me of my marital rite/obligation* thus, dispute sets in, and to avoid myself of all these embarrassment, I made up my mind marrying a second wife which has stabilize the abnormalities and had restored hope and sound health to my life rather than becoming depressed and hypertensive in my own house (Ibrahim, Male, 69 years, Artisan)".

"Let me start by saying marriage is very good and important in every man's life. Especially when children come in place. However, every man should be careful of whom he takes as wife because women everywhere are all the same and it takes two to tangle. My wife has been my source of joy since we got married in the late 60s. Although her *family background* matters most and she had earlier from the onset took over all liabilities at home and within the neighbour hood making me look quite and irrelevant. She becomes *violent, nagging and troublesome*. She is an *impatient wife* and has this '*over-confidence*' that whatever she wants must be. I had been managing the feelings of discontentment and embarrassment within and without me. My friends and family members have a way of showing their concern but it is done underground because they dare not confront her. Even as we both aged, she still remains the true picture of her very self, while the long due psychological trauma had given me hypertension, depression and inability to spend enough time together with her at home. In fact, my life has been in shambles all the while and my religion does not permit me to marry a second wife else, I would have married one long ago. It is for better, for worse (Ezekiel, Male, 71 years, retired civil servant)".

From the above data, it is obvious that plight and challenges confront elderly person in Ilorin metropolis as a man, husband and father have made them

depressed, they hardly communicate and exchanged love like before. As indicate above, many women in Ilorin metropolis are found with attitude of switch love, affection and humbleness from their husband to the children, this were make many husband isolated, neglected and suffers throughout their aging lives.

Effects of the Anomalies on Elderly Male Couples:

Elderly male couples experience series of pains and traumas which eventually results to countless miseries and mishap if not properly monitored. Some men in their homes become stupid due to the inconvenience infringed on them. Two other participants were as well interviewed and these were there comments:

"I was diagnosed of having high blood pressure and was admitted even. My wife and I were two wrong persons, we quarrel and abuses each as if there would be no tomorrow, at the end of it all she 'won' because, I was told not to query with her again by my doctor. She almost kill me, but thank God, here I am, depressed and rejected" but I am still the old shade of myself, full of boredom. (Samuel, male, 65 years, a farmer)".

Another participants interview:

"Me, I don't want to die a cheap death, women are lazy people who always want to hinder men from being a man especially, when we are aged. A friend of mine was having similar marital dispute with his wife and after loud argument he slums and dies. (Yinka, male, 67 years, welder)".

Discussions of the Major Findings

Old age among the elderly people comes with so many challenges due to decline in physical and biological factors of human existence. These challenges or difficulties vary from our society to another particularly on married couple's socio-economic status, family background, environmental challenges, and peer influence factors. Aside these difficulties that comes with aging, elderly persons across the board (aged 65 and above) physical, psychological, social, and health difficulties are yet another topmost challenges they face. Hence, Cano, Johansen, Leonard, & Hanawalt (2005) asserts that, older and elderly couples have issues related to one another's health crisis. It is concluded that elderly male couples in this study still faces some internal (home) anomalies with their spouses and this amount to decline in interrelatedness and interdependent interactions with one another, irregular communication, absence of sexual intimacy, disrespect and misplaced priority, neglect/abandonment, over confidence, nagging, personality trait, lack of attention, boredom and to mention a few of these difficulties they encounter.

These problems can be challenging and life threatening because, most elderly male persons have different health problems and coupled with all of these anomalies, it could eventually lead to high blood pressure, depression, mental health illness (e.g. anxiety disorder, mood disorder, and dementia), sudden death, change in lifestyle mood, etc.

Consequently, Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, Ragan, &Whitton, (2010) argues that, When misunderstandings arise within married couples, the long-term wellbeing of the relationship depends on how the couples manage the problem and on *what* transpire between them., these two main factors plays a great aspect on *how* they argued it because, some issues are more difficult to determine than others, which as a result could lead to health crisis. For instance, dispute between couples on problems such as sex, misplaced priority, personality trait, financial constraint and the host of others are some of the phenomenon confronting elderly male couples (Rehman, Rellini, &Fallis, 2011; Williamson, Hanna, Lavner, Bradbury, &Karney, 2013). Sanford, (2003) also agreed that unhappy couples faces different and possibly difficult set of issues, ranging from violent behaviours by their spouse, a behaviour which most have had been a aged long attitude or perhaps nagging; lackadaisical approach of wives to husbands' needs causing disrespect and changes in lifestyle mood; absence of love and warmth; misplaced priority showed by spouse either abandoning their aged husband at home and leaving for their grandchildren's care (to baby seat) in any of their married children's' home or unable to prepare regular daily meal other than persevered and refrigerated warm up foods that might have stayed over days due to flimsy excuses, etc.

The problems that married couples face changes as they advance as a person and even as a couple, (Reese-Weber, Kahn, &Nemecek, 2015). Unlike young undeveloped married couples that are faced with problems of distrust and jealousy (Feiring, Markus, & Simon, 2018), elderly male couples are face with tremendous problems that has do with their health and social wellbeing and most family members, friends, community dwellers and the society at large are not putting these issues into consideration. It is a phenomenon that has come to stay but, also needs redress and reproach in the nip of time to stop sudden death, depressed mood and even, becoming widow among aged women within the web of this vices. With every passing day or year in every elderly couples married life, marriage should be an exciting and romantic experience in which the relationship between couples should be waxing stronger and better (Tolorunleke 20014). Two participants that were interviewed gave contrary opinion to this assertion, one agreed to have married a second wife at his late forties before it becomes too late of him to do so in a bid to ameliorate the future anomalies that can come from his first wife later in life. The second as well, posits that, his wife has not been productive in all ramifications since they both became of aged. He stated the stress he goes through and the pains attached to it as though he is a widower or an aged bachelor.

Implications for social work practices

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the socio-wellbeing of elderly age persons in Nigeria is in shambles and Ilorin metropolis in particular is not left out of it. In Nigeria, different scholars, agencies and organizations such as: the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nation (UN), family service agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs) among others, had laid so much emphasis on the state at which elderly persons right and the protection of their dignity would be met in improving and promoting their standards of health and living. Apart from the fact that the elderly persons are fragile age cohort that needs care, love and concerns. However, some of the elderly people in Ilorin metropolis are worried about what goes on around them than being cared for and being loved for whom they are. Consequently, many other social and psychological phenomenon wage war against them in their various homes. Thus, this anomaly relatively concerns social workers whose role and relevance is to improve the wellbeing of the individuals, groups and communities (National Association of Social Workers (NASW), 2015). By taking into cognizance the reality that elderly male couples suffers as an individual, mental/psychological trauma which negatively affects their livelihood and social wellbeing.

Therefore, social work in the womb of time is a discipline with dual opportunity either as an educator or a practice based profession which is concern with welfare aids, support and assistance to the elderly in a progressive manner and to every other desired human being. It is embedded by social science theories and guided by rules, standard and principles of social justice, respect for diverse culture, collective responsibility and human right principles. Social work implicates interplay between people and social structures in a bid to ameliorate challenges of life and social well-being (Forde & Lynch, 2013). By promoting and aiding socioeconomic growth and development, supporting grass root empowerment of people and facilities, social cohesion, liberation from oppression and abuses are all attribute of social work practice. Social workers' are people who practices as a professional with a degree in social work. The sole responsibility of social workers is to care for people or group of individuals and families that are confronted by problems affecting their livelihood.

Thus, elderly persons are people to care for and be shown concern to. A practicing social worker must be skillful in knowledge to teach and develop methods or approaches in which clients' will find suitable in easing his/her plight and enhancing their lives and knowledge. Social workers are recognized as worthwhile game players in the society and as well as a very important agent of change who sees all elderly adults as clients and ensure that they are well cared for by making them to understand their plights and also willing to put an end to their sufferings. However, social workers are involved in policy development, advocacy services and as well engage in research work (Cipolle, 2010) which can be of more relevance/significant to programmes and projects that will promote the livelihood of the elderly persons in Nigeria. Social workers are therefore call upon to rise to the

challenges facing most marriages across the globe, especially the elderly male couples because, most homes are now left with windows.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The elderly adults in Nigeria suffer a lot of problems ranging from physical, mental, psychological, health, social and economical difficulties that are most peculiar to several marital issues within the globe. However, there are certain variant anomalies in almost every marital home in Nigeria, and this range from lackadaisical approach of their wives at older age, lack of sexual intimacy, reduced communication/interrelatedness of couples, disrespect, misplaced priority, neglect and abandonment, impatient and other forms of deteriorations that necessitates for an intervention. The elderly persons has no specific social security/protect seeking their wellbeing in Nigeria and most of this people are only supporter by friends and family members, religious caregivers and few non governmental agencies within the society that choice to. In a bid finding a lasting solution to the plight of the elderly male married couples in Ilorin metropolis, in Nigeria at large, and the globe in general, all stake holders that is: the public and private corporations- government organizations and non-governmental organizations, friends/family members, religious clerics, and professional practitioners' must all take the bull by the horn in reducing this tormenting and life threatening monster that seems to dwell within older couples and perhaps making most elderly women widows too, due to its aftermath ordeal with most elderly male married couples. This study therefore, recommends the following:

- 1) Marital education, family counseling, and related services anchored by social workers can improve the phenomenon of elderly male married couple plight through problem-solving skills.
- 2) Hospitals and therapy care centre's anchored by professionals with seasoned experience should be built with related facilities to improve the health and psychological challenges associated with the elderly.
- 3) Outreach cry, sensitization and public awareness programmes by social workers/other related caregivers should be stretched to the elderly people around all pros and cons to reduce boredom, depression and sudden death which could make most women widows.
- 4) The three tiers of government in Nigeria should formulate policies as a matter of urgency that will address issues relating to elderly persons social protection and social right within homes and the society.
- 5) The Nigeria government should as a matter of urgency, intensify more effort to institutionalize social work profession beyond hyperbole statements/recognitions.
- 6) Social workers should counsel all aged married couples concerning issues that usually ensue between them and its attended consequences in a bid to reduce this phenomenon in Nigeria.

- 7) Nigeria government should provide enabling environment for the scope of social work practice to revolve round the locks and cranny of Nigeria society with all needed supports backed by law.
- 8) Government and nongovernmental agencies at all levels should pay more attention to the need and worries happening to the elderly adults, especially those that are still couples.

Limitations

This study examines the phenomenon of elderly male married couples amidst several others which they face such as physical, psychological, social and above all, health challenges which seems natural and phonological within this age bracket. However, fewer anomalies that can as well aggravate their health status arouses within the home which tend to become a severe problem to them due to the fact that they are aged and quiet different biologically from the women folks. The problem poses a limitation on the number of participants sampled and the time framed for the interviews, because the participants were put into consideration occasioned by the pandemic and not to be stressed out/exposed to other risk challenges. Therefore, interpretations of these findings should take into consideration due to the small sample size ($n = 12$) used in a qualitative method in three out of the sixteen local government areas in Kwara state, Nigeria, which is not fully a good representation of the general population size.

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