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Family Crisis: Causes, Consequences and Coping Strategies in
Edo and Lagos States of Nigeria

FAMILY CRISIS: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES IN EDO AND LAGOS STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The study examines family crisis in a holistic approach. Crisis is a phenomenon in most Nigeria household and solving the problem will be the ultimate solution to building a strong, embedded and reliable family. The main instrument for this study was the questionnaire. A total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents were used for this study. The respondents were proportionately sampled from Edo Central and Lagos Central. The findings of the study revealed that factors such as Retrenchment, Employment, Infidelity, Abandonment, Wife Battery, and inability to sexually satisfy their spouses, poor social habit, and poor communication always lead to crisis in the family. Strategies such as effective communication, spending quality time together among others always help to overcome crisis. The major recommendations proffered among others are the introduction of a comprehensive Sexuality Education programme into colleges and tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION
The concept of the family was conceive by Schaefer and Lamm (1998), as a "set of people related by blood, marriage or some other agreed-upon relationships/or adoption, who share the primary responsibility for reproduction and caring for members of the society". In the same vein psychologists like Orhungur (1990) agreed that the family is a group of related kins, linked by blood and marriage, who are usually characterised by economic co-operation and solidarity. Rice (1990) defined "The family as any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship in which: the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship, the members see their identity as importantly attached to the group, and s the group has an identity of its own".

Bidwell and Vander (2000) defined "the family as a collection of people, related to each other by marriage, ancestry, adoption, or affinity, who have a commitment to each other and a unique identity with each other. This collection forms an economic unit. The adults in the collection have varying degrees of responsibility for young members that might be a part of the collection"

The deduction from, the aforementioned definition is that the family is fundamentally a product of marriage, it is expected that members of a family should interact with one another for the sustenance if not only the family but the society at large. A civilized society is built upon he family "the family is the culture-creating institution par excellence" (Berger 1998) Children naturally inherit not only this physical characteristics as well as physical and material wealth, they also receive their social heritage from their biological parents. The family, therefore is the social structure most effective in passing on tradition belief, and value from one generation to the next. The action or inaction of any member of the family has serious implications on the corporate survival of the family, because the family stands as the basic unit of socialization on which every other activity in the society hovers around. The responsibilities of the family as summarized by Schaefer and Lamm (1988) includes reproduction, protection, socialization, regulation of

sexual behaviour, affection and companionship providing social status. Beyond this benefit received through these inheritance, children raised in a stable family by their marriage, have been found, on the average, to be physically and mentally healthier, better educated and later in life enjoy more success than children in disengaged families. Moore (1995) however lamented that such benefits or responsibilities of the family are continuously being separated, infact they are gradually being neglected in our society and consequently, "crisis" is looming in every quarter. Crisis is a time of great danger or any event that is or expected to lead to an unstable and dangerous situation affecting an individual, group community or whole society.

Family crisis can arise from an internal conflict such as death, sickness or drug addiction, or an external event such as flood or the loss of a job. Either way, it provides a turning point for the family to either work together and gain closeness or fall apart. Families can adapt to a crisis by supporting each other and learning flexibility. Family crisis is naturally stressful. A crisis demand some sort of change in the family and this change is stressful for all.

Crises are deemed to be negative changes in the security, economic, political, societal or environmental affairs, especially when they occur abruptly with little or no warning. A crisis or trauma can bring benefits to a family in the form of greater understanding closeness or a new appreciation of each other. Sometimes crisis bring difficulties or misunderstanding within families. A family crisis occurs when a family has to change. It is a turning point, things will either get better or they will get worse (Nelson 2008). A family crisis is naturally stressful, a crisis demands some sort of change in the family and this change is stressful for families.

TYPES OF FAMILY CRISIS
The following are the type of family crisis:
  i.   A bolt from the blue
  ii.   Developmental crisis.
  iii. Structural crisis.
1.   A bolt from the blue: This is when something unexpected or suddenly hit the family. Someone may die, your home burns, you lose your job, you win lottery.
      These changes can be difficult for families because they require the family to deal with many changes. If someone dies, others may have to fit their "shoes" while also dealing with the loss. If you win the lottery you have to deal with how to spend the money and this can cause family conflict. Families can adapt well to these crisis by supporting on another and being flexible enough to make needed changes. (Nelson 1985)
2.   Developmental crisis: Occurs when people get married, have children, have a child start school, have an adolescent going through puberty, have a child leaving home, have parents retiring, aging, and/ or dying. Some of these changes are subtle and gradual; others are abrupt and dramatic.
      These crises are often viewed as "normal events" and thus the stress they can place on your family may not be recognized. Adapting to the leaving or adding of a family member or the changes that occur as children and adults grow and age can be very difficult for families.
      Families need to be aware that these "normal" developments can cause stress because they challenge us to rearrange our families.
      To adjust to developmental crisis, families often need to adjust family rules and roles to meet the new abilities of family members.
3.   Structural Crisis: Occurs when the family resists changing to meet the demands of developmental or "out of the blue" crisis.
      Being unable to change can aggravate existing conflict and can lead to many actions that harm you or other family members. Examples include cheating on one's partner, feeling suicidal, drinking too much (alcoholism), physical and sexual abuse, drug use and divorce. These behaviours are often symptoms of the family's inability to adapt to change and to solve problems.
      The family may become so disorganized it is unable to overcome the crisis. When behaviours such as these occur, families often benefit fro outside professional help. http://ag.edu/extention/ fam/ humandeve.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES WHICH ARE IMMOBILIZED BY STRESS:
- Lack cohesiveness and closeness among members.
- Fight over "who is right".
- Lack time and positive interaction between the parents.
- Lack family activities and quality time together.
- Experience stressed-out symptoms–including sleeplessness, lack of appetite, disorientation, memory lapses, depression and anxiety.
- Disagree about family goals and how to reach them.
- Are hostile, and blame each other often.
- Lack open and safe communication.
- Lack shared values, rules and roles. In poorly functioning families, members are rigid and will only do what they think they "should" do.
     Source : (Nelson 1985) Families Matters

GUIDELINES FOR ADAPTING TO CRISIS IN THE FAMILY BY RESEARCHERS
Accept the Hardship.
Well functioning families quickly accept the hardship and use their energy and resources to meet the challenge. Recognize that tears can be good medicine for many people. Recognize and mourn your loss. Then, figure out your options for moving ahead.
Do not blame each other.
Poorly functioning families try to attach the blame to someone inside or outside the family. Healthy families see the crisis as a family-centred problem. They work together to correct or change the problem.
Be patient.
Well-functioning families recognize the need for peace-making, patience and consideration. Poorly functioning families quickly respond with anger (http:ag.udel.edu/extension/fam/... .
Be good stress managers.
The following steps can be taken to manage family stress
- Practise a healthy lifestyle and plan well-deserved relaxation times.
- Try to gain control over whatever part of life you can. Flood victims are encouraged to seek this control, even if it means putting their remaining possessions in storage, or buying a hot plate on which to cook.
- Remain optimistic, striving to see the brighter side of life, without denying reality.
- Help each family members have high self-esteem and help them be self reliant. Praise each other often and encourage the strengths of each person.
- Give daily reminders of your love and appreciation. Healthy families are clear and direct about feelings, particularly expressions of commitment, affection and praise.
- Do things together as a family. Go on family outings, plan fun time at home, hold family meetings, play together and go to church together.
- Talk openly and honestly. Poorly functioning families may not talk, may keep secrets, or have many topics they cannot or will not discuss with each other.
     Source: www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
The prevalence of crisis in marriages is alarming, it is tearing most homes apart, resultant effect is always separation, mental derailment, divorce etc. and this has suddenly become a precipitator of moral decay and insecurity in our society. The situation has seemingly given rise to social vices and psychological trauma which requires immediate attention. It is against this backdrop, that the study was embarked upon to investigate the impact of crisis on families, and recommend some possible intervention strategies which may ensure peace and stability in families in Edo and Lagos State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was embarked upon to find out the factors that are responsible for the crisis among families, find out if financial issues, sexual issues, education and health problems influence crisis and to recommend intervention strategies that well forestall peace in families in Edo State and Lagos.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to successfully accomplish the purpose of the study, four research questions were drawn. They are:
i.   Does financial and sexual issues influences crisis in families?
ii.   Does physical abuse and health issue bring about crisis in home?
iii.   Do educational problems of children/wards influence the prevalence of crisis in families?
iv.   What are the factors that can lead to family crisis?
v.   What strategies can reduce crisis amongst families?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The survey design which is a descriptive approach was used for the study. This is because the study requires the gathering of opinion from married people in various works of life, and survey method is most relevant in the measurement of public opinion on issues such as family crisis.

Population

The target population for this study comprises of all nurses, health workers, Doctors, Auxiliary Nurses, teachers and other workers who are married in Edo and Lagos States.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for the study comprises of all nurses, health workers, doctors, auxiliary nurse, teachers and other ministry worker's who are married. A sample of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents was purposively selected for the study. The sample of this study consisted of 300 respondent drawn from Lagos central and Edo central of the senatorial districts of both states. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample of 75 respondents from each senatorial district

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged Home and Family Questionnaire (HQF) was used. The instrument contained 67 items split into two sections. Section A contained the bio data of participants including sex, marital status, age, and occupation, qualification. Section B was made up of questions designed on a four point Likert scale to elicit responses on recent events that have happened in the home that causes crisis, the events that causes crisis in the family, and strategies for overcoming family crises. The instrument was subjected to face validation by two experts. The criticism, advice and suggestions guided the reinstructing of the instrument.

Reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was pretested to using 20 respondents, The test-retest design method was used, the scores subjected to person's Coefficient, a reliability coefficient of 0.69 was obtained.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The instrument was administered personally on the respondents, collected on the spot. Percentages were used to analyze the data collected.

Results and discussions

The results from this study will be based on research questions

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Criteria		
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Female	10.8	72
Male	42	28
Total	150	100

Age Grade		
Below 30	18	12
31-40	90	60
41-50	30	210
51-60	12	48
>61	-	-
Total	150	100
Qualification		24
Masters Degree	36	40
Bachelor/HND	60	20
NCE/OND	30	16
Others	24	-
Total	150	100
Marital Status		76
Married	114	8
Divorce	12	12
Separated	18	4
Never married	6	-
Total	150	100
Occupation		
Teaching	18	12
Nurses	54	36
Doctors	-	28
	42	24
	36	-
Total	150	100

Table 1 reveals that 108 (72%) of the respondent involve in the study
were females while 42 (28%) were males, 18(12%) of time respondent are below 30 years, 90(60%) are within the ages of 31-40yrs, 30 (40%) are within the ages of 41-50yrs, while however, 36 (24%) of ten respondent had a master's degree, 60(40%) had first degree/Higher National Diploma (HND) 30(20%) had Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) and Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and 24(10%) had other qualifications. Also 114(76%) of the respondent were married 12(8%) were divorced, 18(12%) when separated and 6(4%) were never married. 18(12%) of the respondents were teachers, 54(36%), of nurses 42(28%) ministry workers and 36(24%) were of other profession.

Research question 1: Does financial and sexual issues influences crisis in families?
Table 2: Does Financial Problems Influences Crisis in the Family

Financial Issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Retrenchment	Always	-	-
	Often	6	4
	Sometimes	12	8
	Never	132	88
Total		150	100
Unemployment	Always	-	-
	Often	6	4
	Sometimes	42	28
	Never	102	68
Total		150	100
Indebtedness	Always	-	-
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	60	40
	Never	60	40

Total		150	100
Declining Market	Always	78	52
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	72	48
Total		150	100

Table 2 reveals that 88% and 68% of the respondents agreed that retrenchment, and unemployment respectively are factors that can influence crisis in the home. However, another 40% disagreed that indebtedness is sometimes a factor that sometimes led to crisis in the home, but 52% agreed declining market crop always led to crisis in the family.

Table 3: Responses to Sexual Issues in Families

Sexual issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Infidelity	Always	36	24
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	84	56
Total		150	100
Abandonment	Always	-	-
	Often	6	4
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	108	72
Total		150	100
Early Marriage	Always	-	-
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	60	40
	Never	90	60
Total		150	100
Teenage Pregnancy	Always	-	-
	Often	6	4
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	144	96
Total		150	100
Consent Absence from home	Always	-	-
	Often	6	4
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	108	72
Total		150	100
Contribution	Always	-	-
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	114	76
Total		150	100

Table 3 reveals that factors such as infidelity with 56% often led to crisis in the home 72% agreed that abandonment never led to crisis in the home. 96% and 60% respectively agreed that early marriage and teenage pregnancy were factors that never influences crisis in the home. However, 72% and 76% agreed that constant absence from home and co-habitation were factors that always led to crisis in the family.

Research question 2: Does physical abuse and health issues bring about crisis in the home

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Table 4: Responses to Physical Abuse in the Family

Physical Abuse	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Conflict	Always	-	-
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	60	40
	Never	60	40
Total		150	100
Alcoholism	Always	-	-
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	48	32
	Never	102	68
Total		150	100
Wife Battering	Always	48	32
	Often	102	68
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Child Abuse	Always	-	-
	Often	114	76
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Aggression	Always	42	28
	Often	36	24
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	72	48
Total		150	100
Delinquent Child	Always	30	20
	Often	60	40
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	60	40
Total		150	100

Table 4 reveals that 40% of the respondent agreed that conflict always lead to crisis in the home, 68% disagreed that alcoholism never lead to crisis in the home. However, 68% agreed that wife battery often lead to crisis in the home. Child abuse, and delinquent child within percentages of 76%, and 40% were factors that never lead to crisis in the family.

Table 5: Responses to Health problems in the Family

Health Issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poor health of a spouse	Always	-	-
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	48	32
	Never	72	48
Total		150	100
Child	Always	30	20
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	42	28
	Never	78	52
Total		150	100
Relative	Always	-	-
	Often	60	40
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	90	60

Total		150	100
Death of a spouse	Always	36	24
	Often	114	76
	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Child	Always	30	20
	Often	84	56
	Sometimes	31	24
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Drug Abuse	Always	42	28
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	60	40
	Never	48	32
Total		150	100
Helpless Aged Person	Always	-	-
	Often	48	32
	Sometimes	54	36
	Never	48	32
Total		150	100
Barrenness	Always	12	8
	Often	108	72
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	-	-
		150	100

Table 5 reveals that factors such as poor health of a spouse with 48% sometimes lead to crisis in the home, while the poor health of a relative in the house with percentages 60%, lead to crisis, death of a spouse, child, helpless ages person, barrenness with percentages of 24% 56% 28%, 52% and 72% of which factors that always and often lead to crisis to the family.

Research question 3: Do educational problems of children / wards influence the prevalence of crisis in families?

Table 6: Responses to Educational problems in the Family

Educational Issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Expulsion from school	Always	6	4
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	42	28
	Never	72	48
Total		150	100
Suspension from school	Always	-	-
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	120	80
Total		150	100
Truancy	Always	60	40
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	42	28
	Never	18	12
Total		150	100
School Dropout	Always	42	24
	Often	18	12

		Frequency	Percentage
	Sometimes	54	36
	Never	16	24
Total		150	100
Child	Always	30	20
	Often	84	56
	Sometimes	31	24
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Drug Abuse	Always	42	28
	Often	-	-
	Sometimes	60	40
	Never	48	32
Total		150	100
Helpless Aged Person	Always	-	-
	Often	48	32
	Sometimes	54	36
	Never	48	32
Total		150	100
Poor performance at school	Always	-	-
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	90	60
		150	100

Table 6 reveals that 48% 80%, 40% 36% respectively of the respondent agreed that educational problems of their children and wards, always, and sometimes lead to crisis in the family. However, 60% of respondent agreed that poor performance of a child/ward never lead to crisis in the family.

Research question 4: What are the factors that can lead to family crisis?
Table 7: Responses to factors that causes problems in the Family Crisis

Health issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poor economic status of couples	Always	18	12
	Often	36	24
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	60	40
Total		150	100
Domestic Violence Family with larger	Always	18	12
	Often	54	36
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	42	28
Total		150	100
Disparity in educational attainment	Always	24	16
	Often	90	60
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Poor social habit of a spouse reduction in	Always	36	24
	Often	78	52
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	-	-
Total		150	100
Inability to sexually satisfy a spouse	Always	60	40
	Often	42	28

	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	12	28
Total		150	100
Lack of understanding/poor communication causes family crisis	Always	78	52
	Often	36	24
	Sometimes	24	16
	Never	12	8
Total		150	100
Marriages with short courtship less than (6 months)	Always	72	48
	Often	42	28
	Sometimes	30	20
	Never	6	4
Total		150	100
		150	100

Table 7 reveals that 40% of the respondent agreed that poor economic status of crop never lead to crisis in the family, but 36% of the respondent agreed that domestic violence (nagging/battery) and disparity in educational attainment often, is a major cause of crisis in the family.

Another 52% and 40% agreed that factors such as poor social habit of a spouse and inability to sexually satisfy a spouse, always cause family, crisis. While 52% and 45% of respondent agreed that lack of understanding and poor communication and short courtship are major factors that lead to crisis in the home.

Research question 5: What strategies can reduce crisis amongst families?
Table 8: Strategies for Overcoming Family Crisis

Health issues	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Effective communication	Always	72	48
	Often	42	28
	Sometimes	18	12
	Never	18	12
Total		150	100
Understanding each others feelings	Always	30	20
	Often	30	20
	Sometimes	36	24
	Never	54	36
Total	150	100	
Families should spend quality time together such as have dinner together, praying together, indoor games.	Always	30	20
	Often	60	40
	Sometimes	48	32
	Never	12	8
Total		150	100
Breaking negative old patterns and building up new healthy skills of relating	Always	18	12
	Often	90	60
	Sometimes	12	8
	Never	30	20
Total		150	100
Overcoming infidelity	Always	36	24
	Often	24	16
	Sometimes	78	52
	Never	12	8
Total		150	100
Family crisis should be faced by the family members	Always	84	56
	Often	54	36

	Sometimes	-	-
	Never	12	8
Total		150	100
Professional help should be sought for solving family crisis situation e.g. counselling/drug therapy	Always	48	32
	Often	60	40
	Sometimes	6	4
	Never	36	24
Total		150	100

Table 8 reveals that 48%, 40%, 60%, 56% of the respondent respectively agreed and the factors such as effective communication, families spending quality time together, breaking negative old patterns and building up new healthy skills of relating and overcoming infidelity are the strategies that can always be used to overcome family crisis. Another 56% and 40% saw that whenever there is family crisis, family members should always face the problems and they should often seek counselling from professionals.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study reveals that retrenchment, unemployment, indebtedness declining markets, poverty, among others were factors that can influence crisis in the family, however 88% of the respondents did agree that these factors which often lead to financial problems in families do occur sometimes. This is in line with Venette (2003), who stated that about 45% of crisis in families is caused by financial problem.

Results also showed that infidelity, abandonment and physical abuse were factors that lead to crisis in the families, but however reveals that 96% and 60% of the respondents, agreed that early marriages and teenage pregnancy respectively were factors that led to crisis. This is in line with Abekhale (2010) who remarked that issues such as absence from home and infidelity that lead to crisis in home and thereby increasing divorce rates in the country.

The study found that 40% of respondent, agreed that constant conflict lead to crisis in the family however, 68% disagreed that alcoholism never led to family crisis. Another 68% agree that wife battery also leads to crisis in the family. This is in line with Akande (2007) in a study being conducted which reveals that wife battery which is a physical attack is a manifestation of crisis.

Results also showed that 48% and 60% of the respondent, agreed that poor health of a spouse, relative, barrenness are factors that lead to family crisis. This is in line with a study conducted by Okpede & Bulus (1992), which indicated that poor health of a spouse, childlessness, drug abuse are often family crisis that leads to divorce.

findings reveals that 48% and 80%, of the respondent agreed that educational problems of the children and wards often lead to crisis in the family, this is in line with Temple (1989) who reported in his study that when children are performing poorly in school, there seems to be more crisis in the family especially from the man who will think that he his wasting money.

Results reveals that poor economic status of the couple never lead to crisis, rather it is nagging and wife battering that lead to crisis in the home. Disparity in educational attainment, poor social habit of spouse, poor communication and short courtship are major factors that always lead to crisis in the family. This confirms the findings of Carter (2010) who reported that long courtship and good communication was a glue that holds marriages together.

Results reveals that strategies such as effective communication (48%), family spending quality time together, (40%,) overcoming infidelity (60%) could effectively reduce the inadequate of family crisis in the home, this is in line with Jeremy (2006) study which stated the good communication was the best strategy for overcoming family crisis (56%) of the respondent also agreed that seeking professional counselling advice will also help to overcome and manage crisis effectively. This also confirm the findings of Winnail (1998) who reported in his study that professional advice should always be sought in the event of crisis in the family.

CONCLUSION

People are usually surprised how much family crisis affects them. Family crisis changes the way they think, their values, habits, feeling and behaviour, but a major crisis can bring a family together. However, families

need extra guidance to learn the best way to handle a crisis, families facing crisis should learn to avoid blaming each other, listen to the problem, avoid escalating family crisis by taking sides, be patient with yourselves, keep communicating, share information, and allow expression of emotions.

Most families have the ability to grow through crisis, but understanding its effects and actively dealing with them is necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings by the researcher the under listed have been recommended. Professional advice/Counselling is commonly known to be a face to face interaction between a professional counsellor and an individual or group of individuals which are confronted with problems.

➢ One of the preventive strategies is the professional help, which can be done through community education.

➢ Sensitization programmes on our media station and group counselling programmes that will be taken to organization and ministries, major focus will understand individual differences, communication network and self disclosure on mental stability. This would adequately take care of marital and pre-marital counselling for individuals outside the school setting.

➢ For students in colleges and tertiary institutions, this study recommends sexuality education where students will receive the knowledge of interpersonal relationships; family stability, true love, tolerance and moral discipline. All these will enable youths contribute meaningfully to marital situations in their families and plan adequately for stable homes when they finally get married.

➢ Sexuality education should be made compulsory for all students so that the purpose of the curriculum will be realized.

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