

FAMILY DYNAMICS AS CORRELATE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF UNDERGRADUATES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE.

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between family dynamics and psychological well-being of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state. The study adopted correlational research design. The participants comprised 576 (203 males and 373 females) undergraduates from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. The researcher employed accidental sampling technique to draw the sample. Two major instruments; index of family relation by Hridson and psychological well being scale by Ryff were employed together data. The data collected were statistically analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. The result showed that index of family dynamics has a significant correlation with psychological well being of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state. The study recommended that educational psychologists and parents should assist the students by providing a conducive environment that will promote love and tender care in the family.

Keywords: Family dynamics, psychological well-being, public universities.

INTRODUCTION

Psychological well being refers to the mental health of an individual. It is a complex psychological construct that tries to explain the mental health of an individual which determines a persons actions or inactions in every given situation towards the accomplishment of a task.

To Becvar (2012) psychological wellbeing is defined as inter-and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referrent attitudes that include one's self of mastery and personal growth. It is used to describe an individuals' emotional health and overall functioning. As affirmed by Dodge et al (2012) psychological wellbeing is a desirable result that produces motivation for people and for many groups of society, it implies positive progression in lives. High standard of living (e.g housing, better health facilities, pipeborn water, employment) are indispensible to well-being, hence, good health policy accommodates these conditions (WHO, 2011). The variety parameters that asses people living conditions do not evaluate their psychological states, such as the excellent companionships, the desirability and toughness.

The relationship or interaction that exist at family level may likely affect the well being of members. The family dynamics refer to the interaction between members as well as the varying relationships that can exist within a family. Pearlin (2018) described family dynamics as the patterns of interactions among

relatives, their roles and relationships and the various factors that shape their interactions. In view of the fact that family members rely on each other for emotional, physical and economic support, they are one of the primary sources of relationship that could affect the psychological well being of individuals.

The pattern of relationship that exists in every family is unique. This is because family members are at liberty to decide their family roles and how to achieve their set out goals. The most common family dynamic is the nuclear family, consisting of a married or cohabiting couple and their biological or adopted children living together.

The type of family dynamics are characterized by the ways in which family members interact, communicate, and fulfill their roles within the family system. The children and other individuals who grow up in households with unhealthy family dynamics are more likely to develop mental health disorders and may experience more difficulty with relationship. It is against this background that the present study was contemplated to ascertain the relationship between family dynamics and psychological wellbeing of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state.

Statement of the Problem

The mental health issues of family members have been a source of concern to educational psychologists, guidance counsellors, parents, health workers and policy makers. This is because the family is the bedrock upon which every society rests. The nature of relationship that exists among family members determine to a great extent the emotional and psychological state of members, hence their mental health.

This ugly development has generated a lot of studies among psychologists to find a permanent remedy to the role the family members will play in maintaining a stable home devoid of rancor, instability and unhappiness. Some of these studies were carried out among adults in their various homes but not much empirical studies have been done in Anambra state using undergraduates as participants. It is this gap that the present study sought to fill. The problem of this study is therefore stated thus: what is the relationship between family dynamics and psychological wellbeing of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between family dynamics and psychological well being of undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Method

The participants were 590 university undergraduates who were selected from two public universities in Anambra state (Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam campus). The participants consisted of 576 (Males = 203 and females = 373) with mean age of 23.50 and standard deviation of 13.61

The participants were randomly selected using accidental sampling technique from four faculties of social sciences (143), Education (138), Arts (161) and management science (134)

Procedure

The researcher obtained permission from the management of the two public universities used in the study. The researcher visited four faculties in each of the two universities; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam campus. The researchers were assisted by four research assistants who were trained in the act of data administration. Out of the 590 copies of the instruments administered only 576 copies were retrieved and employed for data analysis. The exercise lasted for two weeks. The percentage return rate was 98%.

Instrumentation

The two instruments used for data collection were Index of Family Relation (IFR) by Hudson (1982) and Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff (1989).

The first instrument was the Index of Family Relation Scale (IFR) developed by Hudson (1982). It set out to measure the relationship that existed among family members. The instrument has 25 items that described family dynamics. It adopted a five point likert response format of rarely or none of the time (1), a little of the time (2), some of the time, (3), a good part of the time, (4) and most or all of the time (5). These Responses were scored as follows: Rarely or none of the time, (1 point), little of the time (2 points), some of

the time (3 points) A good part of the time (4 points) and most or all the time (5 points).

The second instrument was the Psychological Well Being Scale (PWS) developed by Carol Ryff (1989). It sought to measure six aspects of wellbeing and happiness, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self acceptance. The instrument has 42-items on psychological well being. It has seven point likert-type scale of strongly agree, (1 point), Degree (2 points), a little agree (3 points), neither agree or disagree (4 points), a little disagree (5 points) and strongly disagree (6 points).

Design and Statistics

The study adopted correlational research design. The data collected were statistically analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). All the computation were carried out using SPSS version 26.

Results

The data collected were statistically analyzed in line with the hypothesis of the study, thus:

Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between family dynamic and psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state.

Table 1: Test of significance of Pearson's correlation between family dynamics and psychological well-being among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra state.

Variables	1	2	P	Decision
Family Dynamics	1	0-.017	0.687	Not significant
Psychological well-being	-0.017	1		

The results displayed in Table I showed that there was no significant relationship between family dynamics and psychological well-being among undergraduate in public universities in Anambra state. ($r = -.017, p > .05$). Since the p-value (0.687) was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion

In this section, the results of the study were discussed in accordance with the objective of the study.

Relationship between family dynamics and psychological well being among undergraduates in public universities.

The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between family dynamics and psychological wellbeing of undergraduates. The result of this study collaborates with that of Akinboye et al (2023) and Ikem et al (2016) both of who contended that family relationship correlates with students psychological well-being. This implies that family dynamics had a significant relationship with students psychological well-being irrespective of their ages, class level, gender or culture.

The outcome of this study suggested that the kind of relationship kept by a family will definitely affect the well being of the members. In a family where there is a cordial relationship between parents and their children, the psychological well being of family members will be very friendly and positive unlike a family where parents do not relate with their offsprings and other relations.

Educational Implications

The study indicated that the relationship between family dynamics and psychological wellbeing was not significant. The implications of this findings demands that parents and lecturers should jointly assist the undergraduates in establishing a cordial relationship in their respective homes and schools. The students should be encouraged to obey their parents while their parents should show them love by attending to them passionately to most of their basic needs and desires. The parents should discipline their children and avoid being too harsh. Similarly the roles of parents and teachers in the area of parenting will generate a healthy relationship in both schools and homes. There is no gainsaying the fact that a sound family relationship promotes wellbeing and academic success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the result of this study showed that the family relationship relates the psychological well-being of adolescents in public universities. Educational psychologists have great role in the areas of assisting families establish a cordial relationship to promote sound mental health. Finally, findings from this study would serve as a reference point and inspire research in this direction.

Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study and the implications thereof, the study recommends as follows:

1. That parents should adopt authoritarian parenting style which is anchored on demographic principles.
2. That parents should develop positive attitude towards family issues that concern their children. This positive may likely reduce conflicts between children and their parents and increase the confidence level of children to discuss issues about their lives with the parents.
3. That parents should be advised by the educational psychologists to periodically hold meetings with family members during which issues affecting their mental health will be freely discussed and resolved. This opportunity will give the children a sense of belonging.

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