

Conceptions of Good Family Life Among Three Generation of Nigerians: Implications for Family Development

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INTRODUCTION

The family is the building block of all human societies. It is a fundamental social institution, which acts as a foundation for the conception and orientation of human beings.

The typical characterization of family life in the past runs as follows: in the earlier period family members interacted more intensely, they were much more involved in each other's lives, they did things together for recreation and pleasure, and the conventional values and morality were clearly transmitted from the parents to the children.

The modern family on the other hand, is often characterized as one in which family members rarely talk with one another, in which each family member pursues his or her own recreational and occupational activities. In earlier times, the father of the family often was more patriarchal and authoritarian. The interaction between him and his wife was not between equals, nor were his relations with his children characterized by equality. When the family of the past found time for recreational activities, the men usually interacted with other men, the women with women and the children with their peers. In the modern family there is less role differentiation. Many parents today strive to treat their children "as people", as more or less equal to themselves. They usually organize most family activity around what they think their children want to do.

Family life and processes create conditions for mutual affections among its members as well as the satisfaction and control of the sexual needs of its adults. The family also provides a socially approved context for child-bearing and child care and for the education of its younger members. Hence, it is a means of providing the social capital needed for society and its organization. Without the family regulating life as stated above, there would be chaos in social life as the sexual and other excesses of men and women would be left unrestrained.

Since every person learns to make his adjust-

ments from the people with whom he lives, the family background from which he develops and context of the family life within what he lives will affect his reaction to life situations. As a major social institution, the family is central to many aspects of life in any society.

Based on the foregoing, the goal of this study is to examine the conceptions of what constitutes good family life among three generation of Nigerians resident in South-west of the country. Specifically in this study, answers were sought for the following question:

Has age, gender and socio-economic status any relationship with the types of conception of good family life held by (Nigerians)?

This question forms the basis of our hypothesis (for this study) below:

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the purposes of statistical analysis.

- There will be no significant relationship between age and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.
- There will be no significant relationship between gender and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.
- There will be no significant relationship between socio-economic status and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.

The Concept of Family

The term family does not lend itself to easy and precise definition. In one sense, the family may be defined so as to include all persons with a common ancestor. Under this wide connotation, the family may embrace a large body of persons related by blood to a common ancestor. The relationship may be traced through males, as in patrilineal societies or through females, as in matrilineal societies. Sometimes, the group included in this wide definition of family is

referred to as the extended family a concept which is prevalent in Nigeria.

The family consists of members who live together under one roof having a single household or if they live apart, the household will be considered as their home (Fairchild, 1966; Goode, 1968; Eshleman, 1975; Stone, 1970; Nnatu, 1997).

While there is no general agreement as to what constitutes the perfect definition of the family, there has however been a tendency among Anthropologists and sociologists to define the family in terms of its functions. One of the most renowned of these definitions was made by Murdock (1949) who describes the family as:

A social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually co-habiting adults.

Murdock acknowledged the fact that family functions are often shared by other agencies, but however maintained that the family role cannot be completely taken over. Reiss (1980) in order to avoid the pitfall of assigning too narrowly conceived functions to the family argues that the family is a small kinship-structured group with the key function of nurturant socialization of the new born.

Equally, Levy (1970) the extended family structures may be defined as accenting one line of descent, usually the patrilineal line, and including as members of the family unit individuals of as many generations as have living representatives, the spouses of those in the main line who are mature, and the non adult children of all of the marital pairs.

In classifying existent forms of family organization, certain analytical terms derived from ethnological studies are useful. Thus, in survey of 250 representative human societies, Linton (1959) identified three distinct types of family organization. The first and most basic, the nuclear or conjugal family consists typically of a married man, wife and any non-adult children who are living. When the children of the husband and wife mature, they form families of procreation of their own. The other two family types are the polygamous and extended family as:

—— a group of related people known by a common name and consisting usually of a man and his wife or wives and children, his son's wife or wives and children, his brothers and half brothers and their wives and children and probably other near relations ——

The extended family may include grandparents, sisters and their husbands, aunts, uncles and nieces and even daughters until they reached marriageable age at which time they married out of the family orientation. In the same vein, the family has been argued to consist of the husband who is usually the head of the family, the wife or wives and their children (CESAC, 1980).

Whether nuclear or extended, as far as the experience of each individual is concerned, it is possible to distinguish the family in terms of whether an individual establishes it when he marries (family of procreation) or whether the individual is born and reared within the family of orientation and the family of procreation are different for an individual among the Yoruba-Nigeria. The family of procreation is usually a continuation of the family of orientation.

The Yoruba Family System

The Yoruba speaking people reside in South Western part of Nigeria. Their traditional family is polygamous. Among these people, a man undertakes several marriages and thereby sets up several nuclear matricentric families each centering on a wife and shares in one father. The rule of patrilineal descent governs relationships in the family.

Among the Yorubas, a family could be of two or more generations. That is, a man's conjugal or nuclear family is joined to his father's nuclear family and thus form one extended family. Although, the Yoruba family system is patrilineal, a polygamous setting is generally matrifocal (mother centered). Each mother has her own apartment and kitchen. In this type of family co-wives sometimes live in the same dwelling but often have different households. The husband usually has one home as his primary dwelling, but may spend a certain number of nights per week or each month with each wife in rotation. Co-wives are frequently co-operative and

friendly, but their situation is obviously one that can lead to rivalry and tension, since they may see themselves as competitors for the husband's favours. Among the Yorubas, the discord provoked by polygyny is sometimes eased by system of hierarchical grading among wives. The senior wife has more authority over family decisions than juniors. In order to cohabit and live together in peace, the junior wife usually give respect to the senior wife.

METHOD

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is the ex-post facto. It used the 2 x 3 x 3 factorial designs. The study is an ex-post facto because the researcher relied on the data the way they are without any manipulation. The study is cross-sectional in nature since no previous research had been done by the researcher on the sampled subjects nor was any subsequent extension of the study contemplated.

Study Population and Subjects

The population from which the subjects for this study was drawn comprised male and female workers, students and retirees in the South West of Nigeria. The subjects were one hundred and seventy-one (male and female) youths, adults and elders drawn from Ile-Ife, a town in Osun State (One of the Yoruba speaking states). The sampling technique was mainly purposive.

Data for the study came from two main sources namely: focus group discussions and questionnaire survey. Four homogenous groups of three individuals each, selected on the basis of age and sex were engaged in focus group discussions. These comprised six males and six females selected from the target population representing the three generational groups making a total of twelve focus groups.

Instrument

Primary data used in this study were collected directly from all the respondents through the administration of questionnaire designed by the researcher. The questionnaire, which consisted of three sections, was designed to cover a set of

information items relating to respondents personal data and conceptions about good family life. With the help of two research assistants, the questionnaires were administered to all the subjects in their places of residence. The research assistants were directed to give the questionnaire to anybody they come across and were willing to give the information required. The use of purposive/accidental sampling method cannot be defended by any reason other than the pursuance of what was possible at the time of administration of the questionnaires. This also was responsible for the differences in the number of subjects in each age group. It was easy to get youths and adults, but for elders it was difficult. The research assistants have to go round looking for people above sixty-years of age. In all, 200 questionnaires were given out but only 171 were completely filled and returned. This represents 85.5% response rate.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The responses of the subjects to the items of the questionnaire were compiled into contingency tables according to the main variables being examined. The data generated were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The three hypotheses raised for the study were tested and analyzed. In order to determine the relationships between each of the variables (age, gender and socioeconomic status) and subjects' conceptions of good family life, multiple regression procedure was used.

RESULTS

Description of Sample by Gender, Age and Socio-economic Status

Table 1 shows the characteristics of samples expressed in frequencies and percentages.

Considering the total sample, there are ninety-nine (99) males and seventy-two (72) females.

The age group with the highest number of respondents was 30-60 years. Eighty-one (i.e. 47.4 %) of the 171 were in this age group.

With regard to the distribution of samples by socio-economic status, One hundred and forty (i.e. 81.9% of the total sample) were average, fourteen poor, while seventeen (i.e. 9.9%) were rich.

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics of study sample

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Male	99	57.9
Female	72	42.1
Total	171	100.0
<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Under 30	62	36.3
30 – 60	81	47.4
Above 60	28	16.4
Total	171	100.0
<i>Socio-economic status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Average	140	81.9
Poor	14	8.2
Rich	17	9.9
Total	171	100.0

Respondents' Idea of Good Family Life

In response to items in the second section of the research questionnaire, respondents gave the following as their idea of a good family life. Table 2 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' idea of what constitutes a good family life.

As shown in Table 2 above, 20.7% of the total respondents (i.e. 78 males and 48 females) indicated that a good family life exists when there is comfort and adequate provision of basic needs including security of the family members. This goes to show that a greater number of our respondents tended to be concerned with the provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, water etc. Their choice of this item is unconnected with the inadequate provision of these needs in our society.

The least item on the table is "no extramarital relationship; no conflict". About six percent of the total respondents (22 males and 16 females) indicated that a good family exists when there is no extramarital relationship. This response shows that extra marital relationship and conflict between husband and wife is a common thing within the culture since the people still get themselves involved in polygamous relationship.

Distribution of Respondents' Conception of a Good Family Life by Gender, Age and Socio-Economic Status

Tables 3, 4 and 5 present the distribution of respondents' conception of what constitute a

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' idea of what constitutes a good family life

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Category of response</i>	<i>Percentage distribution of respondents to conception of good family life</i>					
		<i>Male (99)</i>		<i>Female (72)</i>		<i>Total</i>	
		<i>Freq</i>	<i>% Per total male</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>% Per total female</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>% Per total sample</i>
1.	Husband and Wife living in peace, Love, Joy, Happi-ness, Harmony.	60	60.6	56	77.8	116	67.8
2.	Mutual understanding, res-pect, trust, honesty, com-mitment and cooperation.	26	26.3	23	31.9	49	28.6
3.	Religious, God fearing, Christ centred, Pray to-gether, Stays together.	52	52.5	45	62.5	97	56.7
4.	Comfort and adequate provision of basic needs (adequate finance) including security of the family members.	78	78.8	48	66.7	126	73.7
5.	Adequate concern for all family members in term of rights, representation and governance. Parent as good model for the family.	44	44.4	20	27.8	64	37.4
6.	Monogamy: One man one wife; Nuclear family where the Husband is seen as Head with few children and wife accepting Husband's authority.	25	25.3	23	31.9	48	28.0
7.	Development and growth in terms of achievement, children education.	43	43.4	28	38.9	71	41.5
8.	No extramarital relation-ship; No conflict.	22	22.2	16	22.2	38	22.2

good family life according to age (in year), gender and socio-economic status. Alternatives of what a good family life is were proposed and respondents were to score each using Likert-Scaling techniques of five-point continuum. The tables show the frequency and percentage of their response as to whether they agree or disagree with the statements. The age variable was classified into three groups (below 30 years, between 30 and 60 and over 60 years of age). Gender variable was classified into male and female, while the socio-economic status variable was classified into poor, average and rich.

Table 3 presents gender differentials in response to suggested indicators of good family life.

More females than males agree that a good

family life is possible when there is one man and one wife (92.8% vs. 83.0%), with two or more wives to a man, about 10% of male and less than 8% of females agreed that a good family is not possible under such arrangement.

Most respondents see affectional relationship between husband and wife as an index of a good family life (96.6% males vs 94.4% of females). With the husband as the head of the family, all female respondents and over 90% of male respondents agree that a good family life is possible. Also where the wife accepts the authority of the husband, 90% of the respondents believe that a good family life is possible. As for the issue of a final say, there is a 1 point percentage difference between men and women about giving the final say to the husband only in

Table 3: Distribution of respondents conception of a good family life by gender

S. No.	Statement	Gender	Agree		Disagree	
			F	%	F	%
1.	A good family life is possible only with one man and his wife.	M	78	83.0		17.0
		F	64	92.8		7.2
2.	A good family life is possible only with one man and two or more wives.	M	9	10.5	77	89.5
		F	5	7.5	62	92.5
3.	A good family life is possible only with one man, his wife or wives and children, his son's wives and children, his brothers and probably other relations living together under the same roof.	M	7	7.8	83	92.2
		F	8	12.1	58	87.9
4.	A good family life is possible only when the wife earns more than the husband.	M	5	5.7	82	94.3
		F	1	1.5	66	98.5
5.	A good family life is possible when there is affectionate relationship between husband and wife.	M	94	96.9	3	3.1
		F	67	94.4	4	5.6
6.	A good family life is possible when the wife sees the husband as the head of the family.	M	94	95.9	4	4.1
		F	72	100	-	-
7.	A good family life is possible only when the wife accepts the authority of the husband.	M	86	89.6	10	10.4
		F	63	90.0	7	10.0
8.	Compatibility between husband and wife is essential to good family life.	M	91	95.8	4	4.2
		F	69	98.6	1	1.4
9.	A good family should be religious.	M	87	96.7	3	3.3
		F	68	95.8	3	4.2
10.	It is only the husband that should have a final say in any family issue.	M	36	37.9	59	62.1
		F	25	36.8	43	63.2
11.	Children should not be involved in family matters.	M	12	12.6	83	87.4
		F	10	15.4	55	84.6
12.	A good family life should be a place where parents are models for their children.	M	89	91.8	8	8.2
		F	62	89.9	7	10.1
13.	A good family life is where children are free to do what they like.	M	14	14.9	80	85.1
		F	10	14.5	59	85.5
14.	Good family life contributes to feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction for both husband and wife.	M	92	92.9	7	7.1
		F	65	92.9	5	7.1
15.	Good family life enhances the achievement of the family and its members.	M	95	97.9	2	2.1
		F	70	98.6	1	1.4
16.	Good family life provides for conducive socialization and upbringing of the children.	M	98	100.0	-	-
		F	72	100.0	-	-

Table 4: Distribution of respondents conception of a good family life by age

S. No.	Statement	Age (in years)	Agree		Disagree	
			F	%	F	%
1.	A good family life is possible only with one man and his wife.	Under 30	56	93.3	4	6.7
		30-60	66	85.7	11	14.3
		Above 60	20	76.9	6	23.1
2.	A good family life is possible only with one man and two or more wives.	Under 30	3	51.0	56	94.9
		30-60	6	85.0	65	91.5
		Above 60	5	21.7	18	78.3
3.	A good family life is possible only with one man, his wife or wives and children, his son's wives and children, his brothers and probably other relations living together under the same roof.	Under 30	4	6.7	56	93.3
		30-60	6	8.3	66	91.7
		Above 60	5	20.8	19	79.2-
4.	A good family life is possible only when the wife earns more than the husband.	Under 30	1	19.0	52	98.1
		30-60	4	51.0	74	94.9
		Above 60	1	43.0	22	95.7
5.	A good family life is possible when there is affectionate relationship between husband and wife.	Under 30	59	98.3	1	1.7
		30-60	76	95.0	4	5.0
		Above 60	26	92.9	2	7.1
6.	A good family life is possible when the wife sees the husband as the head of the family.	Under 30	60	98.4	1	1.6
		30-60	78	96.3	3	3.7
		Above 60	28	100.0	-	-
7.	A good family life is possible only when the wife accepts the authority of the husband.	Under 30	54	90.0	6	10.0
		30-60	70	88.6	9	11.4
		Above 60	25	92.6	2	7.4
8.	Compatibility between husband and wife is essential to good family life.	Under 30	59	100.0	-	-
		30-60	75	96.2	3	3.8
		Above 60	26	92.9	2	7.1
9.	A good family should be religious.	Under 30	60	98.4	1	1.6
		30-60	67	94.5	4	5.5
		Above 60	26	96.3	1	3.7
10.	It is only the husband that should have a final say in any family issue.	Under 30	23	37.7	4	62.3
		30-60	23	29.9	54	70.1
		Above 60	15	60.0	10	40.0
11.	Children should not be involved in family matters.	Under 30	8	13.8	50	86.2
		30-60	10	12.7	69	87.3
		Above 60	4	17.4	19	82.6
12.	A good family life should be a place where parents are models for their children.	Under 30	55	91.7	5	8.3
		30-60	72	91.1	7	8.9
		Above 60	24	88.9	3	11.1
13.	A good family life is where children are free to do what they like.	Under 30	11	18.3	49	81.7
		30-60	7	89.0	72	91.1
		Above 60	6	25.0	18	75.0
14.	Good family life contributes to feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction for both husband and wife.	Under 30	55	90.2	6	9.8
		30-60	77	96.3	3	3.8
		Above 60	25	89.3	3	10.7
15.	Good family life enhances the achievement of the family.	Under 30	60	98.4	1	1.6
		30-60	79	98.8	1	1.3
		Above 60	26	96.3	1	3.7
16.	Good family life provides for conducive socialization and upbringing of the children.	Under 30	62	100.0	-	-
		30-60	81	100.0	-	-
		Above 60	27	100.0	-	-

any family issue. Similarly there is only 1% difference between males and females about issue. Similarly there is only 1% difference between males and females about whether a good

family should be religious (96.7% of men and 95.8% of women).

Compatibility between husband and wife is seen as essential to a good family likely about

Table 5: Distribution of respondents conception of a good family life by socio-economic status (SES)

S. No.	Statement	Age (In Years)	Agree		Disagree	
			F	%	F	%
1.	A good family life is possible only with one man and his wife.	Poor	10	83.3	8	16.7
		Average	117	86.7	18	13.3
		Rich	15	93.8	1	6.3
2.	A good family life is possible only with one man and two or more wives.	Poor	1	10.0	9	90.0
		Average	12	9.3	117	90.7
		Rich	1	7.1	13	92.9
3.	A good family life is possible only with one man, his wife or wives and children, his son's wives and children, his brothers and probably other relations living together under the same roof.	Poor	4	33.3	8	66.7
		Average	11	8.6	117	91.4
		Rich	-	-	16	100
4.	A good family life is possible only when the wife earns more than the husband.	Poor	1	7.7	12	92.3
		Average	4	3.2	121	96.8
		Rich	1	6.3	15	93.8
5.	A good family life is possible when there is affectionate relationship between husband and wife.	Poor	14	100.0	-	-
		Average	131	95.6	6	4.4
		Rich	16	94.1	-	5.9
6.	A good family life is possible when the wife sees the husband as the head of the family.	Poor	14	100.0	-	-
		Average	135	97.1	4	2.9
		Rich	17	100.0	-	-
7.	A good family life is possible only when the wife accepts the authority of the husband.	Poor	14	100.0	-	-
		Average	119	88.1	16	11.9
		Rich	16	94.0	1	5.9
8.	Compatibility between husband and wife is essential to good family life.	Poor	13	100.0	-	-
		Average	132	96.4	5	3.6
		Rich	15	100.0	-	-
9.	A good family should be religious.	Poor	13	92.9	1	7.1
		Average	128	97.7	3	2.3
		Rich	14	87.5	2	12.5
10.	It is only the husband that should have a final say in any family issue.	Poor	5	35.7	9	64.3
		Average	49	36.6	85	63.4
		Rich	7	46.7	8	53.3
11.	Children should not be involved in family matters.	Poor	2	18.2	9	81.8
		Average	18	13.5	115	86.5
		Rich	2	12.5	14	87.5
12.	A good family life should be a place where parents are models for their children.	Poor	13	92.9	1	7.1
		Average	125	90.6	13	9.4
		Rich	13	92.9	1	7.1
13.	A good family life is where children are free to do what they like.	Poor	2	14.3	12	85.7
		Average	20	15.2	112	84.8
		Rich	2	11.8	15	88.2
14.	Good family life contributes to feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction for both husband and wife.	Poor	14	100.0	-	-
		Average	128	92.1	11	7.9
		Rich	15	93.8	1	6.3
15.	Good family life enhances the achievement of the family.	Poor	14	100.0	-	-
		Average	135	98.5	2	1.5
		Rich	16	94.1	1	5.9
16.	Good family life provides for conducive socialization and upbringing of the children.	Poor	13	100.0	-	-
		Average	140	100.0	-	-
		Rich	14	100.0	-	-

96% of men and 99% of women. Even though a preponderant majority of respondents see involving children in family matters as important, 85% of them however do not support that

children should be given freedom to do what they like.

Feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction were considered by 93% of males and females as an

indicator of a good family life. There is also no gender differential in opinion, that good family life enhances the achievement of the family and its members (97.9% vs. 98.6%).

As shown in table 4 majority of the respondents agreed that a good family life is possible with one man one wife irrespective of their age. More younger people than the elderly supported the idea of one man one wife as an indicator of a good family life. With 2 or more wives to a man (second item on table 2) one in five of the elderly believed a good family is possible. About 5% of respondents who were below 30 years and less than 10% of those aged between 30 and 60 years believed that two or more wives to a man can make a good family life. Majority of the respondents irrespective of age disagree with the statement that a good family life possible only with one man and two or more wives. The same thing goes for the third statement that says a good family life is possible only with one man, his wives and children, his son's wives and children, his brothers and probably other relations living together under the same roof. More elderly than the younger respondents (20.8% of the elderly as against 6.7% and 8.3% of the youths and adults) agreed that the extended family system can make a good family life. A large proportion (79.2% of the elderly, 98.1% of youths and 94.9% of adults) disagrees that such practice cannot guarantee good family life.

Almost all the respondents irrespective of their age group do not see a good family life as possible only when the wife earns more than the husband. The Yorubas do not consider it healthy for a good family life when wife earns more than husband. There is the belief that husband as the head of the family has the sole responsibility of caring for his home. When the wife earns more than the husband, this role would be seen as being taken over by the wife. The fear of who pays the piper dictates the tune may set in. in other words, it is possible for such wife not to submit herself to the authority of the husband.

Love and affection is a good indicator of a good family life among the Yoruba Nigerians. Almost all the respondents irrespective of their age agreed that affectional relationship between husband and wife can promote a good family life (98.3% of respondents under 30 years, 95% between 30 and 60 years and 92.9% of respondents over 60 years).

Acceptance of authority of the husband is also

a factor for a good family life in Nigeria. The respondents do not differ in their opinion about the fact that the wife must accept the authority of the husband. With respect to compatibility between husband and wife, respondents widely believe that compatibility is a necessary factor for a good family life. Most respondents (over 90%) irrespective of age consider religion as one of the factors that make for a good family life.

On the issue of who has a final say in any family issue (item 10 on table 3), two third of the elderly agreed that with husband only in control, a good family life is made possible. Over 60% of the younger respondents disagree that if only husbands have a final say, there can be a good family life.

Excluding children in the family matters is not regarded as an indicator of a good family life across all ages. About four in every five of the respondents disagree that if children are not involved in family matters there can be a good family life. Although it is widely agreed that children are relevant when it comes to making decisions about family matters, children are however not free to do what they like in a good family setting. Among the elderly, a quarter of them agree that children can do what they like. The old people often make excuses for the children, saying that they will outgrow their youthful exuberance later in life. A higher proportion of the other age groups (81.7% youths and 91.1% adults) however do not approve of allowing children to do what they like as an index of a good family life.

There is no significant difference in the opinion expressed by respondents across all age groups on parents being a role model to their children as an indicator of good family life. About 9 in every 10 respondents see a good family life as one in which parents are a role model to their children. Feelings of self esteem and satisfaction for both husband and wife were favoured by respondents as a measure of good family life.

As shown in table 5 the socio-economic status variable (SES) was classified into three-average, poor and rich. With respect to one man, one wife as an index of a good family life, there appears to be no difference in the opinion in relation to respondents' socio-economic status. For instance, about 87% of the average group, 83% of the poor and 94% of the rich support the statement that a good family life is possible only with one man and one wife. Less than 10% of

the respondents agree that a good family life is possible where there are at least two wives.

There is a significant differentials in the opinion expressed by respondents about the extended family system as an indicator of a good family life. For instance, among the average, less than 10% agree that a good family life is possible where a man, his wives and the relations live together in the same room. Among the poor, one third share the same view while none of the rich agree that such an arrangement is connective for a good family life.

Respondents do not generally favour wife earning more than the husband for a good family life. Generally, the poor, the average and the rich recognize the importance of affectional relationship. In the same manner, the respondents expressed the same opinion with respect to recognition by the wife of husband as the head of the family.

Respondents were also requested to react to the statement that a good family is possible when the wife accepts the authority of the husband. The poor totally support the statement (item 7 of Table 4). 94% of the rich agree with wife's acceptance of husband authority while 88% of the respondents classified as average by socio-economic status share the same view. Slightly less than half of the rich and less than two in every five respondents classified as average and poor by socio-economic status agreed that the husband should have a final say on any issue for a good family life to be possible. All the respondents recognize the importance of compatibility between husband and wife as a necessary factor for a good family life irrespective of their socio-economic status.

Socio-economic status also does not appear to determine respondents' responses to the question of parents being a role model for their children. For a good family life to be possible, parents should be a role model for their children. Children should be considered relevant in family matters; but they should not be allowed to do what they like.

Feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction between husband and wife and conductive socialization plus upbringing of the children are independent of socioeconomic status. Respondents generally agree that a good family life enhances the achievement of the family and its members.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho1: There will be no significant relationship between gender and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.

Table 5 shows the Regression Analysis of the influence of gender on conception of good family life.

Table 5: Regression analysis on relationship between gender and conceptions of good family life

Multiple R	0.07678
R-Square	0.00589
Adjusted R. Squared	0.00001
Standard Error	5.04892
F = 1.0021	
P<0.05	(N.S)

Data obtained from 171 respondents was analyzed using multiple regression. The dependent variable is an aggregate score of indices of good family life. An examination of the pattern of relationship between gender and food family life score shows that there is no significant gender influence in the opinion expressed by respondents about good family life ($F = 1.002$). the hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between gender and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life was upheld (accepted).

Ho2: There will be no significant relationship between age and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.

Table 6 shows the Regression Analysis of the influence of age on conception of good family life.

Table 6: Regression analysis on relationship between age and conceptions of good family life

Multiple R	0.15217
R-Square	0.02316
Adjusted R. Squared	0.01738
Standard Error	5.00488
F = 4.0074	
P<0.05	(Significant result)

In order to test this hypothesis, a multiple regression was used. When age was taken into consideration, the table shows that age associates positively with people's conception of what constitutes a good family life ($r = 0.15$). Although the extent of this relationship is somehow weak,

further statistical testing shows that age of respondents significantly determine their conception of what constitutes a good family life ($F = 4.007$ $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis as stated was therefore rejected.

Ho3: There will be no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life.

Table 7 shows the Regression Analysis of the influence of SES on conception of good family life.

Table 7: Regression analysis on relationship between SES and conceptions of good family life

Multiple R	0.0582
R-Square	0.0034
Adjusted R. Squared	0.0025
Standard Error	5.0552
F = 0.5758	
P<0.05	(N.S)

Data obtained from 171 respondents was analyzed using multiple regression. With respect to the respondents socioeconomic status and the type of conception they hold about good family life, result shows that the poor, the average and the rich, do not significantly differ in their opinion about what constitute a good family life ($F = 0.576$). The hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between respondents SES and the type of conception held about good family life was upheld (accented).

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between gender and the type of conception held by Nigerians about good family life, was upheld. The findings indicated that gender has no influence on the people's conception of good family life. The reason for this might be due to the fact that all the respondents (male and female) were from the same culture. They were also from the same locality. This finding to some extent may appear curious to the scholars in the area of gender equality. To us it appears that the cultural values of the people in this area are still very much resistant to the ideas of gender equality and the current struggle for same within many polities of the world, Nigeria inclusive.

In testing the second hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between age and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians about good family life, result showed a significant positive relationship ($r = + 0.152$), thus rejecting the null hypothesis. The reason for the significant relationship might be due to the fact that the respondents differ in their age groups and thus differ in their opinions about what constitute a good family life.

The third hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between socioeconomic status and the type of conceptions held by Nigerians was also upheld. The result obtained showed that the poor, the average and the rich do not significantly differ in their opinion about what constitute a good family life. One of the reasons for this might be due to the fact that all our respondents were educated. Again, the number of rich and poor respondents in the study was very small compared to those that were of average socioeconomic status. This variable can be tested on a more larger and heterogeneous environment. Since ordinarily on an issue like this, the views of both the rich and poor would not be similar.

This study also supported the changing structure of the family from polygynous and extended to a nuclear form. This is due to many factors ranging from industrialization, religiosity, education to economic among others.

The main difference between an indigenous and an educated Yoruba Nigerian who resides in the city lies in the intensity of interaction with people and the degree of involvement in the responsibilities, obligations and the corporate identity of the large family or descent group. Most Yoruba-Nigerians however urbanized or educated are still tightly attached to their primordial or rural traditional family, still find fulfillment of life in the dependence of the sick and the old on the young and stronger members and their common involvement in prestigious social occasions such as naming, burial or funeral ceremonies.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings, the following are some of the implications drawn.

1. The findings of the study have shown that a good family is possible with one man one wife. Although polygyny is giving way for monogamy (conjugal family structure), our

people still go into it. They at times might appear to be living in a monogamous family when in actual fact they have another woman outside their matrimonial home. Such women are most often hidden or kept away from the first wife with whom the man lives. The culture even allows polygynous family structure. Polygyny is apparently not seen as antithetical to good family life, yet most youths are no longer practising it being themselves survivors of polygynous system which can be stifling and ridden with mutual suspicion.

2. Most of the sample believes a woman should not earn more than the husband. However, the reality on ground now is that wives are surely the principal breadwinners while husbands may be out of job.
3. Although it is widely agreed that children are relevant when it comes to making decisions about family matters, children are however not free to do what they like in a good family setting. This reaction might not be unconnected with the contention (nowadays) that the increased "liberty" of children has led to delinquency, cultism etc.
4. It is also noteworthy that the idea of affectional bond between husband and wife as a prerequisite of good family life is not totally compatible with the matricentric-polygynous-extended family system, which they all say they favour.

The point needs to be made that like all other institution, the conception of a good family life is in reality far from the practice and the result is often a confusion of values.

From our analysis of the data collected and interpretation of results it can be concluded from this study that gender and socio-economic status did not have any relationship with the type of conception held by Nigerians about good family life. The study supported the fact that age is a significant index of the type of conception held by Nigerians about good family life.

The findings of this study cannot however be taken as conclusive because of its limitations, part of which relate to limited sample and non-coverage of some other variables like education and religion.

KEYWORDS Conception. Constitute. Age. Gender. Socio-economic. Status.

ABSTRACT The study examined the conceptions of what constitutes good family life among three generation of Nigerians resident in the South Western part of the country. Specifically addressed was the association between age, gender, socio-economic status and the conceptions of family life held (by Nigerians). Data were collected using survey and Focus Group Discussions. The survey consisted of 171 Nigerian Youths, adults and elders who responded to semi-structured questionnaire. Focus Group Discussions were held with selected representatives of youths, adults and elders to further explore the issue. Results show that gender and socio-economic status were not related to the types of conception of family life held. Age relates positively with people's conception of what constitutes a good family life. The implications of all these for the mental health of various family members are discussed.

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