



## Effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on Reduction of Extramarital Affairs Among Female Married Teachers in Rivers State

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### ABSTRACT

*The study seeks to provide an insight into the effects of rational emotive behaviour therapy on the reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The researchers adopt quasi experimental research design methodology. Both theoretical and empirical evidence were reviewed. The population of the study consists of 27 married female teachers who accepted involvement in Extramarital affairs in Rivers State while the sample was made up of 16 married female teachers who volunteered to see/talk to a counsellor and six who did not consent to any form of counselling but accepted to be involved in the study, they were used as the control group. Extramarital Affairs Involvement Questionnaire (EMAIQ) was the instrument used for data collection. Its face and content validity was censured by test experts and experts in guidance and counselling while its reliability was ensured through the test-re-test reliability method which yielded a value of 'r' = 0.79. The study conclude that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy had significant effects in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among married female teachers in Rivers State. This was evident in the significant drop in mean scores of the actions and behaviours of female teachers involved in Extra-marital affairs after the treatment was administered. This simply indicates that the gain of the application of REBT is quite enormous. It is also concluded that location of the school do not affect the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the reduction of infidelity among female married teachers in school in Rivers State. The study recommended amongst others that; the tenants of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy should be taught in counsellor training programs not merely taught through theoretical processes but practically in work-shops and professional conferences to make counsellors more effective in the discharge of their duties.*

**Keyword:** Rational Emotive, Behavior, Therapy, Extramarital Affairs, Married Teachers

### Introduction

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy that focuses on helping individuals identify and change their irrational beliefs and thought patterns. While REBT has been used to treat a wide range of psychological issues, including relationship problems, there is limited research on its effectiveness specifically for reducing extramarital affairs. However, REBT can be helpful in addressing the underlying irrational beliefs and thought patterns that may contribute to infidelity in a relationship. For example, someone who engages in extramarital affairs may have beliefs such as "I deserve to be happy no matter whom I hurt" or "My partner doesn't fulfill all my needs, so I need to look elsewhere." Through REBT, individuals can identify and challenge these irrational beliefs, replacing them with more rational and realistic ones. This can help individuals develop healthier coping mechanisms and make more thoughtful decisions about their behavior in relationships. In addition, REBT can also help individuals develop better communication skills, assertiveness, and problem-solving abilities, all of which can contribute to healthier and more fulfilling relationships. By improving these skills, individuals may be better able to address issues in their relationships before they escalate to the point of infidelity. While further research is needed to fully understand the effectiveness of REBT for reducing extramarital affairs, it has the potential to be a useful tool in addressing the underlying beliefs and behaviors that contribute to infidelity in relationships.

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) is based on the concept that emotions and behaviours result from cognitive processes; and that it is possible for human beings to modify such processes to achieve different ways of feeling and behaving. REBT is one of a number of therapies that come under the heading 'cognitive-behavioural'. In the mid-1950's Dr. Albert Ellis, a clinical psychologist trained in psychoanalysis, became disillusioned with the slow progress of his clients. He observed that they tended to get better when they changed their ways of thinking about themselves, their problems, and the world. Ellis reasoned that therapy would progress faster if the focus was directly on the client's beliefs, and thus was born the method now known as Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy. REBT was originally called 'Rational Therapy', soon changed to 'Rational-Emotive Therapy' and again in the early 1990's to 'Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy'. REBT is one of a number of 'cognitive-behavioural' therapies, which, although developed separately, have many similarities – such as Cognitive Therapy (CT), developed by Psychiatrist Aaron Beck in the 1960's. REBT and CT together form the basis of the family of psychotherapies known as 'Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy'. Over the past halfcentury, REBT has developed significantly, and continues to change. Family, as one of the most important social institution, has always a special status during the history in all societies. This institution, apart from its long responsibility for continuity of the generations and the survival of human beings, it has had some duties and roles such as economic

activity, regulation of sexual relations and socialization of the individuals. However, over the past few decades, the family institution has undergone significant changes, which have brought challenges against the functions and traditional structure of the Iranian family. One of the challenges is the extramarital affair that is a common phenomenon in today's societies Ghadiri & Firooz (2017). Extramarital affair can be considered as violations of the obligations among the couples in marital relations. Such breach of obligations results in the formation of affection or sexual intercourse with another person outside the marital relationship. Extramarital affair often occur to meet one's emotional or sexual needs. This is not necessarily a sexual relationship, but this type of relationship is based on secrecy.

Extramarital affairs refer to romantic or sexual relationships between individuals who are married to other people. These relationships are often kept secret from their spouses and can cause significant emotional distress and damage to the marriage. There are many reasons why people engage in extramarital affairs. Some individuals may feel unsatisfied or unfulfilled in their current relationships and seek validation or excitement elsewhere. Others may be experiencing a midlife crisis, going through a difficult period in their lives, or struggling with addiction or mental health issues. Regardless of the reasons for engaging in extramarital affairs, they can have serious consequences for all parties involved. Infidelity can damage trust, intimacy, and communication in a marriage, and may even lead to divorce. It can also cause significant emotional pain and trauma for the betrayed spouse and any children involved. If you or someone you know is struggling with an extramarital affair, it is important to seek professional help to address the underlying issues and work towards healing and rebuilding trust in the relationship.

One of the main reasons couples seek therapy is due to infidelity (Leeker & Carozzi, 2014). Agi, (2005) also noted that lack of communication is a reason for seeking therapy, because when communication in marriage is lacking can lead to infidelity. Fye and Mims (2018) note that approximately 11-25% of all married couples experience infidelity. Russell, Baker and McNulty (2013) assert that in these cases, couples have already experienced infidelity and are seeking interventions. There are few preventive approaches strictly dedicated to helping couples maintain monogamy such as premarital counselling, even though premarital counselling can increase marital satisfaction and reduce divorce (Tambling & Glebova, 2013), maintaining monogamy is not a common focus within premarital services says (Fye & Mims, 2018). Several effective therapeutic approaches to work with couples or individuals after infidelity has occurred were identified such as emotionally focused couples counselling, taking a forgiveness and reparative approach, traditional family therapy theories, narratives of attachment, an integrative approach, a debriefing and so on (Abraham, Hussain, Khan & Schofield, 2012, Duba, Kindsvatter & Lara, 2008, Juhnke et al, 2008, Marin, Christensen & Atkins 2014; Schade & Sandberg, 2012; Scuka, 2015; Snyder, Baucom & Gordon, 2008). There are also useful premarital programmes, assessments and curriculum available to help people prepare for marriage. These programmes and materials tend to focus on relationship enhancement, skill building, education, and religious implications (Hawkins, Blanchard, Scott and Fawcett 2008). However, in spite of the plethora of therapeutic approaches used in working with couples after infidelity has occurred this study is aimed at helping married teachers in Rivers State to reduce infidelity in their marriages with Rational Emotive Behaviour therapy (REBT) and Reality therapy (RT) to reduce the incident a of extra-marital affairs.

However, from the sociological point of view, due to the globalization and the influence of modern values (especially through the modern media) in developing countries, attitudes of people in these societies have changed and people rethink about their traditional and religious values so that we regularly witness the emergence of new patterns of sexual interaction, such as the friendship with the opposite sex after marriage and the extramarital affairs. On the other hand, any changes in the attitudes of people in society towards extramarital relation can be an important indicator for predicting the tendency of people for extramarital affair, because these beliefs and values encourage or discourage the people's involvement in extramarital affair. In this regard, the findings of Treas and Giesen (2018) show that those who have a positive or attentive attitude toward extramarital relations are more likely to engage in extramarital affair. Therefore, for making a decision and planning for preventing extramarital affair, it is necessary to study the attitudes of married people about the extramarital relationships and the factors affecting it. Therefore, the aim of this study is to evaluate the effects of rational emotive behaviour therapy on reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State.

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## Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of reality therapy on reduction of extra-marital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to;

- Find out the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State, when the pre-test and post-test mean scores of experimental group one (REBT) are compared.
- Determine the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State when the post-test mean scores of experimental group one (REBT) are compared to that of the Control group.

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## Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent to which Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy reduces extramarital affairs among female married teachers?
2. What are the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers when compared to the Control Group?

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among married female teachers when the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental Group 1 (REBT) are compared.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State when the post-test mean scores of the Experimental Group 1(REBT) and the Control Group are compared.

## Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design with a population of 27 female married teachers in public secondary schools in Rivers State for 2021/2022 academic session. This figure was captured from their responses to Extramarital Affairs Involvement Questionnaire (EMAIQ) which was administered to the female teachers in the state. As at the time of this study, the total number of female teachers in Rivers State stands at 4,718 for junior secondary and 3,403 for senior secondary. Grand total of female teachers in the state for 2021/2022 academic session is 8,121. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 27 female married teachers who admitted involvement in extramarital affairs for the study, however this was achieved following the procedure explained below to get a good spread in the three senatorial zones of the state. The number of married female teachers in the drawn schools that indicate involvement in extramarital affairs or show propensity for it were used for the study thus the sample was formed purposively, out of 1015 female married teachers sampled in the 12 schools chosen for the study, 27 female teachers agreed to involvement in extra-marital affairs while only 16 agreed to see/talk to a counsellor, and this number formed the sample. The face and content validities of the instrument, 'Extramarital Affairs involvement Questionnaire (EMAIQ), was ensured using the following method. Face Validity of EMAIQ: To establish the face validity of Extramarital affairs involvement Questionnaire (EMAIQ). Three copies of it were given to three experts in the field of Educational psychology/guidance and counselling and measurement and evaluation.

Content Validity of EMAIQ: Content validity of EMAIQ was determined in two phases. In phase one three copies of the instrument was given to three other experts from the departments of Educational psychology/guidance and counselling and measurement and evaluation experts in three universities in the Rivers state one from each university to make their input. Reliability of extramarital affairs involvement questionnaire (EMAIQ) was established through the test- retest method for a measure of stability. Thirty (30) female married teachers outside the sampled schools were given the instrument to respond to. After three weeks' interval of the first administration a retest was given to the same female married teachers. The initial and re-test scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation test and it yielded a coefficient value of 'r' 0.79. Experts in test confirmed that it was strong enough for utilization. Treatment of subjects was not needed to establish the reliability of the instrument. All the research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested with paired sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

The results obtained in this study after data analysis were presented and analyzed below:

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent to which Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy reduces extramarital affairs among female married teachers when the pre-test and post-test mean scores of Experimental Group one (REBT) are compared?

**Table 1: Pre-test, Post-test Mean Scores/Standard Deviation of Experimental Group 1**

Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	Pretest/posttest mean difference
REBT Recipients				
Pre-test	8	68.25	8.2	40.15
Post-test	8	28.1	5.3	

Table 1 shows the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental groups 1, it shows that experimental group 1(REBT) had a pre-test mean score of 68.25 and standard deviation of 8.2., while post-test mean score shows a mean of 28.1 and a standard deviation of 5.3 with a pre-test, post-test mean difference of 40.15. This shows the gains of REBT. The experimental group members shows an involvement in extra-marital affairs behaviour before counselling and after counselling with REBT the score range dropped to absence of extra-marital affairs behaviour. The answer to research question 1 therefore is: REBT reduces extra-marital affairs to a large extent.

**Research Question 2:** What are the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers when the post-test mean scores of the Experimental Group one (REBT) are compared to that of the Control Group?

**Table 2: Post-test Mean Scores/Standard Deviation of Experimental Group 1 (REBT) and Control Group**

Group	n	Mean	Standard deviation	Post test mean diff. REBT/control
Experimental Group 1 (REBT)	8	28.1	5.3	37.74
Control Group	6	65.84	8.1	

Table 4.5 shows the post-test mean scores of the experimental group 1 and the control group, it shows that experimental group 1 (REBT) had a post-test mean score of 28.1 and standard deviation of 5.3 showing absence of extra-marital involvement behaviour while post-test mean score of the control group shows a mean score of 65.84 and a standard deviation of 8.1 with a post-test mean difference of 37.74 for both groups. This shows the gains of REBT. The experimental and control group members showed an involvement in extra-marital affairs behaviour before counselling of the experimental group and after being exposed to the counselling tenants of REBT the score range of the experimental group dropped to absence of extra-marital affairs behaviour while that of the control group remains involvement in extramarital affairs because they received no treatment. The answer to research question 4 therefore is: REBT reduces extra-marital affairs to a large extent among female married teachers in Rivers State when compared to the control group.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among married female teachers when the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental Group 1 (REBT) are compared.

**Table 3: Summary of paired sample t-test analysis on the significant difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of the experimental group I (REBT)**

Experimental group 1 (REBT)	N	Mean	sd	df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Post-test mean difference	Decision
Pre-test	8	68.25	8.2						
Post-test	8	28.1	5.3	15	0.05	11.63	2.132	40.15	Reject Ho <sub>1</sub>

**Source: Field Survey, 2021:** The mean difference is significant at 0.05\*

Following table 3, a paired sample t-test was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the effect of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the reduction of extra-marital affairs of female married teachers in Rivers State as indicated by their pretest and post-test mean scores, the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of table 3 was  $t(15) = 11.63, p = 0.05$ . On the basis of this result the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the effects of REBT was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among married female teachers in Rivers State, hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy in the reduction of extramarital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State when the post-test mean scores of the Experimental Group 1 (REBT) and the Control Group are compared.

**Table 4: Summary of independence t-test analysis on the significant difference between post-test mean scores of the experimental group 1 (REBT) and the control group**

Groups	N	Mean	sd	df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Post-test mean difference	Decision
REBT Group	8	28.1	5.3						
Control Group	6	65.84	8.1	14	0.05	9.929	2.145	37.74	Reject Ho <sub>4</sub>

**Source: Field Survey, 2021:** The mean difference is significant at 0.05\*

Following table 4, an independent t-test was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and the control group in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State as indicated by the post-test mean scores of the REBT experimental groups and the control group. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of table 4 was  $t(14) = 9.929, p = 0.05$ . On the basis of this result the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the effects of REBT and the control group was rejected and the alternate hypothesis upheld. This suggests that there is a significant difference in the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy and the control group in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among married female teachers in Rivers State hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

## Discussion of Findings

Based on the result of the first hypothesis the calculated t-test value showed 11.63 and a critical table value of t-test which is 2.132 with a degree of freedom of 15 at 0.05 level of significance, there was a significant mean difference in the pre-to-post-test scores of the experimental group recipients that received REBT. This implied that there was a major disparity in extra-marital affairs behavior patterns of the experimental group after the treatment which shows

an effectiveness of REBT treatment methods. This result lends credence to the theoretical position of Albert Ellis (1979) that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is a cognitive approach to therapy and it is oriented to learning positive and rational beliefs to replace negative and irrational beliefs. The result of this finding also agrees with the findings of Olaosebikan (2017) who investigated the effects of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy on reduction of extramarital affairs among married women in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria using a quasi-experimental pre and post-test control group design. The study revealed that Rational Emotive Behaviour therapy was effective in reducing participants' post-test scores on proneness to extramarital affairs when the pretest and post-test mean scores of the experimental group were compared. The results of this study also corroborates that of Cookey, Kennedy and Eremie(2021), who used REBT to investigate bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State and found a significant mean difference between the pretest and post-test mean scores of the experimental group. The results of this study is also supported by the works of Ukwueze (2013), Kennedy (2008), Amuda, Katsala and Petrol (2019), Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007); they all corroborated the effectiveness of REBT in their different studies when the pre-test and post-test mean scores of REBT recipients were compared.

The result of the second hypothesis shows that the calculated t-test value is 9.929 with a critical table value of t-test which is 2.145 with a degree of freedom of 14 at 0.05 level of significance, this implies that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the experimental group recipients that received REBT and the control group. This implied that there was major disparity in extra-marital affairs behavior patterns between the experimental group and the control group at post-test. This result is however not surprising but expected because the control group had no contact with treatment while it is believed that REBT is very effect in bringing about negative behaviour to a positive one, the result of this study has proved this claim to be true. This result is in harmony with that of Ker, Ekoja and Ekoja (2007), who investigated the effect of Rational Emotive Behaviour therapy on voters' attitude in an experimental study in Benue state university among graduate students for 2004/2005 academic session. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was used as the treatment factor for the experimental group while the control group rested. The results indicated that treatment factor Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy produced significant mean difference between the experimental and control groups in favour of the former. The control group maintained consistency in their demonstration of apathy, greed/selfishness and non-cooperation while the treatment group did not. Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy was found to be very effective. The study also aligns with that of Eremie et al (2020), Cookey et al (2021), Ukwueze (2013), Kennedy (2008), Asodike (2009); they all found a significant difference in the mean scores of the recipients of REBT and the control. The experimental groups in their various studies improved above the control groups.

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## Conclusion

The study concluded that location of the school do not affect the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the reduction of infidelity among female married teachers in Rivers State. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control group do not bring about any reduction in extra-marital affairs among female married teachers in Rivers State. All the above claims were made with statistical proofs emanating from the results of data collected for the study.

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## Recommendations

1. The tenants of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy should be taught in counsellor training programs not merely taught through theoretical processes but practically, in work-shops and professional conferences to make counsellors more effective in the discharge of their duties.
2. The study recommends that Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is effective in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among married female teachers in Rivers State. Government should endeavour to open counselling units in every local government area of the state where people can have access to counselling services when overwhelmed with matters concerning infidelity.
3. Female married secondary school teachers who engage in extra-marital affairs and have access to counselling services in their different schools should sort for counselling to redirect their way of life to a positive one. Based on this recommendation, all secondary schools in the state should have functional Counsellors with a counselling unit to effectively cater for the needs of teachers and students.
4. The result of this investigation also proved that the location of female married teachers in secondary schools in Rivers State did not have any significant effect on the effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in the reduction of extra-marital affairs among them. It is thus recommended that counselling units be opened in all rural and urban communities and the services of Professional counsellors retained to cater for marital and other needs.

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