

**EFFECTS OF MARITAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS ON  
MARITAL STABILITY AMONG LITERATE COUPLES IN NORTHERN  
CROSS RIVER STATE**

**FLORENCE ATUBE UNDIYAUNDEYE (MRS)  
PGED/UJ/11565/00  
( B.ED CALABAR, M.ED JOS )**

**A thesis in the Department of ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION  
Faculty Of Education.  
Submitted to the School of Postgraduate Studies University of Jos, in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in Guidance and Counselling of the  
UNIVERSITY OF JOS.**

**MARCH, 2006.**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby, declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts; undertaken under the supervision of Professor M.P. Mallum and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a degree or certificate distinguished and appropriately acknowledged.

---

Signature

---

Date

**FLORENCE ATUBE UNDIYAUNDEYE  
PGED/UJ/11565/00**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the Research work for this thesis and the subsequent preparation of this work by UNDIYAUNDEYE, FLORENCE ATUBE (PGED/UJ/11565/00) was carried out under my supervision.

---

Professor M.P. Mallum  
Supervisor

---

Date

---

Professor G. Bozimo  
Head of Department

---

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of this work would have been a mirage but for the assistance, contribution and co-operation of many people.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my project supervisor, Professor M.P. Mallum, whose academic excellence, expertise, constructive criticisms and useful suggestions are evidenced in this work.

I am eternally grateful to Prof. C.C. Okam whose kindness and humility are almost ethereal. This was manifested through his specialist advice and unflinching support for the progress of this work.

Much gratitude goes to the Dean of Faculty of Education Prof. J. Iheanacho and the Head of Department of Arts and Social Science Education Prof (Mrs) G. Bozimo, for the promptness with which they attended to the demands of this work.

I humbly acknowledge the assistance given to me by Prof. T.O. Oyetunde, Dr. A. O. Enoh, Dr. N. L. Longbap, Prof P.O. Awotunde, Prof. C. A. Adalikwu, Prof C.T. Akinmade, Prof. E. D. Ozoji, Dr. A. Lannab, Prof S. Udoh, Dr (Mrs) C. A. Ugodulunwa, Prof Egbe, and Prof. J. C. Obilom in terms of provision of specialist advice and encouragement.

I wish to acknowledge the moral support I received from the following distinguished friends: among whom are Mr & Mrs. U. L. Adie, Hon. S.p.k. Ogar, A. Obe, Hon. P. Adah, Bar & Mrs V. Ikem, Mr & Mrs C. Ugbong, Mr. E. Aniah, Mr P. Apuye, Mr G. Ogar, Capt & Mrs J. Agba (Rtd) Hon. P. Ogar, Mr & Mrs. E. Ugbe, Hon. V. Agwu, Arch. G. Ogbada and Mr & Mrs. P. Atsu. These special people sacrifice their time and comfort often, without realizing it to make the burden lighter for me.

My profound gratitude once again goes to my dearest husband for his immeasurable encouragement, care and support at the expense of my companionship to him. I also thank him again and again for sharing in my anxious and desperate moments.

I am grateful to Rev. Fr. Jake Otonko, Fr Emma Eroh, Fr. Benard Ahipu, Fr. Hycient Inyang, Fr. Cy Oko, Fr. Akobi, Fr. Inno Awok, Pastor Christy and family, Sis Alice for being there to listen and offer appropriate advice at the point my emotions could no longer carry the burden. Above all for praying fervently for my being found worthy to wear the golden cap at moment.

Let me also recall with nostalgia the special contributions of the following good-minded friends to the work. They include Dr. M. Sule, Dr. A. Ushie, Dr. J. Ingwu, Prof J.N. Aduba, Mr. D. Ugal, Mr. J. Akwaji, Mr. P. Dayatp, Mr. D. Ochelebe, Dr. S. Emaikwu, Dr. U. Ukoha, Dr. O. Ukwenu, Dr. G. Ukwayi, Mrs. U. Atelhe, Mrs. L. Bello, Gen. and Mrs. M. Obi, Mrs. A. Basse, Elder and Mrs O. U. Nkuma, Mr. T. Addai and Mr. E. Akwagiobe.

My very special appreciation goes to my lovely children Ubee, Biwom, Ungwus and Big Daddy for their understanding throughout the course of my struggle to bring this work to a logical conclusion. I say thank you little ones and sorry for all the motherly care I denied you that time.

My most distinct appreciation goes to my special friend and daughter, Francisca Ishamaeli, who protected my kitchen duties jealously by making sure there was good diet for my family to eat and timely always. All the drivers who drove me to and fro Jos each time, I say thank you for all the safe drives.

I am and will ever remain grateful to my parents, Mr & Mrs. J. A. Atianlikong, Mr. Linus Abajie, my sisters and brothers for their love, support and prayers.

I recognize in a very special way the immense contribution of Col. & Mrs. N.O. Ojiji and family for making their home most conducive for my living each time I was in Jos for the programme; I say a big “thank you” and sorry for all the inconveniences I caused you.

The special family of Prof. & Mrs. U.C. Undiandeye: for their special contributions toward enhancing the achievement of this goal. My innermost regard goes to the following computer operators: Mrs. Stella Essessien, Ngozi Ejimako and Mrs. Rachael B. Oroye without whose perfect computer skills this work wouldn't have come up in this special form.

Above all, my profound and unalloyed gratitude goes to God Almighty for touching the heart of everybody acknowledged in this work and for His divine protection, guidance and love throughout the period of this research. To Him alone be all praise, glory, power and might forever and ever. Amen.

**Florence Atube Undiyaundeye**

## **DEDICATION**

The work is dedicated to my beloved husband, Dr. Abu G. Undiyaundeye for his consistent encouragement and sacrifices throughout the struggle to bring this work to a reality.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGES
Title Page - - - - -	i
Declaration - -- - - -	ii
Certification - - - - -	iii
Acknowledgements - - - - -	iv
Dedication - - - - -	vii
Table Of Contents - - - - -	viii
List of Tables - - - - -	xiv
List of Figures - - - - -	x
Abstract - - - - -	xvii

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY - - - - -	1
1.2	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM - - - - -	9
1.3	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY - - - - -	12
1.4	RESEARCH QUESTIONS - - - - -	13
1.5	RESEARCH HYPOTHESES - - - - -	13
1.6	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - - - - -	14
1.7	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY - - - - -	21
1.8	DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY - - - - -	23
1.9	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS - - - - -	24



## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

2.1	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	-	-	-	-	-	27
2.2	THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY-						30
2.3	TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE	-	-	-	-	-	41
2.4	CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE	-	-	-	-	-	47
2.5	ISLAMIC MARRIAGE	-	-	-	-	-	50
2.6	MARITAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS	-	-	-	-	-	61
2.7	MARITAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS (PACKAGE)	-					66
2.8	TYPES OF MARITAL CONFLICT	-	-	-	-	-	75
2.9	CAUSES OF MARITAL CONFLICTS	-	-	-	-	-	77
2.10	GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING	-	-	-	-	-	86
2.11	EFFECTS OF CONFLICTS	-	-	-	-	-	91
2.12	THE NEED FOR MARITAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOL						
	COUNSELLING IMPLICATION	-	-	-	-	-	116
2.13	EMPIRICAL STUDIES	-	-	-	-	-	119
2.14	SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	-					125

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS AND PROCEDURE**

3.1	METHODS AND PROCEDURE	-	-	-	-	-	129
3.2	THE RESEARCH DESIGN	-	-	-	-	-	129

3.3	AREA OF STUDY	-	-	-	-	-	-	132
3.4	THE POPULATION	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
3.5	SAMPLE	-	-	-	-	-	-	137
3.6	SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	-	-	-	-	-	-	142
3.7	INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ADMINISTRATON-							143
3.8	METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION-	-	-	-	-	-	-	147
3.9	DATA ANALYSIS	-	-	-	-	-	-	151
3.10	PILOT STUDY REPORT-	-	-	-	-	-	-	152

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

4.1	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	-	-	-	-	-	-	158
4.2	DATA PRESENTATION	-	-	-	-	-	-	158
4.3	ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY	-	-	-	-	-	-	162
4.4	TEST OF HYPOTHESES	-	-	-	-	-	-	178

#### **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

5.1	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	-	-	-	-	-	-	198
5.2	SUMMARY OF RESULTS	-	-	-	-	-	-	198
5.3	RESEARCH FINDINGS	-	-	-	-	-	-	200
5.4	RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	206
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS	-	-	-	-	-	-	208

5.6	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	212
5.7	CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE	-	-	-	-	-	-	213
5.8	CONCLUSION	-	-	-	-	-	-	215
	REFERENCES	-	-	-	-	-	-	217
	APPENDICES	-	-	-	-	-	-	233

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Profile of the Couples and Population	-	-	136
Table 2	Distribution of Sample Members by Local Government Area who were Administered Questionnaire	-	-	139
Table 3	Distribution of Sample Members by Local Government Area who were Administered Intervention Study Questionnaire.	-	-	141
Table 4	Treatment Procedure	-	-	150
Table 5	Distribution of Respondent by Age, Marital Status and Gender	-	-	159
Table 6	Distribution of Respondent by Highest Academic Qualification	-	-	161
Table 7	Frequency Distribution of how Literate Men and Women Conceptualise Marriage in Relation to Marital Adjustment	-	-	163
Table 8	Frequency Distribution Statistics of Respondents Ratings on the Effect of Type of Marriage Contract on Marriage Stability may be Positive or Negative	-	-	166
Table 9	Frequency Distribution Statistic for the Attitude of Extended and Literate Family Members Regarding the Causes of Conflict.	-	-	169

Table 10	Frequency Distribution for Married Couple's views on the Causes of Marital Conflict	-	-	-	-	-	171
Table 11	Frequency Distribution Statistics for Age of Marriage as a Factor for Marital Conflict	-	-	-	-	-	174
Table 12	Frequency Distribution Statistics of Respondents On How Educational Attainment Affect Marital Relationship	-	-	-	-	-	176
Table 13	t-test Analysis of Marital Adjustment Perception by Gender	-	-	-	-	-	179
Table 14	Descriptive Statistics on Attitude to Marital Problems Scale by type of Marriage Contract.	-	-	-	-	-	182
Table 15	One – way ANOVA table for Attitude of Couples to Marital Problems based on the Couples type of Marriage Contract	-	-	-	-	-	184
Table 16	t-test Analysis table on how Couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict.	-	-	-	-	-	186
Table 17	One-way ANOVE Analysis of Age at Marriage as a Factor of Marital Conflict	-	-	-	-	-	188
Table 18	Descriptive Statistics of Age of Marriage as a Factor of Marital Conflict-	-	-	-	-	-	190
Table 19	One-way ANOVA on Level of Marital Conflict Management Based on Educational Attainment.	-	-	-	-	-	192

Table 20	Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge Gained from Intervention - - - - -	194
Table 21	t- test Analysis for Control and Experimental group on Impact of Marital Counselling to Solving Marital Crisis. - - - - -	196

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Fig 1	Marital Conflict Management Skills Package Atube (2006)	
	MCMS	- - - - - 67
Fig 2	System Approach to Conflict Management in Marriage	108

## ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to find out the acquisition of management skills and how this stabilises a marriage relationship in term of conflict in the home. The study was also aimed at discovering the effect of treatment on couples who attended a management skill programme and those who do not. A total of two thousand couples were selected by purposive sampling technique from ten churches in the Northern Cross River State. These couples were found to have some deficiency in management skill and so conflict were often times mismanaged. The couples for experimental study were put into two groups. The experimental and control. The experimental received treatment while the control did not. The experimental group programme was packaged into four weeks interaction sessions, each lasting for one hour. Pre-test post-test using couples checklist were collected from the two groups.

The two research designs of the study included the survey and quasi-experimental pre-test post-test. The principles of using two designs were employed to adequately maximize the collection of data. Analysis of the research questions was done using statistical package for social science (SPSS), means and standard deviations while the hypotheses were tested using both t-test for independent samples and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The discrimination in the use of these statistical tools was informed by the need to achieve enough sensitivities in these tests.



Specific findings of the study showed that couples required management skills to achieve cordiality in a marriage relationship. The favourable and unfavourable nature of conflict in marriage by gender, family size, family location, family structure and educational status had some determined influence on the direction of marital success of literate couples in Northern Cross River State. The findings of the study also showed that there were no significant differences in the expectations about marriage by male and female couples.

The implication of the findings is that couples' level of education in a way assists in effective handling of marital conflict.

In line with contending, pre-marital counselling was perceived in the study to be the most important predictor for assisting couples in handling marital conflicts. The study recommends the need for family life education as a general course of study that would improve on successful marriage.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The institution of marriage is as old as the creation of man. It is the coming together of two persons in love with consent of parents, guardians and witnesses for the purpose of procreation and companionship. In the context of this work, it is the heterosexual relationship of consenting adults who maintain some form of socially approved sexual relationship, sharing a common residence, engaging in economic co-operation and procreation. Marriage is expected to be an affair of intimacy and compromise, where spouses complement each other. It is also expected to be “for better and for worse” but the current trend in the marriage dyad departs from these traditional assertions, as the marital union is today a mere association where rancour, conflict, savage mutual attacks are endemic (Burk, 2000; Dadi, 2004). Today the couples tend to dwell together only when things are rosy and prefer to leave or separate when misunderstandings occur or when a conflictual situation arises. Despite the threats of the disintegration in marriages, there are still model marriages whose dispositions give hope for badly managed ones. Conflict is said to be good, especially when the tension so generated leads to change which may be thought aggressive, yet ultimately ends in convincingly peaceful resolution. Thus, though conflict is disruptive, it helps to create awareness among different

people, groups and society with respect to the existence of boundaries of common interest. Any attempt by any group to step beyond the bounds generates conflict, which may be capable of disrupting the entire system. Conflict here is seen as being both positive and negative. Essuman (1988) maintains that it is positive when the persons involved are agitating for positive changes in their relationship, and it is negative when conflict is due to their own selfish aims. Often times, this assessment of marriage occur unknown to the couples themselves courtesy of the society and the people therein. The challenges accruing from these conflicts are expected to assist couples move forward in their experience as companions. Conflict creates cohesion and strengthens group solidarity; it binds people with common interests together and restores integrative care. Despite the integrative role conflict is expected to play, it leads too frequently to the break up of marriages these days.

Scholars have suggested several possible causes of this unhealthy situation. Obe (1997), Oyedepo (2001) Awok, (2003) maintain that the seeming unresolvable conflict in marriages is caused by the age at marriage. They state further that when couples are not mature physically, emotionally and intellectually to handle marital conflicts with the patience, perseverance and understanding they deserve, conflicts and consequent break ups become imminent. Modu (1996) strengthens this position with his observation that when

couples are young they tend to sleep over quarrels that would have been treated immediately to avoid carrying over grudges that may cause tension between them.

Childlessness among couples is also often associated with marital conflict. Ikwen (1997), Otuji (2000), Genda (2002), for example, believe that the traditional aim of contracting marriage, especially in most African societies (including Nigeria), is procreation. When this is not possible within a short period, conflicts resulting from sudden outbursts become the order of the day, making marriage an unhappy union. For these scholars therefore, barrenness, infertility or childlessness is the cause of marital conflict.

Another conception, especially by Stone (1980), Essuman (1988), Iwuana (1991) Unachukwu (1991) is interference from couples' relatives. It is the contention of these scholars that when couples are not allowed to take decisions that concern them and their immediate families, frustration and alienation from the family create cracks that ultimately destroy the marital bond. This school of thought further argues that in-laws are almost always interested in what is happening in the marriage dyad of their children to the extent that they even attempt taking decisions for them. The male's parents are usually more prone to this sort of behaviour, and when the female becomes frustrated and reacts to the situation, she would be branded and issued threats ranging from asking the male to marry another

wife to outright divorce of the troublesome or heady wife. When this happens, conflict in the union becomes the order of the day.

Again, sometimes the couples themselves play a major role in creating conflictual situations in marriage. Scholars like Murdock (1949) and Giddens (2000) hold that the person who takes decisions or dominates the decision making process in marriage is capable of creating conflict in the union. This, they believe, is prevalent among literate couples, who both contribute substantially to the family income and would want to take part equally in decision-making in the family. When the man takes up this role, as it is common in most societies, the wife rebels thus creating a situation of conflict and imminent break or separation.

The instability of the family that results from the above conflict situations often threatens the stability of the wider society. This is because when parents are not psychologically balanced, children from such emotionally malnourished homes could derail in their thoughts. Obe (1997), for instance, stresses that social problems such as drug abuse/addiction, school drop out, stealing, prostitution, etc., are effects of conflict in marriage. Education on the ills of unscrupulous behaviour serves as a tool to safeguard against being victims of these predicaments. The individual is also affected as the maladjusted personalities in the society, the malfunction individuals in schools that have become manifest in cult activities, examination

malpractice and other vices in schools as the fallout from marital conflicts.

Churches and mosques have organised several marriage seminars for married and unmarried people to create effective marital relationship and harmony, yet the problem has remained. Experience has shown that separation, stealing, divorce, drug abuse, and uncompromising attitudes of pupils or students stem from marriage instability. Ugabi (2004) contends that marriages nowadays are no longer as successful as was the case two decades ago. Both men and women feel that marriage is now one of those public displays of wealth and therefore propagate marriage of convenience. By and large counselling strategies properly put in place would salvage this menace to the lowest minimum.

Enoh (2005) observed that the more the churches, scholars and other specialised agencies try to reduce the cankerworm in the society, the higher the magnitude of misunderstanding among spouses, because indiscipline has a root from marital instability. Agim (1997) emphasises that if parents could insist on having their children go through a thorough screening of the proposed bride's/groom's family and conduct before contracting marriage, the institution could once again regain its lost glory. Some cultural tenets of marriage are grossly ignored because of civilisation. The traditional counselling methods that were used have been abandoned. The

continuous instability, separation and break down of homes do not augur well for the development of the children and the society. The immediate environment of every child is the home in which the father and mother act as models, whether positive or negative. The children have to necessarily take after their parents who are often their first teachers (Undiyaundeye 2002, Nwobi 1995). Unhappy and incongruent homes produce a great number of unscrupulous and socially deviant children because the people in it are deviant. A visit to orphanages and children in divorced homes would testify to this assertion (Standford, 2002).

It becomes plausible to assert that whatever negative behaviour exhibited by a child is, possibly, a reflection of the parents' behaviour, hence the saying, "like father like son." The frequency of break-ups among couples knows no bounds among both Christians and Moslems in Nigeria. These are the causes of maladjusted personalities among children in our society.

Another factor is the influence of peers or clique or association with others, which has gone a long way in determining the behavioural transformation among spouses in their families. Often, the friends of the couples discuss family problems and the advice often offered could be the type that can injure the marriage union. Couples often take seriously comments made by friends without considering the possible effects these might have on the union.

Carew (1995) and Obe (1997) have established that spouses' discussions with cliques, especially on family problems, have serious negative effects on marriage more than any single variable. This is often because members of cliques' claim to have experience and knowledge on marital issues, irrespective of the fact that each marriage union is markedly different from the other.

Marital conflict breeds unhealthy relationship in the couples themselves, the children and dependants. For revitalisation of convivial living, counselling must come into play. Some tips on couples interaction must be introduced as a combing device for couples in conflict. The couples require some skills to aid them in the management of crisis point at any likely breaking point caused by pressure generated by conflict as they cohabit.

The environment of the neighbourhood of couples also creates problems for the family. For instance, Park, Burgess and Mackenzie (1936) hold that the environment has serious implications for whatever activities that go on in it, including marriage. According to their typology of urban expansion, residence in any of the locations like the "Central Business District" (CBD), the sub-urban, etc. have implications for the marriage dyad as different neighbourhoods have different interaction patterns for their inhabitants. It is therefore the contention that when this happens, it is only the counselling and



managerial skills that can save the day and help the couples cope with this problem.

As a panacea for reducing these situations, several scholars have recommended counselling therapies. Counselling therapy is a structured process, which focuses on the psychological treatment approach in which the therapist collaborates with clients to use specific techniques to improve their emotional well being and overall functioning of the marriage situation. It is the contention here that conflict management skills, which aligns seriously with this therapy, is capable of resolving most marital conflict situations. This is because if this is not done, the situation degenerates to some health problems such as emotional disturbances, besides the social strand of affecting the social cohesion of family members and society.

Encompassed with these predicaments, the researcher is inspired and motivated to seek the actual triggering factors and possible solutions, which will at least, reduce conflict in marriage. The discovery of these conflicts and their intelligible management become necessary in our homes as they bring about maturity and respect that would make marriages relatively stable. This is borne out of the fact that this situation has consequences for not only the individual or his family but on the entire society. The contention here is that the possession of appropriate management skills for couples who have these problems is necessary at this point. This is in the

hope that the effects shall provide a difference for couples who were not exposed to them in order to bring about cordiality in their homes, thus creating peaceful co-existence in the society.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The background of some couples in marriage today has a serious negative impact on their family and society at large. They are alone in the midst of others dependent on their marital disposition, which is sickly due to lack of adjustment to marital vows. Marital distress, conflict, family uncertainty among couples could threaten societal values, an embarrassment to themselves, children and their community where they co-habit and this pose a negative influence. Eniba (1999) observed that the element responsible could be improper communication. Some couples lack the way without to express their feelings which causes breakdown in communication leading to misunderstanding of one another.

Marriage relationships are said to have become generally strained in recent past, especially among literate couples, as indicated by scholars like Obe, (1997) and Carew (1997). Efforts have, however, been made by scholars, churches, professional organisations, etc. to curb this menace. Yet, the incidence of marital conflict and disharmony appears endemic as the stabilising of personality role of marriage and the family wanes at alarming rates. Scholars, teachers, churches, etc. are at a loss on the options

available for identifying the causes of this situation in their attempt to proffer solutions. Otuji, 2000 and Ode 2001 feel that marriages, especially among the literate class, have been under serious threat of disintegration. This situation is said to be caused partly by age at marriage, childlessness or barrenness and extended family interference. This situation has serious implications for the stability of the family with consequences on the children's personality, growth and adjustments.

Marital instability affects the society, going by the rate of divorce and the direct impact on the children, who, in most cases, grow to be social misfits and a nuisance. This situation appears to be nation-wide, as studies by Agim (1997) Obe (1997) and Carew (1995) of couples in Begiaka area of Cross River State, in Iga Okpaya districts of Benue state and University of Maduguri and of Borno State respectively confirm. These studies conclude that educated couples, despite their education, still have discrepancies in their views on issues that are conflict-prone. The effects (social, economic, political, personal and cultural) of this situation have remained worrisome to scholars and planners as well (Landis 1977, Nwobi, 1995 and Ume 2000). The end result of any marital instability is a breakdown of the union or divorce, home desertion, juvenile delinquency, truancy, school drop outs, lukewarm attitude to study, indiscipline, etc (Igbo 1997, Nwobi 1997, Igbo 2000,).

Problems that could have been handled succinctly and co-operatively by couples are often allowed to degenerate to crisis levels, which, in turn, result in emotional dislocation that often leads to marital instability. This situation generates fear and impedes proper adjustments among couples (Philips, 1971; Manicini 1971 and Undie 1997).

This study is therefore hinged on the incessant occurrence of marital conflict among the literate couples in Northern Cross River State. The couples under study are by virtue of their education expected to detect conflict signals and hence employ conflicts managing tactics to effectively control the situation without disrupting the marital dyad and cohesion. The existence of this phenomenon (marital conflict) amongst the literate class points to poor marital conflict management skills.

Ogunsanya (2000) provides a management skill for sexual adjustment in marriage, he fails to emphasise a general overview on other conflict-prone situation in marriage such as finance, warmth, sensitivity to each other's problems and effective communication, probably because the study interest was on sexual adjustment. Following from above therefore, this study sets out to find out the causes of marital conflicts, exploring how the possession conflict management skills helps the couples in adjusting in the face of these conflict. The study also attempted an explanation of how conflict

management skills, can help in bringing about harmony for marital relationship amongst literate couples in Cross River North.

### **1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this research work is geared at achieving the following:

1. to discover the level of marital conflict management skills deficiency amongst literate couples.
2. to explore the effect of conflict management deficiency on age at marriage and marital conflict management.
3. to suggest remedies to resolve the causes of conflict situations in marital interaction and expectation.
4. to elaborate on the consequences of conflicts on the individual, family, marriage institution and the society at large.
5. to suggest skills that may assist in curbing couples defective interpersonal relationship.
6. to find out the effects of conflict management skills on marital stability in the study area.
7. to ascertain the extent to which counselling intervention is desired by married couples in the study area.
8. to find out the influence of family members on the growth of the marriage institution.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the common causes of marital conflicts amongst the literate couples in the study area?
2. What expectations and misconceptions do literate couples have of marriage?
3. What counselling needs are required to help literate couples perceive remote causes of management skills deficiency and deal with the problems?
4. What roles do family members play to influence cordiality and strengthen management skill accusation in couples?
5. What relationship does age at marriage have with occurrence of conflicts in marriage?
6. What effect does knowledge of management skills has on marital stability?

#### **1.5 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The following hypotheses were postulated and tested in this study.

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of marital adjustment by literate couples irrespective of gender.

2. There is no significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital problems
3. There is no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict
4. There is no significant difference between couples that married early and those that married late on subjects that can spark marital conflicts.
5. There is no significant difference in the ways couples handle marital conflicts based on their level of educational attainment and irrespective of management skill acquisition.
6. There is no significant difference in the level of marital conflict management between couples who attended management skills programme and those who did not.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section reviews and discusses some theories that are related to, and form the framework for this study. Several theories abound in psychological discourses of this nature. Psychologists like Carthoresen, Hostord, Michael Lee Meyerson and Whelp (1969), Okobiah and Okorodudu (1997) hold that most human behaviours are learned (though they can be unlearned), changed or modified and sustained if such behaviours are reinforced either positively or negatively as the case may be.

The contention here is that though behaviours are learned, they can be modified and sustained over time, especially in the face of reinforcement; the feelings and attitudes of the people concerned can be changed in order to be consistent with the most current ones.

The following two theories will be used:

1. Eclectic theory
2. Conflict theory

#### **A. ECLECTIC THEORY**

Frederick Thorne (1950), this theorist believed that people are biological, psychological and social beings. The distresses they experience are a by-product of these interlocking factors. The role of the counsellor or therapist is to assist the person seeking to alleviate his or her distress through intervention. All interventions are preceded by some assessment of the problem. It was in fact the opposite of these, since it utilises theoretical unifying principles from various interrelated schools, and integrates pertinent facts from all sources.

He used this theory to treat and or advise couples with emotional problems of aversions towards one another, and which were almost breaking their marriages. He maintained that the counsellor must always listen attentively to the clients, who should most of the time be allowed to solve their problems for themselves.

Thorne (1952) states that this theory was a process of education and treatment as a conceptualised training of the individual



designed to replace emotional–compulsive behaviour with deliberate, rational, adaptive behaviour based on the highest utilisation of intellectual resources. For Thorne (1952) therefore, eclectic theory of counselling is designed to preserve the client's mental health by assisting him to prevent or modify causal factors that produced maladjustment or marital disorder in the client. This is crucial in the management of marital conflict situation.

Here, there is the diagnosis of the causes and symptoms of the client's problem and it is often a client-centred approach in helping the client resolve his problem non-directive way. Thorne (1950) went on to suggest five techniques that can be used in solving problems:

1. Diagnosing the cause of clients' personality maladjustment
2. Making plans to modify or prevent the casual factors of the client's problem.
3. Securing proper conditions and environment for effective learning for client.
4. Developing the client's intellectual resources for practising the newly acquired mode of adjustment.
5. Providing guidelines for the client on how to properly handle problems related to adjustment.

Finally, Okobiah and Okorodudu (1997) expantiate that the eclectic theory attempts the systematisation of counselling through

the application of procedures, techniques and concepts of various theories of counselling.

The word “eclectic” symbolises selecting, reconciling and choosing an appropriate system or doctrines. This implies that using a single theory to deal with issues relating to marital problem may be limited in orientation, hence couples face trivial interpersonal problems as they cohabit. Sometimes the clients may require a learning process where the counsellor may utilise a variety of learning principles to assist the individual acquire desirable behaviours that can solve his or her undesirable behaviours towards others. To affirm this assertion, Shertzer and Stone (1980), Essuman (1988) Iwuana (1991) and Unachukwu (1991) contend that most human behaviours could be learned and unlearned. This creates a possibility for a modification of behaviours as desired. Since every individual has the propensity to evaluate and modify his or her behaviour, the counsellor uses this opportunity to define the client’s problem, formulate counselling goals and apply the required treatment to achieve cordiality, particularly in distressed or troubled couples. In the present study, modelling and reinforcement fit in especially with the views of Bandura (1969) when he studied children who had phobia for dogs. To remove this negative nature, the films of other children fondling with dogs fearlessly were introduced. In line with this approach, Esere (2000) suggests that couples who are well

behaved could be used as models for problem couples to imitate and take clues from in their interactions with each other. Oni (2001) feels that anytime a desired behaviour is observed the counsellor could also follow a positive reinforcement as a follow up. The counsellor should always advise clients to imitate acceptable behaviour exhibited by others in films, media talks, newspaper presentations, or real life situations. Eclectics demand a global evaluation of the client with regard to his past, present and future possibilities. The counsellor's aim is to re-educate, treat and conceptualise training of the individual designed to replace his/her emotional and maladaptive behaviour. This is done with the intention to preserve a client's mental health, which produced mental disorder in the client.

The relevance of Frederick Thorne's work to the present study is the need for marriage counsellors to diagnose the cognitive abilities of the couples through diverse techniques towards resolving marital problems. Hence, people's interactions require divergent methods to handle their behavioural problems. The advantage here is that if one method fails, it could be interchanged with another, since individuals are not static in their ways of life. When different methods are sought for, it gives both the client and counsellor a better clue of dealing with the particular problem under consideration.

**B. CONFLICT THEORY:**

Karl Marx (1959), one of the early proponents of conflict theory, contends that conflict exposes the grievance between individuals or groups whose interest towards the object of contention is antithetical. The so-called higher things in life (example those with power to control the polity) have as their foundation, the economic facts of life. The structure of ownership and control of production and distribution of goods and services in the society determines this. Social change from the Marxian perspective is seen as the outcome of class struggle motivated by economic interest. The fact remains that conflict theory never divorces itself sufficiently from its structural-functionalist but turned on its head than a truly critical theory of the society. To contend with this, Dahrendorf (1959) believes that every society and the people or individuals that exist therein are subject to processes of change. He argues that conflict in the home and society at large contributes and provides enablement for stability. Dahrendorf, like other disciples of this theory, emphasises the role of power in maintaining order in society. He adds to it consensus theory, which examines value integration in the society, and recognises that society could not exist without both conflict and consensus which are prerequisites for each other. Conflict can only be resolved unless there is some consensus. For example, a house wife who had been badly hurt by her husband can not give up anger

if there is no prior consensus or integration to serve as a basis for reconciliation. So where functionalists focus on the coercion created by shared society values, conflict theorists emphasise the role of power in maintaining order in society. Conflict in interest leads to revolutionary change, which alters the social order of the society. Conflict serves to solidify a loosely structured group. In a society or family relationship that seems to be disintegrating, conflict with one another may strengthen and restore the integrative core. Conflicts serve a communication function in a relationship, particularly positions and boundaries between couples, to become clarified. These allow the parties to get a better idea of their relative strength and may well increase the possibility of rapprochement or peaceful accommodation. (Jaworski, 1991 and Ritzer 1996).

Later, Seigert, John and Stamp, Glen (1994) were to observe that the basic insight of this theory is that human beings are sociable but conflict prone-animals. Why conflict at all? It is because violent coercion is always a potential resource. This theory thus looks at the interpersonal relationship between two people and conflict management, and takes a critical look at the development and destruction of a relationship. It studies the relationship and looks at the different stages a relationship goes through. It takes a further look at what causes a relationship to go through these changes and the consequences the changes might have on the outcome of a

relationship. These theorists observe that fight between couples serve to clarify the relationship in either a positive or negative way. Couples might also emerge from the fight with an awareness of interdependence. This new awareness can serve to draw a couple closer together having worked through their first big fight (FBF). The fight might also introduce thematic conflict that is a new dimension of conflict or a final sorting out of the conflict depending on the values of the couples involved.

The Seigert, Thorne, Stanmp and Glen conflict theories shall help the present study in overseeing what transpires between couples in terms of relationship, interaction and misunderstanding amongst them, and proffer ways of resolving unclear issues. Our emphasis here is on clarifying issues of doubt in couple's day to day interaction.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Marital conflicts concern many people: from the religious to community leaders, from the social welfare workers to counsellors. This research work is geared towards deliberation of literate couples who find it difficult to manage seemingly solvable marital conflicts. This study has potential to be of immense value to those who work in the social welfare office of local, state or federal Government. It will provide this category of persons (Social welfare officers) insight on trouble-prone areas of marital conflict in homes of literate members of

the community, and help identify the right counselling tool with which to positively address these problems.

The findings of this work would also be of great assistance to both pre- and post-marital counsellor in conflict resolution and management. It is also hoped that the findings would be used as tools by marriage and family counsellors in assisting married spouses in their area of weakness and strength. It is therefore envisaged that counsellors will find the outcome of this work essential, for a healthy family is a prelude to a healthy and peaceful nation.

Educational planners and designers can also benefit from this study by the insight they will gain on the attitudes, signs and ways of addressing marital conflicts. Information obtained can impact on curriculum development and upgrade teaching and learning, especially since the subjects in this study are literate persons. As such, educational planners in post-primary schools and other institutions of higher learning will be awakened to their responsibility based on the revelations likely to be made by the study.

Married persons and those intending to marry would find the findings useful, as they can mirror their marriages and intentions from the findings of this study. One other potential beneficiary is the researcher in the discipline who, hopefully, will be motivated and challenged to develop further interest in the study of marital and family therapy.

Since marriage and home is the beginning of life, many people from other walks of life will find the study useful and beneficial to them as it is intended to fill the gaps existing between couples, family members, in-laws and the society at large. The study shall proffer solutions to couples' problems in various ways, especially in the following specific aspects:

- provide skills necessary to take their proper place in the society and to seek further knowledge on how to deal with marital crises.
- to equip couples with emotional therapy to take care of the discrepancies in their marriage relationship.
- to assist those who deal with marriage problems at different levels in curbing the abnormalities in their behaviours for a threat-free marital environment.
- to give prospective couples positive hope for getting along well as a family.
- to sharpen the couples' aura for each other as they stick together for life.

## **1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was confined to literate couples who have been married for five years to twenty-five years in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State. Furthermore, the study concerned itself with only couples that can read and write. The effect of the couple's management skills, cognitive abilities, qualification, experience, and



marriage practice among spouses was investigated. However, a good number of couples in the satellite villages were sampled randomly. Even though there are dimensions of conflicts in families such as ethnic/religious conflict, master/servant conflicts, parent/children conflicts, industrial conflicts (between employers and employees), the focus of this study is purely the conflict that exists between a husband and a wife as they interact.

The researcher was limited to providing management skills for couples. The reason being that others have tried to look at money management techniques in the home, joint account issue, will for children, wife's salary and so on but skills for managing conflict in the home has been ignored.

## **1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of clarification and simplicity, certain terms in this work have been redefined in the context of the study.

1. **Marriage:** A union of man and woman as husband and wife after due consultation with parents and performance of the obligatory rights.
2. **Marital breakdown:** The separation of husband and wife due to disagreement, which may be resolved or lead to divorce.
3. **Marital conflict:** A strain in marriage interaction between a husband and a wife who are living together.

4. **Marital counselling:** The total process through which couples who have problems are assisted and through such assistance are capable of resolving their problems.
5. **Couples:** Husband and wife who are bound together.
6. **“For better for worse”:** come what may” rich or poor, ill health or healthy, the couples must stick together as husband and wife.
7. **Educe:** A way of bringing out a hidden fact about a marriage.
8. **Divorce:** A final option out in a marriage by husband and wife.
9. **Effects:** A reaction in response to proposal on marriage rules as applicable in a marriage interaction.
10. **Ogojians:** people who are from Ogoja area of Cross River State. They could also be addressed as people from the Northern Senatorial District.
11. **Literate Couples:** Those who are enlightened and can help others e more focused and directional in their approaches to life.
12. **Marital conflict management skills:** A method used to help couples adjust to each other in conflict to achieve cordiality, e.g. exhibition of good communication skills/habit, display of tenderliness, sensitivity to emotional requirements by couple, openness in interaction.
13. **Marital stability:** The condition of marital harmony amongst couples irrespective of occasional and inevitable disagreements that may arise in the course of human interaction.

14. **Marital Problem:** A misunderstanding about issues that affect a couple's relationship.

15. **Traditional Marriage:** A marriage rite performed as the custom of a people signifies.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In order to locate the present research within the existing frame of knowledge and direct its focus, it is necessary to review the literature related to the issues being researched upon. The review is done under the following headings: the concept of marriage, in-laws' roles in marriage, the traditional concept of marriage, the Christian concept of marriage, the motivation for marriage, the concept of conflicts, types of conflicts, the causes of marital conflicts, the role of third parties in marital conflicts, the effect of conflicts on the couple, siblings and society, the counselling implication of marital conflict, constraints to effective family counselling in Nigeria and the need for marital counselling in schools, summary of the review and its bearing on the current study.

#### **2.2 CONFLICTS AND MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP**

Conflicts in human relationships and socialisation among marriages have often resulted in distress, depression and even in diseases like sexually transmitted diseases, HIV or AIDS and in divorce and other forms of crises. How best can counselling methods help in resolving such issues? Is it possible for those involved in sour

experiences as they interact to be given effective and resolving counselling means to assist themselves?

From the beginning of creation, people have always had interest in each other, in forms of human socialisation such as friends, lovers, acquaintances and even as husbands and wives. The end results of such associations could be marriages, friendships, and groups of like minds, societies and nations who associate as a noble folk. This practice could be as Mailumo (1998) succinctly puts:

1. Communities and organisations actually advertise for relationship
2. Nations offer citizenship to their members.
3. A man goes on his knees to propose to a woman for marriage and promise her heaven and earth and happy living thereafter.
4. People in different sweet human relationships pledge love. The Christian religion teaches that one must love even one's enemies to deserve the kingdom of God.

A manifestation of the value of association is in organisations' payment of benefits to dismissed staff except for extreme situations where victims forfeit everything. In the same vein, divorce attracts payment as part of disengagement benefits when a relationship turns sour. People suffer anger and pain when their cognitive ability fails in handling human relationship. There is no evidence to show that people will stop the search for each other either at individual or group level even as existing relationships are threatened. Mailumo (1998) explains that there is a magnetic force revolving round men and

women, which if poorly managed, as regards setting of poor moral standards or poor exchange of values of their performance and behavioural approach, could remain a source of problems in human relationship. Most people have fallen victims of unacceptable circumstances. Examples are, people falling from high offices due to poor moral standards, issues of sexual harassment and the complex damaging effects of divorce on several segments of society are also common knowledge in this regard. Most of such processes and products of defective human relationship and socialisation have given birth to cognitive methods in marital conflicts and management. How best these methods can be employed and achieved a desirable result for healthy psychological marital cohabitation?

### **2.3 THE CONCEPT OF A LITERATE PERSON**

The term “literate person” connotes one who can read and write. It can also be used interchangeably with “educated person” (Aniashie, 1999). The meaning given to the term “educated person” may vary from place to place. Ahamibe (1979) in Okam (2002) maintains that an educated person is anyone who has impressed us with his knowledge and understanding of the facts and situations of this world, that is, the type acquired from books, schools and colleges. It is particularly emphasised when such a person is able to see the connection between what he has learned and other things; that is, putting what he has learned in a coherent pattern of life.

According to him, the knowledge an educated man acquires should be used when desired. The implication here is that an educated person is expected to exhibit some level of commendable behaviour or conduct which society arbitrarily sets up. The emphasis, in his view, is therefore not on such a person being “learned”. Despite the views above on the important role of education at making society a better place by providing usable intellectual materials, marital problems remain intractable in society. It is in this vein that Iheapwam (2003) posits that education is synonymous with morality and good behaviour in the person; hence, it should be able to raise the person above mundane perceptions and articulations.

Previous studies by psychoanalysts such as ENRICH Couples programme have the assumption that marriage events are governed by laws and determined by powerful instinctual forces, notably sex and aggression, (Nwadinigwe, 1997 & Ugabi, 2005). Some others contracted on reality therapy whose view is that marriage can achieve success when the couples live in a manner which enable them to fulfil their basic needs (Atsu, 1997). A literate person necessarily requires a high level of marital cordiality, hence his acquired education should enhance marriage stability.

## **2.4 THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

The terms “marriage” and “family”, though difficult to separate, are not exactly the same. Nwoye (1992) posits that it is necessary to

dichotomise the two words for the purpose of simplicity and understanding. Martison (1960) argues that there could be confusion in literature among the authorities due to the snail-shell relationship which exists between marriage and family. He further contends that the arrival of a child in a marriage makes the marriage and family two social systems operating under the roof at the same time as a subsystem of marriage and marriage as a subsystem of family.

Though the two terms (concepts) seem inseparable and are often used interchangeably, they possess features that mark them out as different. This is because the features of marriage as a heterosexual union of consenting adults cannot be said to be the same with family, which is basically a social grouping that has people who are either consequently and conjugally related or both ways related.

Oyedepo (1996) contends that the concept of marriage was instituted in the Garden of Eden by God. Making reference to the Holy Book, the Bible, she quotes from Genesis 2:8 as follows, "And Lord God planted a garden in the eastward of Eden and there He (God) puts a man and a woman He had formed". Following the Biblical injunction, the concept of marriage started from the beginning of man. However, the theory of evolution antagonises this argument.

Roels (1989) concedes that God arranges from the very beginning the institution of marriage. That is, one man and one



woman are arranged to come together in faith and love. Notwithstanding, the forms of marriage in the contemporary world seem to vary from the marriage between Adam and Eve, as the Bible and its adherents maintain.

David (1982) asserts that marriage is a legal union between a physically mature man and a physically mature woman within a cultural setting and within the prescribed norms of such a society. The concepts of marriage and family vary from culture to culture and society to society. However, it may be contended that the union of a man and a woman all over the globe involves sex and procreation.

Hornby (1981) defines the term “marriage” as a legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. This, which represents the English definition of marriage, has been mirrored outside culture and custom, hence the definition is purely a linguistic one devoid of ethical connotations. The concept of marriage and family attracts many experts from all walks of life. Festy (1982) views marriage as a cohabitational union of man and woman. It appears he views marriage as a social system, which operates under one roof. In the same vein, Undiyaundeye (2002) sees marriage as a statutory expectation of a young man and woman who are supposed to pledge their love for each other to live as husband and wife under marriage ordinance.

Marriage is something deeper than the mere union of a man and a woman under the same roof. Nwoye (1991) perceives marriage as a sacred and a permanent contract which is assumed to be enacted when two people decide on their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of vocation of love and sharing for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare as persons in their journey together through life. Nwoye (1991) has identified permanence and sanctity in the institution of marriage. In the utopian world, the term "Marriage" hinges as reflected in the term, on love, "For better, for worse", a ritual type of phrase on the altar among the couples. None of the people involved envisages conflicts and dissatisfaction at the beginning. The words "permanent" and "love" lure the Christians, Muslims and cultural settings to guarantee the procreation and sustenance of family within the institution of marriage.

The concept of marriage institution has been viewed by Beattie (1964) as something deeper and more concrete than a mere legal sexual union between a man and a woman. In this view, the offspring within the marriage circle are actually forming a subsystem within the marriage, hence the concept of family.

Gomwalk (1987) contends that in a marriage contract, a certificate is issued to the man and woman who are involved in this contract of marriage union. Gomwalk (1987) must be referring to the

Church and Court marriages alone, ignoring the traditional customary marriage where certificates are not issued before the contract is made between the spouses among the elders and families of the spouses.

In the African context, marriage is one of the most important occasions in one's life. The other occasions are one's birthday and one's day of demise. Of course, a new-born baby does not know what is happening nor is the dead person aware of anything. The most exciting day in African context is the very day one marries. Marriage, therefore, is not a private affair. It involves the families, the kith and kin of the intending couples, including the community at large. Onyejaku (1987) points out that marriage is so exciting that the road cannot be all roses just as a coin has two phases. In the garden of love, as one adage describes the situation of the newly married couples, the other side of the coin is not envisaged.

Moss and Gingles (1965) posit that the marriage of young people may not be strictly accepted as marriage; rather it could be co-habiting since certain rites and or ceremonies that legitimise marriage are absent. This is to say that not all unions are marriages. In the study area, such "marriages" are not uncommon and are often caused by pregnancy as young people get themselves involved in love relationships. This situation has serious implications for the adolescent parents whose education is often truncated, especially the

girl who would have to remain at home to give birth and take care of the child. Some marriages are therefore not properly constituted and may not be considered marriage in its strictest sense. Some marriages procreate while others do not; hence while some unions end up only as marriages, others become families (Sprey, 1972).

Sprey (1972:151) also contends that "Marriage, after all, continues well beyond one hundred game trials; for it is a relationship; one of the very few in our culture that is supposed to last". Taking marriages as a game of which only a few are meant to last is contrary to the religious and cultural views of marriage in terms of permanency. Marriage is supposed to be in existence till death separates the spouses and not a game of trial or temporary situations, especially in the African and Christian traditions

Guillemo (1983) opines that marriage is a compromising union of man and woman which poses developmental life cycle tasks that require individuals to address issues of intimacy and reciprocity. One may share the idea of compromising. The married people have to compromise as they continue to reciprocate each other in the cohabitation.

Baseden (1966) points out that marriage is a social institution in which a man and woman are bound to stay together as husband and wife under a recognised constitution. This view of marriage may

be vague in most African societies since it is not forever and there is no blue print as regards to the customary marriages in Africa.

However, Denga (1982), advises that there is much need for marital adjustments among the couples in order to maintain stability in marriage and family cycle. Denga's research on marriage stability sees the term "marriage" as a game of discovery which continues till death does the spouses part or breakdown may come due to the inability of the partners to adjust to each other's way of living and prevailing circumstances beyond their control.

Family is seen as a continuation of marriage, which comes as a blessing to the marriage, but not the initial purpose of marriage. The initial purpose of marriage is love-sharing and companionship among the married couples, which motivates people to marry.

## **2.5 IN-LAWS' ROLE IN MARRIAGE**

In-laws in marriage relationship refers to the relatives one acquires through marriage. These in-laws are relatives of either the husband or wife. Those who constitute in-laws in this context are parents and siblings of the couples. In a large group, members of extended family, for example, nieces, nephews, cousins, and grandparents are also regarded as in-laws.

The desire to have a home makes a young man and a young woman to come together as husband and wife. Evans-Pritchard (1973) notes that among the Nvers of the Northern Sudan, a young

man talks of a home with reference to his family of procreation. The moment one leaves home to marry, something happens to the bond that holds parents and child, because a child remains emotionally attached to his or her parents for life. Freud (1949) and Undie (1997) point out that parents often get involved in arranging their children's marriages to help the children overcome this attachment.

The fact that parents are involved in the marriage negotiation and the subsequent innate desire to help their children settle down quickly, lead to intrusion into the privacy of the couple, which could occasionally cause misunderstanding. Shyrack (1968) opines that: although parents' intrusion may cause strife in the home, these in-laws are often unaware that their presence is causing someone pain, some may claim objectivity in their intrusion in the couple's marital life – feeling that it is their legitimate rights to interact with their children Undie (1997). As the in-laws interact with the young couples, problems such as jealousy, bad socio-cultural practices and negative attitudes to infertility and all-female children could emanate or be aggravated.

### **2.5.1 Jealousy**

It is always very rare for a mother in-law and daughter in-law to have a cordial relationship. Umoh (1998) feels that the cause of the problem is accusations and counter-accusations between the two women. The mother in-law often sees her daughter in-law as a rival.

She picks on everything that the daughter in-law does, for instance, good family meals, children's clothing and the wife's dressing apparels are condemned outright as acts of extravagance by the mother in-law. The young wife is accused of increasing the poverty level in the family. If the husband listens to his wife and neglects his parents' wish, the wife is accused of using love potion on their son.

Once the daughter-in-law becomes aware of the negative attitude towards her, she also develops resentment for her in-laws. She sees the mother-in-law as being jealous, authoritative and attempting to take over her husband and the running of her home. The sister-in-laws of marriageable age are more desperate in their attacks since they feel that the sister-in-law is depriving them of their rights. With the consent of their mother, they keep their brothers' wife uncomfortable in her home. This ill feeling often leads to character assassination and calumny which breeds' tension, conflicts and contempt that results in exchanging of abusive language and continual physical assaults. The sour mother-in-law - daughter-in-law relationship has often ended in the break-up of marriages since the man is placed in a precarious position of not knowing whom to support. Parents could do their children well if they show love and affection to those who are married.

### **2.5.2 Infertility**

When a man gets married, the anticipation by family members is having children in the nearest possible time. As the marriage progresses if there is no sign of pregnancy, worries set in for the couples; the period of waiting for pregnancy is a time of anxiety and unsolicited advice and suggestions from relatives and friends. The woman who is unable to become pregnant is the focus of discussion by the in-laws. The in-laws never care to know who is the cause of the barrenness but would simply accuse the woman either of infidelity, teenage abortion or witchcraft. The woman is called names and the man would be asked to look for another wife for he was “marrying a man”. Society appreciates fecundity; anyone who falls short of achieving this aim encounters enormous difficulties in marriage. The problem of barrenness is especially excruciating in polygamous homes. Hannah the wife of Elkana in the Bible suffered most humiliating experience annually at Shiloh (1 Samuel Chapter 1 & 2:1-21). Njoroge (1996), is of the view that a childless woman is not only just tormented by co-wife/wives but also by the extended family members, especially the in-laws.

### **2.5.3 All-Female Children**

This is a related problem to barrenness as it concerns in-laws. This is simply the inability of a wife to give birth to male children. Even literate families still blame lack of male children on the wife. The



female children and their mother are often castigated for their sex. Mother-in-laws create opportunities to nag the daughter in-law and develop disaffection for the children. Daughters are made to understand that they are not liked and are of less value than boys. In extreme cases the husband is put under pressure to keep concubines in a bid to raise male children who would sustain the family name.

The desire to please parents often leads to misunderstanding. The love existing in the couples wanes when negative attributes of the woman are magnified at the expense of virtues.

#### **2.5.4 Socio-Cultural Practices**

Some cultural practices in the society breed problems between the in-laws and the couple. One of such practices is giving of names to children. If a child is given a name without the consent of the parent in-laws, hell is let loose. More daring is the idea of giving out a child into marriage without consulting the in-laws who are the grand parents or uncles of the would-be wife or husband involved.

Gentui (1996) reasons that names play a significant role for the individual and the society. In the Nigerian context and the world over, a woman after marriage is expected to change her father's name and adopt her husband's family name. This change, she maintains, has many implications. One of these is loss of identity. If the woman refuses to oblige to this change, she is seen as uncompromising and

not good enough a wife. Gentui (1996) believes that a woman should be seen in her own capacity as a person, and not in terms of her marital status. When these issues are given much credence by in-laws, they make it difficult for the young couples to live an adjustable life in marriage.

From all that has been mentioned, it is noted that in-laws, most often, see only the negative aspects of their sons or daughter in-laws. It would have been most beneficial to their children if they appreciated the virtues of their in-laws and de-emphasised the little faults since no human being is faultless. In-laws should learn to accommodate new members of their family and give them the opportunity to learn in marriage. Daughter-in-laws should also learn not to listen to gossips in order to live peacefully with their in-laws. It is only when young couples resist the influence of neighbours and friends' tales about in-laws that they can truly appreciate them and have a better judgement of their ideas. If, on the other hand, in-laws appreciate the positive sides of their children's marriage, it would be more beneficial to even the continuity of the family (Obe 1997).

## **2.6 THE TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN SENATORIAL ZONE OF CROSS-RIVER STATE**

Prior to the advent of Islam, Christianity and imperialism on the African continent, Africans had always had their native laws and customs though not written and with variations according to place

and ethnic groupings. These regulated the political, cultural and socio-economic life of the people. Marriage, being an important social institution, comes within the sphere of the African laws.

Among the Northern Cross Riverians, marriage is not simply a union between a man and a woman nor is it the affairs of the individual couple alone; it covers the whole family. It is seen as an alliance between two families, which continues even after the death of one or both partners especially where children exist. This communal nature of marriage is based on the African extended family system. The African traditional life is generally centred around the family. The family is where life is generated and the values of the clans, tribes and the Africans are transmitted.

Mbiti (1983) sees marriage as the uniting link in the rhythm of life. All generations are bound together in the act of marriage. Past, present and future generations begin to come on the stage through childbearing. Culturally, among the Northern Cross Riverians, marriage is an approved relationship of a man and some women. That is to say polygamy was an approved way of marriage and monogamy was very rare. The people viewed marriage as something willed by God, which every normal person is supposed to enter into. For Mbiti (1981), "it fulfils the obligation, the duty and custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. Failure to

get married and bear children then is committing a crime against traditional norms and practices.

Marriage is a means through which a man and a woman propagate their species and likeness and so transmit their lives. Children, therefore, become the aim of marriage among the people. This is why marriage was basically polygamous. The men wanted to have many children. Children were considered as the first and foremost value of marriage. As farming was their major occupation, many children and wives meant many helping hands on the farm. Children were also seen as a mark of prestige and wealth among the Northern Cross Riverians. Marriage and childbearing were not only peculiar to the Northern Cross Riverians alone but an African way of life in general. This was probably due to the fact that, through them, parents are remembered when they die. Anyone who dies without leaving a child or close relatives to remember him or pour out libation for him is regarded as an unfortunate person. In this way, marriage is intimately linked up with the religious belief about the continuation of life after death. To affirm this, Agba (1989) opines that pouring of wine and pasting of pounded yam (foo foo) on stones representing ancestors was a way of remembering ancestors and relations who passed on long ago. Also, Ogar (1986) states that naming a newborn child after a relation who died was to reawaken the good life spent

together while on earth and to remind of the deceased's continued existence even after death.

Moreover, among the Northern Cross Riverians, marriage was viewed as a legal order for young couples to begin activating their sexuality which has been dormant. Sex before marriage was and is still strictly prohibited, especially for girls. It was the right and duty of parents to see that their daughters remained virgins till marriage. To give out a virgin in marriage was a thing of pride among the people and there was a token or prize given for it.

### **2.6.1 Forms of Marriage**

Basically, in the Northern Cross River, according to Agim (1997), there are five forms of marriage practices, namely: Betrothals, marriage by engagement, ordinary marriage, marriage by elopement and marriage by inheritance.

### **2.6.2 Betrothal**

In the early years, the arrangement for betrothal was mainly done by parents. When a boy approached the age of puberty, his parents sought for a young girl to be engaged to him. Usually, the father of the boy approached the parents of the girl and made his intention known. When the two parents agreed, and all other things, especially the suitability of the engagement, the girl automatically became the boy's betrothed, to be formally married when both parties were ready.

### **2.6.3 Marriage by Engagement**

Traditionally, this is the most important and the most highly recognised form of marriage in the study area. It is marriage according to the native law and custom of the people, which everybody is obliged to undergo. The process helps in making a successful marriage. Ugbe (1985) explains that: "The purpose of the engagement is to afford the couple the final opportunity to determine definitely whether or not they are sufficiently congenial to achieve a successful marriage". During this period, when their affections are centred upon themselves, they should learn something of the family background, cultural interest, personality trait, the moral character and the general disposition of the other person.

### **2.6.4 Casual Marriage**

Such marriage is usually contracted between girls, especially those who feel they must not enslave themselves for a man but work to enrich her family. She finds a boy-friend, probably of the same village, and then procreates for her father hence they bear her father's name. Most of the time it is by the parents' consent that this is established.

### **2.6.5 Elopement**

This refers to an informal form of marriage. It is often done with a proposed wife. When another person has engaged a girl and she

feels her choice is not the best, she now finds another whom she loves best. In such a situation there is no way they can arrange and marry in a formal way. So the only way is by elopement. The new boy, with the consent of the girl and his parents, sometimes arrange with his friends to ambush her either on her way to the market or stream.

When these friends capture her, they go straight to the boy's compound where gunshots would be exploded to welcome the new bride and reports immediately to the girl's parents. The girl's parents now charge a bride price for payment by the groom. This is not an honourable way of getting married. However, it is simply tolerated and regarded as a smart way of manliness and courage on the part of the boy and his kindred or clan, (Modu, 1996).

#### **2.6.6 Marriage by Inheritance**

This is never planned or arranged according to one's will. It occurs because of circumstances surrounding the couple. This is a situation whereby a person is engaged or married to a lady after her husband's death. The native law and custom of the people demand that the lady is not to marry outside the family of the deceased husband. She is now to remarry one of his brothers based on her choice to any of them. She will now bear children for the family. This is the only way the children of the deceased are maintained without problem or rancour, this was also practised by the Jews.

## **2.7 THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE**

Christianity came with the establishment of schools and churches. The church doctrine on marriage stipulates that in marriage only two are united and joined by bond of marriage. Christ taught more on this when referring to these words as being uttered by God “so they are no longer two but one” (Matt.19:6). He immediately confirms the stability of the bond which was proclaimed long ago in the scripture: “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6).

According to Lewis (1985), unity and indissolubility are considered the most essential properties of marriage and the natural aims of marriage become impossible when unity is destroyed in any marriage relation existing between couples. This can be caused by polygamy or polyandry or when permanence is removed through divorce, the unity and dissolubility cannot be justified on the basis of the sacramental nature of the reality: they are in the first place, founded on the anthropological characteristics of marriage as such bridegroom give and received each other, has in itself an inner tendency towards definitiveness and exclusiveness, Gangwari (1996). The person who gives himself or herself to another no longer belongs to himself or herself but the other. The marital bond of faithfulness is therefore, on the basis of its inner being, disposed to be definitive and exclusive.



Unity then means “an exclusive and total union between man and one woman”. Gangwari (1999) explains that: Unity means the marriage is between one man and one woman. It means that the man or the woman cannot marry another person, as the marriage must be between a man and a woman and not a man marrying a man or woman marrying a woman.

The contending refers thus: marriage is designed to be practised exclusively by one man and one woman. God intends monogamy to be the rule in marriage not polygamy or polyandry. Washikda (1996) holds that the unity of marriage, distantly recognised by our Lord, is made clear in the equal personal dignity, which must be accorded to a husband and wife in mutual and unreserved affections. Once the marital bond is lawfully and validly established, it is permanent and cannot be broken by any human authority (civil or ecclesial) except death. Absolutely, Canon 1141 of the new Code declares: “A marriage which is ratified and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power or by any cause other than death. This law includes other Christians who are validly baptised when marriages contracted among themselves are ratified (unions). When a ratified marriage is subsequently consummated sexual intercourse performed in a human manner, the union becomes absolutely indissoluble.

In line with the traditional concept of marriage, the second Vatican Council Fathers proclaimed that: “marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children”. Indeed, children are the supreme gift of marriage and greatly contribute to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said “it is not good that man should be alone (Gen. 2:18) and from the beginning he made them male and female” (Matt. 19:4). Wishing to associate them in a special way with his creative work he charged them, “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28). Without intending to underestimate the order end of marriage, it must be said that true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it is directed to disposing the spouse to cooperate valiantly with the love of the creator and saviour, who, through them, will increase and enrich his family from day to day.

The conscious exclusion of children by the spouse in their marital union is sinful in the eyes of the church. Tagwana (1997) observes that heterosexual relationship within a marriage is a legitimate means through which couples express their love for each other. Nevertheless, it should at the same time be open to procreation which is the natural consequence of the union. Any sexual union devoid of the intention of procreation, reduce the gift of human sexuality to “mere sex”, a commodity of consumption, pleasure and exploitation. Ayuba (1996) who conducted a research

interview with Muva tribe of Adamawa, again posits that Christian marriage fulfils the essential elements of the mutual well-being of the spouses. It presupposes co-habitation and embraces companionship, love, affection, control, mutual help and sexual union. The selfless and reciprocal self-giving of couples to each other promotes their natural spiritual well being. It is the intimate communion of life and love that guarantees the good of their children born out of the union. However, the union does not depend solely on children to be sustained. Pope John Paul II, says even when children are not born of a marriage, the bond of togetherness should be equally strong enough to uphold the marriage. In fact, physical sterility may be indicative of a vocation to serve mankind in other social necessities. The second Vatican Council teaches that marriage does not lose value without procreation, though very important but can still be achieved. A marriage can be said to be successful if personal relationship of the spouse grows to maturity and perfecting each other. Unlike the customary marriage, Christian marriage is a sacrament with distinctive characteristics. Once contracted, it cannot be dissolved till death.

## **2.8 THE ISLAMIC CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE**

Islamic marriage is a marriage contracted by those who profess the Muslim faith and followers of Mohammed. Abdal 'Ati (1982) says "Islam recognizes the value of sex and advocates marriage". It

strongly discourages celibacy as may be the practice of other religions. From the foregoing, the conclusion may be that any sound minded Muslim has to establish a conjugal family of procreation. In the light of this, the Qura'n, that is the Muslim guide of worship, says when a Muslim marries, he has perfected half of his religion as observes by Ano, (2000). One of the statutory requirements in Muslim marriage is that an individual must be sure of his ability to meet the responsibilities of marriage before taking a spouse. At the time of marriage the bride must be free from all marital bonds. If she is a widow or divorced, she must be free from pregnancy. The groom must be a worshiper of Islam and if already married, his present wife must not be related to the prospective bride in any degree that forbids him from maintaining them. Also, if he happens to have more than one wife the number must be within the maximum limit of four.

A valid Islamic marriage involves consent and saduquat, there are two types of consents to contracting this type of marriage. These are (1) consent of the parties (2) parental consent. Nwogugu (1996) is of the view that the parties to the Islamic marriage must freely consent to the union. Parents could conclude marriages on behalf of their infant sons or virgin daughters (Ijbar). The rule may be ameliorated by the fact that the child has the option to repudiate a marriage contract on attainment of the age of puberty under the Maliki School of Islamic law.

The parents of the intended couples necessarily have the consent for the valid celebration of marriage. For the bride, there must be a marriage guardian whose consent to the marriage is mandatory.

### **2.8.1 Sadauki or Diyya**

This represents the marriage payment or bride price. The price is the entitlement of a woman or the bride not her parents, though paid through the parents. The parents may also utilize it for the preparation of their daughters marriage, with her consent still. The minimum “dower” as prescribed by Sharia law is one quarter of a “Dinar” and the maximum can be anything depending on the status of the groom.

### **2.8.2 The Marriage Ceremony**

A mallam, in the presence of at least two upright Moslem witnesses solemnizes the marriage. Islamic law prohibits marriage between persons related by amenity or consanguinity. A Moslem is also prohibited from marrying a Pagan but not a Christian woman. A male Moslem woman is precluded from marrying a non-Moslem. A Moslem man is entitled to marry at least four wives provided he can take care of them equally (Sulaiman 1999).

Under Islamic law

- Sexual intercourse between the couples and procreation inheritance from each other.
- The wife is entitled to receive maintenance from her husband necessarily even if she is a working class woman.
- Every wife is also entitled to equal treatment and equal share of time as other wives of her husband.
- There is no presumption that wife's property belongs to her husband.

In case of breakdown of order in the relationship the husband has an almost absolute right to divorce, which is done by giving the 'saki' three times for final dissolution, and the wife could come back again only if she remarries another man. The wife could also sue for 'Khul' divorce if he fails to do the following, as posited by Obiadi (1978)

- When husband does not love her anymore
- If husband does not give sexual satisfaction
- If husband is involved in extra marital sex.
- If husband does not take good care of the needs in the home.
- If there is maltreatment, such as excessive beating or starvation.

## **2.9 THE MOTIVATION FOR MARRIAGE**

The idea of love-sharing and the need for companionship (since man is a gregarious being) motivate many people to marry.

However, a good number of spouses enter the marriage contract without proper aims. This is the view of Smalley and Scott (1979) who, in line with Burr (1973), noted that some people enter the marriage contract without rational and realistic expectations, which may be thwarted in due course, hence marriage instability.

Thus, Burr (1973), Smalley and Scott (1979), later, Obe (1997) contend that many men and women enter marriage contract with confused ideas and expectations and with a focus for themselves. Burr (1973) and Obe (1997) for instance, argue that when those misconceived expectations have been thwarted, marital conflicts, which may lead to marital breakdown, surface in such marriages.

In their own contributions, Bagarozzi and Reuben (1968) point out that some couples are motivated by romantic and erotic notions and not critical examination of the proposed opposite sex they intend to marry. One observes in the study area that some boys and girls are triggered into marriage by the material wealth of either side and when these material things are not forthcoming, marriage problems crop up, which may lead to divorce. Some teenagers are motivated to marry by infatuation, which is not genuine love, and when this temporary love fades away, problems arise in the marriage. In line with the foregoing, Etta (2002) observes that marriages based on “cupboard love” are prone to dissolubility as against indissolubility in Cannon law.

Onyejiaku (1990) points out that developmental stresses and storms push some teenagers into marriage without actual needs and real intention to marry. The urge of sex in men between the ages of 15-22, according to him, is very high. He concedes that sexual urge at this period is higher in boys than in girls, who exhibit their emotional feelings indirectly. Many broken homes today are a result of marriages based on from these types of motivation. In consonance with this, Mouris (2002) observes that marriage focus should not be on flesh but on genuine love for spouses as they come together.

Adolescent period is the period when the youngsters make many mistakes. Onyejiaku (1990) opines, "sexual intercourse lure many males to marriages which they (males) are not really prepared for". His advice therefore is that marriage counselling should start not only in school but from home and that parents . Parents should guide and counsel their wards as regards the consequences of illegitimate and indiscriminate sexual intercourse, especially on the issue of HIV/AIDS. In this regard, Mallum (1997) succinctly presents that the following as the primary motives for most marriages in Africa:

1. Companionship
2. Procreation
3. Assistance
4. Social requirements/expectation
5. Self actualisation



### **2.9.1 Companionship**

An individual needs company for social existence and for effective symbiosis. Pam (1997) suggests that people need the contributions of a life lubricant for peaceful co-existence. She further says if the human mind acts without the lubricating agents to soot it, the entire human social existence shall dry off as burnt food in a frying pan. This then suggests why companionship is highlighted as one of the motives for marriage as a whole and in particular in the study area.

### **2.9.2 Procreation**

This is a statutory expectation in African traditional setting and in fulfilment of our creator's prophesies. Ayaliwhu (1997) opines that the expectation of couples shortly after marriage, especially in Africa, is procreation, that is, childbirth, which is one paramount reason for marriage in Africa. This expectation, if not managed properly, could cause anxiety that may affect conception and often create conflict and suspicion among couples. Couples should therefore wait patiently for the child that will come as the marriage progresses and not to force or overwork itself.

### **2.9.3 Assistance**

Couples, as a matter of fact, need each other's assistance. It could be financial or otherwise. If two people are living together as spouses, they rely on each other for survival. There could be division

of labour for life to move forward. The wife takes care of the flaws of the husband and vice versa, (Oyedepo, 1988).

#### **2.9.4 Social Requirements/Expectations**

The society expects that every grown up adult man or woman should get married when of age. Based on this premise, Agim (1997) believes, any adult man or woman who is of age to marry and has refused to do so need not be given a post of responsibility since he or she has not gone through the test of facing social responsibilities.

#### **2.9.5 Self-Actualisation**

An individual's aim of survival is self-actualisation and self-fulfilment. Obe (1997) contends that one of the achievements of a successful married man or woman is self-actualisation. People who are married make a conscious attempt to contribute their best quota to achieve maximum positive returns on output as they share their lives together.

One of the best ways of selecting a life partner is through courtship. So, parents, religious leaders or marriage counsellors should give adequate information on courtship, especially during pre-marital counselling of intending couples.

### **2.10 AGE OF MARRIAGE AND OCCURRENCE OF CONFLICT**

The age of a marriage relationship comes from the time the couples celebrate their love life together either according the

traditional, church, mosque or court doctrines. This relationship progresses from one stage to another until they part to see no more. Marriage has three stages during a couple's lifetime. These are: (1) the beginning stage (2) the expanding stage (3) the contrasting stage.

At the beginning of a marriage love is usually predominant and conflict may not come in much except in the area of understanding with each other in the area of some lapses by either of them before the marriage like stepchildren's interference in their love affairs. Ume (2000) observes that changing trends in the family formation may change the couple's ways if not properly handled by the couples. The influence of family values has a part to play here. The review of existing evidence on conflict handling in marital relationship depends largely on what each person wants and the orientation therein. The orientation on what the couple's expectations are provides a soft ground for their landing and adjustment. This affects the positive or negative way of handling and resolving conflicts as they come either to expunge or linger on, leading them to a bad position in the family interaction. In agreement with the foregoing, Genda (2002) contends that couples' family and religious ties affect the behaviour towards being determined to make a success in a relationship whatever the stress they perceive. Marital stability is presumed to be linked to perceptions of the fairness of the marital relationship.

The expanding stage of marriage is after the honeymoon and the results of the honeymoon bring children and other dependants to assist in the house keeping. These children upbringing could cause some conflicts which either strengthen the union or drag it to a standstill. Wise (1995) and Lamle (2004) feel that the couples get motivated, encouraged or discouraged by the influence of their environment and the way they perceive each other in their new status. This again depends on how they perceive the arrival of these people in their home. Some people feel that the children and home keepers are intruders and develop a put-off attitude on them while some feel it is a blessing and opportunity to expand, and they work hard to enhance the position by adjusting and adapting to a reduction in the occurrence of conflict. As they interact with their family branches, Wise used data of couples that were married from 1986 – 1988 in Minneapolis with the use of constant exponential model of marital disruption. The analyses of control recognises the fact that the behaviour of couples changes either positively or negatively as they live together depending on their desire for the relationship. Findings from other countries like Nigeria and Canada, according to Esere (2000) and Ambert (1995), indicate that there is high risk of conflict occurrence in couples who are entering into marriage with men or women who are in their second marriages, particularly in

instances where the first timer needs to provide financial and social support services.

At the contrasting stage of marriage, the couples often times are done with baby making and training of these children is almost at the termination point where they are leaving to make their own home in form of marriage or gain independence, to be men or women in their own apartments. At this point life begins again for the couples although at a mature stage of life. Here, they have developed expertise on conflict resolution. If at all there is conflict, it may be in the course of taking decisions for children in of mate selection or advisory role on financial management by these starters. Bronx (1995) evaluated the extent to which the men and women endure, and avoid conflict situation at this stage of their interaction. The findings were be that even though the couples are happy to see their children grown, they still insist on being the authors of what happens in the children's lives by suggesting ways they should imbibe in their new family, and sometimes this creates conflict due to the divergent views of parents and their children in area of modernity and old fashion ideas. Eroh (2005) strongly feels that the contrasting stage is a stage where couples have low vision on their world view in general and marriage in specifics. This is a period of recounting experiences and couples could attempt consultancy counselling approaches based on personal experiences in the past, though such experiences

and counselling could be little out of current trend in marital issues. Even at that there could be some useful ideas to benefit the expected developmental stage of a marriage relationship.

Whether the couples are young or old, the guiding principle in marriage at any level should be that all marginalising approaches should be put aside; but rather ways of achieving credible leadership and stabilizing cohabitation relationship should be imbibed to achieve harmony and reduction of conflict situation.

### **2.11 MARITAL CONFLICT ANALYSIS**

Conflict analysis is the step by step account of how conflict occurs, how it is resolved to form a base for peaceful co-existence of the individuals involved be it a family, a community or the society in general. The basis of this analysis is to find out what has happened in the past as regards conflicts, how they were resolved, and how the outcome of this resolution is related to the present study and how it can assist in the progress of the study.

Henderson (1994) is of the view that every marriage deserves a fair chance, no matter the status of marriage now, and no matter what one or one's spouse has done or not done, one may have tried to change things with little success. People may be wondering if there is any hope for the relationship. To further uphold this claim Stuckless, Sage and Ellis (1996) contend that the main focus in analysing conflict is to accompany this concept of forgiveness and

ability to transform intractable conflicts, which are natural ways women in particular use in creating peace for a positive change in the home.

Egbe (2004) feels that often times some couples either consciously or unconsciously allowed themselves to become engulfed in issues that ordinarily could have been sorted out without stress to result in high crises leaving the home in disarray. This is partly due to a wrong possession of temperament or difficult to comprehend kind of temperament. Conflict escalates in the family due to a hardened and unforgivable spirit by either of the spouses. Bakong (2002) states that the personalities and influences involved in a conflict assist in its resolution or not for example, a marriage of unequals and social class differences. If the social or economic status of the husband is higher than that of the wife, instead of carrying the wife along, the husband may decide to go out in search of the love, which is lacking in the home. This will definitely hurt the less privileged spouse and result in conflict. Here, a round table discussion is necessary between the couples, which may help provided the person to preside over such a meeting is a specialist in human relations; if not the meeting may not succeed hence the husband may disregard the views of a less privileged wife on such a trivial issue that concerns him.

When conflict occurs, the obvious thing should be how many people are involved. Is it the husband or the wife that is the cause of the conflict? Could it be the in-laws? Either from the wife's or husband's side? Could it be the extended family of the couples? Or could it be the immediate neighbours or the community where this couple resides? Buchanan Atsu (1997) Buchanan (2001) and Obe (2000) strongly endorse that whether the remote cause of the conflict is from the afore-mentioned or not, mediation is paramount for resolving such a conflict as the conflict, if unresolved, could lead to child maladjustment, particularly where couples are separated. Esere (2000) suggests that investigating into the immediate cause of conflict between couples, the role of gender and ethnicity, the influence of conflict on parent – child, sibling and peer relations, family violence, and inter-parental conflict in divorce and step families must be addressed in a proper peaceful –co-existence. The effect of the mediation should also be evaluated through adequate follow-up and referral appropriately.

A study on conflict analysis of couples of African – American origin by Cox and Cox (1983) Block and Gjerde (1986) Amato and Keith (1991) and Lengua (2000) drew a conclusion, based on the data collected from children of these parents, that divorce could cause behaviour problems in boys. There is a contribution of parent and child temperament to child adjustment after divorce of parents.



Finally, child perception of parents, marital conflict may predict their adjustment problems better than parent reports of marital conflict. For girls, no obvious behaviour was identified but rather the growing environment may assist her to achieve positive or negative behaviour in her world view of life as a whole.

Oni (2001) undertook a study of the conflict analysis on an Urhobo husband and his two wives. The issue of conflict here as realised was that the non-Urhobo wife was being favoured by the husband as against their tradition. Their tradition regards a non-Urhobo wife as a total stranger who has come to benefit from the family wealth. In this case the husband felt that being an outsider, she needed more tender, loving care to enable her adjust properly. After a discussion with a traditional counsellor, the husband convinced them with his views on what should stand and they all resolved and peace was brought nearer to them again.

Sometimes conflict in a family takes place due to the over-zealousness on the part of the couples to satisfy the sexual needs of the family without due consultation with the parties involved particularly in a polygamous setting. One tends to feel that if the couples lay their cards properly on the table, the area of weakness could be given positive options that may not have an adverse effect on the cordiality of the couples involved.

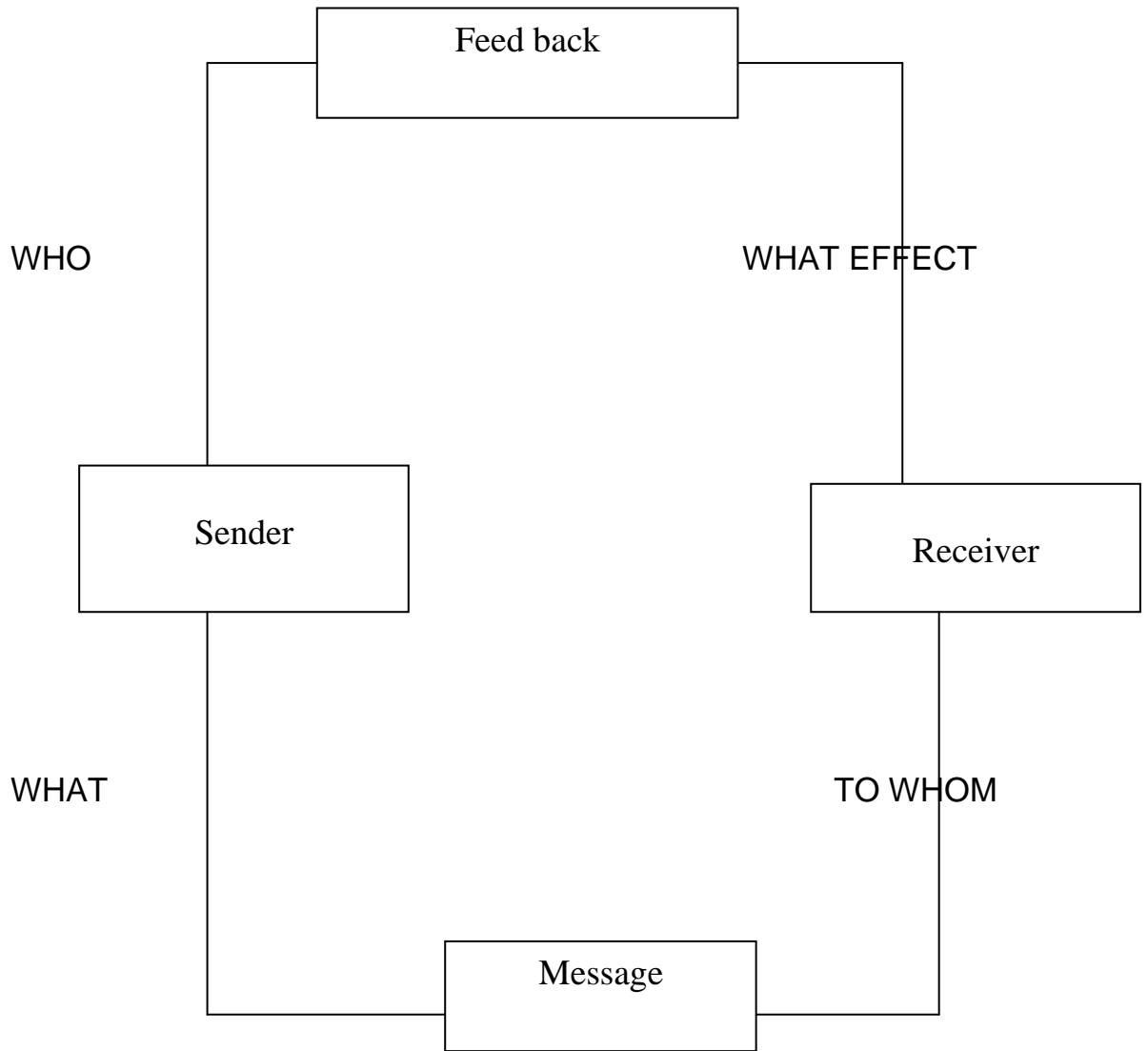
Bello (2002) reports the case of Alhaji Yenusa, whose wife cried out for help to the members of the public that her husband was becoming too sexy and she could not cope with such behaviour. On a round table discussion with the couples and the counsellor, it was discovered that the husband had four wives to satisfy conjugally and needed to beef up his strength with the viagra drug, which made him more active than how he had been. Since he needed enough strength to go round the four wives weekly, he had to take over dose of the drug against his doctors' prescription to sustain him to take care of their emotions equally.

Finally, the suggestion by the counsellor was that the Alhaji and his wives should agree on the modes of operation on how to share their marital attention from their husband to prevent exhaustion. This is to avoid collapse from the women and their husband so that they can enjoy themselves as a people who share a common emotional harmony in their family with equal consent of fact. The management skill in marriage is a continuous one since nobody ever graduated from the marital problems. Calling the family together in the morning has been observed to be very effective in resolving marital issues.

## **2.12 MARITAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS PACKAGE (COMMUNICATION SKILLS)**

A marital conflict management skill package is necessary here to change and preserve the individual from an unacceptance stand to acquire any enduring and adjustable character to feet a marriage scenario. A management skill called Atube (2006) MCMS was provided to take care of defective management skills that often time brings misunderstanding in couple's relationship. Communication skills in this context are the ability of the couples to understand themselves and pass information through communication medium at an appropriate manner and time to breed conviviality of interaction. Eriba (1999) observed that lack of proper placement of communication tools results in conflict mismanagement in couple's interaction. Atube (2006) package provides the enablement for proper communicative skills to be imbibed by couples for harmonious living.

What is communication must be answered for proper synthesising of this package. Communication is a cyclical instrument use to disseminate feelings, expression in the negative or position stance. Communication can only be effective when the sender passes the message to the receiver and a feedback is gotten. If the message is short of any of the mentioned variables then communication did not take place. See the diagram below:



**Fig 2: Atube (2006) management skill package (MCMS)**

What kind of messages do couples send to each other? Example “my flower” “my queen” or my king etc. Sometimes couples are stress up and if equipped with proper management skills the stress could be turn to joy or joyous moments in their life.

1. Dressing in colours they appreciate better stimulates the mind positively. This could attract attention and propels communication to remove the unpleasant feeling harboured earlier.
2. Communication according to Undiyaundeye (2000), could be done through food. If a spouse was angry, a sumptuous dinner or launch is presented particularly a person’s best meal, the anger disappear magically. No wonder Uwe (2000), is of the view that good food is the way to a man’s heart and a husband who begets a wife who is a good cook is rich in unique treasures.
3. Appology: “I am sorry” is a weapon that can move mountains. Mambula (2002) posits that “I am sorry” is the best soothing balm for any furious mind anywhere in the world.  
  
It breeds the coolest ice block to cool the hottest mind anywhere anytime. A management skill programme provides any opportunity for couples who have not put “I am sorry” into practice to avail themselves of the opportunity to do so. This improves their aura for each other.

The word is so simple but sometimes it could be problematic for people to put into use. Atube (2006) should be an enhancement for this purpose.

4. Appreciation; this goes along with complimentary utterances and gestures. Such gestures could be "I love you". This phrase opens a lot of doors and heals wounds as well in an injured mind. Ezinyi (2001) endorsed that when a wife has the courage to say I love you to a husband, the life savings of a man could be invested in such a humane and well disposed woman. This further explains why a marriage is strongly desirous of a management skill to take care of discrepancies in behaviour displacements. Sometimes presentation of gifts as a surprise packages also wet dry minds.
5. Sensitivity to each others opinions; couples deserve to know the boundaries of each others likes and dislikes and work towards delete of the dislikes and popularise the likes to the maximum. Oyedepo (2001) feels that on ideal marital environment is the one the couples appreciate what they have found and decongest stress and put into focus stress healing devices for effective interaction. One would want to believe that recognising important blessings in the family and fronting them for thanksgiving leaves an impressive mark in any family history.

## **Advantages**

The gains of this management skill package results in thus;

1. The home will be enhanced positively and negative behaviours will be modified to desired values.
2. It removes intruders from negative and overbearing influences on the spouses
3. Brings unity between couples themselves and children who are stuck with friendly environment devoid of much stress.
4. Family secrets are buried in the house always hence grievances are not shared with others.
5. It does not give room for scandalous intents to breach peace in the home.
6. The couples are always stucked to each other's concepts of operation.

## **LIKELY PROBLEMS**

In occasion where the rules of the package are over looked the likely problems to be envisaged are;

1. Anger mismanagement
2. Unresolved issues leading to sweeping contending issues under the carpet by not being open.
3. Insisting on your hard stand not giving in
4. "I and you" and not "we"
5. Possessiveness of facts about on self in a personalise focus.

6. Selfishness
7. Lack of consideration for others

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Couples should always learn to know their areas of interest and work to enhance or provide enablement for smooth operation of family and society.
2. Counsellors should promote positive checklists for couples as a reference point to sustain their interaction with one another.
3. The couples should assist towards articulating positive role play to stimulate each others initial interest of coming together in the first instance.
4. Family members should play supportive roles to this couples instead of forming negative cliques to cause unnecessary stress that would cause disharmony and turn off dispositions negatively.

## **CONCLUSION**

Marital conflict management skill package in communication removes doubts in couples which ordinarily brings misconceptions and misrepresentation of each others stand. For the purpose of marriage communicating properly form a united front for the enjoyment of family association for continuity of the home.



## **2.12 WHAT IS CONFLICT?**

The family scene is increasingly becoming characterised by conflicts, which prompts counselling. The youths that go through our educational institutions start their lives in the family. The family sets the pace for socialisation of the youths. These early experiences are very crucial in the life of the individual. Many Nigerian families are troubled and can better be described as existing under the same roof than living together as husband and wife. Many couples are suffering silently while deceiving the public that they are still husband and wife. Such couples hide their problems from relatives and friends; it is only those who are close to them who understand that all is not well. They may succeed in patching it until the problem grows out of size and refuses to be swept under the carpet.

When people are asked what they understand by the term “conflict” they often mention such words as war, fight, chaos, oppression, inequality, destruction, misunderstanding. The list is endless. If one then ponders a little to look at a common term grouping these words together, one would observe that they are all negative words. Does it mean that conflict is always negative? Ezinyi (2001) observes that conflict is a part of life and should be expressed, not repressed. She goes further to say expression of conflict offers opportunity to learn and improve our relationships with others. To express conflict means to begin to resolve it.

In furtherance of this inextricable link between marriages, Gloser (1957), in Betiang (2002) believes that conflict makes a society more vital and responsive to the population and its attendant problems. Disagreements occur amongst individuals and groups resulting in changes that create room for change. Robertson (1977) affirms that such changes arising from conflicts prevent society from stagnation and also the Prince (Machiavelli) who asserts that “violence is the only midwife for any society that is pregnant in change”. For this conflict to be resolved, the opposing parties must show sufficient understanding and co-operation with each other and work together for a common goal (Ugabi et al 2005).

Anyaliwhu (1997) sees conflict as a base for stabilisation of friendship between people, especially in marriage and other interpersonal associations. Contending with this, Ezinyi (2001) points out that the Chinese people see conflict as an “opportunity for change: if we go by this, it then presupposes that conflict on its own is neither negative nor positive. Rather, what determines the way a conflict goes is our own personal attitude and our background information about the conflict that normally dictates the way we manage it. People with negative connotations of conflict, manage conflict in a destructive way and the resultant effect is all negative words like the issue of Middle East conflict. However, people with positive connotations of conflict, like the Chinese, manage conflict in

a constructive way and the resultant effect is development, change, understanding, evolution, friendship, peace, love, progress, interaction, communication and so on, which could be synonymous with a marriage relationship.

Researchers have variously defined conflict but according to generic connotation, it means a situation that emerges whenever two or more persons seek to possess the same object, occupy the same space or the same exclusive position.

Nwude (1995) sees conflict as a struggle between ideas, action or between individuals. ACCORD (1994) explains conflict as an interaction between two or more people who are competing over perceived or actual goals or values with the aim of beating an opponent or having joint solutions. In the same vein, Meyers (1999) claims that whenever various parties pursue their self-interest, ironically to their collective detriments, conflict arises. To him, conflict is perceived in a compatibility of actions or goals and people in conflict, whether their perceptions are accurate or not, sense that one's side gains is the other's loss.

From all that has been observed about conflict, one would want to say that the common cause of conflict is divergent views about an issue of interest and the purpose for this conflict is always for a change of attitude, either positive or negative, depending on the standards the people concerned desire. In this work, conflict in the

marriage and family context should be taken to refer to dissension between marital partners over values, beliefs, norms and behaviours, which make up the structure of the nuclear unit. This conflict may centre on any or all-conceivable areas of marked interaction; such as economic activities (both production and consumption of income) child rearing, decision making, performance of household tasks, sex relation, in-laws and others. The resultant effects of all these in the family as they interact or cohabit could cause role conflict.

### **2.13 TYPES OF MARITAL CONFLICTS**

With the lop-sided resource allocation paradigm in place today, family conflicts are bound to evolve. When conflict started on low level in Benue/Nassarawa, Bauchi, Kaduna and particularly in the Niger – Delta through Ken Saro-Wiwa, either the Government misdiagnosed the problem or diagnosed it correctly but decided to ignore it, treated it with levity or mischievously branded it an act of brigandage by a few self-seeking scoundrels. But here we are today, from a few raindrops, we now have a virtually uncontrollable life-threatening down pour. In the same vein, if a misunderstanding is ignored by couples, it could expand to the level where it developS into a conflict and finally a big problem unable to contain by them.

Ogwuche (2001) posits that conflict in marriage is contagious and could stem from societal unrest. When couples are not

psychologically balanced, their emotional outlook would also be affected, thus different types of marital conflicts emanate. Shertzer and Stone (1976) recognise two types of conflicts existing in marriage relationship as husband and wife interact. These are: (1) intrapersonal conflict (2) interpersonal conflict.

### **2.13.1 Intrapersonal Conflict**

This is a type of conflict within the couples, which arises out of inability to make a satisfactory decision. Otuji (2000), in a marriage sermon, noted that some men, due to their false association with their wives, find it difficult to take a firm decision in the house for fear of the unknown. Such a man, he noted, has already built a false association with his wife and finds it difficult to say the hard truth, which would offend the wife when it is never his intention to do so. In the same vein, Obe (1999) observes that, even though it is good for spouses to respect each other's view, it is still important to avoid any false relationship because at the end of the day, the truth must be told and if the couples have not interacted transparently, conflict may arise.

### **2.13.2 Interpersonal Conflict**

This is a conflict between or among people who have opposing views or orientations. Atsu (2002) explains that interpersonal conflict is that conflict generated either by the relations, friends and associates of spouses as they cohabit as a family or friends. Since

conflicts could have a positive connotation, it is important to aspire to have a change in attitude, especially when conflicts arise.

Ogunsaya (2001) observes that children, mother in-laws, father-in-laws or extended family relations, could generate conflicts and the most deadly could be conflicts from either friends of the husband or wife. Here, a friend of either of the spouses can blackmail one to another, and it can generate conflict. It could be to tell the male spouse that his wife was seen in another man's bed or her husband has housed another girl. Such a thing can generate conflict. One can say that even if the conflicts are generated from people one associates freely with, the watch word should be that conflicts are part of life and should be handled maturely for a positive change as spouses live in the same home.

## **2. 14 CAUSES OF MARITAL CONFLICTS**

Undiyaundeye (2000), Ogbuche (2001) and Ogunsayan (2001) argue that if individuals, groups, nationalities or nations perceived themselves to be getting less than they deserve and complain about it to no avail, conflict results. When change is initiated suddenly without broad consultations with those who would be affected by the change, conflict occurs. When resources are mobilised, put to work, and benefits occurred from the same, the sharing of these benefits usually generates conflicts. When resources are being exploited from community and another community gets a lion share of that

exploitation, conflict is generated. Even in the bee colony, the worker bees work themselves to death in providing the wherewithal for keeping the queen mother bee healthy and productive in egg-laying for making the next generation of bees.

In marriage, because of our different cultural peculiarities, problems that result from marital breakdown are multidimensional in our society today, the exigencies of these factors either combine to or singly rock marriage (Undiyaundeye 2000). It is extremely difficult to understand the character of an individual because of human complex behaviour patterns. If interaction in the family with one of its members leads to conflict, it is a symptom of a sick system. If the symptom is allowed to persist, it may not only cause misery to the individuals but also to the rest of the members in that family. Several factors are responsible for marital conflicts. Ezinyi (2001) identifies the factors as:

- (a) Cultural and ethnic norms that influence how roles are carried out within a given family system: A marriage can stand firmly or become very loose and consequently disintegrate as a result of the quality of the relationship that exist between the wife and her husband's relatives and vice versa.
- (b) Poor level of exposure of spouses: The academic and social exposure of couples can make or mar a marriage.

When couples are not well exposed or enlightened enough, they are prone to conflicts, misunderstanding or misrepresentation of issues concerning their married life (Iheagwam 2001). There could be external influence and lack of firm decision taking ability, which could create communication gap. This may arise due to lack of objectivity in handling faulty issues in their interaction without bearing in mind that, failure of their marriage is an indictment on themselves. But the reverse is the case where conflicts are treated with all amount of rationality in approach.

- (c) Communication gap: the poor level of interaction between spouses makes it almost impossible for them to express their views freely. The fear of the unknown could envelop the marriage, leading to marital problems resulting from suspicion of the spouse. Turner (1970) is of the opinion that communication in marital relationship regulates the extent to which each persons interaction can yield his or her own objectives for the sake of another.
- (d) Influence of wrong models: Association with wrong models accounts for some problems in marriage. Where couples associate with people who teach them wrong approach towards marriage relationship, the marriage



itself would suffer some cracks, which may act as faulty models for them. This has been affirmed by Satir (1967), where fears were expressed that wrong modelling could lead to crises and confusion in marriage.

- (e) Infidelity: Inability of either of the couples to maintain the oath of marriage could result in ill feelings, thereby causing friction in a marriage. Here, either the wife or husband maintains company outside the matrimonial home resulting in heartbreak of either of them. For this Zayyan (1995) is of the opinion that “marriage is ideal for those adults who are psychologically, morally, mentally, economically, socially and anatomically mature to execute the duties and obligations of a married life”. Moral justification is required for an upright status in a marital relationship.
- (f) Infertility: One of the rationales for marriage, as posited by Mallum (1996), is procreation. Once a marriage is contracted, the expectations by parents, friends and even the couples themselves is baby-making. If this is delayed due to some natural interference, these relations begin to murmur and thus mount pressure on the couples and the resultant effect could be conflict.

(g) Breach Of Trust: The Holy Bible book of, Amos 3:3 says,

“How can two walk together, except they be agreed”. This means that agreement is a very vital river to cross in a marriage. A partner’s use of important information about the other partner against him/her in a quarrel or other, issues could hurt the emotion of the other which could lead to a serious betrayal of trust.

(h.) Early Marriage: When couples get involved in marriage early in life, there is bound to be that carry-over of youthful exuberance to marital issues. Consistent exhibition of intolerance and lack of compromising attitudes could occur leading to marriage fracas. Nwobi (1997) suggests that conflict would be reduced if couples thoughtfully and honestly work out their philosophy of marriage before it is consummated taking into account those things they expect in the marriage and see how they can reach an equilibrium with those inevitable areas they may necessarily come across.

(i) Sexual Deprivation: The inability of the couples to meet their conjugal rights could cause a long lasting frigidity on their relationship, hence partners are legally bound to satisfy each other sexually. Atsu (1997) posits that couples are expected to express their emotional desire

freely to avoid cheating on each other. Couples' emotional satisfaction breeds a healthy and happy family interaction.

- (j) Conflict In Marital Roles: Many couples find it difficult to adjust materially, socially and psychologically to some structural changes, which leaves one partner in an unfavourable situation. Some attempts by a husband to shun his economic responsibility deliberately leave the entire domestic problems to the woman. When it is obvious that the woman now takes care of the welfare of the home, it would be tasking, debilitating and unassuming. This position may lead to disagreement and frustration giving way to marital conflict. Bello (1998) observes that in Islamic faith, it is the duty of the man to provide for the woman all her needs even if she is a working class. But one would want to suggest that it should be out of the woman's volition to assist in some way especially when she is working to reduce the man's stress and also to sustain his life span.
- (k) Finance: spouses should know any source of income, as suspicion may crop up. Bank accounts, and in whose name, can generate conflicts. Sources of expenditure – whether extravagant or splendid should be made known for benefit of the doubt.

High desire for new things if the resources are meagre can become an issue, (Obe,1997; Undiyaundeye,2002). Among the educated elite, finance is one of the acute sources of conflicts and even breakdown and divorce. A man may be generous, whereas the woman is stingy or vice versa. Out of the finance come children's school fees and feeding. Lahaye (1977) points out that some wives save their income and have a sense of supremacy economically over their husbands. Many wealthy women in the study area are observed to be separated from their husbands or divorced because such women claim that they can live by themselves thus disregarding their husbands. Since our elders say "it is better to marry a fool who could make one happy than marry a wise one who could make one sad". men prefer to marry even illiterates who obey them to working class educated women who cannot respect them (men). Hence the control of finance in the family can cause marital instability.

- (I) Religious Differences: when couples, especially the women, are almost too old to stay with parents, they pretentiously accept the religious faith of their husbands to do the rituals of marriage to fulfil all righteousness. But

once they find their feet, they go back to their roots. Utsu (1999) aptly opines that some women take marriage to be a fulfilment of social registration, which when not handled properly, could cause conflicts, and subsequently, divorce, hence their husbands have become devil incarnates. How can one live with a devil incarnate when she is a saint or an angel.

Western education has led to most marital instabilities in the contemporary world. Hodges (1991) observes that in traditional way of life, marriage is sacred and permanent as family members of both couples are involved. The main objectives in the traditional societies include sex regulations and the procreation purposes, which are divinely enshrined. However, it is lamentable to see the increasing urbanisation, industrialisation and the mobility of labour with all their attendants, negativity results in the bringing down of the marriage status. The sacred and divine aims of marriage have been lost due to the western system of life, the emancipation movement of women and modernity, which provide an anchor for women's claims to equality with their husbands. These factors have constituted a lot of bottlenecks in the

marriage circle today, hence the marital breakdown (Obe 2000).

Supporting the argument further, Chinoy (1967) and Asinde (1999) contend that in modern women emancipation movement, emotional attachment holds family members together rather than the hitherto collective aims, thus causing marital instability and subsequent breakdown. Even the defined roles among men and women pose problem. The child upbringing, the maintenance of the extended family members and even the entertaining of visitors from either of the spouses have totally been deviated from the traditional ways of life (Bulus, 1997). In some societies, according to Chinoy (1967), some men still maintain masculine authority over their wives. Iheagwam (2001), however, agrees with the foregoing when he say "A man has the power to rule over his wife in issues of family esteem".

In-laws and external influence exert a lot of influence whether negatively or positively on marriage. Sarki (1986) concedes that if the in-laws show some authoritative influence on the marriage, the family of either of the couples may not take it kindly thus causing marriage breakdown. The gossips, criticisms and blames from the in-laws or other external factors lead to frictions between the couples. Experience has shown that external influences are much on marriage. In addition, failure of either spouse to execute his or her own roles in the family, more often than not, brings tumult in the

marriage. Most of these problems are applicable in most Nigerian societies and in the study area in particular.

## **INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP COUNSELLING**

Counselling is professional activity involving a high degree of social skills, intellectual competence and technical sophistication. Unfortunately, most people do not conceive counselling in this perspective. Rather counselling is generally conceived as any activity that can be performed by any person in any place and at any time. The purpose here therefore is to correct this erroneous concept by illustrating the technical requirements for effective counselling and demonstrating practical and empirical processes of counselling in the different methods of counselling approach.

Omoluabi and Animba (1998) observed that counselling is an interaction between a person who is stuck in some way and in need of help and another person who is trained in helping people get unstuck. In the same vein Lamle (2004) feels that the counsellors focus his or her energy totally trying to help the client come out of a problem area to a safer terrain. Conclusively, one may be convinced that the counsellor explore all possible graces to see that a clients burden is remove or reduced to the bearest possible minimum for effective goal actualisation. There are majorly two types of counselling involved namely individual and group counselling.

## **INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING**

This is a one to one counselling service given to a person base on his or her peculiar problem nature which must be handled with all amount of confidentiality except otherwise the client consent is granted otherwise, the problem begins and ends between the counsellor and his/her counsellee.

In individual counselling Ipaye (1983) is of the opinion that, the counsellor helps the counsellee to make the following decisions;

1. Make educational, personal social and vocational plans
2. Help to set attainable educational, vocational and personal social goals for oneself.
3. Help client build realistic self-picture
4. Help rule out areas of decision making that would not be profitable for client to consider.

Obe (1997) and Undiyaundeye (2000) believes that individual counselling is a personalise kind of looking and sorting out a peculiar problem or burden of an individual person with his or her unique potentials, privacy in a problem area of resolution. This person's problem is executively handled to identify and curb all contending variables that may cause friction as this persons cohabit or exist in his or her own right. The counselling strategies to be articulated here vary from person to person and so is the problem area. The counsellor gets to know the client on a personal level by



understanding and appreciating his or her feelings get in touch with what he or she wants, get to a person's problem area and enhance a relationship skill for effective functioning in the society at large. This in itself facilitates, explore and resolve personal problems and issues according to their quantum.

### **GROUP COUNSELLING**

Group counselling is a process where people who have common problem area are put together for purposes of creating enablement for their problem areas to be looked into by a special person who is trained to remove or reduced people's problem area to a palatable state.

Ipaye (1983) observed that group counselling emphasise developmental task, work with a peer group, exploring problems and feelings, group help for individuals, modify attitudes, caring, understanding group support, values and goals. This provides self understanding and the understanding of others which is quite crucial to modify digressed attitudes.

Prudence (1997) and Uwe (2000) feels that group counselling provide opportunity for small group of people to meet and share common concerns. Explore personal issues of common interest and learn new skills under guidance of a group leader who is a counsellor who navigate and proffer solutions to this common concerns which create discomforting position in the persons involved. Here

confidentiality is also maintained among the group members except if they so wish to share with other non-group members. Sometimes the variations of the problems could span through areas like depression, family relationship lapses, career decision making interpersonal conflicts, couple issues, emotional abuse and so on. What ever these people problem could be the counsellor makes use of different therapeutic methods to handle this dicey situation to a level play ground for the beneficiary of such services. Be that as it may, the conclusion should always be, giving counselling to people who are pressed in different problem areas. Thus yield effective dividends if sufficient attempt is made to recognise problems that are individual oriented and group oriented for a wholistic flush of defects, in interaction and modify therefore to acceptable positions or standards as the case may be.

## **2.15 THE ROLE OF THIRD-PARTY IN MARITAL CONFLICTS**

The third-party in a marriage relationship comprises those friends and well-wishers of the couples who make their social or symbolic co-existence. These people could make or frustrate the couple's intention for coming together. The negative aspect of the marriage could result based on their information. They could be members of the couples' immediate family. Obe (1997) believes that these immediate family relations of the couples complain about the ill behaviours of the couples to their associates in confidence. The

confidentiality purported by their friends would be made public the moment the couples give them the least opportunity to do so. The vibration could emanate from the high expectations from their daughters in-laws where criticisms are made openly on issues like the quality and quantity of food, recklessness and financial management, or backbiting in the couples' absence. In consonance with the foregoing, Atsu (2002) observes that when in-laws or friends of the couples start addressing the man as "woman wrapper", one knows that either of the couples is so co-operative that these third parties cannot intrude or they are envious of the couples' harmony with each other.

One wonders why these associates put themselves in the position of tearing apart what God had joined together. This would mean going against the Biblical injunction, which says, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). Is it right if one suggests that such offenders should face the penalty as placed for such offenders by our Creator? Atsu (2001) feels that such offenders should be made to understand that their duties as friends of the couples are:

1. Help in the family mediation in case of misunderstanding.
2. Help and support the growth of the marriage.

3. Help couples to explore issues and look at the options available to them in relation to making a success out of the marriage (Atsu 2001: 54).

## **2.16 THE EFFECT OF THE CONFLICTS ON THE COUPLES, SIBLINGS AND SOCIETY**

We have to be realistic and also recognise that disagreements are part of marriage. Two strong independent personalities will not flow together without causing some turbulence. This holds true for both Christian and non-Christian couples, whether educated or uneducated. These conflicts are not necessarily bad or sinful. The determining factor is how the spouses themselves are handle them. If a conflict is used constructively then it can strengthen and solidify a marriage covenant. But if the reverse reaction is the case then the couples, children and the society at large experience the negative effect. Conflicts denote a drawback in marriage relationship and the lingering effect of marital conflicts is divorce. When conflict results in divorce the effect is felt beyond the spouses themselves who are the main players (Makinde 1999) and Bulus 1986).

Divorce as opined by Parkykel (1969) and Weiss (1975) is a collapse of one's marriage world. At the point the couples resort to separation or divorce, there is bound to be multiple devastating effect on the entire family ranging from the wife, husband and children of

the broken family. The crumbs from such collapse are many, some of which are as follows:

### **2.16.1 Loss of Prestige**

Marriage, culturally, is a statutory requirement by every full-grown adult and if this privilege is deprived, the parties involved may lose their prestigious status in the society they belong. The society at large often time resents the status of couples from broken home. The frustration from such resentments begets low self-esteem and faulty socialisation and eventually affects the children's adjustment in the teaching/learning process. Denga (2005) observed that the human family is designed to serve as a sanctuary, a place of peace and stability where mutual live should prevail. It is meant to be a vehicle for transmitting family and consequently societal values. It is meant to bring up children in the best and most acceptable ways. For example, the crime diary as produced by the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in Obudu, one of the Local Governments in the study area affirms that most inmates in detention have the history of broken homes or parents living at different geographical locations.

### **2.16.2 Stigmatisation**

Divorce or separation has a negative effect on the children of the spouse especially the females. There is a popular adage. "Show me your friend and let me tell you who you are". This simply implies in this context that if one's mother cannot be a good housewife, what

magic can one do to have a successful marriage since there was no model to imitate. Denga (2005) still insist that family conflict generates societal conflict, which leads to national conflict. Bad children from the family are launched into society with their enormous pollution. Although it does not always follow yet it cannot be absolute. The impression formed on such family members leaves a stigma on such children, hence no sane man wishes to have a broken marriage stigma.

### **2.16.3 Sense of Insecurity**

Marriage stability goes with a lot of security cover on the spouse but where there is instability, the couples experience or suffer a sense of insecurity and rejection. Mallum (1997) believes that the idealistic goal of marriage is building social security around the spouse, but today, this security has turned out to be positive only in rare instances due to the so-called women liberation. The women now feel that they have gained independence, which contradicts the Biblical injunction of women acting as helpmates to their spouses.

### **2.16.4 Delinquency**

Love is one of the fundamental requirements and the basis a happy marriage. If couples get married without necessarily considering this prerequisite to a successful marriage, then the relationship is crash-bound, Obudho (1983) affirms that, most times

people marry for money, companionship status and other reasons that do not include the concept of love, and so they lose their marital status almost immediately the money is no longer there. Usually, when a dignified marriage relationship breaks, either of the parties develops a negative concept, which could lead to exhibition of excessive diligence in their disposition to others and proneness to adjusted behaviour.

#### **2.16.5 Pervasive Sadness**

Marriage could result in conflict if marriage guides were not properly followed or taken note of on inchoation of the union. If conflicts could not be resolved, one of the couples badly hurt, could live in pervasive SADNESS. This is a situation where a man or woman no longer enjoys the place of happiness but is perpetual agony and sadness and also becomes irritable to any recreational activities or stress-free participation.

#### **2.16.6 Poor Upbringing**

The children from divorced homes often observe some kind of confusion as they relate within their separated parents. They shuttle between their parents relocated hostile residence being conditioned in each against the other. Some times, it becomes mandatory to spend part of their time with either the mother or father intermittently. Cox and Cox (1975), and Denga (2005) observe that frequently, each

parent seeks to make the child a spy on the activities of the other for a price. With little tips on either way the child is induced to find out how the “mother spends her alimony or private lifestyle” or whether the father seems to have plenty of money and a lady-friend. In the process, these young children’s loyalty is bound to fluctuate depending on the highest bidder. The unfortunate experience of children being “bought over” by their parents may also affect their sense of moral behaviour in other spheres of life? E.g. the children may have been made to become inclined to collecting of bribes. The habit formed developed into a chronic one where they can’t achieve academically only through sorting the teachers or lecturers as the case may be and the negative fall out may keep such children miserable. They stand starkly exposed to fear, loneliness and uncertainty.

#### **2.16.7 Low Commitment to Marriage of Children from Divorced Homes**

Several studies have indicated that children from separated unions hardly enjoy a successful married life. Gleen and Shetion (1983), note thus: persons whose parents are divorced are more likely to have a collapsed relationship than persons from stable married homes. One can deduce here that the former grows up without the opportunity of having parents to oversee their day-to-day performance of the role of husband or wife. Lack of adequate



parental support after marriage. In fact, lack of sample model for growing couples will throw them off the track of achieving successful marriages.

## **2.17 COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS OF MARITAL CONFLICTS**

Having discussed problems envisaged as couples share the same roof, there is an urgent need for suggesting ways of dealing with upsurging issues prevalent in our families. When marriage begins to fail, there is usually more than one area of focus in the search for the cause(s) of the problem. It is the role of the counsellor, in line with this framework, to see that each time a given couple approaches him or her for attention to their marital difficulties, he or she should allow himself or herself to be guided by the suggestions of the following theories: The role theory, model, the psychodynamic theory framework, the structural theory model, the marital communication theory framework and the social learning theory. This is crucial since it is only after this has been done that a clear headway could be discovered for appropriate intervention to be designed for the case. To begin to do otherwise, is to function like a blind man in a thick forest. Where, due to hurts and misunderstanding, couples go round with a mask of inaccessibility to each other, it becomes necessary to encourage a playful conversation through humour or facial expression.

Bulus (1997) suggests that the counsellor can make use of eclectic theory, where many approaches are used in resolving problems in a counselling session. Behaviour modification therapy can be used interchangeably since behaviour can be learnt and relearnt. The behaviourist helps people to learn how to solve certain interpersonal, emotional and decision making problems, according to (Nweke, 1989).

In a situation where spouses are in serious chaos, one of the ways to resolve the trouble is to enter into a relaxed atmosphere where the partners dialogue to appreciate each other, instil in each other the feeling of acceptance and re-affirmation of their own acceptability. Stanford (2002) observes that couples need to be blatant in their day-to-day interactions for the peaceful co-existence as they cohabit as members of a progressive family.

At times, it is also proper to seek a third party in conflict. Here the neutral representation gives an objective assessment in the revolutionary attempt. It is also normal to follow up with a roundtable discussion where each of them bares his/her mind to settle the differences. Most times it could involve experts like marriage counsellors, religious leaders or elderly members of their families.

Where couples are no longer happy with each other, business, and communication suddenly cease, which may result in a drift. In such a context couples must be attended to by the counsellor who

would counsel them on the need to forgo self-pride, which is the source of such problems. They are schooled to accept their faults and to willingly make up immediately conflict arises.

Undiyaundeye (2002) stresses that couples should always be compassionate in their disposition to each other as they go along and sometime, the use of sex therapy could be used to seal the hatchets as well.

The counsellor should utilise religious and marriage counsellors to educate spouses on the consequences of conflict on children and other family members home.

The couples must learn to respect each other, learn to forgive and forget and also have a feeling of each other. That is, they should have emotional attachment to each other. They must, as a principle assert themselves of a better way to resolve their differences. Clarification should be sought for when in doubt of the other's views on the matters affecting them.

Bacchiocchi (2002) has the following rules or strategies for resolving marriage crisis:

1. Commitment to preserve marriage convenience. It is only within the context of a loving and irrevocable commitment that marital conflicts can be successfully resolved. When couples are determined not to let anything or anyone put asunder the marital

unions established by God (Matt. 19:6), they could risk being honest and open in discussing their differences.

2. Be honest and open in discussing conflict. The object of conflict should not be to find fault or to assess blame but to resolve problems. Marriage is not a competitive sport but a co-operative endeavour. When a problem occurs, the goal should not be to determine who is right and who is wrong, but to find a satisfactory solution.
3. Keep your anger under control. This means that truthful persons will not allow their anger to become undisciplined and uncontrolled. If a conflict gets out of control in a marriage, the only way to still the storm is for the more spiritually mature partner to break the cycle of mutual attack by refusing to retaliate for the hurt received. This is the only way to bring an end to marital fight. Nzeilo (1994) is of the view that love sharing and understanding, if upheld, brings anger under control in times of crises.
4. Choose an appropriate time to discuss a problem. The wisest man in the Bible, Solomon, noted that “there is a time for everything under the earth, a time to keep silence, and a time to speak... a time for war, and a time for peace” (Eccl. 3:7-8). This is certainly true of marital conflicts. Marriage counsellors as Prudence (1997), Ume (2000) and Undiyaundeye (2001) agree that timing is critical to constructive resolutions of conflicts. The best time to discuss

sensitive issues or serious difference is when both husband and wife are well rested, wide awake and feeling at ease. At such a favourable time one can be more rational, considerate and accommodating.

5. Stick to the issues at hand. Couples should endeavour to use that time suitable for them to address a particular issue on ground and not to bring up all their past problems. Being historical in problem discussion aggravate the problem rather than proffering solutions. Prudence (2002) emphasises that, dragging past grievances into the matter under discussion hinders the resolution of immediate conflict.
6. Listen carefully and speak tactfully. Conflicts in marriage should serve to improve communication by helping partners know better how each feels and thinks about an issue (Sotunade 1999).
7. Learning to listen carefully to the words of a mate is essential in handling conflict. Yet, this rule of effective listening is the most difficult to implement because in a conflict situation when a person is talking, the other is not listening but thinking about how to respond. The louder our voices and uglier our words, the less our spouses will listen and the poorer will be our communication. It is always important to listen carefully to understand what the real issue is. True courtesy and tactfulness in speech are not learned merely by practising a few rules of etiquette but through renewal of

the heart. It is only when the heart has been touched by the love of Christ and other guiding rules of God that people will feel motivated to listen carefully and speak tactfully to all, especially to their marital partners (Stanford 2002).

8. Be willing to forgive and to forget. Ideally, marital conflicts should always be handled in a controlled and rational way, leading to greater communication between spouses. Realistically, however, in every marriage there are times when conflict becomes uncontrolled and irrational. There are situations when, because of fatigue, pride, selfishness, anxiety, ugly side of our nature breaks out in angry outburst, cutting remarks, abusive language and irrational accusations. Such behaviour awakens the equally ugly side in our mates who may retaliate similarly with angry and abusive language. The only way to bring conflict, which has gotten out of control to a satisfactory end is for one partner to break the retaliation cycle by forgiving the other partner for the hurt received. In Christian marriage forgiveness must be patterned after the forgiveness Christ offers us. He forgives us despite the pain and sorrow we have caused Him. On the cross, Christ forgave those who crucified him, saying "Father forgive them; for they know not what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). When we forgive, we acknowledge that we have suffered a real wrong, which by God's grace we choose to forget.

Owan (2000) is of the view that if we have been wounded by the words or actions of our mates, we should refuse to retaliate by returning words or action in kindness. Such an attitude can calm tensions and create a pleasant atmosphere conducive for a rational discussion of the problem.

To break the iceberg, married people are to adapt to new changes as well as fashion their lives to make positive self-concept and have proper behavioural orientation to propagate peace and harmony as their motto. Some conflicts are inevitable in every marriage because no two persons have exactly the same personality, attitude, and values. A successful marriage is not necessarily one in which there are no conflicts but rather one which partners have learned to handle their conflicts constructively, turning them into opportunities for improving communication and building a stronger marriage covenant.

## **2.18. MARITAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

Sometimes couples experience some tensed atmosphere due to fault of theirs but to some other human factor. This requires some soothing balm to difuse this tension for effective human interaction. The dysfunction of the couples requires some special skills depending on the dose required by the couples involved to gain prominence as conflict management skills come into play for harmonious living. Esere (2000) feels that marital conflict

management skills provide the working tools for couples to realise their goals for coming together. Management skills provide the locus of couple's connubial as a unique family and so they deserve colliding through a medium of acquiring positive knowledge to achieve cordiality.

Furthermore, Markman (2001) seems to uphold the assertion of Esere when he observes that couples without expert skills of operation sometimes derail from what the ideals of marriage require. His emphasis here is that couples require some aspect of pre-marital orientation to sustain a convivial relationship by consistent appraisal of what the relationship is covering, what it has met or covered and how a make up drill can enhance a smooth operation.

A research-based relationship cure by Springer (2003) acknowledges that low level of rehearsal of management skills may get weakened if conflict management skill is not emphasised when couples are active with each other. Then what is a conflict management skill? Ogunsanya (2000) opines that conflict management skill is a special method usually introduced by counsellors to people who are experiencing trouble in their marriages or a preventing measure for couples in general to achieve resolutary approach to cordiality if anticipated conflict is experienced at all. Conflicts are bound in marriage to create change but since this tension hurts or could cause aberration in the feeling of affected



persons in marriage, some techniques to curb conflicts as management skills are necessary.

Atsu (1997), after a painstaking approach on relationship cure of couples in Calabar metropolis, concludes that management skill acquisition by couples enhances the working of marriages through the acquisition of certain skills and attitudes like anger management, depression and self esteem. The management skills enables couples to form an enduring spirit in accommodating stress; it enable them to know and practice basic interpersonal skills like active listening, clear communication, negotiating approach in settling differences. Often times the main purpose of management skills is to transfer them to those couples that experience marital problems. Essuman (1988) suggests that it takes patience and tenacity and sometimes courage from each partner to create stability in marriage. Things change for the better in marriage not by chance but because partners have understood more and become more skilful at being a couple. From the foregoing, one may be tempted to agree that one of the preferred ways for couples to achieve what they want in a relationship is using techniques, such as being proactive in decision taking issues, taking part in planning family upward mobility, problem solving approach in technical issues by caring for each other's flaws and so on.

Sometimes, other ways of expertising management skills as observed by Unachukwu (1991) and Prudence (1997) in resolving

conflicts particularly as it affects couples could be; (1) state the problem in concise manner (2) set goals on resolution (3) brainstorm in getting to a solution without judging either good or bad yet (4) conduct a trial period workability of options. (5) Evaluate the results of the outcome. If this trial approach is not workable, Etta (2002) propose that management skills stabilise in couples' interaction through the following approaches in crises point:-

- negotiation to achieve a fair hearing of each couple
- preparation that is to accept conflict calmly
- discussion by talking about facts not exaggerations as defence
- proposal/counter proposal by moving from discussion of interest to concrete suggestions
- disagreement and agreement: at the disagreement angle, remind yourself that the stress you are experiencing is not the end yet but another expected stage of marriage to make strides later in life.
- agreement gives each other a maximum of what you want with a minimum of what you do not want but verify that the two of you want something.

Finally, since conflict is inevitable in marriage, conflict management skills in marriage aggravate enough grounds for success negotiation and problem solving devices bearing in mind that negotiation is best when both parties are calm, seek mutual

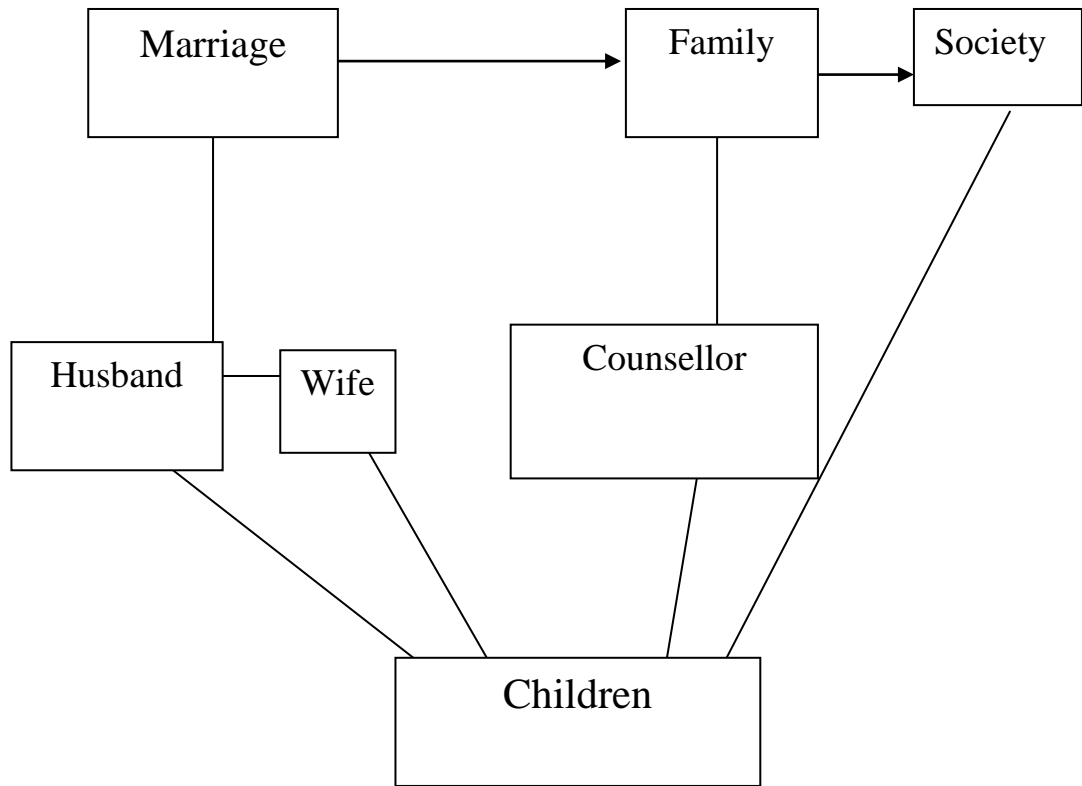
agreeable options and the determination for workability of purpose. In conclusion, Sullivan, Pasch and Bradbury (1998) believe that management skills harmonise the body, mind and spirit with a bias in the provision of participants with insight and techniques needed to understand change, positive response to marriage tenets by optimising the individuals performance in the home through adjusting to change, motivate, encourage and give positive feedback, building trust and showing respect by providing excellent ability in crises time, providing proficiency in monitoring and assessing conflict resolution through effective use of issues identification and mediation.

Be that as it may, the high point should be to demonstrate ability through preparing comprehensive assessment relating to family functions by observing and monitoring clients to detect changes in between or abnormal thoughts and develop skills in family violence and abuse.

## **2.19 EFFECTS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS ON MARITAL STABILITY.**

Marriage as a social system does not exist in a vacuum. The operations in a marriage are mutually dependent on its internal and external environments. Marriage as an organization receives inputs and transforms the inputs through the internal environments known as family into outputs to the external environment, which is the larger society.

This model further expands to show how the various inputs are transformed through the managerial functions of marriage, which are controlled by the counsellor for effective functioning of the society.



**FIG. 1: SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN MARRIAGE (ADENUGA 2004)**

A management skill of this nature is provided for those who are victims of marriage instability to soothe their emotional adjustment in the new state they find themselves. Success in marriage, as observed by Adenuga (2004), does not come through finding the right mate but by being the right mate. What this implies is that even though couples are living in conflict, it is important to provide a succour for them through display of desired behaviour for effective cohabitation. It is only when parents know their responsibility to their children that cordiality can be achieved devoid of breeding grounds for criminals. Oji (2004) contends that kids from broken homes are prone to criminal tendencies. This he urges parents to take strife of adjusting properly to marriage tenets hence the greatest problem the country has today is how to contain with the excesses from children of broken marriages. Management skills are a means of providing succour to their distressed affectionate home. Aguene (1999) feels that the family as a representative of the larger society is the place where the child learns the real behaviour patterns, values, attitudes, and norms of the society. Therefore, any form of disorder in the family will obstruct a child from gaining these advantages. To further buttress the contending views, Otite and Oginowo (1979) argue that many delinquent acts could be traced to broken homes. They explain that the quality of family life in the home determines the social standard of a child in life. Many types of deviant behaviours are

linked to disruption of good moral up-bringing of the parents. Considering the menace falling out from marriage instability, the following management skills by Nwadinagwe (2000) are recommended for a threat free living in our families and the society at large.

They include:

- Observational assessment skills, which call for verbatim, log keeping at regular intervals.
- Focused ability rating
- Creativity stimulation
- Relationships, rapport building skills
- Caring abilities and aptitude
- Encouragement skills
- Attention skills
- Innovation skills
- Cheerfulness and friendliness skills
- Tolerance skills
- Patience skills
- Flexibility and adaptability skills
- Socio drama skills
- Quarrelling skills.

Ezema (2001) feels that more often couples that were emotionally immature fall prey to marital problems. If this is the case,

an observational assessment skill could be prescribed for such couples on stable married couples, which could be interchanged with verbatim or log keeping of desired behaviour at regular intervals for imitation. This does not mean that the emotionally mature ones do not experienced stress. Be it as it may, some innovative and more stimulating habits, like friendly companionship at recreation and other unofficial activities to relieve stress could yield some good results.

Counselling involves one with a problem that cannot help herself or himself at such critical moments, and the other a trained and experienced person with a clear conscience and who has the ability to procure solutions to the problem presented. Okpede (1990) strongly believes that in a traditional society, the literate people particularly are viewed as passing through a process by which society/parents, community and friends move the individual by subjecting him to a selected and controlled environment aimed at assisting him attain social competence and self-actualization. A significant fact of a literate person is to contribute as much as possible to the cultural integration of his learners.

In consonance with Okpede (1990), Edet (1992) and Butswat (1995) maintain that a management skill for unstable marriages is to create marital stability through confidence building, creation and show of affection, reduce parental and relatives intrusion to the barest minimum and create avenue for communication flow between



the couples in order to easily present grievances and avoidance of conflict among couples. Finally, one may think that following all that has been said by the authorities above, initiating holiday trips for couples to exercise intimate interaction rejuvenates their lost affections and promotes lively and enviable interpersonal relationship at personal and societal levels. By and large, Afu (1992) believes that the society counts on literate individuals to develop in their onlookers a common core of shared beliefs, attributes, values and underlying knowledge for peaceful co-existence and finding solace as they interact at different levels as individuals belonging to the same social milieu. The conclusion therefore, is, literate people are expected to live above board for the less privileged educationally to imbibe in them the positive fall out from their dispositions to improve the moral of the society in general and educe those hidden attributes of marriage to bear. Even as the negative fall out are brought to bear by the counsellor, a programme evaluation is required to assess the stated conflict management's skills for effectiveness and necessary corrections as the undesired behaviour give way to the desired one.

## **2.20            CONSTRAINTS ON THE EFFECTIVE MARITAL COUNSELLING IN NIGERIA**

Being a recent phenomenon, there are some constraints on the effective marital counselling in Nigeria. Mallum (1982) presents some of these cogs in the wheel as shortage of manpower, since

professional counsellors are few in the country and inadequate recognition and appreciation of counsellors' roles. It is not always easy to initiate new things. Some people even still confuse "counsellor" with "councillor". There is also language barrier. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society made up of more than 250 ethnic groups. Most professionals use English in discharging their duties. It is regrettable that in the study area, Northern Cross River State, some people do not understand English and also the existence of varied dialects; this becomes a constraint on the effective family counselling in the traditional settings.

Since counselling is a recent phenomenon in Nigeria, coupled with the language barrier, to accept the counsellors and exhume the social personal problems to them (counsellors) is a bottleneck. The problem of acceptability could be surmounted by the intensified effort of the professional in the field. Nurses, social workers and teachers are already known in the society. Denga (1982); Denga (1990); and Mallum (1992) opined. "Who is the counsellor" impact of the counselling are gradually being felt. Counselling and marriage are going on among the school counsellors and the orthodox clergyman respectively. Owing to the recent nature of the discipline in the school curriculum, the trained counsellors who are actually performing their duty on the field are very few compared to the number of nurses and teachers as a whole. The fewness in conjunction with recently

introduced counselling enunciates and trigger bottleneck in the area of power needs of the society. Moreover, marriage counsellors are not even many; rather the vocational counsellors combine the dual roles in the Nigerian settings (Bisong 2002).

Ochai (1985) and Undiyaundeye (2002) have identified impediments in sorting out some sensitive marital problems in the society. Their observation was that many couples saddled with marital problem, refuse counselling. For instance, problems of sexual frequency, manners inhibiting sexual drive, impotence, female frigidity, etc, are not revealed to the counsellor in a counselling session. It has been experienced by marriage counsellor on the field that persistent and chronic family conflicts stem or originate from sexual dysfunction of either of the spouses. To hide these problems and conceal them in the heart are constraints on marriage and family counselling practice. Smalley and Scott (1979); Nwoye (1991); and Mambula (2002) have noted that the Europeans are diplomatic, Americans are pragmatic and are more open to counselling than Africans and Nigerians in particular, let alone the Northern Cross Riverians, who are generally very shy.

Researches carried by Nwoye (1991) and Odokoya (2000) have shown that counselling faces problems such as the following:

- \* The presence of a handicapped member, unable to express himself adequately.

- \* The problem of lack of verbal fluency on the part of one or more family members of the target family.
- \* Presence of a dominant and sulky member within the target client's family.
- \* Fear, anxiety or difference, which prevent one and more members from making adequate contribution to the discussion at hand.
- \* The nature of the problem itself, which may be too embarrassing for members to talk about freely.
- \* Presence of antagonistic or recalcitrant sub-groups or allies friends within the family.
- \* The size of the family may constitute a problem. This may make it extremely difficult if not impossible to evaluate the enormous number of interpersonal relationships and reactions which may occur.

It is these problems, which are usually confronted in conducting any counselling with the whole family groups at a time, that have led some authorities to propose that at times, it may be more beneficial to conduct dyadic or triadic interviews than doing so with a large group. Counsellors should, however, continue to intensify their efforts by enlightening the clients on these problems and ensuring counselling confidentiality. With time, the situation will change for the better.

## **2.21 THE NEED FOR MARITAL COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS**

Observing the current waves of marriage and family breakdown in the contemporary society, pre-marital counselling is necessary in order to acquaint youngsters with the actualities in marriage. The pre-marital counselling in the senior secondary schools and institutions of higher learning will afford intended spouses the opportunity of being informed and also create awareness of the adjustment in sexual, social, personal, economic and financial problems in marriage settings. Out of infatuation, some young people enter into marriage contract and when this desire is weaned, conflicts erupt. Adekoya (2002) and Ochai (1985) note with dismay that our society has been bastardised with broken homes, and elders and parents do no longer ponder on the causes of these problems. It is better to prevent rather than cure. The United States of America though has one of the highest number of marriage dissolutions in the world, her citizens still continue to assess their prospective mates in evaluating and examining the relationship between the female folk and male counterparts (Adalikwu 2003). Successful marriages are not attained by a sudden flight, but through marital and pre-marital education. Bagarozzi and Reuben (1968) rightly observe that the romantic and amorous urge in the youngsters couples with unrealistic expectations, if not elucidated by the professionals, would lead the prospective couples into unhappy and strained marriage. To clear

this nightmare and the hallucinated urge and expectations in the minds of the people who either have been overwhelmed by the nets already or trying to enter the net-marriage counselling ideal provides the proper ages for marriage consummation.

Ochai (1989) and Mambula (2000) state the objectives of pre-marriage education as deduced from the goals of education. These goals include:

- (a) To provide education and information about married life to the prospective mates who are thinking about marriage
- (b) To assist prospective mates to clarify the differences, difficulties and expectations in marriage.
- (c) To acquaint the prospective spouses with true life and realities in marriage life. Onyejiaku (1987) contends that even on the altar the road is not all roses.
- (d) To enable the youngsters to have insight into the marriage.
- (e) To assist the prospective mates to attain self-actualisation in marriage. Since two identical twins vary in strength and weakness, husband and wife certainly vary more than otherwise.

The pre-marital programme is designed in the institute of marriage to meet people of varied phenomena as follows:

- (i) Dating couples
- (ii) Couples who are still dependent on others
- (iii) The occupation and qualification of the in-laws
- (iv) The couples are still teenager and fantasy
- (v) The religious denomination variation, which may be in couple with juvenile life.
- (vi) The general public.

The religious leaders and medical counsellors have observed that sexual difference in terms of frequency, manner of sexual relations are difficulties in marriage that counselling may shy away from. Israel and Memser (1962) concede that the most difficult aspect of pre-marital counselling, where other conflicts emanate from is the sexual incompatibility and adjustment.

Experience has shown that frequent fighting and quarrels in the midnight, that is difficult to narrate, are caused by the sexual problems, premarital information about sexual compatibility and adjustment is therefore timely in the schools. Onyejiaku (1987) points out that at the school times, the personality, self-concept and personal relationship between prospective mates are discerned if they are educated in that direction.

The role sexual intercourse plays in marriage is better told and disseminated to the intending spouses. In most cases, expression of love, responsiveness from the mates' readiness, willingness and importance of sex education and interest in many children are some of the things pre-marital counselling involves. The need to be open to counsellors as regards problems, since marriage is not always a bed of roses, should be disseminated to the students.

## **2.22 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MARITAL CONFLICTS AND MANAGEMENT**

Several scholars have conducted many empirical studies on marital conflicts and management skills. Notably amongst them is, Olson, Fournier and Druckman (1986). A data from 8,383 couples in USA was collected across nine dimensions of their marriage. The data was analyzed in two phases – cluster structure seeking and classification phase – by three different clustering methods, namely inverse factor analysis, hierarchical agglomerative, and K- means cluster analysis. Seven types of marriage were identified: Devitalized couples (40%), financial focused couples (11%), conflicted couples (14%), Traditional couples (10%), Balanced couples (8%), Harmonious couples (8%) and vitalized couples (9%). The multidimensional profiles were described in relation to global measure of marital satisfaction, demographic characteristics, and clinical and research implications. ENRICH, a computerized marriage –



assessment tool that evaluates couples' problem area and strengths along various dimensions of the relationship was established.

The major question in this study was, what are the major dimensions of the marital relationship along which marriages can be classified most efficiently? The major objective of the study was to derive marital ties based on couples' perception of various dimensions of the relationship and to describe the profiles of relationship across these dimensions. Based on the objectives, a conceptual and methodological issue in empirical typology of marital systems was described along with attempts to resolving them.

The 8,383 married couples who participated in the marital enrichment programme, and who had taken ENRICH between 1983 and 1985 were also included in this study. Their scores obtained from the ENRICH computer records were thus: The mean ages were 33 for the males (range: 18-66) and 32 for females (range: 17-64). The average couple had been married for ten years and had 2-3 children. 80% of the couples were in their first marriage 16% had remarried (previously divorced or widowed). The majority of the couples in the sample were 80% Christians and had at least some college education. The conclusion drawn from the study was that couples varied not only in degree of satisfaction with their marriage, but also in their level of distress with various facets of their relationship. It is only necessary for clinicians to get reliable information about marital

relationships that can be useful for assessment and intervention and that is based on valid scientific procedures rather than on idiosyncratic impression. Fournie & Olson (1993), (1992) and (1987), studied couples who took part in PREPARE / ENRICH programme for distress couples. Their assertion was that even though most couples are in distress and abusive relationship, they would prefer to stay married rather than separate, particularly those with children, which means they desire a management skill to sustain their desire. Gottman and Hahlweg (1993) believe, that any marriage relationship that has a deficit in conflict management predicts divorce because a standardized management programme depicts cordiality in couples' relationship.

Due to the rising divorce rates over the years, an increase in marriage interest has developed for predicting couples' compatibility and marriage success. Previously, other researchers like Yang, Chen, Choi and Zou (2000), Thornton (1989), House (1981), Hendrick and Hendrick (2000) and Himes (1980) had a study on the mode of assisting couples have marital harmony. Evidence of these studies proved that couples lack enough information on marriage at the stage of engagement, and inadequate methodology of the assessments of premarital programmes. In order to have divorce – preventing efforts there were three assessment tools needed. These were: (1) identify factors that predict divorce (2) Assess couples on

these factors to determine their strength and weaknesses (3)

Develop specific interventions to deal with the couple's problem areas. The instrument used here was PREPARE: a 125-item inventory designed to assess strengths and weaknesses in 11 relationship areas. The scale was Base Theoretical and Empirical indications of critical tasks related to marital adjustment in couples who are experiencing stress to provide succour as they cohabit. The PREPARE had concurrent validity with a significant relationship with marital adjustment at  $P < .01$ . It also had internal consistency (.7), as well as test –retest reliability (.78) as posited by Notorious and Markman (1993) and Hahlweg and Markman (1993). The resolution reached at the end of the study was that a management skill for couples diminishes marital discord, interpersonal conflicts and the focus of counsellors should lay more emphasis on stress management techniques and much more that helps to relieve stress and build positive mental health as well as encourage effective communication among couples to remove areas of doubt in their relationship to guarantee self esteem for harmonious living.

In Nigeria also, Ogunsanya (2000) studied some fifty couples in an encounter weekend in the Redeemed People's Mission Church in Ogun State University. These couples had marital problems ranging from communication breakdown to inability to exercise their conjugal rights as couples. The objectives were to create communication outlet

for cordiality to be revitalized. From the results, it was discovered that work family conflict imposes negative influences upon psychological conditions including moodiness and incompetence in couples concerned. A suggestion for the introduction of social support service in work places was recommended since there is a spill over of stress from home to office. To buttress this in a larger light, Aryee and Luki (1999), Beehr (1985) strongly support the assertion and further added that supervision support is important to create a healthy working atmosphere in offices. Schmelz (1997) and Counts (1991) also feels that social support service is good for employees to reduce withdraw tendency and to increase productivity.

Eseré and Idowu (2000) undertook a study of couples in Ilorin metropolis; using transactional analysis and came out with the result that for effective marital harmony to thrive, couples should be encouraged to make complementary transactions. Here a message sent from a specific ego state gets the predicted response from the ego state of the other person. Assuming couples had some unusual love misunderstanding during the day, at night they must share their bed. Send a message to your partner by exhibiting a behaviour that he or she cherished most in you, in no time all the accumulated aggression would give way to a positive response and there would be a reunion of the two.

Furthermore, Markman, Cox, Stanley and Kessler, (1996) feel that marital problems are associated with decreased work productivity, especially for men. A variety of studies suggest that the seeds of marital distress and divorce are there for married couples when they say "I DO" The studies showed that premarital or early marital variables can differentiate between couples who will do well and those who will not do well with 80% up to 94% accuracy (Clements, Stanley, and Markman, (1997); Foulers, Montel, and Olson (1996), Gottma, (1994), Karney and Bradbuny (1995), Kelly and Conley (1987), and Rogge and Bradbury (1995) had similar ideas when at different levels muted the PREP (Preventive and Relationship enhancement programme).

PREP is a research-based skills building curriculum designed to help partners say what they need to say, get to the heart of problems, avoid standoffs and connect with each other instead of pushing each other away. PREP emphasizes strategies under two crucial frameworks: strategies geared toward lowering risk factors and strategies for raising protective factors to help marriages succeed. Some couples were observed overtime and compared with those who did not. Beneficiaries of PREP have low rate of premarital break up & post marital divorce. They also have high levels of positive communication and low level of negative communication immediately following the programme. It is important to note that after

4 or 5 years after training. It is also good for couples to review material from time to time hence beyond that; the effects may probably weaken over time if the spouses have reached their goal. Odukoya (2004) seems to agree with the assertion when she says people should not be condemned when they are exhibiting wrong behaviour, rather, they should be encouraged to be acquainted with the right things in life. Gottman (1994) Markman; and Hahlweg (1993) observed that mismanagement and negative interaction in marriage predict both marital distress and negative effects for children. This was further upheld by Gottman (1994), Markman; and Hehlweg (1983), Clements; Stanley; Markman (1997); Cowan; and Cowan (1992); and Grych; Fincham (1990) when they observe thus: Lack of proper management skills in handling marital discord disrupts the future of the family prospects. Be that as it may, the final arbiter of a successful marriage is assumed to occupy a management skill that would bring everlasting succour to distressed couples which should bring home smiles once again to couples and their immediate family and society in general.

### **2.23 SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This section reviews the concepts of marriage and family as the two terms are interwoven and umbrellaic. Smalley and Scott (1979) point out that many persons enter marriage contract with various reasons and expectations without a clear view of marriage

cycle. Such spouses, according to them (Smalley and Scott), fall by the wayside when the realities of marriage life manifest. Beatle (1964), on the other hand, attempts defining marriage as ... "More than simply legalised sequel union between man and a woman so that the children of the spouses are recognised as legitimate offspring of both partners.

The marriage road is not all roses. Thorns and waves in the marriage are concerns of everybody in the community. Some community members contribute positively whereas others contribute negatively to the marital conflicts. All the same, Springer (2002) is of the view that couples should treat each other with sensitivity for effective relationship.

Hodges (1971) compares marriage to a cage of birds; while some birds want to enter others that are already inside want to get out of it. Notwithstanding, continuity of marriage institution continues to persist as long as there are human lives on the physical planet. Hoebel (1966) asserts from his findings that only few societies abhor divorce, 4% out of 271 disdains divorce, 24% allows it and 72% permit it on conditions which include cordial consent and incompatibility.

Nwoye (1991) points out that marriage separation brings about distress, loneliness, stress and loss of reputation in the public. Ochai (1985) opines that marriage problems emanate from lack of proper

information and immaturity of the spouses. According to Ra'ab (1991), children from the broken homes suffer from:

- (i) Extreme emotional deprivation.
- (ii) Failure from emotional reason as to the people's internalise principles in which they feel that people and environment is hostile to them.
- (iii) Displaying aggression towards others and authorities.

Bagarozzi and Reuben (1968) contend that many prospective couples have romantic notions and unrealistic expectations before marriage. All these untested assumptions were not critically examined and when realities of marriage life come, they are found wanting, hence marriage dissolution. Ochai (1983) and Onyejiaku (1987) opt for the introduction of marriage counselling in the senior secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. The pre-marriage counselling, according to them, has definite goals and objectives since prevention is better than cure.

Finally, despite the fact that Ochai (1983) and Onyejiaku (1987) view the institution of marriage at various view points, their works and those of other foreign and local researchers on the phenomenon under study, failed short of explaining how marital conflict management skills can help distressed couples resolve their conflict, and most importantly, how couples can handle their conflict



effectively without resorting to divorce and separation. This obvious lapse justifies the relevance and rationale of this study. In other words, it is the failures of these previous studies to demonstrate how conflict management skills help couples handle their conflict prudently that gives impetus to this current study, especially in the area under study.

The study is also designed to fill and replace the harsh environment existing between couples, especially educated ones. Such a gap translates into incessant fighting and eventual home desertion by couples. If couples who are educated can read in between the lines to discover the root of their problems as couples, a final solution to harsh hassles could be reached.

Various ways and processes of synthesis, findings and conclusions are depicted in conclusion as (Obe 1997) identified;

*A wedding is not a marriage. A wedding is only the beginning of an undertaking that may or may not someday develop into a marriage. What the couples have on their wedding day is not the key to a beautiful garden, but just a vacant lot and a few gardening tools. P; 25*

The advancement to knowledge is that management skills complement marital strategies in realising marital harmony, and effective harmonization of other management skills breeds positive results, prevents cracks in a relationship and enhances relationship cure programmes for couples.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 METHODS AND PROCEDURE**

In every research endeavour, the method and procedure is usually the most crucial aspect since it deals with the methods and procedures upon which the entire exercise in the study rests. It is the actual plan, structure and strategy often adopted for effective answering of the research questions and at the same time control variance. It is discussed under these sub-headings; research design, area of study, population and sample, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection and development of the instruments, the procedure for data collection (administration of data) and the methods of data analysis.

### **3.1 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study adopted two research designs, which are survey design and quasi experimental pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental research design.

#### **3.1.1 Survey Design**

This design provides the researcher with methods of studying a large population of people and other phenomena. It is appropriate and economical because the representative samples form large population that permits inferences from generalizations to population

that could be too large and extensive to study as a whole at a given time.

The present study used survey design geared towards testing opinions or couples regarding issues of marital conflict, that contribute to an enhancement conviviality in marriage. The relevance of this method for this particular work has been emphasized in different ways, as Kerlinger (1973) and Mailumo (1988) observe that in survey research, representative samples of small or large populations are studied in order to determine the character of the whole population, which may be of interest to the researcher.

As applicable here, the characteristics of the large population to be examined within the context of the survey are used to evaluate marriage situations under different conflict scenarios to do with gender, family structure and forms, family size, and socio-economic status conditions of couples in the study area.

### **3.1.2 Quasi Experimental Design (Pre-test, Post test)**

The study adopted quasi experimental pretest posttest design. According to Modumogu (2002) the research investigates possible cause and effect relationship by exposing experimental group for treatment condition and compares the results to control group. The participants were randomly assigned to two groups thus

Group I: Experimental exposed to treatment

Group II: Control (no treatment)

In this study group 1 were treatment group while group 2 served as control group.

In view of the numerous dependent variables of the study, to analyse and discover the effect of management skills on marital stability. It became imperative to place this work on more than one design to find out the relationship between those couples who attended a management skill programme, and those who did not.

This is an experimental aspect of the study design where members of the sample were evaluated on how much they react in different circumstances. After this, they were separated into two groups where therapy skills were taught to one group excluding the other groups, and another evaluation taken after the skill acquisition training to the experimental group.

In this case, the experimental group has a pre-test of the distress couples management skills questionnaire administered and a treatment of tips on marital adjustment for couples to achieve cordiality in marriage, and finally a post-test was conducted with the administration of distress couples management skills questionnaire again. For the control group, there was no pre-test, no treatment, but there was a post-test conducted with the administration of distress couples management skills questionnaire.

Tips on marital adjustment are simply a litany of items required by couples to facilitate and enhance amorous feelings. For example

appreciation of each other through presentation of gifts on birthdays or special days. Identify all erotic zones of your partner in order to ignite sensitivity to erotic feelings. It requires fairness to all concerned to always use acceptable positions to couples to rejuvenate joy and satisfaction.

### **3.1.3 Rationale for the Two Designs**

The researcher decided to hang this study on two designs in order to give the research a broad-based analysis. The provision of the survey enabled the selection of representative samples from the entire study population from which generalizations were made. Flexibility of survey designs allows for the variety of methods of collecting data. Techniques such as observation, interview, and questionnaire are allowed in survey design.

Furthermore, the quasi-experimental pre-test pos-test design provided for comparing what transpires in the experimental and control groups and drawing a conclusion of the effect of the skill the researcher is providing on those who did not take part in the skill programme. It provided the bases to assess both the effect of pre-test and the interaction between pre-test and treatment condition.

## **3.2 AREA OF STUDY**

The study was carried out in the northern part of Cross River State. The study covered churches within the northern senatorial

zone comprising Obudu, Obanliku, Bekwarra, Ogoja and Yala Local Government areas. The people of the northern Cross river or Northern Senatorial Zone are mostly civil servants, subsistent farmers and petty traders. They are mostly monogamous in marital affiliations and are mostly Christians. The justification for the choice of this area of study in the first instance, was in relation to its educational and cultural homogeneity. The Northern Senatorial Zone of Cross River is contiguous and hence homogenous in its characteristics. In addition, the choice of this study area was as a result of its geographical proximity to the researcher (who comes from one of the local government area) and also to enhance a thorough monitoring of the research subjects or respondents with a view to ensuring the validity and reliability of the study.

### **3.3 THE POPULATION**

The National Population Commission (1991) gave the population of Cross River North to be 468,531, which forms (30%) of the net population of the state. This record also showed that out of these, the female constitute 233, 156 (14.4%) while males constitute 235, 475 (15.6%). These figures, show that the men out number the women in the study area (Ministry of Local Government Marriage Registry Obudu). According to Obe (1997) and Modumogu (2002), Cross River State belongs to the South-South zone that was created among the five educational zones. These zones were created based

on educational, socio-cultural and language affinities common to each zone. In this instance, Kerlinger (1973) and Adamu (1995) state that a target population is the entire population targeted by the researcher to cover within his or her investigation. The target population in this work embraces:

- a. All literate couples in Pentecostal and orthodox churches in the Northern Senatorial District.
- b. Distress couples that attended management skills programme
- c. Rev. fathers, pastors, traditional counsellors within the study area.
- d. Social welfare staff and marriage registrars in the local government councils.
- e. All marriage encounter participants and instructors.

The population of this study is made up of all married couples located in two hundred and sixty (260) churches scattered all over the rural and sub-urban areas of Northern Cross River State.

The study area was selected following the researcher's observation of the trend of family breakdown and conflict that have become predominant in this area. As a counsellor, the researcher is always confronted with cases of marital conflicts. This is against the cultural ethos of the people, who believe that marriage among them is for life, but this is no longer the case as the rate of divorce has increased in recent times.

Literate couples especially are selected because they are the ones who often seek counselling services and it has become necessary to investigate these conflict management skills placing the programme side by side the marital condition in the study area.

The couples so targeted for this study come from different social backgrounds and it is envisaged that these home background resource differences formed the basis for their responses. Most of the couples are within the age bracket of 18-30 years for women and 25 – 40 years for men. They were drawn from both polygamous and monogamous homes, large and small family sizes, higher and lower socio economic status as well as from families located in both rural and urban areas. These formed stratified groups for the study. The population of the samples excluded couples who are no longer together. The sample population was thus couples with at least an average ability to read and write.



**Table 1: Profile of the Couples and Population**

Sample type	Target population
Number of churches	260
Population of couples	12, 375

**Source: Borg (1983)**

### **3.4 SAMPLE**

One important decision to be taken is whether all members of the target population were to be studied. However, in view of the rather large size of the population (12,375) a sample was obtained. In like manner, the two hundred and sixty churches in the northern part of Cross River State were numbered, some to be studied at a given opportunity of this nature. Therefore, an appropriate sample of 20% of the population size was obtained as representative sample.

This study was restricted to educated couples that have been married for between five to twenty-five years. These group of people are expected to have better understanding of the issues raised as pertaining to marital conflicts and will give more valid responses for the analyses of the research hypotheses so formulated. Educated couples of long standing marriage were so selected because they are experienced enough in marriage matters for objective assessment of the contending problem. Couples above twenty-five years of marriage were exempted for the reason that, they have stabilized in their association with each other, while the ones under five years are yet to properly adjust to the tenets of marriage and so were exempted from the exercise.

Five Local Government Areas (LGA) in Cross-River north were selected for the administration of the research questionnaire. All the churches in each LGA were categorized into two broad divisions thus

orthodox (Catholic, Lutheran, ECWA etc) and Pentecostals (Redeemed, Deeper Life, Living Faith). The questionnaire was administered on 400 randomly selected married individuals in each of the five Local Government Areas totally 2000 individuals in the study as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Distribution of Sample by Local Government Area for the Administration of Questionnaire.**

LGA	Church Sampled	Church Status	People Sampled
Yala	St Paul Okpoma	Orthodox	200
Yala	Presbyterian, Yache	Pentecostal	200
Obanliku	Master Redemption Sankwala	Orthodox	200
Obanliku	Assemblies of God Bendigie	Pentecostal	200
Obudu	St Charles Catholic church, Obudu	Orthodox	200
Obudu	Assemblies of God church, Ohong	Orthodox	200
Ogoja	St. Benedicts church Igoli	Orthodox	200
Ogoja	Christ for the World, Abakpa	Pentecostal	200
Bekwarra	St. Peter Abucheche	Orthodox	200
Bekwarra	Deeper Life Bible Church Ukpah	Pentecostal	200
	Total		2000

In order to respond to the intervention study, one hundred couples with known family troubles were selected on the spread below as part of the intervention counselling study. Considering that each selected individual in this part of the study has different and unique family problem that will require attention, the sample size in this part of the study was specifically limited to ensure that each case was intervened appropriately. To achieve this the following sampling distribution frame was used as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Distribution of Couples by LGA for the Intervention Study.**

LGA	Experimental	Control	Total
Yala orthodox	10	10	20
Yala Pentecostal	10	10	20
Obanliku orthodox	10	10	20
Obanliku Pentecostal	10	10	20
Obudu orthodox	10	10	20
Obudu Pentecostal	10	10	20
Ogoja orthodox	10	10	20
Ogoja Pentecostal	10	10	20
Bekwarra orthodox	10	10	20
Bekwarra Pentecostal	10	10	20
Total	100	100	200

From each of these church divisions in each Local Government Area, ten individuals participated in the intervention study. Ten individuals from each church were stratified in order to include purposeful response for the experimental group while the remaining ten joined the control group. All the 200 individuals in this study were evaluated based on their perception and possible reaction in different marital problem areas after which those in the experimental group underwent a total of 40 hours of counselling spread into four weeks based on Esere (2002) and Modumogu (2002) prepared conflict models. This model prepares couples in conflict on how to curb stress accruing from it. After the intervention session was complete, another assessment of these 200 participants in the study was done. The result from the pre-test and that of post-test was evaluated to know whether the intervention had made any significant changes to the persons in the experimental group.

### **3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

For the purpose of finding out the effects of management skills on marital stability among couples, stratified random sampling was used by the researcher. Several researches on the field agree that randomisation is the process through which every member of the target population is given equal opportunity to be selected.

In this study investigation, stratified random sampling was used in order to include purposeful respondents. Prior to the sampling, that

target population was divided into five groups in accordance with the Christian denominations, gender, family size, status and settings. After the classification of the target population, simple and replacement randomisation was used using “hat and draw” technique.

Pieces of papers on which “yes” or “no” was written on them, neatly squeezed and mixed up in a hat, ready for picking by the field assistant. The names of the churches and the couples within the stratification were written on a separate sheet of paper. Each time one picked yes, the name of the church denomination or couple was ticked. The piece of paper is again squeezed and thrown back to the hat, well stirred before next picking. The procedure continued till the required sample was selected for the study.

### **3.6 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ADMINISTRATION**

Two instruments were employed in this study namely; questionnaire and distress couples checklist.

The marital adjustment scale questionnaire has two parts; part I dealt basically with the demographic and or personal attribute status of the respondents. This part had fourteen (14) variables that were used to collect results across some general characteristics of the individuals. The second part of the questionnaire measured issues of marital crises using the likert scale. The part two had a total of 42 items distributed into six sub-sections thus:



**Section A:** This is an eleven-item scale that measured the conception of marriage by married and literate men and women in relation to marital adjustment.

**Section B:** This is an eight-item scale that measured the attitude of Christian literate couples and their traditionally married counterparts to marital problems.

**Section C:** This is a five-item scale that measured the attitude of extended and literate family members regarding the causes of marital conflicts.

**Section D:** This is a seven-item scale that measured married and literate couples' view on the causes of marital conflict.

**Section E:** This is a four-item scale that measured age of marriage as a factor in marital conflict.

**Section F:** This is a seven-item scale that measured educational attainment among couples and their effectiveness in managing marital conflict.

Couples checklist questionnaire: This is a ten-item scale that was used to measure how couples feel about their spouses. The couples rated the statements using the likert five-point scale consisting of attention, love, commitment, respect and pleasure. The instrument aimed at achieving three purposes as postulated by Borg and Gall (1983) and Modumogu (2002); they stated that it is;

1. to assess the effect of experimental treatment relative to the control treatment.
2. to assess the effect of pre-test
3. to assess the interaction between the pretest and the post-test to evaluate the treatment condition.

### **3.6.1 Procedure for Development of Instrument**

A number of steps were taken to ensure that relevant items were selected for the study. The researcher first of all reviewed some literature on conflict management. This literature revealed that for any marital skill programme to be meaningful, the components in it must be relevant to the needs of a particular marriage relationship. (Ogunsanya 2001 and Esere 2002). In conformity with the foregoing statement, the researcher composed possible variables, which are conflict-prone in a marriage dyad. These variables were concepts easy to understand but were critical to the comprehension of ideas central to the subject matter. Phrases with multiple meanings were discarded. The couples were directed to tick statements that were relevant to their own situation. Their responses were marked and collated. The distress management skill questionnaire contained a litany of the likely items required in the gingering of couples' sensitivity to one another. The clients here were also expected to tick the options in the checklist relevant to each respondent's problem or issue.

### **3.6.2 Validation of the Instrument**

The researcher made assessment of pre-test and post-test and was subjected to expert judgement to ascertain their content validity by experts in test and measurement and English respectively. The experts were requested to judge the appropriateness of the instruments, that is, to guarantee that the instruments completely and consistently matched the objectives whose mastery they were designed to assess. They were also requested to judge the clarity of expressions to ensure that there was no ambiguity in interpreting the instruments, and to ensure that the item format was not so complex as to require several readings before the nature of the task could be comprehended. Corrections were made based on the suggestions made by the experts. The pilot study was used to further validate the instruments.

### **3.6.3 Reliability of Instrument**

To establish the reliability of the instrument the data was computed using split half method. The split half approach to finding the reliability of any measuring instrument involves splitting the items of the instrument into two halves but administered at the same time to a group of individuals and correlated to give an index of reliability of the entire instrument. To obtain the reliability co-efficient of the whole

test from the correlation between the two halves spearman – Brown prophecy formular was used to step up the co-efficient as follows:

$$r_{11} = 2r_{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \frac{1}{2}$$

$$1 + r_{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \frac{1}{2}$$

where  $r_{11}$  = the reliability coefficient of the whole test.

$r_{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \frac{1}{2}$  = the reliability coefficient of the half test.

On the whole the reliability of the entire instrument using the split half coefficient was 0.92.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The instruments were administered to the stipulated respondents by the researcher with the aid of research assistants. The permission of the churches leader was sought for to use members as research assistants. This assistants, were purely those who can read and write. The questionnaires were administered to 400 individual couples in each local government. These comprised 200 literate and married individual couples of orthodox church and 200 literate and married individual couples of Pentecostal church who attended the church service. After giving out the instruments to the respondents, they were advised to ask questions in the course of the exercise, especially where they have problems in which case the researcher offered explanations where applicable. The filled questionnaires were returned at the respondents' convenience after

church service. All the same most of the questionnaires were filled and returned.

The respondents were to indicate their opinions about each item statement of the checklist or questionnaire, which were anchored on a continuum of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each item of the questionnaire or checklist was to be responded to in one of the five options anchored on a continuum of strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A) undecided (UND) strongly disagree (SD) Disagree (D). Using this set of graduated response options, each respondent indicated his or her degree of agreement with the statement. Some of the items were keyed positively and others negatively. For a positively keyed item, a response of strongly agree (SA) merited 5, Agreed (A) 4, undecided merited 3 strongly disagree merited 2 and disagreed merited 1. On the whole, negatively keyed items were assigned values in reverse order. These response options were weighted and by summing up of on individual response to all the statements. A total score was obtained which helped to determine the persons' standing on the attribute being measured.

In the interventionist checklist, the respondents were grouped based on the nature of their marital problem. Those with similar problems were grouped together and those with deviations were separated. The detailed explanation is presented in Appendix C.

### **3.7.1 Treatment Procedure**

The treatment schedule covered a period of four weeks. Each treatment took place once a week during which different marital harmony skills were taught. The control group had no pre-test or treatment due to the purposive intention to test the management skills on the experimental group. The experimental group had a pre-test, treatment and post-test of the intervention study for inferences to be drawn.

The treatment for the experimental group was couples check list to find out things that could help couples ginger their feelings for each other. The couples fill the items on the questionnaire according to their peculiar desire to achieve effective interaction as couples. Even though the control group did not have the benefits of the management skills programme acquisition, they were given the couples checklist to fill for a comparative response assessment. All these were done under the strict supervision of the researcher and her trained assistants to avoid interference with the grouping.

**Table 4: Treatment Procedure**

Group	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Control Group	General introduction on marital issues e.g. love, care of each other.	Ways of creating and arousing amorous feelings in a marriage relationship	Family interaction e.g. spouses relations, friends and business association	Supporting roles of couples in absence and other environmental requirements by couples.
Experimental group	General introduction and couples personal dozier. Look into core problem areas and formulate curbing strategies	Administer group and individual counselling based on the couple's peculiarities. Give pre-test	Give gingering tips like calling each other special pet names to lubricate each other's aura and evaluate at the end if objectives were met.	Create a forum for the possibility of arriving at convivial interaction and give post-test for conclusion to be drawn.

The treatment procedure provided a level-playing ground for the couples to revitalize their lost love and rejuvenate the purpose of initiating their association as people who can share their lives in one roof for family union.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected using the instruments were analysed so as to enable the researcher to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for social science (SPSS). The research questions posed in this study were descriptively analysed using means and standard deviations. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 5% level of significant using inferential statistics namely: t-test statistics, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The following procedures were adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated in this study.

Hypothesis I which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of marital adjustment by literate couples irrespective of gender. This was tested using independent t-test statistics.

Hypothesis II which states that there is no significant difference between couples married in the church and others (tradition or court) in their attitude towards marital problem was tested using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA).



Hypothesis III which states that there is no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict was tested using independent t-test statistics.

Hypothesis IV which states that there is no significant difference in the level of conflict occurrence by those that married early and those that married late was tested using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Hypothesis V which states that there is no significant difference in the ways couples handle marital conflict based on their level of educational attainment was tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Hypothesis VI which states that there is no significant different in the level of marital conflict management between couples who attended management skills programme and those who did not was tested using t-test statistics.

Consequently, a post-hoc comparison test was carried out on the significant-test statistics to determine the mean(s) that contributed to the significant f-ratio.

### **3.9 PILOT STUDY REPORT**

This study was carried out in January, 2003 at the following churches in the central zone of Cross River State:

1. St Peters Catholic Church Four Corners, Ikom.
2. Christ for the World Mission, Ikom

These churches were sampled through the “hat and draw” random sampling technique from a list of churches in the central zone of Ikom local government area. A total of fifty (50) couples who had been married for between five to twenty five years were randomly selected from these two churches. This selection reflected the five (5) stratified groups of the study (gender, family, location and size, socio-economic status and family structure).

All the fifty (50) questionnaires that were administered by the researcher and her assistants were returned with adequate marital adjustment records collected.

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions of the study. Accordingly, the following answers emerged as findings:

- i. The causes of marital conflict from extended family mean score of the sample stood at 75.62. This signified a strong response of agreement that extended family members, exhibition of immoral behaviour by couples and man’s inability to meet financial needs add up to more problem in the home.
- ii. The conception of marriage by married and literate couples respondent’s score was found to be 68.05. This shows that respondents are of the view that Christian marriages give more stability than traditional marriages among the study population.

iii. The counselling needs required to help couples perceive remote causes of conflict in marriage gave a share of 66.24 which shows that the respondents were in affirmation with the fact that both literate and other couples in marriage require counseling to detect the causes of marital distress and harmonise the knowledge of counseling intervention to tackle these problems as they interact.

iv. The role family members play to ensure cordiality and strengthen family relationship. The mean score of 67.28 showed that often times when they are at loggerheads with the couples, they disregard their convivial requirements which leads them negatively outside the boundary of harmony in marriage interaction.

v. What role does age at marriage have to play in the occurrence of conflict. The mean score showed 68.02, which means that the age of couples in marriage influences positively the occurrence of marital conflict. It was found that lack of humility and sexual maladjustment are responsible factors in marital conflict among younger couples.

vi. What role does knowledge of management skills play in marital stability. The respondents' score showed 56.33. This result showed that couples necessarily require effective knowledge of management skills to be able to sustain their marital vows to have good family living.

The following findings were arrived at when the calculated t values obtained were tested against a  $P < 0.05$  level of significance for the hypotheses formulated.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the perception of marital adjustment by literate couples irrespective of gender.

From the analysis result, the t-statistic calculated was 0.171 with corresponding  $P > 0.05$ . This implied that the null hypothesis was accepted as there exists a no significant difference in the average perception scored rating of male literate couples from their feminine counterparts on marital adjustment.

**Hypotheses Two:** There is no significant difference between couples married in church and others (traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital problem.

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was employed in testing this hypothesis. From the ANOVA – statistics calculated  $F = 69.36$  with corresponding  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ . This then implied that the null hypothesis was rejected for the alternative hypothesis; there is a significant difference in the attitude of couples to marital problems depending on the type of marriage contracted.

**Hypotheses Three:** There will be no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict.

From the analysis result, the t-statistic calculated was 22.01 with corresponding  $P < 0.05$ . This then implied that the null hypothesis

was rejected for the alternative that there exists significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict.

**Hypotheses Four:** There is no significant difference in the level of conflict occurrence by those that married early and those that married late.

From the analysis the ANOVA-statistic calculated  $F=0.58$  with corresponding  $P>0.05$ . This implied that the null hypothesis was accepted against the alternative hypothesis to imply that there was no significant difference in the age of marriage as regards to the occurrence of conflicts.

**Hypotheses Five:** There is no significant difference in the ways the couples handle marital conflict based on their level of educational attainment.

From the analysis result, the ANOVA-statistic calculated  $F=0.866$  with corresponding P-value  $>0.05$ . This implied that the null hypothesis was accepted as against the alternative.

**Hypotheses Six:** There is no significant difference in the level of marital conflict management between couples who attended management skills programme and those who did not.

From the analysis result, the t-statistic calculated was 5.82 with corresponding P-value  $< 0.05$  but the control group couples who did not get the management training did not show a significant

improvement in the level of marital conflict management hence, the t-statistic showed a t-value of 0.15 with corresponding P value > 0.05. This showed that there was no significant change by these couples over the time duration.

### **3.9.1 Implications of the Pilot Study to the Main Work**

The conduct of the pilot study gave rise to the following insights and benefits for the main work:

- i. Ascertaining the suitability of the method of data collection. This focused on the relative cost, accuracy and likely response rates of the samples.
- ii. Determining the adequacy of the questionnaire. This was probably the most valuable function performed by the pilot study. Although the team of experts had earlier validated the questionnaire, the pilot study exercise offered an opportunity for trial testing it.
- iii. Ascertaining the language and wordings of the items of the questionnaire. The pilot study gave an insight into this area, as many of the samples were unable to read and understand the items without assistance.
- iv. Time to be spent by the respondents was anticipated.
- v. It guided the researcher in assessing the likely areas of weakness and strength.
- vi. Offered the rare opportunity to test the instrument on real subjects and focused the weightiness of what the main study encompasses.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 DATA PRESENTATION**

In order to address the research questions and the hypothetical postulations, the data was analyzed using the computer data analysis software (SPSS).

The descriptive statistics captured the composition of the respondent based on some vital demographic information of their status. The age, marital status and sex of the respondents were analyzed and presented in the table below

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Age, Marital Status and Gender**

Marital status	Married			Divorced			Widow / widower		
	Sex			Sex			Sex		
Age group	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<21	46	38	84		2	2		4	4
21-30	18								
	4	288	472		12	12		16	18
31-40	28								
	2	362	644	4	6	10		24	26
>40	36								
	4	160	524	8	6	14	16	54	70
TOTAL	87	848	172						
	6		4	12	26	38	20	98	118



From the table above, 1724 of the 2000 respondents (86%) were married individuals whereas the remaining is distributed amongst the divorced and widows/widowers groups. Most importantly for this study, all (100%) of the respondents are or had been married at least and are quite competent to answer the questions in this study. This research work is concerned with how literate couples react to marital conflict situations; the distribution of respondents by educational standing is shown in the table below

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Highest Academic Qualification**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>Ph.D</b>	40	2
<b>M.Sc</b>	110	5.5
<b>B.Sc</b>	442	22.1
<b>NCE/OND</b>	1036	51.8
<b>Post primary</b>	372	18.6
<b>Total</b>	2000	100

The respondents engaged in this study all had at least a post primary education which constitutes in this context an ability to at least read and write

#### **4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

The result of this research is presented in sequence to the research questions and hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were applied for the analysis of the data in order to answer the research questions. Similarly, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to provide answers to the hypotheses that were formulated in the study. The findings are then discussed under each of the research questions and hypotheses

##### **4.1.1 Research Question 1:**

What are the common causes of marital conflicts amongst the literate couples in the study area?

This research question was analysed using the input collated from Section A of the questionnaire. This section had eleven variable scales that are aimed at capturing the feelers of respondents by their ratings on perception as to what it takes to effectively adjust in a marital relationship without raising conflicts. The responses are presented in the table below

**Table 7: Frequency Distribution of how Literate Men and Women Conceptualise Marriage in Relation to Marital Adjustment**

	Percentage				Total
	SD	D	A	SA	
Literate married men appreciate the tenets of marriage more than literate married women.	10	22	28.3	39.6	100
Some literate married women compromise easily to marital problems than literate married men.	7.1	18.1	50.9	23.9	100
Listening to gossips cannot cause marital breakdown	43	28.7	14.6	13.7	100
Sexual differences between the couples cannot lead to marital breakdown.	25.6	42.4	18.7	13.3	100
Lack of discussion and mutual conversation lead to marital problems in literate couples.	2.6	5.1	50.7	41.6	100
Disrespect for each other's personality in marriage can lead to serious marital problems	3.2	2.6	40.3	53.9	100
Lack of knowledge of marital objectives by couples leads to marital breakdown	2.3	4.5	58	35.2	100
It annoys me when my expectations in marriage are not met	3.2	9.3	58.8	28.7	100
Disregards for each other's relatives could cause conflict in marriage	3.1	3.4	43.1	50.5	100
Frequent nagging by couples leads to misunderstanding	3.3	2.8	49.9	43.9	100
In marriage where conflict dominates the affairs of the home, women suffer more emotional stress than men.	6.9	7.4	36.4	49.3	100

The highlights from the above show that most of the respondents strongly believe that literate men respect the tenet of marriage more than the illiterate counterparts with 67.9% of the respondents agreeing to this statement. Also, respondents believe that Literate married women adjust easily to marital problems than literate married men by 74.8%. This position was shared by Etta (2002) that women are forced to mould themselves to fit the mans requirements particularly where determination to stay married is the watchword. Another factor that promotes good marital standing was put forward by Ume (2002) thus: discussion of couples scale of preference breeds progress and upward mobility for the couples' married life', this research work supports this position because the respondents confirmed that lack of discussion and mutual conversation leads to marital problems in literate couples (92.3%); disrespect for each other's personality in marriage can lead to serious marital problems (94.2%) and that lack of knowledge of marital objectives by couples leads to marital breakdown (93.2%). Also, the study reported that disregard for each other's relatives could cause conflict in marriage (93.6%); Springer (2003) and Atsu (1997) support the outcome that frequent nagging by couples leads to misunderstanding (93.8%). Emphatically, Springer (2003) states that nagging tones off love as a lubricant to harmonious living. The respondent felt strongly that in a marriage where conflict dominates

the affairs of the home, women suffer more emotional stress than men (85.7%). On the subject of gossiping, Essuman (1998) agrees that gossips distract the focus and create bad blood in the couples' estimated plan of action to be executed as they co-habit. That was probably the position of the respondents who strongly disagreed that listening to gossips cannot cause marital breakdown (28.3%). The same low acceptability was recorded on the statement that sexual differences between the couples cannot lead to marital breakdown, which had only 32.0%. Unachukwu (1999) strongly supports this stand by his statement that sexual difference scare cordiality in interaction of couples' this could be either by over exercising or under exercising of libido.

#### **4.1.2 Research Question 2:**

What expectations and misconceptions do literate couples have of marriage?

From the research question two, the study plans to capture the respondents opinion on what expectations and misconceptions literate couples have of marriage. The descriptive results are shown in the table below:

**Table 8: Frequency Distribution Statistics of Respondents Ratings on the Effect of Type of Marriage Contract on Marriage Stability may be Positive or Negative**

	Percentage				Total
	SD	D	A	SA	
Christian married couples lack self-control and this causes marital conflict	42	28.9	14.8	14.4	100
The traditionally married and literate couples find it difficult to keep all marriage promises than Christian married couples	12.7	20.7	44.7	22	100
The Christian married couples dominate their own family affairs	6.8	20.9	51.1	21.3	100
The traditionally married couple are always unhappy about the way their partners outsmart them	6.2	24	53.2	16.7	100
In Christian marriage a situation of childlessness does not cause marital conflict	18.9	39.8	27.1	14.2	100
In a traditional marriage setting, giving birth to all-female children does not cause problems in marriage	34.2	46.4	12.4	7	100
In a Christian marriage lack of trust amongst couples leads to marital breakdown	4.9	6.4	51.2	37.4	100
Child's neglect and abuse by either couple does not cause breach of peace among traditionally married couples.	39.6	33.6	15.3	11.5	100

The result of the study shows that most of the respondents (70.8%) did not agree with the statement that Christian married couples lack self-control and this causes marital conflict. On the other hand, most of the respondents are supportive of the positions that the traditionally married couples find it difficult to keep all marriage promises than Christian married couples (66.7%), and that the traditionally married couples are always unhappy about the way their partners outsmart them (69.9%). This can result in what Lewis (1985) describes as the distraction of external factors as the couples outsmart each other in cheating on each other. This causes depression and misery on the less advantaged partner. The Christian married couples dominate their own family affairs (72.4%) In a Christian marriage lack of trust amongst couples leads to marital breakdown (88.6%).

The study equally showed that the respondents did not agree with the following positions viz, In Christian marriage a situation of childlessness does not cause marital conflict (41.3%). This factor is vital in marital stability because it is a very serious African factor in a home. Njoroge (1996) puts it that a childless woman is not just only tormented by co-wife/wives but also by members of the extended members family. The study postulates that in a traditional marriage setting, giving birth to all-female children causes problems in marriage (80.6%); this is so because the importance of the boy-child



often creates castigations for the mothers of all-female children (Undie 1997).

#### **4.1.3 Research Question 3:**

What counselling needs are required to help literate couples perceive remote causes of marital distress and deal with the problems?

To meet up the challenges of family life by literate couples, it will be necessary to have an overview of unique areas of emphasis and training needs. The study explores these areas and the following were the outcome:

**Table 9: Frequency Distribution Statistics for the Attitudes of Extended & Literate Family Members Regarding the Causes of Marital Conflicts**

	Percentage				Total
	SD	D	A	SA	
Extended family members are responsible for most marital conflict/problem	2.4	3.6	56.1	38	100
The couples are often unaware of marital conflict arising from their interaction with extend family member	5	32.5	46.1	16.5	100
Early marriage could cause dissatisfaction and misunderstanding within the extended family	5.3	12.2	49	33.6	100
Extended family members often disregard couples needs when at logger heads with them.	2.9	7.6	60.2	29.3	100
Couples often disregard extended family member's advice when in conflict	9.5	27.9	47.1	15.5	100

The study showed that even literate persons view the role of the extended family in marital relationship and stability. The respondents support the notion that extended family members are responsible for most marital conflicts/problems by an overwhelming 94.1% support. This is often the case because mother in-laws see daughter in-laws as rivals or one has have come to deprive them of their sons' love and attention (Umoh 1998). More so, the respondents accept the position that extended family members often disregard couples needs when at loggerheads with them with 89.5% irrespective of the fact that they were the ones that often arranged the marriages (Undie 1997). Another area of serious conflict is that of early marriage. 82% if the respondents agreed that early marriage could cause dissatisfaction and misunderstanding within the extended family. The study result showed that the most needed counselling issues to be address to literate married couples are the effective roles and position extended family should take as well as the age disposition of the couples.

#### **4.1.4 Research Question 4:**

What roles do family members play to ensure cordiality and strengthen family relationship?

The research study explores the roles family members plays in ensuring cordiality and strengthening of family relationship. The table below shows the responses on the various aspects.

**Table 10: Frequency Distribution for Married Couples' Views on the Causes of Marital Conflict**

	Percentage				Total
	SD	D	A	SA	
Exhibition of immoral behavior by couples is not a serious marriage problem	44.6	28.6	14.5	12.3	100
Aggression and uncompromising position regarding major decision taking is often responsible for marital conflict	3.3	3.9	55.3	37.6	100
The man's inability to meet the financial and moral needs of the family is responsible for marital conflict.	4.1	7.3	56	32.6	100
Conflicts have no negative effects on spouses as such	34.8	43.1	13.3	8.8	100
Insults and assaults create/cause conflict in marriage	1.7	3.9	50.8	43.6	100
Display of affection reduces conflict situation.	3.6	7.1	40.3	49.1	100
Emotional stress creates loneliness and discomfort for couples in conflict.	3.1	4.8	45.5	46.6	100

Bakong (2002) supports the 73.2 % respondents position/belief that immorality and aggression are regarded as a strong factor that may lead to serious family problems and that it may consequently affect spouse negatively. Bakong (2002) states emphatically that display of immoral behaviour and excessive aggression by partners results in consistent fracas in the family union. He also agrees that aggression and uncompromising position regarding major decision taking are often responsible for marital conflict, this position supported held by 92.9% of the respondents. Similarly, 94.4% saw insults and assaults as major factors that create/cause conflict in marriage. Also, emotional stress created by loneliness and discomfort by couples in conflict is found to be detrimental to the smooth running of the family. All of these factors are found to impact negatively on the progress of the family. It can be deduced from the study outcomes that couples should avoid taken serious uncompromising stands nor exhibits violent tendencies such as insults and assault. Other areas the ability of couples to meet up with their financial obligation and continually make deliberate attempts to display affection as a way of reducing tension and conflict.

**4.1.5 Research Question 5:**

What relationship does age at marriage have on occurrence of conflicts in marriage?

The age of marriage, is postulated to play a significant role in marital conflict occurrence. In order to substantiate these and other claims, the respondents were asked to respond to various issues related to age as a marital factor and the results are presented in the table below:

**Table 11: Frequency Distribution Statistics for Age of Marriage  
as a Factor for Marital Conflict**

	Percentage				
	SD	D	A	SA	Total
Sexual maladjustment is often responsible for marital conflict among younger couples	2.6	5.5	55.6	36.3	100
The incidence of non-chalant attitude is the consequence of marital conflict among older couples	4.9	10.4	57.6	27.1	100
The age of couples in marriage influences positively the occurrence of marital conflict	5.6	19.6	51.5	23.1	0.1
Lack of humility among younger couples often creates marital conflict	1.3	4	46.3	48.4	100

The study shows that the age factor affects marital stability especially in the aspect of humility amongst younger couples with 94.7% of the respondents believing in this factor as a serious obstacle. No wonder Eroh (2005) observes that when couples are young they tend to carry over youthful indulgence acquired by peer influence forgetting their new status which will infringe on the companionship of the other partner. Other factors peculiar to younger couples that result in marriage instability include the aspects of humility (91.9%) and non-challant attitude (84.7%) of the couples. This non-chalant attitude of couples was studied by Eroh (2005) and he stated that for older couples at the contrasting stage they tend to cling more to their children and grand-children forgetting about taking care of each other's needs and values. The study reveals that younger couples are slow in adjusting to sexual disposition of their pairs as well as act arrogantly which results to conflicts. On the other hand, the study inputs showed that the older couples display more of non-challant attitude than their younger counterparts.

#### **4.1.6 Research Question 6**

What effect does knowledge of management skills have on marital stability?

Education had been claimed to be a factor of enlightenments; as such educational level and status as a factor of marital adjustment was analyzed using some measurable parameters as shown in the table below:



**Table 12: Frequency Distribution Statistics of Respondents on How Educational Attainment Affect Marital Relationship**

	Percentage				Total
	SD	D	A	SA	
Differences in educational qualification of couples result in conflict	14.1	23.2	43	19.7	100
The occurrence of conflict is more among educated couples than the uneducated ones	16.8	39.9	25.7	17.6	100
Working class women pay less attention to husbands' emotional needs	9.9	19.4	45.6	25.1	100
Inappropriate handling/settling of differences among educated couples leads to perpetual happiness	33.7	23.2	25.9	17.1	100
Pre-marriage counseling does not help couples in handling marital conflict	34.9	37.9	18.3	8.9	100
Educated couples tend to have mutual co-existence when in love	1.9	3.4	61.2	33.4	100
Conflict management skills could resolve marital conflict among literate couples.	3.1	5.8	48.1	43	100

Hendrick (2000) strongly endorses that literate couples that are more knowledgeable about problems that threaten a love relationship adjust to issues that breed peace in the home. In this light 94.6% of the respondents acknowledge that educated couples tend to have mutual co-existence when in love while 62.7% of the respondents acknowledge that differences in educational qualifications of couples results in conflict. Fewer of the respondents did not support the notion that the occurrence of conflict is more among educated couples than the uneducated ones (43.3%). In another light, working class women are purported to pay less attention to husbands' emotional needs (70.7%). In support of this stand, Ogunsaya (2000) states that the working class women mostly exhaust their energy from office and domestic activities and pay less attention to bedroom duties which are most paramount to diminished stress accrued by husbands from discharging office work to solve this prevailing problem Esere (2000) recommends a strong backup of pre-marriage counseling to produce enough knowledge on how the woman in particular can meet her expectations in discharging marital duties. Also revealed by this study is that majority of the couples (72.8%) believed that pre-marriage counselling does help couples in handling marital conflict.

## **4.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

The data for testing the six null hypothesis were analysed using the student t-test for independent sample statistics and analyses of variance statistics (ANOVA) using a one-way ANOVA design concept.

### **4.2.1 Hypothesis I:**

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the perception of marital adjustment by literate couples irrespective of gender affiliation

$H_1$ : There is significant difference in the perception of marital adjustment by literate couples irrespective of gender affiliation

The independent T-test statistics was employed in testing hypothesis analysis using the computer SPSS statistical package

**Figure 13: t-test Analysis Of Marital Adjustment Perception By Gender**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Male</b>	952	38.571	6.6276			
<b>Female</b>	1032	38.746	7.2103	-0.56	1982	0.575

From the analysis result, the T-statistic calculated is -0.56 with corresponding P-value  $> 0.05$ . This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted to mean that there exists no significant difference in the average perception scored rating of literate male couples from their female counterparts on marital adjustment concepts. Odukoya (2000) says in his study that each partner has his or her own independent view on marital adjustment concept or issues; and Adalkwu (2003) similarly stresses that the level of reasoning by a male partner is different from a female partner on diverse marital issues, particularly as it affects gender. This stand of the two authors may probably be because their subjects of study spanned across the literate and the non-literate population. Given that literacy level was a basic requirement in selecting respondents in this study it may then imply that the variation factor was neutralized given a certain education standing of the couples

#### **4.2.2 Hypothesis II**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (Traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital problems

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant difference between couples married in the church and the others (Traditional or court) in their attitude towards marital problems

The One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was employed in testing this hypothesis analysis

**Table 14: Descriptive statistics on Attitude to Marital Problems Scale by Type of Marriage Contract**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Christian Wedding</b>	1032	21.3721	5.94879	0.18518
<b>Traditional Marriage</b>	686	21.0058	5.07807	0.19388
<b>Court Marriage</b>	28	18.7857	5.22357	0.98716
<b>Others</b>	14	18.1429	3.86019	1.03168
<b>Total</b>	1760	21.1625	5.61345	0.13381

From the descriptive statistics, 1032 respondents had their marriage contract consummated in a church while 686 had theirs based on traditional norms of their locality. In similar manner 14 of the respondents got married in a court of law while 14 respondents were married by other contract solutions. The average score on the marital problem attitude scale showed that the Christian wedding contract group scored higher rating on attitude on the scale with 21.37 followed by those on traditional marriage (21.01), then court marriage (18.79), and other marriage contract groups scored least with 18.14 points on the scale.

Ordinarily, this may imply that those with higher scale do better under any marital problem situation. This position needs to be statistically validated under an inferential analysis situation by employing the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) analysis



**Table 15: One-way ANOVA table for Attitude of couples to marital problems based on the type of marriage contract**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Between Groups</b>	348.003	3	116.001	3.698	0.137
<b>Within Groups</b>	55079.522	1756	31.366		
<b>Total</b>	55427.525	1759			

From the analysis result in table 4, the Anova-statistic calculated is  $F = 3.698$  with corresponding  $P\text{-value} > 0.05$ . This then implies that there is no basis for rejecting the null hypothesis for the alternative hypothesis at 95% statistical level of confidence. The null hypothesis was thus accepted, in which case the interpretation shows there is no significant difference between couples married in the church and those married by other contract means (Traditional, court etc) in their attitude towards marital problems. On the other hand Gangwari (1996; 1999) opposes the assertion on the ground that couples who are wedded in church hold tight to the vows of marriage which says “for better or worse, in sickness and in health”. In another study of his he argues that others like Islamic concept of marriage say ‘if a man or woman is no longer functional, the marriage can be dissolved as against the canon law of indissolubility’. This study deviates from Gangwari’s (1996; 1999) by maintaining that regardless of the marital contract; literate couples behave and react similarly in situations of marital problem. The emphasis of literacy again plays a significant role here.

#### **4.2.3 Hypothesis III**

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict.

$H_1$ : There is no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict

The T-test statistics was employed in analyzing this hypothesis using the computer SPSS statistical package

**Figure 16: t-test Analysis Table on how Couples view Extended Family as a Cause of Marital Conflict**

<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
1956	17.311	4.0239	0.091	-0.98	1955	0.327

From the analysis result, the T-statistic calculated is -0.98 with corresponding P-value  $> 0.05$ . This then implies that the null hypothesis is accepted against the alternative hypothesis that there exists no significant difference as to how literate couples view extended family as a cause of marital conflict. This position was highlighted by the descriptive statistics on the subject as presented in table 10.

Umeh (2000) agrees with the position when she said most times couples feel that their family members form the bulk of the problem or hard times faced in marriage. Unnecessary intrusion by relatives knows no boundary irrespective of their qualifications.

#### **4.2.4 Hypothesis IV**

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of conflicts occurrence by those that married early and those that marry late

$H_1$ : There is no significant in the level of conflicts occurrence by those that married early and those that marry late

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was employed in analyzing this hypothesis

**Table 17: One-way ANOVA Analysis of Age at Marriage as a Factor of Marital Conflict**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Between Groups</b>	131.03	1	131.03	6.545	0.011
<b>Within Groups</b>	39237.867	1960	20.019		
<b>Total</b>	39368.897	1961			

From the analysis of result, in table 18, the ANOVA-statistic calculated is  $F = 3.269$  with corresponding P-value  $< 0.05$ . This then implies that those that married early and those that marry late reject the null hypothesis against the alternative hypothesis to imply that there is a significant difference in the level of conflicts occurrence. The mean shows that those that married early have higher conflict problems than those that married late as shown in the table below

**Table 18: Descriptive statistics of Age of Marriage as a Factor of Marital Conflict**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Early marriage</b>	1264	23.8149	4.55239	0.12805
<b>Late marriage</b>	698	23.2751	4.32921	0.16386
<b>Total</b>	1962	23.6228	4.48062	0.10116

Those that married early had a conflict higher ranking of 23.81 that those that married late whose ranking stood at 23.28. Genda (2003) agrees with this study's findings. He states that couples who are not physically and emotionally mature cannot weather the storms of marriage because they have not acquired the skills of rugged aspect of marriage and they cannot stand the bitter taste of marriage life and so they stand a higher chance of conflict occurrence.

#### **4.2.5 Hypothesis V**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in the ways couples handle marital conflict based on their level of educational attainment.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the ways couples handle marital conflict based on their level of educational attainment.

The One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics was employed in analyzing this hypothesis.



**Table 19: One-way ANOVA analysis on level of marital conflict management based of couples educational attainment.**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Between Groups</b>	123.609	4	30.902	2.22	0.065
<b>Within Groups</b>	27208.218	1955	13.917		
<b>Total</b>	27331.827	1959			

From the analysis result, in table 20, The ANOVA-statistic calculated is  $F = 2.22$  with corresponding P-value  $> 0.05$ . This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted in place of the alternative hypothesis to mean that there is no significant difference in the attitude of couples to marital problem regardless of their level of educational level and attainment. A post-hoc analysis is further carried out with the following results

Lamle (2004) states that emotional aggression has no qualifications once the inner stimuli is triggered negatively, and that there is a corresponding response of explosion of anger not minding all the acquired status from studying higher.

#### **4.2.6 Hypothesis VI**

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of marital conflict management between couples who attended management skills programme and those who did not

$H_1$ : There is significant difference in the level of marital conflict management between couples who attended management skills programme and those who did not

The Paired t-test statistics was employed in this hypothesis analysis using the computer SPSS statistical package.

**Table 20: Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge Gained from Intervention**

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	100	8.82	4.59991	0.45999
Control	100	- 0.44	3.86729	0.38673

The table result showed that those couples on the experimental group have a positive knowledge and value gain whereas those in the control group seem to remain static. A statistical T-test was use to measure whether or not the average knowledge gained was significant as shown in table below.

**Table 21: T-test Analyses for Control and Experimental Group on  
The Impact of Marital Counselling to Solving Marital  
Crisis.**

T	15.409
df	192.326
p-value	0.000
Mean Difference	9.26
Std. Error Difference	0.60096

The result showed a t-value = 15.409 with corresponding p-value < 0.05. This implies that there exists a significant difference in the knowledge level of couples that were in the experimental group from their counterparts in the control group. So therefore, the study showed that when couple get training on marital conflict management skills it enhances harmonious living and so is encouraged.

Adenuga (2004), Oji (2004), Nwadinagwe (2000) and Aguene (1999) in their various studies on this subject (marital conflict management), feel that a man cannot give out what he does not have hence their recommendation was that couples necessarily require training on strong management skills on problem tackling as they may arise in the progression of marriage from its incipient stage to the last stage or terminating stage which probably comes when death takes one of the partners or voluntary retirement from it.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion give utility, relevance and significance to any research endeavour. This chapter thus contains a summary of the findings and the appropriate recommendations and conclusions that have been articulated from the discussions made in the preceding chapter.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

From the results one can deduce that:

- i. Husband and wife in marriage relationship have similar expectations about marriage; the two deserve companionship.
- ii. External factors like in-laws, finance, inappropriate behaviour by couples and other family members can cause conflicts in marriage.
- iii. Based on the entire study the educated people/couple have acquired basic expertise on managing conflict as they interact.
- iv. It was also discovered that couples who are equipped with management skills from a management skill programme adhere more easily to marital problems than those who are

deficient in it and have not had opportunity of being exposed to a management skills programme.

- v. Couples who are grounded in pre-marital counselling have a full knowledge of their expectations of marriage, and can cope and adapt efficiently in case there is a conflict situation in their inter personal interaction.
- vi. During the data analysis, it was also noticed that disrespect for each other's personality in marriage could lead to serious marital problems.
- vii. The number of years a couple spends together helps in the development of their expertise on handling conflict when they come. Also the same age factor affects the occurrence of conflict in marriage.
- viii. There is a significant reaction or difference amongst couples in conflict management based on their age at marriage.
- ix. Giving a level of educational attainment or literacy status of couples may be a deciding factor that stands as problems diminish most probably because educational factor plays vital role in marital adjustment across different ramification hence its recommended strongly that a minimum of secondary education is basic for intending couples.



### **5.3 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

So far, the findings and the discussions would have indicated that education, family size, gender, age as well as type of marriage contracted do not determine differences in marital relationship among couples. Since all the samples are literate and still in marriage, a significant difference may exist in relation to cordiality in marriage with reference to their marital ties and values. The researcher's suspicion of a difference in achieving marital success of couples based on their type of marriage is hinged on the argument that the average couples who are likely to be cohabiting peacefully may be those equipped with management skills while couples without the knowledge of management skills may be doing trial and error in the way and manner they handle conflicts, if any.

In this light, perhaps the results of this study would have been different if couples below five years and above twenty-five years were used, since the ones below five years are fresh and may not have come to terms with the trying period of marriage yet, and those above twenty-five years may have stabilized and developed effective shocks on how to overcome trying moments. Their experiences would have down played any hitch and create a great difference in conflict resolution.

On the other hand, the differences noticed in the values of marriage tenets by couples who are married in church and others:

when marriage is focused on conviviality may be explained by the fact that more of the samples were literate and are Christians. As such they found it problematic in inculcating other couples with diverse mode of marriage contracts to achieve the desired attributes of holding tight to their marital vows. This resulted into the disparity in the mean scores of these variables (13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, refer table 7) and hence the significant difference. Since it has become apparent that there may be a disparity in the quality of couples' modes of marriage, the implication is that marriage may continue to have diverse ways of handling marital issues for stability on the bases of marriage ties and values despite concerted efforts by counsellors to help bring about peaceful co-existence in the home.

There exist individual differences as people co-exist with their unique potentials differently from each other; so also there are different dimensions or likely variables that can spark off conflict in a marriage relationship depending on the stage of a marriage.

There is therefore no evidence to suggest that no marriage is without conflict, so they cannot be said to be interacting perfectly without conflict. The degree of conflict resolution in a marriage depend on how well each couple is equipped or understands the management skills available to their own situation.

Even among older couples, there are likely to be variations in management efficiencies. Lamle (2004) agrees that while we know

that there are variations from couple to couple on conflict approach in marriage, there exists a similarity in the way each couple reacts but management differs. Such an approach has considerable currency and history in marriage counselling. The differences and similarities in tackling conflict in marriage constitute their marriage ties, which are characterized by their patterns of behaviour, values, beliefs and indeed marriage environments. Eroh (2005) while identifying separate cultures on how marriage is valued within family settings, said couples' personality traits, whether literate or not, are inherent. Taken together, they constitute the family, which can be a function of a successful marriage. One aspect, which surprisingly is often neglected, is sexual dysfunction in marriage. Often, sex is not viewed as a factor that can disrupt a marriage. The function of sex in marriage is to take off all stress by the couple and lubricate their drying scenario in marriage. The objective of counselling in marriage is to achieve cordiality, which explains why parents and guardians spend more of their time attempting to achieve peaceful co-existence. At the same time, parents and guardians, to some degree, fail to acknowledge that sex is a pleasurable tool for the achievement of stability in marital issues. It is therefore professional and ethical interest to attempt to explain why this happens. Odukoya (2004) suggests that sex exerts definite pressures on certain people to be non-conforming rather than conforming; in other words, sex which

was made by God to achieve pleasure in marriage also could produce displeasure, and that the explanation for this lies not with the nature of man, but with societal pollution as manifesting through misplaced values in marriage.

Outside marriage, conflict in interpersonal interaction, its application and enforcement of rules for its avoidance becomes the concern of all within a particular society. Conflict, as we all know, is not entirely negative but an attempt to put things right with conflicting focus is what results in it. Some conflict situations yield positive results for the enhancement of the societal goals while some disrupt the goals and cause more confusion. For the conflict that breeds development in a particular setting, the beneficiaries usually have huge benefits and better lessons to learn from for a better functioning tomorrow. The more a society organizes its affairs, the more equipped in management of conflict it becomes. Uwe (2000) observes that the major difference is the way in which individuals' management skills are used in resolving conflict.

Successful management of conflicts has a sort of truce between the individuals and society. This truce is in the nature of an informal arrangement for the mutual convenience of both sides in the exercise of rules and regulations in the society. The individual and the society thus have the greatest potential for a successful intervention of conflict among individuals within a neighbourhood.

However, most of the reported remediation efforts in curbing conflict in the literature involved counselling for people in conflict and their friends by counsellors either in the traditional or formal ways. In most cases elders in the society who may not have been adequately trained for the task render these services.

Apparently, inadequate possession of skills to manage conflict results in poor resolution, which in turn, results in more broken relationships. These are in addition to characteristics such as breach of peace in the home and outside the home, war, lack of concentration in things that would generate revenue to better the economy and a complete disorganisation of the entire system. Conflict may come about by the orientation of an individual. A socially dysfunctional person may be characterised by obsessive efforts to secure social acceptability by friends or onlookers, inability to form and maintain social relationships, aggressive behaviour or, in contrast, excessive timidity.

By and large, a friendly environment has the most profound impact on learning and exerts a significant role to produce cordiality in interaction. The friendly environment of a person can be categorised into physical, social and psychological. In the society in general, the physical environment of every person is his or her home where family members are its make up. The provision of a warm interacting environment enhances effective homely living, which

motivates other family associates to imbibe the culture of living in peace with one another and learn better ways of resolving conflict in a family setting.

However, today in our country, Nigeria, lack of enough provision of human needs propels stress that if improperly managed creates conflicts and wars among brothers and neighbours. When an individual's needs are not met, there is bound to be frustration, and posing a defence on himself or herself conflict could be chosen as the next option to bring down the tension in the individual.

The social environment is the societal expectations from the individual. Most important of these is what you can contribute to the society as a person who has gone to school or learnt a trade in a particular environment. Ogunsanya (2001) observes that in terms of social esteem, professional rating, the current status of people who are in different professions is low, hence they cannot be engaged in their different careers to exercise their expertise skills which they have acquired. A frustrated and dissatisfied person cannot exhibit a friendly disposition to create cordiality in interpersonal interaction.

Government should consider its stance on the plight of its neglected citizenry in order to breed peace and harmony, which is hardly seen among people of the same household, local government, state and country as a whole. Attention should be given to peoples'

emotional well-being and provision of job opportunities across boards to create a friendly environment for stability.

#### **5.4 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS**

In Nigeria and the world over, no marriage is conflict-free. The way couples handle their individual marital conflicts makes the difference in a marriage interaction. The tenets of marriage are universal whether Christian, Moslem or traditional marriage/court. The common element between them is the proclamation of love to live as one. A function on the background of the presuppositions of couples as they are without analysis and examination of how conflict affect couples may have created initial difficulties for couples. It is proper that these initial difficulties among couples be understood and tackled in order to avoid the lasting deleterious effects on the spouses and their society or immediate environment.

The findings of this study show that there is a significant difference in marital interaction between couples that are married in church and others. There is also an indication that marriage tights are higher in Christian wedded couples than their traditionally married ones. A probable conclusion is that those who are wedded in church hold tight to their marital vows of “for better for worse”. There is thus likely to be a significant conflict which is between couples that are wedded in church and the traditionally married. If these conflicts cannot be resolved, the ultimate solution is to rely on the

development of a new management skill to salvage the difference. In traditional counselling setting the development of management skills is required to take care of the diverse nature of marriage in the traditional setting. This is related to the stratification of knowledge in modern marriage to the counsellor. Differential access to knowledge is also linked with the distribution of resources. Couples with limited knowledge of marital problems need more resources, longer hours of tutoring and more expertise of counsellors to cope with their deprivations. Ogunsaya (2000) advocates for diverse skills for distressed couples. He argues that the marriage institution demands the right competency to deal with all categories of marital problems. Odukoya (2004) supports the clamour to exhibit a diverse management skill. She advocates for the collection and integration of the different skills in conflict management. These advocations discern that the different skills should cater for the couples needs and peculiarities of each couple. The aim is to make the marriage institution challenge sufficiently in the couple's abilities—perceptual, conceptual, physical and emotional. These are rudiments of future problem solving skills, future creativity and inventions. Couples all over desire relatively similar programmes for all spouses based on assumptions of fair play and equality of couples that are processed in groups according to certain age criteria. The question arises whether these couples are of the same age and of equal ability. Certainly, the



answer to these questions is no. However, it is important to examine or assess the couples based on their knowledge of conflict management, particularly in conflict situations. The assessment of their expertise here acts as a determining factor for ability and performance in conflict resolution. Dadi (2004) sees acquisition of management skills as a treating experience of couples under the guidance of a counsellor.

An examination of the relevance of this claim in relation to conflict management strategy, apparently shows that the concept of management skills has indeed been somewhat exaggerated. There appears to be a gap between couples, who acquire management skills, and those who do not. The variations in couples with experience, values, knowledge and ability in managing conflict, cannot curtail the high rate of conflict in marriage; it is suggested that the post-primary and tertiary institutions curriculum be remarkably differed along abilities, knowledge, provision of teaching and learning resources an acquisition of management skills to tackle marital problems in family life.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and the discussions that followed, the under-listed suggestions and recommendations are made:

**Parents/Guardians**

Although most of the variables regarding the conduct of marriage did not suggest that a couple without good home background can achieve cordiality in marriage, one may tend to believe that a couple endowed with special talents on human management could brave it. Prudence (1997) observes that most parents in Nigeria and in the study area wish that their children achieved marital harmony, yet the environment sometimes has an overbearing influence on them. Parents should therefore enforce positive attitudes that supercede the environmental influences on the wards who are of marriage ages.

**School Administration**

The school has been perceived within the limits of this study to be an important predictor of knowledge. It is expected that the school should assume this responsibility of teaching children of marriage age on mate selection so that whatever the exigencies of this group of students can be satisfied in his or her quest to select the appropriate partner for life.

**School Curriculum Experts**

Experts charged with the responsibility of drawing up or reviewing existing curriculum for tertiary schools in particular should take cognisance of the likely variables that could hinder marital adjustment of these students in future. Such curriculum should be

liberal enough as to take care of different parental backgrounds to create alternatives for children from family marital background. This could be done through deliberate introduction of marriage counseling in the school timetable to enhance enrichment of knowledge on marriage tenets and requirements in the society they belong.

- Counsellors should intensify group counselling through public lectures to enlighten couples on the dangers of lingering conflicts in marriage though unavoidable visitor in marriage but proper handling of it releases stress and tension and brings cordiality for peaceful co-existence of the individuals in a community, family and society as a whole.
- Seminars/workshops should be organized regularly by churches, government, traditional kinsmen and mosque on family life education with particular emphasis on literate couples who are like the light of the family.
- The counsellors must adopt behavioural modification in effecting changes in distress in numerous couples.
- Pre-marital counselling, family life education and sex education should be introduced in post-primary and tertiary schools curriculum for clarity of the expectations of marriage.
- The counselling Association of Nigeria should organise enlightenment campaigns on the need for couples to use

marriage counselling services provided by counsellors since most couples see marital issues as trivial at the moment

- Couples should exhibit the behaviour data that they know to be beneficial to them; daily time in prayer, maintaining morals and caring for each other. Too often when they suffer the lashes from an on going tribulation they should use their pain as an excuse to become a spiritual coach potato.
- Couples should not allow trouble to persist or linger and learn to forgive one another in totality. There are some variables in any storms that they can control; they are the moving part of life and usually this is what they can do anyway-move the part of life that is moveable and respond proficiently to the things that seem as inflexible as a concrete wall. God eventually moves them. Sometimes the natural progression of life removes them. But by then patience has started her perfect work in your heart and you have learned to calmly pace yourself for the long distance race.

### **“Win – Win” or no loss Method of setting disagreement**

Every relationship has conflicts. However, conflicts do not have to end with someone losing or hating each other. Wise persons are able to resolve disagreements with both parties satisfied or respecting each other.

Have a discussion to understand both sides of problems, conflicts, needs and preferred outcomes. Find out what they want. Do not assess blame but point out anything that seems unfair. Be honest and cordial. Special attention must be given to the causes of the conflict. Gather all the additional information you need and think of several options satisfying or plans for resolving the conflict and satisfying shared interest. Integrate the plans of both parties to resolve conflict. Suggestions were also made for the establishment of centres for marriage management skills training in all state capitals in Nigeria.

After this, the researcher would have a conference of marriage counsellor within the study area and rob minds on the contending problems in marriage. This would lead to mounting of programme on how management skill can be dispensed to couples and spread same to other areas like the churches, marriage registry and social welfare offices.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

This research endeavour cannot in any way claim absolute treatment of the related issues of this topic in a given opportunity like this one. As follow-ups, the under-listed areas and topics may be researched upon:

- i. The number of children in a marriage and marital stability
- ii. Childlessness of couples and marital stability

- iii. Sexual dysfunction in family adjustment and marital stability
- iv. Couples' level of intimacy in marriage and achievement of cordiality in marriage relationship.
- v. The relationship between couples and family members in marital stability.
- vi. The relationship between couples' self-esteem and social status of children born out of the marriage.
- vii. Early marriage and marriage instability: counselling interventions.
- viii. Sexual denial, a bedrock of marital conflicts: counselling implications.

## **5.7 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

The following novel findings have been articulated and they no doubt will contribute to knowledge in the counselling of couples and the counselling needs of Nigerian education generally:

1. Getting married to fulfill the social obligation in the society does not determine a successful marriage. Rather, getting the couples enlightened on the nitty gritty of marriage sustains it. Dadi (2004), in response to the effects of management skills deprivation, refers to the entire concept as a myth. The most important predictor of a successful marriage is not a society wedding. This study has revealed that acquisition of management skills breeds cordiality in a marriage. Couples

who benefit from a management skills programme have a better knowledge of handling conflicts than those who do not. This would enhance the existing literature in the area of marital conflict management.

2. It would, however, be far from the truth to conclude that the attention paid by marriage counsellors in recent years to marital breakdown has taken us very far towards a solution. However, marriage counsellors have long been interested in techniques and strategies used to achieve harmony among individuals, groups and couples in particular, and how to deal with diverse marital problems as it affects couples in northern Cross River State. This will serve as reference point for family policy makers or government.
3. The findings have revealed that conflict has a negative effect on the couples, siblings and society in general. Conflict breaches peace in the family interaction, hence it distorts harmonious living between members of the immediate and extended family relations. Lack of cordiality suggests boundaries and bridges, which hinders a healthy interpersonal relationship across borders.
4. An inference of findings is that management skills help to equip couples with emotional therapy to address discrepancies that

may exist in a marriage relationship and give the would-be couples a solid hope of achieving their desire as couples.

5. Even though conflict has negative effect on the siblings in another dimension the study reveals that conflict in marriage could have positive connotations hence the challenges brings positive change at some point.
6. Conflict theory reveals that couples behaviours can be modified, changed, attend for the benefits of the society given, appropriate counselling therapy. Conflict can be resolved among couples provided there is some consensus within themselves. The consensus might come out if one of the partners initiates it by mutual apology.
7. Education promotes resolution of marital conflict among couples. The study redresses the results of ignorance of marriage tenets and its negative consequences on the society in general.

## **5.8 CONCLUSION**

Marriage is the basis of good family living, which introduces a healthy society. However, a difference in the family structure reflects the societal adjustment to situations probably due to the variations in socialization techniques existing in family settings. Parental harmony is quite important for the inculcation of required and acceptable behaviour of the individual child as a virtue of convivial living.



Experts in marriage counselling are asked to unravel the flaws in couples relationship for a cordial interpersonal relationship in the family set up. Since marriage propagates the way a society functions, it was recommended that efforts should be geared towards explaining clearly what marriage entails during pre-marriage courses and re-emphasises management skills during the marriage encounter in order to enhance success in marriage by both young and old couples. Since there is a lot of disparity in family upbringing couples should be given tutorials on marriage composition, likely hitches or conflicts and how cordiality could be achieved in a marriage relationship. If these are not done, the challenges these people face as they run along with themselves may dampen their opportunities to do well as couples in the marriage set up. A cheerful heart is good medicine but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

Finally, for an appropriate level of literacy the secondary education offers basic expertise on managing conflict in a marriage. This deduction is drawn from hypotheses five, which shows that there is no significant difference amongst couples irrespective of their educational attainment.

## REFERENCES

- Abdal, A. (1982). *Sharia law legal system*, Unpublished manuscript, University of Jos, Jos.
- ACCORD, (1977). *Handbook on peace development and security in Africa*, South Africa: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs.
- Ada, N. A. & Ker, B.O. (1997). *Essentials of thesis and project writing: A guide to research studies in tertiary institutions*, Makurdi: Afmond Press and Co. Ltd.
- Adalikwu, P. (2003, May). *Bette concept of marriage*. Unpublished manuscript, St Charles Parish, Obudu.
- Adamu, S. O. & Johnson, T. L. (1995). *Statistics for beginners*, Ibadan: Onibanjo Press Ltd.
- Adenuga, W. (2004). *Super Story*, Nigerian Television Authority Network Programme.
- Afolabi, M. (1993). *Introduction to research for writing proposals projects thesis*, Zaria: Alpha Publishers.
- Afu, M.O. (1992). *Marital separation and its influence*. Unpublished Masters' thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Agba, A.U. (1989). *Bette traditional marriage*. Unpublished literature, Bette Traditional Council – Obudu, Cross River State.
- Agba, F.O. (2000, June). *A development and validation of Girl child education in Benue State*, M.Ed: Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Agim, E.A. (1997, June). *Traditional rights of couples: The message*, Igoli-Ogoja: Cross River State (5) 20.
- Aguene, I. N. (1999). *Contemporary social problems*, Nsukka: Prize Publishers.
- Ahamibe, C. (1979). *Aims and purposes of education*. In B. O. Ukeje, (Ed.) *foundation of education*, Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation.

- Amato, G. & Keith, A. (1991, July) *Effect of Conflict in marriage. Journal of counselling psychology* Cambridge University (6) 112 – 118.
- Ambert, A. M (1995). Marital stability and social and financial support services. *Journal of Marriage and family therapy*, 5 (3), 85-92
- Aniashie, S. A. (1999). *The literacy of an individual*, Obudu: Pace Setter's publishers.
- Ano, J.L (2000). *Positive outlook of marriage and family life in the new millennium*, Abuja: B Anny publishers.
- Aryee, S.D., Field, A. & Luki, V. (1999, July). A cross cultural test of a Model; The work of family interference; *Journal of management*. 25, (4), 491 – 511. University of Ohio.
- Asinde, F.A. (1999). *Women Emancipation and Traditional Concept of Marriage in Bette*, Unpublished manuscript, F.C.E Obudu-Cross River State.
- Atsu, S.A. (2001). *Marriage and the family*. A paper presented on marriage and family development at WACO Week: University of Calabar.
- Atsu, S. A (2002). *Marital issues*, Unpublished manuscript, University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Atsu, M.E. (1997). *The place of sex in marriage*, Unpublished M.Ed: Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Atube, F. (2006). MCMS Model: An approach for attitude change, Obudu: Pace setters publishers.
- Awok, I.K. (2000). *Marriage Expectation*, Marriage encounters lectures: St. Charles Parish, Obudu, Cross River State.
- Anyaliwhu, E. (1997). *A panacea of marital conflicts among couples*, Unpublished manuscript, St. Charles Parish, Obudu, Cross River State.
- Ayuba, B. (1996). "Islamic concept of marriage". An unpublished lecture note, FCE (T) Potiskum: Yobe State.
- Bacchiocchi, J. T. (2002). Spouses locus of control and their level of marital satisfaction: *Journal of marriage and family* 60 (2).

- Bagarozzi, E. & Reuben, C.(1968). *The family as a patient*. London: Souvenir Press.
- Bakong, R. (2002, Jan). Couples fight for right. A term paper on EDG 313, University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Bandura, A. (1979). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey Prentice Hall, Inc.
- Baseden, E.A. (1966). *The family concept*, London: Souvenir press.
- Bature, J.N. (1990). Physical facilities and their effects on pupils' academic achievement: comparison of classroom in Kaduna State. Unpublished Masters' Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Beattie, F. (1964). *Marital adjustment by couples: A handbook on the mechanics of marriage*, Chicago: Rand McNally papers.
- Beck, A. (2001). *Marriage ingredients*, New York: Mc-Graw Hills Books.
- Beehr, T. A., Dunseath, & J., King, D. W. (1995). Job stress-social support, effects across gender, education and occupational group in a municipal workforce. Review of public personnel administration.
- Behrens, B; & Halford, K. (1994). Advances in the prevention and treatment of marital distress. Paper presented at the "Helping family change" conference, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.
- Beerh, T.A. (1985). *The Role of social support in coping with organisational stress, human stress and cognition in organisation*, New York: Humeral press.
- Bello, A. (1998). Seminar paper presented on the "Role of men in islamic marriage system".
- Betiag, P.A. In Iheagham, A. W. (Ed) (2000). *Sociology of education*, Calabar: Ushie publishing company.
- Block, A. & Block, C. (1986, January). Marriage and family issues; *journal of human psychology*. Cambridge University 2.

- Block, C. & Gjerde, O. (1986, July). *Conflict analysis*. A paper presented at University of Minnesota, U.S.A.
- Borg, W.R. & Gall, E. (1983). *Educational research: An introduction*, (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- Bronx, W. (1990). Married women and men perseverance in marriage, *Journal of population research, Pennsylvania state University: U.S.A* (3) 346 – 354.
- Buchanan, C. (2001). In J. H. Grch, and F. D. Fincham (Ed) (2001). *Theory, Research and application*, Hardback: Cambridge University Press.
- Bulus, I. (1988). *Essentials of counselling theories*, Enugu :A B C publishers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1995). *Indigenous and western counselling approaches: A synthetic model for use in Africa*, Jos: Ehindero Nigeria Limited.
- Burr, O. (1973). Marriage covenant. *Journal of psychology*. 2, (5) 50-57.
- Burkke, J. (2000). *A canonical and pastoral commentary on the laws of the Catholic Church on marriage*, Ibadan: Nihil Obstat
- Butswat, B. Z. (1995). *Students crisis management skills, an unpublished Master's thesis*: University of Jos, Jos.
- Carew, F. (1995). *The purpose for marriage, an unpublished manuscript*: University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri.
- Chinoy, C. (1967). Married to a stranger, *Journal of marriage and family*. 2 (58) 20-26.
- Clements, T. Stanley, B., & Markman, J.P., (1997). Positive steps for preserving a marriage. A paper presented at the "helping family change" conference, University of Queensland Brisbane, Australia.
- Cox, A. & Cox, O. (1975). *Towards a model of pastoral counselling and care in Nigeria context*. TCNN bulletin, 15 (1) 65-68.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1983, May). *Conflict analysis model*. A paper presented at a Biennia Conference of African American Couples. Ohio: U.S.A.

- Counts, J.A. (1991). Perceived effectiveness of conflict management strategies in dating relationship. M. Ed. Thesis, presented to East Tennessee University, USA.
- Dadi, N (2004). *A study of Taroh traditional marriage and its implication for counselling*, M.Ed thesis University of Jos, Jos.
- David, E. (1982). *Marriage and legal issues*, an unpublished manuscript: University of Calabar, Calabar.
- Denga,D.I. & Ali, A. (1983). *An introduction to research methods and statistics in education and social sciences*, Jos: Savannah press Limited.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2005, August). Counselling for peace in Nigeria an unpublished key note address presented at CASSON conference University of Calabar.
- Edet, C. A. (1992). *Sexual frustration. A major cause of broken home*. Faculty of Education: M.Ed. Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Egbe, E. U. (2004, April). Marriage encounter lecture at our lady of Fatima Catholic Church, Jos – Plateau state.
- Ellis, A. (1962). *Reasons for emotional psychotherapy*, New York: Ballantric Books.
- Ellis, D., Stuckless, N., & Sage, C. A. (1996). *The analysis in mediation and negotiation of marital conflicts at 25<sup>th</sup> peace summit Darka, Ghana*.
- Eriba, J.D. (1999). Effective of persuasive communication model in changing students attitude towards science in Benue state, A Ph.D dissertation University of Jos.
- Eroh, O.E. (2005). Marital growth. Unpublished manuscript St. Joseph's Parish Begiagba, Bendi; Cross River State.
- Eroh, W. O. (2005, February). Couples conduct and marital stability. A unpublished manuscript St. Charles Parish Obudu CRS.
- Esere, M.O. & Idowu, A.I. (2000). The effect of cognitive restructuring in resolving marital conflict among couples in Ilorin, *Nigerian Journal of applied psychology*, 6, (1) 87– 98.

- Eseré, M.O. (2002). Approach to marital therapy; *The Nigerian Journal of guidance and counselling*, University of Ilorin, 8 (1).
- Esuman, J.K. (1988). Behaviour approaches to Counselling in Achebe cl (ed) theories of individual counselling. Relevance to the Nigerian situation: Nassachuatte: Fire College Black studies press.
- Etta, B. (2002, November). "Marriage Ordinance" A lecture Presented at the Mother's Day Celebration. St. Charles Parish Obudu, Cross River State.
- Enyi, D. (1995). *Provision of primary education in Benue State: Exploring participation as a supplementary source*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1973). *African system of marriage and kinship*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Ezema, M.C. (2001). *Man and aid social environment*. Enugu: New Generation Books.
- Ezinyi, E. (2001, August). Counselling for peaceful co-existence. A paper presented at the conference of Counselling association of Nigeria, Markurdi, Benue State.
- Festy, E. (1982). *Personal adjustments, marriage and family*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Flyod, T. & Harrti, E. (1974). Long term marriage; *Journal of psychology*, 5 (2).
- Floyd, F., Markman, H., Kelly, S., Blumberg, S & Stanley, S (1996). Prevention: conceptual research and clinical issues. In N Jacobson and A Gurman (Eds) *Handbook on marital therapy* (second edition).
- Fournier, D.G. Olson, D.H., & Druckman J.M (1983). Assessing marital and premarital relationships: Enrich Inventories. In E.E. Felsingner (Ed) *marriage and family assessment*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Fournier, D.G. & Olson, D.H. (1986). Programmes for premarital and newly wedded couples. *Psycho educational approaches to family therapy and Counselling*. *Journal of marriage and family*; (10).

- Fowers, B.J & Olson, D.H. (1989). Enrich marital inventory: A discriminant validity and cross – validation assessment. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 15.
- Freud, S. (1960). *Psychotherapy of everyday life*. Boston: Ernest Bennu (Paper back ed).
- Freud, S. (1949). *An outline of psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Gangwari, U.J. (1996). *Theology of marriage*. Unpublished manuscript, St. Augustine's Seminary, Jos, Plateau State.
- Genda, A. (2002, May). *Marital issues*. A paper presented at the Counselling Association of Nigeria Conference, Benin Chapter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2002). *Marriage expectation*. Unpublished manuscript, St. Augustine's Seminary, Jos, Plateau State.
- Genesis (1:28; 2:18). *The Holy Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson publisher.
- Gentui, O. (1996). Applied relaxation-treatment of panic disorder with Ogonoraphiobia. *Journal of psychology*, 5 (3).
- Gleen, O. & Sheton, I. (1983). A general sociology of the family. Methodology, concept and prepositions. North Western University, U.S.A.
- Gloser, C.C. (1957). Verbal skills to ensure better understanding between partners. *Journal of marriage and family*, 40, 712-714.
- Gomwalk, P. (1987). Strategies for effective proliferation of marital conflict. Jos: Fab Anieh Nigeria Limited.
- Gottman, J.M. (1994). *Marital interactions: Experimental investigation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Guillemo, B. (1983). Family therapy. *Journal of marriage and family* 5, (1), 62-71.
- Habel, E. A . (1996). *Introduction to guidance*. New York: Macmillan.
- Hahlweg, B. & Markman, J.P. (1993). Family conflicts issues: *Journal of marriage and family*, 63, 115 – 128.



- Health, T. & Dominic, E. (1974). *Basic statistic methods*. San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Henderson, M. (1994). *Women initiative on peace making*. Humeral: Press, U.S.A.
- Hendrick, S.& Hendrick, C. (2000). *Close relationship. A source Book Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications*.
- Himes, J.S (1980). *Conflict and conflict management*. Athens, G.A: The University of Georgia Press.
- Hodges, P. (1974). Marriage and families in changing society. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 41 (2).
- Hornby, A.S. (1981). *The Oxford dictionary of current English*. New York: Oxford University Press. Inc.
- Hosford, C. (1995). Management skills for troubled couples. *Journal of marriage and family*. 41 (2).
- House, J.S. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Addison: Wesley, U.S.A.
- Igbo, B.A. (1997). *Child psychology*. Calabar: Ushie Printers.
- Igbo, B. A. (2001). *Introduction to guidance and counselling*. Calabar: Lag Pat.
- Iheagwam, A. W. (2001). *Educational theory*. Calabar: Ushie Publishing Company.
- Ikwen, B. (1979). *Bette traditional marriage custom*. Unpublished Monographic, Obudu Local Government.
- Iwuana, B.C. (1991). *Foundations of guidance and counselling: cases and technique*. Benin City: Supreme.
- Jaworskia, G. P. (1991). *The history and contemporary importance of losers functions sociological theory* (9), 116 – 123.
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1973). *Foundations of behavioural research*. New York: Holt Rinehart and Wilson.

- Kumuyi, W. F. (1990, May). *Marital breakdown. Woman mirror*; Deeper Life Bible Church, Lagos pp 5-8.
- Lagos State Ministry of Education, (1994). *Child guidance service careers exhibition*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Lahaye, T. O. (1977). *Married life in an African tribe*. An unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Lamle, E. N. (2004). *Sex & marriage*. Jos: The crossroad comm. Media Services.
- Lengua, F. (2000, March). Marital conflict and family. *Journal of counselling psychology*. Cambridge University (12) 220 – 226.
- Lere, M.M. (1996). *The integration of the disabled through the physical education and recreation: A survey of institutions in Mangu L.G.A*. An unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Mailumo, P.H. (1988). *Guide to research methods*. Jos: University of Jos, Jos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ P. H. (1998). Using tap international action in special needs. *The counsellor*, 16 (1), 255-259.
- Makinde, B.O. & Nwadinigwe, I.P. (1997). *Fundamentals of individual counselling theories*. Lagos: Charolo & Sons.
- Mallum, M. P (1975). *Understanding basic principles in guidance and counselling in Nigeria*. Zaria: ABU Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997). *Lecture notes on marriage and family counselling*. University of Jos, Jos.
- Mallum, J.O. (1995). The role of family size in child rearing patterns and academic achievement. *The Journal of special education and Rehabilitation*. 2(1), 198-204.
- Mallum, A.Y. (1967). "Marriage counselling". An unpublished Lecture note, University of Jos, Jos.
- Mambula, P. (2002). *Marital commitments*. University of Maiduguri: *Journal of education* (2), 60–65.

- Martison, F.M. (1960). *Marriage and American ideal*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co.
- Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African religion and philosophy*. London: Heinemann Publisher.
- Meyers, C. A. (1999). Conflict prevention a reality: *Journal of counselling and clinical psychology* 61 (1), 6-15.
- Miller, C.H. (1971). *Foundations of guidance* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New York: Corey Publishers.
- Modu, P. (1996, June). *Marriage encounter lessons at St. Benedict's Cathedral, Ogoja: Cross River State* pp 6-18.
- Moss, M. & Gingles, P. (1965). Marriage creed. *Journal of marriage and family*. 27, (3), 265.
- Moudumogo, C. A. (2002). The effects of three methods of instruction on senior secondary school students' vocabulary achievement. Ph.D thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Mouris, O. (2002, September). Television lecture on Ryma. Network programmes.
- Naser, T. (2002). *Educational research and grant proposal development*. Lagos: NASER academic Press.
- Njoroge, J .T. (1996). "Hannah why do you weep". Sam 1 and 2: 1-21 In Wamue, O & Getui, M. (eds). *Violence against Women*. Nairobi: Action Press.
- Notarius, T. & Markman, J. P. (1993). *Assessing premarital relationships: Prepare inventories*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Nwadinagwe, I.P. (2000). *Marriage issues*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Lagos.
- Nweke, C.C., (ed.) (1989). *Guidance and counselling principles and practices*. Calabar: Paico Press and Books.
- Nwobi, P.C. (1995). *Marriage and family counselling*. Enugu: Pan African communication.
- Nwogugu, E. (1996). *Family law in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Claverianum Press

- Nwoye, A. (1991). *Counselling psychology for Africa*, Jos: Fab Education Books.
- Nwude, O. (1995). *Aims and purpose of marriage*. Benin City: Etio computers.
- Nzeilo, B.N. (1994). *Family stress management*. Enugu: Abic Publishers.
- Obe, A. (1997). *Causes of marital conflict in Iga Okpaya*. M.Ed. Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1999, September). *Conflict management*. A paper presented at Benue State Chapter CASSON Week.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (2000, August). *Family life education*; A paper presented at CASSON, Abuja.
- Obele, A. (1999). *Selected studies in marriage and family*. St. Charles Parish, Obudu, Cross River State.
- Obiadi, G.O. (1978). *Shaira law in Nigeria*, Faculty of law. Unpublished manuscript, University of Jos, Jos.
- Ochai, A. O. (1986). *Etymologies of marriage instability and divorce*. A case of Otukpo Local Government Area. Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Odey, E. (2001, December). *A marriage sermon* at St. Charles Parish, Obudu.
- Odukoya, B. (2004, April). *Single and married partners NTA spiritual Talk Shows* Lagos: Fountain of Life Church.
- Ogunsaya, A. (2001). *A survey of sources and effects of conflicts, its resolution and implication for rehabilitation counselling*. Counselling Association of Nigeria. Markudi, Benue State.
- Ogunsanya, O. & Shomade. D. (2000). *A Study of couples adjustment and management skills*. Journal of counseling psychology Ogun State University.
- Ogwuche, C. O. (2001, August). *Counselling for conflict resolution*. Paper presentation at the 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference of CASSON Makurdi.

- Oji, C. (2004, March 25). *Kids from broken homes*. Daily Sun; p. 17
- Okobiah, O.C. & Okorodudu, R.I. (ed) (1997). *Principles and techniques of guidance and counselling*. Benin: Osasu Publishers.
- Okpede, E. D. (1990). *Development and validation of a sex education in Nigeria*. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Olson, D. (1987, May). Family assessment. A paper presented at the annual conference of National Council on Family Relations at Atlanta, U.S.A. University of Minnesota.
- Olomolaiye, F. (1998). *Statistical techniques in educational research*. Jos: University Press.
- Omoluabi, P and Animba, O (1998). *Counselling for Survival: Issues and Techniques*, Lagos: Amazing Grace Printing and Publishing Company
- Oni, P. (2001, May). *Conflict in marriage*. *The Journal of school of education* College of Education Asaba (1), 20 – 25.
- Onyejiaku, F.O. (1987). *Career guidance and counselling services in schools*. Calabar: Wusen Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990). *Psychology of adolescence*. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers.
- Oyetunde, T.O (2002). *Essential guide to research and project writing*. Jos: Lecaps publishers
- Osuala, E.A. (1993). *Introduction to research methodology*. Enugu: African Fep Publishers.
- Otite, O. & Oginowo, B. (1979). *Introduction to sociological studies*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational books Ltd.
- Otuji, M. (2000, March). *Family life education*. The message communication; Ogoja: Cross River State pp 18 – 21.
- Owan, C. A. (2000, February). *Predicting Martial Happiness and stability*. CIWA Port-Harcourt pp 12 - 16.
- Oyedepo, F. (2001). *Marriage covenant*. Kaduna: Dominion Books.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1996, May). "Relationship cure" an NTA religious programme.
- Pam, P.N. (1997). *Marriage tenets*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Jos, Jos.
- Park, R., Burgess, E & Mackuzie, A. (1936). *The City*, little rock, WCM Publishing company.
- Philips, E. (1971). Marriage vows. *Journal of psychology*. University of Wisconsin, USA. 8 (1), 121-127
- Prudence, C.N. (1997). *Marriage and family counselling*. Enugu: Pan African Communication.
- Rice, F.P. (1978, April). *Sexual Problems in marriage weep from the Christian counsellor*. West Minister Press, pp 20- 25.
- Ritzer, G. (1996). *Sociological theory*. Singapore: MC Graw Hill International Inc.
- Robertson, M.C (1977). Sexuality among men and women in committed relationships. *The Canadian journal of human sexuality*, 8 (1), 31-40.
- Roels. D. ( 1989). Assessment of marital satisfaction. *Journal of marriage and the family*, .41, 813-822.
- Sarki, I. (1986). *Marriage under Islamic law*. Unpublished monograph, University of Jos, Jos.
- Satir, J.M (1967). Marriage enrichment family relations. *Journal of marriage and the family*. 48, 273-275
- Schmelz, D.R., Ramsey, R.P. (1997). Considering sources and types of social support. A psychometric evaluation of house and well instrument: *Journal of personal selling and sales management*, 12, (1) 49 – 61.
- Seigert, F. (1994). In orim, p (2004). *Sociological concepts*. Kaduna: Datura print and publishers.
- Shertzer, B. & Stone, C. (1976). *Fundamentals of counselling*. Boston: Houghton Milfflin Company.

- Shyrack, D.A. (1986). *Happiness for husband and wives*. Washington: Review and Herald.
- Smalley, P. & Scot, E. (1979). *Community counselling: A human senile approach*. New York: John Willey.
- Sotunade, A.O. (1999). Family stability as factor in reconstruction and transformation of a nation. *The counsellor* .17 (1) 105-110.
- Sprey, O. (1972). A Successful marriage. *Journal of marriage and family*, 2 (1), 34-39.
- Standford, M. C. (2002). *CNN Talk show on family life education*. Cabel Network .
- Sule, M.N. (2001). *A study of socio-cultural dynamics and academics achievement of secondary school students in Plateau State*. Doctoral thesis, University of Jos, Jos.
- Suleiman, I. N. (1999). *Islamic personal and practice in Nigeria*. Makurdi: Oracle publishing company Ltd.
- Sullivan, K.T., Pasch, L. A., & Bradbury T. N. (1998). Social support in marriage: *Translating research into practical application for clinicians counselling and therapy for couples and family* 6, 263 – 271.
- Tagwana, J. (1997). *Impact of christianity on traditional marriage of Manghi people of Mubi LGA*. Adamawa State. Unpublished B.A thesis of St. Augustine's Seminary, Jos.
- Thornton, A. (1989). Changing attitudes towards family Issues in the United States. *Journal of marriage and the family*, 51, 873 – 893.
- Turner, R.H. (1970). *Family interest*. New York: John Willey and Sons.
- Ugbe, E. (1988). An unpublished manuscript, *Bette traditional council*. Obudu, Cross River State.

- Ugabi, J.I, Orim P.O. Awah, I. M. & Ikwazomm, A. C. O (2005).  
Social Studies for PRE-NCE Calabar: Unique link Ventures.
- Ugabi, J. (2004). *Sociological perspectives: modernisation and social Change*. Kaduna: Datura print and publishers.
- Ugodulunwa, C. & Ugwuanyi, C. (1999). *Understanding educational evaluation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Jos: Fab. Education Books.
- Umoh, S.U. (1998). *The Sara tradition*. The Catholic Ambassador 19 (2), 17.
- Unachukwu, G.U. & Igborgbor, G.C. (1991). *guidance and counselling*. A realistic approach. Owerri: International press.
- Undie, E.A. (1997). An begiaka traditional marriage rites. *Unpublished Manuscripts*, Obudu, Cross River State.
- Undiyaundeye, F.A. (2000). *The Basics of counselling*. Makurdi: Aboki Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2002, August). *The causes of marital conflicts* A paper presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual conference of counselling Association of Nigeria. Makurdi: Benue State.
- Unimna, A. (1988). *Marriage in Bette tradition*. Calabar: Ushie Printers.
- Utsu, A.C. (1999). "*Aim high*". Calabar: Ushie Printers.
- Uwe, E.A. (2000). *Marriage counselling issues and solutions*. Calabar: Pyramid Computers.
- Washikda, H. (1996, February). *Marriage ordinance*. A paper presented at a conference on the values of a Christian marriage; St. Augustine Seminary Jos: Plateau State.
- Wise, C. (1995). Marriage progress and relationship. *Journal of sociology*, University of Minneapolis. USA (1) 57 – 96.
- Yang, N, Chai, J., Chen, C. C., and Zou, Y. (2000). Source of work family conflict. A Sino – U.S comparison of effects of work and family demands. *Academy management journal* 43, 1, 113 – 123.



Yoloye, E (1980). *Handbook on continuous assessment*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education.

Zayyan, M.S. (1995). Young mothers in the killer range: The case of cervical cancer and vesico vaginal fistula (VVF). *Proceedings of seminar on "problems of early marriage in Nigeria"*. Organised by women in Nigeria (W.N) Kaduna, Kaduna State.

## **APPENDIX A**

Department of Arts and social  
Science Education,  
Guidance and Counselling Unit,  
Faculty of Education,  
University of Jos,  
Jos – Plateau state.

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

The researcher is a postgraduate student of the University of Jos, investigating into the topic: The effects of marital conflict management skills on marital stability among couples in the Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State.

This questionnaire is intended to collect information from you on some important marital matters, which will help in addressing and solving marriage problems in the society. This means that your honest responses to the statement made in the questionnaire will provide useful data for this work. I assure you that any information given will be treated in confidence and used strictly for the purpose of this work only.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

***Florence Undiyaundeye (Mrs)***  
Researcher (Ph. D. Candidate)

## APPENDIX A I

### PART 1: COUPLES' PERSONAL INVENTORY FORM (CPIF)

**Introduction: Supply the answers to the blank spaces and tick (√) in the appropriate places.**

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Age: Below 20 years [ ] 21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41 and above [ ]
3. Marital Status: married [ ] Divorced [ ] Widow/Widower [ ]  
Never married/single [ ]
4. Highest Educational Qualification:
  - (a) Ph.D [ ] (b) Masters Degree [ ]
  - (c) First Degree/HND [ ]
  - (d) NCE/OND [ ]
  - (e) Other qualifications, (please specify):-----  
-----
5. Number of years married:
  - (a) 1-5 years [ ] (b) 6-10 years [ ]
  - (c) 11-20 years [ ] (d) 20-30 years [ ]
  - (e) over 30 years [ ]
6. Indicate how many children you have
  - (a) None [ ] (b) 1 – 5 [ ]
  - (c) 6 – 10 [ ] (d) 11 – 15 [ ]
  - (e) 15 and above [ ]
7. Type of marriage contracted.
  - (a) Christian wedding [ ] (b) Traditional marriage [ ]
  - (c) Court marriage [ ] (d) Others (specify): -----  
-----
8. What religious denomination do you belong?
  - (a) Christianity [ ] (b) Islam [ ]

(c) Traditional [ ] (d) Others (specify please):-----

9. How many wives have you?:-----

10. Are you divorced? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. If ever divorced, how was it carried out?

(a) Court of law [ ] (b) Church [ ]

(c) Separation by elders [ ] (e) Others (specify):----

12. How old were you at your first marriage? (Both married and divorced persons):

(a) 10 – 19 [ ] (b) 20 - 29 [ ]

(c) 30 – 39 [ ] (e) 40 and above [ ]

13. What are the sexes of your children?

(a) All boys [ ] (b) All girls [ ]

(c) Girls & Boys [ ]

14. What are the physical problems encountered by your children?

(a) Deformed children some [ ]

(b) All deformed children [ ]

(c) All partially deformed [ ]

(d) No Deformed children [ ]

## **COUPLES MARITAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE REGARDING THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

The following is a list of statements, issues, questions and suggestions about what experts perceive regarding the causes of conflict in marriage which have bearing with marital adjustment of couples. The instrument is divided into six sections.

Read each of the items of the instrument carefully and decide on what it demonstrates or reveals regarding what you feel are the causes of conflict in marriage.

If a statement describes MOST SATISFACTORILY the way you feel about the causes of conflict in marriage tick Box 5 (STRONGLY AGREE).

If a statement describes SATISFACTORILY the way you feel about the causes of conflict in marriage tick Box 4 (AGREE).

If you are uncertain about the issues involved in any of the items of the instrument tick Box 3 (UNDECIDED).

If a statement describes UNSATISFACTORILY the way you feel about the causes of conflict in marriage tick Box 2 (DISAGREE).

If a statement describes MOST UNSATISFACTORILY the way you feel about the causes of conflict in marriage tick 1 (STRONGLY DISAGREE).

Please tick only one Box per statement; provide responses to all items of the instrument. Your responses are for research purposes only and will not be disclosed to anybody.

## APPENDIX A II

## PART II: COUPLES MARITAL ADJUSTMENT SCALE(MAS)

## SECTION A

S/N	THE CONCEPTION OF MARRIAGE BY MARRIED & LITERATE MEN & WOMEN IN RELATION TO MARRITAL ADJUSTMENT (NOS 1-11)	SA (5)	A (4)	UN D (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
1.	Literate married men understand the tenets of marriage more than literate married women.					
2.	Literate married women adjust easily to marital problems than literate married men.					
3.	Listening to gossips cannot cause marital breakdown					
4.	Differences in sexual desire among couples cannot lead to marital breakdown.					
5.	Lack of discussion & mutual conversation lead to marital problems in literate couples.					
6.	Disrespect for each other's personality in marriage can lead to serious marital problems					
7.	Lack of knowledge of marital objectives by couples leads to marital breakdown					
8.	It annoys me when my expectations in marriage are not met					
9.	Disregards for each other's relatives could cause conflict in marriage					
10	Frequent nagging by couples leads to misunderstanding					
11	In marriage where conflict dominates the affairs of the home, women suffer more emotional stress than men.					

### APPENDIX A III

#### SECTION B

S/N	<b>THE ATTITUDES OF CHRISTIAN LITERATE COUPLES AND THEIR TRADITIONALLY MARRIED COUNTERPARTS TO MARITAL PROBLEMS (NOS 12-20)</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>UN D (3)</b>	<b>D (2)</b>	<b>SD (1)</b>
12	Christian married couples lack self-control and this causes marital conflict					
13	The traditionally married and literate couples find it more difficult to keep all marriage promises than Christian married couples					
14	The Christian married couples dominate their own family affairs					
15	The traditionally married couples are always unhappy about the way their partners outsmart them					
16	In Christian marriage a situation of childlessness does not cause marital conflict					
17	In a traditional marriage setting, giving birth to all female children does not cause problems in marriage					
18	In a Christian marriage lack of trust amongst couples leads to marital breakdown					
19	Child's neglect and abuse by either couple does not cause breach of peace among traditionally married couples.					

## APPENDIX A IV

### SECTION C

S/N	THE ATTITUDES OF EXTENDED & LITERATE FAMILY MEMBERS REGARDING THE CAUSES OF MARITAL CONFLICTS NOS 20-24	SA (5)	A (4)	UN D (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
	When you analyse the causes of marital conflict, often times you discover that;					
20	Extended family members are responsible for most marital conflicts/problems					
21	The couples are often unaware of marital conflicts arising from their interaction with the family					
22	Early marriage could cause dissatisfaction and misunderstanding within the extended family					
23	Extended family members often disregard couples' needs when at loggerheads with them.					
24	Couples often disregard extended family member's advice when in conflict					



## APPENDIX A V

### SECTION D

S/N	MARRIED AND LITERATE COUPLE'S VIEWS ON THE CAUSES OF MARTAL CONFLICT NOS 25-31	SA (5)	A (4)	UN D (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
	When couples interact at different levels they realise that:-					
25	Exhibition of immoral behaviour by couples is not a serious marriage problem					
26	Aggression and uncompromising position regarding major decision taking is often responsible for marital conflict					
27	The man's inability to meet the financial and moral needs of the family is responsible for marital conflict.					
28	Conflicts have no negative effects on spouses as such					
29	Insults and assaults create/cause conflict in marriage					
30	Display of affection reduces conflict situation.					
31	Emotional stress creates loneliness and discomfort for couples in conflict.					

## APPENDIX VI

## SECTION E

	<b>AGE OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL CONFLICT NOS 32-35</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>UN D (3)</b>	<b>D (2)</b>	<b>SD (1)</b>
32	Sexual maladjustment is often responsible for marital conflict among younger couples					
33	The incidence of non-challant attitude is the consequence of marital conflict among older couples					
34	The age of couples in marriage influences positively the occurrence of marital conflict					
35	Lack of humility among younger couple often creates marital conflict					

## APPENDIX VII

## SECTION F

S/N	EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AMONG COUPLES AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN MANAGING MARITAL CONFLICT NOS 36-42	SA (5)	A (4)	UN D (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
36	Differences in educational qualification of couples result in conflict					
37	The occurrence of conflict is more among literate couples than the illiterate ones					
38	Working class women pay less attention to husbands' emotional needs					
39	Inappropriate handling/settling of differences among educated couples leads to perpetual happiness					
40	Pre-marital counseling does not help couples in handling marital conflict					
41	Literate couples tend to have mutual co-existence when in love					
42	Conflict management skills could resolve marital conflict among literate couples.					

**APPENDIX B****COUPLES' CHECKLIST**

**INSTRUCTION:** Read the statements carefully and tick right ( ✓ ) under the option that applies to your response.

Key: SA Strongly Agree, A Agree, Und Undecided, SD Strongly Disagree and D Disagree.

	SA	A	UND	SD	D
1. I like my partner more when he/she gives me attention.					
2. It excites me when we discuss as friends with my spouse.					
3. Because my partner attends to our needs regularly, conflicts rarely occur.					
4. My partner keeps the tempo of our marriage tenets high by exercising our conjugal rights as and when due.					
5. Constant viewing of "Your choice" programme on NTA Network makes my partner more romantic.					
6. The challenges from the little quarrels that occur occasionally have made us wake up to each other's responsibility.					
7. My partner's dressing puts me off.					
8. We prefer our undesired behaviours to be corrected with diplomacy.					
9. It gives us pleasure when each partner's role is maintained.					
10. We may fall apart if our individual views are not respected in decision taking.					

## APPENDIX C

### TREATMENT SCHEDULE

PREP method by Esere (2002) was adopted for the workability of the distress couples management skills checklist.

A total of two hundred couples were used to test the management skill provided for four weeks. These two hundred couples were further divided into two groups of experimental and control with hundred couples each. A schedule for each week is as follows;

#### EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

There was a pre-test, treatment and finally, a post-test administered.

Week	Work plan	Time/Days
1	(1) General introduction and personal dossier of Marriage  (2) Find out various problems encountered by couples in marriage.	2 hours daily Monday – Friday Total of 10 hours weekly
2	(1) Group couples according to problem  Individual counselling to Group counselling according to their problem. Administered pre-test of the couples checklist.	2 hours daily Monday – Friday Total of 10 hours weekly
3	Prescribe gingering tips to lubricate each. Couples sensitivity at the beginning of the week and evaluate at the end of the week if it was successful or met the desired objectives.	2 hours daily Monday – Friday Total of 10 hours weekly
4	Have a discussion with the couples on the options of achieving cordiality and, finally administer a post-test.	2hours daily Monday – Friday Total of 10 hours weekly

## **APPENDIX C I**

### **CONTROL GROUP**

Here there was a pre-test, no treatment and a post-test was administered with general counselling on the purpose of marriage and effect of good interpersonal relationship on couples, siblings and society in general.

The couples in the control group were exposed to a general marriage-counselling programme where tips on achieving success in marriage were given with the intention to sharpen the rough edges, if any, in their marital interaction. Some possible issues of disagreement in marriage such as sex dysfunction, the number of children to acquire and sex of children, and infertility were highlighted to act as a deterrent for future disagreement.

**APPENDIX D**





**APPENDIX E**

**APPENDIX F**

**APPENDIX G**

**APPENDIX H**

**APPENDIX I**

