

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING ON YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT: The study was on the “number of children in the family and its psychological wellbeing on youths”. The study had 74 undergraduates with age range 18-33 years, SD of 3.13672, correlational design, cluster sampling, and Person Product Moment Correlation statistics. Findings showed there was negative non-significant correlation between number of children and psychological wellbeing, so that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces; Number of children had negative significant relationship with “personal growth” attributes of psychological wellbeing, in which among all the attributes of psychological wellbeing, “personal growth” was most adversely affected by the number of children; and Number of children had positive non-significant relationship with “self-acceptance” attribute of psychological wellbeing, whereby some individuals still perceive themselves very positively notwithstanding the impacts of number of children in their family. Recommendation was for families to have number of children they can conveniently take care of.

KEYWORDS: Number of Children, Family, Psychological Wellbeing, Youths

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, studies on psychology changed direction after Seligman’s (2018) reminder: “Psychology is not just the study of weakness and damage, it is also the study of strength and virtue.” In other words, “What is wrong with people?” was the question of 20th century whereas “What is right about people?” became the question of 21st (Snyder & Lopez, 2017). This change also affected the popular topics in the field of psychology; as some positive experiences, personality traits and civic virtues, like well-being, life satisfaction, hope, optimism, happiness, courage, spirituality and tolerance, are listed as being in the field of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2010).

Moore and Keyes (2013) defined well-being in adulthood as a combination of cognitive functioning, behavioral functioning, physical health and mental health. The cognitive functioning component includes positive thought processes whereas restorative sleeping is an example for physical health. In addition, Keyes and Waterman (2013) stated that the level of well-being also indicates how the individual is being involved in communal activities, such as volunteering and voting, and how one feels responsible to others. Researchers also presented people, who report high levels of well-being, consider themselves as “sources of intergenerational transmission of important social skills”. Two approaches for well-being: hedonic and eudaimonic defined by Ryan and Deci (2011).

Hedonic well-being focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance, whereas eudaimonic well-being focuses on meaning and level of functioning in life and human potential. On the other hand, well-being literature designated two dimensions for well-being which are subjective and psychological well-being. Subjective well-being was defined as the individual’s self-assessment related to life events and emerges as a result of the feeling of mastery, experiencing pleasurable activities and positive relations (Diener, Sapyta, & Suh, 1998).

In addition, subjective well-being was defined as the balance of positive and negative affect and satisfaction (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). Whereas, Bradburn (1969) defined psychological well-being in terms of positive and negative affect while Keyes et al. (2002) considered psychological well-being as the perceived commitment to existential challenges. When these approaches are considered together, subjective well-being, which emphasizes happiness, overlaps the hedonic approach while psychological well-being, which underlines the use of human potential, matches the eudaimonic approach (Deci & Ryan, 2008). To confine the elements of psychological well-being, Ryff (1989) developed a six dimensional, which are self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth, model. Ryff established this model with an eudaimonic

approach, based on the theories of scientists, namely Erikson, Maslow, Rogers, Allport, Neugarten, Bühler, Jung, Jahoda and Frankl (Ryff & Singer, 2018).

Self-acceptance defines how an individual acknowledges positive and negative aspects of own personality and is pleased about past experiences. Individuals who are reported to have positive relations with others are able to establish warm and trusting relations, experience empathy and intimacy as well as understanding the dynamics of a relationship. Both autonomy and environmental mastery are concerning how an individual relates with social environment. Autonomy refers to the obedience of an individual to others whereas mastery refers to the ability to manipulate environment due to personal needs. Purpose in life is regarded as the fifth dimension of psychological well-being and refers whether an individual has aims for living and believes the meaning of life.

The final dimension is personal growth and indicates an individual's competence for development and exploration. Research on psychological well-being focused on cultural differences (Diener & Diener, 1995; Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997), individual differences (Sheldon & Niemiec, 2016; Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2014; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002), change in psychological well-being through life span (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2018; Shields & Price, 2015) and gender differences due to gender stereotypes (Mills, Grasmick, Morgan, & Wenk, 2012; Roothman, Kirsten, & Wissing, 2013). Hence, this present study focus on the extent to which numbers of children will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among couples in Aguata Local Government in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Psychological well-being has recently been discussed upon the happiness of individuals within the framework of several variables. Ryff (2019) mentioned that psychological well-being was a concept to be evaluated within the scope of positive psychology. Ryff (1989) defined psychological well-being as individuals' having the power to struggle in order to establish the balance between their life anxiety and individual and social interests. According to him, well-being should be explained through an integrative understanding benefiting from life

development, mental health and clinical viewpoint. Being different from happiness, well-being has been discussed as individuals' effort to realize their own real potential. For that reason, he was influenced, especially in his studies related to psychological well-being, from development psychology, the concepts of self-realization, maturity, and functionality.

In reference to this viewpoint, Ryff (2015) expressed that happiness was not the key message, and happiness could be as result of a good life. The factors that can be expressed as good life or psychological well-being includes positive relationships with the others, environmental domination, autonomy, life purpose, personal development and self-acceptance. According to Ryff (2015), the concept of psychological well-being was a multi-dimensional structure including the life attitudes of individuals rather than a simple combination of positive-negative emotions and life satisfaction (subjective well-being). Hence, this study wants to investigate if numbers of children will correlate with psychological well-being among couples in Aguata L.G.A in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

1. To examine if overall psychological well-being of youths will significantly correlate with the number of children in their family.
2. To examine whether various perspectives of psychological wellbeing of youths will significantly correlate with the number of children in their family.

Research Questions

1. To what extent will over all psychological well-being of youths correlate with the number of children in their family?
2. In what way will various perspectives of psychological wellbeing of youths will correlate with the number of children in their family.

Significance of the study

1. Theoretically, this study will add to the existing literatures on the concept of psychological well-being among couples as well as the extent to which it can be affected by numbers of children.
2. Practically, this study will be useful to the counsellors in providing relevant psychological guidance to their clients on their psychological well-being.

3. Also, this study will help couples to know how to manage their mental health when they start having children.

Operational Definition of Terms

Number of children: The definite or absolute number of children given birth to or perceived to be the bona-fide children in a family.

Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being is an individual's subjective wellbeing and behavioural comfort as measured with Ryff Psychological well-being scale by Ryff (1989).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Need Hierarchy Theory of Psychological well-being by Maslow (1943): Maslow's theory states that there are five need sets in order: Physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, status and esteem, and actualization. The demands of individuals and civilizations change throughout time, and so do their efforts to satisfy them. This is true for everyone, and it can be applied to a wide range of situations, from individuals in smaller groups to whole nations. As an individual or a group expands in size, their expectations rise, but their willingness to have their needs met decreases.

One's personal well-being depends on a variety of factors, including one's physical well-being, the stability of one's family, one's financial well-being, one's job security, and one's sense of belonging. With this hierarchy, it's clear why these requirements were arranged in a pyramid, with physiological needs first, followed by actualization needs. To put it another way, Maslow believes that people's needs change throughout their lives, and they will be dissatisfied, even if they aren't conscious of it. According to the theory, the most fundamental and urgent needs of people are served first, and then those farther up the value chain are handled.

Empirical Review

Psychological Well-Being

The correlation between age and well-being is recently studied by Blanchflower and Oswald (2008) who considered happiness as an indicator and concluded that well-being displays a U-shaped change as the age changes. The researchers studied with a large sample from USA and Europe, and found that well-

being degrades to the lowest level in middle ages. The European sample included Turkish participants and the turning age of the U-shape for Turkish sample is found to be 45.

U-shape correlation is also found by Shields and Price (2005) who stated the minimum level of psychological well-being is around the age of 34. On the other hand, the change of happiness on life cycle showed a slight increase from 18 to midlife and decrease afterwards as the satisfaction from several life domains increase through midlife but decline after midlife in Easterlin's (2006) study.

In addition, Keyes and colleagues (2002) stated that the younger adults with less education report lower levels of subjective and psychological well-being. In addition, gender differences on psychological well-being are a common topic studied generally in terms of gender roles.

Cenkseven (2004) conducted a study while Tuzgöl (2004) studied how the subjective well-being level of university students varies and they shared gender, socio-economic status, and locus of control variables. Neuroticism, extraversion, perceived satisfaction of interaction with dates and parents, external locus of control, and perceived satisfaction of recreation activities were listed as the predictors of both subjective well-being and psychological well-being by Cenkseven (2004).

Hypotheses

1. Over all psychological well-being of youths will not significantly correlate with the number of children in their family.
2. Various perspectives of psychological wellbeing of youths will not significantly correlate with the number of children in their family.

METHOD

Participants: The participants for the study were the students of the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. They were mostly youths with age SD of 3.13672, the minimum age of 18 years, maximum age of 33 years, and average (mean) age of 33 years. The sample distribution of the participants is given in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample Distribution of the Participants

Categories Variables	Sampled Groups	Number of Samples
GENDER	Male	41
	Female	33
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	MSc	18
	BSc	46
	Diploma	10
YEAR OF STUDY	Year 1	7
	Year 2	14
	Year 3	6
	Year 4	46
	Year 5	1
DEPARTMENTS	English	2
	Philosophy	5
	Economics	2
	Sociology	5
	History	3
	Psychology	30
	Business Administration	1
	Mass Communication	15
	Religion	1
	Architecture	1
	Political Science	4
	Theater Art	1
	Criminology	2
	Entrepreneurship	1
	Igbo	1
PROGRAMME	Regular	61
	Part-Time	6
	Postgraduate	7

Source: Questionnaire primary data

Cluster sampling was used to select the youths' groups, which include the gender, educational level, year of study, Departments, and programme. Incidental sampling was used to select the participants based on their availability and willing to participate in the study, which could explain why some participants are relatively very small.

Instrument: Psychological wellbeing was a continuous variable, in which psychological wellbeing scale was used to collect data on it. Other continuous variables of the study were age and the number of children, in which the participants gave their ages and the number of children in their respective families. Discrete data were also collected from categorical variables of gender, educational levels, year of study, Departments, and programme. The psychological wellbeing scale had 0.92 convergent validity with life satisfaction scale, as well test-retest reliability of 0.89.

Procedure: The study was conducted among the students of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria. The students used fall within age bracket of youths. Both the regular, part-time, and postgraduate students were sampled. Two

research assistants very conversant with the objectives of the study were used. The psychological wellbeing scale was administered on the participants on separate days spanning a period of two weeks. The instrument had two sections. The Section A examined the number of children and other personal information of the participants, while the Section B examined the participants' psychological wellbeing. The instruments were collected after being responded to instantly. Some efforts were made to urge the respondents to cooperate in participating in the study. Some declined to do so and were not urged further. Clarification questions were entertained from the respondents. As the instruments were being collected after being responded to, they were checked for errors and inaccuracies. The attentions of participants were drawn to their errors and inaccuracies if any. In some cases, some participants adamantly refused to correct their errors. Such instruments were discarded from the analyses.

Design/Statistics: The design of the study was a correlational design. The study aimed at finding the relationships existing between number of children in the family and the psychological wellbeing of the youths. The

statistics employed were inferential analysis, and descriptive statistics. The inferential statistic was the Pearson product moment correlation. It tested the relationship between the independent variable (number of children in

the family) and the dependent variables (psychological wellbeing, and its attributes). The descriptive statistics examined the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis performances in the study.

RESULTS

Both the inferential and descriptive results are presented. Similarly, other fall out results are also presented.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Number of Children and Psychological Wellbeing

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Error	SD	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
GENDER	74	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	74	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
AGE	74	18	33	1702.5	23.0068	.36464	3.13672	.855	.279	.786	.552
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	74	1	11	333	4.5000	.24052	2.06901	.472	.279	.180	.552
YEAR OF STUDY	74	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
DEPARTMENT	74	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
PROGRAMME	74	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING	74	78	196	11405	154.1216	2.24251	19.29082	-.543	.279	2.053	.552
Autonomy	74	6	35	1959	26.4730	.53227	4.57876	-1.212	.279	4.195	.552
Environmental Mastery	74	15	34	1884	25.4595	.44804	3.85415	-.240	.279	1.165	.552
Personal Growth	74	8	37	1926	26.0270	.57563	4.95175	-.419	.279	1.081	.552
Positive Relations	74	11	35	1939	26.2027	.54626	4.69911	-.596	.279	.461	.552
Purpose Life	74	7	36	1785	24.1216	.56129	4.82843	-.416	.279	1.148	.552
Self-Acceptance	74	9	34	1880	25.4054	.56326	4.84533	-.697	.279	.506	.552
Valid N (listwise)	74										

Source: Questionnaire primary data

Table 2 showed the average number of children in a family as 4. The skewness was negative for psychological wellbeing (-0.543), indicating the youths lacked psychological wellbeing. The Kurtosis of 2.053 indicated very little experience of psychological wellbeing among the youths.

Table 3: Correlations Analyses for Number of Children and Psychological Wellbeing

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. NUMBER OF CHILDREN	1							
2. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING	-.108	1						
3. Autonomy	-.076	.647**	1					
4. Environmental Mastery	-.029	.536**	.256*	1				
5. Personal Growth	-.278*	.684**	.519**	.309**	1			
6. Positive Relations	-.049	.650**	.065	.275*	.261*	1		
7. Purpose Life	-.002	.749**	.401**	.210	.351**	.569**	1	
8. Self-Acceptance	.022	.780**	.440**	.291*	.395**	.550**	.517**	1

** significant @ $P \leq .001$ or * significant @ $P \leq .05$; Ho; N = 74. Source: Questionnaire primary data

Table 4 showed a negative non-significant correlation between number of children and psychological wellbeing ($p > 0.05$, $r = -0.108$, $N = 74$). It indicates that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces. Its non-significant means it is not generally applicable to all participants. However, number of children had negatively significant

relationship with “personal growth” attributes of psychological wellbeing ($p \leq 0.05$, $r = -0.278$, $N = 74$). It indicates that of all the attributes of psychological wellbeing, “personal growth” was most adversely affected by the number of children. Ancillary, number of children had positive non-significant relationship with “self-acceptance” ($p > 0.05$, $r = 0.022$, $N = 74$)

attribute of psychological wellbeing. It indicates that some individuals still perceive themselves very positively notwithstanding the impacts of number of children in their family.

Summary of Findings/Results

Correlational finding

1. There was negative non-significant correlation between number of children and psychological wellbeing, so that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces.
2. Number of children had negative significant relationship with “personal growth” attributes of psychological wellbeing, in which among all the attributes of psychological wellbeing, “personal growth” was most adversely affected by the number of children.
3. Number of children had positive non-significant relationship with “self-acceptance” attribute of psychological wellbeing, whereby some individuals still perceive themselves very positively notwithstanding the impacts of number of children in their family.

Descriptive finding

4. The psychological wellbeing of the youths was negatively skewed, which shows poor psychological wellbeing of the youths.
5. All the attributes of psychological wellbeing were all negatively skewed, showing very poor psychological wellbeing of the youths.

DISCUSSION

The study examined number of children in the family and its psychological wellbeing on youths in Aguata L.G.A in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that there was negative non-significant correlation between number of children and psychological wellbeing, so that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces. Also, Number of children had negative significant relationship with “personal growth” attributes of psychological wellbeing, in which among all the attributes of psychological wellbeing, “personal growth” was most adversely affected by the number of children. Furthermore, Number of children had positive non-significant relationship with “self-acceptance” attribute of psychological wellbeing, whereby some individuals still perceive themselves very

positively notwithstanding the impacts of number of children in their family.

The findings relate with the findings of some studies on psychological well-being such as Ryff (1989), who found that there is correlation between demographic factors, including age and gender, and psychological well-being. Furthermore, Cirhinlioğlu (2006) concluded that life satisfaction and psychological well-being will ascend if the personal characteristics are more consistent with cultural characteristics. Cirhinlioğlu (2006) also reported higher levels of positive relations with personal growth, self-acceptance and autonomy, similarly to what is found in this current study.

Implications of the Study

1. From the study, it is clear that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces.
2. It is glaring from the study that giving birth to many children can affect the psychological well-being as this will breed so many thoughts which ranges from how to cater for the children to how to ensure they are all doing well in their endeavours.
3. With this findings couples are encouraged to give birth to the number of children they can adequately cater for.

Limitations of the Study

The result of this study is limited by the following considerations:

1. Participants were sampled from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. Thus, generalizability of the findings may be limited to undergraduates in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Also, further researchers should focus on finding out if other variables such as personality, optimism, culture and social intelligence can correlate with psychological well-being of youths.

Recommendations

Based on the study, it was recommended that:

1. Couples are encouraged to give birth to numbers of children they can take care of, as this will help them to be free from worries that can affect their psychological well-being.

Conclusions

The study investigated number of children in the family and its psychological wellbeing on youths in Aguata L.G.A in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that there was negative non-significant correlation between number of children and psychological wellbeing, so that as the number of children increases, the psychological wellbeing reduces, Number of children had negative significant relationship with “personal growth” attributes of psychological wellbeing, in which among all the attributes of psychological wellbeing, “personal growth” was most adversely affected by the number of children, Number of children had positive non-significant relationship with “self-acceptance” attribute of psychological wellbeing, whereby some individuals still perceive themselves very positively notwithstanding the impacts of number of children in their family.

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Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale

S/N	Autonomy	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.					
2	My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.					
3	I tend to worry about what other people think of me.					
4	I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.					
5	I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.					
6	It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.					
7	I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.					
S/N	ENVIRONMENT MASTERY	SA	A	U	D	DA
1	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.					
2	The demands of everyday life often get me down.					
3	I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.					
4	I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.					
5	I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities					
6	have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.					
7	have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.					
S/N	PERSONAL GROWTH	SA	A	U	D	DA
1	I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.					
2	I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world					
3	When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.					
4	I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a person overtime.					
5	Do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.					
6	For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.					
7	I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.					
S/N	POSITIVE RELATIONS	SA	A	U	D	DA
1	Most people see me as loving and affectionate.					
2	Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.					
3	I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.					
4	enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.					
5	People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.					
6	I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.					
7	I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.					
S/N	PURPOSE IN LIFE	SA	A	U	D	DA
1	live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.					
2	I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.					
3	My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.					
4	I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplishing life.					
5	I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.					
6	Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them					
7	sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.					
S/N	SELF ACCEPTANCE	SA	A	U	D	DA
1	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.					
2	In general, I feel confident and positive about myself					
3	feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.					
4	I like most aspects of my personality					
5	In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.					
6	My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.					
7	When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.					

Source: Ryff (1989).