

# MARITAL CONFLICTS AND JOB EFFECTIVENESS OF MARRIED WOMEN ACADEMICS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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## ABSTRACT

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The study examined the relationship between marital conflict and job effectiveness of working married women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used. The population of the study was 486 married women working in four tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Using purposive sampling technique, 160 married women were drawn as sample for the study. Data was generated through a well-structured and validated questionnaire captioned Marital Conflict and Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (MCJEQ). Cronbach coefficient Alpha reliability method was used for the test of reliability. Reliability estimates of the sub scales of the instrument ranged from 0.613 to 0.838. Consequently, the instrument was found to be adequately reliable for use in the study. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics to answer the research question and the Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analysis shows that marital conflict among women in tertiary institution was perceived to be caused by late night with friends, extra-marital relationship, finances, in-law involvement and the use of mobile phone. Furthermore, there exists a significant relationship between conflict arising from child care and job effectiveness of women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the government and other organizations (religious) should direct efforts in amelioration of marital conflicts through the psychologist and counselors in various institutions and religious institutions alike.

**Keywords:** Marriage, conflict, women academic, job.

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## Introduction

Married persons who have never argued or been in conflict in certain time of their lives are not being honest with each other. At times, it could be painful tension set up by a clash between opposed and contradictory impulses. No matter how one try to avoid it, conflict periodically occurs among spouses and family members. Argument arises from time to time and is sometimes meant to settle disagreements in order to move forward towards better living.

Marital Conflict could result in positive or negative impact in one's life; however, when this conflict arises for the wrong reasons and is not handled with care it becomes more serious with impact on the victim and their job effectiveness, especially for the woman. Suffice to say that conflicts and disagreements are inevitable in every close relationship, including marital relationship. Every marriage relationship is as unique as the individuals, it may contain some degree of conflict, it is actually necessary to keep a marriage dynamic rather than static (Ashford, LeCroy, & Lortie, 2006).

Working effectively in tertiary institution generally requires higher intelligence, concentration and commitment. It entails conducting of research paper publication in reputable professional journals, preparation and delivery of lectures, attendance of professional conferences, counsel and advice students, assess students' work, timely submission of students' results, and sometimes carry out administrative responsibilities. On the other hand the ineffective role performance of married women academics can lead to late preparation and attendance to lectures; low publication in professional journals; less attendance to conferences and workshops; late submission of student's result becoming too sick to work; lack of desire to embark on academics research (Reis 1984; Sarwar, 1994; Theorell & Rahe, 2003). The resultant effect is the production of poor quality students, poor research culture and procrastination (Denga, 2002). This then weakens the standard of education in the society which gives rise to low productivity. Marital conflict is not just a difference of opinion. Rather, it is a series of events that have been poorly handled so as to deeply damage the marriage relationship.

Association has been postulated between marital conflict and job effectiveness. In the academics, males and females are involved; however people tend to express reservation over job effectiveness of married academics (Denga, 2002). Sarwar (1994) stated that there are many aspects of the job that the performance of women academics leaves much to be desired. Some of the areas that scholars, administrators, policy makers tend to express reservation over the effectiveness of female academic include: timely submission of students result; academic publication; project supervision; attendance at conferences, regular lectures attendance as well as attending to students' on academic related issues. Sarwar (1994) equally stated that in order to move along in their work, a good number of them tend to depend on male colleagues in most cases for assistance while those that marry fellow academics tend to depend on their husbands. Huda, (2003) further stated that as a result of the above mentioned findings, women academics do not appear to be progressing as speedily as their male counterparts in the tertiary institution.

These perceived non-effectiveness of women academics could lead to frustration, depression and stress which inhibit job effectiveness. One then begins to wonder

whether the observed non-effectiveness is due to marital conflict results from child care. Child care conflicts are conflicts that emerge in marriage that borders on issues around the children. Hence, this study seeks to find out if marital conflict resulting from child care has any relationship with job effectiveness of married women academics in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **Study objectives**

- i. To find out the perceived causes of marital conflicts among married women tertiary institution in Cross River State?
- ii. To find out the relationship between conflict arising from child care and job effectiveness of women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State?

### **Literature Review**

Uka, Obidoa and Uzoechina (2013) undertook a study on marital disharmony: causes and resolution strategies in Enugu State. The study investigated the causes of marital disharmony and resolution strategies for resolving marital disharmony among couples in Enugu State. Two research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey design was used. The sample for the study comprises 300 (150 literate and 150 non-literate) couples drawn through multi-stage random sampling from a population of 646,311 married people. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The research questions were analyzed using mean scores and hypothesis tested with t-test statistics. The findings revealed among others, infertility, lack of trust, sexual deprivation, early marriage, finance, communication gap, infidelity as the causes of marital disharmony. Avoiding the idle mind by engaging in hard work, use of family counsellors, listening carefully to spouse, developing a positive attitude towards disharmony, communicating feelings of love, admiration, likes and dislikes, are resolution strategies for resolving marital disharmony.

Amadi and Amadi (2014) conducted a study on marital crisis in the Nigerian society: causes, consequences and management strategies. The study was informed by the rising profile of broken homes in the Nigerian society of contemporary times as many Nigerian homes today are riddled with marital crises. The investigation was designed as opinion survey using a structured questionnaire rated on a 4-point scale. The population for the study was made up of two categories namely clergy/marriage counselors and married couples (intact and non-intact families). The exact population size was not determined hence the choice of convenience sampling technique in constituting the study sample. With an infinite population, the study sample was chosen by convenience but efforts were made to ensure diversified and extended coverage of the area studied. A sample size of 100 respondents was drawn up made

up of 50 clergy, 20 intact couples, 10 single parents (males), 20 single parents (females). Three research questions and four null hypotheses guided the investigation, and generated data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were subject to the t-test statistic. Findings indicated that emergence of crises in marital homes is occasioned by a lot of factors including incompatibility in social and sexual life with mean score of 2.59, infidelity/extra marital sexual affairs 3.00, lack of mutual respect 3.15, poor marital communication 2.69, extreme sexual orientation 3.14, third-party syndrome 3.50, bareness 3.33, infatuations/fantasies 2.56 and desire for male children 2.92.

There are major factors that may be associated with marital conflict. According to the studies of Aina (2004), Tenuche (2004), Aderinto (2004), the major causes of marital conflict include refusal of wives to submit to the husband's authority, sexual misconduct by wives, interference by in-laws, conflicts between career and domestic duties by wives, religious conflict between couples, flirtation by male couples, and husbands' inability to live up to their domestic responsibility due to poverty.

Some studies (Onwuasoanya, 2006; Oyedepo, 2001; Awok, 2003; Meyer, 2011) have been carried out on the causes of marital disharmony among couples. Onwuasoanya (2006) state that age at marriage, educational level of couples, religious affiliation, income, types of marriage contracts, fertility status, types of family practiced, communication, cultural background, lack of trust, sexual incompatibility and problems of in-laws, have direct bearing on marital disharmony. The studies carried by Oyedepo (2001) and Awok (2003) maintained that the seeming unresolved marital conflict is caused by marital expectation of couples.

Causes of marital conflict identified by Meyer (2011) include:

- Finance: According to her, most couples argue over bills, debt, spending and other financial issues.
- Children: Here, discipline, diet and other parenting issues can be sources of disagreement between couples.
- Sex: To her, frequency, quantity, quality and infidelity are all common sources of stress and disharmony, as well as conflict.
- Time apart (Schedules): According to her, time apart and lack of quality time together serves to get people out of harmony.
- Household responsibilities (Chores): According to her, many couples argue over equitable distribution of household work, and how to do it.
- Friends: She stated that not all friends are helpful to relationships and some of them are poisonous.
- Habits (irritating habits): Many people, she argued, are married to someone who has one or more habits they find undesirable.

- Expectations: People go into marriage with certain expectations. Judgments and unmet expectations are source of marital conflict.
- Personality conflicts: There are personality traits that can predispose a marriage to failure. If you do not like something about your partner, one of you must change.
- Family in-laws, siblings, children and step children, to her, can all create disharmony within a marriage.

Each of the above is a very common problem dealt with in marriages. Although they are problems, they can also be opportunities for growth, learning and accord.

The level of exposure by couples could also become a crucial issue. Academic and social exposure of couples can make or mar a marriage. When couples are not well exposed or enlightened enough academically and socially, they are prone to conflict, misunderstanding or misrepresentation of issues concerning their married life (Iheagwam, 2001). Wrong influence of models has also become an issue. It is often the case where couples associate with people who teach them wrong approach towards marriage conflicts.

In a related study by Odhiambo & Maito (2013) on marital conflict in Kenya using Anglican Diocese of Maseno North as a case study. Primary data for the study were collected through interviewing and a focus group discussion and this was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Destructive marital conflict in the study area was perceived to be related to a wide array of factors which were grouped into five interrelated categories. These are: socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, personal attribute of spouse, domestic family life factors and factors of structural inequality. Out of these groups the most important factors identified by respondents included the following: low income (money); disagreement over roles and responsibilities of spouses, irresponsible alcohol drinking, gambling and pilfering; maltreatment of children, step children and other relatives; interference from in-laws and other kinsmen. The data indicated that psychological battering was common and employed by both spouses. About a third of females indicated they had been victims of physical abuse yet kept their abusive relationship because they were constrained by a network of social, cultural and economic barriers. Respondents' perception of gender relations in society informed their relationship to the opposite sex and this they carried over into marriage to influence the marital conflict behavior of spouses.

In a study by Buss (1991) on conflicts in married couples, using 210 married couples; conflict was prevalent with the following significant predictors t-values: lack of condescending (3.02), possessive-dependent (-5.27), neglecting-rejecting (6.36), abusive- physical and verbal (-0.85) inconsiderate (10.8) physically self-absorbed (-3.49) moody (-4.67) Sexually withholding-rejecting (-2.96), alcohol abuse (3.09)

disheveled (2.34) Sexually aggressive (1.52) However, the following were not significant: unfaithfulness (-0.80), sexualizes other (-0.15), insulting of appearance (0.81), Self-centered (0.49).

Okpechi and Usani (2015) carried out a study on the influence of marital stressors on role performance of married academic women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The survey research design was adopted in the study. A total of 421 women academics were drawn from the four tertiary institutions used. The instrument that was used in this study is a 61 items questionnaire tagged Influence of Marital Stressors on Role Performance Questionnaire (IMSRPQ). It was hypothesized that stressors arising from child care will have no significant influence on the role performance of married academic women in tertiary institutions. Data analysis using multiple regressions at 0.05 level of significance reveals that stressors arising from child care have a significant influence on the role performance of the married academic women. (R-value of .440, while the F-Cal = 8.940. B = 0.236, the F-Cal is greater than the critical F-value of 3.84).

The solution for nearly any marital conflict is found in getting on the same page and presenting a unified front. Otherwise, the children at home play couple against each other and add fuel to the conflict fire. Conflict decreases as teamwork increases. It may not be easy to agree with your spouse on the rules and standards you are willing to enforce with the children. That's why the first order of business is to iron out differences behind closed doors. It is advised that couples should not solve their parenting squabbles in the moment—while the children enjoy the show. The time for presenting your ideas and negotiating trade-offs is when the two of you are alone. Once you reach agreement, stick together.

<http://archives.relevantmagazine.com/life/relationships/5-biggest-areas-conflict-couples>

## **Methodology**

Survey design was adopted in this research. A survey research design presents a picture of the present condition of a particular phenomenon. This design was chosen because it involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena

The population of the study consists of all married 486 academic staff employed in tertiary institutions in Cross River State (University of Calabar, Cross River University of Calabar, Federal College of Education Obudu and Cross River State College of Education Akamkpa).

The sampling technique adopted was purposive sampling technique. The sample for this study was made up of 160 married women selected from the population, this is at 35% of each tertiary institution, the choice of using 35% is to have representative sample from every tertiary institution

The instrument used for this study was a questionnaire captioned Marital Conflict and Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (MCJEQ). The instrument was divided into 3 sections. Section A elicited response on personal data, section B was a 5 item questions on marital conflict resulting from child care and section C was a 8 item questions that measures job effectiveness.

## Results and Discussion

Data was analyzed Hypothesis-by-hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Simple percentages, bar chart and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in answering the research question and hypotheses.

### Research question 1

What are the perceived causes of marital conflicts among married women tertiary institution in Cross River State?

To carry out theses analysis, Simple percentage, frequencies and bar chart was used. The summary of the analysis is as shown in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1  
Frequency and Simple percentages showing the causes of marital conflict among women in tertiary institution in Cross River State.

S/N	Causes	Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Phone (calls, chat & social media)	21 (13.1%)	70 (43.8%)	69 (43.1%)
2.	Late nights with friends	21 (13.1%)	56 (35%)	83 (51.9%)
3.	Finances	42 (26.3%)	48 (30%)	70 (43.8%)
4.	In-law involvement	-	63 (39.4%)	97 (60.6%)
5.	Children	7 (4.4%)	28 (17.5%)	125 (78.1%)
6.	Food	14 (8.8%)	21 (13.1%)	125 (78.1%)
7.	Extra marital relationship	35 (21.9%)	62 (38.8%)	63 (39.4%)

The results presented in table 1 shows the causes of marital conflict among tertiary institution women in Cross River State. As presented, financial issues accounted to always cause marital conflict with a frequency of 42 (26.3%) of the 160 respondents, sometimes at 48 % and never at 43.8%. Extra-marital relationship always caused

conflict at 21.9%, sometimes 38.8% and never 39.4%. In-laws interference was not always causing conflict however it does sometimes at 39.4% and never 60.6%. Children’s behavior is perceived to always cause conflict at 4.4%, sometimes 17.5% and never at 78.1% respectively.

The multiple bar chart in Fig.1 further illustrates in pictorial form, the perceived causes of marital conflict.

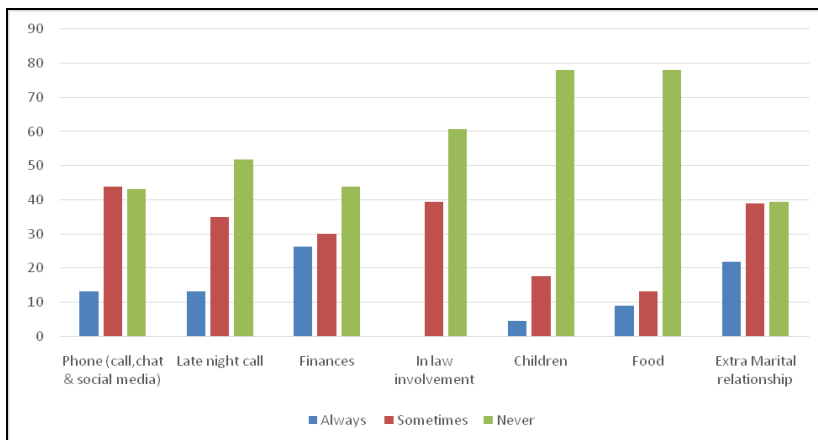


Figure 1: Bar chart of perceived causes of marital conflict.

### Hypothesis 1

In the null form, the hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between conflict arising from child care and job effectiveness of women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State? The result of analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 2  
Pearson Product moment Correlation of child care conflict and job effectiveness.

Variable	N	X	SD	r-value	Sig of r
Child care conflict	160	12.03	2.29	-.066	.000*
Job Effectiveness	160	15.12	2.60		

Significant at P< 0.05

The correlation analysis result presented in table 2 shows that a correlation coefficient of -.066 was obtained for the relationship between marital conflict from child care and job effectiveness of tertiary institution women in Cross River State. The



result further shows that the relationship was significant at 0.05 probability level. The negative correlation coefficient indicates that as conflict from child care increases, job effectiveness decreases and vice versa. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and uphold the alternate hypothesis.

### **Discussion of findings**

The above research question indicated the perceived causes of marital conflict among tertiary institution women in Cross River State are late night with friends, extra-marital relationship, finances, in-law involvement and the use of mobile phone. The findings is supported by Amadi and Amadi (2014) who carried out a study on marital crisis in the Nigerian society: causes, consequences and management strategies, the emergence of crises in marital homes is occasioned by a lot of factors including incompatibility in social and sexual life with mean score of 2.59, infidelity/extra marital sexual affairs 3.00, lack of mutual respect 3.15, poor marital communication 2.69, extreme sexual orientation 3.14, third-party syndrome 3.50, bareness 3.33, infatuations/fantasies 2.56 and desire for male children 2.92.

Onwuasoanya (2006) also corroborates this finding where the study found out that age at marriage, educational level of couples, religious affiliation, income, types of marriage contracts, fertility status, types of family practiced, communication, cultural background, lack of trust, sexual incompatibility and problems of in-laws, have direct bearing on marital disharmony. More so, this finding is in agreement with the findings of Aina (2004), Tenuche (2004), Aderinto (2004) and Alumanah (2004), where they found out that the major causes of marital conflict include refusal of wives to submit to the husband's authority, sexual misconduct by wives, interference by in-laws, conflicts between career and domestic duties by wives, religious conflict between couples, flirtation by male couples, and husbands' inability to live up to their domestic responsibility due to poverty. Furthermore, this research findings is in conformity with Odhiambo & Maito (2013) in their study of marital conflict in Kenya and found out that money management, disagreement over roles and responsibilities of spouses, irresponsible alcohol drinking, gambling and pilfering; maltreatment of children, step children and other relatives; interference from in-laws and other kinsmen where causes of marital conflict.

Conflict arising from child care had a significant relationship with job effectiveness of women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. This hypothesis was predicated upon the fact that amidst marital conflict arising from children related issues, the working woman is affected emotionally, which generally shatters her emotional well-being for job effectiveness. This finding is supported by Okpechi and Usani (2015) carried out a study on the influence of marital stressors on role performance of

married academic women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State. A total of 421 women academics were drawn from the four tertiary institutions used. The instrument that was used in this study was a 61 items questionnaire tagged Influence of Marital Stressors on Role Performance Questionnaire (IMSRPQ). It was hypothesized that stressors arising from child care will have no significant influence on the role performance of married academic women in tertiary institutions. Data analysis using multiple regressions at 0.05 level of significance reveals that stressors arising from child care have a significant influence on the role performance of the married academic women. (R-value of .440, while the F-Cal = 8.940. B = 0.236, the F-Cal is greater than the critical F-value of 3.84).

### **Conclusion, Summary and Recommendation**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived causes of marital conflict the relationship between marital conflict and job effectiveness of working married women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Through a purposive sampling technique, sample of 160 for the study was selected from a population of 486 married women who are employed in four tertiary institutions (University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology, Federal College of Education Obudu and Cross River State College of Education) in Cross River State as academic staff. A questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The result of analysis reveals that:

- Marital conflict among working women in tertiary institution was perceived to be caused by late night with friends, extra-marital relationship, finances, in-law involvement and the use of mobile phone.
- There is a significant relationship between conflict arising from child care and job effectiveness of women in tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

Following the findings, It was recommended among others that:

1. The perceived causes of marital conflict is quite revealing as a pointer to marital conflict, and having established in the literature that conflict can lead to serious job ineffectiveness. It is therefore expedient that efforts should be directed towards its amelioration if not complete eradication through the introduction of psychologist and counselors in various organizations and religious institutions alike.
2. The government and other organizations must identify effective ways of raising awareness about marital conflict consequences and develop supportive social structure for victims. There should be a general awakening of women to take control of their bodies and lives. The women non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should take up this responsibility. And good parenting skill should be integrated into the existing maternal health programme. Social, political,

community and religious leaders should be enlisted in speaking out against marital conflict

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