



PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FAMILY AND OTHER SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the perceived relationship between the family and other social institutions towards a sustainable society in Ondo State. Four research questions guided this study and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all inhabitants of Ondo City. A sample size of 133 respondents was purposively and randomly sampled. A validated four-point modified Likert scale structured questionnaire of 25 items was used for the study. The reliability coefficient determined using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a value of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency of the instrument. Data collected were statistically analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistical methods. The major findings indicated that family functions include ensuring continuity of the society through child-bearing and rearing, meeting the economic needs of the members, and socializing children. Sustainable development is viewed in the context of the United Nations Vision 2030, which serves as the basis for operations in every sector in Nigeria. Additionally, maternity homes and adoption centres, banks and insurance companies, and media perform some of the functions traditionally meant for the family. It was therefore recommended that families should return to their fundamental functions and for other social institutions to perform their functions while recognizing the importance of families in society.

Keywords: family institutions, globalization, social institutions, sustainable society

Introduction

The home is the basic building block of society, and the role played by the family cannot be underestimated. Traditionally, the family plays a crucial role in sustaining society through population growth and replenishment through procreation and adoption, social continuity through marriage and regulation of sexual activities, provision of essential needs like food, clothing, shelter, and economic support through income and employment. It also educates and equips family members with knowledge, competencies, socialization, and life skills, ultimately contributing to the development of capable members of society (Obinnura, 2022). Additionally, the home promotes good physical and mental health by caring for the sick and providing for the emotional and physical well-being and safety of frail and troubled family members of all ages. The home is a haven of emotional and psychological security, particularly through warmth, love, and companionship (Barnard, 2022). It equally provides an identity for its members through nomenclature, kinship, and a sense of attachment, fostering community, ethnic, family, and



national identity. These functions of the family are deeply espoused in the cultural ethos of Nigeria, especially in Ondo State. Sadly, however, the family is relinquishing many of its traditional functions through a gradual process that has successfully transformed the orientation and "big picture" of homes.

The family is letting go of its primary responsibilities due to the prolonged engagement of parents outside the home, as occasioned by civilization, industrialization, and globalization. It is glaring yet unsatisfying that while civilization has brought about life improvements and expanded existing knowledge, the accompanying industrialization and urbanization have continued to bring about many changes in family structure, especially through a sharp change in the life and occupational styles of family members. Apart from distortions in the forms of decline in patriarchal structure, distortion of gender-based roles, change in economic orientation, preference for unconventional family structures, and prevalence of divorce and separation, the family now shares or transfers much of its functions to other social institutions. The society is made up of institutions outside the home such as child care centres, elementary and secondary schools, institutions of higher education, job training programs, libraries, pre-school systems, and vocational centres. These institutions now take over the task of educating children and youths who are members of the family. Moreover, the media, educational, peer, religious, and recreational systems such as electronic media, libraries, organizations (e.g., community-based, faith-based, social), places of worship, radio, recreational clubs, schools, and television now play very significant roles in the socialization of children, probably more than the home does.

Although the family and social institutions perform very similar and interdependent functions, the relationship between them seems not to be as cordial as expected. This may be because each entity seeks to perform its perceived function exclusively and independently. This needs to be corrected if sustainable and vibrant societies are to be built. According to the United Nations (2020), the 17th Sustainable Development Goal is oriented at strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. United cooperation is crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The 17th goal emphasizes concerted efforts from nations worldwide to address pressing challenges and create a more equitable and sustainable future. Nations are to work tenaciously to end all forms of deprivation, including poverty and illiteracy. This is inextricably linked with strategies intended not only to preserve our nature and tackle imminent environmental concerns such as climate change but also to improve the quality of health and education delivery, reduce inequality, and encourage economic growth. In line with these aspirations, the International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE, 2019) identifies households as building blocks of sustainable societies. Addressing complex interrelated human and environmental problems, the field of Home Economics aims to achieve optimal and sustainable living conditions for individuals, families, and their communities while acknowledging their global interdependence.

Moreover, there is an imminent need for effective strategies to improve the relationship between the family and other social institutions to ensure sustainable development. In Ondo State, there is



no retrievable record of a scientific study of the interaction of the home and other social institutions such as schools, hospitals, religious institutions, banking institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations in terms of the interrelatedness of their essential functions. Hence, this study investigated the relationship between the family and other social institutions towards a sustainable society in the Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State.

Statement of the Problem

The observed discord between the family and other social institutions in Ondo State undermines sustainable development and familial well-being. This disharmony, characterized by a decline in traditional family values, inadequate support for family structures, and insufficient inter-institutional collaboration, has far-reaching implications for societal progress. The study posits that the intricate interplay between the family and institutions, such as education, economy, religion, and governance, is pivotal to achieving a sustainable society. However, existing challenges, including limited access to quality education and economic opportunities, coupled with ineffective governance, hinder the realization of this potential. This research seeks to examine the nature of this relationship, identify the specific challenges, and propose strategies to enhance the synergy between the family and other social institutions for sustainable development in Ondo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What are the perceived major functions of the family in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?
2. What is the perceived relationship between the functions of the family and those of other social institutions in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?
3. What is the perception of family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State about sustainable development?
4. What are the perceived strategies for improving the relationship between the family and other social institutions for sustainable development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between the perceptions about the functions of the family and the perception of sustainable development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State
- Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State regarding the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions.
- Ho3:** There is no significant difference in the perceptions of unmarried and married family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State regarding the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions.



Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the perception about the relationship between the family and other social institutions towards a sustainable society in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. The target population for this study comprised all inhabitants of Ondo City, estimated at 459,776 (World Population Review, 2022; United Nations, 2022). Using Taro Yamane's formula, an initial sample size of 399 was calculated, which was subsequently reduced to 133 respondents to enhance feasibility. To ensure representation, a disproportionate stratified sampling technique was used based on gender, educational status, occupation, and income level. A structured questionnaire with a four-point modified Likert scale was developed to collect data on the perceived functions of the family, interactions with other social institutions, and perceptions of sustainable development. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items that underwent content validity through expert reviews. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating good internal consistency. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and t-test to test the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceived major functions of the family in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?

Table 1: *Perceived Functions of the Family in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State*

SN	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Decision
1	To ensure continuity of the society through procreation and rearing	3.53	0.61	1st	Agreed
2	To meet the basic economic needs of family members	3.36	0.61	4th	Agreed
3	To socialize (transmit social values and traditions to) children	3.35	0.74	5th	Agreed
4	To provide recreational facilities for the use of family members	3.32	0.63	7th	Agreed
5	To give identity, name and kinship ties to members of society	3.34	0.71	6th	Agreed
6	To regulate sexual activities among members of society	3.14	0.81	10th	Agreed
7	To educate (teach knowledge, competencies and life skills) to members	3.50	0.62	2nd	Agreed
8	To instill religious knowledge and lifestyle in its members	3.27	0.75	9th	Agreed
9	To promote good physical, mental and psychological health of family members	3.49	0.62	3rd	Agreed
10	To provide protection for vulnerable members such as the sick, aged, and handicapped.	3.32	0.80	8th	Agreed

Findings from Table 1 reveal the perceived functions of the family by the respondents in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The mean values of the responses are greater than the cut-off points of 2.50, ranging from 3.14 to 3.53. In descending order of magnitude, the perceived functions of the family include ensuring continuity of society, education, promotion of health, meeting basic economic needs, socialization, means of identity, recreation, protection against vulnerability, religiousness and regulation of sexual activities among members of the society. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.61 to 0.81, indicating that the responses to each question item are moderately dispersed from the mean.



Research Question 2: What is the perceived relationship between the functions of the family and those of other social institutions in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?

Table 2: *Perceived Relationship between the Functions of the Family and Other Social Institutions in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State*

SN	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Maternity homes and adoption centres play an important role in procreation.	3.59	0.57	1st	Agreed
2	Banks and insurance companies meet the economic needs of people in the society	3.06	0.74	9th	Agreed
3	The media, school and peers play important roles in a child's socialization	3.38	0.75	2nd	Agreed
4	Entertainment industries, recreational centres and organized sports provide recreation	3.36	0.60	3rd	Agreed
5	Religious affiliation and club membership give identity and name to society members	3.29	0.72	5th	Agreed
6	Sexual activities are regulated by one's instinct and ethics of one's religion	3.06	0.76	10th	Agreed
7	Primary and secondary schools, vocational centres, and institutions of higher learning now take up the role of educating children	3.25	0.73	6th	Agreed
8	Faith-based organizations and religious media now cater for the religious needs of people	3.12	0.80	7th	Agreed
9	Clinics, therapies, and counselling centres are concerned with people's physical and mental needs	3.30	0.82	4th	Agreed
10	Charity organizations, social workers and old people's homes perform the function of protecting family members	3.08	0.79	8th	Agreed

Table 2 shows the perception of the respondents on the relationship between the functions of the family and those of other social institutions. The mean values of the responses are greater than the cut-off points of 2.50, ranging from 3.06 to 3.59. The responses indicate that, in descending order of magnitude, the primary functions of the family are also performed by maternity homes and adoption centres (procreation), the media, school and peers (socialization), entertainment industries and recreational centres (recreation), clinics, therapies, and counselling centres (health), club membership (identity), primary and secondary school vocational centres (education), faith-based organization and religious media (religiousness, identity and regulation of sexual activities), charity organizations, social workers and old people's home (protection from vulnerability), and banks and insurance companies (economic needs). The standard deviation values ranged from 0.57 to 0.82, indicating that the responses to each question item are moderately dispersed from the mean value.



Research Question 3: What is the perception of family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State about sustainable development?

Table 3: *Perception of Family Members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State about Sustainable Development*

SN	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Vision 2030 is well known as the United Nations' effort blueprint for building a peaceful and progressive world	3.43	0.61	3rd	Agreed
2	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the basis for running every sector in Nigeria	3.19	0.61	5th	Agreed
3	Developmental projects must be undertaken with the well-being of future generations in mind	3.44	0.67	2nd	Agreed
4	The strength of the family system in a society determines the extent of its development	3.32	0.71	4th	Agreed
5	Inter-institution cooperation is necessary for the sustainable development of a society	3.50	0.69	1st	Agreed

Table 3 above shows the perception of family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State about sustainable development. The mean values of the responses are greater than the cut-off points of 2.50, ranging from 3.19 to 3.50. In decreasing order of magnitude, the respondents perceived that inter-institution cooperation is necessary, developmental projects should consider future generations in mind, vision 2030 is well known, the strength of the family system in a society determines the extent of its development, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the basis for running every sector in Nigeria. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.61 to 0.71, indicating that the responses to each question item moderately dispersed from the mean.

Research Question 4: What are the perceived strategies for improving the relationship between the family and other social institutions for sustainable development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State?

Table 4: *Perceived Strategies for Improving the Relationship Between the Family and Other Social Institutions for Sustainable Development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State*

SN	Items	\bar{x}	SD	Rank	Decision
1	Families should be enlightened on the need to return to their basic functions	3.68	0.48	1st	Agreed
2	Other social institutions should be disengaged while the family is empowered to perform all essential functions	3.19	0.75	4th	Agreed
3	Families should look up to other institutions to help with life's essential functions	3.21	0.77	3rd	Agreed
4	Other social institutions in the society should depend on the family for their functions	2.80	0.96	5th	Agreed
5	The family and other social institutions should relate mutually and cordially	3.43	0.75	2nd	Agreed

Table 4 presents the responses of the respondents on the strategy to be adopted in facilitating the interactions between the family and other social institutions for sustainable development. The mean values of the responses are greater than the cut-off points of 2.50, ranging from 2.80 to 3.68. In decreasing order of magnitude, they agreed that families should be enlightened on the



need to return to their basic functions, the family and other social institutions should relate mutually and cordially, and families should look up to other institutions to help with life essential functions. Their responses are lower on whether other social institutions should be disengaged while the family is empowered to perform all essential functions, or that other social institutions in the society should depend on the family for their functions. The standard deviation values ranged from 0.48 to 0.96, indicating that the responses to each question item are moderately dispersed from the mean value.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the perceptions about the functions of the family and the perception of sustainable development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

Table 5: *PPMC of the Relationship Between the Perceptions about the Functions of the Family and Perception of Sustainable Development in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State*

Variables	N	r	p	Decision
Female	133	0.63	0.00	Positive, high and significant

Table 5 shows that the coefficient of the correlation between the perceptions about the functions of the family and the perception of sustainable development is 0.63, which is positive and high. This implies that an increase in the perceptions about the functions of the family corresponds to a high increase in the perception of sustainable development. The probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05 which implies that the relationship is significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State about the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions.

Table 6: *Independent Samples t-test of the Difference in the Perceptions of Male and Female Family Members about the Relationship Between Family Functions and those of other Social Institutions*

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	T	df	p	Decision
Male	37	3.24	0.35	-0.19	131	0.85	Insignificant
Female	96	3.26	0.42				

Table 6 shows that the obtained probability value ($p = 0.85$) is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, indicating that the difference in the way male and female family members perceive the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions is not significant. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that, though the female respondents have a slightly higher mean value of perception ($\bar{x} = 3.26$) than the male ($\bar{x} = 3.24$), the difference is statistically negligible.



Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of unmarried and married family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State regarding the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions.

Table 7: *Independent Samples t-test of the Difference in the Perceptions of Unmarried and Married Family Members about the Relationship Between Family Functions and those of other Social Institutions*

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	df	ρ	Decision
Unmarried	117	3.25	0.38	-0.44	131	0.66	Insignificant
Married	16	3.30	0.58				

Table 7 shows that the obtained probability value ($\rho = 0.66$) is greater than the alpha value of 0.05, indicating that the difference in the way unmarried and married family members perceive the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions is not significant. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This implies that, though the married respondents have a slightly higher mean value of perception ($\bar{x} = 3.30$) than the unmarried ($\bar{x} = 3.25$), the difference is statistically negligible.

Discussion of Findings

In answer to the first research question, the perceived functions of the family include ensuring continuity of the society, education, promotion of health, meeting basic economic needs, socialization, means of identity, recreation, protection against vulnerability, religiousness and regulation of sexual activities among members of the society. These functions align with the foundational roles traditionally ascribed to the family unit across diverse cultures. This finding resonates with contemporary sociological perspectives that emphasize the family's role as a primary agent of socialization and support (Nickerson, 2024). The inclusion of functions such as protection against vulnerability and sexual regulation underscores the family's multifaceted role in providing both material and emotional security for its members. This aligns with research highlighting the family's capacity to buffer against life's challenges and promote overall well-being (Thomas *et al.*, 2017).

This study also found that the primary functions of the family are also performed by other social institutions such as maternity homes the media, schools, entertainment industries clinics, faith-based organizations and banks. This finding indicates a significant shift in the division of labour within society. This trend is consistent with the concept of institutionalization, where social functions previously carried out within the family are increasingly assumed by formal organizations (Goldman *et al.*, 2020). The outsourcing of certain family functions to specialized institutions is a response to societal changes such as globalization, urbanization, and the increasing participation of women in the workforce. While these institutions offer essential services, their role in supplementing rather than replacing family functions is crucial for maintaining social cohesion and individual well-being (Welsh Government, 2023).

In answer to the third research question, members of the Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State perceived that inter-institution cooperation is necessary, developmental projects should consider future generations in mind, vision 2030 is well known, the strength of the family



system in a society determines the extent of its development, and that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the basis for running every sector in Nigeria. The respondents' association of inter-institutional cooperation, future-oriented planning, and the strength of the family system with sustainable development reflects a holistic understanding of the concept. This perspective aligns with the broader definition of sustainability as encompassing economic, social, and environmental dimensions (Purvis *et al.*, 2019). The recognition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development suggests that the respondents are aware of global efforts to address pressing challenges. This finding underscores the importance of public awareness and engagement in achieving sustainable development goals (United Nations Habitat, 2020). Some of the strategies suggested to facilitate the relationship between the family and other social institutions for sustainable development include enlightenment of families on the need to return to their basic functions, the family and other social institutions seeing themselves as interdependent rather than independent. The suggested strategies of enlightening families about their roles and fostering interdependence between family and other institutions indicate a recognition of the need for collaborative efforts to address societal challenges. This aligns with the concept of ecosystemic thinking, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of various systems (Guy-Evans, 2024). Encouraging families to return to their "basic functions" suggests a desire to strengthen traditional family bonds and values. However, it is essential to consider the evolving nature of family structures and roles in contemporary society. A more nuanced approach that acknowledges the diversity of family forms and the importance of work-life balance might be necessary.

This study found that an increase in the perceptions about the functions of the family corresponds to a high and significant increase in the perception of sustainable development among family members in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The positive correlation between perceptions about family functions and sustainable development highlights the crucial role of strong families in building resilient communities. This finding supports the notion that social capital, fostered within families and communities, is essential for achieving sustainable development goals (Zhang *et al.*, 2024; Pendergast, 2018). The results suggest that investing in family well-being can yield significant returns in terms of environmental sustainability and social progress. From the test of the second null hypothesis, this study found that the difference in the way male and female family members perceive the relationship between family functions and those of other social institutions is not significant, though the female respondents have a slightly higher mean value of perception than male. This suggests a growing convergence of gender roles in contemporary society. These finding challenges traditional stereotypes and highlights the increasing participation of both men and women in family and societal responsibilities (Hentschel *et al.*, 2019). However, while the overall differences may not be statistically significant, it is essential to explore potential nuances in perceptions through further qualitative research.

From the test of the third null hypothesis, this study found that the difference in the way unmarried and married family members perceive the relationship between family functions and



those of other social institutions is not significant, though the married respondents have a slightly higher mean value of perception than the unmarried. This indicates a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing individuals and families in contemporary society. This finding suggests that both married and unmarried individuals are aware of the evolving roles of family and other institutions (Sharma, 2024). Nevertheless, further research is needed to explore potential differences in perceptions based on specific marital statuses (e.g., divorced, widowed) and their implications for family well-being and social participation.

Conclusion

The family is the fundamental building block of the society that is responsible for perpetuating the society, education, promotion of health, and meeting the basic economic needs. To perform these functions effectively, the family depends on several other institutions in the society. The relationship between the home and these other social institutions is expected to be mutual and cordial, to build strong and sustainable societies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that:

1. Family members should return to their basic functions, as they are the best to perform these roles.
2. Families should identify the areas where they need help from other social institutions and be prompt to maximize such help when available.
3. Other social institutions should perform their functions with recourse to the importance of families in society.
4. The government and other agencies pursuing the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals should consider the need for synergy between the home and other institutions in their strategies.

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