

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARITAL DYSFUNCTION AND  
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT AS CIVIL SERVANTS  
IN ENUGU STATE**

**BY  
NWOBODO, DONATUS NDIDIBUIKE, REV. FR. PH.D. (NIG.)**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY  
THINKERS CORNER ENUGU, Nigeria**

**email: [nwobodoCM@gmail.com](mailto:nwobodoCM@gmail.com)  
08033028860**

**Abstract**

The study was carried out to investigate the relationship between marital dysfunction and women's employment as civil servants in Enugu State. The study adopted a correlational survey design approach in which two research questions and one hypothesis tested at 0.05 significant levels were posed. The population of the study consisted of all the divorced women currently working as civil servants in Enugu State Civil Service. Multi-stage cluster sampling in combination with purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting 72 respondents used for the study.

A questionnaire of four-point rating scale developed by the researcher called Marital Dysfunction Inventory (MDI) was used for data collection. Data obtained with the instrument were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using multiple regression analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that earning from work relates directly and mostly with marital problems associated with finance. It also revealed that earning from work and sex-related issues shows negative or inverse relationship, among other findings. It was recommended among other issues that women should undertake courtship with their intending husbands in order to identify their sex-partners so as to curtail sex-related problems that could endanger their marital life.

## INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, members of house of assemblies make policies as legislative arm of Nigerian government. The Civil Service is a body owned, run by government and charged with the sole responsibility of implementation of such enacted policies. The policies were made primarily to address certain anomalies in the state, failure of which may result to serious catastrophe such as economic breakdown, poverty and under-employment, among others without a virile civil service is doomed to fail. And so for the Nigerian nation to succeed or be removed from the list of failed nations, its civil service must rise up to the challenge of discharging its duties without fear or favour (Obineli, 2010). The civil service refers to all Government Departments or Ministries other than Armed Force, Road Safety, and Civil Defence Corpse. The civil servant is a person employed by the government to work in the civil service. Such a person could be man or woman, single or married or couple. Such couple working as a civil servant may be experiencing marital dysfunction. Women employed as civil servants in Enugu state civil service are therefore non-exceptional in the category.

Marital dysfunction refers to breakdown of marriage or total separation of the couple. Marital dysfunction means dissolution, starting all over alone, setting off without the partner on whom one has relied on, perhaps for many years (Obineli, 2010). In the recent times, the ever-increasing number of divorces has been posing a serious threat to this fundamental institution called marriage, which is valued very highly by all human cultures and religious traditions (Apathurai, 2012). Marriage has changed in the last fifty years from the instructional type characterized by specific roles for husband and wife, such as the former being essentially, a provider outside the home and the later the person who looked after the home and the children, to a compassionate model whose survival is dominated by the affective interaction of the spouses (Dominian, 2007). Engagement of wives in works outside looking after the home and the children, may lead to partners no longer sharing pleasantries, mutual love, bearing or raising children together, among other basic essence of the marital union. Moreso, it could result to marital dysfunction caused by finance and sex-related problems.

The rate of marital dysfunction among civil servants in various parts of the world appears to be on the increase. For instance, there is growing concern over the increasing number of divorces in the world (Apathurai, 2012). According to Apathurai (2012), in the US as in other parts of the world the increase in divorce rate causes serious concern with the ending of

marriage through divorce. These reports suggest that Civil Servants in Nigeria and Enugu State Civil Service may be inclusive. Moreso, employment of women has brought to them considerable economic independence and given birth to the concept of women's liberation. This has had its effect – albeit negatively – on the stability of the traditional family as seen in the increasing number of divorces by making young women aware of alternatives to traditional marriages, thereby encouraging a more widespread response to the unfavourable conditions (Amyra, 1985). Ideally, married women working as Civil Servants in Enugu State are not exempted from the negative effect of economic independence among married women.

Furthermore, it was argued that women's employment provides additional family income that may decrease some of the family tensions that would motivate either spouse to divorce (Spitz and South, 1985 in Aro, 2000). Yet, another school of thought argued that a woman's employment also provides her with a source of income that may allow her to live independently if she or her spouse should wish to dissolve an unhappy marriage (Schoen and Urton, 1979; and Apathurai, 2012). Moreso, women with high incomes are much more likely to be single or divorced than are either housewives or women employed in occupations with average remuneration (Nye, 1979). Thus, on one hand, a wife's employment may discourage divorce and in the other hand it could turn up to be the source of divorce because of her job status and/or earning from such employment. This situation appears to be a tussle in the life of families in which the couples are all working as civil servants. It is pertinent, therefore, to observe that the relationship between women's employment and marital dysfunction poses another issue of concern in the occupational life of families. In view of these controversy, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between marital dysfunction and women's employment as civil servants in Enugu State, so as to clarify the notion.

Apart from women's employment as factor of marital dysfunction, other factors reported in literature include geographical mobility (Gelles, 1995; Aro, 2000; and Apathurai, 2012); unsatisfying sexual experiences (Aro, 2000; Obineli, 2010; and Apathurai, 2012); amount of time spent on work-places (Gelles, 1995; Aro, 2000; and Apathurai, 2012). Moreso, other factors associated with marital dysfunction include handling of finances, taking major decisions in family matters, lack of cohesion on decisions of both parties and mistrust on either of the parties or both (Obineli, 2010); the sharp increase in the educational level of young adults, especially women, and the closely

associated rapid increase in the employment of women outside home (Glick, 1985).

It has been argued, Hornby (2003) that it would be strange to find a marriage without disagreement or conflict. In support of Hornby (2003), Nwoko (2004) stated that conflict and hostility characterize some couples from the beginning; and that no home is conflict-free. In contradiction to Nwoko's (2004) view, Hornby (2003) upheld that the issue is not freedom from conflict but how effectively the conflicts are resolved; for while some couples resolve their conflict, others do not. The issue appears to be inconclusive and need further enquiry to clarify the contention. In view of these uncertain situations and dearth of empirical data in the area of the study, the present study becomes pertinent to investigate the relationship between marital dysfunction and women's employment as Civil Servants in Enugu State Civil Service.

### **PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY**

Divorce rate has been noted to be on the increase in different countries of the world including Nigeria. Several factors have been held responsible for the increase in divorce among married couples, which may include couples working as civil servants. It was argued that rapid increase in employment of women outside home resulted to women's earning from such employment and so tends to make them independent of their husbands by mean of marital dysfunction. To what extent do marital dysfunction related to women's employment as civil servants in Enugu State Civil Service?

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study is limited to women who were separated from their husbands and are working as Civil Servants in Enugu State Civil Service. The study is focused on the earning and job status of such divorced women so as to ascertain whether their earnings were responsible for divorcing their husbands due to financial and sex-related issues.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The major purpose of the study is to investigate possible relationship between marital dysfunction and women's employment as Civil Servants in Enugu State.

Specifically, the study sought to investigate:

1. The specific types of marital dysfunction experienced by married women working as Civil Servants in Enugu State Civil Service.
2. The relationship between earning from work and marital dysfunction experienced by married women working as Civil Servants in Enugu State.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the specific types of marital dysfunction experienced by married women working as Civil Servants in Enugu State?
2. How does marital dysfunction experienced by married women in Enugu State Civil Service relate to earning from work?

### **HYPOTHESIS**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** The regression coefficient between occupational factors (earning from work and job status) and marital dysfunction experienced by women over matters affecting finances and sex-related issues is not statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

### **METHODOLOGY**

The correlational survey was used for the study. It seeks to establish whether the occupational variable, earning from work and job status of divorced women working as civil servants can relate to marital dysfunction experienced by them. The correlational survey was considered appropriate for the study because according to Ball and Gall (1977), correlational studies include all those research projects in which an attempt is made to discover or clarify relationships through the use of correlation coefficients as well as predicting scores on a variable from subjects' scores on other variables. This study as a correlational study used the independent variable (occupational variable) to predict the occurrence of the criterion behaviour (marital dysfunction) among divorced married women working as civil servants in Enugu State.

The sample for the study consisted of 73 divorced women (civil servants) drawn randomly using the multi-stage cluster sampling in combination with purposive sampling procedures. The first procedure involved randomly sampling two senatorial zones (Enugu North and Enugu West) out of the three senatorial zones. The next procedure involved randomly sampling 3 Local Government Areas out of 6 Local Government

Areas in Enugu North and 2 out of 5 Local Government Areas in Enugu West. The instrument when administered to all the women working as civil servants in the five local government areas, the numbers of divorced women were obtained from the bio-data of the respondents. This gave a total of 42 respondents from Enugu North and 31 from Enugu West, thereby resulting in a grand total of seventy-three (73) respondents used for the study.

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher developed a questionnaire instrument called marital dysfunction inventory (MDI) which was used. The MDI, which consisted of three sections with a total of 25 items took the form of a four-point rating scale. The instrument was facially validated by 3 experts in Educational Foundation and 2 lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation considering the adequacy of the items in eliciting appropriate information from the respondents as well as the ambiguity/language used in construction of the items. The instrument was trail-tested outside the area of the study but with population that have similar characteristics as the main area of the study. The reliability of MDI was established using data from trail-testing and analyzing it with Cronback alpha procedure which yielded a coefficient of 0.79. The researcher administered the instrument in anonymity to the respondents by hand. The administration of the instrument provided data for analysis. The research questions were answered using person product moment Correlation Coefficient Statistic. While the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using multiple regression analysis.

## RESULTS

Research questions one and two were answered using Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) for Earning from Work and Job Status, and Marital Dysfunction Experienced by Divorced Women in Enugu State Civil Service.

Occupational Variables	Marital Dysfunction Areas	
	Variance 1 Finance	Variance 2 Sex-Related
1. Earning from work	0.17	- 0.09
2. Job Status	0.81	0.12

\* Positive Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) indicates direct relationship.

\* Negative Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) indicates inverse relationship.

Table 1 above clearly indicated that the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between earning from work and each of the subscales of marital dysfunction (finance and sex-related as experienced by the divorced women are 0.17 and  $-0.09$  respectively. This finding indicates that earning from work relates mostly and directly to mental problems associated with finance. This means that as earning from work increases, so also does marital dysfunction in the area of financial position of the women increases too. However, the relationship between earning from work and sex-related issue ( $r = -0.09$ ) shows negative or inverse correlation. This means that as earning from working increases, the magnitude of marital problems experienced by the women in sex-related issues diminishes.

Furthermore, the finding clearly indicates that job status of the divorced woman relates directly to both subscales of marital dysfunction (finance and sex-relation) with correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.81 and 0.12 respectively. This means that as job status of the women increases, marital dysfunction in the areas of finance and sex-related issues also increases.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** The multiple regression co-efficient between occupational factors (earning from work and job status) and marital dysfunction experienced by divorced women over finance and sex-related issue is not statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression Analysis of Occupational Factors for Divorced Women On Marital Dysfunction

Variables	Multiple R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	B	Beta	Standard Error	F. Cal.	F. Crit. (P<0.5)
Earning from work	0.11012	0.00214	0.00061	-0.034152	0.150131	0.33576	1.08	19.48 NS
Job Status	0.04381	0.00152	0.00107	-0.012341	-0.011625	0.33692	0.74	19.488 NS

Table 2 revealed that F-values are 1.08 and 0.74 at 1 and 72 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance against critical F-value of 19.48 each. Since the calculated f-value for each of earning and job status are less than their individual critical F-value, their contributions of 0.00061 (0.06%) and 0.00107 (0.12%) respectively to the variance in marital dysfunction problems for divorced women are not significant. In other words, job status and earning from work are not predictors of marital dysfunction problems in marriage.

## Discussion

From the findings, it is obvious that earning from work relates mostly and directly with marital problems associated with finance. That means that as earning from work increases, so also marital dysfunction problem associated with finance increases and vice versa. However, the finding revealed that the relationship between earning from work and sex-related issues shows negative or inverse relationship. That means that as the earning from work increases, the magnitude of marital dysfunction problem experienced by the women-civil-servants in sex-related issues diminishes and vice versa. This finding is supported by Aroh (2000) who reported that sex-related area of marital dysfunction decline in the face of increases in the amount of money earned from job. Moreso, earnings has significant and an inverse relationship with marital dysfunction among couples in the area of financial sphere (Aroh, 2000). The finding of the present study, however, contradicts the earlier report of Aroh (2000), since the present study did not find relationship between earning from work and marital dysfunction experienced by divorced women over finance and sex-related issues statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

On how earning from work and marital problem is associated with sex-related issue turned out to be inversely related ( $r = - 0.09$ ), a probable reason could be that with high income in form of salary, wages and allowances, the woman instead of increasing her affection and inter-personal relationships with her husband tends to divorce her husband in search of freedom, authority and class distinction. When the wife's income is higher than her husband's, there is an increase in the likelihood of divorce (Cherlin, 1979). It is possible therefore that when the wife's income is equal to or lower than her husband's the chances of divorce are less.

The issue of enquiry into relationship between variables such as earning from work and job status of married women, and marital dysfunction areas such as sex-related issues and finance problem appears to be inclusive. There is need for further enquiry to clarify the issue.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the study. The finding provided empirical evidence that marital dysfunction areas, such as finance relates directly and mostly with occupational variables such as earning from work and job of divorced women. Moreso, there is empirical evidence provided by this work that as earning from work increases, the

magnitude of marital problems experienced by the women in sex-related issues diminishes. However, the contributions of earning from work and job status of divorced women to the variance in marital dysfunction problems are not significant. On the basis of these conclusions, it is recommended that:

1. Employers of labour should exercise no penalty for workers, especially mothers who devote time to family instead of work issues as well as exemption of young women from unpredictable job-related moves, travels and transfer.
2. Government (Local, State and Federal) should enhance salary structures of women in civil service as well as their allowances so as to enable them cater for their children, extended family relations, inconveniences emanating from job moves, overtime shifts among others.
3. Women should undertake courtship with their intending husbands in order to identify their sex-partners so as to curtail sex-related problems that could endanger marital life.

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