

# *Humility and Educational Levels of Couples as Correlate of Handling Marital Conflicts in Ekiti State, Nigeria*

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## *Abstract*

*This study examined humility and educational level of couples as correlate of handling marital conflicts in Ekiti State. The study was a descriptive survey. The population consisted of all couples in Ado- Ekiti Local Government Area. The sample consisted of 200 married people who reside in Ado-Ekiti. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. Stratified sampling technique was employed to categorise couples based on their educational level. A self- designed instrument titled "Marital Conflict Handling and Couples Educational Questionnaire" (MCHCEQ) was used for the study. Face and content validities of the instrument were ensured by experts in Educational Psychology and Social Studies Education. The reliability was ascertained through test-retest method. The result yielded reliability coefficient of 0.70 which was considered acceptable for the study. The data collected were analyzed descriptively using Percentage, Mean scores, Standard deviation. Inferential statistic of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that at all levels of education, humility serves as part of important means of handling marital conflicts. The results also revealed that there was statistically no significant relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling. Based on the findings it was recommended that married couples should involve humility in handling offences and conflicting issues with their spouses. Married couples should be taught by Counsellors to imbibe humility no matter their educational attainments.*

## **Introduction**

Marriage is a union of two people of opposite sex (a man and a woman) coming together with the purpose of building a God-given home. It is a union beyond the body but also of the spirit and soul which requires higher and maximum level of relationship with each other (the male and the female coming together) than with any other person on earth. It is observed that in the pieces of marital relationship that can last for years (beyond the time of gestation and rearing of children), a lot happens during the early stage of marriage in the late years. For example, there might be reduction in their

economic strength, the body growth and romantic expression waxes and wanes as the strength reduces.

However, as two people continue to live together, they begin to observe and pick faults in each other and this could eventually generate conflict; of course conflict is inevitable in human living. Conflict is a product of human nature and is inevitable in any marriage. When two people who are not identical get married, their differences will naturally oxidize like iron and water. The differences between two people are what make them unique individually, yet, it is these differences that sometimes cause conflict when two different and unique people come together in marriage. Before marriage, these differences seem to be the magnetic forces that attract the people to each other. According to Wickstorm (2008), in the dating process, the difference noticed in the spouse either being outspoken, reserved or a listener, attracts; and that is a good thing. He further said, in marriage process those same differences can, and usually will cause conflict. In any marital relationship where there is no conflict, it means one or both partners are pretending, suppressing emotions or bottling up anger. Every intimate relationship seems to be believed to have periods of conflicts. The difference is that, in successful marriages, the partners have learnt how to handle their conflicts and even use them to improve their relationship.

Washington (2005) opined that marital conflicts arise when one or both spouses feel unhappy in their relationship and their interactive processes is not properly managed and they try to resolve it in any way. Divorce seems to be the result of unresolved conflicts; and more than half of couples who handle conflicts destructively and do not seek counsel finally get divorced. Several factors have been attributed to the causes of marital conflict in the society. Among the prominent factors are educational level and absence of humility. The level of education of couples should not affect the relationship. In what seems to be a perfect society and on the basis of what purpose marriage should serve, education should not really affect conflict handling. Education is considered as part of life achievement. The educational level of spouse may determine the position, economic, and social status and sometimes their personality make-ups. Whenever spouses pay more attention to or are obsessed with this, it may result to pride and frustration in handling conflicts. Unfortunately, we do not have a perfect society and so the issue of education is usually a thorny issue. Education as an issue in handling marital conflict affects how we interact with each other. Education integrates interpersonal norms, values, ethics and culture into individuals which could propel their action and reactions at the time of conflict that they need to value the opinion of the spouse and have a value judgment of the situations around the conflict.

Education could help couples to engage intellectually when issues in form of conflict arise and their level of intelligence would likely give them right insight into such issues. An educated spouse could get information on such issue relating to the society. The society does not exist outside the family, thus such information received by the spouse could influence their behaviour on certain matters in the family such as child rearing,

management of fund and interpersonal relationship. Aemro (2018) submitted that where spouses are educated to a large extent, the education may not be a big deal but character of spouses. As a woman, there may be need for her to make it open and clear that she honours the leadership and headship of the husband despite the educational equality. Higher education pulling the “I know more than you do” card or insinuating it in a conversation will make the marital affairs “who is better?” measuring contest, without resolution of the conflict. Juliana (2016) opined that the more education couples have in common, the more it may go to affect their stands when conflicts arise due to similar intelligence and maturity level. The level of education might help the couple in their adaptation level to marital conflicts. Most times when the man is more learned, it may not be an issue because structurally the man is the one who offers leadership, it does not hurt if he knows a little more than the woman.

Musick, Brand and Davis (2012) asserted that conflict is increased when there are differences in the level of education of couples. Groot and Den (2002) assumed that couples’ chances of having conflict decreases when they have the same level of education. Geok (2013) asserted the importance of wives’ income, the extra resources encourage married people to have a moral equal distribution of power in their relationship which can promote marital happiness. Marital satisfaction and quality of the relationship with regard to economic stress is reduced. Regardless of the level of a spouse’s education, the virtue of humility is still expected to be in foreplay to iron out their differences that can snow-ball into marital conflict. Today, a lot of families are in disarray, though highly educated because the veritability of humility is lacking. Submission could be seen as part of the product of humility which will support the educational advantage of couples in handling marital conflicts. This could probably save the wounds of divorce, untrained children, vagabonds, family violent and others. Unresolved family conflict that led to divorce, untrained children and vagabonds has further deepened the societal problem with thurgery, robbery, assassination, kidnapping, death and wanton destruction we witness all around us today. If the family is healthy, the society will be wholesome.

It seems that humility is a virtue that helps and strengthens the relationship between spouses and when applied, it shifts the attitude of our personal constraints. Humility is modest and respectful, it is the quality of not being proud because one is aware of one’s own imperfections and is willing to humbly accept them. When couples do not admit that they are imperfect, they will not be able to take ownership of their own shortcoming which can bring setback in their relationship. Humility does not always pointing the accusing finger to the other spouse blaming him/her for all the problems. Francis (2013) submitted that conflict is an opportunity or challenge for possible change and there is no progress in life without a change. This is because when two irresponsible parents fight, it is always the poor child that suffers. Many conflicts arise because of lack of humility resulting in misunderstanding which is commonly observed among parents. He argued that conversation with humility and respect is essential in conflict resolution. It is

therefore quite necessary to encourage individual or group of people who are involved in a conflict to work it out among themselves before exposing themselves in the society. Jegede (2015) sees handling conflict with humility as need to have a humble attitude by swallowing one's pride. Humility is a core value that has to be practised and lived out for others to believe it is not just a stated value. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. Rather, it is thinking of yourself less. He expatiated further that humility is important because is the key to turning conflict into opportunity.

The Patriarchal believe of making men assume the position of Lords in everything and situations at home may contravene the virtue of humility in handling marital conflicts. It may rather engender pride. The Holy Bible (Mic 6:8) submitted that, "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God". Humility is one of the greatest attributes in handling marital conflicts among couples based on the fact that couples are more likely to respond to each other in a positive way. Humility will make couples say "sorry" to any injury caused to each other, or what they felt they have done wrong. It takes humility to keep silence or calm by one party when sensing aggressiveness in the tone of the other party. Ekiti State being mostly referred to in Nigeria as fountain of knowledge will probably be of much benefit when their couples combine the blessing of education with the virtue of humility for a sustainable family.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the correlation between humility and educational level of couples in handling marital conflicts in Ekiti State. The study sought to find out whether the level of education has influence on humility of couples during conflicts.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the educational level of couples in Ado Ekiti?
2. How does level of education of couple make them to adopt humility in marital conflict handling?

#### Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was generated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H_{01}$ : There is statistically no significant relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling.

#### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey as the design. The population consisted of all couples in Ado Ekiti local government area. The sample consisted of 200 married people who are residing in Ado Ekiti.

Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Stratified sampling technique was employed to categorize the respondents based on their educational level literate and illiterate. The sample does not cover couples of high institutions in Ado Ekiti

A questionnaire tagged "Marital Conflict Handling and couples education Questionnaire" (MCHCEQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The face and construct validities of the items in the instrument were determined by experts in Educational psychology and Social Studies Education to examine whether the items of the instrument actually measured the content of the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering the items twice within two weeks on sixteen married people outside the sample Local Government Area. The data obtained from the two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis which yielded a co-efficient of 0.70 which was considered high enough to be used for the study. Descriptive statistics, specifically percentages, mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research question. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** *What is the educational level of couples in Ado Ekiti?*

**Table 1: Descriptive analysis showing respondents on basis of educational level**

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Primary	4	2.0
SSCE	14	7
NCE	48	24
OND	39	19.5
HND	68	34.0
B.Sc	21	10.5
Masters	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 shows that all of the respondents had one form of education or the other. Most of the respondents indicated that they had HND with 34%, while 24% OND, 19.5% had NCE, 10.5% had B.Sc., 7% had SSCE, 3% had their masters and the least indicated that they had was primary education which was 2%. This implies that the sample used for the study include people who could read and write and as well understand the content of the items of the questionnaire. Nevertheless, people with less than NCE and OND

were indicated as illiterate as categorized in this study.

**Research Question 2:** *How does level of education of couple make them to adopt humility in marital conflict handling?*

**Table 2: Descriptive analysis showing respondents handling conflicts with humility on the basis of educational level.**

<i>Educational</i>	N	X	Sd	Decision	Rank
Primary	4	3.10	.871	Agree	7 <sup>th</sup>
SSCE	14	3.30	.512	Agree	5 <sup>th</sup>
NCE	48	3.35	.374	Agree	2 <sup>nd</sup>
OND	39	3.30	.514	Agree	4 <sup>th</sup>
HND	68	3.36	.514	Agree	1 <sup>st</sup>
B.Sc	21	3.31	.382	Agree	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Masters	6	3.26	.326	Agree	6 <sup>th</sup>

Table 2 shows humility as a method of marital conflict handling on the basis of educational level. Ddate from Table 2 revealed that respondents at all level of education agree on humility as a method of marital conflict handling. The mean revealed that HND holders ranked 1st in adopting humility in marital conflict handling, NCE ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, B.Sc ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, OND ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, SSCE ranked 5<sup>th</sup>, Masters ranked 6<sup>th</sup> while Primary ranked 7<sup>th</sup>. This implies that educational level of couples could determine the adoption of humility in marital conflict handling. Humility was displayed in every level of education as crucial in handling marital conflicts.

**Hypothesis:** *There is no significant relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling.*

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling.**

<i>Construct</i>	Mean	Sd	N	R	Significance
Educational level	4.20	1.303	200	.025	.730
Humility	3.33	.458	200		

p > 0.05 (null hypothesis upheld)



Table 3 shows that there is no significant relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling. This table revealed that p-value (.730) is greater than  $r_{cal}$  (.025) at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant relationship between couples level of education and humility in marital conflict handling is upheld.

### Discussion

The study shows the educational level of couples. It revealed that all the respondents were literate who could read, write as well understand. This finding corroborates with Aemro (2018) who argued that when couples are educated to a large extent, the education may be a big deal for the character of spouses. On the contrary, Juliana (2016) opined that the more education couples have in common the more it may go a long way to strengthen their relationship when conflict arises due to similarity in educational level that may influence their state of humility.

From the study, all the respondents agreed that at all levels of education humility serves as a means of handling marital conflict. Respondents with HND were ranked first while respondents with Primary school leaver were ranked 7<sup>th</sup> meaning that education of couples makes them to humble themselves in marital conflict handling. This is in line with Musick, Brand and Davis (2012) who said conflict is increased when there are differences in the level of education of spouses. On the other hand, Groot and Dan (2002) argued that couples' chances of conflict reduces when they have the same level of education.

The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between couples' level of education and humility in marital conflict handling. The assumption of Worthington (2005) that there is no perfect society that is built on educational levels of individuals hence the issue of education is usually a thorny issue and can affect how individuals interact with each other. The Bible principle of marriage could be imbibed building together for progress Scripturally, God still demands submission from the wife and the husband should put away selfishness. It also stated that it will be helpful if couples can see themselves as friends, helpmate, without rival or any assumption of being superior to one another. This could help to develop more sense of humility. Selflessness could also be another means of achieving humility.

Humility is not a product of educational level. The result indicates that apart from education, humility is virtue that needs to be developed as an essential quality that needs to grow with the educational level of the couples. This is part of character development.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it could be affirmed that married educated people are able to handle marital conflict through humility. The study further stresses that there is no correlation in the educational level and humility in handling marital conflict at home

by couples. Since there is no correlation between humility and educational level, it means that humility is a veritable tool in handling marital conflict regardless of the level of education of the couples.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Married couples should learn to be humble with their spouses in their matrimonial homes.
- ii. Married couples should be taught by marital counsellors to imbibe humility regardless of the level of their education.
- iii. Humility is a virtue which all couples will need to possess to enable them save their marriages from collapse.

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