

Estranged Wife, Other Man's Beloved: Perspectives of Filipino Women Involved in Extramarital Relationships

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Abstract

Amid societal constraints, difficult repercussions, and double-standard morality on sexuality that favors the male members of their society, eight Filipino women engaged in extramarital affairs. To answer the question “Why did they commit and endure the affair?” a phenomenological life-world approach explored their perspectives regarding the triggering and perpetuating factors of their extramarital relationships (EMR). The analysis revealed their standpoints that negatively perceived marital relationship quality, paternal neglect of children, increasing opportunities for EMR, that is, workplace and mobile technology, and positively perceived extramarital–alternative familial relationship quality emerged as the women’s reasons behind the decision to engage and endure in the affair.

Keywords

extramarital affair, infidelity, Filipino women, family, marriage, cheating

Despite the prevailing double-standard morality in sexuality (Jankowiak, Nell, & Buckmaster, 2002; Mulder, 1990-1991), a norm that upholds women to be chaste, monogamous, and sexually passive and exclusive (Dias, Machado, & Gonçalves, 2012; Rodriguez, 1990) and puts up with men being polygamous as they succumb to the influence of machismo culture (T. Gonzales, 2003; Leyson, 2004-2006) within an allegedly male-dominated society, some Filipino women of today are now openly taking on the risk of an extramarital relationship (EMR). The downside of this double standard is that machismo tolerates male EMR while marianismo condemns female EMR. In machismo, a real macho’s appeal is derived from his ability to conquer women, whereas in marianismo, a woman’s worth is based on the ideals of the Catholic’s Virgin Mary, that is, self-sacrificing moral mother, long-suffering martyr, and submissive wife (Englander, Yáñez, & Barney, 2012; Roces, 2009).

Also called as marital infidelity, EMR could be categorized as emotional, sexual, or a combination of both (Allen et al., 2008; Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Fisher, Voracek, Rekkas, & Cox, 2008). Sexual infidelity involves purely sexual intercourse whereas emotional infidelity does not require sexual relationship but develops a strong emotional bond with the person other than the spouse (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011; Zare, 2011). It is considered as infidelity because within marriage, emotional bond and sexual relationships are expected and agreed to be exclusive between husband and wife (Thornton & Nagurney, 2011). This is risky for a woman who faces more sanctions when it comes to sexuality than her male counterpart (Crooks & Baur, 2008;

De Stefano & Oala, 2008). For the Filipino woman in particular, her society constructed female sexuality within the bounds of marriage and the standards of marianismo, that is, she is expected to be self-restraining and serving as “moral mother” who ought to be a model of chastity and a forgiving martyr in case of husband infidelity (Aguilar, 1989; Estrada-Claudio, 1990-1991; Mulder, 1990-1991). Venturing out of this social construction would dishonor her and expose her to societal contempt and domestic violence, and would even criminalize her act as adultery (Leyson, 2004-2006). In one of the cases of this study, the woman’s husband physically abused her due to jealousy and intensified upon learning about her affair. She and her lover were even incarcerated for adultery.

For a woman who engages, the affair becomes an open secret to her social milieu wherein sometimes it is just the husband who remains unaware of the affair. In the eight cases studied here, only two husbands have no direct knowledge of the situation. This and other studies show that women in EMR are no longer new. The numbers filling out some statistical tables about female infidelity are foreboding. Some studies conducted from 1948 to 1992 assessed women extramarital affairs to be around 20% to 50% (Buss &

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Shackelford, 1997). Recently, some estimates claim that at most 55% of married women engaged in extramarital sex whether a one-night stand or an enduring one (Atwood & Schwartz, 2002).

The society has had enough of the problems from philandering. What more to expect from women doing the same? Apart from sexually transmitted diseases, there is the possibility of increase in domestic violence as husbands tend to be violent in reaction to wife's infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Jankowiak et al., 2002). Also, one likely direct effect is a broken home. That is because EMR has been a primary cause of marital dissolution (De Stefano & Oala, 2008; Leyson, 2004-2006). One cross-cultural review reveals that infidelity became the most typical cause of marital break-up (see Whisman, Gordon, & Chatav, 2007). Another study even showed that if the offending partner is the female, marriage is more likely to collapse than if it is the male (Zola, 2007). It might be because the husband tends to be less forgiving of the wife's infidelity (T. Gonzales, 2003), and the wife is less willing to resolve the marital conflict if she has already developed emotional bond with the lover (Allen et al., 2008).

It is indeed high time that the female infidelity issue, particularly in the local setting, be recognized as an immediate concern for research. As there is a dearth of relevant localized studies regarding this psychosocial issue (Leyson, 2004-2006), the only established theories available are those generated from the outside (see Allen et al., 2005; Blow & Hartnett, 2005). The very few particularized researches are primarily focused on Filipino husbands as the offending party and wives as the offended side, but there are almost no inquiries centered on Filipino women engaged in EMR (see Ahlburg, Jensen, & Perez, 1997). In most relevant infidelity studies, the samples used were restricted to middle-to-upper-class and Caucasian participants (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). A theory generated from a less diverse sample may also be limited and therefore may not be enough to further understand the EMR experiences of the lower class Filipino women. Blow and Hartnett (2005) suggested the use of diverse samples to enrich meanings of data gathered across cultures. This particular study about Filipino women EMR may contribute to this diversity. This is a confirmation of the paradigm shifts in Philippine Social Science research that encourage the use of indigenization, localization, and particularization in approaching unique to collective experiences particularly those of socio-cultural significance (Banzon-Bautista, 1995; A. Gonzales, 1990; Miralao, 1999). This supports the inductive emergence of theories in meeting halfway the process of theoretical deduction in qualitative research (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Patton, 2002). In this emergent design, the goal is to generate categories and concepts through the description and analysis of the underlying meanings constructed by the participants and not to tie the data on any preexisting theory (Creswell, 2007; Dawson, 2007; Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). Reviews of related studies were

done for cross-references and delimitations rather than for designing a primary theoretical framework that follows the data fitting process. Thus, with this goal in mind, it was necessary for the inquiry to start off with an exploratory approach. The data were categorized inductively to answer the research question.

Keeping in mind that EMR is no longer a particular masculinist domain (David, 2001), we would like to present the different Filipino women's experiences in braving this venture amid constraints and complicated consequences. The use of the concept of bravery is never connotative of nobleness. Rather, it is tantamount to courage, a denotation of which is a mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty in a particular situation. In a nutshell, the concept of courage provides an immediate and initial description of the Filipino woman's disposition in her involvement in EMR in spite of its negative effects to her family and to her as a woman, whose womanhood and sexuality are defined within the double-standard morality of the only predominantly Christianized society in Southeast Asia (Austria, 2004; Roces, 2009). With the primary objective of understanding the psyche of the women engaged, this study began exploring one aspect of this experience—the factors in the decision to engage in EMR. Thus, the woman's answers to the question of why she committed and endured the act would hopefully emerge the real "lived experience" that would clarify some preconceptions.

Dynamics of Factors in Literature

What are her factors in engaging the EMR? In every phenomenon, factors could be categorized into three basic dynamics, that is, predisposing, triggering, and perpetuating factors. A comprehensive review done by Allen et al. (2005) emerged six factors that reflect the stages of extramarital involvement, that is, predisposing, approach, precipitating, maintenance, discovery or disclosure, and response. These defined factors that are along the dimensions of the individual (offending party and the offended), marital relationship, and external context (extramarital partner and relationship, workplace, peer, and culture) thoroughly illustrate the development of the EMR from pre to post involvement. This study, however, does not present the process but is delimited in categorizing and putting forward the answers of the participants to the main question mentioned earlier.

Predisposing Factors

This study defines predisposing factors as those tendencies of the individual to commit the act during or even before marriage. These factors are focused on the involved individual level. According to some studies, one of these precursors could be personality, that is, insecure attachment style (Tsapelas, Fisher, & Aron, 2010), low self-esteem (Træen, Holmen, & Stigum, 2007), low conscientiousness, high

narcissism, high psychoticism (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), neuroticism (Whisman et al., 2007), low agreeableness (Zare, 2011), and sexual compulsivity (Smith, 2011). For the bio-evolutionary paradigm, Cherkas, Oelsner, Mak, Valdes, and Spector (2004) claimed that having it in the family blood increases susceptibility as female infidelity is hereditary. While Buss and Shackelford (1997) maintained that most demographic characteristics are insufficient predictors of EMR, Crooks and Baur (2008) and Chernozhukov and Hong (2002) presented that age matters such that the younger the individual the more is the tendency to engage. Atkins, Baucom, and Jacobson (2001) revealed that high educational level increases likelihood of committing infidelity. Premarital context too is influential such that cohabitation (Smith, 2011), a history of extra-dyadic affair, and high premarital interest in sex would increase tendency to extramarital sex if marital sex satisfaction decreases (Allen et al., 2008). The study of Allen et al. (2008) also linked poor mental health, low religiosity, and low relationship adjustment ability to infidelity susceptibility.

Triggering Factors

In the review of Allen et al. (2005), triggering factors encompass the beginning of actual engagement, whereas in this study, they are defined as situational within the marriage life and encompass what goes on inside marital and familial relationships before the EMR as well as opportunities conducive for the event to be actualized. The bulk of similar studies focused more on the couple relationship and opportunities and less to almost none on the familial relationship (see Allen et al., 2005; Drigotas & Barta, 2012). In a collectivist culture like the Philippines, the family is a significant influence in decision making. Consequently, in this research, family emerged as a factor.

Independence, whether emotional or economical, is also an influencing factor in the decision for engagement (Drigotas & Barta, 2012). Aside from women entering the world of work (Atkins, Eldridge, Baucom, & Christensen, 2005; Drigotas & Barta, 2012), Weeks, in an interview conducted by Smith (2011), argued that the introduction of mobile and digital technology created more opportunities for EMR. Also, the mass media with its bombardment of subliminal to intentional messages about liberal sexuality, misrepresented and misinterpreted gender role changes, and equality and romanticized affairs is preparing a society that is more conducive to extra-dyadic affairs (Leyson, 2004-2006).

In most of the relevant researches gathered, marital relationship quality is the primary triggering factor, while studies about the factors of familial relationship quality in EMR that involves the role of children and parenting work are almost unavailable. Marital quality encompasses the sexual satisfaction sub-factor and emotional relationship sub-factor, that is, love, commitment, expression, or "emotion work" (Wilcox

& Nock, 2006) and other needs and expectations (Meston & Buss, 2007). In view of the deficit love model (Tsapelas et al., 2010), women in EMR claim general marital dissatisfaction rather than purely sexual dissatisfaction as the primary reason for the involvement (Allen et al., 2008). Thus, women's extra-dyadic affairs are usually reported to be more emotional than sexual (Fisher et al., 2008). Women in EMR give more weight in intimacy and attachment problems in the marital life as reasons to engage (De Stefano & Oala, 2008). Also, in the reason of the women in committing infidelity, relationship context is more of an influencing factor than demographic predispositions like age and educational level (Mark, Janssen, & Milhausen, 2011). In utility assessment, length of marriage is also a factor that is inversely correlated with marriage satisfaction (Fair, 1978). Moreover, Buss and Shackelford (1997) cited the 1977 study of Glass and Wright, which claimed that a lot of women in EMR are those who experience marital dissatisfaction later in marriage life. While for other needs and expectations, infertility of the spouse is a motivating factor (Smith, 2011), and a study done by Zhang, Parish, Huang, and Pan (2012) in China reveals that a comparatively low income of the husband is correlated with wife infidelity. Also, the affair could be considered as an alternative investment that would provide resources, that is, economic, physical, and emotional for the woman if the husband is becoming less amenable and accessible. The husband's infidelity is one situation that puts the marital-familial relationship in danger of paternal investment withdrawal that encourages the woman as a mother to look for alternatives (Fisher et al., 2008). Furthermore, some affairs are attempts to elicit the partner's jealousy for self-worth affirmation (Crooks & Baur, 2008) while others are retaliatory in case of the partner's misdemeanor (Zare, 2011).

Perpetuating Factors

Perpetuating factors endure the phenomenon and are apparent in long-term EMR. There are some studies that present that the extramarital partner may prolong the EMR even if the woman decides to stop through threats of disclosure particularly if the spouse is unaware of the affair (Allen et al., 2005). In this research, however, there are no similar claims from the women. Thus, the factors that emerged rely heavily on the result of comparison between the married life and extramarital life. A comparison between husband and lover by the woman, which inclines favorably on the lover's side, perpetuates the affair such that when she already developed emotional connection with the alternative partner, she is less willing to rescue the marital relationship (Allen et al., 2008). In view of the equity restoration mechanism model (Walster, Traupmann, & Walster, 1978), the alternative relationship may compensate whatever is lacking in the under-benefited marital relationship. That is, the alternative relationship is able to provide the needs and expectations not met in the marital context, more so if it is able to guarantee the familial

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Participants.

Participant (P)	Fighter	Diane	Vilma	Ms. X	Happy	Meg	Barbie	Sweet Girl
Age during interview	50	42	38	35	53	38	32	49
Age married	18	30	17	28	17	27	19	25
Age upon engagement in EMR	29	37	36	33	48	33	32	46
No. of years married before EMR	11	7	19	5	31	6	13	21
P's occupation	Teacher	Guest relations officer	Cook	Vendor	Retail store owner	Public servant	None	Massage therapist
Age of spouse during interview	54	54	47	Deceased at age 65	Deceased at age 81	33	32	53
Spouse's occupation	Marine	None	House caretaker	Deceased	Deceased	Tricycle driver	Bill collector	Carpenter
If spouse is aware of P's EMR	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Lover's age during interview	43	54/66	38	50	52	38	29	60
If lover is aware of P's marital status	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lover's civil status during interview	Single	Married	Single	Widower	Married	Married	Single	Married

Note. EMR = extramarital relationships.

requirements of a biologically predisposed “nest-defending human female” (Pease & Pease, 2001, p. 231).

There are further individual observations regarding the factors. For one, Langley (2005) claimed that her participants reported the feeling of something missing in the marital relationship. She considers this as the critical first stage when EMR is about to be created (Langley, 2005). Lusterman (1998), however, pointed out the critical role of the family in establishing the pattern of EMR practices from parents to children, a predisposing factor.

This study, however, does not attempt to look at the predisposing factors as this would require a more in-depth and longitudinal case study (Allen et al., 2008) that uses other sources aside from interview. The main framework is the set of triggering factors and the perpetuating factors along the standpoint of the women engaged. The immediate subjective perspectives of these women about their own “action-design” (Flick et al., 2004, p. 68) are put on the surface for analysis with the hope that this would be an additional help in addressing the issue in concern.

Method

As the study is a phenomenological life-world analysis that encompasses the subjectively constructed nature and essence of the lived experience, the emphasis of analysis was on the perceptions of the participants as comprising the only real world built on the “realm of immediate evidence” (Flick et al., 2004, p. 67). The primary collection of data was the interviewers' written notes directly from the answers of the participants. There were only four audio records of the four participants because the rest of them refused an audio. We used the eight sets of transcriptions from the written records of the interview.

The researchers did a one-shot semi-structured interview that lasted for about 2 to 3 hr for each of the eight cases, all of which are from Palawan, an immigrant province in the

Philippines. The challenging search for potential participants was done through the use of an indigenous method known as *patanung-tanong* (asking around). Fifteen women were identified, but only eight of them confirmed the willingness to be interviewed. *Patanung-tanong* (*tanong* is a Filipino translation of the word “question” or “inquiry”) is an informal but discreet way of locating key informants who would be willing to recommend potential participants for the research. The element of trust and researcher credibility in this method is critical, and thus, locating the participants was done through the help of these informants who personally know the women involved in EMR. They served as the bridge that played key roles in inviting and convincing the participants to take part in the interview and for establishing rapport before the interview process. Rapport building included the introduction of the topic of the interview, significance of the study, importance of their stories, and the informed consent that assured the recognition of their rights and the confidentiality of their participation. Even before the interview, the participants readily admitted their involvement in the EMR. It was found out during the interview that their willingness to participate was brought about by their desire to air out their sentiments and be listened to by someone whom they believed would understand their situation. The interview setting was exclusive between the participant and the researcher as interviewer; two interviews (with the participants whose EMR status during the interview was still “trusting” with their extramarital partner) were conducted outside the home, while the rest were done within the privacy of their home.

The qualified participant was living with the husband and considered herself legally married to him (this is included as one respondent's marriage was actually void beyond her knowledge and realized only later during the affair) when the decision to engage in EMR was realized. The demographic profiles of the participants are presented in tabular form (see Table 1).

The series of guide questions with 23 items in Filipino language was organized in such a way that would check the consistency of the answer while maintaining the required conversational design, flexibility, and fluidity of qualitative interviewing (see Mason, 2002). For example, we started the conversation with the question “*Kumusta na kayo ng boyfriend mo ngayon?* [How is your relationship with your boyfriend at present?],” which could be rephrased as “*Kumusta si (code name of lover) bilang boyfriend?* [How is (code name of lover) as a boyfriend?]” and could be asked again later to check consistency. “Rather than to *just* retrieve a series of answers from a predetermined set of responses,” the goal of the interview was to engage the participants in a conversation for full disclosure of their perspectives regarding their lived experiences of EMR (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 210, emphasis added). A pilot interview with a woman who engaged in EMR after a 3-month separation from the husband was conducted to test this. The validity of their claims, however, was no longer tested. That is, if there are socially acceptable answers, it could not be ascertained if they provided them for the reason of social acceptability or for truthfulness. For an initial exploration, their consistent verbal expressions that considerably reflected their present sentiments and perspectives would be enough.

Qualitative approach does not impose the process of data fitting on static preconceived categories (Flick et al., 2004; Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). The process of inductive analysis should form new concepts generated from the subthemes from the data. Thus, in using the principles in qualitative research of Creswell (2007), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), and Patton (2002) as guide in thematic analysis, which suggests that themes and categories are emergent, the preliminary guiding framework is delimited to the basic dynamics of triggering and perpetuating factors of EMR.

The analytical strategy followed three stages. First, the data gathered, transcribed, and coded are categorized under the pre-arranged primary themes, that is, triggering factors and perpetuating factors. These primary themes were created in response to literature and pre-assumptions, that is, predisposing factors would not be readily available from a one-shot interview, and so they were not explored, while triggering factors are presumed to be situational within the marital relationship before the EMR and perpetuating factors are assumed to be enduring within the EMR. A series of re-reading and re-interpretation was used to establish the proper codes. The second stage allowed the interplay of the coded data and the pre-arranged themes. In this stage, subthemes emerged. The categorized data on the triggering factors were put into subthemes of unmet needs and expectations within marital and familial relationships, and opportunities. It is interesting to note that apart from opportunities and marital relationship, familial relationship quality emerged as another sub-factor. This sub-factor is themed as the significance of children, which is given less attention in some EMR literatures. Under the perpetuating factors,

EMR quality and alternative familial relationship quality emerged as sub-factors. The third stage allowed the inter-course of the factors and sub-factors to explore any apparent relationship. The comparison of the factors revealed the juxtaposition of the sub-factors marital and familial relationship quality under the woman’s negative evaluation. Further interaction of the sub-factors resulted to the contrast of the primary themes as marital–familial is perceived as negative as opposed to the positively evaluated extra-marital–alternative familial relationship quality (see Table 2). Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants. The frequency of indications of the themes or factors is also noted. Profiles are added for support if the interpretation would need the background information of the participants.

The result of this exploratory study is true only to the participants and should not be used for external generalization (see Dawson, 2007). The purpose is to extract the underlying meanings along the expressions of the participants that would represent the perspectives, as suggested by Creswell (2007), of the women engaged in EMR.

Discussion of Results

When asked about the condition of marital bond, particularly the relationship of the husband to his wife before the EMR, the women readily gave negative assessments. The marital context before EMR was negatively evaluated, for example, “empty relationship” (Barbie) and “already hurting each other” (Diane). Their claims as shown by the following verbatim expressions are pointing to their husbands as the ones to be blamed in their “not good” (Happy) or “difficult” (Sweet Girl) situation cradled by unresolved conflicts, abuses, and economic insecurities. The wounded sentiments caused by their husbands’ uncaring attitudes and inabilities could already be extracted here.

. . . no more love. It was all gone . . . We used to be happy and sweet. We were open with each other. But then it was all gone when I learned about his illegitimate child . . . It became an empty relationship that it was like we were just living together for the sake of the children. Not easy, right (Barbie)?

We would always fight over finances. We could not reconcile things. (Vilma)

We were already hurting each other. There were times when he would pour down freezing water on me. Once, I ran to my friend’s house without slippers just to escape away from him. Life was hard that we’re eating only two square meals a day. He would even choose his friends over us, his family. (Diane)

It was difficult like he did not care about me, he was always working, he was always boozy and was not providing money that I had to find ways to get food for my children. I did laundry and massage services for money . . . (Sweet Girl)

Table 2. Summary of Factors.

Participant	Triggering factors			Perpetuating factors	
	Negatively perceived relationship quality (husband as the pivot)			Positively perceived relationship quality (lover as the pivot)	
	Marital relationship	Familial relationship	Opened opportunities	EMR	Alternative familial relationship
Fighter	Physical abuse (recurring); infidelity (concubinage)	Lack of respect, love for kids or family; selfish; finances provided not enough; oppressive atmosphere	Change of workplace where she met the lover	Perpetuating harassment of the husband; firm resolve to stand up for it; assurance from lover that he will fight for her; needs and expectations are met	Cares for children
Diane	Physical and sexual abuse; infidelity	Finances provided not enough (2 meals a day); does not prioritize family; lack of affection (dines on his own)	Change of work situation (met lover when starts working at night)	Excitement and affection of lover	Has a child from the lover whom he supports perpetuates the EMR
Vilma	Lack of affection and appreciation (never once dated after marriage; does not celebrate birthdays)	Does not prioritize family; conflicts on finances	SMS communication (textmate)	Lover meets expectations and emotional needs; love for husband faded; affection and care	
Ms. X	Lack of respect, trust, honesty especially on finances; age gap	Unresolved conflicts (money, little things like watching TV and etc.); wanted to have children	Workplace and SMS	Loves the lover more than the husband; met some expectations in EMR; knows the lover more than the husband	Has child with the lover
Happy	Infidelity; physical and sexual abuse; not ready to communicate	Lack of care and respect for the family; hurts the kids; finances provided not enough	Has a retail store where lover was a constant customer	EMR provided an outlet and met her needs; boosted her self-esteem; love; cares and concerns, hardworking; lover values her; firm decision	Cares and accept her children
Meg	Physical abuse; infidelity; sexual dissatisfaction	Conflicts on finances and alcoholism	Peer influence in the workplace	Love faded; loves the lover more than husband	
Barbie	Infidelity; no healthy communication; lack of love, respect and faithfulness; no longer recognizes role in budgeting as such	No longer has time and affection for kids; kids are hurt with the conflicts at home; conflicts on finances	SMS (textmate)	Unresolved conflicts with husband and no open communication; emotional hurt of husband's infidelity not alleviated due to anger; new found excitement in EMR; found happiness	Lover provides economic help
Sweet girl	Conflicts on husband's accusations; no open healthy communication; disregard her importance at home; lack of respect for her as a woman; indifferent husband	Lack of assurance of love, care, and affection for her and the kids; does not provide enough finances	Change of milieu and met friend turned lover; at first, lover was an opportunity to rebel against husband's indifference	Lover cares and protects her; compensated the needs and expectations not met by husband; found someone she loves	Cares and provides for her kids (youngest even calls lover father)

Note. EMR = extramarital relationships; SMS = short messaging system.

Not good. He took me for granted. He didn't care. He was forcing me to have sex with him. He said he would hurt our kids if I refuse. He beat them terribly . . . (Happy)

Even in weighing the quality of familial relationship, the point of reference is the ability of the husband to provide as a partner parent. Economic provisions are expected to be the husband's primary responsibility. The statements above show that in this role, the husband is perceived to be inefficient. More to this, in Happy's case, the husband was physically abusive of the children. The husband then as the marital partner and father of her children became the pivotal springboard of her perceived triggering factors in engaging the affair (see Table 2).

Marital Needs and Expectations: Primary Factors in Marital Relationship Quality

Upon entering a life-altering married life, she has with her a set of expectations, that is, be taken care of, be provided, if

not perfectly at least be comfortably sexually satisfied, be valued as an individual, and understandably, be adored. The relevant studies regarding the needs of married women revolve around these expectations (Crooks & Baur, 2008). If these needs and expectations are not achieved, then she will be tempted to find the fulfillment of these requirements outside marriage when an alternative relationship becomes available. This is in line with the investment model approach that discusses relationship commitment as a factor that influences involvement in extra-dyadic relationships and where relationship satisfaction serves as a force that determines the level of commitment (Drigotas & Barta, 2012). This study did not measure the level of commitment before EMR. Nevertheless, the expressions of the participants reveal that the negative evaluation on marital relationship is tantamount to low satisfaction, a function of which is the fulfillment of the needs and expectations.

In this study, the marital needs, which refer to those necessities of the woman as a wife, encompass sexual satisfaction; love needs that summarize intimacy, care, trust, and affection;

husband's fidelity; and individual demands referring to freedom and esteem needs. This is manifested along the women's answers (shown below) when asked about their needs and expectations. These marital needs, which are weighing more on the love and individual demands, become the primary factors in evaluating the marital relationship quality for these women as they are highly indicated.

Be taken care of, love, and faithfulness of course. A spouse who cares to understand me and my children's needs. Be treated with dignity . . . even love and respect he could not give. I should have freedom in doing things. At least show his love to our kids. No he doesn't. He is selfish he disregards his family . . . (Fighter)

There shouldn't be secrets . . . He seems a stranger to me that there are lots of things about his past that I don't know. (Ms. X) First, our household needs, our finances that he should provide since he's the one working, right? Sex is not that much important. I don't crave much, that occasionally would be enough. And of course I should know, that a man should treat a woman nicely. (Meg)

For me, I do not need much sex. He has to provide our economic needs so my children could live a good life. (Diane)

It could have been better if he gives at least 100 Php or 150 Php [roughly US\$2-US\$4] that I could stretch out for a day instead of me finding money outside. I really feel like he does not love me. He had his first wife from an invalid marriage who left him. It feels like I have his body but he left his heart in his first family. I really wish that he loves us also, that he provides our economic needs. I wish that sometimes he would be more affectionate instead of going home drunk and cold. (Sweet Girl, emphasis added)

Citing Sweet Girl's case, it is revealed that just to check on her worth as a wife, her first attempt of extramarital sex was intentional to test her husband's indifference. Unfortunately, it did prove her unloved wife status. Although still a necessity as specified by two of the women, sex is perceived to be "not much" (Diane, Meg) of a need. Only one (Meg) indirectly claimed sexual dissatisfaction within marital relationship, which, however, was not pointed out as a conducting factor. This confirms some studies claiming that this marital requirement is often not the driving force in cheating (e.g., Allen et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2008; De Stefano & Oala, 2008) as claimed by Sweet Girl below:

It's exasperating that others think that I just need it [sex]. It's not about it [sex]. I just need to be appreciated, to be taken care of. My neighbors would insist that I'm wanting and that I'm starved of [sex] . . . they know nothing . . . (Sweet Girl)

Despite the double-standard view the Philippine society has on marital relationship, two women (Barbie and Fighter) implied that the husband's fidelity is still a requirement. Nevertheless, most of the husbands are perceived to be cheaters as six out of the eight cases of marital relationships are

characterized by husband's infidelity. What is more surprising is that only two women (Barbie and Meg) openly specified husband's infidelity as a conducting factor. Even Fighter who pointed out fidelity as a requirement expressed that what hurts her more is the husband's inability to meet her love needs and welfare of her children than his betrayal. It might be poverty and the forgiving culture when it comes to men cheating which push fidelity a little into the sidelines and emphasize the importance of love needs, individual demands, and familial requirements. Although nobody directly claimed poverty as a contributing factor, expressions such as "We're eating only 2 square meals a day" (Diane) and "He does not take home money . . . I still need to work on my own . . . as a laundry woman . . . so my kids could eat" (Sweet Girl) imply an economically poor situation.

In every relationship, open communication is a must to ensure the life of the bond (Allen et al., 2008). When a spouse sees an opportunity for healthy communication within the relationship, she may view this as a bridge for the realization of her marital expectations. Three of the women (Happy, Barbie, and Sweet Girl), however, reported that this prerequisite is absent exacerbating further the conflicts and differences.

It's exhausting to talk with him . . . we could not tackle the problem because when I try to open up he raises his voice. He shouts a lot . . . he doesn't care. He's selfish. (Sweet Girl)

Honestly, there is no way that we could settle things because he just doesn't know how to listen. He always talks perversely. Even in realizing his mistakes, he shouts and leaves me. Let's say when I tell him that I'm having a hard time working, he retorts "and so just go on working, why don't you?" He's unreasonable. It's hard to converse with him. So we just do not talk, not even planning to . . . (Happy)

These conflicts are usually about the husband's betrayal, physical abuse, and in majority of the cases, finances. Physical abuse such as hitting, pouring on freezing water, and rape is characteristically accompanied by the husband's infidelity. This confirms some studies that reveal that the likelihood of spousal abuse increases if the husband has extramarital affairs (e.g., McCloskey, Williams, & Larsen, 2005; Stieglitz, Gurven, Kaplan, & Winking, 2012). Although this finding is not explored in this study, this could be relevant if analyzed further. Not only does physical violence not fulfill the love need, but it also betrays it and violates the individual rights of the woman, thus manifesting in the worst scenario of unmet marital needs and expectations.

Significance of Children: A Crucial Factor in Familial Relationship Quality

Albeit not directly asked about the quality of family life, which encompasses the relationship of the father to his children and parent to parent interaction, the expressions

throughout the interview provide enough information that reveals a negative evaluation. For one, as can be extracted from the quoted statements of the participants, even if it is just the marital relationship that is being inquired about, the answers almost always connect to the family center—the children and their unmet needs, that is, economic and psychological. Fighter, for example, lamented, “He hits me even in front of the kids.” Emphasizing on “even in front of the kids” implies the lack of consideration of the father for his children’s emotional well-being. Another one, Happy, described how her husband would carelessly take his mistress home, and as she put it,

They eat and laugh while I and my children stay here inside the bedroom . . . not even a knock to check if we have already dined or not.

She added the following:

What particularly hurts me more is that he beats my children . . .

While for Barbie,

For me, he has to give his love again, his respect for me as his wife. He no longer shows them. He has to give back the old me, the wife who used to have the rights, like in household finances he no longer recognizes my role in budgeting. He has to regard my children with his love and time. Even that he could no longer provide. (Barbie)

It is shown here that for the woman, marital is intertwined with the familial. She does not separate the two relationships such that when asked about her needs and expectations as a wife, the needs of her children and the need for a child, as indirectly implied by one woman, are included. Ms. X admitted that the desire to have her own child was one of the concurring factors that pushed her toward EMR.

Yes, I’m fed up . . . It’s just so tiring. I thought he could not give me a child since the problem is on him [husband]. I really want to confirm that I don’t have reproductive problems. I want to have my own child. (Ms. X)

Also, the economic security or finances are the familial needs directed toward the children, being the family center. That is, when she talks about the family and finances, it is implicitly about the children’s well-being.

Included in the stated needs of the women are the financial and family commitments of the husband. These commitments are not fulfilled as the needs and expectations are incongruent with the reported quality of familial relationships. Every case has a problem on finances of which the father is considered by the women as the primary provider. And most of the cases are characterized by blatant neglect of the children. This situation for the women became a crucial

factor when a very tempting offer came along the way. We could see this along the statements below:

He [lover] helped me find food for my kids during difficult times . . . his worries about me and my kids are really appreciable. (Sweet Girl)

At least I know this widower . . . He has kids . . . I know his past. (As Ms. X had contemplated the possibility of bearing a child with boyfriend)

EMR Opportunities: Necessary Factors

Given the unmet needs and expectations mentioned, what to do when very seductive and appealing opportunities show themselves? The women reported that with twice thinking, they still pursued them anyway.

“Maybe this man could fulfill what my husband could not,” Diane said when asked about the reason for the decision to pursue the affair upon realizing the other man’s offer. The offer came when she started working at night and had the opportunity to widen her milieu and met her lover. The lover then was given the opportunity to show what he could fulfill. In Diane’s case as well as in the other seven cases, opportunities to actualize the affair were necessary factors. Thus, even if the unmet needs and expectations are perceived to be enough reasons to find someone else, if there are no opportunities, the relationship could never be realized as in the case of Meg.

In my case, it was unexpected because of the bantering. We were always together wherever we go. Because he [lover] is really friendly and warm. Well, without those encounters, I won’t cheat on him [husband]. (Meg)

We were just texting (SMS) at first. It never crossed my mind that there would be someone who would be interested since I already have kids . . . it was exciting to have a textmate. It eventually developed into this. (Barbie)

It started through texting. He was sending messages and I still didn’t know him personally. I told my husband about it and he told me to just delete the number. But I was fascinated by his messages and it led into regular exchange of messages and then I challenged him to meet me . . . (Vilma)

Pittman (1990) talked about the changing pattern of infidelity and pointed out the increasing opportunities for spouses to encounter more people outside the marriage life. In the eight cases of this study, these opportunities became apparent when they started venturing the outside of the marital fence. Four of them met their lovers at work. A sort of peer teasing provoked one to try the excitement of the experience. The prevalence of electronic communications such as cell phone hastens the affair due to convenience and ease of

cover. SMS communication or texting were the facilitators of the affairs of two of the women (Vilma and Barbie). Nice messages and the excitement derived from this method pushed them further toward the onset of the relationship. While the lover of another woman was a neighbor, their encounters were made possible by her retail store where he (the lover) was a constant customer. In the other case, the persistence of her lover who followed her from Manila to Palawan was an enduring opportunity, which remained open until she decided to accept it.

Husband Versus Lover: On Perpetuating Factors

The study finds that whether the husband is aware or not, the affair endures. During the interview, the status of the four cases is cohabiting, while two are trysting secretly and one is dating, which means just seeing the other man from time to time but without firm commitment. In spite of some societal constraints such as condemnation, gossips, and friends and family pressure, the women stood on their decision to engage and endure along the process. Diane and Ms. X said the following:

At first I was afraid I was thinking of others' opinions if ever they found out. Well now, it's different as I care less for whatever they say. (Diane)

Same old. I don't give a damn to their tittle-tattle. They know what's between us [husband]. They know the story. They know how he [husband] treated me. I don't care. It's their opinion anyway. (Ms. X)

Why? One woman (Happy) affirmed, "I have already made up my mind," referring to her decision to stand for the affair. "I got the courage because I love him [lover]," another one (Meg) asserted,

. . . this one, I really feel that he loves me. He does everything just to see me. He helps me find food for my kids when I am having the hard time. He really takes care of me. His protection and his concern for me and my children are really appreciable . . . my youngest even calls him father. (Sweet Girl)

I am really happy when I'm with him [lover] because he cares for me. When I'm sick he would cook for me and assist me and feed me. I did not experience all these from my husband. I have endured a lot of pain with him [husband]. This one helps me do things like gardening . . . he took me home, his home. I don't care if he [husband] finds out. I have already made up my mind. (Happy)

When they entered the affair, another set of expectations were put forward, that is, be protected, cared for, adored, and loved, and needs be fulfilled—including the children's. After a given period of trial, majority if not all of the familial and marital needs are fulfilled. The comparison between life with husband and life with the other man favored the latter.

It's different since there's already a comparison. I saw his [lover] concern for me. He is always reminding me to not skip my meal. He is soft-spoken. My husband rarely goes home and we always fight. He's always yelling. He has no time that even when I ask for a date he refuses. What I also like about my boyfriend is when I air up my hurt feelings about my husband, he doesn't provoke me. He consoles me and tells me to just let it go. (Vilma)

What endured the relationship is the perception that the other man is better than the husband. "He [lover] treats me differently than my husband . . . he is really caring," as Happy reported. Estranged from their husbands, they feel that they become their other mans' beloved. Love requirements were satisfied when they believe that the lovers care for them, and love for the husband faded. Esteem needs are further satisfied just as Happy believes when she said, "I have finally found my worth; it in some way boosted my self-esteem."

With reference to the equity theory (Walster et al., 1978) and investment model, briefly discussed by Drigotas and Barta (2012), pursuing an alternative relationship if positively evaluated may be considered as an equity restoration mechanism and may weaken the commitment to the marital relationship. The weakening of the commitment is due to the lessening of the marital as well as familial relationship satisfaction due to the unfulfilled needs and expectations of the woman, which in this study are also juxtaposed with the regard for children. It was also influenced by the comparatively more satisfying EMR. The alternative relationship became a way to restore the inequity in relationship, wherein the women may consider themselves as the under-benefited party. They have endured enough and so they believe that they deserve a better relationship. This justification is an underlying sentiment that could be extracted from the following statements.

. . . my children understand and accept my situation because they know that their father is the reason why I do this. (Sweet Girl)

My boyfriend knows my circumstances and still accepts me. He knows what I have endured from my despicable husband. (Fighter)

Table 2 summarizes the positively perceived quality within the extramarital and alternative familial relationship as the perpetuating factor of the EMR. The lover in this case is the point of reference. When compared with the life with the husband, if not all, some of the needs are fulfilled in the EMR as reflected in the expressions of the participants. Ms. X in particular got a child with her lover, thus satisfying her need to be a biological mother. The alternative familial relationship for Sweet Girl provided the care and security for her children that even the youngest calls the lover *tatay* or father. This relationship becomes alternative because this in some way compensates the familial needs, which are deficient or lacking within the original family life. Marital needs, which

are the primary factors, are reassured in the EMR. “I am happy with him [lover]” is the usual confirmation of the women. “I have already found someone who loves and accepts me for real,” the physically abused Fighter revealed. This exemplifies the perceived discovery of new love or comparatively real love that encompasses the expressions of these women. They found it and hold unto it as long as it lasts.

Conclusion

Even if there were any good things at all in the marital life, these were already clouded by the perceived undesirable experiences. All that came out were negative reports against the husbands and positive things about the lovers as these are explained by the triggering and perpetuating factors, respectively. The triggering factors focused on the husband–father while the perpetuating factors inclined favorably on the lover.

As implied previously, the part of the women in the marital relationship was not evaluated as they focused on assessing their husbands’ role instead of weighing the entire situation of the married life before EMR. Although not confirmed, there is the possibility that these women gave socially acceptable or biased answers to justify their acts so much that they set aside the possibility of their contributions on the failure of the marital and familial relationships even before the affair. Allen et al. (2008) pointed out that relationship quality is actually a product of the contributions of the husband and wife. Realizing this could have helped these women come up with a full perspective of what really happened in the relationship and might have equipped them with strategies in salvaging whatever is left. Thus, it is interesting to also explore the woman’s contribution on the marital–familial relationship context, particularly how she perceives her contribution. This is also additional information that would be useful for counselors of family crisis management.

Nevertheless, the women’s reports, *ceteris paribus*, confirmed some studies, that is, that contrary to the old common belief, love and esteem needs are claimed to be the stronger contributing factors than sexual dissatisfaction, and women who started going outside the home have wide opportunities for EMR. Moreover, the positive evaluation of the women on the EMR as compared with the perceived undesirable experiences of the marital–familial relationship perpetuated the affair. In contrast to their other counterparts, the cases studied seemingly intermingled together the marital and familial aspects of the married life as manifested by the reports on the perceived quality of husband and wife relationship, wherein children were always mentioned by the women themselves. Thus, the significance of children is considered a crucial factor.

There are still relevant areas not explored in this study but that would be very useful if pursued for further research. Who initiated the extramarital affair? The answer to this may open up for the influx of other variables. If it is the men (lovers),

given the abusive atmosphere of the women’s marital life of which these lovers are fully aware, it may have something to do with the “male protective instinct” or the “knight in shining armor” complex. Or it may confirm the connoted passive waiting attitude of the Filipino woman. If it is the women, there might be this novel implication of a contemporary Filipino actively seeking her “happiness” amid the constraints of the society, that is, the double-standard morality and machismo ethics of men to be the motivators of romantic or sexual relationships. Given this courage of the woman, predisposing factors could now also be challenged, such as the family background or “it is in the blood” concept and even her past relationships, age, and physiological changes. Influences of the social milieu such as the media, friends, family, and even their own children could also be taken as variables.

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