Socio-economic factors and family size in Odukpani Local Government, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract
The study examines the effect of socio-economic conditions on family size in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The general objective was to find out the effect of socio-economic crisis on family size. The research problems were clearly defined, specific research question was developed the research hypothesis was also formulated to guide the researcher in the investigation. Relevant literature was reviewed and theories were used to back the explication of the study. To achieve the objectives of the study survey research design was employed, the purposive and stratified sampling technique was used to select respondents in the study area. A structured questionnaire was also constructed and administered to two hundred (200) respondents. Chi-square (X^2) was used in analyzing the data retrieved. The results showed that, there is a significant relationship between socio-economic conditions and family size in Odukpani Local Government Area, Cross River State, there is a significant relationship between educational level and family size in Odukpani Local Government Area, Cross River State. Based on the findings; it was therefore, recommended that; the government in the collaboration with social welfare agencies as well as NGOs should formulate policies and develop programmes with the aim of sensitizing the general public on the need for family planning, so as to reduce the issues in family size.

Keywords: Socio-economic conditions, Family size, Educational level, Family planning

Introduction
The size of the family is a matter of great importance not only for the country as a whole but also for the welfare and health of the individual, the family and the society. There have been diverse opinions on family sizes and its tendency for a probable world population explosion which could plunge poor developing countries into further poverty and helpless wretchedness (Kessel, 2018). In industrialized countries, large family size and the resultant high birth rates accompanied rapid population growth during the industrial revolution which are mainly because of improved public health. As countries become more prosperous both death and birthrates are decreased, resulting in low population growth rates. Today, most of the developing world is characterized by high birth rates for much the same reasons as in the industrialized countries in the past. At the same time, death rates have fallen dramatically, mainly because of improvements in health care, education and sanitation (Jones, 2015). Though birth rates have declined substantially in many developing countries during the past 25 years, it still remains high mainly for some reasons; one of such is that, agriculture is an important activity for poor households, they have incentives to invest in children to serve as farm labour and assist with household tasks, such as fuel wood and water collection and child care. Large families provide social security through the extended family. Investing in children guarantees care at old age, and the reason for lack of knowledge about family planning (Akpotu, 2015).

Africa, the second - largest of the earth's seven continents, with adjacent islands covering about 30,330,000 Sq km (11,699,000sq inc), including its adjacent islands comprises 22 percent of the world's total land surface area. At the end of the 20th century, more than 13 percent of the world's population lived in Africa (National Population Commission of Nigeria and Health Policy Project, 2015). Most of the Africa's population live in the region of south Sahara, known as Sub-Saharan Africa. On the whole, Africa encompasses about 50 nations, ranging from Nigeria, a country of an estimated 218.5 million (2022 estimate) to small island republics such as Comoros, which has a population of 836,774 (2022 estimates). Tropical Africa is amongst areas in Africa with higher family size; hence high population figures

(National Population Commission of Nigeria and Health Policy Project, 2015). These figures as indicated are still on the ascendancy indicating a purposeful concern for population studies.

The decision to have large family size and the lining is a critical issue which may involve a trade-off of the family scarce resources against a large family size. Economic difficulties in maintaining large families as a result of the economic crisis forcing people to change traditional beliefs in large family size and the traditional system of African extended family that had hitherto led to high fertility rates. At the same time, the desire for child bearing is still strong in Nigeria particularly in the rural areas. This has given rise to the strong view that the level of fertility and use of contraception are not likely to change until there is a drop in desired family size and increase in the awareness of reproductive choice is widely accepted (Knodel, 2018). It will be difficult for such an extended family size to avoid the trend of poverty that is clinching into Nigerian communities of a high rate. This trend of family size is drastically increasing in the Northern Nigeria even with the awareness of family planning and policies of precise number of children a household should have, children still continue to increase. Hence, this study examines the effect of socio-economic crisis on family size, using Odukpani local Government Area of Cross River State as the case study.

The problem

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with an estimated population of over 200 million and a land mass of 923,768 square kilometers (Thompson, 2021). With the myriads of natural mineral resources, Nigeria is on the path of self-sufficiency and economic envy. Regrettably, Nigeria is literary plagued by socioeconomic, political, ethno-religious challenges made obvious in high level of poverty, unemployment, high foreign debt, kidnapping, money laundering, poor infrastructure, insecurity, food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition and so on. The monoliths nature of Nigeria's economy chiefly characterized by oil has more potential for sustainable economic stability. Poor governance which has led to underutilization of the nation’s economic resources has led to ethnic consciousness (ethnocentrism), religious division, influx of foreign crime (e.g. cyber-crime etc.) amongst other social vices. Hence, while Nigeria is blessed with both human resources in terms population as well as natural resources, Nigeria is constantly plagued by the aforementioned vices. The increasing rate of killings witnessed in the Northern part of the country between herders and farmers, terrorism activities in the North, kidnapping in the South further espouses Nigeria quantum social ills. One which has exposed Nigerian to loss of jobs, death, increase mortality, more so affecting education adversely.

Due to high rate of corruption in Nigeria’s leadership, the relatively lack of social amenities and necessary social infrastructure, it has become a huge challenge to the teeming population of Nigerians to access sustainable livelihood and social/economic wellbeing. Evidently, there is a severe shortage of live supporting infrastructure which is a result of unbalanced population growth and infrastructural development. This sorry reality has led to increase in out-of-school children, with Nigeria leading in Africa. It has presented unemployed Nigerians with criminal occupation chiefly seen in cyber-crime. Scholars therefore believe that paucity of relevant survival facilities affects the sustainability of families and the large family sizes weaken the impact of available life support facilities and infrastructure. While we espouse these problems, conscious attempt at solving them heralds in intellectual found into attempting to establish (if any) the relationship between socio-economic factors such as educational level, and so on, and family size. Do these socioeconomic factors affect family size?

Overview of socio-economic crisis on Nigeria family size

Family size is generally defined in terms of the number of children per household. For the purpose of this study, large family may refer to any family that has more than five (5)

members (father, mother and three children), living together within a single household unit. In many cases, the family size pattern that is commonly found in a particular society is often a reflection of the sociocultural and socioeconomic ideologies of the people. In underdeveloped societies children are seen as a major resource base in families and communities. This is primarily due to their contribution through manual labour in food and commodities production. In such societies, children are seen as gift from God or the gods and therefore should not be numbered. There is seemingly no effort adopted by partners in marriage to control child birth, rather expansion of family size is encouraged by older adult members considering the comparative advantage associated with larger family sizes. This notion is obviously a symptom of predominantly low level of educational advancement by the majority of the people in such societies.

Over the years, there have been some various mechanisms that have been put in place in monitoring the well-being of different children with different socio-economic capabilities, and relating the same with the major differences that must have occurred in material access as well as social resources. There have also been different growth patterns on children from different economic backgrounds (Henry 2001). Previous studies have also shown that socio-economic crisis will have significant impact on the well-being of a given family and the entire society, hence influencing the family size as well as the child's attitude and orientation towards life. Such crisis also has been known to affect even those children who have been moderated by own inborn-characteristics, and even the family characteristics (Kessel, 2018).

It would hence be noted that the socio-economic factors in any given society will play a big role, determining the size of the family in such a community. Large-sized families will result from lack of necessary education and even due to poverty. Most African countries have associated larger families with poverty (David, 2000). Also, it would be necessary to understand that the socio-economic factors in a given household would influence even the individual children in a given house hold. Different children will adapt differently in such society, meaning that their developmental capabilities and characters will be affected differently. More often than not, children from extremely restrained economic conditions take their own courses of life and up having different future lives (David, 2000).

Fertility level is also another factor that accounts for varying family sizes in different parts of the world. Most high income developed nations have low fertility rates while African countries have the highest fertility rates in the world, reaching an average of 4 children per woman and in some sub-regions (middle Africa for example reaching about 6 children per woman) (United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). However, in the last decades, there has been a declining trend in fertility level and child-bearing practices due to transformation in marriage and cultural practices. (Mokomane 2017). For instance, a girl child tends to suffer the most in case of poverty in a given family or society. Such children will tend to be tricked into early marriages and by so doing channeling them to a different course of life, which may never produce a promising end.

In addition, some girls end up being discriminated in some societies depending on the socio-economic factors. Some have to undergo or deal in circumcision and engage in household chores, and by so doing having their future doomed. It has also been indicated that different children will respond differently when it comes to school work, aptitude, sociability and even personal characteristics depending on the socio-economic and family factors the child grew in. In that case, different children will be influenced differently depending on the place, and the social and economic factors they were exposed to upon birth.

The social and economic bonds in a family tend to be great, particularly in the developing countries where the economic value of the child to the family is high. In fact, because of government inability to help families to prevent or ban child labour and enforce compulsory basic education, the economic viability of the child to the Nigerian family has been enormous, particularly to the poorer families. Indeed, the fundamental importance of the family as an agent for human growth and development and for the welfare of the entire society cannot be overemphasized.

Eboh, Akpata, and Owoseni (2017), examine socio-economic impact of family size preference on married couples in Kogi State university used adopted community, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria. This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to investigate 240 married couples using Taro Yamane (1970) and the proportionality formulae to determine the sample size. The semi-structured questionnaire served as the instrument of data were presented collection. The data were presented using tables, simple percentages and frequency counts. The hypotheses were tested with the aid of chi-square statistical test at a predetermined 0.05 level of significance as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 was used to aid the analysis.

Findings showed that religious orientations and beliefs, the current monthly significant influence income and educational attainment of the respondents had significant influence on the family size preference. In other words, socio-economic factors of the married couples acting independently or jointly with other variables in the university community could predispose them to opt for a particular family size. The study therefore, recommended that the university-based religious associations and the various fellowship leaders should enlighten their members and followers on the need to maintain moderate, standard and manageable family size. To this end, incentives including but not limited to affordable school fees and subsidized healthcare services through the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)should be granted to the couples with moderate family size.

Similarly, James and Isiugo-Abanihe (2010) carried out a study to examine Adolescents' Reproductive Motivations and Family Size Preferences in North-Western Nigeria. A community-based and cross-sectional research design was adopted. Primary data were obtained using quantitative methods. A survey of 1,175 adolescents aged 12-19 years was carried out, using multi-stage sampling techniques involving States, Local Government Areas (LGAs), towns/villages, main streets, houses, households and individuals. Frequency distribution, multiple classifications, Chi-square, and regression analyses were used for data analysis. The results of the current study show that gender, residence, ethnic origin, religion, educational level, knowledge and approval of contraceptive methods were significantly associated with family size preferences ($p<0.05$).

Educational attainment and family size

Financing children education usually becomes tougher during the recession as schools would adjust tuition fees upwards due to high operating cost. Parents with three or four children in high schools and universities are at the cross-roads at the moment. This is evident in today's economic realities in Nigeria. Many families are already switching to cheaper schools around with similar qualities and standards, which we consider a good step in direction-but this may not apply to university students. For under-graduates this study suggests on-campus business or total switch to part-time schooling programme which allows students to combine work and learning for self-financing purpose.

Kpakpor, (2015) alleged that, people with large family size were the illiterates. He further explained that, a family of about twenty members would likely have a poverty rate of

90 percent. There is an indication of an increase in poverty prevalence as family size increase is determined by number of children. The family is very influential in creating and reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the larger society. As Adjaero (1996) commented, education and socialization of children are the primary ways through which a society creates its future. The family is more than just a collection of people with biological, social, moral and economic ties.

To Zimmer, Hermalin and Lin (2014), it is in the family that the larger social and economic order impinges on individuals, exposing them to varying degrees of hardship, frustration and struggle. The family therefore, has very strong interacting influences on members in diverse ways. Education, the world over, has come to be accepted as the most consistent and reliable measure of socioeconomic status determination of individuals in societies. It helps to place persons into statuses.

The beauty of education is that it has very limited errors of reporting and accounting, compared to other socio-economic status determinants like wealth or income. Education is measured as a categorical variable that reflects no formal or low formal education, middle and high levels of education attainment (Wu & Li, 2021). The basic responsibilities of the traditional family which remained housing, clothing, health care, nutrition and safety, have in modern times included the provision of quality education and a homely condition with necessary facilities that support child learning. As a measure of socioeconomic status determinant, families regard education as a means of maintaining their status or improving it. This perhaps, explains why high socio-economic status families tend to show much concern over their children's poor performance at school either by teaching them those subjects in which the children perform poorly or employing part-time teachers for them. Today, most high socio-economic status families strive to maintain their status by ensuring that their children attend the best nursery and primary schools which guarantee admission to highly placed secondary schools, provide the best routes to university education and thus guarantee access to a prestigious occupation and employment and enhanced income.

Over the years, there has been much controversy on the impact of family size on educational investment in children. Nyenke (2014) and Eriemo, (2014) feel that other demographic and educational factors are highly influential. These studies actually link family size to child labour and school enrolment. No doubt, decisions regarding family size and educational investment in children are made independently at distinct times. However, because of economic realities of the time, such decisions are taken proactively, in cognizance of the educational implications. For, in reality, family investment in children's education is financed primarily through reduced consumption. Yet, other consumption demands of the family in the form of feeding, clothing, shelter, entertainment and others keep rising with time, just as the cost of educating the child skyrockets. From economic point of view, the household demand for education is inversely related to its private costs. The higher the cost of educating the child, the lower would be the household demand for education, holding income and other variables constant. Like the neoclassical theory of household choice for goods, services, leisure and education, a family's decision to have additional children certainly has sociological and economic rationality, suggest a vicious circle of poverty and illiteracy as the situation is worst with the poor. This finding appears universal in all regions of the world, including wealthier regions (Ashford, 2014).

The implication of the findings on the capability of such nations and households to invest on education is grave. The poor, in most cases, are always the first to drop out of school, have less chance of completing any level of education cycle because; the implicit and explicit private costs of education to the poor family is often higher. Thus, making the family's rate of

returns on investment in a child's education to be lower for the relatively poor than for the relatively rich. Education is certainly a strong determinant of earnings; hence, investment in education geared towards equalization of educational opportunities could help to equalize incomes in the future. Indeed, since the development of the human capital theory in the 1960's, development economists as well as educational economists and planners have continued to argue that investment in education does not only contribute to economic growth and development, but also act as a long- term strategy for equalizing earnings and income distribution.

To Todaro (1977), there is a positive correlation between a person's education and his lifetime earnings and this is especially true for those who are able to complete secondary and university education where an income differential is very substantial. In addition, access to jobs is predicated almost exclusively on educational credentials irrespective of the relationship between years of schooling and job performance; and family's income serves as the basic criterion of who is able to proceed up the educational ladder to highly paid jobs. In the past, parents' natural desire to have large family size created no serious socio-economic problems. Breeding children then cost almost nothing. With the battered Nigerian economy and the souring cost of living, breeding children has become very expensive, and with the increasing cost of education, sponsoring many children in secondary and post-secondary schooling can be quite formidable on parents, even on their substantial income. This certainly supports the assertion of Ahlburg and Kelley (1996), Ebenuwa-Okoh, Osakwe and Oluwole (2004) that large numbers of social deviants such as juvenile delinquents and prostitutes come from families, which are at least too large for proper parental control and training. In the same vein, Akpotu and Jike (2014) have lent support to the claim that there is a positive correlation between level of educational attainment and involvement in crimes.

As Nigeria and most other African countries continue to witness high illiteracy rates, with many school age children out of school with increasing number of school dropouts, children from larger and poorer families would appear to be more disadvantaged, more so, the role of extended families and governments in sharing the burden of post-secondary education has been encountering difficulties. This forms the premise for this study, which attempts to examine family size, parents' socio-economic variables as predictor of investment in children education in south-west Nigeria.

According to Okolo and Okolo (2018), education and income are variables influencing family size preference amongst female health professionals in Usman Dan Fodio Teaching Hospital (UDUTH) Sokoto. The authors used a cross-sectional descriptive survey design with the population participants made up of female health professionals working in UDUTH. There were two hundred and thirty-four (234) female health professionals working in UDUTH comprising doctors (10), pharmacist (2), laboratory scientist (8) and Nurses (214). The instrument for data collection was a self-administered questionnaire while the data were analysed manually using appropriate statistical methods with the level of significance at ≥ 0.05. The major findings showed that A total of 29 (16.1%) of respondents choose religion as the determinant of their family size decision. Since it is known that Islam allows for a large family size, and most of the respondents are Muslims, yet the percentage is low; this goes to show that even though religion is a factor, it is not so much a major factor to determine family size among educated women. Only 42 (23.3%) of the respondents indicated that their educational background had contributed to the choice of their desired family size. One would have expected that educational background would have played a greater role in the decision of these women to have a particular family size. These health professionals are aware of the risks and problems associated with a large family size and so are supposed to be educationally primed but from

this study, 76.7% did not agree that their educational background had an influence on their family size decision.

Dibaba and Mitike (2016) conducted a study titled "Factors Influencing Desired Family Size among Residents of Assela Town". The study adopted a community-based cross-sectional research design spanning between March 25 and April 4, 2013. A total of 428residents were included in the study. The age of women ranged from 15 to 49 years and men above 15 years. The desired family size was determined using mean score. Respondents were asked to determine which factors were influential on their desired family size. Descriptive analysis, 95% CI and multiple linear regressions were used to investigate the relationship between the independent variables and desired family size. After recording the variables, logistic regression was used to see the association between family size preference and predictor. Among the major findings, it was discovered that women belonging to Protestant and Catholic religious groups had relatively lower mean desired family size when compared to those following orthodox Christian and Muslim. Also, respondents who had primary education desired higher family size than those who had more than secondary education. The study concluded that it was quite possible that increasing educational level and age at marriage might influence couples to desire lower family size. Educational level and knowledge of family planning affected family size preferences. Akpotu (2015) has shown that women in many developing countries, particularly those from the poorest households, with no schooling or with lower education have the highest fertility.

The resource dilution theory

This theory was propounded by Berker, (1960); Akpotu, Omotor and Dickson (2007). The Resource Dilution Theory succinctly portrays that an increase in the demand for child quality reduces the demand for quantity, both through the shadow income constraint and by raising the shadow price of quantity. An increase in the demand for quantity reduces the demand for quality by a similar mechanism. The preceding analysis strongly supports the micro-economic theory of fertility. The theory posits that:

(1) Parents may produce more children than they actually desire in the expectation that some will not survive;

(2) That there is a strong intrinsic satisfaction from family formation, so that children, especially the first two or three, can also be viewed as alternative "consumer goods in their parents' decision making process.

Beyond this, the economic choice mechanism sets in for every additional child born. The economic benefits derivable there from are viewed in terms of the expected income from child labour and their later financial support at parents' old age Against these benefits are the principal elements of costs: 129 children must be met; an indication that the limited resources will be spread thinner as the family increases.

In general, the more rapid the population growth rate, the greater will be the proportion of dependent children in the total population and the more difficult it becomes for those who are working to support those who are not. In other words, such a population tends to be youthful with grave consequences such as increased education burden on the family and society. No wonder, Todaro hypothesized that higher birth rates are generally associated with national poverty, and indeed, higher levels of living provide the necessary motivations for families to choose to limit their size. All things being equal, as the family experiences fixed and limited time and financial resources, and with fixed allocation of these resources, additional children impose additional burdens on the family. Within individual households, it is implied that family size corresponds to a decreased investment of parental time and money in the education of each

child. Even as the resources available to the family are limited in supply, the needs of every additional child must be met; an indication that the limited resources will be spread thinner as the family increases. This perspective which is known as "the dilution effect" recognizes that education; especially beyond the primary level is expensive and that the resources needed to provide this the opportunity cost of the mothers' income forgone as she stays at home caring for the children and the actual cost of educating the children. Therefore, a cost-benefit analysis is often carried out, weighing the economic benefits against costs. Like the traditional theory of consumer behaviour, the micro-economic theory of family fertility leads to the conclusion that as the price or cost of child rearing increases, parents demand for additional number of children diminishes.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that, large family size has a significant effect on developmental process of members of any given family. It is nevertheless true that children impose certain costs as well as benefits on their parents. The economic costs of large family could be the difficulty in providing education for the children to improve their quality; difficulty in feeding, clothing and sheltering the family. In which case, fertility should be higher when income is sufficiently high to bear the explicit and perhaps implicit costs. However, although increased income may enable the family to support more children, the evidence seems to show that with higher incomes, parents will tend to substitute child quality for quantity by investing in fewer, more educated children whose eventual earnings capacity will be much higher (Todaro,1977). This was further expressed by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997), when they posited that not only are the direct and indirect costs of education significant determinants of demand for children, but the way in which these costs are shared between parents, the extended family (including siblings), and government influences parents' perceptions of the economic burden or advantage of an additional child.

Methodology

The survey research design is used in this study. The method supports the use of large and small populations. This is done by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelationship among variables. In this instance, survey research design is directed towards determining the nature of the situation that exists at the time of investigation.

The area of the study is Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State. It is located between Latitudes 5°71 N 5°32N and Longitudes 8°101E 8°201 1E. The study location is related to some towns and urban at centres in Cross River State. at the northern part of the area is Akamkpa, while Calabar and Calabar South Local Government Areas are at the southern part. Odukpani has an estimated population of 273,580 in the 2016 census. Major socioeconomic activities of the area are fish farming and trading on aquatic products.

The sample size for this study is three hundred (300) respondents consisting of youths and adult selected from the respective wards in the study area. The study employed the purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Purposive sampling method was used to get a representative of the entire population sampled and to reduced cost. On the other hand, stratified sampling method was used in handling the heterogeneous population sampled. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling method by collating a wide representation of individuals taking into due consideration the phenomenon under investigation. The groups selected depended upon the subjective judgement of the researcher. While on the other hand the researcher employed the stratified methods by first dividing the population being studied into three groups being: Odukpani central, Eniong and Adiabo Efut. This was to ensure that no group was under-represented or over-represented in the sample. Hence, fifty respondents were

drawn from selected wards within the study area, which are as follows: Adiabo Efut (100), Odukpani Central (100) and Eniong (100) all making it a total number of 300 respondents.

The questionnaire was used for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two section. Section A consisted of demographic information of respondents, while section B was concerned with data on the phenomenon under study; the effect of socio-economic crisis on family size in Odukpani local Government Area of Cross River State, this section elicit the respondents responses on a 4-point Likert scale such as; (SA) Strongly Agree, (A) Agree, (D) Disagree, while (SD) Strongly Disagree.

Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The major primary sources were the questionnaire. The secondary data were collected from textbooks, journals, magazines, lecture notes and internet materials.

Data analysis

Data collected from the field was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistics with particular reference to the table and simple percentage were used to present data while the inferential statistics with particular reference to Chi-square (X^2) was used to ascertain the extent of association between dependent and independent variables. The Chi-square (X^2) is denoted by the formula:

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Where:

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

X^2 = Chi-square notation

$\sum$ = Summation sign

There were a total number of 300 questionnaire administered to 300 respondents, of these 285 (100%) were properly filled and retrieved. These then constituted the basis of analysis and presentation.

Demographic data of respondents

Sex	**No of respondents**	**Percentage(%)**
Male	183	64.91
Female	102	35.79
Total	285	100
Age		
20-25	42	14.74
26-29	76	26.66
30-35	83	29.13
36-39	64	22.46
39 and above	20	7.018
Total	285	100
Marital status		
Single	102	35.79
Married	95	33
Divorced	81	28.42
Widow	7	2.48
Total	285	100
Religious Affiliation		

Christians	186	65.26
Muslim	31	10.88
Others	68	23.86
Total	285	100
Occupation		
Students	132	46.32
Public servant	53	18.60
Traders	58	20.35
Farmers	17	5.96
Others	25	8.77
Total	285	100
Educational qualifications		
Primary	53	18.59
Secondary	97	34.04
Tertiary	76	26.6
No formal education	59	20.70
Total	285	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by sex, 183 (64.91%) respondents were male representatives, while 102 (35.79%) respondents were female representatives. The distribution of respondents by age indicated that 42(14.74%) were representatives between the age bracket of 20-25 years, 76 (26.66%) were representatives between the age bracket of 26-29 years, 83 (29.13%) were representatives between the age bracket of 30-35 years, 64 (22.46%) were representatives between the age bracket of 36-39 years, while 26 (7.018%) were representatives between the age bracket 39 and above. The distribution of respondents by marital status shows that 102 (35.79%) were single respondents, 95 (33%) were married respondents, 81 (28.42%) were respondent who are divorced, and 7 (2.48%) were respondent who were widowed respondents. The distribution of respondents by religion shows that 4.1.4,156 (65.26%) were responded from the Christianity religion, 31 (10.88%) were respondent representatives of the Islamic religion, while 68 (26.86%) were respondent representatives of the other religion. The distribution of respondents by occupation shows that 132 (46.32%) were respondents representatives of students; 53 (18.60%) were respondents representatives of public servants, 58 (20.30%) were respondent representatives of Traders, 17 (5.96%) were respondent representatives of farmers, while 25(8.7%) were respondent representatives of those in other endeavours. The distribution of respondent by educational qualification shows that, 53 (18.59%) were respondent representatives of those with primary education, 97 (34.04%) were respondent representatives of those with secondary education, 76 (26.6%) were respondent representatives of those with tertiary education, 59 (20.70%) were respondent representatives of those with no formal education.

Summary of contingency chi-square (X^2) of Educational status and family size

Educational attainment	**Family size**		**Total**	**Cal X^2**
	Yes	**No**		
Yes	169 (160.48)	86 (81.52)	242	8.995*
No	20 (28.52)	23 (14.48)	43	
Total	196	92	285	

**Significant at .05, Critical X^2=3.84, df=1*

O	E	O-E	O-E	O-E
169	1.60.48	8.52	72.5904	0.452
73	81.52	-8.52	72.5904	0.8905
20	28.52	-8.52	72.5904	2.55
23	14.48	8.52	72.5904	5.013

X^2=8.906

The result of the analysis as presented in table above reveals that the calculated X^2 value of 8.906 is higher than the critical X^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between educational attainment and family size.

Findings and discussions

The finding of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic crisis and family size in Odukpani Local Government Area. The socio-economic state tends to have a number of determinants on the nature and the size of family income, educational background and even socio-cultural status itself it has been also noted that such factors have big impact on health issues, cognitive aspects and even the socio-emotional impacts on individual and most on children. The finding of this study is in agreement with David (2000) who observed that the socio-economic factors in a given household would influence even the individual children in a given house-hold. Different children will adapt differently in such society, meaning that their developmental capabilities and characters will be affected differently. More often than not, children from extremely restrained economic conditions take their own courses of life and end up having different future lives. For instance, a girl child tends to suffer the most in case of poverty in a given family or society. Such children will tend to be tricked into early marriages and by so doing channeling them to a different course of life, which may never produce a promising end. In addition, some girls are being discriminated in some societies depending on the socio-economic factors. Some have to undergo an ordeal in circumcision and engage in house-hold chores, and by so doing having their future doomed.

The finding of Aigbokhan (2008) is also in consonance with the present study. He discovered that, household size influences house-hold welfare. The larger the size, the larger the resources required to meet basic needs of food and other necessities. It is therefore, often hypothesized that the larger the house-hold size the higher the likelihood of failing among the poor.

Educational attainment and family size

The finding of the third hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between educational attainment and family size. The findings is in agreement with Woodhall (1997); Tinker, Finn and Epp (2000); Ashford (2001); Akpotu (2005) observed that women in many developing countries particularly those from the poorest households, with no schooling or with lower education have the highest fertility. This no doubt suggests a vicious circle of poverty and illiteracy as the situation is worst among the poor. The implication of the findings on the capability of such nations and household to invest on education is grave. The poor, in most cases, are always the first to drop out of school, have less chance of completing any level of education cycle because; the implicit and explicit private costs of education to the poor family is often higher.

The finding of Kpakpor (2005) is also in consonance with the present study. He alleged in his studies that, people with large family size are illiterates, explaining that a family of about twenty members would likely have a poverty rate of 70 percent. Hence there is an indication

of an increase in poverty prevalence as family size increase due to their illiteracy level is determined by numbers of children.

Summary and conclusion

The study was carried out to examine the impact of socio-economic crisis on family size in Odukpani Local Government Area, Cross River State. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher formulated three hypotheses. Literatures were reviewed and theoretical issues examined. The survey research design was adopted, the purposive and stratified sampling technologies were employed to select two hundred (200) respondents from the targeted population of Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State. Chi-Square (X^2) statistical analysis was used to test the hypotheses for the study.

The findings of this study provide us with some evidence to reach some specific conclusions. These are that, the socio-economic status of people within a family system have a direct impact on family size. The socio-economic bonds in a family tend to be great, particularly in the developing countries where the economic value of the child to the family is high. In fact, because of government inability to help families to prevent or ban child labour and reinforce compulsory basic education, the economic viability of the child. To the Nigerian family has been enormous, particularly to the poorer families, indeed, the fundamental importance of the family as an agent for human growth and development and for the welfare of the entire society cannot be overemphasized. The family is very influential in creating and reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the larger society. The family is more than just a collection of people with biological, social, moral and economic ties. It is in the family that the larger social and economic order impinges on individuals, exposing them to varying degrees of hardship, frustration and struggle. The family therefore, has very strong interacting influences on members in diverse ways.

With globalization, access to better-paid jobs is dependent on the quality of education, qualifications possessed; while access to quality education, and enhanced qualifications are closely tied to socio-economic status of family. The higher the socio-economic status of the family, the better schooling for the children and hence, the better qualifications and better paid jobs. Unfortunately, more often than not, children tend to provide a readily pool for farm labour and they constitute a regular source of finance to their parents from very tender ages and continues to farm for them till old age. More so, parents now a days become more of urban fixed wage earners who longer consider child labour as economical or worthwhile, child rearing has become increasingly costly. Hence, the poor family suffer to meet up, so they keep procreating, with the hope that their children would support them through mean farm labour or becoming housekeepers, slave and labourers for economic reasonings for their family. This can be seen in rural setting where people are farmers and requires them procreate, in order to attain larger family so as ease in farm production especially during cultivation and harvest period.

Social work implication

The most fundamental concern of social work practice is the wellbeing of individuals in society. The social work profession is therefore designed to ensure that every individual lives up to his or her social functions in the social system where the individual belongs. To achieve this, the social worker carries out effective sensitization programmes to expose individuals and families on the possible negative socio-economic implications of large family sizes on the social and economic stability of society. The social worker takes the sensitization campaign to health centers, worship centers, village square, hospitals and other public spaces. The social worker also takes the advocacy role to policy makers and government authorities to promote the formulation of policies that will help to moderate child bearing practices as well as

strengthen the enforcement of child rearing policies in both rural and urban communities in Odukpani Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. The government in collaboration with social welfare agencies and NGOs should rate programs with the aim of sensitizing the general public on the need for family planning so as to reduce the issues in family size.
2. The government should support individuals in large family with incentives so as to improve their standard of living to cope with their present circumstances.
3. Social welfare agencies and NGOs should accommodate children from the less privilege homes so as to attain a positive impact in their life and to the society.
4. Adequate policies should be enacted to curtail the issues of family size by policy makers.
5. Educational campaigns should be held quarterly to educate the public on the negative consequences of having large family size.
6. The government should be active in helping to provide jobs for majority of the populace.
7. When people are employed, they are in the better position acquire quality education for their children. Hence, making them aware of the implications of a large family.
8. Religious institutions, counselors of hospitals, voluntary organizations, non-governmental institutions and social workers should intensify their education on the need to maintain smaller families even in the phase of having either more males or females in the family.
9. Churches should stop propagating the message of encouraging people to populate the earth since psychologically people are motivated as such to give birth to large family sizes

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