

Conflict Resolution, Marital Intimacy and Job Progression of Women in the Civil Service of Cross River State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship that exists between conflict resolution, marital intimacy and job progression among women in the civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria. Seven purposes, seven research questions and seven hypotheses guided the study. The research design adopted for this study was the correlational research design. The population of this study consists of all married women in the civil service of Cross River State. The total married women are 23,346. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select total of seven hundred and fifty-eight (758) married women in the study area, selected from 10 local government area of Cross River State. Three experts validated the instruments that was used to collect data for the study. The instrument that was used for data collection in this study is a questionnaire titled “Marital Stability and Job Progression Questionnaire” (MS-JPQ) was administered to the respondents to elicit their responses. The instrument has 22 items with 4-option answer format. The instrument was in three sections, section A elicited information on the demographic data of the respondents with 3 items while section B elicited information from the respondents on Marital conflict resolution and marital intimacy and it is made up of 12 items, six items each for the two variables, while section C

elicited questions about the respondents Job progression ten items each in section C on a 4-point Likert scale. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability estimate of the instrument ranging from .71-.85. The data that was collected and the hypothesis were answered using one sample t-test and simple regression, at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that conflict resolution and marital intimacy significantly predict job progression. It was recommended that Government should run counselling services even before anyone is employed in their office, to enable they be able to manage work and family and to make sure they understand the importance of communication among couples, intimacy, conflict management, for the maintenance of work-family balance.

Key Word: Conflict resolution, marital intimacy, job progression.

Introduction

Traditional African societies viewed women as homemakers, performing domestic tasks such as cooking, caring for children, and maintaining cleanliness. However, recent times have seen women transitioning to occupations that require them to leave home. Factors such as complex social movements, equal opportunity legislation, service sector expansion, rising living costs, and increased access to education have contributed to this shift. Women now face challenges in work-life balance, including low wages, long working hours, complex work environments, increased demands, lack of gender-friendly policies, and demands for overtime. These workplace issues put women in difficult situations, as they struggle to balance their family responsibilities and work as paid workers. Work demands often take women to distant locations, leading to varying degrees of abandonment of the home. Despite these challenges, women continue to play a crucial role in shaping the future of African society.

Also, when women change their status by getting involved in paid labour, they tend to substitute their roles as mothers and caregivers, often causing friction within the family system. Women who adjust quickly may avoid marital crises and achieve stability, while those who fail to adjust may experience marital instability. Job progression is the advancement of an individual in their career, it is often marked by increased responsibility, higher pay and new challenges. It involves moving up the corporate ladder to higher level positions with more responsibility, upward job progression could facilitate increased job satisfaction, career advancement, financial rewards and personal growth.

Work and family are the two most important aspects of an individual's life, particularly for working parents with children. Positive and negative experiences at work can impact marital behaviours at home through psychological availability. Conflicts between work and family can lead to negative interactions with spouses and children. Marriages are often long-lasting and satisfying, but the divorce rate is increasing in Western countries and Nigeria. The reason

for this is due to factors such as women's social status, industrialization, modernization, and cultural acceptance of divorce (Zainal, Ahmed & Ramli, 2020). The trend of increasing dual-earner families is likely to continue with women's involvement in the workforce.

Thus, this study examines how marital stability relates to job progression among women in the civil service of Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship that exists between marital stability and job progression among married women in the Civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. How marital conflict resolution relates with job progression among married women in the Civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria
2. How marital intimacy relates with job progression among married women in the Civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria

Research questions

The study is designed to provide answers to the following questions.

1. To what extent does marital conflict resolution relate with job progression among married women in the Civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between marital intimacy and job progression among married women in the Civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to direct this study:

1. Marital conflict resolution does not significantly predict job progression.
2. Marital intimacy does not significantly predict job progression

Literature Review

Conflict Resolution and Job Progression

Wang (2023), study is to determine the impact of empowering leadership on conflict management and employees' advancement for organizational sustainability. Furthermore, it also investigates the moderating impact of emotional stability on the relationship between empowering leadership, conflict management, and employee advancement. Quantitative data for this research were collected from 512 middle-management-level employees from manufacturing firms in China. The partial least squares structural equation modelling results highlighted that empowering leadership positively impacts conflict management and employees' advancement. Furthermore, the study showed that the organization's

sustainability is possible with conflict management and employee advancement when there is emotional stability.

Also, Castellini, Consonni, and Costa, (2023) study analyses issues related to work conflicts and adverse health consequences in 1,493 workers who approached a hospital service for work-related stress and harassment over a 3-year period. The subjects were examined according to a broad protocol covering working conditions, sources of conflict and negative actions suffered, and resulting impact on health status. Many critical conditions were reported in all occupational sectors with some differentiation in relation to gender (women more at risk) and employment status. Higher qualified levels were more exposed to experiencing severe personal adversities aimed at their progressive expulsion or resignation, with consequent higher risk of chronic adjustment disorders, while lower levels reported more stressful conditions in terms of interpersonal disputes and greater interference in the home-work interface. The study can provide useful indications for a better understanding of workplace conflicts in order to set up the most appropriate actions to manage and prevent them.

In another study carried out by Adham, (2023) aimed to investigate and assess effective conflict resolution skills and interventions for managing conflicts within the team. Through a comprehensive literature review, a range of conflict resolution skills were identified and categorized into distinct domains. The first domain highlighted the significance of understanding cultural differences and emotional awareness in conflict resolution processes. The second domain emphasized the importance of fostering a cooperative and inclusive team atmosphere to facilitate conflict resolution. The third domain underscored the value of providing constructive feedback as an effective skill to address conflicts. In the fourth domain, effective communication and establishing positive relationships, were emphasized as crucial factors in resolving conflicts. The fifth domain recognized the significance of leadership skills in managing and mediating conflicts within the team. The sixth domain emphasized the skills of trust-building to encourage open dialogue and conflict resolution. The seventh domain highlighted the necessity for effective managerial strategies and decision-making processes in conflict resolution. Finally, the eighth domain encompassed various skills such as problem-solving skills, consistency and clarity skills, conflict analysis skills, active listening skills, and empathy skills, all of which were identified as essential in addressing conflicts within the team. The findings of this research study provide valuable insights into the diverse array of conflict resolution skills applicable to managing and resolving conflicts within the team.

Also, Nikitara, Dimalibot, Latzourakis, and Constantinou, (2024) aimed to identify the most prevalent conflict management styles and strategies employed by nurses in clinical settings and to examine the factors associated with their selection. A comprehensive literature search was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines. Databases searched included PUBMED, CINAHL, Medline, and ProQuest, focusing on articles published between 2014 and 2024. Inclusion criteria were primary data studies involving nurses, published in English. The search strategy utilized Boolean operators to combine keywords related to nursing, conflict management, and healthcare settings. A total of 174 articles were initially identified, with 22 meeting the inclusion criteria after screening. The quality of the included studies was assessed using the Joanna Briggs Institute Qualitative Assessment and Review Instrument Critical Appraisal Checklist. The results were synthesized using content analysis. The main findings from the 22 articles reviewed indicate that accommodation and collaboration/integration are the most common conflict management styles and strategies among nurses, with compromising also frequently employed. Factors such as age, experience, educational level, and workplace culture significantly influence the choice of conflict management strategies. Discussion: Nurses employ a variety of conflict management strategies depending on the context, individual preferences, and situational factors. Effective conflict resolution is closely linked to collaboration and communication, with proactive strategies being more effective in preventing conflicts.

In another study carried out by Beredugo, and Mbang, (2024), specifically examined the effect of organizational conflict on quality assurance, job progression, and the reduced rate of plagiarism among academic staff of the University of Calabar and the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria. The survey research design was used while data were collected from 282 academic staff of the selected universities. The simple regression and independent t-tests were used for the hypothesis test. It was discovered that organizational conflict significantly affects the quality assurance of job progression of the universities [$t_{cal} = 42.730 > t_{0.05} = 1.96$] and organizational conflicts lead to a reduced rate of plagiarism among academic staff of the universities. Discovered was also discovered that the performance of the academic staff members during the pre-conflict era was low ($M=1.3298$, $SD=.47266$) compared to the performance of the staff in the post-conflict era ($M=3.5765$, $SD=.56267$). It was concluded that tertiary institutions should occasionally stimulate conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff job progression.

Furthermore, in another study carried out by Igbinoba, Salau, Atolagbe, and Joel, (2022) investigated the influence of avoidance, dominating, compromising, obliging and integrating conflict management strategies on the career advancement of faculty members in selected public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Smart PLS 3.0 was used to analyse only 416 copies

of the questionnaire, representing an 83% response rate. The findings demonstrate that conflict management methods such as avoidance, dominating, compromise, obliging, and integrating substantially impact academic faculty affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The study finds that academic staff at various universities should encourage compromising, integrating, and obliging conflict management tactics to be more involved in the settlement of the conflict. As a sequel to the findings, it was recommended that when settling conflicts, academic staff and management should always consider the feelings of other parties involved, as this will go a long way in satisfying all affected parties. Furthermore, parties in disagreement should be open-minded and willing to listen to each other to make the best and most sensible conclusion when resolving conflict. Universities' administration should teach the different techniques of handling conflict so employees will be able to choose the appropriate approach when faced with conflict situations, especially when faced with interpersonal conflict.

Wang, and Tsai, (2024) the study examines the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and career advancement of married women and ability to stay in marriage in the nursing context, and explores the moderating effects of different sources of social support. This study questionnaire used a self-reporting scale. To avoid common method variance, research data were collected at two time points. Five hundred twenty questionnaires were sent to nurses working at five hospitals in Taiwan, and 501 were returned, of which 495 were valid and used in analysis. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test study hypotheses. Study findings were degree of family-to-work conflict influenced career advancement of married women and ability to stay in marriage negatively, level of WFC did not significantly affect career advancement of married women and ability to stay in marriage, support from friends strengthened the negative effect of family-to-work conflict on career advancement of married women and ability to stay in marriage, and support from coworkers weakened the relationship between WFC and career advancement of married women and ability to stay in marriage. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be useful for nursing managers, organizations, and future research. Hospital organizations and nursing departments have a positive role to play in fostering an organizational culture that helps its staffs balance work and family responsibilities. A strategy of human resource management that is consistent with the demands of nurses may help reduce WFC.

Also, in another study Schneewind, and Gerhar, (2022) explored the relationship between couples' stable personality variables associated with interpersonal competencies (referred to here as relationship personality variables) and marital satisfaction with conflict resolution style as the mediating factor. Eighty-three newlywed couples participated in the study at 6 points over 5 years at 1-year intervals. The results indicate strong mediational effects across

time. In particular, conflict resolution styles appear to form during the 1st year of marriage and are habituated thereafter to a large extent. The relationship personality variables correspond closely with conflict resolution styles, which in turn influence marital satisfaction. Asadi, Sadeghi, Taghdisi, Zamani-Alavijeh, Shojaeizadeh, and Khoshdel, (2016) study explored that how women deal with different points, ideas and behaviors in marital life. For the study, we recruited 30 to 45-year-old housewives who visited health centers in Tehran, Iran. The participants (n = 45) were selected using purposeful convenience sampling. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used. The data were analyzed qualitatively using MAXQDA 10. Themes, including conflicting situations, causes of conflict, consequences of conflict, and conflict resolution styles, were extracted. Although Iranian women were dissatisfied with their lives, they tried to protect their marriages.

Islami (2016) investigated that couple relations are intimate, characterized by constant interaction and strong interdependence between spouses. Conflict in marriages can lead to negative communicative acts, such as loss of confidence, frustration, anxiety, and discomfort, which can escalate marital conflicts. Communication plays a significant role in conflict resolution. The choice of behavior in conflict situations depends on persistence in pursuing interests and cooperation in addressing others' interests. Spouses also choose conflict resolution styles based on their communication model. Open communication is preferred by openly communicating spouses, while competition is used by those who do not practice open communication. Rivalry is chosen as a conflict resolution style, reflecting the desire for an open fight for the realization of interests, especially when spouses limit their rights or fail to fulfill emotional needs. However, the duration of the marital relationship does not affect the use of certain conflict resolution styles among respondents.

Ünal, and Akgün, (2022) the relationships between spouses' approaches to their marital conflicts and their marital happiness were considered in this review. Conflict is a natural part of all marriages but the couples' approaches to marital conflicts may lead to constructive or destructive outcomes for their relationships. One of the most important goals of many intervention programs developed for distressed couples is to provide spouses with the ability to resolve their conflicts constructively. Findings showed that constructive conflict resolution (considering conflict as a social problem that could be solved with cooperation, striving to satisfy the needs of both parties, and finding out solutions together) leads to an increase in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment. Destructive behaviors with hostile intentions focused on self-interest (physical and verbal aggression and oppression) seem to be negatively related to marital adjustment and satisfaction. Besides these negative coping behaviors, it will be beneficial for spouses to gain awareness of behaviors such as submission, protective buffering, and underestimating the coping capabilities of the partner with an overprotective

attitude, which are not based on hostile intentions in dealing with problems but can have devastating consequences in the long term.

Marital Intimacy and job progression

Choi, Kim, and Myong, (2020) study was to examine the relationships between the husbands' domestic labour and marital intimacy, work development, and depressive mood in married working women. We used the sixth (2016) dataset from the Women and Families Panel Survey conducted by the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI). The subjects were 791 married working women who lived with a wage-earner husband and who did not have a housework assistant. The correlations between variables were measured and the fit of the structural equation model was assessed. We used a mediation model in which the husbands' domestic labor affected the depressive mood of married working women through mediation of marital intimacy and work development. Bootstrapping was used to verify the significance of the indirect effects of the mediating variables. Husbands' domestic labour had a significant effect on married women's marital intimacy and work development, but no significant direct effect on depressive mood. Marital intimacy had a significant effect on work development, and these two variables were significantly related to reductions in the depressive mood score. Husbands' domestic labour was found to be a complete mediator of depressive mood through its effects on marital intimacy and work development. Husbands' domestic labour did not directly reduce married working women's depressive mood scores, but instead reduced them indirectly through effects on marital intimacy and work development.

Also, Çemberci, Civelek, Ertemel, and Cömert (2022) investigated the relationship of marital intimacy, job progression and having children with work engagement among white-collar workers who work in flexible hours. Data is collected through surveys from 199 flexible working employees. ANOVA and T-tests were employed to analyze the data. The results indicate that only one of the sub-dimensions of work engagement—namely absorption—changes according to their marital status. Yet, the work engagement is not related to having children. In addition, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between job progression and marital intimacy. Similarly, another study carried out by Park and Lee (2023) aims to investigate the psychological resources that could serve as protective factors against work-family conflict, considering both family-related dynamics and work-related values. To this end, we assessed marital intimacy, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and work-role salience in a sample of 220 full-time working parents (113 males and 107 females), all of whom had at least one child under the age of 13. We analysed the moderated mediation model using by structural equation model using MPlus 8.0. The results demonstrated that higher levels of marital intimacy were associated with increased job satisfaction and reduced work-

family conflict. Job satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between marital intimacy and work interference with family (WIF). More importantly, as the significance of one's work role increased, the positive relationship between marital intimacy and job satisfaction was strengthened, thereby reducing WIF. Our findings suggest that when individuals place a high value on their work role, marital intimacy could function as a psychological resource to enhance job satisfaction and mitigate work-family conflict.

Kim, Jung, and Kim, (2023) study aims to determine the moderating effects of marriage satisfaction and organizational gender discrimination climate in the relationship between work-family conflict and depressive symptoms of married working women in Korea. A cross-sectional study was conducted using the data of the 8th Korean Longitudinal Survey of Women and Families (KLoWF). The data of 1,816 married working women employed and paid by an individual or an enterprise were analyzed. The work-family conflict had a significant effect on depressive symptoms of married working women. In the dynamics between work-family conflict and depressive symptoms, no significant moderating effect of marriage satisfaction was found. On the contrary, the organizational gender discrimination climate displayed a moderating effect on the relationship between work-family conflict and depressive symptoms. Nursing strategies in the workplace or community are needed so that married working women can cope positively and actively with work-family conflicts and maintain healthy mental health. To this end, gender role awareness education should be prioritized to improve awareness of gender discrimination in the workplace. In addition, nursing interventions such as linking local or government support and information delivery should be provided so that married working women can be consulted about situations related to work-family conflicts or gender gender-discriminatory climate.

A related study Wan-Othman, Wan-Jaafar, Zainudin, and Omar-Mokhtar, (2023) aimed to look for the relationship between marital intimacy and psychological well-being among career development. Scopus, ScienceDirect and PubMed database was selected to identify relevant articles. Research published between the year 2012 to 2021 was selected to look at the effect of employment on marital satisfaction and psychological well-being and the relationship between marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. The finding shows that employed women will have better marital intimacy compared to those who are housewives. They have greater financial freedom and self-direction. Additionally, emotional stability affects women's marital intimacy and psychological well-being. Additionally, marital intimacy is critical for marital satisfaction and psychological well-being maintenance.

Moreover, Kardan-Souraki, Hamzehgardeshi, Asadpour, Mohammadpour, and Khani, (2016) study aimed to classify the articles investigating the impact of interventional programs on

marital intimacy after marriage. In April 2015, we performed a general search in Google Scholar search engines, and then we did an advanced search the databases of Science Direct, ProQuest, SID, Magiran, Irandoc, Pubmed, Scopus, Cochrane Library, and Psych info; Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL). Also, lists of the references of the relevant articles were reviewed for additional citations. Using Medical Subject Headings (MESH) keywords: Intervention (Clinical Trials, Non-Randomized Controlled Trials, Randomized Controlled Trials, Education), intimacy, marital (Marriage) and selected related articles to the study objective were from 1995 to April 2015. Clinical trials that evaluated one or more behavioral interventions to improve marital intimacy were reviewed in the study. 39 trials met the inclusion criteria. Eleven interventions had follow-up, and 28 interventions lacked follow-up. The quality evidence for 22 interventions was low, for 15 interventions moderate, and for one intervention was considered high. Findings from studies were categorized in 11 categories as the intimacy promoting interventions in dimensions of emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, temporal, communicational, social and recreational, aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual intimacy, and total intimacy. Improving and promoting communication, problem solving, self-disclosure and empathic response skills and sexual education and counseling in the form of cognitive-behavioral techniques and based on religious and cultural context of each society, an effective step can be taken to enhance marital intimacy and strengthen family bonds and stability. Health care providers should consider which interventions are appropriate to the couple's characteristics and their relationships.

In another study, carried out by Jaleel, and Chandola (2023), married women's marital intimacy and job progression were examined and compared. For this reason, samples of middle-aged married women and young adult married women were collected. Data were gathered utilising the General marital intimacy and job progression Questionnaire (MIJPQ). The result shows that the mean of marital intimacy and job progression among young adult married women was 21.28, while In middle-aged married women mean value was 21.82. The T value was 0.86. In middle-aged married women's mean value was 21.28, and the t value was 0.27. The correlation between the variables of marital intimacy and job progression was 0.40. The relationship between marital intimacy and job progression is a positive correlation. Also, Raman (2022) the study aimed to find 'the effect of length of the marriage, on marital intimacy and job progression in working women.' The sample was collected by 60 working women, where 30 were newly married and 30 were women who were married for more than 10 years. The data was collected using the job progression Survey developed by Paul E. Spector (1985). The statistical tools Pearson's correlation coefficient and t-test were used. The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between marital intimacy and job progression in newly married (0-5 years) working women. And there is a significant relationship between marital intimacy and job progression in working women who are

married for more than 10 years. Secondly, it indicated that there is a significant difference in marital intimacy among newly married working women and working women who are married for more than 10 years. And there is a significant difference in job progression among newly married working women and working women who are married for more than 10 years.

Research Methodology

The study adopts the correlation research design. This type of design attempts to find out the nature of the relationship between a set of variables that cannot be manipulated or determined by the researcher. The area of study was Cross River State. Geographically, Cross River State is located in the rain forest Zone of West Africa. It is found between latitudes $5^{\circ} 53$ and $4^{\circ} 32$ North of the equator and longitudes $7^{\circ} 50$ and $9^{\circ} 28$ East of the Greenwich meridian. The State is bounded at the North by Benue State, at the South by the Atlantic Ocean, on the East by the Republic of Cameroon, and on the West by Abia, Ebonyi and Akwa Ibom States.

The population of this study consisted of all married women in the civil service of Cross River State. The total married women are 23,346 (Civil Service Commission, 2025). The sampling technique adopted for the study was stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling technique is a means by which the researcher gives each member of the population equal opportunity of being selected into the sample. The sample of the study consisted of a total of seven hundred and fifty-eight (758) married women in Cross-River State selected from 10 local government area of Cross River State. The instrument for data collection in this study is a questionnaire titled "Marital Stability and Job Progression Questionnaire" (MS-JPQ). The questionnaire consisted of 42 items divided into three sections: A, B and C. Section A was designed to elicit information on respondents' demography, which consists of 3 items (1-3). Section B consisted of 24 structured items, which measure the Marital Stability variable among couples in three sub-independent categories. Section C consisted of 20 items measuring Marital Stability and Job Progression.

The questionnaire was prepared based on the four-point Likert modified type Scale, with scoring ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and the reverse for negatively worded items. The face validity was established by experts in one Guidance and counselling, two in Educational Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education. The reliability estimates was established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability formula. The questionnaire was trial tested on one hundred (100) married working women in Akwa Ibom State who were not part of the main study. The reliability coefficient Cronbach Alpha coefficient ranges from 0.78 to 0.85. The questionnaires were administered directly to respondents by the researcher, in the respondent's offices with the help of six research assistants earlier trained by the researcher for this purpose. The respondents were

adequately briefed on the exercise and the essence of giving objective responses to the items as information obtained would be treated with all amount of confidentiality and used as data for the research work only.

Presentation of results

In this section, each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test it, is presented. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at the .05 level of significance.

H₀₁

Marital conflict resolution does not significantly predict job progression.

Simple linear regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. The result of simple regression analysis in Table eight on the relationship between Marital conflict resolution and job progression among married women. Produced an adjusted R^2 of .527. This result implies that only 52.7 per cent of the variance can be predicted from the independent variable (Marital conflict resolution) in predicting job progression among married women. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 845.26$, having a p-value of .000 with 1 and 756 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore signifies that marital conflict resolution does significantly predict job progression among women by 52.7 per cent, and the identified equation to understand this relationship was that job progression among couples = $14.15 + .843$ (Marital conflict resolution).

Table 1: Summary of data and simple regression analysis of the relationship between marital conflict resolution and job progression.

Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	16235.97	1	16235.97	845.26	.000
Residual	14521.47	756	19.21		
Total	30757.44	757			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	14.15	.459		30.844	.000
Marital conflict resolution	.843	.029	.727	29.073	.000

P<.05

R=.727

R Square =.528

Adjusted R Square = .527

H02

Marital intimacy does not significantly predict job progression

Simple linear regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. The result of simple regression analysis in Table nine on the relationship between marital intimacy and job progression among married women. Produced an adjusted R^2 of .542. This result implies that only 54.2 per cent of the variance can be predicted from the independent variable (marital intimacy) in predicting job progression for married women. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 897.04$, having a p-value of .000 with 1 and 756 degrees of freedom at the .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore signifies that marital intimacy does significantly predict job progression among women by 54.2 per cent, and the identified equation to understand this relationship was that job progression among women = $14.08 + .868$ (marital intimacy).

Table 2: Summary of data and simple regression analysis of the relationship between marital intimacy and job progression.

Model	Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	16690.86	1	16690.86	897.04	.000
Residual	14066.55	756	18.61		
Total	30757.44	757			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	14.08	.448		31.42	.000
Marital intimacy	.868	.028	.737	29.95	.000

P<.05

R=.737

R Square =.543

Adjusted R Square = .542

Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis indicates that, marital conflict resolution does significantly predict job progression. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of the study carried out by Beredugo, and Mbang, (2024) which specifically examined the effect of organizational conflict on quality assurance, job progression, and the reduced rate of plagiarism among academic staff of the University of Calabar and the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria. It was discovered that organizational conflict significantly affects the quality assurance of job progression of the universities [$t_{cal} = 42.730 > t_{0.05} = 1.96$] and organizational conflicts lead to a reduced rate of plagiarism among academic staff of the universities. It was also discovered that the performance of the academic staff members during the pre-conflict era was low ($M=1.3298$, $SD=.47266$) compared to the performance of the staff in the post-conflict era ($M=3.5765$, $SD=.56267$). It was concluded that tertiary institutions should occasionally stimulate conflict by encouraging divergent views and rewarding staff job progression

The result of the second hypothesis indicates that marital intimacy does significantly predict job progression. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of the study carried out by Çemberci, Civelek, Ertemel, and Cömert (2022) which investigated the relationship of marital intimacy, job progression and having children with work engagement among white-collar workers who work in flexible hours. The results indicated that only one of the sub-dimensions of work engagement—namely absorption- changes according to their marital status yet the work engagement was not related to having children. In addition, it was seen that there was a significant relationship between job progression and marital intimacy. Similarly, another study carried out by Park and Lee (2023) which aimed at investigating the psychological resources that could serve as protective factors against work-family conflict, considering both family-related dynamics and work-related values assessed marital intimacy, work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and work-role salience in a sample of 220 full-time working parents (113 males and 107 females), all of whom had at least one child under the

age of 13. The results demonstrated that higher levels of marital intimacy were associated with increased job satisfaction and reduced work-family conflict. Job satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between marital intimacy and work interference with family (WIF). More importantly, as the significance of one's work role increased, the positive relationship between marital intimacy and job satisfaction was strengthened, thereby reducing WIF. Our findings suggest that when individuals place a high value on their work role, marital intimacy could function as a psychological resource to enhance job satisfaction and mitigate work-family conflict.

Implications for Counselling

1. Many researchers in the marital stability-related field have established the negative implications on job progression, especially among women. This study was designed to confirm the direct link between marital stability and job progression among married women in the civil service of Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. The current investigation focused on marital stability among married women in the civil service of Cross River State and how this affects their job progression so that marital strategies can be identified and targeted as one way to optimize marital outcomes alongside job progression.
3. Given the relationship between marital stability and job progression among married women, one important consideration for the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) is to work toward reducing marital instability among couples.
4. If Counsellors were aware of the potential consequences of poor communication and conflict management on job progression, especially among married women and the possible negative effects of them, strategies to reduce these variables can be implemented to help couples recognize signs of marital instability and learn effective ways to cope.
5. To women facing the issue of slow job progression, especially due to marital stress Counsellors have the number one responsibility to proactively inform, educate and give orientation to the women on their expected roles in the society and how to handle such situations as preparation before going into any serious relationship or marriage.
6. Attention should be drawn to make guidance and counselling services compulsory to all working-class women preparing to tie the knots, irrespective of what they already know. This could harmonize and help women access and navigate the marital-work life balance in order to live and have a functioning marital life and develop a positive attitude to marriage.
7. Counsellors are advised to take the issue of women experiencing slow job progression, especially the married ones seriously, and attend to them with empathy knowing fully well that, if left unattended to they may be at risk of experiencing marital breakups.
8. Guidance services should not just be a one-sided benefit but should involve additional assistance where each couple receives assistance based on their individual needs. These

should include such areas as marriage counselling where the couples get direction on how to choose the right partner suitable for them and counselling assessment where couples' interests are evaluated in order to decide the type of counselling to give.

9. Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON), in collaboration with marriage stakeholders and marriage law makers, should organize seminars at least once a year to sensitize and create awareness on the need for periodic couple counselling among couples for earlier identification of subtle signs of marital instability. Attention should be given to those with such signs to help them work towards eliminating the red flags.

10. State chapters of the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) are to organize conferences, seminars and workshops for government officials (in ministries) in charge of marriage unions and other marital affairs to raise awareness on how women can balance work and families in order to improve job progression.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that there is a high level of marital stability among married women in the Civil Service of Cross River State, Nigeria. Job progression is also significantly high among these women. Factors such as conflict resolution, marital intimacy, commitment, and communication individually predict job progression. These findings suggest that conflict resolution, marital intimacy, communication, and commitment jointly predict job progression among married women in the Civil Service of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government should give more attention to the maintenance of work-family balance, which can impact the quality of marriages.
2. Frequent orientation programmes with improved quality should be organized for single and married women alongside the provision of suitable motivational talks, especially to the married ones on how to improve their marital communication, conflict management, and intimacy, so they can have a stable work-family balance.

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