

A STUDY OF BIBLICAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE FAMILY AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BABCOCK UNIVERSITY, ILISHAN-REMO, OGUN STATE

Olalekan Moses Olayemi¹, Daniel-Adebayo Olugbenga², NyaknoOloladeOluokun³

¹Department of Information Resources Management, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

^{2,3}Department of Accounting, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State

ABSTRACT

This study investigated Biblical approach to conflict management in the family among postgraduate students of Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. The survey design was adopted in carrying out the study. The study population comprised postgraduate students of Babcock University, Ilishan, Remo, Ogun State who offering GEDS 901 Course: (Personal and Family Wholeness) in the year 2018 session, in which total enumeration technique was used for selecting the sample size. The data was collected using structured questionnaire, and all the data generated were categorized and analyzed using tables, frequency, charts and simple percentage for data analysis. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents admitted to have experience conflict in their families. Findings indicated that emergence of conflict family is occasioned by a lot of factors which include: personality difference, use of finance (money) and intellectual differences (educational). Finally the study revealed that majority of the respondents frequently use Biblical approach in resolving conflict in the family. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the family members should always adopt Biblical approach that best fit every situation in resolving conflict whenever it arises.

KEYWORDS

Biblical; conflict; management; marital; family; couples; Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of conflict has a variety of meanings “disagreement” “clash” “friction” “disharmony” “struggle” etc. Conflict, such a real part of everyday life, has not by-passed couples, children, fellow workers, church members, leaders and even family. To simply put, conflict in a family is a natural part of human life even though the conflicts may assume different forms, as it is not possible to work together all the time without having conflict or sharp disagreement (Langat and Njenga, 2015). Bible gives good examples of conflict, interpersonal disputes existed between Barnabas and Paul, and between Paul and Peter, but that these were carefully handled and fashioned out without allowing it to lead to dissension in the Church.

The cause of conflict in family varies. This is because human differ in term of background, individual personality, culture, disposition, education and thinking. Bacchiocchi(2000) identified nine major causes of marital conflict among couples/family. They are; personality differences, intellectual differences, spiritual differences, vocational tensions, role conflicts, family crises, in-law difficulties, sexual adjustments, and the use of money. The issues however, should not be absence or causes of conflict in the family but a healthy way to resolve or manage conflict. Family conflict that is not managed correctly diminishes happiness and has the possibility to destroy people, it leaves them broken, stressed and burnt out. Under conditions of improper management such situations may result in physical assault, litigation, separation and sometimes divorce (Omorogbe, Obetoh and Odion, 2010).

According to Abdullah (2017) conflict management is defined as the “opportunity to improve conflict situations and strengthen relationship”. It is believed that conflict is better managed than eliminated within the growing realization that a number of benefits are accruable as well as costs. Conflict that would have been properly handle in many families had degenerate into crisis that has led to marital instability, divorce, assault among others leading to negative effect on the family members and society at large. Overtime man has always adopt different means of settling conflict in the family, but more often than not, there is continual increase of conflict in the families leading to breakdown in many homes. One effective way of managing conflict in the family is the use of Biblical approach to resolve it, as Godly approach assures a better and best way to resolve conflict without laying credence to the past, revenge and hurting one and another among the family members. It is against the foregoing background that, this study intends to investigate Biblical approach to conflict management in the family.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies have shown that there is an increase in conflict leading to divorce in many African homes and even the church is not spared (Amadi and Amadi, 2014; Oyewale, 2016; Mobegi, Mokoro and Kearsi, 2016). Tolorunleke (2014) asserted that, many families have been and some are still seriously at war with themselves simply because of their failure to seize, manage or resolve conflicting issues between couples or families. Hence, such families are facing stress and hardships as a result of the conflict. The effects of unresolved or well managed conflict affect the family; the couples, children, church and the community/ society at large. Unless the society comes to grips with this societal problem and adopt Biblical approach, the institutions of marriage and the family will always be at risk of breaking up or collapsing.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to investigate Biblical approach to conflict management in the family. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To ascertain if the respondents had ever experienced conflict in their family;
2. To find out the frequency of conflict in the family;
3. To understand the underlining prevalent causes of conflict in the family;
4. To know possible consequences/impacts of conflict on the family;
5. To find out Biblical approach adopted by the respondents managing/resolving conflict in the family;
6. To ascertain the frequency of the use of Biblical approach for managing conflict in the family.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature shows that many studies have been conducted on causes, consequences and ways to manage conflict among couples or families in different communities and settings. Tolorunleke (2014) studied the causes of marital conflicts using survey approach. The finding did reveals that marital conflicts did exist. She recommended that to prevent or manage crisis therefore will depend largely on the mutual understanding of couples involved. Mbwirire (2017) investigated causes of marital conflicts in mainline and modern day Christian churches found in Domboshava area of Zimbabwe. The results of the study indicated that marital conflicts were caused through natural problems as well as man-generated problems. Similarly, Langat and Njenga (2015) studied marital conflict management among couples in Ainamoi Division of Kericho County. The research shows the following factors causing conflict in marriage in their order of priority: communication problems, financial management conflicts, issues surrounding children, in-laws, sexual issues, and finally, behaviour problems.

Amadi and Amadi (2014) studied marital crisis in the Nigerian society. The findings reveals consequences of marital crises to include; poor mental, emotional and physical health of couples and their children, physical abuse and threat to life of partners, escalation of social vices and crimes such as drug abuse, kidnapping, prostitution, deschooling of children of crises-ridden and broken homes.

Ibeh, Obidoa, and Okere (2013) studied resolution strategies adopted in resolving marital disharmony among couples in Enugu State. The result revealed among others, that avoiding the idle mind by engaging in work, developing a positive and healthy attitude towards disharmony, listening carefully and speaking tactfully to spouse, use of family counselors, communicating feelings of love, admiration, likes and dislikes to each other help in resolving marital disharmony among couples. From the Biblical approach of handling conflict in marriage / family constructively, Bacchiocchi (2000) consider seven basic rules to include: commitment to preserve the marriage covenant, honesty and fair in handling the conflict, keeping anger under control, choosing an appropriate time to discuss a problem, sticking to the issue at hand, listening carefully and speaking tactfully, and willingness to forgive and forget.

3. METHODOLOGY

Survey design was adopted for the study. Survey design was consider appropriate for the study because the study aimed at gathering people's opinion; and its ability to collect a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. It also provides information on which to base or test decisions and it tries to explain why a certain situation exists (Olayemi, Abolarinwa and Olayemi, 2017). The target population of the study comprises married couples of Postgraduate students of Babcock University, Ilishan, Remo, Ogun State from the Department of (Information Resources Management, Accounting, Mass Communication, Business Administration, Economics, Computer Science) who are offering {General educational studies (GEDS) 901 Course: Personal and Family Wholeness} in the year 2018 session. Total enumeration was used as the sampling technique due to the manageable population which makes the study's sample employed to cover those who are taking part in the course. The data was collected using structured questionnaire, which was designed using online survey Google forms and administered to the students via their e-mail. The researchers ensured that only questionnaires filled by the respondent were used for the data analysis. Hence one (1) submission was rejected because the respondent was single (unmarried). The study therefore analyzed

responses collected from 41 respondents. All the data were categorized and analyzed using tables, frequency, charts and simple percentage for data analysis.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Socio-Demographic Status of the Respondents

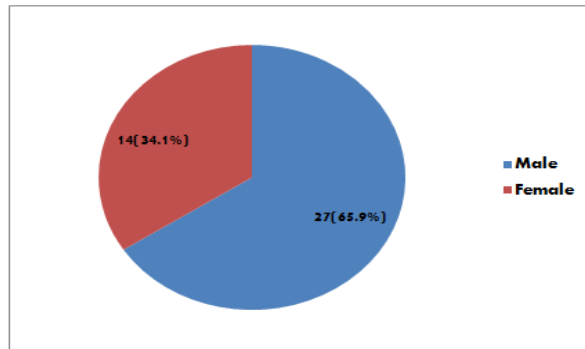


Fig 1 Gender

Gender: Figure 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents indicating that majority 27 (65.9%) were male and 14 (34.1%) were female.

Age: Results also show the age bracket of the respondent. The majority of the respondents 18 (43.9%) were in the 31 – 40 years age group, followed by 16 (39.0%) were aged 41 – 50 years, 6 (14.6%) were 51 years and above.

Length of marriage: Result shows that 15 (36.6%) which constitute majority of the respondents have been married for 6-10 years, 12 (29.3%) for 11-20 years, 8 (19.5%) for 1-5 years, 6 (14.6%) for 20-30 years.

Marital status: The majority of the respondents 39 (95.1%) were married, while 2 (4.9%) were separated.

Research objective one: Experience of conflict in the family

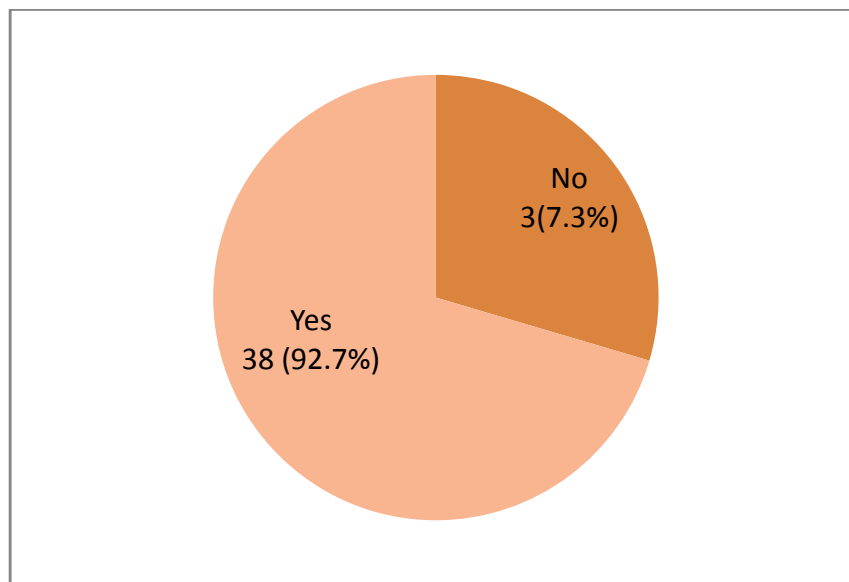


Fig. 2 Conflict experience

Conflict experience: The majority of the respondents 38 (92.7%) said Yes that they have experienced conflict in their families while 3(7.3%) said No.

Research objective two: Frequency of conflict

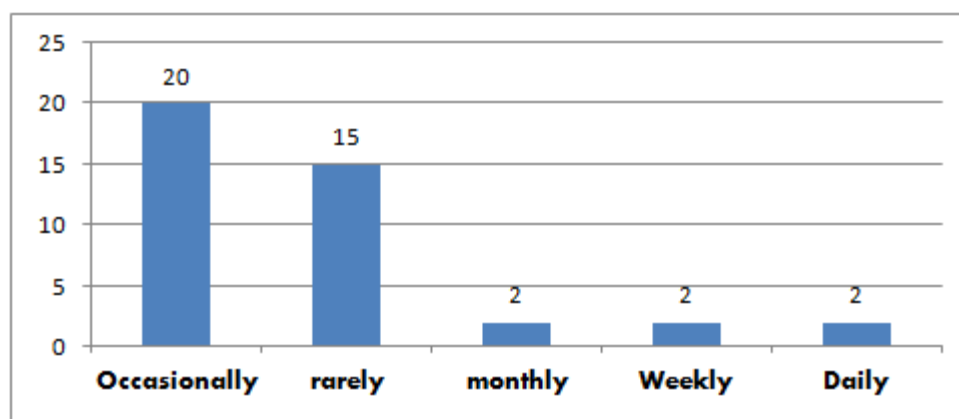


Fig. 3 Frequency of conflict

Frequency of conflict: Figure 3 reveals that 20(48.7%) of the respondent occasionally experience conflict in their family, 15 (36.6%) rarely, and 2(4.9%) monthly, weekly, and daily respectively.

Research objective three: Causes of conflict in the family

Table1: Prevalent causes of conflict in the family

Variables	Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time/ Always
Personality differences	11(26.8%)	10(24.4%)	17(41.5%)	3(7.3%)
Intellectual differences (Educational)	11 (26.8%)	19(46.4%)	7(17.0%)	4(9.7%)
Spiritual differences	14(34.1%)	11(26.8%)	6(14.6%)	10(24.4%)
Vocational tensions (Vocation, career)	12(29.2%)	10(24.4%)	8(19.5%)	11(26.8%)
Role conflicts	12(29.2%)	10(24.4%)	10(24.4%)	9(21.9%)
In-law difficulties	15(36.6%)	9(21.9%)	8(19.5%)	9(21.9%)
Sexual incompatibility	16(39.0%)	11(26.8%)	12(29.2%)	2(4.9%)
Use of money (Finance)	6(14.6%)	10(24.4%)	18(43.9%)	7(17.0%)
Inability to bear children (Infertility)	29(70.7%)	6(14.6. %)	3(7.3%)	3(7.3%)
Infidelity/extra marital sexual affairs	27(65.9%)	6 (14.6%)	5(12.2%)	3(7.3%)

As disclosed by the respondents, table 1 reveals the causes of conflict in the family. Naturally there cannot be one single cause of conflict there may be several inter-woven like personal factors, interpersonal or family factors. The result shows that respondent identified various causes of conflict in the family.

Regarding the “personality difference” the majority of respondents 17(41.5%) said is the main causes “most of the time/ always”. Regarding the “intellectual differences (educational)” the majority of respondents 19(46.4%) said is “rarely the cause”. Regarding the “use of money (finance)” the majority of respondents 18(43.9%) said is the cause “some of the time”. Regarding the “spiritual differences” “vocational tensions (career)” “role conflicts” “in-law difficulties” “sexual incompatibility” “inability to bear children (infertility)” “infidelity/extra marital sexual affairs” majority of respondents 14(34.1%), 12(29.2%), 12(29.2%), 15(36.6%), 16(39.0%), 29(70.7%), 27(65.9%) respectively said they are “never the cause of conflict in the family”.

Research objective four: Consequences/impacts of conflict in the family.

Table 2: Consequences of conflict in the family

Statement	Frequency (N=41)	Percent
Loss of spousal confidence	21	51.2%
Poor emotional health of spouse	13	31.7%
Poor emotional health of children	14	34.4%
Social insecurity	11	26.8%

Economic insecurity	13	31.7%
Negative effect on children	20	48.9%
Dissolution of marriage	12	29.7%
High rates of juvenile challenge	13	31.7%
Physical assaults	16	39.0%

Table 2 shows the consequences/impact of conflict on the family. The majority of the respondents 21(51.2%) said, that it leads to loss of spousal confidence, followed by 20(48.9%) negative effect on children, 16 (39.0%) physical assaults, while the least identified is social insecurity 11(26.8%).

Research objective five: Biblical approach of managing/resolving conflict in the family

Table 3: Biblical approach to conflict management

Variables	Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time/ Always
Keep your anger under control	1(2.4%)	3(7.3%)	12(29.3%)	25(60.9%)
Be committed to preserve your marriage covenant	1(2.4%)	3(7.3%)	7(17. %)	30(73.4%)
Be honest and fair in handling the conflict	1(2.4%)	3(7.3%)	11(26.8%)	26(63.4%)
Listen carefully and speak tactfully	-	3(7.3%)	12(29.3%)	26(63.4%)
Willing to forgive and to forget	-	2(4.9%)	11(26.8%)	28(68.3%)
Developing a positive and healthy attitude towards disharmony	-	1(2.4%)	11(26.8%)	29(70.7%)
Use of family counselors (Spiritual leaders, elders, friends and neighbours)	17(41.5%)	10(24.4%)	8(19.5%)	6(14.6%)

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the respondents' biblical approach of managing/resolving conflict in the family. All respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements about their approach, using a four point Likert scale. The survey results indicated that majority of respondent said they keep their anger under control, committed to preserve their marriage covenant, honest and fair in handling the conflict, listen carefully and speak tactfully, willingness to forgive and forget, and developing a positive and healthy attitude towards disharmony, and using of family counselors (Spiritual leaders, elders, friends and neighbours) most of the time respectively.

Research objective six: frequency of the use of biblical approach in resolving conflict

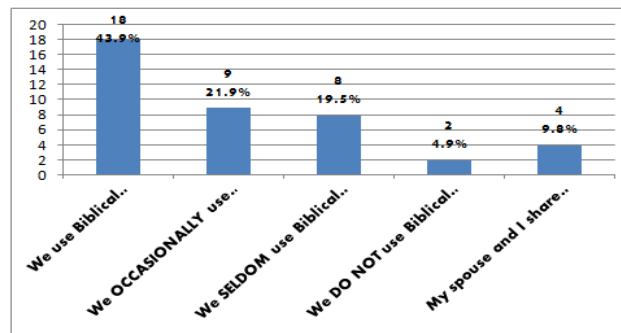


Fig. 4 Frequency of the use of Biblical approach

The respondents were asked about the frequency of the use of Biblical approach in resolving conflict in the family. The majority of the respondents 18(43.9%) said most of the time, 9(21.9%) occasionally, 8(19.5%) seldom, 2(4.9%) do not use the approach, while 4(9.8 %) said they share different believe and approach with their spouse.

5. DISCUSSION

This study investigated Biblical approach to conflict management in the family. The study revealed that majority of the respondents admitted to have experience conflict in their families occasionally. This corroborates the findings of Tolorunleke (2014) that conflict exists in the family. The major variables found to be responsible for conflict in the family include: “personality difference” Most of the time, “use of money (finance)” Some of the time, and “intellectual differences (educational)” Rarely. Conflict may have been triggered by anyone the variable or a combination of them. This is consistent with the findings of Langat and Njenga (2015) and that of Mbwirire (2017).

Consequences of conflict in the family can have both direct and indirect impact on the family. The study revealed the possible consequences of marital crises on the family to include: loss of spousal confidence, poor emotional health of spouse, poor emotional health of children, social insecurity, economic insecurity, negative effect on children, dissolution of marriage, high rates of juvenile challenge and physical assaults.

Conflict in the family is inevitable, so there is need to have ways of managing conflict in the family. On Biblical approach to resolving conflict in the family, the survey results indicated that majority of respondent said they keep their anger under control, committed to preserve their marriage covenant, honest and fair in handling the conflict, listening carefully and speaking tactfully, willingness to forgive and forget, and developed a positive and healthy attitude towards disharmony. Finally the study revealed that majority of the respondents frequently use Biblical approach in resolving conflict in the family.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, as seen from the study, conflict exists in the family like other institutions. In fact, it is part of occurrence of human lives. However, the most important concern for family is to know

the likely causes of conflict and adopt effective approach that can be used to address or reduced their consequence in order not degenerate into situations that can affect the family members. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is necessary that each family establish some principles and rules towards activities in marriage and home management using God's standard form the on-set rather than using prevailing situation or circumstance as a basis of policy formulation and decisions in homes.
2. Churches or denominations should have systems or, mechanism for teaching and counseling couples about principles and skills of marital conflict management in the family.
3. Family members should be encourage/counsel tolerate their difference and avoid lingering in resolving conflict whenever it arises.
4. Family should quickly seek the assistance from spiritual counselors when face with conflict that they could not be amicably resolve.
5. Family members should always adopt biblical approach as effective strategies in resolving their conflict.
6. There is need to create awareness for married couples and families on adopting Biblical approach in resolving conflict in their homes - using seminar, workshop and church announcement platform.

REFERENCES

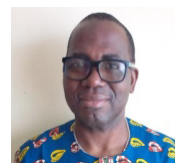
- [1] Abdullah, N. H. (2017). Conflict management among Malay married couples: an analysis on their strategies and tactics. *Asian Social Science*, 13(10), 95-103.
- [2] Amadi, U.P N., and Amadi F.N.C (2014) Marital crisis in the Nigerian society: causes, consequences and management strategies. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(26), 133-143.
- [3] Bacchiocchi, S. (2000). How to handle marital conflicts. *Endtime Newsletter*, 49, 1-11.
- [4] Ibeh, U.O. Obidoa, M. A. and Okere, A. U. (2013). Resolution strategies adopted in resolving marital disharmony among couples in Enugu State. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4 (25), 182-187.
- [5] Langat, J., and Njenga, E. (2015). A Study of marital conflict management among couples in Ainamoi division of Kericho County. *Kabarak Journal of Research & Innovation*, 3(2):98-109.
- [6] Mbwirire, J. (2017). Causes of marital conflicts in christian marriages in Domboshava area, Mashonaland east province, Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Humanities, Art and Social Studies*, 1(2), 31- 38
- [7] Mobegi, W. O., Mokoro, J. M., and Keri, J. D. (2016). Pre-marital counselling and marital conflicts among christian couples in Sameta sub county, Kisii County, Kenya. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 91-99.
- [8] Olayemi, O. M., Abolarinwa, T.S., and Olayemi, K.J., (2017) The Use of E-journals by Health Researchers: A case study of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR). *J InfSci Theory Pract.*, 5(3), 61-70.
- [9] Omorogbe, S. K., Obetoh, G. I. and Odion, W. E. (2010). Causes and management of domestic conflicts among couples: the Esan Case. *J SocSci*, 24(1), 57-63.
- [10] Oyewale, P.B. (2016). A critical analysis of marital instability among Yoruba christian couples in the North West of England. A dissertation submitted to the Department of theology, philosophy and religious studies, Liverpool Hope University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Theology). 1-270.
- [11] Tolorunleke, C. A. (2014). Causes of marital conflicts amongst couples in Nigeria: Implication for counselling psychologists. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 140, 21 –26.

AUTHORS

Olalekan Moses Olayemi, holds Bachelor of Art and Master in Library and Information Sciences (LIS), from Bayero University, Kano. He is currently studying for his PhD in Information Resources Management at Babcock University.



Daniel-Adebayo Olugbenga, is a professional and Chartered Accountant. He obtained his first degree in Accounting from Obafemi Awolowo University and M.Sc Accounting from Babcock University, where he is currently studying for his PhD in Accounting.



Nyakno Ololade Oluokun is a seasoned professional Accountant with over nine years post qualification experience as Chartered Accountant. She holds B.Sc (Hons) and M.Sc in Accounting from Babcock University where she is also studying for her PhD in Accounting.

