

Availability of Supports and Effective Management of Families for Improved Academic Performance of Students

BY

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ABSTRACT

In most countries like Nigeria, where marriage is predominant, there seems to be factors that fluctuates the economic stability of extended families and smaller families. Even when there is reliable source of income in the home, much is needed to be critically analyzed in order to avoid economic setbacks in the home. The study will help to identify various strengths and weaknesses of the family on economic as well as the social life of people. It would provide first-hand insight into some of the problems faced by extended families even those with smaller families as well as remedies to make families have appreciable social and economic standards. The study concluded that marital instability brings about stress, tension, lack of motivation, and frustration. And these manifestations act negatively on a child's academic performance while poverty, high rates of unemployment, and financial constraints may contribute to large numbers of fathers failing to take responsibility for their children. One of the recommendations made in the study was that students' academic and emotional well-being should be given appropriate attention for that can go a long way in ensuring that their potentials are harnessed and put into use for national development.

KEYWORDS: Economic setbacks, Remedies, Family size and performance of students

Introduction

It is very true that one's parents cannot teach one everything. Even if they know everything, they cannot teach you because of the little time they have. Children who grow in extended families learn co-operative work and develop a sense of brotherhood and caring for others so that when they go to the outside world, they become attached to the community as his siblings. This helps us to become good leaders of the society. Also, there is unity among members and thus one can seek protection from his immediate family members. Another tremendous benefit is seen when there is a new birth; the presence of aunts makes it easy for the mother since they take turns in taking care of the baby while the mother gets some time to rest.

From this, we are witnesses and we can even imagine how the suffering would be if everything is left for the mother to do on her own. As stated earlier, the extended family also has some disadvantages just like any other thing. For instance, one's privacy maybe denied in some cases because of the large number of people. There are some things you will want to do alone or sometimes one may want to think or spend time alone in privacy all of which is very hard to do in the extended family especially a very large one. There is also a kind of monarchy in the extended family. A decision made by the overhead which is usually the grandfather cannot be challenged by any other person. This is a disadvantage because one may not be allowed to exercise his rights of freewill to something. Some children get spoilt in the extended family by the grandparents. Because the grandparents so love them, they are given freewill to almost anything but the bad deed are ignored. The grandparents may also prevent the parents from taking action on their children and this brings about disrespect from the child. Trouble, quarrel, and conflicts are almost inevitable in the extended family. Most times, there are fights especially when there is no mutual understanding among members. You hear about cousins fighting cousins, and uncles hate his nephew, and so on. On the other hand, quarrels are almost null in the nuclear family. Who do you want to fight? Your siblings or parents. But in the extended family, due to the large size and little far relationship between people, then conflicts tend to prevail. Looking at both sides, it can be deduced that even though the extended family has some disadvantages. Its practice in Africa should therefore be preserved. People should realize the value of having family there to help support them when in need and to give them wisdom in ways that were never thought to be possible. The family is considered a basic cell of society. All social and cultural practices find their connection with a notion of family, either supporting or distorting it.

Economic Support

In developed countries, financial safety nets for individuals facing economic setbacks are typically provided by comprehensive social security systems, pensions, insurance, banks, and credit unions. In developing countries, such institutions are extremely limited and where they exist they are typically only available to the better-off (Canning et al, 2016). In the latter countries, therefore, people generally rely on their family for support in times of financial and economic setbacks, and as Canning and colleagues' asset, families contribute to the economic empowerment of their members by playing a "role of insurer of last resort providing aid and solace when all else fails and preventing temporary setbacks from becoming permanent" (Canning et al, 2016). The practices of education or training fostering (where children are boarded out with relatives who are expected to provide formal education to the younger one, often in return to have themselves received educational assistance) and alliance building fostering (where children are sent out as wards to the homes of non-relatives, including friends and acquaintances of respected social standing to establish and strengthen social, economic or political alliance) are examples of how this was and continues to be, achieved (Isiugo-abamile, 1985).

Protection of Vulnerable Members

In addition to childcare support, families typically provide protective care and support for their disabled frail, ill, and other vulnerable members who cannot care for themselves. As Nukuya (1992) observes, the family is a "social arrangement in which an individual has extensive reciprocal duties, obligations, and responsibilities to his relations outside his nuclear family". In

this context of high HIV and AIDS prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa, a substantial body of liberation provides evidence that grandparents particularly grandmother, have increasingly taken up the responsibility of caring for the sick and the dying and for grandchildren orphaned or made vulnerable by the epidemic. According to UNICEF (2007), more than 90 percent of orphans in many countries of the region are living with extended families, with most being cared for by grandparents.

Save The Children (2007), for example, found that in Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, 60percent of orphans and other vulnerable children were living in grandparent-headed households. This ‘crisis fostering- defined as the boarding out of children as a result of the dissolution of the family of birth by, among other things, the death of one or both parents is a major source of social and economic empowerment for the orphans as it generally improves the children survival chances by removing them from the source of a crisis (IsiugoAbanihe, 1985). Families-especially women and older persons are also primarily responsible for executing the home-based care model through which many African governments shifted the burden of HIV and AIDS-related care from the state of families and communities. In terms of the social and economic empowerment of those individuals infected by the epidemic, the potential benefit of home-based care includes that. (see, for example, Fox et al, 200; Ogden et al, 2006).

- The sick are surrounded by people they love and are familiar with, and hence are more likely to receive more flexible and nurturing care;
- The Distress of traveling to and from hospitals or health centers for both the sick and their families is removed.
- Expenditure on transport and hospital cost is also reduced.
- In being cared for at home, a person with HIV or AIDS may be in a ready position to work or look after family members for short periods while the primary earners work. This promotes social empowerment for the sick and economic empowerment for other individuals in the family finally.
- The time the family would otherwise use traveling to and from the hospital can instead be spent on other life-enhancing social and economic activities.

In a different view and against the background of the global economic crisis and widespread of youth unemployment, recent evidence shows that increasing proportions of young people are living longer with their parents, and are entering the labour market later than was previously the case. In such cases, these young people often rely upon their parents and grandparents for financial assistance to access basic socio-economic resources, and in turn empowerment (European commission, 2009). In terms of the individual and groups of interest to this paper, the protective role of families is particularly relevant for people with disabilities. Generally, with no stable income, people with disabilities have to depend on the mercy of family members, well-wishers, and charity groups for hand-outs to sustain their livelihood (Tsengu et al, undated). Tsengu and Colleagues, however argue that “the ability of people (living with disabilities) to earn a living for themselves rather than depending on others for a living is a cornerstone for their economic empowerment” but to this end, families’ resiliency, reflected in their absorption of the added demands on time, emotional resources and financial resources, are the most critical source of support for people with disabilities.

Changing family circumstances and challenge for Social and Economic Empowerment the discussion in the foregoing section can be succinctly summarized by the following statement:

The family plays a key role in preventing social alienation because it is the one structure individuals are part of from birth rather than by choice. Even if all other institutions fail and individuals, can always turn to their families in times of difficulty if the institution of the family is functioning. Without the family to fall on in times of stress the likelihood that the individuals leave society and enter the underclass when for examples, they face unemployment, increase (Canning et al, 2018). Against this background, some of the prevailing socio-economic transformations taking place in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa are not worthy as they create family circumstances associated with economic fragility and debilitating poverty (Dintwa, 2010) and hence threaten the social and economic empowerment of individuals. These include persistent poverty, high proportions of female-headed households, absentee fathers, and a high level of HIV and AIDS prevalence.

Nurturance, Support, and Socialisation

Intergenerational solidarity, which manifests itself when “one generation uses its vantage position of being outside a particular generation to be of assistance to a generation in need” (Biggs 2007) is an additional pathway to achieving this role. For example, in addition to child socialization discussed earlier, the traditional African extended family is also the base for reciprocal care giving relations between generations where older persons play a major role in taking care of grandchildren while younger family members are the main caregivers of older members (Blanc & Lloyd, 1994). Asian Societies also have a strong traditional culture or intergenerational support where children are expected to have a sense of gratitude towards their pertinent and an obligation to provide care for them in their old grandparents, aunts and other relatives – are counted upon to provide child care giving support (Caparas, 2011). In Latin American, many societies possess a collectivistic orientation which underscores a strong concern for the fate and well-being of one’s kin and the need for family members-young old to support each other and to assist in the socio-economic maintenance of the family (Fulgini et al, 1999).

All in all, therefore, the nurturing and supporting role of the family can enhance the social and economic empowerment of both older persons and young people. Essentially, developing connections with a younger generation can help older adults to feel a greater sense of fulfillment while linking older adults with youth can provide advantages for both groups including providing an opportunity for both to new skills; giving the child and the older adult a sense of purpose; helping children to understand and later accept their aging; Invigorating and energizing older adults; helping reduce the likelihood of depression in the elderly; reducing the isolation of older adults, and helping keep family stories and history alive (Spence & Radanovich, Undated). The provision of childcare support by grandparents and other family members can also be invaluable in facilitating parents’ participation in the labour force. As the European Commission, (2009) concluded “without the help of grandparents, many women in Europe would be unable to go back to work, especially in those countries where childcare structures are still inadequate” similarly, in many African Societies members of the extended family such as mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law from either the husbands or wives family make themselves available right from birth to assist in caring for a newborn baby and the nursing mothers, a practice that lessens the emotional and physical burden that a nursing mother goes through during the early period of childrearing (Wusu and Isiugo-Abahike, 2006). This kinship support for care responsibilities generally continues throughout the child-rearing years and enhances parents' participation in

income-generating and socially enhancing activities thus contributing to social and economic empowerment.

Female-Headed Households

As a result of transformations such as, increased marriage timing and increased female educational attainment, female-headed households have become a discernible pattern on the African Social Landscape, with a recent figure showing that these type of households account for more than 20 percent of all households in many countries of the region (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003, Mokomane, 2012). This pattern has implicated the social and economic empowerment of individuals in these households given that female-headed households are generally disadvantaged in terms of access to important socio-economic resources such as land, livestock, credit, education, health care, and extension services (Connell, 2003; Ellis & Adams, 2009: 14; UNECA, 2009).

Absentee Fathers

Due to the changing marriage patterns (Mokomane, 2012) and the high prevalence of female-headed households discussed above, the phenomenon of absentee fathers-where a father is alive but is socially emotionally and/or financially absent in his children's lives-is notably increasing in some African countries. In South Africa, for example, the institution of Race Relations recently released figures showing that the proportion of fathers who are absent but living increased from 42 percent to 48 percent between 1996 and 2009. Conversely, the proportion of fathers' present decreased from 49 percent to 36 percent over the same period (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). While poverty, high rates of unemployment, and financial constraints may contribute to large numbers of fathers failing to take responsibility for their children. This trend is a cause for concern given the significant body of evidence showing the positive effect of the presence and active involvement of a father in a child's life chances; academic performance and social, emotional, and cognitive functioning (Engle et al, 2006; Kang & Weber, 2009). Overall, this phenomenon can negatively affect the social empowerment of children and young people.

The Influence of Family Background on the Students' Academic Performance

Levin (2001), states that parents are probably the actors with the clearest dimensional interest in a high level of their children are in academic performance. To some extent, there is simple evidence to show that marital instability brings about stress, tension, lack of motivation, and frustration. These manifestations act negatively on a child's academic performance. Johnson (2000) asserts that children from divorced families often fail and are at a risk emotionally. However, this may not be completely applicable in all instances of broken homes. Some children irrespective of home background or structures may work hard and become successful in life. Moreover (Ayodele, 200) stated that the environment where a child finds himself or herself goes long way in determining his learning ability and ultimately his academic performance in school. Bliss (2004) is of the view that many students from low socio-economic homes respond incomprehensively to classroom teaching because their home environment has not exposed them to the kinds of materials used in school. If the home environment is not intellectually stimulating some students to find it difficult to cope up in school and may eventually drop out of school. Furthermore, the home has been identified as an overwhelming factor affecting students'

performance academically. It would appear then, that broken homes, present a very real danger to the emotional, personality, and mental adjustment of the student.

These impinge on students' academic performance. According to Fraser, (2001), psychological home conditions arise mainly from illiteracy of children, the label of an adopted child, broken home divorce, and parental deprivation. Such abnormal conditions of the home are likely to have a detrimental effect on the school performance of the child. He asserts that life in a single-parent family and the parent. Such families are faced with the challenges of inadequate financial resources. Schultz (2006) noticed that if adolescents from unstable homes are to be compared with those from stable homes it would be seen that those from unstable homes have more social academic and emotional problems. (Roehkepartain et al, 2003), think that the family and its structure play a great role in children's academic performance. Omotewa (2002) affirmed that the academic performance of the child could be traced from the home he comes from. Synder et al (200) claimed that the family environment is the most powerful influence in determining the child's academic performance. It is obvious that a substantial influence on a child's academic performance.

According to Abiriri (2010), Education is an instrument par excellence for the development and as such its the engine that promotes development. Aside from the intellectual capacity of the child, the academic performance of the child also largely determined by the family is the bedrock of any society. It is also the foundation of the academic achievements of the child. (Uwifo 2008), further affirmed that the recent wave of the immoral decedent and all sorts of anti-social behaviours could be traced to the poor home background. Petit (2008), pointed out that psychological needs are a potential source of an individual's personality and academic success is achieved only in family background sources can be assessed to maximize the association between family influence and outcomes. It is believed that families with high social-economic status often have more success in preparing their children for school because they always have access to a wide range of resources at their disposal to promote, uplift, and support their children. According to Ardedi; (2001), Eunice (2004), it becomes imperative that a study of the relationship between family background and students' academic performance should be investigated, because the youths are the leaders of tomorrow. Their academic and emotional wellbeing if given appropriate attention will go a long way in ensuring that their potentials are harnessed and put into use for national development.

Conclusion

From the findings made, it was concluded that, in our families today, there are cases of family instability and when the family is unstable there are bound to be a female-headed family as it is also applicable to the male folk. It was also concluded that to some extent, there is simple evidence to show that marital instability brings about stress, tension, lack of motivation, and frustration. And these manifestations act negatively on a child's academic performance while poverty, high rates of unemployment, and financial constraints may contribute to large numbers of fathers failing to take responsibility for their children. In addition, the pattern of female-headed households has implicated the social and economic empowerment of individuals in these households given that female-headed households are generally disadvantaged in terms of access to important socio-economic resources such as land, livestock, credit, education, health care, and extension services.

Recommendations

1. Students' academic and emotional well-being should be given appropriate attention for that can go a long way in ensuring that their potentials are harnessed and put into use for national development.
2. The provision of childcare support by grandparents and other family members can also be invaluable in facilitating parents' participation in the labour force.
3. There is need to provide members of the household with adequate supports which can be in cash, emotional support and many more.

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