



Personal Factors as Predictors of Couple Crisis Among Married Tertiary Students in Ibadan, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Couple crisis has been an intense subject matter especially with increase in marital issues within our society and the international sphere. This study therefore examined personal factors (marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse) as predictors of couple crisis among married tertiary students in Ibadan, Nigeria. General theory of crisis and social bond model were utilized in the study while cross sectional research design was adopted. Two hundred and fifty (250) married tertiary students were selected as participants using purposive sampling technique. A structured questionnaire with psychometrically sound scales was used to collect data. Four hypotheses were tested using T-test and Multiple regression analysis at .05 level of significance. Findings showed that marital satisfaction had significant influence on couple crisis [$t(237)=-7.71$; $P<.01$]. Specifically, respondents with low level of marital satisfaction reported higher couple crisis compared to those with high level of marital satisfaction. Similarly, third-party interference had significant influence on couple crisis [$t(237)=4.66$; $P<.01$] such that respondents with high level of third-party interference reported higher couple crisis compared to their counterpart. Substance abuse was also found to have significant influence on couple crisis [$t(237)=3.46$; $P<.05$]. Participants high on substance abuse scale reported higher couple crisis compared to those low on substance abuse. Personal factors (Marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse) were significant joint predictors of couple crisis [$R=.66$; $R^2=.43$; $F(3,232)=58.76$; $P<.01$]. Collectively, personal factors accounted for 43% variance in couple crisis among married tertiary students. Personal factors are vital explanatory variables of couple crisis. It is therefore recommended that these factors be considered by clinicians, family and couple therapists when designing intervention plan.

Introduction

Globally, the issue of couple crisis has become a matter of great concern, that has drawn the attention of individuals, clinicians, medical community and other stakeholders largely because of its negative and harmful consequences on mental, physical and social health of an individual and its rippling effect on the society at large. In close relationships and marriages, conflicts are bound to occur at some point but when such occurrence are not quickly resolved by the parties involved it gives room for crisis which may necessitate physical and mental abuse. Clearly, there is a need to address crisis among couples especially given the increase in intimate partner violence and domestic violence issues reported by several studies (Taswe & Getahun, 2021; Agboola & Oluwatosin, 2018; Dildar et al., 2013; Birditt et al., 2010). Previous studies have explained the cycle of violence, crisis at home, and the serious risk of harm that accompanies these problems in our modern society (Asadi et al., 2016; Tolorunleke, 2014; Driver & Gottman, 2004). For most society, crisis among couples has severe impact which can be felt in the social, economic and cultural spheres; and for the individual it may include any of the following attributes, lack of self-esteem, feeling shame and guilt, difficulties in expressing negative feelings, hopelessness and helplessness, which, in turn, lead to difficulties in using good coping strategies, self-management, and mutual support networks.

When it has to do with conflict or crisis in marriages the focus of attention usually is on sociodemographic factors. For most studies, the female gender is the focal point and they are often viewed as the recipient of harassment, mistreatment and abuse. Little or no interest is been paid to the

male gender as well as investigating the precipitating trigger(s) for the couples' crisis. Consequently, scholars suggest that more attention needs to be paid to individual or personal attributes and characteristics that further impact on couples' relationship leading to marital crisis (Taswe & Getahun, 2021; Asadi et al., 2016; Dew & Dakin, 2011). Investigating couple's crisis situation by addressing the individual or personal factors is very crucial to planning and execution of intervention so as to resolve the crisis faced among couples. The main goal of this study is to investigate the role of personal factors such as marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse on couple crisis. Specifically, the objectives of this study include to examine;

- whether marital satisfaction will have significant influence on couple's crisis among married tertiary students.
- whether third-party interference will have significant influence on couple's crisis among married tertiary students.
- whether substance abuse will have significant relationship with couple's crisis among married tertiary students.
- whether marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse will have significant joint and independent influence on couple's crisis among married tertiary students.

As opposed to decades back, in Nigerian crisis and conflicts in marriages cuts across many parts of the country. This shift in trend and increase in couple's crisis is at variance with deep rotted patriarchal orientation that expects the woman to be submissive

to the spouse in marriage. More and more women are showing independence and some of the cultural beliefs are weaning down due to acculturation. Now, people are more willing to express their marital dissatisfaction with spouse and are more open to share marital issues with third party, also many marriages are in crisis today because of the presence or interference of third parties. Indeed, the era of marital issues been kept as a family secret is gradually fading away. The literature addressing the substance use, marital conflict and violence in relationship is limited but growing steadily. Some sociodemographic variables have been found to influence divorce and conflict behaviours among couples such factors include partner level of education, income, and even age had varying impact on marital conflict (Udoka et al., 2019; Agboola & Oluwatosin, 2018; Asadi et al., 2016; Birditt et al., 2010) very few studies have conducted quantitative inquiry of couples highlighting the psychosocial factors relevant to conflict situation among couples. From literature suggestions have been made to address factors such as personal traits, communication skills, commitment, and family interference as crucial factors worth investigating in relation to conflicts in marriages. Indeed, a scientific enquiry into the subject matter is germane as many families have been and some are still seriously at war with themselves simply because of their failure to arrest, manage or resolve conflicting issues between couples. Couple crisis makes some families go through a lot of psychological stress and hardship with devastating effects on the children, family and the community at large.

Hypotheses

1. Marital satisfaction will significantly influence couple's crisis among some selected married tertiary students in Ibadan.
2. Third-party interference will significantly influence couple's crisis among some selected married tertiary students in Ibadan.
3. Substance abuse will significantly influence couple's crisis among some selected married tertiary students in Ibadan.
4. Marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse will significantly jointly predict couple's crisis among some selected married tertiary students in Ibadan.

Method

A cross sectional survey using ex post facto research design was adopted in this study. In this study the independent variables are marital satisfaction, third party interference and substance abuse while the dependent variable is couple's crisis. The variables under consideration have occurred prior to the investigation and are all measured in continuous form.

This study was carried out in some selected tertiary institutions in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state in Southwestern Nigeria. The participants for this study were 250 married tertiary students who were selected using convenience sampling technique from three tertiary institutions in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Data for this study were gathered using a questionnaire consisting of five sections. Section A measured the sociodemographic characteristics of study participants. Section B measures marital satisfaction using the 16-item Couples Satisfaction

Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Section C measured third-party interference using the 41-item Marital Interference and Boundary Scale (Goldstein, 2011), while Section D measured substance abuse using the 10-item Drug Use Questionnaire Test (Skinner, 1982). The dependent variable was assessed in Section E using the 20-item Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus & Douglas, 1998). Participants of the study were approached at the different institutions and the study questionnaire was administered among those who indicated interest. They were informed of the need to voluntarily participate in the research and that they were free to decline participation at any point in time. The participants (married tertiary students) completed the questionnaires in about 10 to 15 minutes. Responses to the questionnaire were

coded and entered into SPSS (version 21.0) for statistical analyses. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted by the researchers. Hypotheses one, two and three were tested using t-test for independent sample, while hypothesis four was tested using multiple regression analysis. Furthermore, reliability assessment of independent and dependent scales (Cronbach's alpha) was also analysed.

Results

Data used to test study hypotheses was gathered from two hundred and forty-two (242) married tertiary institution students. The variables assessed were marital satisfaction, third party interference, substance abuse and domestic violence.

Hypothesis One

Respondents with low level of marital satisfaction will significantly report higher on couple's crisis compared to those with high level of marital satisfaction. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: T-test for Independent Sample showing results on marital satisfaction and couple's crisis

Marital satisfaction	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	P
Low	118	60.19	9.01			
				-7.71	237	<.01
High	121	50.46	10.44			

Table 1 presents results on the influence of marital satisfaction on couple's crisis among married tertiary institution students in Ibadan metropolis. It is shown that marital satisfaction had significant influence on couple's crisis [$t(237) = -7.71$; $P < .01$]. Specifically, respondents with low level of marital satisfaction reported higher on couple's crisis (Mean = 60.19; SD = 9.01) compared to those with high level of marital satisfaction (Mean = 50.46; SD = 10.44). Therefore, the stated hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

Hypothesis Two

Respondents with high level of third-party interference will significantly report higher on couple's crisis compared to those with low level of third-party interference. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: T-test for Independent Samples showing results on the Influence of Third-Party Interference on Couple's crisis

Third party Interference	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	P
High	133	58.05	9.78	4.66	237	<.01
Low	105	51.69	11.27			

Table 2 presents results on the influence of third-party interference on couple's crisis among married tertiary institution students in Ibadan metropolis. It revealed that third-party interference had significant influence on couple's crisis [$t(237) = 4.66$; $P < .01$]. Specifically, respondents with high level of third-party interference reported higher on couple's crisis (Mean = 58.05; SD = 9.78) compared to those with low level of third-party interference (Mean = 51.69; SD = 11.27). Therefore, the stated hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

Hypothesis Three

Respondents with high level of substance abuse will significantly report higher on couple's crisis compared to those with low level of substance abuse. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented on Table 3.

Table 3: T-test for Independent Samples Summary Table Showing Results on the Influence of Substance Abuse on Couple's crisis

Substance abuse	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	P
High	139	57.33	9.75	3.46	237	<.05
Low	98	52.47	11.85			

Table 3 presents results on the influence of substance abuse on couple's crisis among married tertiary institution students in Ibadan metropolis. It is shown that substance abuse had significant influence on couple's crisis [$t(237) = 3.46$; $P < .05$]. Specifically, respondents with high level of substance abuse reported higher on couple's crisis (Mean = 57.33; SD = 9.75) compared to those with low level of substance abuse (Mean = 52.47; SD = 11.85). Therefore, the stated hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

Hypothesis Four

Marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse will significantly jointly predict couple's crisis among some selected married tertiary students in Ibadan. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Results the prediction of Marital satisfaction, Third-Party Interference and Substance Abuse on Couples crisis

Predictors	B	T	P	R	R ²	F	P
Third part interference	.02	.26	>.05				
Substance abuse	.05	.73	>.05	.66	.43	58.76	<.01
Marital satisfaction	-.62	-9.47	<.01				

Table 4 presents results on the joint and independent influence of marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse on couple's crisis among married tertiary institution students in Ibadan. It was observed that marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse were significant joint predictors of couple's crisis [$R = .66$; $R^2 = .43$; $F(3, 232) = 58.76$; $P < .01$]. Collectively, marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse accounted for about 43% variance in couple's crisis among married tertiary institution students. However, only marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.62$; $t = -9.47$; $P < .01$) had independent influence on couple's crisis. Therefore, the stated hypothesis was confirmed in this study.

Discussion

The study investigated influence of marital satisfaction, third party interference and substance abuse on couple crisis among married tertiary students in Ibadan, Oyo state. The first hypothesis stated that marital satisfaction will significantly influence couple crisis among married tertiary students

in Ibadan. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and it was discovered that marital satisfaction had significant influence on couple crisis. Furthermore, respondents with high level of marital satisfaction reported lower on couple crisis compared to those with low level of marital satisfaction. This finding implies that lower satisfaction among married persons could account for couple crisis, therefore the stated hypothesis was confirmed in this study. In connection with previous studies, this result finds support in literature where it was generally observed that a good marriage and marriage devoid of crisis is the most rewarding experience life can offer (Adegboyega, 2021; Aricioglu & Kay, 2023; Ghoroghi, Hassan, & Baba, 2015; Javdan, Bahrampour, & Dehghani, 2023; Moland, 2011). Thus, marital satisfaction makes a person feel adequate, desired, approved and complete to a degree which is not possible in any other form of human relationships. There is a relationship between good marriage and marital satisfaction, both are inextricably tied to each other, this current study clearly attests to the

fact that marital satisfaction can impact on conflict situation among couples. Marital satisfaction therefore plays a major role to promote good patterns of interaction among married persons. It was also observed that third-party interference accounted for variation in couple crisis. The study findings showed that respondents with high level of third-party interference significantly reported higher on couple crisis compared to those with low level of third-party interference. This confirms the stated hypothesis, which is in line with some previous studies. For instance, Gangoli and Rew (2011) found that some acts of violence perpetrated against women were influenced by their mothers-in-law in India. Interference from family members and relatives most especially from Mother-in-Laws may create continuous friction among couples. Similarly, Pak (2011) found that mother-in laws frequently control and criticize their daughter-in-law leading to relational conflict in marriages. Some of this interference may be linked to different culture and the socialization processes which approves of and accommodate third-party interference in marriages.

The third hypothesis states that participants with high level of substance abuse will significantly report higher on couple crisis compared to those with low level of substance abuse. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and it was revealed that substance abuse had significant influence on couple crisis. In addition, respondents with high level of substance abuse reported higher on couple conflict compared to those with low level of substance abuse. Hamilton and Collins (1981) estimated that 25% to 50% of male against female domestic violence events involved drinking males and that men who were violent against

their partners were disproportionately likely to have alcohol problems. More recent reviews of the literature have shown similar findings (Alonso-Ferres, Valor-Segura & Expósito, 2019; Barnett & Fagan, 1993; Lee & Weinstein, 1997). Barnett and Fagan (1993) examined drinking patterns among 181 men who were married or cohabiting in the past 12 months. Four groups were studied: maritally violent counseled, maritally violent uncounseled, nonviolent unhappily married, and nonviolent satisfactorily married. The men who had been maritally violent drank more than the nonviolent men, and they were different from their nonviolent counterparts specifically on the larger amount of alcohol consumed and their drinking for emotional reasons. From the outset of systematic study of family violence, the association of drinking to male against female domestic assault was apparent in a review of the literature (Fincham, F. D., & Bradbury, T. N. 1987). The last hypothesis four was that there would be significant joint and independent prediction of marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse on couple crisis among married tertiary institution students. It was observed that marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse were significant joint predictors of couple crisis. Collectively, marital satisfaction, third party interference and substance abuse accounted for about 43% variance in couple crisis among married tertiary institution students. However, only marital satisfaction had independent influence on couple crisis.

Conclusion

This study examined whether marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse will have significant influence on couple crisis among

married tertiary students. The result demonstrated that marital satisfaction predicted couple crisis. This implies that respondent with higher marital satisfaction were less likely to experience couple crisis. Conversely, this study showed that persons with high level of third-party interference reported higher couple crisis compared to those with low level of third-party interference. Similarly, the result showed significant effect of substance abuse on couple crisis where persons with high level of substance abuse reported higher couple crisis compared to those with low level of substance abuse.

Implications / Recommendations

This study was an attempt to uncover the predictor roles of marital satisfaction, third-party interference and substance abuse on couple crisis. The result will have direct implication for married couples and will inform practitioners in marriage counseling, family therapist, family religious mentor and the newly wedded couple how marital satisfaction, third party interference and substance abuse could account for couple crisis in homes. Also, the results of this study will therefore have implications for practitioners in the field of marriage counseling, family management, health sectors, social psychology and clinical psychologist when designing interventions aimed at addressing marital or couple conflict to take into consideration the personal factors investigated in this study. Since the incidence of domestic violence and marital conflicts are growing in a geometric progression, it is highly recommended that stakeholders and government should give serious thoughts to the personal factors (marital satisfaction, Third-party interference and substance abuse) found to account for couple

conflict if these growing societal issues is to be resolved and reduced to its barest minimum. This current study provides a foundational knowledge to the matter of couple crisis and therefore it is suggested that empirical investigation on other factors such as financial stressors, economic status and age differences among couples be considered in future studies.

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