



# Perceived Effects of Marital Crisis on Academic Performance of Adult Learners of National Teachers Institute (PGDE Centres) in Rivers State

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## Abstract

The research studied the perceived effects of marital crisis on academic performance of adult learners of National Teachers Institute, Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Centres in Rivers State. The population for the study consisted of 1,018 adult learners in NTI, PGDE in the three Centres in Rivers State. The sample size was 509 representing 50% of the entire population. Data were collected through questionnaire aimed at identifying the various forms of marital crisis among adult learners', the causes of marital crisis the effects of marital crisis and ascertaining if marital crisis has impact on the academic performance of adult learners in NTI-PGDE in Rivers State. Analysis was done using mean statistical tool while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels. The findings revealed that rejection of food, fighting, face off, use of abusive words against each other are forms of marital crisis. Denials of sex, lack of transparency, infidelity, lack of communication are the causes of marital crisis. Depression, prostitution, frustration, single parenting, hypertension and loss of concentration are effects of marital crisis. Inability to buy books, pay school fees, and temporary withdrawal from school are some of the negative impacts of marital crisis which influences the academic performance of adult learners. Recommendations were proffered.

**Keywords:** Marital Crisis, Academic Performance, Adult Learners, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the union between adult male and female which leads both to reasoning together, working in one accord, raising children which in other words is the formation of nuclear family. Marriage in this wise is traditional and normative. It is traditional in the sense that it is almost as old as man, and it is normative since there are rules and standards of behavior describing marriage. Corollary to the above, Farley in Akubukwe (1997, p. 62) opines that “marriage is socially approved arrangement, usually between a male and a female that involves an economic and sexual relationship”. Also Smith and Preston (1982:316-317) are of the view that “marriage is an enduring socially approved sexual and economic relationship between at least two persons”. Marriage confers legitimacy in that it assigns roles to the partners and establishes a permanent setting in which procreation and child rearing can take place (Akubukwe, 1997, p. 62). Explaining marriage further, Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000, pp. 212-213) view marriage “as a cultural phenomenon which sanctions a more or less permanent union between partners, conferring legitimacy on their offspring”. From this definition of marriage, it is glaring that offspring that spring up out of wedlock are not likely to be recognized and may not be given any right in the family. In other words such children are referred to as illegitimate children.

In trying to continue to define or give explanation to the meaning of marriage, some scholars have advanced definitions that are highly characterized by the current trends of the society. Accordingly, Samuel-Khusamat (2014, p. 73) marriage is “a sanctioned sexual union between or among living things”. In his view, consideration or reference is made to the fact that nowadays, same – sex marriage exists, and it is alleged that some human beings have sexual relationship with animals. People equally make arranged marriage where the marriage will not produce children. It is based on this that the definition of marriage must be flexible enough to accommodate the contemporary practice or developments. Considering the above, the sanctity of marriage stands tall in the social milieu. Unfortunately, marriage that ought to be honourable, without blemish and hallowed is now commonly associated with disagreements, quarrels, disintegration, general crisis and divorce.

Explaining the concept of marital crisis, Hornby (2000) posits that crisis is “a situation where there is great danger or difficulty or uncertainty, when problems must be solved or important decisions reached”. It therefore follows that marital crisis is a situation where there is disagreement, disaffection and the marriage almost at the verge of collapse. In such case, it is either the husband or wife is no longer comfortable with the relationship or both and have reached the point of parting ways or separation.

In spite of the above, it is factual that some couples did not acquire western education due to early marriage. The knowledge and skills which they did not acquire from western education have kept them in ignorance hence they are severely disadvantaged in the society. Giving credence to the above, Otti in Onyia (2002) posits that:

Education is a “leading out” from something bad and undesirable to something good and desirable, notably ignorance’ which causes primitive life, poverty, disease, slavery, superstition, pride, indiscipline, bad habits to knowledge which leads to light, civilized life, comfortable and healthy life, freedom, discipline and good habits (p. 45).

The understanding of the importance of education has led to the emergence of international policies which nations or countries were mandatorily asked to adopt. Such policies include Education For All (EFA) by the year 2000, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015. Furthermore, the tension raised by educational inequality in Nigeria has drawn the attention of the government. According to Kosemani and Okorosaye–Orubite (2002, p. 201) the problem of educational inequality in Nigeria has its origin in historical, social and religious ideologies operative during the colonial period and immediately after it. In order to make for the deficits, Nigerian Government adopted the principle of compensatory education. It is on this premise that various education programmes were established such as Schools of Basic Studies, Women Education, Quota system of Admission, Adult Education, Distance Learning Programmes, which NTI is anchored on, Part Time Studies, Sandwich Programmes etc. The above compensatory education programmes in various dimensions were made to facilitate equality of educational opportunity to all citizens.

The above has provided opportunity for married women or man to enroll in education programmes. Ordinarily, a student of whichever programme is not supposed to have or experience any form of shock or problem if he or she must perform well in academics. A student who is married and the marriage is undergoing marital crisis may be shrouded with emotional imbalance which is not good enough for academic endeavour. The burden of how such students would cope with their academics becomes a source of worry hence the decision to embark on this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The establishment of the National Teachers Institute (NTI) and the attendant Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Programme is a welcome development. This reaction or response stems from the fact that it provides opportunity for teachers in various educational institutions and related works of life, to acquire trainings to enhance efficiency. The programme is open to all, male and female, single as well as married people. Records show that more women enroll in the programme than men. This may be because it is a weekend programme. Despite the interest shown by women in this programme, there are external factors that tend to affect their academic performance and even hinder their desired achievement. One of such factors is marital crisis. Investigation has proven that most marriages have one form of crisis or the other. Depending on the form and level, marriage crisis or conflict leaves victims with indelible marks and experiences.

According to Akinade (2001) conflict refers to the “existence of competing and incompatible, or opposing desires, needs, goals, objectives, demands and opportunities at the same time antagonistic interaction in which one party attempts to thwart the intentions or goals of another”. From the above, it could be deduced that marital conflict is misunderstanding or disagreements that arise between the husband and wife during normal course of interactions and is caused by inherent differences among them. Such differences may be beliefs, ideas, actions, interests or inaction. Sometimes it could escalate to violence which is not acceptable in any society because it impedes development. Irrespective of the misunderstanding they still enroll in schools or programmes.

Given the structure of NTI in Rivers State and the use of conventional schools as NTI learning centres, there is availability of infrastructural facilities, and quality manpower, since most of her facilitators are lecturers from various tertiary institutions.

It is therefore the expectation of all concerned, that the academic performance of the candidates would be very high. Unfortunately, reverse seem the case, as it is alleged that the academic performance of women in NTI, PGDE programme is comparatively below expectation. This is a thing of worry and leaves questions in the minds of people. The question is how do married women cope with studies in spite of their marital needs or challenges. Could it be that marital crisis negatively affects the academic performance of NTI, PGDE women? The problem of this study therefore is how to address these questions.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to determine the perceived effects of marital crisis on academic performance of adult learners of National Teachers Institute, PGDE Centres in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- Identify the various forms of marital crisis among adult students of NTI–PGDE Centres.
- Ascertain the causes of marital crisis among adult students of NTI–PGDE Centres.
- Find out the effects of marital crisis among adult learners of NTI–PGDE Centres.
- Ascertain if marital crisis have impact on the academic performance of adult learners of NTI–PGDE Centres in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the various forms of marital crisis?
- What are the causes of marital crisis among adult students of NTI – PGDE Centres.
- What are the effects of marital crisis?
- Does marital crisis have impact on the academic performance of adult students of NTI – PGDE Centres in Rivers State?

### **Hypothesis**

One null hypothesis guided this study:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the forms of marital crisis and academic performance of adult learners of NTI–PGDE in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The population for the study is 1,018 adult learners from the three NTI – PGDE – Port Harcourt Centres namely: St. John’s Campus 400; Community Secondary School Rumuapara 350; and Model Government Girls Secondary School Rumueme 268.

The sample size comprised 509 adult learners which represent 50% of the entire population. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Structured questionnaire designed by the researchers was the instrument used for data collection. It was a 20 item

instrument designed in a four point Likert scale responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was made up of two sections. Section 'A' was for the respondents bio-data while Section 'B' elicited information on the research questions. The researchers personally administered the instrument and also retrieved them on the spot. The data collected were analyzed using Mean statistical tool for the research questions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic for the hypothesis.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1: What are the Various Forms of Marital Crisis?

Table 1: Responses and mean score analysis of the various forms of marital crisis in Rivers State NTI –PGDE centres

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
	Do you agree that the following are forms of marital crisis among adult learners in NTI-PGDE programme?							
1	Use of abusive words against each other	253 (1012)	136 (408)	72 (144)	48 (48)	509 (1612)	3.2	Agree
2	Rejection of food	174 (696)	246 (738)	47 (94)	42 (42)	509 (1570)	3.1	Agree
3	Fighting	128 (512)	283 (849)	62 (124)	36 (36)	509 (1521)	3.0	Agree
4	Face off	135 (549)	230 (690)	65 (130)	79 (79)	509 (1439)	2.8	Agree
5	Divorce	150 (600)	263 (789)	52 (104)	44 (44)	509 (1537)	3.0	Agree
Grand Mean							3.0	

Table 1 above has a grand mean of 3.0 which means that all the items in the table were accepted as forms of marital crisis among adult students

### Research Question 2: What are the Causes of Marital Crisis among Adult Students?

Table 2: Responses and mean score analysis of the causes of marital crisis among adult students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
	Do you agree that the following are causes of marital crisis among adult learners?							
1	Denial of Sex	168 (672)	230 (690)	54 (108)	57 (57)	509 (1527)	3.0	Agree
2	Inability of the husband to provide for the family	127 (508)	196 (588)	86 (172)	100 (100)	509 (1368)	2.7	Agree
3	Lack of transparency	140 (560)	222 (666)	63 (126)	84 (84)	509 (1436)	2.8	Agree
4	Attitudes of infidelity	136 (544)	218 (654)	83 (166)	72 (72)	509 (1436)	2.8	Agree
5	Lack of communication	150 (600)	263 (789)	52 (104)	44 (44)	509 (1537)	3.0	Agree
Grand Mean							2.8	

Table 2 above shows a grand mean of 2.8 which indicates that all the items in the table were accepted as causes of marital crisis among adult students.

**Research Question 3: What are the Effects of Marital Crisis?**

Table 3: Responses and Mean Score analysis of the effects of marital crisis

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
	Do you agree that the following are effects of marital crisis among adult students?							
1	Depression	160 (640)	180 (540)	72 (144)	97 (97)	509 (1421)	2.8	Agree
2	Prostitution	190 (760)	175 (525)	89 (178)	55 (55)	509 (1518)	3.0	Agree
3	Frustration	204 (816)	192 (576)	59 (118)	54 (54)	509 (1564)	3.1	Agree
4	Single parenting	213 (852)	201 (603)	35 (70)	60 (60)	509 (1585)	3.1	Agree
5	Hypertension	148 (592)	126 (378)	111 (222)	124 (124)	509 (1316)	2.6	Agree
Grand Mean							2.9	

Table 3 above has a grand mean of 2.9. It also indicates that all the items in the table were accepted as effects of marital crisis.

**Research Question 4: Does Marital Crisis have Impact on the Academic Performance of Adult Learners?**

Table 4: Responses and Mean Score analysis of the Impact of marital crisis on the academic performance of adult learners

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
	Do you agree that the following are the impact of marital crisis on academic performance of adult learners?							
1	Loss of concentration	230 (920)	200 (600)	28 (56)	51 (51)	509 (1627)	3.2	Agree
2	Inability to buy books	174 (696)	196 (588)	43 (86)	96 (96)	509 (1466)	2.9	Agree
3	Inability to pay school fees	133 (532)	224 (672)	72 (144)	80 (80)	509 (1428)	2.8	Agree
4	Lack of upkeep provisions	151 (604)	174 (522)	106 (212)	78 (78)	509 (1416)	2.8	Agree
5	Temporary withdrawal from school resulting from crisis	172 (688)	193 (579)	94 (188)	50 (50)	509 (1505)	3.0	Agree
Grand Mean							2.9	

Table 4 above shows a grand mean of 2.9 and also shows that all the items in the table were accepted as impact of marital crisis on academic performance of adult learners.

## Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the forms of marital crisis and academic performance of adult learners in Rivers State NTI-PGDE programmes.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic Test of relationship between marital crisis and academic performance

Variables	N	df	Sign/L	r-cal	r-tab	Decision
Marital crisis Academic Performance	509	507	0.05	0.810	0.195	Reject null

At 0.05 level of significance and 507 degree of freedom, r-cal is 0.810 and r-table is 0.195. Since r-calculated is greater than r-table value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that academic performances of adult learners in NTI- PGDE programme in Rivers State are affected by marital crisis.

## DISCUSSION

The result from the analysis shows that use of abusive words against spouse, rejection of food, fighting, face off, and divorce are forms of marital crisis. The above finding is in consonance with Ajere (2013) as he stated that:

Several couples are undergoing an experience of partial divorce i.e. a situation whereby they are not in good talking relation even if they live in the same house or room. It is also a common experience that parents are living separately due to either work demand or quarrels yet it is not a total divorce. Nevertheless, a visit to lower courts would expose or inform the rate of divorce cases being tried (p. 123).

While face off and rejection of food may not be noticed by any other person, other than the couple, fighting is not easily covered. It is a common experience that couples disagree over issues which sometimes result to fight, to the extent that those in the neighbourhood are alerted. Injuries and bruises are inflicted on either the husband or wife especially among couples who lack self-control. Worse still is the use of abusive words.

Result also reveals that denial of sex, inability of the husband to provide for the family, lack of transparency, infidelity and lack of communication, are some of the causes of marital crisis. Sex is one of the natural gift given to mankind. It is instinctive and pleasurable. Ijabulu in Onuh (2003) describes sex as “the most beautiful gift from God. It is meant to be enjoyed and not to be endured. Denial of sex has led to several marital crisis in various homes. Also infidelity revealed as one of the causes of marital crisis. Describing infidelity, Arebi in Njoku (2005) posits that it is one of the most painful injuries one can inflict on a trusted partner. It is the root cause of most marital crisis in the society. Infidelity deprives couples of achieving the maximum level of marital satisfaction. It robs marriages of emotional intimacy, time, sexual exclusivity and economic resources. More so, it becomes an obstacle for couples to support each other in

providing a nurturing home for their children. It is factual that faithfulness is one of the cornerstones that sustain marriage. Neither the wife nor the husband tolerates acts of infidelity.

The study also revealed lack of transparency as one of the causes of marital crisis. Hiding things from one another or indulging in secrecy is not healthy in marriage. Many quickly forget that marriage is a contract involving oath of agreement to work together as one body or entity. The oath implies that the body of the couple has become one and as such their resources are collectively owned. Secrecy is not supposed to exist in marriage. The moment it is practiced by any of them and it is discovered, the trust that holds the marriage is destroyed. Lack of communication is identified as a cause of marital crisis. Hybels and Weaver (2001) posit that communication is any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings which involves not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerisms and styles. Nwadinobi in Oniye, Odebode and Lemboye (2012) view communication as the pillar, which maintains the structure of peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding among individuals. Considering the two definitions above, it follows that if there is communication breakdown, peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding among individuals would cease to exist.

To buttress this view in relation to the subject matter, Olagunju and Eweniyi (2002) opine that communication is the life-wire of marriage relationship or any other meaningful relationship. Communication breakdown therefore is characterized by discernable evidence of communication gaps, misconstrued intentions, misinterpreted and misunderstood messages inappropriately transmitted and poorly received messages (Ipaye, 1995). Explaining communication breakdown further, Ojiah (2004, p. 121) has advanced some obstacles to effective communication which include selective listening, lack of attending, and authority as a barrier. When one chooses to hear only what he chooses it could ignite anger which eventually leads to marital crisis. Lastly inability to cope with financial needs of the family also leads to marital crisis because most often women or wives find it difficult to endure hardship. Lending credence to this, Ezeribe (2014, pp. 130–131) posited that the sources of marital conflict include finances and job, in-laws and extended family as well as other sources.

The study further revealed that depression, prostitution, frustration, single parenting, and hypertension are the effects of marital crisis. There is always sign of depression on either the wife or husband whenever misunderstanding reaches crisis level. This is because none of the parties would be happy with the situation. It also leads to prostitution because that complimentary role played by the wife to husband and vice versa is no longer done. The situation might be so confusing that it could lead to frustration. If there are children, automatically it would result in single parenting which is not good enough for the children. Lastly much ado arising from the trend of things could deteriorate into high blood pressure (hypertension).

In spite of the above, the study further revealed that loss of concentration, inability to buy books, inability to pay school fees, lack of upkeep provisions, and temporary withdrawal from school arising from crisis are the impacts of marital crisis on the academic performance of adult learners. It is obvious that whenever somebody has serious problems, he or she can hardly concentrate in other affairs especially in academics. Loss of concentration negatively impacts on students' academic performance. Also if there is crisis in marriage, the bread winner or the sponsor might withhold his or her money hence buying books, payment of fees and upkeep provisions may no longer be available to the adult student. Certainly a student that does not have books would not perform excellently well in academics. The same thing is applicable to lack of



upkeep provisions and school fees. A student may be sent out of school or may not be allowed to write examination if he or she owes school fees and these impacts negatively on the academic performance. Sometimes if it remains difficult to cope with the financial obligations as well as other desires, the adult student withdraws from school temporarily. This equally impacts negatively on the student.

## **CONCLUSION**

Marriage is contracted for cooperation and mutual benefit. Whenever marital crisis occurs, it is often characterized by certain consequences which may be devastating – such as emotional imbalance, frustration, lack of concentration, inability to cope with the financial needs of the school etc. All these culminate in poor academic performances of adult students whose marriage is experiencing crisis.

## **Recommendations**

- Both husband and wife should be transparent. This is because two of them have become one at the instance of marriage. Since a partner cannot hide something from himself or herself so the couple cannot hide anything from each other.
- Joint account could help to instill stability and peace since no partner would accuse the other of using money without the consent of both.
- Couples should create time for each other. This is needed because there should be time to reason together over certain issues, play, have pleasure, plan and advance or improve on what they do. There should be time for relaxation, shopping, recreation etc. This makes marriage meaningful and lessens propensity for crisis or divorce.
- Invent special language or slangs which only the couple would understand. This enhance communication between a husband and wife even in the midst of other people without those other people understanding what they had communicated to each other.
- Couples should have respect for themselves. If there is respect for one another and observant, each partner would understand each other's mood and know the best approach at such time.
- Find out what each partner cherishes and once in a while, bring it up. Let kindness and love be the watch ward and then the marriage would be so successful that it would be the envy or admiration of the people around you.
- Attending marriage seminars, workshops, conferences, symposia, bible studies, Sunday schools etc. will help to improve marriage relationships.
- Couple should attempt solving problems themselves, but if difficult to be resolved they could consult a good counselor.
- Every student should cultivate the habit of reading always so that unpleasant developments would not affect your academic performance.
- Couple should always pray together

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