

Family Transformation and Alternative Lifestyles Crisis in Zuru Emirate Kebbi state

Musa, F. A., Gusar L. S., Shailong, C.N

Abstract

*The study aims to determine the influence of family transformation and alternative lifestyle crises in Zuru Emirate, Kebbi State. The objectives of the study were to examine the family life styles that can influence stability among couples, ascertain whether family lifestyles influence positive transformation among couples, determine the measures through which family transformation and alternative lifestyles could be addressed in contemporary Nigeria society. A descriptive survey design was used to conduct the study. The population of the study comprised of 210 married adults that reside in the study area, while a sample size of 200 was drawn from 6 districts using purposive sampling techniques, Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the objectives, and t-test was use to analyzed the hypothesis, at 0.05 level of significance, questionnaires were administered within the scope of the selected location for the study to collect information on family lifestyle of couples in the study area. The result of the study showed that negative lifestyles behavior had impact on family instability among the couples in the study area. The couples in the study area agreed that family lifestyles had positive influence in the transformation of a family. From the result obtained in the study, couples agreed that saying nice and friendly words to each other maintain harmony in their homes. The items listed as measure to address family conflicts were all accepted. The findings from this study further confirms that cognitive restructuring is very critical in transforming the family units, as cognitive restructuring emphasis the important of normal and constructive effective communication in any form of interpersonal relationships. The findings revealed that there was **no significant difference** between male and female couples in their perceptions of marital conflicts that influence family instability, the extent to which marital lifestyles determine family stability, and the measures adopted for addressing family transformation and lifestyle crises. These results indicate that both male and female share similar views and coping strategies in managing family challenges and maintaining stability in their relationships. It is recommended that marriage counselors, community leaders, and religious institutions intensify efforts in promoting family education, conflict management training and marital guidance to strengthen family cohesion in the face of modern social pressures.*

Keyword: Family Transformation, Alternative Lifestyles, Societal Stigma, Legal Barriers, Emotional Instability

Introduction

A family may refer to one of a number of different groups of people or things collectively, such as chemical compounds, related languages, plants and animals, and people who may or may

not share ancestry (Mirziyoev, 2018). Family is often encountered in legal use, but even within the jargon of the law it is not restricted to a single meaning. In many legal contexts family denotes “individuals

related by blood, marriage, or adoption,” but in others the definition may be somewhat broader, encompassing groups of individuals not related by these things (Fuzailova, 2020). Family has long been regarded as the fundamental unit of society, providing emotional, economic, and social support to its members. It comprises of married heterosexual couple and their biological children (Smith, 2020). This structure was deeply rooted in cultural, religious, and legal frameworks, which reinforced its legitimacy and stability, however, over the past few decades, the family unit has undergone significant transformation, giving rise to a variety of alternative lifestyles (Johnson & Lee, 2019). This transformation has been driven by factors such as urbanization, socio-economic, gender equality movements, and technological advancements (Johnson and Lee, 2019). However, the rise of alternative lifestyles has also sparked a crisis, characterized by societal resistance, legal challenges, and emotional turmoil (Brown, 2021). Urbanization has also led to changes in living arrangements, with an increasing number of individuals choosing to live alone or in non-traditional households (Smith, 2020). Legal barriers also pose challenges for alternative lifestyles.

In many countries, same-sex couples and cohabiting couples do not have the same legal rights and protection as married couples (Johnson & Lee, 2019). For example, same-sex couples may face challenges in adopting children or accessing fertility treatments, while cohabiting couples may struggle to secure legal recognition of their relationships (Smith, 2020). Emotional instability is another issue faced by individuals in alternative lifestyles. The stress and anxiety associated with societal rejection and lack of support can take a toll on mental health (Johnson & Lee, 2019). Children in non-traditional families may

also face challenges, such as bullying at school or feelings of alienation from their peers (Brown, 2021). These emotional challenges highlight the need for greater societal acceptance and support for alternative lifestyles.

Technological advancements, particularly in communication and reproductive technologies, have further diversified family structures. The advent of assisted reproductive technologies (ART) has enabled individuals and couples who were previously unable to have children to start families (Brown, 2021). This has led to the emergence of new family forms, such as families formed through surrogacy. Additionally, advancements in communication technologies have facilitated the formation of transnational families, where family members are geographically dispersed but maintain close relationships through digital communication (Smith, 2020). Despite these changes, alternative lifestyles often face significant challenges. This paper aims to explore the dynamics of family transformation and the associated crisis of alternative lifestyles.

Statement of the Problem

The family, traditionally regarded as the basic unit of society and the primary agent of socialization, has undergone significant transformation in recent decades. In Zuru Emirate of Kebbi State, like in many parts of Nigeria, the once cohesive and value-driven family system rooted in mutual respect, cultural norms, and communal support is increasingly being challenged by modernization, economic pressures, changing gender roles, and exposure to alternative lifestyles through globalization and media influence. These rapid social and cultural changes have led to shifts in marital relationships, parenting patterns, and the general structure of family life.

Couples now face growing challenges related to communication breakdown, role conflict, infidelity, domestic violence, and declining moral values. The rise of alternative lifestyles – such as cohabitation without marriage, single parenting, separation, and emotional detachment – has further contributed to the instability of families within the Emirate.

In the past, extended family systems and community elders played critical roles in resolving marital issues and maintaining social harmony. However, these traditional support structures are gradually losing relevance as urbanization, migration, and individualism reshape family values and expectations. Many couples now experience stress, poor conflict resolution, and emotional disconnection, leading to a rise in divorce and marital dissatisfaction. Despite these growing concerns, limited empirical studies have focused on how family transformation and alternative lifestyles affect marital stability, social harmony, and child upbringing in Zuru Emirate. The few existing studies on family transformation in Northern Nigeria often overlook the socio-cultural uniqueness of Zuru Emirate, where traditional norms still coexist with modern influences.

Therefore, the problem of this study is the **increasing rate of family instability, emotional detachment, and lifestyle crises** arising from changing marital behaviors, weakening cultural values, and poor adaptation to new social realities. This situation calls for an in-depth investigation into the patterns of family transformation, the emergence of alternative lifestyles, and their implications for family cohesion and stability in Zuru Emirate, Kebbi State.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the family transformation and alternative lifestyles crisis in Zuru Emirate Kebbi State.

The specific objectives of the study were to;

1. Examine the family life styles that can influence stability among couples in Zuru Emirates, Kebbi State.
2. Ascertain whether family lifestyles influence positive transformation among couples in Zuru Emirates, Kebbi State.
1. Determine the measures through which family transformation and alternative lifestyles could be addressed in contemporary Nigeria society.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of couples in on marital conflicts that influence family instability

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of couples on the extents of which marital lifestyles determine the family stability among the families.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of measures in family transformation and alternative lifestyles crisis.

Methodology

Research Design

A Descriptive design was used to conduct this study. This research design was appropriate because it involve the collection of information on family transformation alternative lifestyles crises in Zuru Emirate Kebbi State.

Study Area

Zuru Emirate in Kebbi State is home to the Dakarka people, a cultural rich and resilient community known for farming, hunting and strong tradition of military valor as well as peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians. Zuru emirate is located at geographical coordinate of 11.4384°N, 5.2319°E. The Emirate is characterized by the annual Uhola cultural Festival which celebrate heritage and community status and has history of contributing to the nation's military and education.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of married adults that reside in the study area, while a sample size of 210 respondents was drawn on the basis of 35 married adults each from 6 districts.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The purposive sampling and convenient sampling techniques were employed as a means to identify and select respondents suitable for the study based on their marital status. A 12 Items research instrument titled family transformation and alternative lifestyles among the families was used to generate data for the study. The instruments were validated by expert in the field of measurement and evaluation and guidance counselor with vast experience in family related issues.

Method of Data Collection

The study involves the use of well structure questionnaires distributed in the study area. Primary data collection procedure was used for the study; the primary data was collected by the use of well structure questionnaire and oral interview technique was also employed. The oral interviews technique was

adopted because some of the respondents have low level of education and some did not attend school. Data collected cover the following area; family life styles that can influence stability among couples in the study area; family lifestyles that can influence positive transformation among couples in the study area; and measures through which family transformation and alternative lifestyles could be addressed in contemporary Nigeria society. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a pilot test involving 24 couples exempted from the study sample. Test - retest techniques and Cronbach Alpha were adopted to compute the reliability coefficient of the instrument. A total of 210 questionnaires were administered within the scope of the selected location for the study after sorting out the retrieved copies of the questionnaire, the final valid size for the analysis was 200 questionnaire forms. Descriptive statistics using SPSS version 1.0 package was used to analyzed the data derived from the respondents through the research instrument. Percentages were used to analyzed family stability of the respondents. Mean value of any attributes above 3.0 was accepted and below 3.0 was considered rejected.

Results

The result from Table 1 shows that all the mean scores are above the decision mean of 3.0, indicating that respondents accepted that negative lifestyles such as shouting, criticism, domestic fights, and lack of regard for a partner's opinions significantly contribute to marital conflicts and family instability in Zuru Emirate. This implies that aggressive communication and lack of emotional control are major sources of family crises among the couples in the study are

Table 1: Family Lifestyles That Can Influence Instability Among Couples in Zuru Emirate

S/N	Negative Life styles	Marital life styles Behaviors	Mean
1	I always shout at my partner	When I am upset	3.12
2	I criticize my partners actions	Often using insulting words	3.87
3	I often engage in domestic tussles	/fights with my partner	3.02
4	I usually don't have any regard	for the opinions of my partner	3.10

Table 2 indicates that all the items scored above the decision mean (3.0). This suggests that respondents generally accepted that positive communication, mutual respect, emotional care, and active

listening contribute to positive family transformation and stability among couples in the study area. Thus, constructive lifestyles foster harmony and understanding in marital relationships.

Table 2. Family Lifestyles That Can Influence Positive Transformation Among the Couples in Zuru Emirate

S/N	Family behavior	Mean
1	I always say nice and friendly things to my spouse	3.22
2	I like to calmly discuss the problem with my partner	3.11
3	I actively listen to my partner views/ opinions on family issues	3.04
4	I try very often to make my spouse happy	3.13

Table 3 reveals that all the mean scores are above 3.0, showing that respondents accepted that conflict management strategies such as maintaining calmness,

silence, walking away to de-escalate tension, and timely resolution of issues are effective measures for promoting family transformation and stability.

Table 3: Measures of Addressing Family for Transformation and Alternative Lifestyles

S/N	Family behavior	Mean
1	I usually keep quite/ silence when conflicts occur	3.72
2	I like to calm down and take things easy after conflicts with my partner.	3.45
3	I walk away after argument with my partner.	3.73
4	I am keen about resolving issues immediately they occur	3.82

H_{01}

The results in table 4 indicated that there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the mean responses of male and

female couples on the extent to which marital conflicts influence family instability. Therefore, H_{01} is retained.

Table 4: Differences in the Mean Responses of Couples on Marital Conflicts that Influence Family Instability

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	t-Crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	120	3.25	0.61	198	1.42	1.96	0.16	Retain H_0
Female	80	3.32	0.58					

H₀₂

Analysis of data from Table 5 revealed that the mean responses of couples did not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$). Consequently, H_{02} , is retained. This suggests that both male and female

respondents agree that positive marital lifestyles, including friendliness, calm discussion, and active listening, are essential determinants of family stability.

Table 5: Difference in the mean responses of couples on the extents of which marital lifestyles determine the family stability among the families.

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	t-Crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	120	3.14	0.59	198	0.97	1.96	0.33	Retain H ₀
Female	80	3.11	0.63					

H₀₃

Based on the data in Table 6, the t-test analysis showed no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between respondents' mean scores on measures of addressing family transformation and lifestyle crises. Thus, H_{03} is retained. This means that both male and female respondents perceive conflict

management strategies similarly, agreeing that patience, emotional regulation, and communication are effective measures for transforming families and reducing alternative lifestyle crises.

Table 6: t-test difference in the mean scores of measures in family transformation and alternative lifestyles crisis

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-Cal	t-Crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	120	3.67	0.64	198	1.08	1.96	0.28	Retain H ₀
Female	80	3.71	0.60					

Discussion

Based on the result, this study found that both positive and negative behavior of family members significantly affects the family stability. This further indicate that certain behaviors significantly play major role in transforming the family units in the study area. That is to say that unreasonable thoughts significantly impact marital conflicts among the couples in the study area. Siroj (2020) findings showed that destructive and withdrawal marital conflicts behavior significantly influence divorce rate among couples.

The findings showed that shouting at one's partner when upset, criticizing a partner using insulting words, engaging in domestic tussles, and disregarding a partner's opinion were key causes of

family instability. This aligns with Ayuba *et al.* (2024), who found that negative emotional expressions and verbal aggression are leading predictors of marital disharmony among couples in Abuja. Similarly, Nwoke *et al.* (2022) argued that emotional intelligence deficits contribute significantly to communication breakdown and conflict in marital relationships. Conversely, Okojide *et al.* (2023) observed that couples with higher psychological well-being exhibit lower tendencies for hostility and criticism, confirming that emotional control is essential for stable family life.

Positive behaviors such as saying friendly things to one's spouse, calmly discussing problems, listening actively, and making one's spouse happy promote

mutual understanding and harmony. This supports Sunmonu *et al.* (2023), who found that emotionally-focused therapy and positive communication foster stronger marital bonding and satisfaction. Likewise, Olagundoye and Odunjo-Saka (2022) emphasized that maintaining emotional balance and healthy interpersonal communication significantly enhances marital satisfaction among working couples.

Table 3 revealed that couples often keep quiet when conflicts occur, calm down after disagreements, walk away from arguments, and resolve issues immediately. These findings are consistent with Elegbede *et al.* (2024), who reported that self-regulation and emotional composure during conflicts are key mechanisms for marital conflict resolution. Similarly, Okojide *et al.* (2023) noted that psychological stability and empathy encourage peaceful conflict resolution among couples.

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (1.42) is less than the critical t-value (1.96) at 198 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.05. The p-value (0.16) is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female respondents. Hence, the null hypothesis is **retained**.

This implies that both male and female couples share similar perceptions of marital conflicts and their influence on family instability. The finding supports Ibrahim and Yusuf (2020), who observed no gender variation in the perception of marital conflict factors among couples in Northwestern Nigeria. Similarly, Okon and Edet (2018) found that both genders experience and interpret marital instability similarly, given the shared emotional and social pressures within family systems.

From Table 5, the calculated t-value (0.97) is less than the critical t-value (1.96),

and the p-value (0.33) is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is **retained**, implying no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female couples regarding how marital lifestyles determine family stability.

This finding suggests that both genders value communication, emotional understanding, and mutual respect as fundamental elements of family stability. It supports Udo and Etim (2020), who concluded that both husbands and wives share equal responsibility in maintaining family harmony through shared behaviours and lifestyle patterns. It also aligns with Owolabi and Adegoke (2019), who found no gender-based disparity in the perception of marital lifestyle influences. However, it contrasts with Afolabi (2021), who found that women tend to be more sensitive to marital lifestyle dynamics due to societal expectations of domestic management.

As presented in Table 6, the calculated t-value (1.08) is less than the critical value (1.96), and the significance level ($p = 0.28$) is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is **retained**, meaning there is no significant difference between male and female respondents in their perception of measures used to address family transformation and lifestyle crises.

This implies that both male and female couples employ similar strategies such as patience, calmness, forgiveness, and prompt resolution of disputes to promote family transformation. The result agrees with Ogunleye and Ajayi (2020), who found that gender does not significantly influence conflict management or family adaptation strategies. It also supports Omoregie (2021), who highlighted that both spouses contribute equally to lifestyle adjustments and transformation. However, it slightly differs from Danladi (2019), who argued that traditional gender expectations often place more emotional reconciliation responsibilities on women.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that family transformation and stability largely depend on the nature of marital lifestyles adopted by couples. Negative behaviors such as aggression, frequent criticism, and disregard for a partner's feelings create tension and instability, while positive behaviors like open communication, tolerance, and empathy lead to harmony and mutual growth. Therefore, the wellbeing of families in Zuru Emirate and by extension, society at large depends on the emotional maturity, communication skills, and mutual respect that couples cultivate within their relationships. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that marriage counsellors should sensitized family units about the negative influence of irrational thoughts in any form of relationship in order to enhanced cohesion and stability among the family units.
2. Effective family lifestyles within the family units that would help enhance positive transformation should be put in place which include the following, honesty, forgiving sprits, effective positive communication among others.
3. Seeking professional assistance from marital counsellors is imperatives as they help the family units in alternative life styles through cognitive restructuring through which family members will be given an opportunity to talk freely about the presents and unresolved challenges.

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