# PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC AND FAMILY CRISES AMONG COUPLES IN CALABAR METROPOLIS

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## ABSTRACT

*The study was aimed at examining personal characteristic and family crises among couples in Calabar Metropolis. Three research questions were raised and three hypothesis was stated. Literature was reviewed empirically and theoretically according to the sub variables of the study. The study adopted a survey research design with a purposive and accidental sampling technique to select a total of 232 couples in Calabar Metropolis. A questionnaire titled 'Personal Factors and Family Crises Scale (PFFCS) were used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two Counselors and three Measurement and Evaluation Experts , all from faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar . the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha and the coefficient of the sub-scales ranges from .78-.87 which showed that the instrument is reliable.  Data were collected by the researcher and analyzed using independent t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result showed that gender differences, parental educational background and age in marriage significantly influence family crises among couples. It was therefore recommended that women should helped to manage their emotions in order to help them among family issues appropriately. That couples should be exposed to different educational programmes in order to help them acquire skills and knowledge that can make them live happily in their homes.*

**KEYWORDS**: *Personal Characteristic, Family Crises, Couples*

## INTRODUCTION

The family is the basic unit of the society. It is the institution that begins life of the society. Every man is born in a family and that give him or her identity. The family is a fundamental social institution occurring in all societies, although its particular forms differ substantially from place to place. The family has various responsibilities of maintaining a healthy sexual relationships, economic cooperation among members, reproduction and, the educational function - socialization of children (Amadi, 2014).  Thus, the family begins when a man comes in union with another irrespective of the number of children that they may have. Irrespective of how a family begins, the family has the responsibilities of ensuring peace, love and harmony among members of the family. However, there are crises in the Nigeria family. These ranges from husband to wife continuous antagonism, infighting,distrust,divorce,and malice. In most families, children are at war with their parents and parents are at war with each other.  Children aligning with either of their parents and this causing division in the family. Families that would have been in peace are disintegrating on daily basis and this does not speak

well of our family systems in Nigeria. These states of affairs have triggered a lot of attention ion what would have been the causes of these problem. According to Zain(2016), Buckwell, (2010), Awake (2008) and Tobin (2004), these includes social incompatibility of marriage partners, sexual incompatibility extreme sexual orientation , extended family affairs/issues, lack of mutual respect between partners, dishonesty and moral decadence, negligent behaviour of spouses, poor marital communication and unwholesome social behaviour.

The effect of family crises includes increased social vices such as prostitution among couple, suspicion, distrusts, lack of cooperation, lack of progress, marital dissatisfaction, lack of sexual gratification, lack of parental control on children, unhealthy competition among family members among others. Counselors and researchers have tried to ensure that they bring solution to marital homes but the problem still persists. The researcher is presuming that personal characteristics of the couples could be responsible for family crises.

Personal characteristics are traits that reside with the person or are associated with the individual. They include a variety of personal attributes such as age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, self concept which are identifiable with the individual. However ,human beings differ from one another because of these personal attributes. (Ojugo, 2004).Gender here refers to male or female, gender equity and fairness is key to success in any marital affair or relations. The way a man values a woman determines how he treats her and vice-versa. Age in marriage relates to how old the couples are. In traditional African societies, we respect age of individuals. It is believed that the older ones is, the more wisdom he/she acquires from life experience and that account for how one behaves at every particular stage of his/her life. The age or length of marriage may refer to how long the couple has lived together as husband and wife. The length of marriages partly determines the stability of marriage and tolerance between couples. It is believed naturally that the older the age of marriage, the lesser the conflict in the sense that the partners get to know each other and gets more stabilized (Amadi, 2014). The researcher is asking, could gender differences, educational qualification and age of couples influence family crises among couples in Calabar metropolis ? it was in a bid to answer this question that this study was carried out.

In a study carried out by Okorie(2015)on the relationship between personal factors and marital conflict resolution strategies among married people in Enugu State. To guide the study, three research questions and five null hypotheses were formulated to establish the degree of relationship. The correlational survey design was adopted in carrying out the study.

Using an estimated population of 246,849 couples, the multi-stage sampling involving purposive random sampling procedure as well as stratified sampling method was used to compose a sample of 600 married people. A researcher constructed questionnaire titled ' Family conflict resolution strategy inventory" (FCRSI) with face validation and a reliability co-efficient of 0.84 was used in data collection. On the spot administration and collection of data was used. The data collected were analyzed through the use of frequencies, mean scores, standard deviation, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-test of significant relationship were used to answer and test the research questions and hypothesis respectively. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis yielded the following findings among others; that marital conflict resolution strategies of married people are; talking over the conflict, consulting family/marital counselors, use of performance based treatment, consulting extended family members, avoidance of negative factors, use of personality options, the use of character options and clear role definition. That the identified marital conflict resolution strategies are effective for them. There is a significant relationship between gender and conflict resolution strategies of married people. There is a significant relationship between Length of marriage and conflict resolution strategies of married people. There is significant relationship between educational qualifications and conflict resolution strategies among married people. Occupational status and age are also significantly related to marital conflict resolution strategies of married people.

Nwobi (1995) carried out a study on personal background and environmental factors influencing marital adjustment among Anambra State couples, implications for marital / family counseling. The design of the study was a survey. A total of 1,500 married couples were involved in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire. The data generated were analyzed using the mean and the standard deviation to answer the research question and t-test and ANOVA to test the hypothesis raised in the study. The result of the study revealed that couples background factors that include age of marriage, academic qualification, income and number of children; type of marriage among others increases the level of their adjustment to marital issues. The work did not consider other personal factors like gender, age or occupational status of the couples, hence the present study.

Okere (2003) worked on marital satisfaction and female labour force participation among married couples using a population of 74,801 married men and 80,078 married women and a sample of 1576 respondents was adopted using stratified and purposive cluster sampling procedure, the researcher adopted

both descriptive and correlational survey design in the study. He used questionnaire in data collection, in analyzing the data he used mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlational statistics. He found out among others that full time wives (non working) exhibited higher degree of marital satisfaction generally than their working counterparts and men married to full time or non working wives were generally more martially satisfied than married men to working wives.

In a study carried out by Onyechi (2003) on some correlates of family stability among couples in Anambra State, the study made use of 500 respondents. The family stability scale designed by the researcher was the main instrument used for the study. The instrument was made up of three major sections. Section A, had items on socio-economic class, section B dealt with items on family size and section C was on family stability. The data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) and the multiple Regression Correlation co-efficient. The study showed that there is a significant relationship between money management and family stability. She also found that, instability of spouses to adequately manage the financial resources of their family whether large or small give rise to crisis in marriage. The study as well revealed that, what a person does for a living and the persons educational level are likely to influence family stability. She identified also that lack of sexual satisfaction, childlessness, communication gap, in-law influence and poverty as major factors that cause marital conflicts in most couples.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The following questions were raised to guide the study
  i.   What is the influenced of parental educational background on family crises among couples ?
  ii.  What is the influenced of gender on family crises among couples ?
  iii. What is the influenced of age in marriage on family crises among couples ?

## STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS
  i.   There is no significant influence of parental educational background on family crises among couples
  ii.  There is no significant influence of gender on family crises among couples
  iii. There is no significant influence of age in marriageon family crises among couples

## METHODOLOGY
The study adopted a survey research design with a purposive and accidental sampling technique to select a total of 232 couples in Calabar Metropolis. A questionnaire titled 'Personal Factors and Family Crises Scale (PFFCS) were used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two Counselors and three Measurement and Evaluation Experts , all from faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar . the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha and the coefficient of the sub-scales ranges from .78-.87 which showed that the instrument is reliable. Data were collected by the researcher and analysed using independent t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result is presented below

## PRESENTATION OF RESULT
### Hypothesis one
There is no significant influence of gender differences on family crises among couples. The independent variable is gender differences categorized as male and female while the dependent variable is family crises. To test this hypothesis, independent t-test was used and the result showed that (t= -5.43, p<.05). since p(.000) is less than p(.05), this implies that there is a significant influence of gender differences on family crises. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. a cursory look at the table showed that females with a higher mean of 16.23 are more susceptible in influencing family crises than males with a mean value of 14.72. the result is presented in Table 1

**Table 1**

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender differences on family crises

| Variables | N | X | S.D | df | t-cal | p-val |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 101 | 14.72 | 3.67 | | | |
| | | | | 231 | -5.43 | .000 |
| Female | 131 | 16.23 | 3.16 | | | |

### Hypothesis two
There is no significant influence of parental educational background on family crises among couples. The independent variable is parental educational background categorized as FSLC/WASSCE, NCE/ND and B.Sc/B.Ed-above while the dependent variable is family crises. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result showed that (F=5.432, p<.05). Since

p(.001) is less than p(.05), this implies that there is a significant influence of parental educational background on family crises among couples. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. a post hoc test was carried out using Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) and the result showed that couples with FSLC/WASSCE with a mean value higher than others are more prone to family crises than the ones who have gone to school. . The result of the post hoc is presented in Table 2

**Table 2**

One way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of parental educational background on familycrises

| Variables | N | X | S.D | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FSLC/WASCE | 87 | 17.87 | 2.17 | | |
| NCE/ND | 91 | 16.32 | 3.37 | | |
| B.Ed/B.Sc-above | 54 | 16.87 | 3.45 | | |
| Total | 232 | 18.22 | 4.43 | | |
| Source of variation | SS | df | MS | F-ratio | p-val |
| Between | 1469.35 | 2 | 2938.712 | | |
| Within | 161759 | 299 | 541 | 5.432 | .001 |
| Total | 163228.35 | 232 | | | |

**Table 3**

Fishers LSD Post hoc analysis result on the influence of parental educational background on family crises

| Variables | FSLC/WASSCE n=87 | NCE/ND n=91 | B.Ed/B.Sc-above n=84 |
|---|---|---|---|
| FSLC/WASSCE | 17.87a | 1.55b | 1.00 |
| NCE/ND | 2.76*c | 16.32 | -0.55 |
| B.Ed/B.Sc-above | 2.39* | -1.65* | 16.87 |
| MS within=1013 | | | |

a= group means in the principal diagonal

b= Group means differences above the principal diagonal

c= Calculated t-values below the principal diagonal

## Hypothesis three

There is no significant influence of age in marriage on family crises among couples. The independent variable is age in marriage categorized as below 5 years, 6-10yrs and 11-above years while the dependent variable is family crises. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result showed that (F=10.13, p<.05). Since p(.001) is less than p(.05), this implies that there is a significant influence of age in marriage on family crises among couples. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. a post hoc test was carried out using Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) and the result showed that couples with few years in marriage with a mean value higher than others are more prone to family crises than the ones who have been in marriage for a long time. . The result of the post hoc is presented in Table 4 and 5

**Table 4**

One way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result on the influence of age in marriage on family crises

| Variables | N | X | S.D | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Below 5years | 67 | 16.43 | 2.22 | | |
| 6-10yrs | 101 | 14.56 | 2.98 | | |
| 11yrs-above | 64 | 14.98 | 3.01 | | |
| Total | 232 | 18.22 | 4.43 | | |
| Source of variation | SS | df | MS | F-ratio | p-val |
| Between | 6503.46 | 2 | 3251.73 | | |
| Within | 156724.89 | 299 | 321 | 10.13 | .001 |
| Total | 163228.35 | 232 | | | |

**Table 5**

Fishers LSD Post hoc analysis result on the influence of age in marriage  on family crises

| Variables | Below 5yrs n=67 | 6-10yrs n=101 | 11yrs-above n=64 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Below 5yrs | 16.43[a] | 1.87[b] | 1.45 |
| 6-10yrs | 2.76*[c] | 14.56 | -0.41 |
| 11yrs-above | 2.39* | -1.65* | 14.98 |
| MS $_{within=321}$ | | | |

a= group means in the principal diagonal

b= Group means differences above the principal diagonal

c= Calculated t-values below the principal diagonal

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis one that stated there is no significant influence of gender on family crises was rejected .this implies that there is a significant influence of gender on family crises . the result further revealed that women are more  prone to facilitating crises than men in the family. This could be due to the fact that women are more volatile and emotional than men. They react to issues from the emotional point of view rather than reasons and facts and this tends to aggravate crises where there ought not to have existed. They sometimes allow their needs, personal issues to becloud that of the family. The findings were in line with that of Okorie(2015) that carried out a study on the relationship between personal factors and marital conflict resolution strategies among married people in Enugu State. To guide the study, three research questions and five null hypotheses were formulated to establish the degree of relationship. The analysis yielded the following findings among others; that marital conflict resolution strategies of married people are; talking over the conflict, consulting family/marital counselors, use of performance based treatment, consulting extended family members, avoidance of negative factors, use of personality options, the use of character options and clear role definition. There is a significant relationship between gender and conflict resolution strategies of married people. There is a significant relationship between Length of marriage and conflict resolution strategies of married people. There is significant relationship between educational qualifications and conflict resolution strategies among married people.

Hypothesis two that stated that there is no significant influence of parental level of education on family crises was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of parental level of education on family crises. The result further revealed that parents with lower level of education are more susceptible to family crises than those with higher educational qualification.   The more educated couples are, the more the acquire knowledge and information that can helps them live meaningfully in the family without crises. Although, crises are inevitable in families but level of education can help couples to understand each other as well as their children in order to manage emotions that sometimes lead to crises at home. The findings of the study were in line with that of Nwobi (1995) carried out a study on personal background and environmental factors influencing marital adjustment among Anambra State couples, implications for marital / family counseling. The design of the study was a survey. A total of 1,500 married couples were involved in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire. The data generated were analyzed using the mean and the standard deviation to answer the research question and t-test and ANOVA to test the hypothesis raised in the study.  The result of the study revealed that couples background factors that include age of marriage, academic qualification, income and number of children; type of marriage among others increases the level of their adjustment to marital issues

Hypothesis three that stated that there is no significant influence of age in marriage on family crises was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of age in marriage on family crises. The result further revealed that couples withfew years of education are more susceptible to family crises than those with adequate number of years in marriage. This could be due to the fact that couples who have stayed long in marriage understands themselves, the likes and dislikes of each other's and knows how to manage themselves appropriately. Contrary to this, couples who have few years in marriage may not have understood each other's especially when the period of dating was short or the coupls were cut short by distance. They experience a lot of psychological and economic crises at home. The findings were in line with that of Onyechi (2003)that carried out a study on some correlates of family  stability among couples in Anambra State, the study made use of 500 respondents.. The study showed that there is a significant relationship between money management and family stability. She also found that, instability of spouses to adequately manage the financial resources of their family whether large or small give rise to crisis in marriage. The study as well revealed that, what a

person does for a living and the persons educational level are likely to influence family stability. She identified also that lack of sexual satisfaction, childlessness, communication gap, in-law influence and poverty as major factors that cause marital conflicts in most couples.

## CONCLUSION /RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that gender differences, parental educational background and age in marriage significantly influence family crises among couples. It was therefore recommended thatwomen should helped to manage their emotions in order to help them among family issues appropriately. That couples should be exposed to different educational programmes in order to help them acquire skills and knowledge that can make them live happily in their homes

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