

**INFLUENCE OF MARITAL CONFLICTS ON THE EDUCATIONAL  
ADVANCEMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN EDO STATE**

**BY**

**Otaniyen IMAFIDON**

**PG/EDU1503158**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY**

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATIONS, FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SUBMITTED TO THE  
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**CERTIFICATION**

We, the undersigned, certify that this study was carried out by ----- of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to The Almighty God, for His love and care.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the influence of marital conflict on the educational advancement of post-graduate students in Edo State. The need to address the concern of stakeholders over the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of postgraduate students, in university of Benin, Benin City necessitated this study. To guide the study, five research questions were raised, hypothesized and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

The study adopted Survey research method to measure the differences between the variables of the study. The population of the study was Eleven thousand, five hundred (11,500) married postgraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, while the target population was Five hundred and thirteen (513) married postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. The sample of the study consisted of Two hundred and twenty five (225) married post graduate students selected through purposive sampling procedures. The research instrument used in collecting data was a self designed questionnaire titled: “Marital Conflict and Students Educational Advancement Questionnaire (MCSEAQ)”. The instrument was validated by the researcher’s supervisor in the Department of Educational Foundations and two experts from the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The Cronbach’s Alpha Statistics was used to establish the reliability of the instrument, the alpha value of 0.87 was obtained. Demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed with percentage while the hypotheses formulated were tested using Chi-square statistics.

The findings revealed that there is a difference between the nature of marital conflicts among employed married post-graduate students and unemployed post-graduate students in University of Benin. The study also showed that there is a difference between the causes of marital conflicts among employed married post-graduate students and unemployed post-graduate students in University of Benin and that there is a difference between the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of married male post-graduate students and that of married female post-graduate students in the University of Benin. The study further revealed that there is a difference between the coping strategies employed by employed post-graduate students of University of Benin experiencing marital conflicts and that of unemployed post-graduate students of University of Benin

experiencing marital conflicts, In view of the findings, the study recommends, among other, that the findings of this study be made available for use in educational planning and improvement. There was need for the University of Benin to have guidance Counsellors, who could counsel married students experiencing marital conflict.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background to the Study**

Conflict can be defined as the lack of peace in an environment. Conflict in a family therefore refers to a situation whereby the smooth interaction and relation among members of a family is disrupted. It can be between the two parents or between parents and their children. Conflict in a family can be as a result of lack of trust, love, drunkenness, lack of dialogue, lack of respect, joblessness and idleness. It comes in the form of fights, quarrels, spouse battering, child abuse and child molestation. It can result to a bad atmosphere in the home, separation or even divorce.

Couples who have never argued or been in conflict at a certain time of their lives are not being honest with each other. Conflicts is defined as a struggle to resist or overcome; contest of opposing forces or powers; strife; battle (Ellis and Garber, 2000). It is a state or condition of opposition; antagonism; discord. A painful tension set up by a clash between opposed and contradictory impulses. No matter how one try to avoid it, conflict periodically enters people lives. Conflicts occur 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. Conflict could result in positive

effect in one's life; however, when conflict arises for the wrong reasons and is not handled with care it becomes more serious with negative effect on the victim and their academic performance. Couples engage in conflicts more often due to economic, sexual and power control. Couples tend to quarrel over money more often than other things.

Many families face difficult struggles that are often quite volatile and troubling. Marital conflict is a phenomenon that destabilizes the couple, disrupt their joy and mostly felt by women yet, least recognized human rights abuse in the world.

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman from different backgrounds to become husband and wife and spend most of their life together. Marriage brings about intimate relationship between the couple. One major factor that plays a major affects marital bliss is the occurrence of marital conflict (Cummings & Davies, 2012). Research has shown that married students who witness higher level of marital conflict are more likely to internalize stress resulting in a multitude of negative somatic symptoms including frequent illness, physiological indications of chronic stress, high levels of blood pressure, heart rate reaction (Cohen, 2013). Marital conflicts happen when one or both persons are self-centered. One selfishly wants what he wants without consideration for the capabilities, plans, or goals of his spouse.

The problems that bring about marital conflict are attributed to lack of understanding among couples, poverty, background, social influence, early marriage etc. All these have their consequences which are fighting, quarrelling, maltreatment, emotional stress, neglect, lack of family affection, being away from home which has resulted to a great number of divorces and separation. Increase in marital conflicts also makes married students more susceptible to feelings of frequent and intense interpersonal conflict, which research has shown to be a greater predictor of marital adjustment problems from divorce alone (Cummings & Davies, 2012).

Married students who experience relatively high level of marital conflict were associated with having less secure attachments with their spouse (Lindsey, 2009). These factors are the most common emotional support structures among these individuals. Students who witness marital violence face increased risk for such emotional and behavioral problems as anxiety, depression, poor school attendance, performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares and physical health complaints. In other words, exposure to marital conflict might influence married student directly or indirectly through its effect on their academics.

The most prevalent type of marital conflicts are based on unmet needs. Money, power struggle, sexual problems, infidelity and in-law problems. Marital conflict can lead to mental instability and family disorganization resulting to lots of social

ills. Crisis and conflicts in marriages produce discord and reduces affection among couples leading to divorce and separation and total dissolution of the family system, with an influence on academic performance.

Moral decadence, depression is a major impact that results to crisis among married couples. Gradual degeneration, of traditional system of marriage, disintegrations and commuter marriage system has made marital conflict to be on the increase. Escalating marital conflicts and crisis can lead the nation of its capability to possess responsible citizens with poor educational performance. This implies that there will be deteriorations in the calibre of citizens with every new generation. The nation will be full of selfish, self conceited individuals. There will be continued national instability due to unstable personalities. There will be national disintegration and eminent collapse in marriage if the family system is not addressed and refocused to its statuesque.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria today, it is commonly reported in the media that a child or its parents or both have been hospitalized or killed as a result of marital conflicts. Other cases reported are those where a woman packs and leaves her matrimonial home with her children because she can no longer tolerate her husband's behavior. There are even cases where it is the men who move out of their homes to "look for peace"

elsewhere. There have also been cases of suicide and murder, where the head of the family kills his wife and children before killing himself. There are also the cases of street children, some of whom are on the streets because they have run away from violent home environments. These incidents take place not only in rural areas but also in urban ones.

Edo State, Nigeria has also recorded some of these incidents. When there is marital conflict, it affects children in their physical, cognitive, affective and even spiritual growth. Their lives are enclosed or imprisoned if they continue being exposed to a violent environment. For some, such an environment means that they have no access to formal education and their cognitive and affective developments are hampered with. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of post-graduate students in Edo State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the nature of marital conflict amongst married post-graduate students in University of Benin?
2. What are the possible major causes of common marital conflicts among couples experiencing conflicts in University of Benin?

3. What is the relationship between marital conflicts and students educational advancement in University of Benin?
4. To what extent do marital conflicts influence students' educational progress in University of Benin?
5. What are the coping strategies that can be employed by students experiencing marital conflicts to enhance their educational progress?

### **Hypotheses**

To have more insight into the problem, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested. All research questions were hypothesized as follow:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the nature of marital conflicts among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the causes of marital conflict among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin.

HO<sub>4</sub>: Marital conflicts have no negative influence on the academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin.

HO<sub>5</sub>: There is no significant difference in the coping strategies employed by married post-graduate students towards the enhancement of their academic performance in University of Benin and their employment status.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to examine the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of postgraduate students in University of Benin, Benin City. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Examine the nature of marital conflict among married post-graduate students in University of Benin.
2. Identify the possible major causes of common marital conflicts among couples experiencing conflict in University of Benin.
3. Ascertain the relationship between marital conflicts and students educational advancement in University of Benin.
4. Determine the extent in which marital conflicts affects students' educational progress in University of Benin.
5. Find out the coping strategies that can be employed by students experiencing marital conflicts, towards the enhancement of their educational progress.

## **Significance of the Study**

A study of this sort using postgraduate students of the University of Benin as a case study will be relevant in the following ways:

- i.) The finding of this study will be useful to parents, especially parents who are students on the need for a conflict free home, reducing marital pressure, finding positive means of coping with conflicts and academics, developing positive emotional maturity, spouse to be supportive, show love, patience and proper communication in the family, in order to enhance qualitative educational progress, especially on those couples that always engage in conflicts.
- ii.) It will be of great benefit to married couples in improving and minimizing conflicts in the home especially those married students experiencing marital conflicts in the University of Benin, Benin City.
- iii.) The findings of this study will also be useful to the communities and Government on the need to educate spouses on the preventive measures of conflicts in order to have responsible citizens and effective productivity in the labor market, hence qualitative education is the bedrock of any society.
- iv.) Finally, it would add to the existing body of knowledge on the subject and the interesting findings may be taken as input for other researchers

for further research on marital conflicts and students' educational progress. Scope and

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study mainly focuses on the influence of marital conflicts on the educational advancement of postgraduate students in Edo State. Thus participants in the study were married students in the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. That is students who were married before securing admission into the university. This is because the researcher feels that with this group of students, more useful information will be obtained.

The study examined the causes of marital conflicts among these selected groups, the influence of such conflicts on their educational progress and ways to cope with such conflicts. The study was delimited to the University of Benin Faculty of Education postgraduate students.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were operationally defined according to their use in the study.

**Conflict:** A state of open, often prolonged fighting; a battle of war. It is also a state of disagreement or disharmony between persons or ideas; a clash.

**Marital Conflict:** It is a series of disagreements or disharmony between couples that have been poorly handled so as to deeply damage the marriage relationship.

**Educational Advancement:** Educational Advancement is the outcome of education. The extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter presents the review of Related Literature on the study. This is done under the following headings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Conceptual Clarification
- Nature of Marital Conflict
- Causes of Marital Conflict
- Marital Conflicts and Students' Academic Performance
- Summary of Literature Reviewed

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is hinged on Karl Marx's Theory of Conflict which claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for the limited resources. Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless (Marx, 1971). Karl Marx's Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including marital conflicts. Karl Marx holds that marital conflicts are unavoidable aspects of everyday conflicts occurring

between two or more people who disagree on issues that threaten their respective goals, values, or needs. The ultimate root of marital conflicts happens when you perceive something or someone as a threat to some area of your wellbeing. Threats typically trigger emotional responses. When this happens, your ability to view and approach the situation in an objective manner is hampered (Marx, 1971).

Karl Marx also said that as stressful as marital conflict can become at times, there are genuine benefits in resolving it which would otherwise not present themselves if it did not arise. He further said that marital conflicts benefits can come in the form of personal growth, stronger bonds, increased in productivity and overall boost in moral. There are also interpersonal relationship agreements as well as peace increase when issues are resolve. It creates long time bonds that help in strengthening the family bonds time (Marx, 1971).

Daramola (2010) defined academic performance as the ability or inability of the student(s) to think and explain what they are taught in the lecture room in order to achieve a desired or stated objective in a field of courses taken within a defined period. Adewale (2011) described academic performance as a means of academic progress, not only to indicate readiness for next step' but to evaluate students' progress towards educational goals. Alfred (2011) sees academic performance as an appraisal to determine whether a student will remain in the same level in the

coming year or will be promoted. Examination and test is some of the measuring tools for determining those who will graduate and those who will not.

Olusola (2009) and Mbah (2011) highlighted the factors affecting academic performance as: intellectual curiosity; encouragement; environment; lecturer influence among other factors. Olusola (2009) suggested that encouragement should be seen as a wide range of effort people made to help students to participate meaningfully in scholastic activities.

Marriage is one of the roles expected by society from its members during adulthood. Marriage is a legal union between two matured adult of two different sexes. Differences and difficulties are inevitable in marriage. Spouses usually work hard towards handling these difficulties, but at times, they get out of hand. This makes marriage to fail and result in conflict and divorce.

Gbenga et al. (2012) said that marriage is supposed to be a harmonious integration of husband and wife, but many other factors such as psychosocial, cultural and economic problems make people to deviate significantly from the objectives of marriage. Marriage therefore consistently calls for adjustment as the relationship can have either positive or negative influence on the family.

Conflicts in marriages according to Akinade (2007) are human attributes which may be natural or man-made. How they are handled determine the success or

failure of a marriage. Buba (2010) explained that, unmet needs, high expectations, economic, power struggle, sexual problems, infidelity, and possessiveness are the most common forces of marital conflicts.

Degenova and Rice (2011) used the conflict theory of crisis development to explain the occurrence of marital crises in families. The theory postulated that conflict is a normal phenomenon where there are two or more people and even within an individual, adding that, the theory of marital and family behaviour aims at managing conflicts to avoid crisis. Buba (2010) further said that it is when conflicts are resolved that a new rewarding and meaningful relationship can be developed. Such solutions can only come through bargaining negotiation and compromise. Wale and Rovalt (2009) outline causes of marital conflicts as; infidelity, economic distress inter-personal perception of each other, among other factors. They further said that when these causes persist, it could lead to depression, anxiety, fear, withdrawn with tensed emotional climate in the family.

Olaitan (2013) viewed the effect of conflict as it could lead to marital instability, discord depression and reduces affection among couples, it leads to divorce, separation and total dissolution of the family system. Summing up the general effect of marital conflicts, Abdul Baba (2013) gave an even broader impact by stating that with the gradual degeneration and disintegration of the family system, as a result of unresolved conflicts, the nation will be deprived of its capability to

posses responsible citizens. This implied that, there will be deterioration in the calibre of citizens with every new generation, selfish, conceited individuals, continued national instability due to unstable personal, ties, marital infidelity and sexually transmitted diseases among other effects.

Degenova and Rice (2011) identified the following as coping strategies to manage or avoid marital conflicts;

- i.) Avoidance in order to overcome the problem. Couples avoid discussing controversial issues even when they are important. Avoidance may however become counterproductive as the issue may continue to brew into more serious conflicts.
- ii.) Ventilation is an opposite of avoidance when negative feelings and pressure are expressed as a means of resolving conflicts. This coping strategy has been used by psychotherapist where it involves encouraging partners with a boiling problem to take-out, act out their feelings in the open. Other marital conflicts coping strategies includes never giving up.
- iii.) Pursuing new interest to cool off tension. Iv.) Honoring spouse's request for emotional space by backing off till both parties has stabilized.
- iv.) Making a list of things you want to do to get more balance emotionally, such as religious activities, sports, listening to inspirational songs.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

Eze and Echoes (2009) defined marriage as a socially sanctioned relationship involving two people of opposite sex, whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for procreation. Genesis 2:18 defines marriage as a legal relationship or union between husband and wife to live together. Marriage was first established when God used Adam's rib to create Eve.

Couples, who marry for companionship vow to love, cherish and honour, mutually help, procreate and pleasure (sexually) for each other. Biologically, the institution of marriage arises from the fact that humans must procreate and rear children for a lengthy period and depend on each other. Eze and Echoes, (2009) defined marriage in its social aspect as an approved and legal contract. They defined marital relationship between husband and wife as a contract which is conducted in a solemn manner.

Kolo (2011), views marital vows such as to love, cherish and honour as declining due to the love of money, freedom, struggle for power control, poor communication, lack of preparedness or lack of proper diagnosis and treatment of the problem. Due to this decline, these marital vows are now replaced with social ills such as, disaster, poor development, and lack of involvement, appreciation,

understanding, companionship, support, attraction, forgiveness on poor sexual relationship. These factors increase marital conflicts and tear most marriages apart.

Eze and Eches, (2009) observed that there is an increase in the number of young ladies living apart from their spouse or who are divorced due to conflict. A legal marriage should be permanent and sacred among two mature people, through a mutual understanding for the purpose of companionship, socialization, procreation, support and protection.

Donald (2000) defined conflict as a slight or sharp disagreement or clash of interest or idea. Marital conflicts arise when partners or couples can no longer condone or tolerate the other's actions, inaction, behaviours, and attitudes. Evelyn (2007) viewed marital conflicts as opposing interest, idea, drives or impulse within an individual or between two or more persons which may endues great stress from the union. Munroe and Levy, (2008) opined that conflict do exist between spouses that a relationship is dead when the couples show complete indifference or apartheid. Marital Conflict is part and parcel of what keep any relationship active if properly managed. Eisenma (2009) viewed conflict as frustrating and misunderstanding for all marriages, and essential for marital growth. Conflict he argued as a necessity for the continual negotiation and renegotiation of values, beliefs and goals. Conflict, he argued is a necessity for continuous negotiation and re-negotiation of values, beliefs and goals.

Oliver (2007) observed that when a family has a decision to make on any issue but the members fail to agree in opinions or values, conflict is generated. As the opposing faction tries to influence the decision of his/her own opinion, conflict worsens.

According to Williams (2010), marital conflict when not properly managed can result in parental separation and this negatively affects both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour of children and adolescents. Adolescents of divorced parents often score lower than their peers of continuously intact families. The strongest effects are found in the areas of psychological adjustment, self-concept, behaviour/conduct, educational achievement and social relations. An adolescent from a single parenthood home suffers seriously from paternal or maternal care and discipline; hence, he/she is highly vulnerable to the incidence of maladjusted behaviour as a result of incessant negative influence of the peers.

Also, with respect to married students, William (2010) argued that lack of sponsorship by spouse can influence poor concentration in academic activities of married students, open reprimanding of spouse in the presence of people around and high extent of marital pressure can equally influence academic performance of married students which has negative influence on married students' academic performance.

Williams (2010) viewed conflict as a result of lack of proper channel for effective communication. He further stated that asserted, effective communication is one of the key pillars to developing oneness, sound relationship, success and happiness within the family. Two people cannot live together without effective communication. Mambula, (2004) suggested that the recipes for effective communication is by maintaining eye contact, paying attention have feeling for each other, observe body language avoid interruption. Williams (2010) pointed out that conflict can be curtailed if couples involves in good selection, perception, interpretation, understanding, motivation ability and empathy.

### **Nature of Marital Conflict**

Marital conflicts can be about virtually anything. Couples complain about sources of conflict ranging from verbal and physical abusiveness to personal characteristics and behaviours. Perceived inequity in a couple's division of labour is associated with marital conflict and with a tendency for the male to withdraw in response to conflict. Conflict over power is also strongly related to marital dissatisfaction. Spouses' reports of conflict over extramarital sex, problematic drinking, or drug use predict divorce, as do wives' reports of husbands being jealous and spending money foolishly. Greater problem severity increases the likelihood of divorce.

According to Barry (2009), during conflict, distressed couples make more negative statements and fewer positive statements than non-distressed couples. They are also more likely to respond with negative behaviour when their partner behaves negatively. Indeed, this negative reciprocity, as it is called, is more consistent across different types of situations than is the amount of negative behaviour, making it the most reliable overt signature of marital distress.

Similarly, Negg (2010) argued that negative behaviour is both more frequent and more frequently reciprocated in couples that engage in physical aggression than in other couples. Nonverbal behaviour, often used as an index of emotion, reflects marital satisfaction better than verbal behaviour, and unlike verbal behaviour does not change when spouses try to fake good and bad marriages.

According to Phillips (2010), the sequences of behaviour that occur during conflict are more predictable in distressed than in non-distressed marriages and are often dominated by chains of negative behaviour that usually escalate and are difficult for the couple to stop. One of the greatest challenges for couples locked into negative exchanges is to find an adaptive way of exiting from such cycles. This is usually attempted through responses that are designed to repair the interaction (for example, “You’re not listening to me”) but are delivered with negative affect (e.g., irritation, sadness). The partners tend to respond to the negative effect, thereby continuing the cycle. This makes their interactions structured and predictable.

## **Causes of Marital Conflict**

Many people engage in conflict mainly because they do not employ good decision-making procedures. Fighting is a matter of power-sharing, that is, everyone would like to get his or her own way and no one likes to lose. Howse (2009) argued that many couples neglect consideration of how they are going to make decisions and consequently often end up fighting about how the decision was made, even though they have little difficulty about the decision itself. Anger in the family could result to avoiding responsibility, neglect, thoughtlessness, unfaithfulness and rejection. According to him, marital conflict is all about differences. Without trust between two people, conflicts cannot be resolved. Negative feelings will prevail. According to Coleman (2010), conflict can be divided into rational, irrational, overt, covert, acute, chronic, basic, non-basic, personal and interpersonal.

According to Gitaari (2012), causes of conflict include the following: Unrealistic Expectations: These include men expecting their wives to be like their mother or better than their mothers; men expecting their wives to be angels; women expecting their husbands to be like their fathers (if they were good) or a man who is always at home and is soft. Some of the couples get into marriage with the view of changing some of their spouses traits. They fail to understand that it is virtually impossible to change a grown up. Instead, compromise and tolerance should be exercised

**External Pressure:** The following factors closely affect the couple and can sometimes, if not well handled, create marital conflict. They include:

- i) **Extended Family:** One may have in-laws living with them and wanting to spend 'what belongs to their brother or sister'.
- ii) **Mothers-in-law:** Some men listen to their mothers instead of their wives; others let their mothers run their families for them.
- iii) **Career:** Men may engage in very busy careers that they do not have time for their families. Women may also have equally competitive careers. This means that the couple has no time for each other and for their family.
- iv) **Separation by employment:** This is whereby the husband and wife are working in different parts of a country. This makes adjusting to each other very difficult and each is independent. Thus, when they are able to live together again, none is ready to submit to the other because each person is used to making their own decision.

**Children Related Problems:** These include lack of children (lack of a girl means no wealth while lack of a boy means no future); replacing spouse with children (giving too much attention to the children at the expense of your partner); number of children to have (in-laws may insist on having a child named after them and this may mean getting more children than what one initially expected); birth control

methods (some couples may detest all family planning methods and thus they continue getting more children than they can raise).

**Money Problems:** If one's partner does not know how much money the other partner earn and spend, it can result in insecurity, competition and tension. If a husband divides all the money as he deems fit without involving the wife in decision-making, there could arise major problems. Mistrust and suspicion will always come in. There could also be a problem of lack of enough money. It results in tension and disharmony between husband and wife. Loss of employment is another problem and so is impulse buying.

**Communication Breakdown:** A couple needs to take and have a common understanding about children and money among others. When communication is poor or misunderstood, there are problems. Causes of poor or wrong communication include different cultures and where one has been brought up (rural or urban setting). Some communication killers include explosion (being angry and complaining) and silence (refusing to point out when one wrongs you).

According to Sasse (2007), conflict can be divided into two. That is, constructive conflict or destructive conflict. Constructive conflict occurs when people work together to solve a problem and they come to a better understanding of each other. After the conflict, they feel better about each other. Destructive conflict occurs

when people attack each other instead of trying to solve the conflict. This leads to weakening of relationships. For example, a wife may complain that the husband does not eat her food and the husband could become rough and impatient and yet all these are just masking the main issue which is lack of fulfilment as far as sexual needs are concerned and can cause frustrations in the family.

### **Marital Conflicts and Students' Academic Performance**

In a troubled marriage, the women are mostly to be pitied. They might have been living in a psychological, comfortably friendly environment before, and all of a sudden, they begin to see strange behaviours from their spouse. Troubles do not just burst out; they are brewed and fermented before they are brought to the public where it could be seen. These young adults in their simple minds do not even understand why they should quarrel about certain issues. To them certain things do not need quarrelling about hence the couples do not seem to understand the implication of such (Nwoye, 2009).

Sotonade (2008) opined that married students found in conflicted marriages undergo one or all of the following reactions: anger and irrational communication and undesirable modes. Married students brought up with this behaviour from spouse may develop the following characters: Inability to accept dangers including intolerance for separation, a symbiosis without sympathy and infertile fixations,

Poor communication disturbance, Interpersonal difficulties, including reliance upon escape, gloating doublers binding and sadomasochistic relationship.

Spannier (2010) further explained that in interpreting the effects of these roles on the young adult, observed that the responsible spouse carry the need to control their lives, which may lead to frequent ending up of meaningless relationships.

The spouse may grow up to be manipulated by others; and may suffer from low self esteem. Cumming (2012) explained that students from conflict free family tend to contribute immensely to the society. Parke (2010) noted that the father in a family has significant effect on the cognitive development of the family. Therefore frequent conflict in the home has a negative attribute to the student's poor educational attainment. That conflict has more negative effect on the men more than the women. A good home is what brings upon a good society because if the home is bad the impact is extended to the community, society and the country at large.

Edwin (2010) explained that when there is conflict it affects productivity which eventually affects the society. Job is also not done well when conflict exists and these can affect the individual life. There may be fear, anxiety, trauma, emotional instability among other effects. In a conflicted home, the couples Job is not usually done well because of the effect of quarrels they do have at home. There is usually

transferred of aggression to other members of staff in the office of spouses with marital conflicts.

Onyango, (2013) suggested that conflicts in the home can make the couples to lose the respect accorded them in the society. This could be in a form of excluding them from playing certain societal or social roles like conflict resolutions. This is because their own homes are unstable and as such they cannot be allowed to participate in counseling other people with similar problems. This may demoralized the ego of the couples in their society. The couple may lose respect accorded to them by their children and even unto one another. They may no longer have regard to one another which can be exhibited even when they are outside their homes. According to Edwunwn (2011), when there in conflict in the home, family usually goes wayward because they do not receive the proper attention required from parents during conflicts. This is because the conflict usually diverts the attention of the each other.

According to Jay (2010), the home generally becomes unstable in times to conflicts. This generally gives rise to an unstable society because the home is the first place where the members of the family receive either good or bad discipline, and the home is what forms the basic unit of the society. A divided home or society cannot achieve its full potentials due to the disunity and conflicts persisting in the Individual families. Jay (2010) suggested that marital conflicts can be resolved or

prevented if the couples are patient with each other, and if they have proper channels for communication without third party getting note of their conflicts. They should stop competing among themselves on wordily things. They should learn how to forgive one another mistakes, and in turn show remorse for wrong doing and then reconcile.

Margolin (2008) proposed that couples differ in the way in which emotions are expressed during conflicts resolution. With couples expressing their negativity very openly and directly while others keep the conflict silent and hidden. He further viewed that the consequences of these different affective pattern of marital conflict resolution for the young adult's socio emotional development have been argely unexplored, and these can have negative consequences for the children. Rutter et al. (2007), viewed that a stronger relationship with spouse behaviour problems in an unhappy marriage can be characterized by quarrelsome than those characterized as "pathetic". The particular way couples engage in marital conflict may be associated with negative or dysfunctional behaviours patterns in children.

Conflicts are very much associated with negative effect and poor coping responses in spouse. High levels of marital conflict are associated with poor adjustment problems in couple and their family members, independent of whether couples are married or separated. The behaviours couples engage in, that are destructive to their relationship have impact on their family even before any actual marital

dissolution occurs. Margolin (2008) suggested that marital conflicts are not a unitary entity. The consequences of different forms of marital conflict on the many facets of couple and their academic performance and social emotional development remain largely uncharted territory.

A good home and conducive environment can influence positive academic achievement in students. Berger (2013) found out that married students that have positive self-concept and conflicts-free homes will achieve positively in their academics than students with poor self-concept.

Sheik (2010) argued that there is connection between conflicts at home with lack of warmth in the spouse relationship which has negative relation to married student's grades. Good grades in school are indications of positive family functioning among students in their homes. Participation in extra-curricular activities has been shown to link with a diversity of positive outcomes among students, such as reduction in conflicts, and absenteeism from school work.

Fonkengs (2013) demonstrated that there is an association between underachievement and lack of progress in school with psychological health. Students who consistently fail or repeat courses are found to develop inferiority complex and a non-progressive attitude towards friends and schools. He further stated that marital conflict had a detrimental impact on every member of the family.

Family conflict and environment might significantly have negative or positive impact on the students' academic performance and school-related behavioural problems. Forgas (2011) suggested that unhealthy emotions can undermine attention and memory, while depression leads to biased recall of information. Academic performance is linked to married students' emotional adjustment, and the relation between the home and their academics. He further explained that low academic performance has a link with students' high rate of conflicts between couples play a major role in stressor's distress development. This stress can involve all family members and change the relationships between them to be imbalanced and create a lot of problems which may include high level aggression and poor academic performance.

Gothman (2014) remarked that, the presence of conflict in the home does not determine the quality of marriage; rather how the couple handles conflict situations determines the quality of the relationship. Unresolved conflict leads to drifting away from one another and sometimes jettisoning the relationship entirely. Marital conflict reduces the family's network of friends and creates more loneliness. Conflict between the spouses tends to both change the mood of household actions and also shift the parent's attentions to the negative behaviours of their children. Marital conflict leads to fathers issuing confusing and threatening commands to their sons, and direct impact on the children. Marital conflict associated with

maladaptive behaviour on the part of the children. Buehler et al 2013) cited that family with conflict makes the children to be aggressive and have behaviour problems with lower academic performance. Even when conflict is not overt it has often not gone unnoticed by the children. Emery and O’Leary, (2012) and that diminished academic performance in both parents and children has also been noted by spouse from high conflict families and are viewed in their social world through their overly negative and hostile ways. Other side effect of marital conflict includes; significant changes in parenting behaviour, attachment and other vital emotional structures and systems within the family. Fathers in high conflict marriages have been shown to be more withdrawn and less involved in parenting.

Where there is family conflict, children of such homes, irrespective of their age, react to background anger as stressor. Marital conflict is not always negative, benefits may accrue from exposure to moderate conflict in supportive home environments. Children can develop useful coping skills, when they are not overly taxed. Anger is a normal part of life and conflict may at times be necessary in order to bring attention to issues that need to be resolved. Children can cope with “normal”, non-aggressive level of anger within a home, provided they are infrequent and effective to resolution. Unresolved, chronic conflict is most toxic and actions that either improve this and effectively buffer children against self

lame and the trauma of adult conflict are essential to a child's longer term well-being.

### **Summary of Literature Reviewed**

From the review, a number of issues were raised which led to discovering of the gap to be filled by the present study. The literature revealed that marital conflict is marital disruption and low marital quality. The Karl Marx's theory of conflict was reviewed equally and the theory was very appropriate in understanding marital conflict.

It was equally revealed in the literature that marital conflicts occur in marriages as a result of factors such as unrealistic expectations external pressure, children related problems, money problems, communication breakdown among others. The literature reviewed also provided an insight into strategies that had been adopted in conflict resolution in marriage. Such strategies like counselling. The use of kinsmen, proper role definition, faithfulness and communication among others have been opined by scholars to have been used in resolving marital conflict by married couple.

Although the literature revealed the strategies for resolving marital conflicts, it did not reveal if such personal factors as employment status is dependent on the nature, causes and marital conflict resolution strategies among married people. So, the

researcher could not find any empirical work done in Edo State on the relationship between the personal factor (employee status) and the nature, causes and marital conflict resolution strategies among married people. It is this gap that is study is set to fill.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter deals with the methods and procedures that were adopted in carrying out the study under the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study;
- Sample and Sampling Procedure;
- Research Instrument;
- Validity of the Instrument;
- Reliability of the Instrument;
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of the study was to critically examine the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of post-graduate students in Edo State and as such, the study made use of survey method of research. Survey method is primarily exploratory research by design. Also being an expository research, it involved a detailed study of the nature of marital conflict among married post-graduate students in University of Benin; and identification of the possible major causes of

common marital conflicts among couples experiencing conflict in University of Benin; examination of the relationship between marital conflicts and students educational progress in University of Benin; determination of the extent to which marital conflicts affects students' educational progress in University of Benin and suggestion of coping strategies that can be employed by students experiencing marital conflicts, towards the enhancement of their educational progress. It provides an insight into the study problem and also helped in the development of the research hypotheses.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for this study consists of all married post-graduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. At the time of this study, the number of married post-graduate students in the University of Benin was 11,500, while that of Faculty of Education, University of Benin, was 513 (Central Record Processing Unit (CRPU) of the University of Benin, UNIBEN, 2016).

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique. To determine the sample size for the study, the study made use of the Slovin's formula below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e^2)}$$

$N = \text{Total Population} = 513$

$E = \text{Margin of error} = 5\%$

$1 = \text{Constant}$

This implies that  $n = \frac{513}{1+513 (0.05^2)}$

This implies that  $n = \frac{513}{1+513 (0.0025)}$

This implies that  $n = \frac{513}{1+1.2825}$

This implies that  $n = \frac{513}{2.2825}$

This implies that  $n = 224.75$

Thus, the sample size for the study was 225 Post-graduate married students of the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument for the study was a self-designed questionnaire titled: “Marital Conflict and Students Educational Progress Questionnaire MCSEPPQ”.

The research instrument contained five parts. That is section A, B, C, D and E. Section A contains the bio-data information of respondents; Section B, C, D and E contain questions to answer the research questions raised.

## **Validity of the Instrument**

The content validity was applied. The draft of the questionnaire was first given to the researcher's supervisor in the Department of Educational foundations and two Experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City to make necessary corrections and adjustment in line with the research questions raised. Their inputs and corrections were effected before producing the final draft of the instrument.

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability test was run for 10 sample data of the research questionnaire using SPSS package. This was done in order to ascertain the reliability of the research instrument. From the reliability test carried out, the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.87 was obtained, which implied that the research instrument was quite reliable and useful for the study.

## **Method of Data Collection**

A cross-sectional sample of post graduate married students from the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, was given copies of the questionnaire to fill. The completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher and the trained research assistant immediately after the respondents finished answering the questions in order to ensure high return of completed questionnaire.

## **Method of Data Analysis**

The study made use of descriptive statistics to analyze the collected data, while, the hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistics. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the interpretation of the data collected and the testing hypotheses formulated. A total of two hundred and twenty five (225) respondents; married post radiate students, was administered with the research questionnaires. One hundred and ninety three (193) copies were duly filled and returned, representing 86.7% response rate. The Percentage technique was used to analyze the information from bio-data in a tabular format and the Chi-square statistics was used in testing the Formulated hypotheses.

## Section A: Demographic Information

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents demographic

| <b>Demographic Characteristics</b> | <b>Options</b>     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sex</b>                         | Male               | 48               | 24.9                  |
|                                    | Female             | 145              | 75.1                  |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>       | <b>193</b>       | <b>100.0</b>          |
| <b>Marital Status</b>              | Married            | 111              | 57.5                  |
|                                    | Divorced           | 82               | 42.5                  |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>       | <b>193</b>       | <b>100.0</b>          |
| <b>Age</b>                         | Less than 25 years | 47               | 24.4                  |
|                                    | 25 – 40 years      | 86               | 44.6                  |
|                                    | Above 40 years     | 60               | 31.1                  |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>       | <b>193</b>       | <b>100.0</b>          |
| <b>Employment Status</b>           | Employed           | 124              | 64.2                  |
|                                    | Unemployed         | 69               | 35.8                  |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>       | <b>193</b>       | <b>100.0</b>          |
| <b>Religion</b>                    | Christian          | 133              | 68.9                  |
|                                    | Muslim             | 52               | 26.9                  |
|                                    | Pagan              | 8                | 4.1                   |
|                                    | <b>Total</b>       | <b>193</b>       | <b>100.0</b>          |

**Source:** Researcher’s fieldwork, 2024

From table 1, it was noticed that 48 (24.9%) of the respondents are males, while 145 (75.1%) are females, indicating that the female respondents were more.

It was also discovered from the table that 47 (24.4%) of the respondents were below 25 years; 86 (44.6%) were between the age bracket of 25-40 years and 60 (31.1%) were above 40 years. This indicates that a majority of the respondents were between the aged brackets of 25-40 years.

From the table, it also showed that 111 (57.5%) of the respondents were married and 82 (42.5%) were divorced. This implies that a majority of the respondents were married.

On the findings on Employment Status, the above table revealed that 124 (64.2%) of the respondents were employed and 69 (35.8%) were unemployed. This implies that a majority of the respondents were employed.

Lastly, from table it was revealed that 133 (68.9%) of the respondents were Christians, 52 (26.9%) were Muslims and 8 (4.1%) were pagans. This indicates that a majority of the respondents were Christians.

### **Hypotheses Testing**

There are five hypotheses underlying the study. These hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistics. The responses are presented in a table of observed frequencies and the formula given below is used for the Chi-square computation.

$$X^2 = \sum \left( \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right)$$

Where:

$X^2$  = value of Chi-square

$fo$  = the observed frequencies in a category

$f_e$  = the expected frequencies in the same category

$\Sigma$  = sum over all columns and rows

### **Test for Hypothesis One**

*HO1: There is no significant difference in the nature of marital conflicts among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment*

Hypothesis one is tested by collating the average responses from the questions relevant to ascertaining the nature of marital conflict. Thus, question 6 through 10 of section B of the research questionnaire were used as a proxy for the nature of marital conflict. The average responses to questions 6 through 10 of Section B of the research questionnaire are given below:

**Table 2a:** Average of the responses to questions 6 through 10 of the research questionnaire

|                   | <b>Frequency<br/>(Employed)</b> | <b>Frequency<br/>(Unemployed)</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>(Employed)</b> | <b>Percentage<br/>(Unemployed)</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 19                              | 29                                | 48           | 9.8                              | 15.0                               | 24.9         |
| Agree             | 32                              | 58                                | 90           | 16.6                             | 30.1                               | 46.6         |
| Disagree          | 24                              | 14                                | 38           | 12.4                             | 7.3                                | 19.7         |
| Strongly Disagree | 10                              | 7                                 | 17           | 5.2                              | 3.6                                | 8.8          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>85</b>                       | <b>108</b>                        | <b>193</b>   | <b>44.0</b>                      | <b>56.0</b>                        | <b>100.0</b> |

Field Work, 2016 Average Responses of Respondents to Questions 6 through Question 10 of Section B of the Research Questionnaire

### **Chi-square Computation**

First, since the total frequency (employed married post graduate respondents) is 85 and total frequency (unemployed married post graduate respondents) is 108, then

Expected employed married post graduate respondents' frequency = Employed married post graduate total frequency/Number of variables =  $85/4 = 21.25$  and

Expected unemployed married postgraduate respondents' frequency = Unemployed married post graduate total frequency/Number of variables =  $108/4 = 27$

Thus, the Chi-square computation is shown in table 2b

**Table 2b: Chi-Square Computation**

| Category                 | Employed Married Postgraduate Students |       |          |                      |                          | Unemployed Married Postgraduate Students |       |             |                      |                          |
|--------------------------|--|-------|----------|----------------------|--------------------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | Fo                                     | Fe    | Fo-Fe    | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe | Fo                                       | Fe    | Fo-Fe       | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 19                                     | 21.25 | -2.25    | 5.06                 | 0.24                     | 29                                       | 27.00 | 2.00        | 4.00                 | 0.15                     |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 32                                     | 21.25 | 10.75    | 115.56               | 5.44                     | 58                                       | 27.00 | 31.00       | 961.00               | 35.59                    |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 24                                     | 21.25 | 2.75     | 7.56                 | 0.36                     | 14                                       | 27.00 | -13.00      | 169.00               | 6.26                     |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 10                                     | 21.25 | -11.25   | 126.56               | 5.96                     | 7  | 27.00 | -20.00      | 400.00               | 14.81                    |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>85</b>                              |       | <b>0</b> |                      | <b>11.99</b>             | <b>108</b>                               |       | <b>0.00</b> |                      | <b>56.81</b>             |

Therefore, degree of freedom (df) = n-1; 4-1 = 3.

At  $\alpha$  level of 0.05, a tabulated value  $X^2$  as 7.81 is obtained

From the above analysis,

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for employed respondents = 11.99 and Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for unemployed respondents = 56.81 and Chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2T$ ) = 7.81.

Thus, this implies that the null hypothesis is rejected since the respective Chi-square computed value for the employed married post-graduate students and the unemployed married post graduate students respondents are both greater than the Chi-square tabulated value. Thus, there is a significant difference in the nature of

marital conflicts among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status. The result shows that marital conflict are more common with the unemployed married post-graduate students than the employed married post-graduate students in University of Benin.

### **Test for Hypothesis Two**

*HO2: There is no significant difference in the causes of marital conflict among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status.*

Hypothesis two was tested by collating the responses from the questions relevant to ascertaining the causes of marital conflict among post graduate students in Edo State. Thus, question 11 through 20 of section C of the research questionnaire was used to proxy for the causes of marital conflict. Thus, the average responses are presented in table 3a below.

**Table 3a:** Average of the responses to questions 11 through 20 of the research questionnaire

| Option            | Frequency (Employed) | Frequency (Unemployed) | Total      | Percentage (Employed) | Percentage (Unemployed) | Total        |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 26                   | 38                     | 64         | 13.5                  | 19.7                    | 33.2         |
| Agree             | 31                   | 36                     | 67         | 16.1                  | 18.7                    | 34.7         |
| Disagree          | 26                   | 18                     | 44         | 13.5                  | 9.3                     | 22.8         |
| Strongly Disagree | 7                    | 11                     | 18         | 3.6                   | 5.7                     | 9.3          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>90</b>            | <b>103</b>             | <b>193</b> | <b>46.6</b>           | <b>53.4</b>             | <b>100.0</b> |

**Source:** Field Work, 2024 – Average Responses of Respondents to Questions 11 through Question 20 of Section C of the Research Questionnaire

### Chi-square Computation

First, since the total frequency (employed married post graduate respondents) is 90 and total frequency (unemployed married post graduate respondents) is 103, then Expected employed married post graduate frequency  $\frac{\text{Employed married post graduate total frequency}}{\text{Number of variables}} = \frac{90}{4} = 22.5$  and Expected unemployed married post graduate frequency  $\frac{\text{Unemployed married post graduate total frequency}}{\text{Number of variables}} = \frac{103}{4} = 25.75$  Thus, the Chi-square computation is shown in table 3b

**Table 2b: Chi-Square Computation**

|                          | Employed Married Postgraduate Students |       |             |                      |                          | Unemployed Married Postgraduate Students |       |             |                      |                          |
|--------------------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Category                 | Fo                                     | Fe    | Fo-Fe       | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe | Fo                                       | Fe    | Fo-Fe       | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 26                                     | 22.50 | 3.50        | 12.25                | 0.54                     | 38                                       | 25.75 | 12.25       | 150.06               | 5.83                     |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 31                                     | 22.50 | 8.50        | 72.25                | 3.21                     | 36                                       | 25.75 | 10.25       | 105.06               | 4.08                     |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 26                                     | 22.50 | 3.50        | 12.25                | 0.54                     | 18                                       | 25.75 | -7.75       | 60.06                | 2.33                     |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 7                                      | 22.50 | -15.50      | 240.25               | 10.68                    | 11                                       | 25.75 | -14.75      | 217.56               | 8.45                     |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>90</b>                              |       | <b>0.00</b> |                      | <b>14.98</b>             | <b>103.00</b>                            |       | <b>0.00</b> |                      | <b>20.69</b>             |

Therefore, degree of freedom (df) = n-1; 4-1 = 3.

At  $\alpha$  level of 0.05, a tabulated value  $X^2$  as 7.81 is obtained

From the above analysis,

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for employed respondents = 14.98 and

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for unemployed respondents = 20.69 and

Chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2T$ ) = 7.81

Thus, this implies that the null hypothesis is rejected since the respective Chi-square computed value for the employed married post-graduate students and the unemployed married post graduate students respondents are both greater than the Chi-square tabulated value. Thus, there is a significant difference in the causes of marital conflict among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and

their employment status. The causes include putting up unrealistic expectations from spouse, couples inability to have children, disagreement among couples such as who to pay the bills or house expenses, opposing interest, lack of effective communication between couples and finance.

### **Test for Hypothesis Three**

HO3: There is no significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of married post graduate students in University of Benin.

Hypothesis three was tested by collating the responses from the questions relevant to ascertaining the relationship between marital conflicts and academic performance of post graduate married students in Edo State. Thus, the average responses of respondents to question 21 through 30 of section D of the research questionnaire were used to proxy for the relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of post-graduate married students in University of Benin. Thus, the average responses to questions 21 through 30 in section D of the research questionnaire are given below.

**Table 4a:** Average of the responses to questions 31 through 40 of the research questionnaire

|                   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree    | 64               | 33.2              |
| Agree             | 78               | 40.4              |
| Disagree          | 39               | 20.2              |
| Strongly disagree | 12               | 6.2               |
| Total             | 193              | 100.0             |

Source: Field Work, 2024 Average Responses of Respondents to Questions 31 through Question 40 of Section E of the Research Questionnaire

### **Computation of Chi-square**

Since the total frequency is 193, then expected frequency total frequency/number of variables; which implies that expected frequency =  $193/4 = 48.25$

Thus, we have the following Chi-square table 4b below:

**Table 4b: Chi-Square Computation**

| <b>Category</b>          | <b>Fo</b> | <b>Fe</b> | <b>Fo-Fe</b> | <b>(Fo-fe)<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>(Fo-Fe)<sup>2</sup>/Fe</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 64        | 48.25     | 15.75        | 248.06                     | 5.14                          |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 78        | 48.25     | 29.75        | 885.06                     | 18.34                         |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 39        | 48.25     | -9.25        | 85.56                      | 1.77                          |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 12        | 48.25     | -36.25       | 1314.06                    | 27.23                         |
| <b>Total</b>             |           |           | 0            |                            | 52.49                         |

Therefore, degree of freedom (df)  $n-1$ ;  $4-1-3$ .

At  $\alpha$  level of 0.05, we obtain a tabulated value of  $X^2$  as 7.81

From the above analysis, we have as follows:

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) = 52.49

Chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2T$ ) = 7.81

Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of post-graduate married students in University of Benin.

#### **Test for Hypothesis Four**

HO4: Marital conflict has no negative effect on the academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin. Hypothesis four was tested

by collating the responses from the questions relevant to ascertaining the effect of marital conflict on students educational progress. Thus, the average responses of respondents to question 31 through 40 of section E of the research questionnaire was used to proxy for the effect of marital conflict on students' educational progress. Thus, the average responses to questions question 31 through 40 in section E of the research questionnaire is given below.

**Table 5a:** Average of the responses to questions 31 through 40 of the research questionnaire

|                   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree    | 57               | 29.5              |
| Agree             | 67               | 34.7              |
| Disagree          | 51               | 26.4              |
| Strongly disagree | 18               | 9.3               |
| Total             | 193              | 100.0             |

Source: Field Work, 2024 – Average Responses of Respondents to Questions 31 through Question 40 of Section E of the Research Questionnaire

### **Computation of Chi-square**

Since the total frequency is 193, then expected frequency = total frequency/number of variables; which implies that expected frequency =  $193/4 = 48.25$

Thus, we have the following Chi-square table Sb below:

**Table 5b:** Chi-Square Computation

| <b>Category</b>          | <b>Fo</b> | <b>Fe</b> | <b>Fo-Fe</b> | <b>(Fo-fe)<sup>2</sup></b> | <b>(Fo-Fe)<sup>2</sup>/Fe</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 57        | 48.25     | 8.75         | 76.56                      | 1.59                          |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 67        | 48.25     | 18.75        | 351.56                     | 7.29                          |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 51        | 48.25     | 2.75         | 7.56                       | 0.16                          |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 18        | 48.25     | -30.25       | 915.06                     | 18.97                         |
| <b>Total</b>             |           |           | 0            |                            | 28.01                         |

Therefore, degree of freedom (df)=n-1; 4-1-3.

At  $\alpha$  level of 0.05, we obtain a tabulated value of  $X^2$  as 7.81

From the above analysis, it follows that:

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) = 28.01

Chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2T$ ) =7.81

Thus, the alternative hypothesis is accepted which states that marital conflict has negative impact on the academic performance of married post- graduate students in University of Benin.

## Test Hypothesis Five

HO5: There is no significant difference in the coping strategies employed by married postgraduate students towards the enhancement of their academic performance in University of Benin and their employment status.

Hypothesis five was tested by collating the average responses from the questions relevant to ascertaining the coping strategies for marital conflict. Thus, question 41 through 50 of section F of the research questionnaire was used to proxy for it. Thus, the average responses to questions question 41 through 50 in section E of the research questionnaire is given below:

**Table 6a:** Average of the responses to questions 41 through 50 of the research questionnaire

|                   | Frequency | Frequency | Total | Percentage (Employed) | Percentage (Unemployed) | Percentage Total |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 30        | 39        | 69    | 15.5                  | 20.2                    | 35.8             |
| Agree             | 27        | 35        | 62    | 14.0                  | 18.1                    | 32.1             |
| Disagree          | 28        | 17        | 45    | 14.5                  | 8.8                     | 23.3             |
| Strongly Disagree | 7         | 10        | 17    | 3.6                   | 5.2                     | 8.8              |
| <b>Total</b>      | 92        | 101       | 193   | 47.7                  | 52.3                    | 100.0            |

Source: Field Work, 2024 Average Responses of Respondents to Questions 41

through Question 50 of Section F of the Research Questionnaire

## Computation of Chi-square

First, since the total frequency (employed married post graduate respondents) is 92 and total frequency (unemployed married post graduate respondents) is 101, then

Expected employed married post graduate frequency =  $\frac{\text{Employed married post graduate total frequency}}{\text{Number of variables}} = \frac{92}{4} = 23$  and Expected unemployed married post graduate frequency =  $\frac{\text{Unemployed married post graduate total frequency}}{\text{Number of variables}} = \frac{101}{4} = 25.25$  Thus, the Chi-square computation is shown in table 6b table

**Table 4.20:** Chi-Square Computation

| Category                 | Employed Married Postgraduate Students |       |             |                      |                          | Unemployed Married Postgraduate Students |       |             |                      |                          |
|--------------------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|--|-------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                          | Fo                                     | Fe    | Fo-Fe       | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe | Fo                                       | Fe    | Fo-Fe       | (Fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> | (Fo-Fe) <sup>2</sup> /Fe |
| <b>Strongly Agree</b>    | 30                                     | 23.00 | 7.00        | 49.00                | 2.13                     | 39                                       | 25.25 | 13.75       | 189.06               | 7.49                     |
| <b>Agree</b>             | 27                                     | 23.00 | 4.00        | 16.00                | 0.70                     | 35                                       | 25.25 | 9.75        | 95.06                | 3.76                     |
| <b>Disagree</b>          | 28                                     | 23.00 | 5.00        | 25.00                | 1.09                     | 17                                       | 25.25 | -8.25       | 68.06                | 2.70                     |
| <b>Strongly Disagree</b> | 7                                      | 23.00 | -16.00      | 256.00               | 11.13                    | 10                                       | 25.25 | -15:25      | 232.56               | 9.21                     |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>92.00</b>                           |       | <b>0.00</b> |                      | <b>15.04</b>             | <b>101.00</b>                            |       | <b>0.00</b> |                      | <b>23.16</b>             |

Therefore, degree of freedom (df) = n-1; 4-1-3.

At  $\alpha$  level of 0.05, a tabulated value  $X^2$  as 7.81 is obtained

From the above analysis,

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for employed respondents = 15.04 and

Chi-square computed value ( $X^2C$ ) for unemployed respondents = 23.16 and

Chi-square tabulated value ( $X^2T$ ) = 7.81

This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected since the respective Chi-square computed value for the employed married post-graduate students and the unemployed married post graduate students respondents are both greater than the Chi-square tabulated value. Thus, there is a significant difference in the coping strategies employed by married post-graduate students towards the enhancement of their academic performance in University of Benin and their employment status. The coping strategies include putting up unrealistic expectations from spouse, couples inability to have children, disagreement among couples such as who to pay the bills or house expenses, opposing interest, lack of effective communication between couples and finance.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results obtained from hypothesis one in the study indicated that there is a significant difference in the nature of marital conflicts amongst married post-graduate students in University of Benin. Specifically, with respect to this finding, the study shows that that couples making more negative statements, couples responding with negative behaviour and couples showing lack of love for one

another are the most common characteristic nature of marital conflict among married post graduate students in the University of Benin. The study findings is in line with the findings of Barry (2009), that during conflict, distressed couples make more negative statements and fewer positive statements than non-distressed couples. He added that they are also more likely to respond with negative behaviour when their partner behaves negatively.

Furthermore, the results obtained from hypothesis two showed that there is a significant difference in the causes of marital conflicts among married post-graduate students in the University of Benin. This finding is in line with the views of Omotosho (2011) who said that the most likely cause of marital conflict was as a result of the negative perception each spouse view problems, and that lack of not doing what is expected from each other can trigger conflict. This was also corroborated by Gaanagana (2010) who posited that most of the major factors that could lead to marital pressure are feeling of domineering, lack of support for each other in terms of needs, when there is high rate of violence from relatives of spouses, lack of equal love, not reciprocating, when love failed to cover all wrongs and failure to be submissive among other reasons.

With respect to hypothesis three, the study showed that there is a significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin. This finding is in agreement with that of

Sotonade (2008) who found that the family and its structure play a great role in students' academic performance. Conflict among couples could be a great obstacle to married students' ability to succeed academically. Moreover, this finding is in agreement with that of Spannier (2010), who asserted that cordial relationship among couples that are students goes a long way in determining the learning ability and ultimately the academic performance of the married students.

Also, the analysis of hypothesis four shows that marital conflict amongst married post graduate students affect their educational progress negatively. Supporting the findings, Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2012) found that marital conflict could result in the family serious interference on the couples due to marital pressure that may affect and retard their progress in their learning process. Victims of marital conflict are aggressive most times.

With respect to hypothesis five, it showed that there is a significant relationship between post-graduate married student's marital conflict and coping strategies employed towards the enhancement of their academic performance in University of Benin. This is also in line with the views of Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2012) who said that only positive attitudes put up by married couples can alleviate any marital conflict. Thus, from the findings of the study, marital conflict negatively affects the educational progress of married post graduates in order to alleviate any marital conflict.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study had examined the effect of marital conflicts on the educational progress of married post-graduate students at the University of Benin.

In examining the influence of marital conflicts on the educational progress of married post-graduate students in the University of Benin, the following research questions were raised to guide this study: What is the nature of marital conflict amongst married post-graduate students in University of Benin; What are the possible major causes of common marital conflicts among couples experiencing conflicts in University of Benin?; What is the relationship between marital conflicts and students educational progress in University of Benin; To what extent do marital conflicts affects students' educational progress in University of Benin? What are the coping strategies that can be employed by students experiencing marital conflicts to enhance their educational progress

Five hypotheses were formulated in line with the research questions. The first hypothesis is to test if there is significant difference in the nature of marital conflicts among married post-graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status. The second hypothesis is to test if there is significant

difference in the causes of marital conflict among married post- graduate students in University of Benin and their employment status. The third hypothesis is to test if there is significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin. The fourth hypothesis test if marital conflict has negative effect on the academic performance of married post-graduate students in the University of Benin and the fifth hypothesis test if there is significant difference in the coping strategies employed by married post-graduate students towards the enhancement of their academic performance in University of Benin and their employment status.

The study made use of primary data collected from copies of research questionnaire administered by married post-graduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, a total of two hundred (200) respondents (post-graduate married students), were administered with the research questionnaires. One hundred and ninety three (193) copies were duly filled and returned, representing 96.5% response rate. The percentage statistic was used to present the data in a tabular format and the Chi-square statistics was used in testing the hypotheses.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the nature of marital conflicts amongst married post-graduate students in University of Benin. The study also showed that there is a significant difference in the causes of marital

conflicts amongst married post-graduate students in University of Benin and that there is a significant relationship between marital conflict and academic performance of married post-graduate students in University of Benin. The study further revealed that marital conflict amongst married post-graduate students affects their educational progress negatively and that there is a significant relationship between post-graduate married students' marital conflict and coping strategies employed towards the enhancement of their academic performance in Benin City. Conclusion The Study has analyzed the effects of marital conflict on the educational progress of students in Edo State. Marital conflicts arise when partners or couples can no longer condone or tolerate each other's actions, inaction, behaviours, attitudes or as opposing interest, idea, drives or impulse within an individual or between two or more persons which may endues great stress from the union. This study has shown that marital conflict in homes significantly determines academic achievement of married students from such homes. Marital conflict when not properly managed can result in parental separation and this negatively affects both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour of children, adolescents and the couples. The strongest effects are found in the areas of psychological adjustment, self-concept, behavioural/conduct, educational achievement and social relations. A married student from a conflict home suffers seriously from emotional instability; hence, he/she is not able to excel academically.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i.) The University of Benin, Benin City should have guidance counselors, who could counsel married students experiencing marital conflict.
- ii.) There is need for personal social counseling in group or on individual basis where married students with challenges from conflicting homes are counseled.
- iii.) It is important that married couples must endeavour to put up positive attitudes in order to alleviate any marital conflict.
- iv.) It is therefore recommended that intervention programmes should be put in place to checkmate family chaos. Such intervention strategies include: Self management technique, marital communication skills, stress inoculation training, cognitive behavioural therapy, etc. These may perhaps facilitate family adjustment, family stability and family cohesion that can forestall the incidence of marital breakdown and separation.

## **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study will be useful to married students in University of Benin in particular and generally, tertiary institutions of learning, on the need for a conflict free home, reducing marital pressure, finding positive means of coping with conflict and

academies, developing positive emotional maturity, spouse to be supportive, show love, patience and proper communication in the family in order to enhance qualitative academic performance, especially on those couples that always engage in conflicts. The findings from this study will be of great benefit to married couples in improving and minimizing conflicts in the home especially those married students experiencing marital conflicts in tertiary institutions in Edo State.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE INFLUENCE OF MARITAL CONFLICTS ON  
THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS OF STUDENTS IN EDO STATE**

#### SECTION A (Bio-Data)

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: Less than 25 years [ 3. 125-40 years ] Above 40 years
3. Marital Status: Married  Divorced
4. Employment Status:  Employed | Unemployed
5. Religion:  Christian  Muslim [Pagan

**SECTION B:** This section of the questionnaire is to ascertain your perception of the mature of marital conflict experienced by you. Please tick the box as appropriate.

|     |   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| 6.  | During conflict. My spouse or I tend to make more negative statements.  |                |       |                   |          |
| 7.  | During conflict, my spouse or I tend to respond with negative behaviour |                |       |                   |          |
| 8.  | During conflict, there is lack of love for one another.                 |                |       |                   |          |
| 9.  | During conflict, there is lack of love for one another.                 |                |       |                   |          |
| 10. | During conflict, there is lack of trust for one another.                |                |       |                   |          |

SECTION C: This section of the questionnaire is to elicit from you your perception of the major causes of common conflicts between you and your spouse. Please tick the box as appropriate.

|     |   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| 11. | Putting up unrealistic expectations from my spouse has been one major cause of conflict in my home.       |                |       |                   |          |
| 12. | Our inability to have children has been a major source of conflict in my home.                            |                |       |                   |          |
| 13. | Children related issues such as number of children to have has been a major cause of conflict in my home. |                |       |                   |          |
| 14. | Who to pay the bills or house expenses has been a major cause of conflict in my home.                     |                |       |                   |          |
| 15. | Lack of effective communication between me and my spouse has been a major cause of conflict in my home.   |                |       |                   |          |
| 16. | One major source of conflict in my home was infidelity of my spouse.                                      |                |       |                   |          |
| 17. | Whenever I am financially down, I am easily angered.  |                |       |                   |          |
| 18. | My wrong perception of my spouse has resulted in conflict between us.                                     |                |       |                   |          |
| 19. | Opposing interest, idea, drives or impulse between my spouse and I has resulted in conflict between us.   |                |       |                   |          |
| 20. | My spouse showing complete indifference or apartheid towards me has resulted in conflict between us.      |                |       |                   |          |

**SECTION D:** This section of the questionnaire is to elicit from you your perception of the effects of marital conflict on your academic performance. Please tick the box as appropriate.

|     |   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| 21. | My negative self-concept as a result of marital conflict reflects negatively in my academics.                               |                |       |                   |          |
| 22. | My under-achievement in school is associated with assault received from my spouse from marital conflicts.                   |                |       |                   |          |
| 23. | My non participation in extra-curriculum activities is linked to my conflict home.  |                |       |                   |          |
| 24. | My ineffective interpersonal relationship among my school mates is connected to my conflict home.                           |                |       |                   |          |
| 25. | My poor grades in school are indications of negative family functioning in my home.   |                |       |                   |          |
| 26. | My lack of progress in school is associated with my emotional instability resulting from conflict between me and my spouse. |                |       |                   |          |
| 27. | Lack of attention to details in my academics is connected to unhealthy emotions from my marital conflicts.                  |                |       |                   |          |
| 28. | My conflict home reflects negatively in my academics.   |                |       |                   |          |
| 29. | My recent loss of memory is connected to unhealthy emotions from my marital conflicts.                                      |                |       |                   |          |
| 30. | My poor attitude towards school is as a result of my marital conflicts.   |                |       |                   |          |

**SECTION E:** This section of the questionnaire is to elicit from you your perception of how to manage conflict in a home in order to enhance educational progress. Please tick the box as appropriate.

|     |   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree Strongly | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------------|-------|-------------------|----------|
| 31. | Do you try to avoid situations that may result in conflicts?  |                |       |                   |          |
| 32. | Do you try not to give up in your marital relationship despite the conflict?  |                |       |                   |          |
| 33. | Do you try to pursue new interest to cool off tension?  |                |       |                   |          |
| 34. | Do you try to honour your spouse request for emotional space by backing off till both of you is stabilized?                               |                |       |                   |          |
| 35. | Do you try to keep yourself busy to get more balance emotionally, such as religious activities, sports, listening to inspirational songs? |                |       |                   |          |
| 36. | Do you try to confront the situation by expressing your negative feelings and pressure to your spouse?                                    |                |       |                   |          |
| 37. | Do you and your spouse try to know, accept, and adjust your differences?  |                |       |                   |          |
| 38. | Do you try to forgive your spouse no matter the offence committed?  |                |       |                   |          |
| 39. | Do you learn to show more love and care to your spouse inspite of his/her wrong doings?   |                |       |                   |          |
| 40. | Do you try not to dwell on complaints?  |                |       |                   |          |