

The Need for the Reconstruction of the centripetal periods of Family Life in Okene Metropolis

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Abstract: *Some of the challenges being faced by Nigerians have been attributed to the involvement and activities of individuals with bad and questionable character. This in turn has been blamed on the absence of good moral upbringing at home which is the primary duty of parents especially the women. This problem is intensified by the fact that women are now primary breadwinners in many households and as a result of the interchangeable roles of men and women in the family, great damage is being done to society in general. There is thus a need to reconstruct the basic tenets of the family with particular reference to women. This paper investigated the need for the reconstruction of the centripetal periods of family life by adopting the Descriptive research design. 75 lecturers from Federal College of Education, Okene were purposively selected for the study. The Need for Reconstruction of Family Life Questionnaire (NFRFLQ) was used for data collection. Results indicated that there is indeed a crack in the family and the primary roles of women are being threatened due to role reversal as a result of the economic changes. The implication of the findings is that future generation could be seriously in trouble and recommendations such as the need for women to re-assess their roles and pay more attention to the home front, creation of flexible work schedule to enable them pay attention to the home and engaging the services of family counselors for counseling were made.*

I. Introduction

Every individual has a family of origin which has been described by Gladding (2007) as the family in which a person grew up with each individual family member playing a role in the family system that maintains a balance. Similarly, Hovestadt, Anderson, Piercy, Cochran & Fine (1985) noted that family of origin may be likened to a living unit or organism in which an individual initially develops physically, mentally and emotionally and in the unit, individual's self-concept, values, behavior, attitudes and relationship building skills develop and this affects their growth, development and behavior throughout their lives.

Bowen (1978) had earlier observed that the family unit is of great importance to the well-being of members of the family and that individuals function better in a healthy functioning family relationship. Also, Agali (2011) concluded that the most important part of any society is the family and it is on the family unit that stability, order and peace revolves.

Globally, the family has been besieged with problems over the years and these problems seem to be responsible for numerous security challenges such as terrorism, armed robbery, piracy, militancy, dwindling standard of education, wrong usage of social media, and a host of other unpleasant events. These challenges have been attributed to involvement and activities of individuals with bad and questionable character who incidentally are members of different family units. This in turn has been blamed on the absence of good moral upbringing at home which is assumed to be the primary duties of parents especially the women especially in a country such as Nigeria.

The role of women has come under strong criticism and requires a careful rethinking and assessment of the general assumptions about the nature of family and who is responsible for its maintenance. At the end of the family continuum is the woman who is expected to be the home maker, saddled with the raising of children and inculcating good moral values. (Agali, 2011; Mason, 2009; Gladding 2007)

Mason (2009) attributes the changes in the family to the changing roles of women in the home. In the past men tended to be more conservative than the women in their expectations for work and family roles but the reverse is the case today as women make up at least half of the current workforce due to the biting effects of the economy. In the face of recession, inflation, joblessness and poverty, many women have been forced to work and help supplement the income. This gives room for a dual-earner type of family (Coltrane, 1989).

The involvement of the women as breadwinners either individually or joint as in dual role sharing seem to be causing great damage to the entire family unit and society in general. Due to financial insecurity making many women to work and or living home to look for money, disturbing developments abound in many families. One of these is that divorce is attributed to financial discord and changing roles economically and children experience many short and long term consequences of divorce, separation and single parenthood. This situation contradicts Ritchie (2009) views in line with the experiential family counseling tenets that the family is

to a system in which every one and every thing is affected by problems in the home and this in turn affects every one and everything else. This implies in order words that change in any part of the family system invariably changes the whole system and every one involved will not be happy.

Literature reviewed (Combrink- Graham, 1988; Haley 1993; Moore, Stambrook & Peters, 1993; Hompson & Beavers, 1996; Dykeman, 2011), have documented that for a family to be happy and balanced here should be cohesion, intense bonding with the creation of a family as the source of pleasure, joy and satisfaction. This captures the concept of centripetal. However, Dykeman (2011) opined that centripetal and its opposite, centrifugal are terms borrowed from physics to describe different relational styles in families. While centripetal connotes families seeking to maintain rigid boundaries and harmonious familial interaction by looking inwardly to the benefits of the family regardless of obstacles; centrifugal connotes families that look outwards for pleasure, joy and satisfaction and consequently, familial boundaries and interactions are minimized. (Beavers & Hompson 1990)

Combrink- Graham, (1985) maintained that the closed periods of family life are called centripetal to indicate the many forces in the family system that hold the family tightly together. Centripetal periods are marked by an inner orientation requiring intense bonding and cohesion such as early childhood, child rearing and grand parenting and internal family life characterizes these periods. Consequently, as Haley (1993) noted, the boundaries between members are more diffused so as to enhance team work and cooperation among family members.

The fall of the family unit is likened to the centrifugal periods which are described as the distant or disengaged periods indicative of predominance of forces that pull the family apart. The centrifugal family periods are marked by a family's outward orientation where attention is shifted from the home front to other things for instance, due to changing roles in the home, life styles are affected and when this happens, the external family boundary is loosened, old family structures are scattered and children are at the receiving end (Dykeman 2011).

A centripetal family thus is characterized by a home built on the traditional beliefs of the idle home where there is a balancing between work and family roles which improve better standards of living enhance psychological well-being, proper upbringing of the children and a happier marriage (Mason, 2009). It is believed that there is a need for families to reconstruct the centripetal family style to enable couples reorientate them and manage stressful situations wisely for the benefit of their children and society. Thus, this paper, investigates the need for reconstruction of centripetal periods of family life in Okene Metropolis.

II. Statement of the problem

Centripetal periods of family are characterized by greater family cohesion and focus on the maintenance of a health and happy family but these periods are gradually dimming as evident in the happening in Nigeria today. High rate of divorce, separation, security challenges, to mention a few. It seems that the economic changes remain the major reasons for the shift in the role of women at home as mothers and rising of good children to breadwinners. Caught in between these two roles, many women have abandoned their traditional roles or are not fully on ground to effectively carry out their duties at home.

Okene, in Kogi State is not an exception to the problems emanating from a divided parenthood. Many women are either working or engaging in business activities which take them out of their homes due to the need to supplement the family income. The consequences are grave on married couples as well as on the children. This study focuses on the need to reconstruct the idle family system (Centripetal) in Okene Metropolis.

The main purpose of the study thus is to investigate the need for reconstruction of centripetal family periods in Okene, Kogi State as perceived by selected nurses.

Research Questions

1. Is there a need for the reconstruction of centripetal periods of family life in Okene Metropolis?
2. Will respondents differ in their perception of the need to reconstruct the centripetal periods of family life in Okene Metropolis on the basis of sex?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the respondents' perception on the need to reconstruct the centripetal family life in Okene Metropolis on the basis of sex?

Research Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for the study which is relevant as the study aimed at investigating the perception of a selected group of participants who are a fair representation of the entire population on the need for reconstruction of the centripetal periods of family life in Okene. The target population for the study included all nurses in the three general hospitals in Okene but 100 were randomly

selected to participate in the study. The Need for Reconstruction of family life Questionnaire (NFRFLQ) was used for data collection. Items for the instrument was generated from literature reviewed. Content validity was used to establish the validity of the NFRELQ While the reliability co efficient after employing the test-retest reliability method, was 0.64. Research question 1 was analyses using frequency counts and simple percentages while the t- test statistic was used to analyze hypothesis 1.

III. Results

Research Question 1: Is there a need for the reconstruction of centripetal periods of family life in Okene Metropolis?

Table 1: Distribution and Ranking of Respondents’ Perception of Need for Reconstruction of Family Life.

S/NO	NEEDS	SA	A	D	SD	%
	Why do you think there is need to reconstruct the family life: -					
1.	There are lots of problems in the society that can be attributed to bad upbringing.	48%	32%	20%	-	100%
2.	Women have abandoned their traditional role as a result of economic reasons.	56%	24%	8%	12%	100%
3.	Decline in family togetherness.	48%	36%	8%	8%	100%
4.	Changes in the family life lead to high rate of divorce and separation.	52%	26%	22%	-	100%
5.	Happy marriage correlates with enhanced psychological well-being of every member of the family	62%	32%	2%	4%	100%
6.	Since roles are now interchanged economically, there should be shared responsible in all tasks at home.	30%	30%	30%	10%	100%
7.	Security challenges are consequences of bad parenting.	48%	32%	15%	5%	100%
8.	African traditional beliefs of marriages should be revisited.	51%	42%	2%	4%	100%
9.	Children thrive better in a home with proper upbringing & love.	65%	15%	20%	-	100%
10.	A well functioning parental subsystem assist in developing and supporting individual needs	48%	36%	10%	6%	100%
11.	Women remain the major force in a family.	86%	14%	-	-	100%
12.	Men should revisit their conventional role and provide for members of their family so that women can devote fine to the home.	80%	20%	-	-	100%

Table 1 show the perception of respondents on the need for reconstruction of family life. The table reveal that generally, participants agreed that there is indeed a crack in the family due to role reversal at home 80% of the respondents attributed many problems in the society to bad upbringing of children and that women have abandoned their traditional roles as a result of economic reasons. 84% agreed that there is decline in family togetherness and 78% opined that the changes contribute to high rate of divorce and separation. Virtually all respondents perceived family as an important unit and agreed that women are the major force in a family. That only 20%, 20%, 16%, 22%, 6%, 40%, 20%, 6%, 20%, and 16% for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 respectively indicate that more people accept the fact that the family is no longer together.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in perception of nurses on the need to reconstruct the family life on the basis of sex.

Table 2: t-test comparison of nurses’ perception on the need to reconstruct the family life on the basis of sex.

SEX	N	X	SD	DF	Cal t	Cri - t
Male	34	53.60	7.65	98	1.03	1.96
Female	66	62.41	8.01			

Table two shows that the calculated t (1.03) is less than the critical table values (1.96) thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents on their perception of the need to reconstruct the family life is accepted.

IV. Discussion

Results of research question one as presented in table one reveal that there is a crack in the family and this crack is having a negative impact on the children, parents and society in general. women have abandoned their traditional roles to help out economically and financially in doing things, family togetherness, is no more, divorce rate soars daily and children engage in bad behaviors, respondents strongly believed that these makes the need to reconstruct family life highly imperative. Bowen (1978) noted that the family unit is the most important part of any society and as Agali (2011) puts it, the stability, security and peace of any society revolves

around the family. The result is in line with Ritchie (2009) views that the family is expected to be a system in which everyone and everything is affected by problems in the home and in turn this affects everyone and everything else. In other words any negative change affects the whole system.

The result also supports the central tenets of a centripetal family. Beavers & Hampson (1990); Combrinck-Graham (1988), Dykeman (2011) opined that an idle family is that which involves the many forces that hold of the family highly together, a family characterized by inner orientation and intense bonding and cohesion but this is lacking in to family as division abounds due to role reversal.

The need for a home built on the traditional beliefs of the idle home where there is a balancing between work and family roles becomes imperative and this enhances psychological well-being and proper upbringing of children and a happier manage.

Hypothesis I result show that both female and men have the same views on perception of the need to reconstruct family life. They both see it as important. This indicates that regardless of sex, family problems are universal and not peculiar to women alone. This means that family consist of a man and a women who are expected to make it work and respondents are all aware of the need to pay attention to the family system. The result could be possible in view of the fact that everybody experiences the many effects of family break down in view of the mirage of problems in the society.

The result also supports the views of Mason (2009) who believes that both man and woman are in the marriage together and the problem in the family today is partly due to role reversal as a result of the bad financial climate whereby more women have to work to help supplement the family income. Dykeman (2011) and Haley (1993) noted that due to the changes in roles, for instance dual earner or single breadwinner, the external family boundary is loosened and children are at the receiving end.

V. Implication of the Finding

The fact that there are cracks in the family and the primary roles of women are being threatened due to economic challenges. The result of this study implies that future generation could be seriously in trouble as present generations are part-takers in one form of the vice or the other. The result also implies that counsellors need to shift focus on marriage counselling to assist families understand effects of role reversal and assist families get backs on track.

Another implication is that the family unit is being affected by the changes at home and this means that parents need to redefine their roles and create an enabling climate at home to enhance the family structure. The result implies that there is need to revive the tenets of family togetherness which is the key to raising a successful family.

VI. Recommendations

1. There is need for women to re-assess their roles and pay more attention to the home front as the success or failure of the home depends on them.
2. Since multiple roles as a result of having to work cannot be avoided, women need to balance work and home roles and devote more time to the home front. This can be done by creating a flexible job schedules or engaging in part-time jobs.
3. There are jobs that can enable women create more flexible work schedules and these are jobs like teaching and nursing. Career wise, women should explore more of these career paths.
4. The motivating factor for more women being in the work force remains quest for money to supplement the family income, but women should make do with the normal pay and refuse overtime or turn down jobs that require excessive travel in order to increase family time and reduce stress.

VII. Conclusion

In the aforementioned alternative options recommended, it is notable that many women may not be financially secure enough to give the options trials but it is a truism that the benefits inherent in looking at the options out weighs the drawbacks of a dual earner family style and this affects both men and women equally. The only legacy parents can bequeath to their children is a good upbringing which will make them useful members of the family and the society in general. That the world will be a better place to live in if parents devote more time to the upbringing of children is not in doubt, hence parents should find a way out of these distracting challenges and strike a balance between home and work lives.

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