

PERCEIVED ECONOMIC CAUSES OF FAMILY CONFLICT/CRISIS IN EDO STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the social causes of family conflicts in Edo State. The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study was made up of families in the three senatorial districts of Edo State namely, Edo South, North and central. They comprised of adult population of 18 years old and above. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents randomly sampled from the three-senatorial district of Edo State were used for data collection. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by four experts in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Finding revealed that economic is one of the causes of family conflicts in the study areas. It was concluded that economic factors cause crises/conflict in the family, it was therefore recommended amongst others that, government should provide employment to the unemployed and that individual should be equipped with financial assistance to start business.

INTRODUCTION

A family is a group of people considered to be related to each other either by blood or marriage. Family consists of father, mother and children. Conflict which is inevitable among the family may be as a result of social problem, economic problem, misunderstanding, incompatible needs, goals and expectation. Consequently, family conflicts lead one person opposes another verbally, threatening, accusing, insulting or in some other ways finding fault with one another.

The family healthy life style is an issue that borders on healthy nation building. Naturally, family life as a constituting of acting units, developing acts to meet the situation in which they are placed. The family healthy life style involves all social interaction in which each person continually checks his own behavior in response to real or anticipated reactions of the other person. Traditionally, according to Idialu (2003) family life is the interaction of a husband and wife and the rising of children. An ideal

family life provides stability, support, continuity for societal values, and free from conflicts/crises.

The economic causes of family conflict revolve round capital inadequacy, home issues, job/unemployment, government policies, the extended family and poverty. Studies by Popenoe (2007) and Stanley, Amato, Johnson and Markman (2006) affirmed that inadequate capital of poor economic status is a very serious cause of family or marital conflict in most homes. Similarly, Adepo (2006) opined that poverty is the major challenge facing families in Nigeria. The author maintained that if families are unable to meet basic needs necessary to maintain a minimum standard of living it eventually leads to conflict. Scholars such as Olowokere (2005) and Kenwenda (2005) reported that poverty is manifesting in families as high rate of mortality, prevalence of malnutrition, hunger, lack of shelter, illiteracy, high infant and maternal mortality, low life expectancy, poor quality housing, inadequate clothing, low per capital income. Recently, Ajagun and Aiya (2012) asserted that poverty is

a major challenge to families in Nigeria. The authors added noted that poverty among family members is not just having no money but rather, it is an existential condition in which member lack the skill and techno-material wherewithal to produce and sustain a living above the poverty line.

Researchers pointed out that when family finances are not properly managed, funds are not likely to be available to meet important needs or address emergency issues it will eventually leads to conflict. Poor financial management may be due to lack of proper planning or budgeting or inadequate knowledge of proper money investment strategy. Amato, Booth, Johnson and Rogers (2007) observed that loss or lack of job or economic power affects the purchasing power or welfare of the family, which can cause serious strain on family relationships, since they are not able to maintain a good standard of living. According to Cutrona et al (2003) reported that, when husband feels the wife insubordination may be due to her economically engaged. Nature of employment can also constitute a source of conflict.

The government employment policies were believed by respondents to be important causes of family crisis. For example an employment policy of the government that borders on the family is the welfare support for only the first four children in the family, as obtained in the study area and Nigeria in general. Family with more than four children are therefore compelled to take full responsibility for the remaining children, where funds are inadequate, crisis is inevitable.

The family is very crucial in national development. Many have argued that the problems confronting the nation can be trace to several factors, but a poor family is seriously indicated (Omorogbe 2001). It is further posted that to build a virile nation, a nation worth living in, secured and comfortable, demands an understanding of issues affecting healthy life. To this end, the World Youth Report 2003 noted that the socio-

economic instability observable in the society is a negative consequence of family crisis. Could these facts be tenable? Based on this, the researchers wish to examine perceived economic issues that can lead to crisis/conflict in the family in Edo State?

Research Question

The study attempted to answer this research question

- (i) What are the possible economic issues that can lead to crisis/conflicts in the family?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey design entailing seeking information or opinions of persons sampled from a population. The population of the study was made up of families in the three senatorial districts of Edo State namely, Edo South, North and central. They comprised of adult population of 18 years old and above. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in the study using the three senatorial districts in the state. The three (3) senatorial districts were purposively selected to give the study a state-wide focus. From each district, three local government areas were randomly selected using the sample ballot system which were further stratified into urban and rural locations. The L.G.A headquarters were purposively chosen to represent the urban Centre, thus, the L.G.A headquarters were regarded as urban community while the other villages were regarded as rural community. From each L.G.A, three communities were randomly sampled. A random sample of 50 families was taken from each L.G.A, making a total of 150 respondents per L.G.A, 450 per senatorial district and 1350 for the entire state. A survey sample, focus discussion session was organized in selected community in each senatorial district of Edo State.

The instrument used for data collection was rating scale structured questionnaire. A focus group

discussion (FGD) template was developed to guide the focus group discussion. The researchers personally distributed the questionnaire assisted by four research assistants. A group discussion (FED) session was organized in each of the senatorial district in the state. One research assistant helped in recording the event during the focus group discussion sessions, one hundred (100) persons, comprising of family members participated in focus group discussion in the three senatorial districts. One thousand two hundred and one (1201) representing 89% copies of questionnaire were

properly completed and used in the analysis. The focus group discussion sessions provided qualitative data that was used to compliment the quantitative data obtain through the questionnaire. Data collected for the study were coded into Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). The package was used to run mean and standard deviation which was used for answering the research question. A mean score of at least 2.5 was considered as an index for agree.

Research question one: To what extent do economic problems lead to crisis or conflicts in the family?

Table: Mean score on the economic problems that lead to crisis or conflicts in the family

Statement	Edo Central		Edo North		Edo south		Pooled	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Capital Inadequacies								
Unmet needs of family members	3.2	0.85	3.2	0.73	3.36	0.69	3.25*	0.76
Insufficient finances	3.21	0.81	3.33	0.61	3.2	0.64	3.25*	0.69
Poverty / inability to meet basic needs	3.15	0.91	3.11	0.67	3.33	0.63	3.20*	0.75
Home Issues								
Poor Home management/wastefulness	3.21	0.83	3.3	0.69	3.24	0.61	3.25*	0.72
Poor response to children's needs	3.29	0.73	3.33	0.65	3.23	0.64	3.28*	0.68
When the woman becomes the bread winner	3.21	0.73	3.03	0.67	3.32	0.69	3.19*	0.71
Job/Employment Issues								
Loss of job/reduction of income	3.15	0.77	3.08	0.66	3.4	0.66	3.21*	0.71
Lack of employment/retrenchment	3.02	0.85	3.05	0.7	3.4	0.77	3.16*	0.8
Parents having several jobs to family needs	2.89	0.87	2.82	0.79	3	0.64	2.90*	0.77
Decision on whether or not a wife should work and the type and place of work.	3.02	0.84	3.06	0.67	3.17	0.62	3.08*	.72
Situations where one spouse enjoys rapid promotion than the other	2.66	0.85	2.67	0.83	2.89	0.76	2.74*	.82
Knowledge/lack of knowledge about pay pocket of spouse	2.85	0.95	3.03	0.82	3.02	0.68	2.97*	0.83
Nature of occupation/employment	2.96	0.88	2.97	0.67	3.22	0.57	3.05*	0.73
Government policies								
The economic policies of federal, state and local governments	2.87	0.9	2.88	0.83	2.98	0.69	2.91*	0.81
Employment/family policies of government	2.75	1	2.99	0.84	3.01	0.72	2.92*	0.87
Extended family support								

Proportion/frequency of remittance to in-laws	3.02	0.92	2.87	0.84	2.91	0.75	2.93*	0.84
Long term care for the sick/elderly	2.95	0.8	2.97	0.71	3.06	0.73	2.99*	0.75
A spouse get assistance from relation to live overseas	2.8	0.84	2.7	0.85	3.01	0.64	2.84*	0.79

* *Agreed (mean >2.50)*

RESULTS

Under the capital inadequacy, the aggregate or pooled results showed that insufficient finance (mean = 3.25), unmet family needs (mean = 3.20) were perceived important economic causes of family crises. Poor management of family finance (mean = 3.25), poor response to children's need by either parent (mean = 3.28) and the wife assuming the breadwinner status in the home (3.19) were identified as serious home-related causes of family conflict. Less job or reduction in income (mean = 3.21), lack of job (3.16), decision as to whether the wife should seek employment (3.08) and the nature of employment (3.05) the government employment (mean = 2.92) or economic (mean = 2.91).

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The economic causes of family conflict revolve round capital inadequacies, home issues, job/employment, government policies and the extended family. Where funds are insufficient to satisfy the needs of the family, conflict can arise because of the inconveniences that may arise in meeting the needs of family members. Studies by Popenoe (2007) and Stanley, Ameto, Johnson, and Markman (2006) confirm that inadequate capital or poor economic status is a very serious cause of marital or family conflict in most homes. Adejo (2006) noted that poverty is the major challenge facing families in Nigeria, a situation where families are unable to meet basic needs. In the contribution of kenkwenda (2003) poverty is manifesting in families as high rates of mortality. In addition, Aiagun and Aiya (2012) asserted that poverty is a major challenge to families in Nigeria. They noted that poverty among family members

is not just having no money but rather, it is an existential condition in which members lack the skill and technological wherewithal to produce and sustain a living above the poverty line.

Poor management of family resources/finance were identified as serious home-related causes of family conflict, when family finances are not properly managed, funds are rarely available to meet important needs or address emergency issues. The fear that when woman becomes the breadwinner in the home, she will attempt to take over the headship of the home, is pervasive in the African culture. Idialu (2003) noted that such women sometimes may fail to listen to their husband, and may in fact usurp the husband's authority. Several factors were perceived to be important causes of family crisis under unemployment category. Ameto, Booth, Johnson and Rogers (2007) observed that loss or lack of job or economic power affect the purchasing power or welfare of the family which can cause serious strain on family relationship. Family conflicts have also been known to arise over whether the wife should seek employment or not. According to Cutrona et al (2003) such conflict usually arise when the husband feels the wife insubordination may be due to her been economically engaged. Nature of employment can also constitute a source of conflict. Some employment type can pose a serious stress to family relationships especially when such job causes the family member to come home late. Employment policy of the government that borders on the family is the welfare for only the first four children in the family, as obtained in the study area and Nigeria in general. Where funds are inadequate, crisis are inevitable.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown the economic causes of family conflict which revolve round capital inadequacies, home issues, job/employment and government policies. It has therefore been concluded that economic factors cause family conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that:

- i. Government should provide employment opportunities to the unemployed.
- ii. An individual should be equipped with information, resources, education and provision of financial assistances to start business.
- iii. Husbands whose wives are economically active or earn more than them should not feel threatened or jealous, rather, they should give necessary support to their wives

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