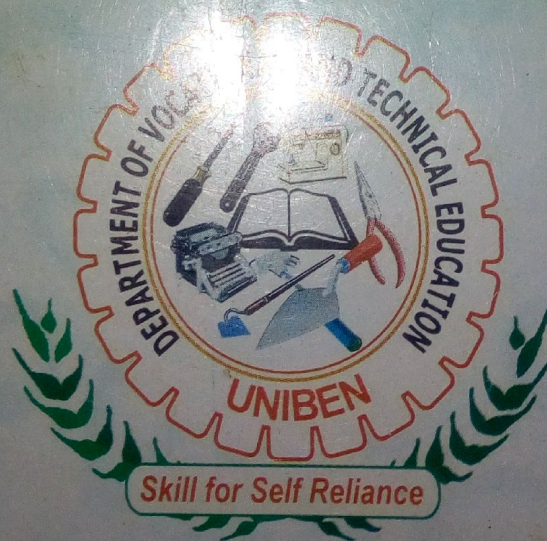


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# CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN FAMILY CRISES IN THE TEACHING AND NURSING PROFESSION IN KWARA AND EDO STATES. NIGERIA.

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined types of family crises experienced by teachers and nurses, and also investigated causes of family crises and coping strategies adopted in crises situations. A descriptive survey method was adopted using a four point Likert type questionnaire. An instrument titled Family Crises Questionnaire (FCQ) was used to collect data. The instrument was administered on 150 Teachers and 150 Nurses randomly selected from two States and two Teaching Hospitals in Kwara South and Egor Local Government Areas of Kwara and Edo State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study and three hypotheses formulated. Data were analysed using mean score and standard deviation, while t-test was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Result revealed that both teachers and nurses go through different types of family crises, ranging from financial, sexual, physical abuse, health and educational crises. There is a significance difference in types, rate and degree of crises experienced by teachers and nurses. Lack of understanding and individual differences were agreed to be major causes of family crises. Hidden talents, cooperation, and seeking for professional help were among the coping strategies that should be adopted to combat family crises. The paper recommended that family members should be optimistic, accept challenges and help each other to have high self esteem and be self reliant.*

## **Introduction**

Family crisis as a frequently studied subject in families is very paramount and relevant if families will amount to anything in relation to Home Economics aim of promoting, and improving the quality of life of individuals and families. Crisis period is a dangerous or worrying time: a situation or period in which things are very uncertain, difficult, or painful, especially a time when action

must be taken to avoid complete disaster or breakdown. It is also a critical moment: a time when something very important for the future happens or is decided (Microsoft Encarta, 2009).

Olson & DeFrain, (2006) defined crisis as any sharp or decisive change for which old patterns are inadequate. It also defines it as a turning point in life that can lead in either a negative or positive direction. At present, most Nigerian families are at a cross road. The Nigerian economy is undergoing its most severe economic crisis since the Biafra war of the sixties. Currently, she is experiencing a staggering rate of inflation, as well as experiencing a severe recession, as the unemployment rate has risen in recent years. (Cullen, and Change 1999).

A nurse is somebody caring for patients, somebody trained to look after sick or injured people, especially somebody who works in a hospital or clinic, administering the care and treatment that a doctor prescribes. As members of the largest health care profession in the nation, registered nurses practice wherever people need nursing care, including such common sites as hospitals, homes, schools, workplaces, and community centers, and uncommon areas such as children's camps, homeless shelters, and tourist sites. Based on the outcome desired, nurses intervene to promote health, prevent illness, or assist with activities that contribute to recovery from illness or to achieving a peaceful death. (Microsoft Encarta 2009) They are faced with many family crises especially as they have to go on night call duties leaving their family in care of someone else which sometimes result in problems in their marriage. Thus health hazards and stresses of work itself, as well as intervening factors from outside the working life may influence, and impair the state of health. They also state that these effects are associated with phase shifting in sleep and wakefulness cycles, and cause interferences with daily routine at work and in family and social life.

A Teacher is somebody who teaches, especially as a profession through, systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills, and techniques to students. Microsoft Encarta (2009). A person's unhappiness with their job affects their relationships with others, especially their relationships with family members as almost all teachers are concerned in the industrial world where their salaries, working conditions are below standard as unhappiness at work carries over into other aspects of life, can disrupt relationships with family and friends, and can influence physical and mental health. (Rafferty, M (2002) The current and past political, religious, and inter-ethnic riot / wars has plunged many families into unexpected financial, health, political, religious and personal family crises. Consequently, family crises has caused and will continue to cause considerable hardship for many Nigerian families and poses a serious threat to the physical and mental health of a substantial proportion of the population. It

is therefore the aim of this research to document in a systematic way how families that have experienced varying degrees of family crises have adjusted to or tried to adapt to this pressure. Difficult circumstances such as prolonged illness, the birth of a handicapped child, a divorce, an accident, or a death are a part of nearly everyone's experience. Others include being diagnosed with a serious health condition, dealing with the aftermath of a natural disaster, or being personally affected by a human tragedy, although events of lesser severity can also constitute a crisis. More recently, the International Labour Organization (I.L.O, 2004) reported that global job losses worldwide could hit fifty-one million by the end of 2009 as a result of the economic slowdown believed to be degenerating into a global unemployment crisis.

This could lead to high crime rate and prostitution by young females. It will also increase the rate of drug trafficking as well as money laundering. Again, it would encourage indiscipline from children of parents that are directly affected, as standards of living will also fall as those affected can no longer pay for the things of interest (Asogu, 1991)

A family is a unit of interacting persons related by ties of marriage, birth or adoption whose central purpose is to maintain a common culture which promote physical, mental, emotional and social development of each of its members. (Irving, 2003)

Another definition of family is two or more people who are committed to each other and who share intimacy, resources, decision-making responsibilities, and values (Olson, and John (2003) Ideally, the family provides its members with protection, companionship, security, and socialization. The structure of the family, and the needs that the family fulfills vary from society to society. The nuclear family—two adults and their children—is the main unit in some societies. In others, it is a subordinate part of an extended family, which also consists of grandparents and other relatives. A third family unit is the single-parent family, in which children live with an unmarried, divorced, or widowed mother or father. Clarke (2000) proposed family systems theory, which suggests that families are cultural systems that go through developmental stages. This tries to maintain a sense of continuity and equilibrium and enhance each member's growth. The theory and the related concept of family equilibrium suggest that pressures both outside and within the family can disturb the equilibrium of the family (Brett & Stroh, 1995).

According to Anyakoha (2008) Each stage of the family life cycle, which is a stage of life that the average family goes through has its own unique crises period. The beginning stage when couple marries and establishes a home ends with the arrival of the first child. This stage is faced with the issue of couples



planning their lives and adjusting to marital life. Expanding Stage is child bearing stage when couples prepares for and adjusts to parenthood. Child rearing stage zooms in as children grows, the parents work to meet their children's needs and to help them develop independence. Contracting Stage or launching stage is when the children gradually leaves home for marriage or full time employment outside the home to support themselves, parents help children to adjust to their new way of life. Couples entered the empty-nest stage after the last child has left home, the couple renews their marriage relationship and adjust to the changes in their parenting role. Retirement stage is a time of adjusting to the aging process. They may develop new interest or renew old ones. Oredein, & Alao, (2009) suggests that three factors interact to produce a family's well-being: the stressor, the family's resources or characteristics to cope with the stressor, and the family's ability to cope with the stressor. Wiggins and Sheham (1994) proceed to identify family support, family adaptability and family communication as predominant among characteristics that facilitate coping, with family communication identified as the characteristic that enables the evolution of the other two attributes of family functioning. The ABC-X model of family crisis model help families identify resources to cope with the stressor. A -stressor, B -crisis meeting resources C- definition of the stressor and X-the crisis.(Hill, 1958 in Olson & DeFrain (2006) Families can adapt well to these crises by supporting one another and being flexible enough to make needed changes. A developmental crisis occurs when people get married, have children, have a child start school, and have an adolescent going through puberty, have a child leaving home, have parents retiring, aging, and/or dying. Some of these changes are subtle and gradual; others are abrupt and dramatic. These crises are often viewed as "normal events" -- and thus the stress they can place on your family may not be recognized. Adapting to the leaving or adding of a family member or the changes that occur as children and adults grow and age can be very difficult for families. Families need to be aware that these "normal" developments can cause stress because they challenge us to rearrange our families. To adjust to developmental crisis, families often need to adjust family rules and roles to meet the new abilities of family members (Parkz, E.2007). A structural crisis occurs when the family resists changes to meet the demands of developmental or "out of the blue" crisis. Being unable to change can aggravate existing conflict and can lead to many actions that harm you or other family members. Examples include cheating on one's partner, feeling suicidal, drinking too much (alcoholism), physical and sexual abuse, drug use and divorce. These behaviors are often symptoms of the family's inability to adapt to

change and to solve problems. The family may become so disorganized it is unable to overcome the crisis. When behaviors such as these occur, families often benefit from outside professional help (Park, E. 2007). The level of poverty as a crisis in Nigeria homes has increased in recent years. especially in rural areas, where up to 80% of the population live below poverty line and social services and infrastructure are limited. Unemployment is on the increase ,with graduates selling recharge cards and riding okada. Poverty also led to lack of variety of foods, causing high occurrence of infectious diseases, malnutrition and death.(Stephen, 2010) Family crises affects children's success in school resulting in examination malpractices. The entire family may suffer from hunger, fatigue, confusion, lack of money for health treatments as a result of family crises Increase in drug and crime rates, poor feeding habits, broken marriages, mental illness, prostitution e.t.c. are results of family crises even as they are crises themselves. Families which are immobilized by stress often:-lack cohesiveness and closeness among members, lack positive conflict-management skills , fight over "who is right., lack time and positive interaction between the parents, lack family activities and quality time together, experience stressed-out symptoms – including sleeplessness, lack of appetite, disorientation, memory lapses, depression and anxiety, disagree about family goals and how to reach them, are critical and hostile, and blame each other, lack open and safe communication. When families do not communicate well, they have more misunderstandings, lack shared values, rules and roles. In poorly functioning families, members are rigid and will only do what they think they "should do. When a family is experiencing a crisis, all its members are affected -- including the children.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this research is to document in a systematic way causes of family crises and how families that have experienced varying degrees of family crises have adjusted to or tried to adapt to this pressure.

### **Specifically the study determined:-**

types of family crises experienced by teachers and nurses.

the causes of family crises among teachers and nurses

the coping strategies adopted by teachers and nurses in family crises situations.

### **Significance of the Study:-**

This research work proposes to provide useful information on coping strategies on family crises that will be useful to families and to policy makers (government) who must weigh the costs and benefits of the current inflationary pressures as well as severe recession.

## **Research Questions:**

The study has answers to the following research questions:-

1. What type of family crises are most experienced by teachers and nurses.?
2. What are the different causes of family crises?
3. What are the strategies employed by teachers and nurses in coping with family crises?

**Hypothesis:-** One null hypothesis was formulated for this study.

HO1: There is no significant difference in rate of experiencing family crises by teachers and nurses.

## **Methodology:**

**Research Design:-** The research design for this study was a descriptive research of the survey type. The population for this study was 300 subjects made up 150 Teachers and 150 Nurses randomly selected from two States and two Teaching Hospitals in Kwara South and Egor Local Government Areas of Kwara and Edo State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study and one hypothesis formulated

**Research Instrument:** Relevant data for the study were collected using a questionnaire titled Family Crisis Questionnaire (FCQ). The face and content validities of the instrument were certified by experts in Vocational and Technical Education Department. The construct validity of the instrument was established, the correlation coefficient was 0.357. The reliability of the instrument was established using Crombach Alpha, a reliability coefficient of 0.920 was obtained.

## **Data Analysis**

Data collected were statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, mean, standard and deviation. The stated hypothesis was tested with two tailed t-test @ 0.05 significance level.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Data presentation and analysis**

Analysis of data and the interpretation of findings in the study were carried out on the basis of the responses collected from the questionnaires administered to the respondents. The objectives and research questions were addressed by presenting the relevant items in frequencies and percentages. The findings are presented on the tables that follow.



**Hypothesis:-**There is no significant difference in rate of experiencing family crises by teachers and nurses.

**Table 1:-**t-test analysis on differences in types of family crises experienced by respondents and the rates of experiences.

Group	N	X	SD	SE	Df	t-cal	P	t-crit	Remark
Teachers	150	7.55	3.23	0.264	298	2.251	0.025	1.96	S
Nurses	150	6.65	3.68	0.301					

Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of 2.251 is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 ( $t_{\text{cal}} > t_{\text{crit}}$ ) with 298 df and the level of significance 0.025 is less than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), so the hypotheses which states that there is no significant difference in rate of experiencing family crises by teachers and nurses is therefore rejected. This implied that there is significant differences in the types of family crises experienced by teachers and nurses.

### Research Question 1

What type of family crises are most experienced by teachers and nurses.?

**Table 2:-** Comparison of respondents means score associated with null hypothesis one for differences and rates of family crises experienced by teachers and nurses.

Teachers			Nurses	
Variables	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Financial Crises	1.62	0.19	1.62	0.19
Sexual Crises	1.36	0.32	1.28	0.36
Physical crises	1.46	0.27	1.20	0.40
Health Crises	1.63	0.19	1.39	0.31
Educational Crises	1.48	0.26	1.16	0.42
Total	7.55	3.21	6.65	2.68

**Table 2** revealed a mean difference of 0.90 between teachers and nurses types and rates of experiencing family crises. This result confirms the acceptance of the hypothesis in Table1.

**Research Question 2:-** What are the different causes of family crises?

**Table 3:-**Mean responses on causes of family crises?

S/N	Item	Teachers			Nurses		
		X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remark
1	Poor families suffer more crises	3.15	1.43	Agreed	3.56	1.22	Agreed
2	Family with larger resources suffer less crises	2.12	0.94	Dis Agreed	3.56	1.47	Agreed
3	Individual differences can cause family crises	3.09	1.46	Agreed	3.06	1.94	Agreed
4	Lack of understanding of each others motive causes family crises	3.85	1.08	Agreed	4.13	1.81	Agreed
5	Decline in salary or income result in family crises	3.65	1.18	Agreed	4.38	1.12	Agreed
6	Single parents suffer more depression as a result of family crises.	3.69	1.16	Agreed	3.77	1.69	Agreed
7	Couples living together are better able to cope with family crises	3.58	1.21	Agreed	4.63	1.94	Agreed
<b>Total</b>		<b>23.3</b>	<b>11.41</b>		<b>4.13</b>	<b>13.17</b>	

The mean rating of 2.50 and above is considered agreed and below 2.50 is disagree.

The result in table 3 indicated that the respondents agreed to all the items except one(2.12), teachers do not agree with the fact that families with larger resources suffer less crises. This implies that lack of understanding, individual differences and decline in salary among others are major causes of family crises. The study revealed that couples living together are better able to cope with family crises.

### Research Question 3

What are the strategies employed by teachers and nurses in coping with family crises?

**Table 4:-**Mean responses on family crises coping strategies

S/N	Item	Teachers			Nurses		
		X	SD	Remark	X	SD	Remark
1	Future of the nation depends on the stability of the family	3.62	1.19	Agreed	3.88	1.06	Agreed
2	Overcoming crises makes you realize hidden talents in you.	3.44	1.28	Agreed	4.06	1.97	Agreed
3	Professional help should be sought for solving family crises e.g counseling or drug therapy.	3.57	1.22	Agreed	4.06	1.97	Agreed
4	Family crises should be faced by all family members.	2.98	0.51	Agreed	4.19	1.41	Agreed
		13.61	6.20		15.19	17.41	

Table 4 presented the cumulative means on family crises coping strategies among teachers and nurses. Majority of the nurses (4.06) were of the opinion that overcoming family crises revealed ones hidden talents, and all family members should face the crises together and seek professional help when necessary. All the respondents believed that the future of the nation depends upon the stability of the family.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that both teachers and nurses experience different types of family crises, ranging from financial, sexual, physical abuse, health, and educational crises.(Table 2).This agrees with Cullen and Change(1999) who stated that the current and past political, religious, and intertribal riot/wars has plunged many families into unexpected financial, health political religious and personal family crises. The hypothesis tested revealed a significant difference in rates and types of family crises experienced by teachers and nurses.(Table 1) The difference could be due to difference in finances as nurses are well paid as opposed to the teachers poor salary. This



result agreed with Stephen (2010) that rise in poverty in Nigerian homes has led to occurrence of health hazards, malnutrition and death across board. The respondents were of the opinion that families with larger resources suffer less crises and that lack of understanding, individual differences and decline in salary among others are major causes of family crises, they equally agreed that couple living together are better able to cope with family crises.(Table 3). This is in line with Parker(2007) who opined that, family crises could be as a result of unexpected happening, like death, fire accident, loss of job, winning of lottery. These changes require the cooperation of all members to deal with them.

The fact that poor families suffer more crises is supported by Asogu (1991) who stated that being poor would encourage indiscipline from children as their standard of living falls. The respondents were of the opinion that the best coping strategies are for the families to be stable as the future of the nation depends on this. Other coping strategies embraced include family cooperation and looking for professional help (counseling) when necessary.(Table 4). This agree with Park(2007) who stated that the family may become so disorganized it is unable to overcome the crisis and then often benefit from outside professional help. He reiterated that families can adapt well to these changes by supporting one another and being flexible enough to make needed changes.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that teachers and nurses have similar experiences as regards family crises and coping strategies employed to combat the crises, though there may be differences in financial challenges due to disparities in income, they can find a way to bring in extra money to augment their income. This is where entrepreneurship skills advocated by Vocational and Technical Education comes to play. Both Teachers & Nurses believed that families with larger resources suffer less crises and that crises should be faced by all members. The family is the unit of the nation and its survival depends on stability of the family.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:-

- Accept the hardship:- Well-functioning families quickly accept the hardship and use their energy and resources to meet the challenge. Recognize and mourn your loss. Then, figure out your options for moving ahead.
- Don't blame each other:- Healthy families see the crisis as a family-centered problem. Work together to correct or change the problem Do things

together as a family. Go on family outings, plan fun time at home, hold family meetings, play together and go to church together.

- Talk openly and honestly. Poorly functioning families may not talk, may keep secrets, or have many topics they cannot or will not discuss with each other. Develop a strong social network by participating in community organizations, accepting help and supporting others.
- Seek professional help, develop a workable plan to "make things better?" If not, get help from a reputable family service agency in your area.
- Take Care Of Yourself:- In order to avoid adding to your problems, be sure to eat a healthy diet, get enough sleep, exercise regularly. Also, try to do some things you normally enjoy, like seeing a movie, reading a good book, or gardening.

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