

## MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARRIAGE RESPONSIBILITIES AND FEMALE LECTURERS' POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES – A CASE STUDY OF SOME SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study examined managing the relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers' postgraduate programmes in some selected universities in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted to guide the study. The population for the study consisted 10, 578 Lecturers in the selected Universities in Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 560 Lecturers. The research instrument used to obtained relevant information for the study was tagged: Marriage Responsibility and Female Lecturers Post Graduate Programme Questionnaire (MRFLPGQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the field of Educational Management. Test-retest method of reliability was used for the study and a coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. The data was analysed using inferential statistics. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers' post graduate programme. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marriage responsibilities significantly impact female Lecturers post-graduate programme. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that female Lectures should be given study leave and their work should be reduced for effectiveness in their Postgraduate programmes.*

**Keywords:** Relationship, marriage responsibilities, female lecturers, post-graduate programmes, Universities in Nigeria

### Introduction

Education is generally perceived to play an important role in the development of human capital. Education as an industry has been patronized by both males and females, each contributing to the accomplishment of the overall goals. Just as males have right to education so also their female counterparts have equal right to Education. In light of this, providing women with a quality education is crucial for the advancement of the country. Women's potential to contribute to nation-building appears to be limited, yet education enables them to do so. Despite taking care of the home, women are typically partners in progress and make significant contributions to nearly every

aspect of human endeavour, including research, teaching, medicine, administration, the military; and law enforcement.

As a result of cultural changes of women perceptions and ideas, women now go for higher education to boost their chances in participation in political and socio economic of a nation. Women embark on Post graduate programme such as PGDE, Masters' degree and Doctor of Philosophy among other programmes. However, observation revealed that post-graduate programmes come with various challenges ranging from course work, series of assignments and thesis writing. As a result of the aforementioned challenges of post graduate programmes, female lecturers

seem not to find it easy to running post graduate programme looking at the task of their job and balancing it with their marriage responsibilities. Hence, post graduate programme become an herculean task for female lecturers. This is evidence in their failure to complete their post programme on record time as well as their performance generally in the programme. These problems associated with female lecturers running a post graduate programme may be as a result of marriage responsibilities.

Marriage is typically entered into in order for couples to take on new responsibilities in their lives. There are reciprocal responsibilities in marriage. Married women in higher education typically struggle to balance their academic and household responsibilities simultaneously. Nonetheless, a lot of married women achieved success in their studies and even at home (Tata, 2014).

Women who are married and study at universities must fulfill multiple roles because they need to balance their academic studies with their family duties according to new research findings. The qualitative research conducted among female graduate students showed that working women need to balance their family responsibilities and job commitments and academic requirements through social and institutional support networks (Pwavra, Iddrisu, Poku, Yawson, Mensah, Oppong, Aarah-Bapuah, & Aziato, 2025). Postgraduate students who are married and study at Islamic universities must develop adaptive strategies and institutional support to achieve their academic and family commitments according to research findings which show that students balance household responsibilities with their academic work (Muthohar, Raharjo, Thoha, & Nasikhin, 2024). This demonstrates unequivocally that married women are still juggling postgraduate coursework and household duties while

they are in school. This study therefore intends to examine how female Lecturers balance their marriage responsibilities with their Postgraduate programmes.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study examined managing the relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post graduate programme in Universities in Nigeria.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:  
There is no significant relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post graduate programme in Universities in Nigeria.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

#### **The Feminist Theory – Jo Ann Arinder**

This study is based on the feminist theory of **Arinder**

Feminist philosophy dates back to the 18th century and gained momentum during the equality movements of the 1970s and 1980s. This investigation was guided by the feminist theory. Mary Wollstonecraft first proposed the notion in 1792, but later thinkers including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, John Neal, Judith Sargent Murray, and Betty Friedan Simone de Beauvoir expanded on it. The feminist theory fought to support women's equal rights in society (Arinder, 2020).

It is a kind of critical thought that seeks to undermine the oppressive and power structures in society. The idea focusses on how individuals interact with systems and may provide ways to challenge and end oppressive structures and systems that define society. Feminist philosophy does not suggest that men are the enemy; rather, it advocates for the liberation of all people from all forms of social oppression, not only women. As Hooks (2000) correctly noted, feminism is a movement to

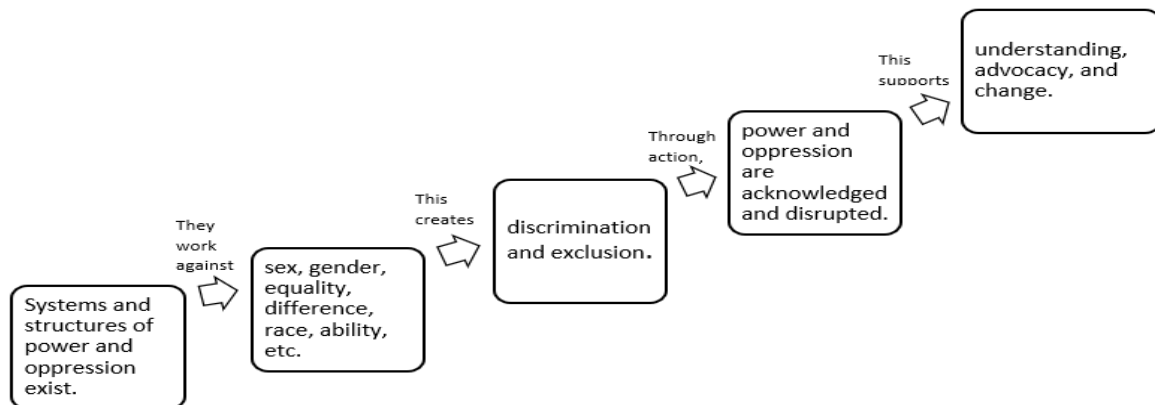
eradicate sexism, sexist oppression, and sexist exploitation.

Research on gender equality in education is still advancing feminist

philosophy, and gender equality is still a problem today.

## The model of feminist theory

**Figure 1**  
*Model of Feminist Theory*



**Source: Jo Ann Arinder model of feminist theory (2020)**

Figure 1 depicts a feminist theory model that starts with the idea that there are oppressive systems that work against people and then demonstrates how oppression is founded on intersecting identities that can lead to exclusion and discrimination. The model suggests that oppressive systems can be overthrown to promote understanding and change through knowledge and action.

The model can be explained using the following concepts, constructs, and propositions:

1. **Concepts:** Sex, gender, racism, discrimination, equality, difference, and choice are the fundamental ideas of feminist thought. Because of these characteristics, there are structures and processes in place that work against equality and equity as well as against people. The conviction that truths can be discovered by investigating these contemporary conditions in the current social order is necessary for research in critical paradigms. But more significantly, this investigation may raise

awareness of repressive structures while also providing platforms for a range of views to be heard.

2. **Constructs:** The concepts of intersectionality, social life dimensions, social injustice, and social transformation are all of interest to feminism. Understanding the intricacies and shifts in the gendered division of employment has benefited greatly from feminist studies. Politically, economically, and socially, men and women need to be treated equally. This philosophy does not support the idea that men are different or similar, nor does it advocate for the exclusion of males or the advancement of women's issues exclusively. By recognising and opposing oppression and power, feminist theory seeks to promote understanding and change.
3. **Proposition:** According to feminist philosophy, understanding, advocacy, and change can happen when oppression and power are recognised and challenged.

### **The Use the Feminist Model**

This approach can be applied in a variety of ways in both practice and research:

1. Teachers and students might think about the power structures in their district, school, or classroom. They can enquire about the ways in which these systems contribute to exclusion and discrimination. They can recognise obstacles and problems inherent in the system by taking into account the social structures that are currently in place. Once these problems are recognised, they can be broken up to start the process of understanding and change. This might be demonstrated, for instance, by taking into account how colonialism in the past has oppressed English as a second or foreign language learners.
2. In the case of the English language classroom, students may be subjected to oppression because of their native language or country of origin, which can impact their access to education. Taking these barriers into consideration when planning and incorporating efforts to mitigate the issues and barriers faced by students is a use of feminist theory. When feminist theory is applied in the classroom, it can guarantee that the classroom is designed, in advance, to consider learning barriers faced by students because of sex, gender, difference, race, or ability.
3. In order to bring about change, feminist research aims to dismantle oppressive structures or the barriers that result from them. Feminist theory can be included into any research project that supports initiatives to oppose and promote the eradication of oppression and power within structures or systems that specifically target women. Since education is a field that is traditionally dominated by

women, an analysis of education in general may be helpful, even though women are not frequently in leadership positions within the field. Similarly, it may be helpful to examine the under-representation of male instructors and persons of colour in education through the lens of feminist thought. Action research is another field that can employ feminist theory. Action research is often undertaken in the quest of establishing changes that are discovered during a project. Action research and feminism go hand in hand since both focus on bringing about change.

### **Relevant of the Feminist Theory to the study**

The Feminist Theory is relevant to the current study in the following ways:

1. Recognising that, regardless of gender differences, feminism is about controlling oppression for everyone.
2. The feminism theory can be applied to manage the challenges that are related to classroom and research practices.
3. The feminism theory assists the teachers and school managers to help the married and pregnant students to cope with the rigor of lecture and research activities.
4. The feminist perspective focusses on examining current systems to see if they are putting anyone at a disadvantage.
5. Anyone who wants to eradicate oppression and actively work as a teacher or researcher to challenge oppressive institutions can be guided by the feminism philosophy.

### **Literature Review**

Married women in higher education typically struggle to balance their academic and household responsibilities simultaneously. Nonetheless, a lot of

married women achieved success in their studies and even at home. Professor Rukayyatu Ahmed Rufa'I of Bayero University in Kano, for example, completed all of her postsecondary studies while married. Married women are having trouble juggling their home and academic obligations, according to Akinkugbe (1994) and Mercer (2004). According to Sa'ad (2007), married women students in Bauchi State's higher education institutions found juggling home responsibilities and academic obligations to be extremely taxing and difficult.

The key to the success of many married women who attended school while married was determination, hard work, dedication, and patience. Despite the dual responsibilities married women carry out during their studies, especially those at the tertiary level, some are performing well, others averagely, and some poorly. Married women are overburdened with work at home and at school, and their failure rate is higher than males because they have less time to study and thus give their studies less attention (Taniguchi and Kaufman, 2005).

Recent Nigerian studies indicate that married female students often face significant challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with domestic obligations. Ojo and Adebayo 2019 discovered that married women in southwestern Nigeria who attended tertiary institutions experienced academic engagement and performance difficulties because of their family responsibilities which included childcare and household management. Muhammad and Usman 2021 found that married female students in northern Nigerian colleges of education experienced role strain which resulted from their dual home and school responsibilities and this affected their cumulative grade point averages. Okeke and Nwankwo 2022 found that married women show strong time management skills and resilience, but domestic workload remains the primary factor which determines their academic

performance in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Married women possess the ability to achieve academic success, but their household responsibilities create a significant impact on their educational performance. The study seeks to investigate the impact of home duties on married women's academic performance at Azare College of Education.

### **The Concepts of Marriage**

Marriage is a mutual agreement of two adults, a male and a female, who legally married for procreation and to fulfill conjugal bliss. Sa'ad (2007) concurred that marriage is a mutual responsibility. According to Egbule, Okoh, and Solomon (2022), married women in Nigeria perform several household and social duties because their domestic responsibilities which include childcare and cooking and cleaning and caregiving duties establish the boundaries of their married life and their capacity to study and work. The study shows that married women handle their duties because their domestic work requires them to balance their household and external responsibilities. According to Offei-Ansah (2012), married women in African settings are in charge of caring for and educating their families at home in addition to cooking and serving their meals.

### **Marriage responsibilities and challenges of female married students**

According to Sa'ad (2007), married women in higher education typically struggle to balance their academic and household responsibilities simultaneously. Married women students are found to be juggling home responsibilities and academics to be extremely taxing and frustrating. Offei-Ansah (2012) observed that when their universities were not in session, several married women worked to earn money for themselves and their families.

According to Offei-Ansah (2012), married women in African settings are in charge of caring for and educating their families at home in addition to cooking and serving their meals. Traditional role expectations that place a greater emphasis on men providing for the family's financial needs while women handle childcare and housekeeping may be partly to blame for these disparities in working hours. Among the negative outcomes for women are "second shift" duties, working a full-time job while still returning home to take care of the family and children, and experiencing a "wage gap" or "wage penalty" (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010).

Kurdek (2005) agreed that when gender roles change, both men and women may experience different potential advantages and disadvantages of marriage in terms of marital quality or satisfaction. The division of work and domestic/childcare duties within a marriage is being impacted by shifting gender roles. According to Shirley (2015), women were more likely to engage in invisible mental labour during pregnancy, such as organising activities like reading "what to expect" books and worrying about becoming a good mother as well as the health of the unborn child. Women also had a tendency to feel ultimately in charge of the health of the unborn child.

### **Female lecturers' postgraduate programmes**

Individuals who show interest in postgraduate programs can apply after they complete their admission requirements and possess the necessary academic credentials. The common postgraduate programs that universities offer through their Faculties of Education include the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master of Education (M.Ed.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) across multiple education specialization fields. The academic community considers postgraduate students to be adult learners

who must demonstrate their ability to think critically and research independently while conducting scholarly work. Thus, PG students are considered to be matured students who can conduct independent research in their various field of study. Maryam, Aisha & Umar (2025) rightly observed that course work with thesis writing are the two ways postgraduate education is delivered. Writing the research project report, which might be a project, dissertation, or thesis, is the last step in the supervision process for postgraduate study.

There has been a gender gap in education for the past century due to a variety of sociocultural and social norms, such as the belief that women are better at home and should take care of their families rather than go to school (Nwobodo, 2018). According to Aliyu (2018), since the start of the twenty-first century, postgraduate degrees have been awarded in nearly every nation in the world. Postgraduates are a significant component of any nation's human capital resources, making significant contributions to national scientific and technological advancement and being a part of the global workforce in science and engineering.

One of the instruments for women's professional development and advancement is their educational attainment. For people, especially women in North Central Nigeria, pursuing higher education—especially postgraduate studies—has become more and more crucial as they work towards both professional and personal growth. Women who pursue higher education have the chance to work outside the home, learn a variety of skills, and pick up practical ideas from peers and literature that can improve their relationships with their families. Nonetheless, women who are enrolled in postgraduate education programmes encounter particular difficulties (Maryam et al, 2025).

### **Factors contributing to the poor**

### **enrolment of females for PG programmes in Nigerian universities**

The three major factors contributing to the poor enrolment of female PG programmes in Nigeria are marriage related challenges, religion and economic factors as explained below:

1. **Marriage related challenges:** Ojo and Olofin (2022) observed that high levels of stress and poor academic performance have been associated with multitasking, which involves juggling studies with employment and family obligations.
2. **Religion factors:** In Nigeria, children and women do not still have the freedom which the male counterparts have to education. Some religious believers believe that women are home-keepers who are supposed to be caring for children and cooking for husbands. Islam is practiced by the majority of people in Northern Nigeria. According to Maryam et al (2025), because of the conception of western education, which views women as complete dependents on males, the contributions of women from the Northern States are seldom heard. As a result, the Northern region of the country has not fully embraced the platform for women to receive an education since the beginning of western education because Islam has been ingrained in the thoughts of people in the North since it was introduced by Christian missionaries from the West.
3. **Economic factor:** Bush (2017) lamented that economic factors such interest rates, earnings, government activity, regulations, tax rates, policies, and unemployment cause women's low enrolment in postgraduate programs in Nigeria.

### **Empirical studies on the relationship between marriage responsibilities and**

### **female lecturers' postgraduate programmes**

Scholars' perspectives are not the same on the subject of relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers' postgraduate programmes. For instance, Sa'ad (2007) carried out a research on the impact of domestic responsibilities on the academic achievement of married women in tertiary institutions of Bauchi State. The study revealed that married women are still juggling postgraduate coursework and household duties while they are in school.

Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) focused on the degree completion among non-traditional college students. According to the study, married women are overburdened with work at home and at school, and their failure rate is higher than males because they have less time to study and thus give their studies less attention.

Gender role attitudes and expectations for marriage, including shifting gender roles and marriage, were studied by Shirley (2015). As gender roles change, the traditional marital model—in which the woman takes care of the home and the children while the male earns the money—is evolving. Bianchi and Milkie (2010) did another study that concentrated on family research and work in the first ten years of the twenty-first century. Traditional role assumptions that males should be more accountable for the family's finances and women should be more responsible for childcare and housekeeping may be partly to blame for these disparities in working hours.

An assessment of women's status in Indian society and a case study on a married woman's duties and obligations to her parents was examined by Alo (2022). It forced Indians to adopt a more practical and logical stance regarding the rights of the parties engaged in a marriage by establishing a moral duty on the daughters to support their parents in the same way that

the sons would if the parents were unable to support themselves.

The recent studies from Nigeria showed that married women in the country experience continuous challenges. Solanke, Adetutu, Sunmola, Opadere, Adeyemi, **Nurat**, & Soladoye (2022) discovered that marital structures determine both the level of women's autonomy and their capacity to make decisions. Obaoye and Wenli (2022) found that educational institutions and workplaces and legal systems continue to experience persistent gender discrimination. Shittu and Okewu (2025) established a connection between gender inequality and restricted socioeconomic progress, while national survey data demonstrates that domestic rights violations against women continue to occur.

Forster and Offei-Ansah (2012) conducted a study on the coping mechanisms and family roles of female students in public institutions in Ghana. According to the report, women's education enables them to contribute to nation-building, which appears to be lacking in sub-Saharan Africa. Ali (2005) conducted research on Islamic marriage. According to the report, a married woman's duties include cooking for her family, cleaning the house, and looking after the kids.

Kurdek (2005) conducted a study using a growth curve approach to examine gender and marital satisfaction in the early stages of marriage. According to the study, lingering gender roles have an effect on how married couples divide work and childcare/household duties. According to Shirley (2015), women were more likely to engage in invisible mental labour during pregnancy, such as organising activities like reading "what to expect" books and worrying about becoming a good mother as well as the health of the unborn child. Women also had a tendency to feel ultimately in charge of the health of the unborn child.

### **Appraisal of Literature Review**

The previous studies carried out by researchers on marriage responsibilities and female lecturers' postgraduate programmes are conspicuous. The divergence views of the scholars unambiguously express the challenges that are associated with the studies of married female students. For example, Sa'ad's (2007) research on the impact of domestic responsibilities on the academic achievement of married women in tertiary institutions was solely focused on Bauchi State of Nigeria. The scope of the study failed to address the plights of female postgraduate students in Nigerian universities.

Taniguchi and Kaufman (2005) researched on the degree completion among non-traditional college students. The study was not relevant to the current study. Gender role attitudes and expectations for marriage, including shifting gender roles and marriage, were studied by Shirley (2015). The study focused on the general roles and attitudes of married women. However, it did not extend the research to the universities.

Bianchi and Milkie (2010) carried out a study on family research and work in the first ten years of the twenty-first century. The study was too narrow to that it excluded the universities. Alo (2022) examined an assessment of women's status in Indian society and a case study on a married woman's duties and obligations to her parents. The study was only narrowed to homes and not universities.

Forster and Offei-Ansah (2012) conducted a study on the coping mechanisms and family roles of female students in public institutions in Ghana. Though this study is relevant to the present study, but it only focused on public institutions without indication of universities. Ali (2005) conducted research on Islamic marriage. This research is not relevant to the current study because it only focused on Islamic marriage.

Kurdek (2005) conducted a study using a growth curve approach to examine gender and marital satisfaction in the early stages of marriage. The study only focused on the early stages of marriage, but failed with the inclusion of female married students that are running postgraduate programmes.

Therefore, none of the previous studies addressed the combination of the current study.

### Methodology

The research design used in the study was a descriptive survey research design. All female lecturers at Nigerian universities made up the study's population. Three hundred female professors made up the study's sample. To gather pertinent data for the study, two questionnaires were used: the "Marriage Responsibilities Questionnaire (MRQ)" and the "Female Lecturers Post Graduate Programme

Questionnaire (FPGPQ)." Experts validated the instrument, face and content validity of the instruments were ensured. The study employed the test-retest reliability approach, yielding a value of 0.77 reliability coefficient. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis at the significance level of 0.05.

### Results

**Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post graduate programme.**

Reference to the testing of hypothesis, data on marriage responsibilities were collected from the female academic staff in section B of MRQ (1-10) and FLPGP (1-10) in the study instrument were further analysed statistically to test the hypothesis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 1: Relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post graduate programme**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	P-value
Stress Marriage Responsibilities	300	49.28	5.98	0.5131*	0.000
Female Lecturers Post-Graduate Programmes	300	55.42	7.41		

\*P < 0.05

Table 4 shows the relationship the between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post graduate programme. The result revealed that r-cal value of 0.5131 and p-value of 0.000 (<0.05) existed at 0.05 significance level. The null hypothesis was rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between marriage responsibilities and female lecturers post-graduate programmes in selected of the Universities in Nigeria.

### Discussion

The study revealed that the there was a significance between marriage responsibilities and female Lecturers post graduate programme. The probable reason for this finding is because marriage

responsibilities takes a serious toll on the post-graduate programmes of female lecturers in selected University in Nigeria.

The study results reveal a strong correlation between marital duties and female lecturers' academic performance in graduate programs which matches the latest research findings from Nigeria. Solanke et al. (2022) demonstrated that marital structures and spousal expectations substantively control women's ability to make decisions which results in restricted professional development opportunities. The obligations of marriage which women must fulfill restrict their ability to complete postgraduate studies as domestic responsibilities required by marriage limit their academic work.

Akanbi and Fakayode (2023) found that work-family conflict between home duties and academic responsibilities affects research output and productivity as well as career advancement for female Nigerian university academics who have children to care for. The research demonstrates that the simultaneous demands of family and academic responsibilities create stress which obstructs academic progress.

Ogbogu (2022) found that educational institutions can use support systems together with effective coping mechanisms to reduce the detrimental effects of marital duties on students' academic success. The impact of marriage on individuals depends on their specific environment which includes their access to support systems and their workplace environment.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marriage responsibilities influence postgraduate programmes of female Lecturers in selected universities in Nigeria.

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore, recommended that-

- Female Lecturers should be given study leave so as to go for postgraduate programmes
- Also, the workload of female lecturers should be reduced to create time for their post graduate programme.

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