

The Impact of the Nigeria Economy on Family Speech Communication of Igarra Rural Community of Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

Purpose:

Millions of families attempting to survive amidst numerous economic obstacles are at the core of the Nigerian economy. From unemployment and inflation, to changes in oil prices and currency devaluation; families contend with an unstable economic environment that frequently determines their financial security and well-being. This paper explores how families interact and how they manage their limited resources. It also deals with the financial setbacks the nation imposes on family life.

Methodology:

It also demonstrates the Nigerian families' inventiveness and fortitude in the face of hardship, as well as their capacity for innovation and the creation of chances for economic emancipation. Hence, this paper underscores the intrinsic link between the Nigerian economy and family interaction.

Keyword:

Impact, Nigeria Economy, Family Speech, Communication, Igarra, Rural Community.

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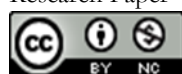
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Findings:

We shall be looking at the subject matter, studying the situation at Igarra Akoko-Edo local government in Edo state. The economy is a crucial aspect of every society. The economy of a state is the substructure of the state, and it is on this base that every other aspect of the society is built. Hence, Karl Marx refers to the political, social and religious aspects of the society as the superstructural aspect of the society.

Implication:

The superstructure can affect the base. However, he is of the view that the influence of the base is predominant. As such it becomes very essential that we look at this economic aspect of the society and how it affects the family which is a very important variable of the society.

INTRODUCTION

The family is seen as the basic unit of society as it provides for the development of an individual in terms of personality, self-esteem and so on, especially in current times where the economic situation of the country fluctuates and bites harder. As we traverse the dynamic landscape of economic fluctuations, it is imperative to recognize the intricate ways in which these fluctuations influence family dynamics, relationships, and the overall well-being of individuals. This comprehensive exploration will navigate the challenges families face due to economic shifts, acknowledging the various dimensions of this impact and offering insights into building resilience in the face of adversity. To proceed, we shall implore the use of a questionnaire to gather information on the subject matter with convenient sampling being applied, and these data will be analyzed using simple percentile in order to know the impact of the current economic situation as felt by the people.

Nigeria. Nigeria, officially known as the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is a country in West Africa. It is situated between the Sahel to the north and the Gulf of Guinea to the south in the Atlantic Ocean. It covers an area of 923,769 square kilometers (356,669 sq mi), and with a population of over 230 million, it is the most populous country in Africa and the world's sixth-most populous country. Nigeria borders Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west. Nigeria is a federal republic comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. The largest city in Nigeria is Lagos, which is one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world and the largest in Africa (Roger, 2014).

The modern state originated with British colonization in the 19th century, taking its present territorial shape with the merging of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate and Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1914. The British set up administrative and legal structures while practicing indirect rule through traditional chiefdoms. Nigeria became a formally independent federation on 1 October 1960 and has experienced military interventions in her political history but has operated a democratic system of governance since 1999 till date.

Nigeria is a multinational state inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups speaking 500 distinct languages, all identifying with a wide variety of cultures. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa in the north, Yoruba in the west, and Igbo in the east, together constituting over 60% of the total population. The official language is English, chosen to facilitate linguistic unity at the national level. Nigeria's constitution ensures de jure freedom of religion, and it is home to some of the world's largest Muslim and Christian populations (Ayomide, 2019). Nigeria is divided roughly in half between Muslims, who live mostly in the north, and Christians, who live mostly in the south and indigenous religions, such as those native to the Igbo and Yoruba ethnicities, are in the minority.

Igarra People. The Igarra people are an ethnic group that lives in the northern part of Edo State, which is in the southern part of the nation. They belong to the wider ethnic group known as the Edo, which is divided into numerous subgroups with unique customs, languages, and cultures. The town of Igarra and the surrounding territories, which are located in Edo State's Akoko-Edo Local Government Area, are home to the majority of the Igarra people. The Igarra people's administrative and cultural hub is Igarra Town. Igarra is home to over 262,000 people.

The Igarra people have a rich cultural legacy that includes traditional festivals, music, dance, food, and social norms, much like many other ethnic groups in Nigeria. They also take great pleasure in their cultural identity and strong feelings of community.

The Igarra people have always been farmers and have engaged in agriculture as their main source of income. They grow vegetables, maize, cassava, and yams, among other crops. Among the Igarra people, trading and handicrafts are important economic pursuits in addition to agriculture.

Igarra, the native tongue of the Igarra people, is a member of the Edo language family. However, English is also commonly spoken and understood in the region because of the impact of colonialism and the expansion of the language as a lingua franca in Nigeria. These people are the object of study in this paper.

The Nigerian Economy. Olaitan (2015) holds that Nigeria is a regional power in Africa, and her economy is seen as the largest in Africa, the 39th-largest in the world by nominal gross domestic product (GDP). Nigeria is often referred to as the Giant of Africa owing to its large population and economy, but her economy has suffered in recent times due to certain factors such as bad governance, which is a product of the inadequate democracy that is practiced in Nigeria and also the pattern of economic structure. Within this diverse nation lies an economic narrative that weaves together a complex blend of opportunities and challenges. Though Nigeria boasts a rich tapestry of landscape and mineral resources such as crude oil, gold, iron ore, natural gas, coal, Bentonite, Gypsum, Kaolin, Magnesite uranium, Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gold, Lead, Marble, Tantalite etc., her economy is mainly based on crude oil.

However, before the discovery of oil in 1956, Nigeria was famous for her agrarian economy through cash crops like palm produce (oil and Kernel), cocoa, rubber, and timber. Groundnut was exported, thus making Nigeria a major exporter in that respect (Olaitan, 2015). Indeed, agriculture is the bedrock of every economic development, and it is not very certain to attain a meaningful level of economic progress without developing the agricultural sector. This sector offers vast opportunities and employs over seventy percent (70%) of the Nigerian labor force. Added to it is the provision of the basic food requirements for the country with over one hundred and thirty million (130 million) people, as well as providing raw materials for local industries. The exportation of the agricultural products mentioned above helped Nigeria in taking gigantic strides towards her economic growth.



Down memory lane; upon the discovery of crude oil and its subsequent exportation, there was a boom in the economy of Nigeria as it accounted for over eighty percent (80%) of the country's foreign exchange earnings. The discovery, to some extent, assisted the country's economic prosperity but has now become the bane of Nigeria's economic growth. It is so because the money earned by a country with less or little effort through petroleum resulted in the neglect of the agricultural sector, which consequently suffers a drastic decline (Toyin and Ann, 2005).

In addition to the above, the country's situation is persistently precarious. The economy remains in dire need of reflection to boost consumer aggregate demand and overall productivity. The labor market remains a serious threat. Simply put, the external debt service remained high and unsustainable except for the recent "debt relief" (equally a 'wait and see' situation).

It is very sad to note, however, the decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to fix the high price per barrel, as that was the beginning of Nigeria's economic metamorphosis into a monopolistic economy. The very presence of resources does not attain economic growth and stability but lies in the effective utilization of such, to provide necessities and to improve the standard of living of the citizens. It becomes pathetic for a country like Nigeria, which is endowed with vast, fertile and available land coupled with good climatic conditions and enough mineral resources, to still wallow in economic inefficiency.

Nigeria as a nation is in an urgent need of responsive leaders that are well focused to the yearnings and aspirations of its citizenry. Nigeria desires leaders who are optimistic about the future of the nation. Those willing to take practical steps to ensure that we diversify the economy, moving from the theoretical notions of diversification that has been over flogged to reviving the agricultural sector.

It is ludicrous that the services sector, which includes telecommunications and banking, has witnessed substantial growth, reflecting the country's evolving urban landscape, yet the manufacturing sector, which is also a very vital sector, faces challenges such as infrastructural deficiencies and inadequate power supply, hindering its full potential. Until these challenges are consciously addressed, Nigeria will continue to grapple with economic problems.

METHODS

This brings us to the second variable that we are looking into in this paper. At this juncture, the question of what family means arises, and we would like to answer this question using the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. It explains that it is both difficult to answer and highly subjective because the word family has shifted its meaning considerably, and it is currently applied in many different senses, and at least one of these senses may signify different things to different people. The earliest uses of family denoted "a group of persons in the service of an individual," a sense that is now archaic. Although this early meaning may seem farfetched from the way it is well-known.

Etymologically, the word comes from the Latin word familia, which means "household," a designation that includes both servants and relatives (Philip, 2020). In modern use, the family may refer to one of a number of different groups of people or things collectively, such as chemical compounds, related languages, plants and animals, and people who may or may not share ancestry. Family is often encountered in legal use, but even within the jargon of the law, it is not restricted to a single meaning. In many legal contexts, family denotes "individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption," but in others, the definition may be somewhat broader, encompassing groups of individuals not related by these things.

There are many different types of families: nuclear families, which consist of parents and their kids; extended families, which include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins; single-parent families; blended families, which are created through remarriage; parent families; and chosen families, which are non-biological relationships based on strong emotional bonds. Families perform practical tasks, including resource sharing, financial support, and caring



for young, old, or disabled family members, in addition to offering emotional and social support. Additionally, they pass along cultural norms, values, and customs from one generation to the next.

For the context of this work, we shall be looking at the family from one dimension which is a group of persons with same ancestry - a basic unit of the society, traditionally consisting of two parents rearing children (Stephen, 2015). It is important to say equally, that the family as a basic unit of the society performs various function such as the economic functions, the social function and the psychological function.

Economic Function. The economic functions of the family are the most visible aspect of the family because they encompass the basic needs of the family, such as the provision of shelter, food, clothing, health care, education financial support of family members. etc., as such, the economic situation of the country greatly affects this function of the family (Nancy, 1995). The economic function of the family can be discussed under various themes such as labor division, determination of Inheritance, and management of income, which is discussed subsequently.

Labor division could be discussed on the basis of the fact that the family comprises members of all ages, genders and capabilities according to which they work. Male members are considered to be the earning members who work outside, whereas the females have to look after the household duties (Adele and Elaine, 2012). However, this concept has considerably changed as more and more females are working to better the family's economic strength. The children always contribute to the household work according to their capacities, and families with grown-up children also assist the family financially.

Determination of Inheritance. The family has its own money and property. The head of the family runs and controls the family. The inheritance is handed over to the next senior members according to the system prevalent in the particular family. In the modern families, inheritance is the right of both daughters and sons unlike the old patriarchal society.

Management of Income. The family has to manage the total requirements of food, clothing, shelter, health and education of all members of the family within the family income. In modern times, all the members of the family try to contribute towards the total family income and this aspect is greatly impacted by the economic situation of the country.

Social Functions. Family is the basic entity of the society. Though it may be big or small, it is very important to a society because of various functions it performs which contributes to the continuous existence of the society. There are various social functions performed by the family such as socialization, determination of social status, recreation discussed below (Terrence, 2008).

Psychological Functions of the Family. It is also a very important function of the family as Families offer an environment of warmth, love, and understanding, which is essential for the emotional and psychological development of their members. The emotional stability provided in a family "fosters self-confidence and self-esteem in individuals, making them resilient and capable of dealing with life's challenges" (Stephen, 2015). These feelings of love, warmth, understanding, affection, respect, cooperation, faith, etc., play a very crucial role in the development and mental status of each member of the family, as these feelings make family bonds stronger.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Speech. Speech is the spoken language use for the purpose of verbally expressing ideas, thoughts, or feelings. It entails articulating words, sounds, and sentences in a way that communicates ideas and meaning to other people. Speech is an essential component of human communication and is used in social contact, education, politics, commerce, and entertainment, among other spheres of daily life. In order to effectively communicate meaning, emotion, and emphasis, effective speech frequently takes into account a variety of elements, including tone, intonation, tempo, and emphasis (Stephen E., 2019). Furthermore, in order to engage listeners and



accomplish their communication objectives, skilled presenters frequently modify their speeches to fit the audience and environment. They do this by using the right language, style, and rhetorical devices.

However, in the context of a family, speech refers to the spoken exchanges and interactions that occur between members of the family. It includes spoken language exchanges inside the family unit of ideas, emotions, knowledge, and experiences. Family communication is essential for building bonds, passing along traditions and values, settling disputes, and offering emotional support. Transmission of family lore, anecdotes, and customs from one generation to the next depends on speech. Families create a sense of continuity and belonging by preserving their history, cultural legacy, and collective identity via storytelling.

Theoretical Perspective to the Discuss: Rational Choice Theory. These discuss which borders on the impact of the economy on the family speech could be given a theoretical backing. As we know, the current economic situation of the country is occasioned by the adoption of two major economic policies, which are the policy of fuel subsidy removal and the floating of the Nigerian currency. We shall be adopting the rational choice theory, which, according to Itzhak (2010), holds that "individuals rely on rational calculations to make rational choices that result in outcomes aligned with their best interests."

Reid Hastie and Robyn M. Dawes (2010) posit that Rational choice theory suggests that individuals within a family unit might make decisions about family planning (such as whether to have children, how many, and when) based on their assessment of the costs and benefits associated with each option. Factors such as financial resources, career aspirations, and personal goals could all influence these decisions.

Rational choice theory suggests that families make financial decisions (such as budgeting, saving, and investing) based on their assessment of costs, benefits, and risks. It could involve prioritizing expenditures, choosing between alternative investments, or deciding whether to pool financial resources or keep them separate.

Rational choice theory can provide insights into how individuals navigate relationships within the family unit. For instance, individuals may weigh the costs and benefits of investing time and effort into maintaining relationships with family members, balancing their own needs for autonomy and intimacy with the desire to maintain familial bonds (Kenneth, 2012).

Within a household, rational choice theory can help explain how tasks and responsibilities are allocated among family members. Each member may weigh the costs (time, effort, skill required) and benefits (satisfaction, leisure time) of performing various tasks and negotiate roles accordingly. For example, one partner might take on more household chores if they perceive the benefits of doing so (e.g., maintaining harmony in the relationship) to outweigh the costs.

In general, rational choice theory provides a framework for comprehending how individuals within families make decisions in pursuit of their own and their family's well-being, even when family life encompasses complicated emotions, cultural norms, and social interactions.

Effect of the current economic situation on Family Speech. We shall be looking at the various ways in which the current economic situation has impacted the family speech, and we shall be doing this in line with the respondents to the questionnaire applied for this discussion.

This table shows the percentage of responses by respondents to the impact of the current economic situation on family speech.

Table 1. Impact of the Current Economic Situation on Family Speech

/N	Item	Percentage of respondents in agreement	percentage of respondents in Disagreement	Total
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1	A hard economy can significantly impact family speech by increasing stress and tension and affecting parent-child communication.	100 %	0%	100%
2	In hard economic times, families may find themselves discussing money matters more frequently and openly. It could involve conversations about job loss, debt management,	96%	4%	100%
3	Conversations within the family may revolve more around budgeting, cost-cutting measures, and strategies for coping with financial challenges.	87.5%	12.5%	100%
4	The economic situation of a family leads to the choice of words or violent speeches in the family	97.5%	2.5%	100%
5	The economic condition of a family leads to an increase in the number of school children and dropouts from tertiary institutions due to the inability to afford education	87.5%	12.5%	100%
6	The economic situation of a family could hinder the bond of unity and shared love in the family	98%	2%	100%
7	Economic hardship can affect parent-child communication patterns. Parents may feel pressured to discuss financial realities with their children in age-appropriate ways.	91.5%	8.5%	100%
8	Children may pick up on their parents' stress and respond with their concerns or questions.	87.5%	12.5%	100%
9	The current economic situation could lead to the loss of jobs by members of the family, leading to a worsened financial situation for the family	100%	0%	100%
10	The economic situation of the country leads to an increase in broken homes	100%	0%	100%
11	It leads to the inability of families to afford good health care	85%	15%	100%
12	Economic hardship can take an emotional toll on family members, affecting their mood, mental health, and overall well-being. This emotional strain can influence the way family members communicate with each other.	75%	25%	100%
13	In a hard economic communication within the family may become more supportive, empathetic, and collaborative.	68.5%	31.5%	100%
14	Economic hardship can lead to worries about financial stability and job security, which may spill over into family conversations.	92%	8%	100%
15	Economic hardship could lead to the relocation of families to accommodations that are not conducive, such as the use of shanties.	92%	8%	100%

Source: field survey 2024

The economic function of the family, just like we earlier said, is the most visible function of the family as it addresses family basics such as food, shelter, health, provision of financial support to members of the family and others. As such, due to the scarcity occasioned by economic hardship, the function of the family suffers immensely, as many families would not be able to keep up with the provision of these basic needs. From the above table, we can deduce that a difficult economic climate has a substantial impact on family communication by raising stress



and anxiety, changing priorities, bringing up money issues more frequently, impacting parent-child communication, causing emotional distress, and possibly building family resilience and support.

On issues regarding education, loss of jobs or pay cuts of employees, and provision of shelter, majority of the respondents supports the position that economic hardship leads to the inability of families to afford good education and good health care. Similarly, the evidence shows that it leads to loss of jobs and accommodation especially amongst families in the lower class of the society.

Having looked at the effect the economic situation (economic hardship) has on family speech, we should also look at ways in which we could checkmate these impacts because of the adverse effect they could have on the entirety of society. As such we are coming up with certain suggestions for both the family on how to cope during the period of economic hardship and the government in ensuring the reduced effect of economic hardship on the family through policies.

- a) On issues that borders on the challenges faced by the family in terms of the economic functions it is advised that families should adhere to financial management education, and adopt financial management skills by ensuring provisions for savings. Such savings will help to cushion the impact of the economic situation on the family.
- b) Families, particularly those headed by employees, should also learn how to diversify their sources of income so that, with numerous revenue streams, they can support their families through unpredictable economic times.
- c) The government could potentially intervene by introducing specific types of subsidies and offering palliatives to lessen the severity of the suffering that the populace is experiencing. In addition, government ought to be more people-centric and representative of the dreams and ambitions of the populace.
- d) In order to support families who lack the financial means to meet their members' educational demands, the government should also enact laws requiring education and making it accessible, with grants or loans available.
- e) In addition, the government should investigate the possibility of offering health insurance plans and ensuring that public health facilities are standard and reasonably priced.
- f) In terms of communication, families are urged to prioritize open communication and to create a supportive and united atmosphere during these trying times. Additionally, it would support the preservation of positive family dynamics and lessen the emotional, mental, and psychological strain on family ties.
- g) A family can also overcome financial challenges by creating a strong network of support within the community and encouraging a sense of solidarity.

CONCLUSION

As we address how a challenging economy affects family speech, we must advance laws that support low-income households. In order to lessen the negative consequences of economic downturns on families, access to affordable healthcare, housing aid and educational opportunities is essential. Additionally, the stigma and isolation that are frequently connected to financial difficulty can be lessened by promoting an environment of understanding and support within communities.

A difficult economic climate has a profound and wide-ranging effect on families, impacting every facet of daily life at home. Family dynamics, financial security, and mental and emotional health are all significantly impacted by economic adversity. Nevertheless, families can weather the storm and come out stronger as a unit with resiliency, companionship, and community support. Society must put the needs of struggling families first and endeavor to make the environment more just and encouraging for everyone. If the economy is good, family life, speech and even well-being will improve.

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