

**CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF MARITAL CONFLICT AMONG MARRIED
TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN UMUAHIA NORTH EDUCATION
ZONE**

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Abstract

The study investigated causes and effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education Zone. It adopted a descriptive research design. A sample of 157 from a total of 524 married teachers in primary schools freely participated in the study. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. 30 items questionnaire titled: Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ) was designed for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. There were pilot-test using 20 married teachers in the primary school from Aba Education Zone which are not part of the study Area. Its reliability index was 0.87. The responses was designed in a 4-liket options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree(D) with weighs of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. Mean and standard Deviation was used to address the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in the primary schools as: outside intimate relationship, sex, violent behavior of the man or woman, finance, inability to spend enough time with the family, issues relating to their children, education gap, childlessness, lack of effective communication and third person such as mother or father in laws. It also showed that marital conflict has negative effects of married couples. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that married teachers should identify causes and effects of marital conflicts and seek for counselling and other remedies to resolve issues and conflicts before they become a strong one

Key Words: Marital Conflict, Married Teachers in Primary Schools and Umuahia North Education Zone.

Introduction

The word conflict can be used exchanged with disagreement, clash, difference, quarrel and so on. According to Sotonade (2018) conflict is the struggle for control over another person's behaviour or action. Furthermore, Okwun (2011) and Justin (2014) sees conflict as a situation whereby a husband and wife desire goals which may be perceived as attainable by one but not by both. A disagreement in marital relationship becomes a conflict when it goes beyond the normal intellectual difference that characterizes marital relationships to the emotional realm involving feelings of anxiety or anger and followed by abusive languages and hostile actions. According to Ogazie (2022) marital conflict can be overt or covert. While overt marital conflict can be open, seen and felt such as: given physical injury to the partner, using abusive words and so on, covert marital conflict may or may not be seen, or feel such as: murmuring, denial, aggression and so on. Many times covert conflict may lead to more serious invisible injuries such as: depression, anxiety, fear, mental, aggression among others while overt ones may lead to physical injuries, hospitalization, death among others. Kiuwer, Heesink & Van De Vliert (2014) also opined that the absence of overt conflicts does not mean that there is no conflict only that it is not openly expressed. No matter the level of conflict that exists, the two parties at least still have relationship, no matter how bad it may be. The conflict may lead them to hurt each other or to forgive and forget but the conflict shows that something about the relationship is still important to the people involved.

Makinde, (2012) went ahead to classify marital conflict into three basic types namely: Acute, Progressive and Habituated conflicts based on when and how they develop and what functions they serve; 1. Acute conflicts grow out of the couple's need to establish a successful method of dealing with difficulties in marriage. According to him, such conflicts occur frequently in marriages. He gave examples of such conflicts as; conflicts arising from arguments on how money should be spent on food, drinks, clothing and entertainment, problems of adjustment connected with in-laws, sex among others. Furthermore, progressive conflict arises when couples fail to focus upon current issues affecting the family and resolving them. Each conflict that is unresolved becomes progressive, as a result, partners tends to challenge each other's weakness and find faults in the least things done or said by a partner. The third one is the Habituated conflict. After couples have worked out basic adjustments and learned to avoid progressive conflicts, sometimes, there remain certain areas where agreement will never come and where accommodation is the best that can be achieved. In marital conflicts, the individuals

or groups involved are seen as basically competing with each other and power is seen as the decisive factor in interactions according to Eroh, (2015).

Marriage is a life that partner go into it with happiness, joy, satisfaction, and so on and cannot anticipate what may happen in the further as the advance in the marriage. Navindia (2014) opined that when people get into marriage, it is with the intention of “till death do us part” but there are some circumstances that may warrant conflict and disharmony such as: dispute over money, sex, children, dealing with in laws among others. In the same vein, Afu and Nteh (2020) observed that families are faced with lots of socioeconomic conflicts factors or challenges such as: financial, poverty, unemployment and, pressure from family and friends. Furthermore, Tolorunke (2013) pointed out that marital conflict were as a result of socio-economic issues like; sexual needs and inability to meet basic needs of the family. Madi and Amadi (2014) revealed the following as causes of marital conflict: social incompatibility of spouses, sexual, relations and in law, Lack of respect for each other, dishonesty, moral decadence, negligent and poor communication. Afu and Nteh (2020) study equally revealed some causes of marital conflict to be; upbringing of children, childlessness, lack of financial differences in religions. Ogazie (2022), outlined some causes of marital conflict to include: cultural, educational, physical, socio economic, psychological and material in nature. Other authors such as : Dilon et al (2015) Obelenienė and Gabševičienė (2015), Papp et al (2011), Asadi et al (2016), Asadi, et al (2016), found out from their studies that major causes of conflict among married people were disparity in opinion, interests, lack of material needs, immaturity of spouses, poor communication, disrespect, money, sex, children, aggression.

Marital conflict may have some effects on the married teachers. Its effect may likely affect their families, the school and the society at large. Tasew and Getahum study in (2021) revealed that marital conflict is highly prevalent and showed an increasing trend from year to year. In this regards, Afu and Nteh (2020), outlined some of the effects of marital conflicts to include: infidelity, stress, not being able to control children, drug intake and divorce. Also, Amadi and Amadi (2014); Dildar (2013) equally posited that when conflicts are not properly handled, it can lead to unfulfilled desires, lack of satisfaction, emotional problems like; depression, aggression, and worry-hence family. A teacher who experiences marital conflict may transfer the aggression to either students or other staff. This may also result in poor performance on delivery of teaching subject, withdrawal, quarrel, restlessness and even poor health condition. The researchers also posited that marital conflict may have long term effect on the married

teachers such as: lateness to school, poor health condition, sleeplessness and restlessness, anxiety, aggression, isolation, irrational thoughts and ideas among others.

Most couples who fall victim of marital conflict are teachers. Married teachers are expected to show sense of maturity in dealing with their marriage partners but most times it is not so. According to the findings of Brox, Devault, and Cohen, (2015), educated couples, despite their educational qualifications have discrepancies in their views concerning marital conflicts especially as it concerns their values and marriage expectations.

Gender is the socially constructed roles, behaviour, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men and gender diverse people according to Canadian Institutes of health research. Gender has influence on how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act, interact and the distribution of power and resources in the society. However, Gender limits its meanings involving behavior, cultural and psychological traits Merriam Webster dictionary (2002). One`s gender is a complex interrelationship between the three dimensions: body, identity and social gender. Yinusa(2020) carried out a study on the effect of age, gender and value orientation on Adolescents students moral development in conflict situations in the University. The findings of the study revealed that neither age nor gender was significantly related to moral development, males and females follow the same pattern. Some of the times, men try to avoid conflicts but if they engage in conflict, they tend to use more coercion, aggression, and control tactics. They use intimidation while women mostly like to involve in conflicts.

Study by Wood and Eagly (2012) revealed that men and women approach arguments and respond to withdrawal differently. However, it is strong arguments that causes conflicts among married couples. Men are known to be withdrawal if they are having conflict with a woman especially their wives while on the other hand, women mostly use power of the tongue, or destruction of the house properties which provokes the man to raise hands on them. Again, Because of the responsibilities of the couples, gender may play a significant difference among married teachers. Men are expected to carry out their responsibilities as men in the house. Again, a man or woman is expected to carry out his or her duty in the home but when they fail to do so, it result to conflict. No wonder, Iran (2020) in his study posited that rate of divorce was significantly increasing in Iran and there were also decree in the ration of marriage from 9.4 in 2004 50 6.5 in 2009, and to 4.2 in 2004. They revealed a significant difference in marital satisfaction between different gender roles

In spite of the various efforts made by some bodies in the church and society like: Justice, Development and Peace (JDPC), Human Rights, family, customary court, to maintain satisfactory relationship in marriages, married teachers are still experiencing marital conflict which have negative effects on both the family, school, society and the wellbeing of the couples

at large. It is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to find out the cause, effects and possible solutions to marital conflicts among married teachers in the primary schools

Statement of the Problems

Marriage is a unique and divine relationship for life and harmoniously integrating the mature man and woman into becoming “one flesh”. Notwithstanding various efforts in creating harmonious relationship in marriages, couples are still experiencing marital conflict which affects both the family, school, society and the well-being of the couples at large. Married teachers are expected to show sense of maturity in dealing with their marriage partners but most times it is not so. According to the findings of Brox, Devault, and Cohen, (2015), educated couples, despite their educational qualifications have discrepancies in their views concerning marital conflicts especially as it concerns their values and marriage expectations. Some bodies like Justice, Development and Peace (JDPC) Human Rights among others have been set out to find solutions to marital conflict but to no avail. This ugly situation has made the researchers to seek to find out causes and effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education Zone.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. find out the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone.
2. find out the effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone.
3. offer possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone

Research Questions

1. What are the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?
2. What are the effect of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?
3. What are the possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?

Hypothesis

Ho1. There is no significant difference on marital conflict exhibit by primary school teachers based on gender.

Methodology

The study investigated causes and effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education Zone. It adopted a descriptive research design. A sample of 157 from a total of 524 married teachers in primary schools freely participated in the study. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. A-30 items questionnaire titled: Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ) was designed for data collection. The instrument had three clusters A, B, C and D. A was designed to elicit demographic information from the respondents. Cluster B had 10 items measuring the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in the primary schools, Cluster C also hosed 10 items measuring the effects of marital conflict among married teachers while Cluster D measure solution of marital conflicts among married teachers in the primary schools. The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. There were pilot-test using 20 married teachers in the primary school from Aba Education Zone which are not part of the study Area. The responses was designed in a 4-liket options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree(D) with weighs of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The maximum score obtained by the participants was 100 while the minimum was 20. This means that any score calculated to be greater than or equal to 2.50 is accepted that the participant has marital conflict while any value from 2.49 and below was said to be rejected.

However, 20 married teachers in the primary schools in Aba was used a as pilot test on two occasions It;s reliability index was 0.87 using the Cronbach Alpha statistical tool. The instrument was administered to the participants through the principals of the schools used. Mean and standard Deviation was used to address the research questions while t test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: What are the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents on the causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone

S/N	Causes of Marital Conflict among School Teachers include:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Outside intimate relationship	3.20	0.73	Agree
2	Sex	3.09	0.62	Agree
3	Violent behaviour of the man or woman	3.33	0.74	Agree

4	Finance	3.47	0.69	Agree
5	inability to spend enough time with the family	3.30	0.91	Agree
6	Issues relating the their children	3.29	0.73	Agree
7	Education gap	3.27	0.65	Agree
8	Childlessness	3.18	0.77	Agree
9	Lack of effective communication	3.15	0.63	Agree
10	Third persons such as mother and father in-laws	3.19	0.70	Agree
	Total mean score	3.24		Agree

The result in Table 1 revealed various causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools to include: outside intimate relationship, sex, violent behavior of the man or woman, finance, inability to spend enough time with the family, issues relating to their children, education gap, childlessness, lack of effective communication and third person such as mother or father in laws. Response to this ten items ranges from 3.09 to 3.47, given a total mean score of 3.24 which is above the cut off mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated that the respondents agreed that all the items contributes to marital conflicts among married teachers in Umuahia North Education Zone.

Research Question Two: What are the effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents of the respondents on the effects of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone

S/N	Effects of Marital Conflicts among School Teachers includes:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Psychological trauma such as: depression	3.28	0.89	Agree
2	Has negative effects on the children	2.89	0.90	Agree
3	Physical injuries	3.13	0.79	Agree
4	Divorce	3.02	0.88	Agree
5	Sleeplessness and restlessness	3.15	0.76	Agree
6	It creates tension on the partners	2.93	0.81	Agree
7	Marital conflict can increase stress	2.99	0.67	Agree
8	It can trigger emotions such as; anger, fear, depression, aggression etc.	3.17	0.91	Agree
9	It can also result in unhappiness, insecurity among others	2.90	0.78	Agree
10	Marital conflict has negative effect on me	3.24	0.77	Agree
	Total mean score 3.07			Agree

The result in Table 2 revealed various causes of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools to include: depression, negative effects on the children, Physical injuries, divorce, Sleeplessness and restlessness, tension on the partners, increase stress, trigger emotions such as; anger, fear, depression, aggression, results in unhappiness, insecurity and negative effect on the person. Response to this ten items ranges from mean scores of 2.89 to 3.28, given a total mean score of 3.07, which is above the cut off mean scores of 2.50, indicated that the respondents agreed that all the items has negative effects of marital conflicts among married teachers in Umuahia North Education Zone.

Research Question Three: What are the possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents on possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone

S/N	Possible ways to resolve marital conflicts among School Teachers include:	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Effective communication among partners	4.02	0.75	Agree
2	Non- judgmental when having discussions among partners	3.52	0.50	Strongly Agree
3	Polite expression your feelings among partners	2.97	0.70	Agree
4	Partners should address issues as they arise and not waiting for the judgment day	3.64	0.72	S. Agree
5	Forgiveness and seeking counselling	3.66	0.69	S. Agree
6	Learn how to admit your fault by saying sorry to your partner when conflict arises	3.25	0.75	Agree
7	Exchange of gifts on birthdays and anniversaries go a long way to heal conflicts	3.61	0.65	S. Agree
8	Respecting for each partner will help to solve marital conflict	3.94	0.81	S. Agree
9	Negotiation is a good strategy for resolving marital conflict	3.61	0.56	S. Agree
10	Avoid dominance	2.83	0.84	Agree

The result in Table 3 show that the mean ratings of possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone to include: Effective communication, Non- judgmental when having discussions, Polite expression of feelings, admit your fault by saying sorry, exchange of gifts on birthdays and

anniversaries, respecting for each partner and avoidance of dominance. Response to this ten items ranges from mean scores of 2.83 to 3.94, given a total mean score of 3.50, which is above the cut off mean scores of 2.50, indicated that the respondents strongly agreed that all the items in table 3 are possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education Zone.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference on marital conflict exhibit by primary school teachers based on gender.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of Male and Female on Marital Conflict Exhibit by Primary School Teachers

Status	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Remark
Male	29	3.52	0.68	107	0.15	1.96	NS
Female	38	3.50	0.74				

Data in table 4 showed the t-calculated value of 0.15 and the t-critical value of 1.96 at degree of (df) of 107. Since the t-calculated value of 0.15 is less than t-critical value of 1.96, the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference on marital conflict exhibit by primary school teachers based on gender.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study on Research 1: table one, revealed that all the 10 items in Cluster A are contributors to marital conflicts among married teachers in Umuahia North Education Zone. The items include: outside intimate relationship, sex, violent behavior of the man or woman, finance, inability to spend enough time with the family, issues relating to their children, education gap, childlessness, lack of effective communication and third person such as mother or father in laws. The mean scores ranges from 3.09 to 3.47, and given a total mean score of 3.24 which is above the cut off mean scores ranges from 2.50. The result of the present study is in line with findings of the studies of Dilon et al (2015) Obelenienė and Gabšėvičienė (2015), Papp et al (2011), Asadi et al (2016), Asadi, et al (2016), found out from their studies that major causes of conflict among married people were disparity in opinion, interests, lack of material needs, immaturity of spouses, poor communication, disrespect, money, sex, children, aggression.

The findings of table 2, Research question two revealed that all the items in cluster B has negative effects on marital conflicts among married teachers in Umuahia North Education Zone. The finding of the present study is also in concurrence with the study of Afu and Nteh (2020), outlined some of the effects of marital conflicts to include: infidelity, stress, not being able to control children, drug intake and divorce. Its findings also is in line with Amadi and Amadi (2014) and Dildar (2013) study which posited that when conflicts are not properly handled, it can lead to unfulfilled desires, lack of satisfaction, emotional problems like; depression, aggression, and worry-hence family. The researchers found in the present study that a teacher who experiences marital conflict may transfer the aggression to either students or other staff, and this may also result in poor performance on delivery of teaching subject, withdrawal, quarrel, restlessness and even poor health condition.

The findings of table 3, Research question three revealed that items in cluster C possible solutions on the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers in primary schools in Umuahia North Education zone They include: Effective communication, Non- judgmental when having discussions, Polite expression of feelings, admit your fault by saying sorry, exchange of gifts on birthdays and anniversaries, respecting for each partner and avoidance of dominance. Response to this ten items ranges from mean scores of 2.83 to 3.94, given a total mean score of 3.50, which is above the cut off mean scores of 2.50. The finding of the present study is in agreement with the findings of Navinda (2014) who stated that the inability of several families to be able to manage family disputes is the reason why most families are at war.

The findings table 4, Hypothesis one showed that there is no significant difference on marital conflict exhibit by primary school teachers based on gender. Since the t-calculated value of 0.15 and the t-critical value of 1.96 at degree of (df) of 107. And since the t-calculated value of 0.15 is less than t-critical value of 1.96, the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. The present study was also in concurrent with the study of Wood and Eagly (2012) reported that men and women approach arguments and respond to withdrawal differently.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. many variables contributes to the marital conflicts such as: outside intimate relationship, sex, violent behavior of the man or woman, finance, inability to spend enough time with the family, issues relating to their children, education gap, childlessness, lack of effective communication and third person such as mother or father in laws.
2. It was concluded also that marital conflict has negative effects on the married primary school teachers
3. There are possible solutions to the reduction of marital conflict among married teachers such as: Effective communication, Non- judgmental when having discussions, Polite expression of feelings, admit your fault by saying sorry, exchange of gifts on birthdays and anniversaries, respecting for each partner and avoidance of dominance.
4. Gender had no significant difference on marital conflict exhibited by married teachers in primary schools.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that married teachers should identify causes and effects of marital conflicts and seek for counselling and other remedies to resolve issues and conflicts before they become a strong one

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