

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

**STIGMATIZATION AS A PREDICTOR OF PARENTING ROLE CONFLICT AMONG
PARENTS WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN IN ENUGU STATE**

By

Anieke Callistus Sunday

**Department of Educational Foundations,
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria.**

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the predictive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Enugu state. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. This study was conducted in Enugu state Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 486 parents whose autistic children were registered for therapy in the six Government-Approved Rehabilitation Centers in Enugu state as at the time of the study. The entire population (486) was adopted as sample for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study namely; Questionnaire on Parenting Role Conflict (QUPRC) and Parental Stigmatization Inventory (PASTIN). The instruments were constructed by the researcher and validated by three research experts. The overall reliability coefficient values obtained for the instruments were .77 and .79 for QUPRC and PASTIN respectively. QUPRC was made up of 10-items while PASTIN was made up of 11-items. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help two briefed research assistants. Direct delivery and retrieval system was used in data collection. Statistical tools that were used for data analyses for the study were Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and Regression Analysis. Specifically, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research question while hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis at .05 significant level. Major findings of the study indicated that there exist a positive predictive relationship between Stigmatization and parenting role conflicts among parents of autistic children in Government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state. It was therefore recommended among other things, that government at all levels and all individuals should condemn in strong terms any form of stigmatization of parents with autistic children.

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

Introduction

Stigma is considered a social process, which is used by some groups and individuals to reinforce existing social inequalities. These inequalities may include gender, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity and possession of wealth. Jinadu (2017) defined stigmatization as the process of intentionally marking an individual or persons to indicate unacceptable behavioral moral traits as compared to prevailing standards. According to Jinadu, the mark here may be physical marks on the body or deliberate derogatory behaviors towards a person(s) all with the intent of discriminating against such person(s) socially or otherwise. In the same vein, Adung (2018) defined stigmatization as the process whereby a mark or attribute culturally understood as devalued and discrediting is recognized in, or applied to, an individual or group of individuals by another more powerful group of individuals. This stigmatizing mark works to differentiate and separate marked individuals from unmarked individuals because of the associated judgment that persons so marked are tainted and lesser.

No doubt, stigmatization is, to say the least, dehumanizing. This is because stigmatization is rooted in normative judgments. Hence, it reduces the stigmatized individual from a complex whole and “usual” person to this single tainted and discounted trait, (Marua, 2018). According to Marua, stigmatization is effected through interaction and it involves a combination of negative stereotyped beliefs, prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behavior toward marked individuals. Stigmatization takes place at both the interpersonal and broader systemic levels. Some stigma may be obvious, while others are known as concealable stigmas that must be revealed through disclosure. Stigma can also be against oneself, stemming from negatively viewed personal attributes in a way that can result in a "spoiled identity" (i.e., self-stigma). Stigma may also be

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

described as a label that associates a person to a set of unwanted characteristics that form a stereotype. Perhaps, the worst aspect of stigmatization is social stigma. Social stigma according to Baro (2018) is the disapproval of, or discrimination against an individual or group based on perceived characteristics that serve to distinguish them from other members of a society.

Stigma may affect the behavior of those who are stigmatized. Those who are stereotyped often start to act in ways that those who stigmatize them expect of them. Stigmatization does not only changes the behavior of the stigmatized, but it also shapes their emotions and beliefs. Members of stigmatized social groups often face prejudice that causes depression. These stigmas put a person's social identity in threatening situations, such as low self-esteem, (Kelly, 2020). Kelly further submitted that members of stigmatized groups start to become aware that they are not being treated the same way and know they are likely being discriminated against. Stigmatization is commonly related to culture, gender, race, socioeconomic class, age, sexual orientation, body image, physical disability, intelligence, and wealth and health conditions. Nwakwo (2019) hinted that in most African cultures, health conditions especially psychological disorders could be misunderstood by the natives. This misunderstanding results in the natives attributing some health conditions of psychological disorders to witchcraft, sin or other fetish beliefs.

Consequently, the victims and/or their parents become prime suspects. These suspicion according to Nwakwo may lead to erroneous conclusion that they (the victims and/or their parents) caused the sicknesses or disorders. Ogbonna (2017) noted that autism is one of the psychological disorders that attract ill feelings and stigmatization towards the victims and/or their parents in traditional Nigerian society. In this study, the researcher is interested in finding out the predictive relationship between stigmatization and marital conflict among parents of autistic children. That

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

is, stigmatization of a parent suffers because he/she has an autistic child. Simply put, the researcher is interested in finding out whether or not such stigmatization could predict marital conflict among parents. This becomes imperative because studies known to the researcher have yielded conflicting findings on the predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and various forms of marital conflict among parents of autistic children.

Researchers such as Sciz (2017), Mbang (2019) and Davidson (2020), in their separate studies found that stigmatization significantly predicted marital conflict among parents of autistic children. On the other hand, Ogbonna (2017) and Marshal (2020) in their separate studies reported the contrary. That is, weak predictive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children. This gap justifies the need for more studies such as this present one.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Enugu state.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study.

1. What is the predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state?

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

1. The predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among male and female parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state do not differ significantly.

Methodology

In this study, correlational research design was adopted. According to Ugade (2018), correlational research design is a type of research in which direction and magnitude of relationship between variables are established. Kreks (2020), added that correlational research design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. Hence, it enables researchers ascertain the extent to which variations in certain variable (s) are associated with variations in other variable (s). In correlational research design, the degree of existing relationship was expressed as a correlation coefficient when two variables are involved or as a regression coefficient when more than two variables are involved. Correlational studies only indicates if a relationship exists or not but does not indicate causation. These features of correlational research design make it made suitable for this study.

This study was conducted in Enugu state Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 486 parents whose autistic children were registered for therapy in the six Government-Approved Rehabilitation Centers in Enugu state as at the time of the study. The entire population (486) was adopted as sample for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study namely; Questionnaire on Parenting Role Conflict (QUPRC) and Parental Stigmatization Inventory (PASTIN). The instruments were constructed by the researcher and validated by three research experts. The overall reliability coefficient values obtained for the instruments were .77 and .79 for QUPRC and PASTIN respectively. QUPRC was made up of 10-items while PASTIN was made up of 11-items. Copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help two briefed research assistants.

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

Direct delivery and retrieval system was used in data collection. Statistical tools that were used for data analyses for the study were Computer Aided Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and Regression Analysis. Specifically, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research question while hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis at .05 significant level. The particular software used for all analysis was STATA.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state?

Table 1: predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state

		Parental Income	Anti-social Behaviour
P.I	r	1	.6401
	Sig.	-	.0011
	n	486	486
A.B	r	.6401	1
	Sig.	.0011	-
	n	486	486

From table 1, the r value was .6401, indicating a strong positive relationship. Therefore, there exists a strong positive predictive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

children in Enugu state. As a result, as stigmatization of parents of autistic children rises, parenting role conflict also rises. This means that an increase in stigmatization of parents will likely predict an increase in parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Enugu state.

Hypothesis 1

The predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among male and female parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state do not differ significantly.

Table 2 Regression Analysis for hypotheses 1

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Tolerance	r	VIF	Sig	Decisions
	B	Std. Error	Beta					
(Constant)	8.233	2.101			.001		.3111	
Stigmatization	9.822	.003	.004	.503	.002	.001	.0013	Significant
Parenting Role Conflict	9.901	.002	.002	.511	.003	.002	.0003	Significant
Gender	7.124	.001	.333	.003	.001	.001	.0004	Significant

From table 2, the coefficient (r) for stigmatization was .002 with a corresponding VIF value of .001 which was significant at .0013. Also, the coefficient (r) for parenting role conflict was .003 with a corresponding VIF value of .002 which was significant at .0003. Gender of parents yielded a coefficient (r) of .001 with a

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

corresponding VIF value of .001 which was significant at .0004. Comparing with the significant value set for this study (.05), stigmatization was significant since the coefficient (r) obtained for it was significant at $.0013 < .05$. Similarly, parenting role conflict was significant since the coefficient obtained for it was significant at $.0003 < .05$. Also, gender of parents was significant since the coefficient (r) obtained for it was significant at $.0004 < .05$. These results show that stigmatization can significantly predict parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state and Gender influence was also significant. Hence, the impact of stigmatization on Parenting Role conflict was not equal for male and female parents of autistic children in the study. From the mean values obtained for male parents (3.01) and female parents (3.87), it can be inferred that stigmatized female parents are more prone to parenting role conflict than their male counterparts. Consequently, hypotheses 6 was not accepted as stated because the predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among male and female parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state differed significantly.

Summary of Findings

Findings made in this study can be summarized thus:

1. an increase in stigmatization of parents will likely predict an increase in parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Enugu state.
2. the predictive relationship existing between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among male and female parents of autistic children in government approved rehabilitation facilities in Enugu state differed significantly with stigmatized female parents tending to be more prone to parenting role conflict than their male counterparts.

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

Discussion

With respect to the predictive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents with autistic children, it was found in this study that an increase in stigmatization of parents will likely predict an increase in parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children. A strong positive predictive relationship was found between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children. As a result, it was concluded that as stigmatization of parents of autistic children rises, parenting role conflict also rises. Jinadu (2017) and Mbang (2019) also in their separate studies found a strong positive relationship between stigmatization and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children, while no work reviewed in this study reported otherwise. There is no doubt that parents' personality characteristic may bring about parenting role conflict especially when they (the parents) are stigmatized.

Stigmatization tamper with aspects of a persons' personality. Hence, resulting to conflict between the stigmatized persons' personality and that of others. The resultant effect will be parenting role conflict which according to Mbang (2019) may have many different effects on the behaviour of a parent as well as their family-life. Evidences of existence of parenting role conflict in a family may include but are not limited to differences in parenting styles, differences parenting responsibilities and differences parenting mentorship as well as other areas where parents may clash in their roles or functions. Some of these areas were listed by Ademola (2017) as misunderstanding on child discipline, misunderstanding on child's study habits, misunderstanding on child's social behavioral pattern, misunderstanding on child's dress codes, misunderstanding on child's eating habit and misunderstanding on child care.

From the above, it is clearer that parenting role conflict is negative and may have undesired effects on families where it exists. Good enough, the findings of this study have alerted stakeholders in marriages and families alike by revealing that stigmatization of parents may result in parenting role conflict.

Conclusion

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made;

- i. an increase in stigmatization of parents will most likely predict an increase in parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children.
- ii. stigmatized female parents are more prone to parenting role conflict than their male counterparts.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations were deemed necessary.

- i. Government at all levels and all individuals should condemn in strong terms any form of stigmatization of parents with autistic children in Enugu state and beyond
- ii. Legislative houses in Enugu state and beyond should establish laws that will provide for adequate punishment for person(s) found guilty of any form of stigmatization of parents with autistic children.
- iii. Government at all levels and non-governmental organizations including religious, social, cultural and traditional institutions should embark upon aggressive public enlightenment on dangers of stigmatization of parents with autistic children in Enugu state and beyond.

REFERENCES

- Ademola, D. (2017). Gender difference in parenting role conflict among depressed male and female parents with autistic children in Akure, Ondo state. *Global academic society journal* 19(2), 1125-1134. www.gasj/2327711/abstracts.org

Anieke, C. S., January, 2024

- Adung, N. (2018). Role of stigmatization on marital conflict and spread of HIV/AIDs in Ikom Local Government Area of Cross-River state. *Global Psychological Reviews* 4(1) 84-106. www.psychoworld.org
- Baro, M. (2018). Extent to which stigmatization could predict Marital Physical Conflict among parents of autistic children in Yenogoa, Bayelsa state. *Journal of studies in Educational Psychology* 3(1), 139-151. <http://www.josep.wiley.net>.
- Davidson, O. (2020). Correlation between stigmatization and Marital Physical Conflict among autistic children's parents in New York City, USA. *World Thinkers' Bulletin*, 3(1), 580-598. <http://www.thinkersedu.org>.
- Harry, Y. (2017). Relationship between depression and parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Colorado, USA. *Global academic society journal* 19(2), 767-789. www.gasj/2327711/abstracts.org
- Jinadu, U. (2017). Parenting role conflict and autistic based stigmatization in Bauchi state. *Journal of Psychology*, 7(3), 885-906. <http://www.edu.org.com>.
- Kelly, Y. (2020). Influence of stigmatization on economic conflicts among married couples with autistic children in Dundee, Scotland. *World Thinkers' Bulletin*, 3(1), 1055-1073. <http://www.thinkersedu.org>.
- Marshal, S. (2020). Marital conflict and stigmatization among couples with autistic children in East London, UK. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary research in Education*, 5(2), 847-866. www.multiresearch/edu.net.
- Marua, A. (2018). Extent to which autism-based stigmatization could predict verbal conflict among married couples in Gombe state. *Journal of studies in Educational Psychology* 3(1), 544-563. <http://www.josep.wiley.net>.
- Mbang, A. (2019). Predictive tendencies between stigmatization and parenting role conflict in Calabar, Cross River state. *The Psychological Insight* 13(2) 2227-2251. www.psychoworld.org
- Nwankwo, K. (2019). Predictive relationship between stigmatization and Sexual misunderstanding among couples with autistic children in Abia State. *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences*. 6(7), 660-681. www.aarf.asia
- Obome, M. (2018). Depression: predictor of parenting role conflict among parents of autistic children in Afikpo Ebonyi state. *Journal of studies in Educational Psychology* 3(1), 962-982. <http://www.josep.wiley.net>.

Stigmatization as a Predictor of Parenting Role Conflict

- Ogbonna, A. (2017). Relationship between stigmatization and financial misunderstanding among couples with autistic children in Abia state. *Journal of Psychology*, 7(3), 363-380. <http://www.edu.org.com>.
- Sciz, Z. (2017). Marital Sex Related Conflict among stigmatized male and female parents with autistic children in Central Hong Kong. *Global academic society journal* 19(2), 551-570. www.gasj/2327711/abstracts.org
- Smith, H.I (2020). Determining the relationship between depression and parenting role conflict among male and female parents with autistic children in Ohio State of USA. *World Thinkers' Bulletin*, 3(1), 368-389. <http://www.thinkersedu.org>.