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Family Adjustment Programs in Edo South in The Face of Covid-19 Pandemic: Implication for Sustainable Family Living in an Unstable Economy

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic and its emerging crises have led to economic distress which was never envisaged by a people. It came as a shock as families lost their jobs or income, as sudden closures of schools, restriction of movement and the widespread of the disease and death threatened everyone. The COVID-19 crises will not affect all families equally but causes more harm to families with low income. The objective of this study, therefore, was to investigate the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on family living and adjustment programs for sustainable living. Three objectives were stated to guide this study. The population for this study comprised of three hundred and fifty (350) families drawn from the study area using stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques from which a sample size of 105 were drawn. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire and titled 'Family Adjustment Programs in Pandemic Era Questionnaire (FAPPEQ). Data collected were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation. Findings on the influence of COVID-19 pandemic showed that respondents agreed to the fact that COVID-19 pandemic greatly influences family living while findings on the family adjustment programs for sustainable family living in pandemic era showed that respondents agreed that the adjustment programs outlined are suitable and appropriate for sustainable family living. This study recommended that some family adjustment programs such as subsistence farming at the backyard garden, being a one car family, learning how to recycle waste should be carried out by families for sustainable living in COVID-19 era.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, family living, sustainable living, adjustment programs, unstable economy.

Introduction

The Coronavirus Pandemic is one of the biggest shocks the world has ever experienced of recent. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. Those infected experience mild to moderate respiratory illness while older people and people with underlying ailments such as chronic respiratory disease, cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease may develop serious illness. After the COVID-19 had spread through East Asia, Europe, and North America in early 2020, Nigeria recorded the first confirmed case in late February 2020, after which it started to spread through Lagos States, Ogun State, Federal Capital Territory Abuja and later to Edo State and other parts of Nigeria (Kwaw, Hyacinth and James 2020). Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State was not left out of the rude shock that hits Nigeria.

Ariel, Mayer and Rohen (2020) reported that the United State labor market collapsed within two weeks between March and April, 2020 due to the imposition of stay at home that was ordered all over the country as a result of the pandemic. Ariel et. Al. (2020) also reported that even families who did not

lost their income were also affected negatively due to closure of schools and the spread of the disease. Zhou, Yu and Du (2020) reported that 54 deaths were recorded out of 191 people infected with the pandemic at that time.

According to Kuhfeld, Soland, Tarasawa, Johnson, Ruzek and Liu (2020), school closures and the interruptions of learning have been a threat to students' learning. Kalil, Ryan and Corey (2012) also opined that those children whose families are of low income may be at a greater risk for learning losses and behavioral stress when compared with children whose families are of high income given average pre-pandemic differences in parent engagement in children's learning. Attanasio, Blundell and Conti (2020) reported that the COVID-19 crisis will not affect all families equally but may cause certain harm to children of low-income and less-educated parents, due to their lower academic and socio-emotional skills when compared to those of higher income.

Calarco, Meanwell, Anderson and Knopf (2020) and Gassman-Pines, Ananat and Fitz-Henley (2020) reported that the relationship between COVID-19 pandemic and family life was greatly focused on its economic and mental health impact. Calarco et. al. (2020) also revealed that COVID-19 pandemic and the protocol which include stay-at-home order, work-from-home, and closure of schools may create a stressful environment for families in many ways which include worries about health, working from home, job loss which leads to loss of income, and the need to teach students at home due to school closure. According to Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG, 2020), it was stated that Nigeria as a nation is heading toward a significant economic downturn due to COVID-19 pandemic; even though government and regulators have responded promptly and put in place different measures to have a sustainable economy which include establishment of a fund (50 million naira) to support the country's economy to be given to households and micro/small enterprises, with payment of a very low interest on loan given to support small scale businesses. International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2020) corroborated by stating that COVID-19 is having serious socioeconomic impact on Nigeria's economy which has resulted to the sudden drop in the prices of oil, thereby posing a threat on the country's economy. Simona Varrella (2021) revealed that the price of oil per barrel was 57 U.S. dollars, which due to COVID-19 pandemic dropped to 42 U.S. dollars per barrel as at April, 2020.

Ariel, Mayer and Rohen (2020) reported different areas and ways the pandemic affects Nigeria as a country which include shortfalls in government revenue, reduction in foreign remittances and restrictions of movements which affected economic activities of the country. IMF (2020) revealed that the lockdown policies in Nigeria during the early days of the pandemic reduced the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 11 billion U.S. dollars during the 8-week period between March and May 2020. Agri-food system was also reported to have experienced 11% decline GDP which represents US S1.6 billion. It was also reported by IMF (2020) that there was 9% increase in the national poverty headcount rate, indicating that about 17 million more Nigerians are living below the poverty line during the 8-week lockdown period of March 30th to middle of May 2020.

Family adjustment programs in the face of COVID-19 pandemic are the various activities which can be carried out by family members to reduce the cost of living, and to make extra income. This will enable families to adapt and cope with the economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic such as high cost of food and other materials, high rate in transportation fare, increase in wages of domestic workers. These programs include some activities and vocational programs such as growing food crops for family use, rearing of snails, poultry, and fish for both family use and profit making, using one car as a family and recycling waste.

The need for sustainable family living in the face of COVID-19 pandemic has become

a very serious concern to people in Edo South and Nigeria in general. Recently, there have been a lot of concerns raised over the negative influence of COVID-19 pandemic on the people. This influence has continued to rise daily as people complain of the harsh influence on families. To mitigate the negative influence on family living, the researchers are of the opinion that COVID-19 pandemic influences on family living are identified and programs of activities to be carried out by family members to mitigate the influences, thus helping families to achieve sustainable family living in the face of COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate family adjustment programs in Edo South in the face of COVID-19 pandemic: Implication for sustainable family living in an unstable economy. Specifically, it:

1. Investigated the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on family living in Edo South.
2. Identified family adjustment programs for sustainable family living in COVID-19 pandemic age.
3. Assessed vocational programs to be carried out by families for sustainable living in COVID-19 pandemic age.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design of the study was the survey research design. Survey research design according to Lawal (2015) is the plan, structure and strategies which any researcher adopts in order to find a solution to stated research problems using questionnaire in collecting data for analysis and interpretation. The study was conducted in Edo South, one of the three senatorial districts in Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State is one of the states in the South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria. It lies between latitude 05°44'N and 07°34'N and longitude 05°'E and 06°45'E. It has a total land area of about 19,794 square kilometers (Edoworld, 2019). Edo South consists of seven local government councils which includes Egor, Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Orhionmwon, Ovia North-East, Ovia South-West and Uhunmwode Local Government Areas. The area was chosen for this study due to the alarming report of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the area by Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and its possible effects on family living among the people in the area.

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised of 350 families drawn from the seven local government areas that make up the study area. These local government areas are represented with the following population: Egor (340287), Oredo (372080), Ikpoba-Okha (372080), Orhionmwon (183994), Ovia-North - East (155344), Ovia South - West (138072) and Uhunmwode (121749) with a total of one million, six hundred and six thousand, one hundred and one people, (NPC,2006). Families that have been victims of the pandemic and have sought health care services and recovered were eligible to participated in the study. Only 350 families were identified and these formed the population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 105 was used for the study. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 families from each of the local government areas, thus the sample size was 105 families, this sample size was representative of the entire population and easy to manage considering the consequences of the interaction under strict protocol conditions. The various families selected as respondents have been married for some years and are aware of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the globe. The selected families represented the different family groups who are employed, self-employed, and unemployed.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire items on a 3-point scale, developed by the researchers. Each item in the questionnaire was assigned the response options Agree (A-3), Disagree (D-

2), and Don't Know (D.K-1) to answer the research questions. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity by three experts from the University of Benin, Benin City. Data were collected by the researchers with the aid of two assistants.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using mean and standard deviation to answer the specific objectives. The decision rule for the objectives was based on mean value of greater or equal 2.0 as Disagree and less than 2.0 as Agree of each item.

Results

The results of the study are represented in Tables 1-3

The data in Table 1 showed that items 1-15 were rated with mean score range 1.00 - 1.82 indicating that the respondents agreed with the itemized statements as regards the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on family living. The values of standard deviation range from 0.00 - 0.709, these values showed that the respondents were close to the mean and to one another in their responses.

Table 1: Influence of COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Living in Edo South (n = 105)

S/N	Items	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1.	COVID-19 has negative influence on family income	1.07	0.318	Agree
2.	Restriction of movement/lockdown Prevents COVID-19	1.64	0.637	Agree
3.	Lockdown affects prices of goods	1.00	0.000	Agree
4.	COVID-19 leads to increase in health care	1.10	0.390	Agree
5.	COVID-19 affects transportation Fare	1.05	0.255	Agree
6.	COVID-19 increases poverty rate	1.00	0.000	Agree
7.	COVID-19 leads to malnutrition due to poor diet	1.55	0.588	Agree
8.	COVID-19 leads to loss of jobs/income	1.24	0.546	Agree
9.	COVID-19 leads to distress sales of assets	1.46	0.651	Agree
10.	COVID-19 leads to predatory loan acquisition	1.71	0.675	Agree
11.	COVID-19 makes parents give Adequate attention to their children	1.82	0.568	Agree
12.	COVID-19 causes distress for Parents with low income	1.05	0.255	Agree
13.	Closure of daycare and schools Increases parents' stress as they shuttle between Home and work place	1.02	0.137	Agree
14.	COVID-19 reduces parents working Hours, thereby reducing productivity	1.10	0.390	Agree
15.	COVID-19 leads to loss of loved ones	1.00	0.000	Agree

The data in Table 2 revealed that all the items had a mean score range of 1.03-1.54 indicating that they are less than the cut off mark of 2.0. This shows that the respondents agreed to all the itemized statements as regards the family adjustment programs to carry out in the face of COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate its influence on family living. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.000-0.590, which indicated that the responses do not deviate widely from the mean.

Table 2: Family Adjustment Programs for Sustainable Family Living in COVID-19 Pandemic age in Edo South (*n=105*)

S/N	Items	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1.	Eat produce that is in season and avoid eating out	1.07	0.251	Agree
2.	Go for reusable items instead of disposable ones	1.13	0.394	Agree
3.	Turn off electrical appliances when not in use and when leaving the house	1.03	0.167	Agree
4.	Take a walk or bike/public transport to reduce Transportation expenses	1.07	0.251	Agree
5.	Rent items for usage instead of buying	1.30	0.502	Agree
6.	Generate less waste	1.07	0.251	Agree
7.	Go out with your own water bottle	1.31	0.466	Agree
8.	Use handkerchiefs instead of tissues	1.37	0.486	Agree
9.	Go out with your shopping bags	1.54	0.621	Agree
10.	Become a one car family	1.51	0.590	Agree
11.	use everything you have Maximally	1.30	0.539.	Agree
12.	Change the light in your house to low energy ones	1.10	0.308	Agree
13.	Live in a house with moderate cost	1.07	0.251	Agree
14.	Choose renewable energy	1.12	0.409	Agree

Table 3 indicated that all the 7 items had a mean value range of 1.10-1.26; these values are less than the cut-off point of 2.0 indicating that the respondents agreed that all the items are vocational programs for sustainable family living in COVID-19 pandemic age. The values of standard deviation of the respondents range from 0.251-0.481, these values showed that the respondents were close to the mean and to one another in their responses.

Table 3: Vocational Programs to Be Carried By Families For Sustainable Living In COVID-19 Pandemic Age In Edo South (N=105).

S/N	Items	Mean (X)	SD	Decision
1.	Grow some food crops for your family Consumption	1.10	0.295	Agree
2.	Make your snacks yourself	1.24	0.428	Agree
3.	Learn how to recycle waste	1.15	0.361	Agree
4.	Learn to mend your clothes	1.25	0.435	Agree
5.	Produce your meat by engaging in poultry, Snail and fish farming	1.17	0.379	Agree
6.	Engage in vocational trades for extra income	1.07	0.251	Agree
7.	Make home products instead .	1.26	0.481	Agree

Discussion of Findings

Findings from Table 1 revealed that COVID-19 pandemic influences family living as respondents agreed to all the fifteen items. This is in agreement with the report of Ariel, Mayer and Rohen (2020) that the U. S. labor market collapsed within two weeks between March and April, 2020 due to the imposition of stay at home that was ordered all over the country as a result of the pandemic. It

also agrees with the report of IMF 2020 that COVID-19 is having serious socioeconomic impacts on Nigeria's economy which has resulted to the sudden drop in the prices of oil, thereby posing a threat on the country's economy. This study showed that COVID-19 has negative influence on family income, affects prices of goods, leads to increase in health care, affects transportation fare and increases poverty rate. The findings on Table 2 showed that some family adjustment programs can be adopted by various families to help cope with the influence of COVI-19 pandemic. The respondents agreed to all the items, indicating that all the programs can help families to cope in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study from Table 3 showed that some vocational programs that can be carried out by various families to help them mitigate the influence of COVI-19 pandemic. The respondents agreed to all the items, indicating that all the vocational programs can help families to mitigate the influence of COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

COVID-19 pandemic is in no doubt a threat to sustainable family living in Edo South. This study revealed the influence of COVID-19 pandemic on family income, health, and productivity. Sustainable family living can therefore be enhanced through some adjustment and vocational programs which include growing some food crops for family use, mending clothes by oneself, rearing snails, chickens, and fish for both family consumption and profit making. Government on its part can provide soft loans as coping strategies for families to adjust during crisis period.

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