

Economic Challenges and Strategies for Managing Family Financial Resources in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the management of family financial resources in a period of economic challenges. The study is a descriptive survey, the comprised of 300 men and 291 women from Ado local government Education zone. The instrument for data collection was 21 questionnaires. The statistical tools were mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study revealed that adequate financial budget, prudent financial planning and proficiency in financial management are some of the approaches for managing family financial resources. The finding also showed that low standard of living, high rate of poverty and unemployment are the major factors of economic challenge in some families. It is suggested that government and financial institutions should provide Nigerian families with micro-finance facilities for small scale business. Corruption should be addressed by different levels of government to allow the use of available funds in Nigeria.

Keywords: family, financial management and economic challenge.

Introduction

There are urgent needs for families to taking precautionary steps against possible effects of the current global economic challenges. There are strong apprehensions that the current global economic situation may soon be taking its toll on most families. The family is regarded as a major social institution of person's social activity, and that is why Association (2010) defined family as a social unit created by blood, marriage, or adoption which can be described as nuclear or extended. In Ado area of Benue state there are different kinds of association such as the age grade, the youths club, farmers association and the Christians Association. The Christians associations are one of the dominant types of families in Ado area that most people are associated. The Christian association is divided into men and women. It's correct to say that both educated and the uneducated, known that something is wrong with the economy of most families in Nigeria and Ado area on particular.

The concept of economic Challenges has assumed the centre stage in the media. Ascribing tenses such as Economic meltdown. Economic crisis and economic bankruptcy which describes a broad range of bad economic conditions from a severe, prolonged and depression with high bankruptcy rates. These conventionally resulted to high unemployment, such as the Great Depression Dmitry (2008), a breakdown in normal commercial activities caused by hyperinflation, example, Weimar Germany, (Peter and John, 2011) or according to Goldstein (2011) is a social process entailing responsibility for the effective and economic planning and regulation of the enterprise in fulfillment of a given purpose or objective. Family financial resources in the context of this paper refer to funds, capital or money.

Management of family financial resources in this context refers to prudent financial planning, financial savings, financial budgeting and effective coordination of financial resources in the family. Family resources could be called money as well as financial resources. Financial resources can take any of the following forms: physical cash, bank credits, allowances, discount received, undistributed profit in the form of funds could help family coped with the decline being experience by many families in Nigeria.

It seems family financial resources may decline as a result of expenditures resulting to low standard of living, high level of poverty, and inability to meet family financial demands. According to Slater (2000), the causes of decline in financial resources are attributed to Poor management, inadequate financial control, inappropriate financial policy and high cost structure among others. These may led to a cut back in the family expenditures on social services sub-sectors like education, health, agriculture, commerce, industry and per capital income of an individual. This situation being experienced by families necessitates the need for prudent planning, effective financial budget, and reduction of expenses. To ensure that the above mentioned are achieved there is need for the introduction of economic concepts like investment, efficiency, accountability, budget and introduction of other business concepts like entrepreneurship.

Introduction of entrepreneurship in the family can reduce the challenges posed by economic meltdown and for improving financial position of family. Nwangwu (2007) defined entrepreneurship as a functional education that seeks to offer people functional skills to enable participant to be creative and innovation in identifying novel business opportunities for profit making.

Statement of the Problem

The management of financial resources is an important factor during the period of financial difficulty or economic meltdown. This is because it provides a solid guide in proper costing of family activities and spending to avoiding waste of resources. However, financial management in Nigeria in recent time has witness a number

of challenges since the emergence of economic meltdown.

The current economic meltdown though alleged to be a global problem is more felt in developing countries, including Nigeria. This has greater adverse effect on the standard of living of people, increased unemployment rate, low savings and dependency on others. The problem of this study therefore is to find out how family financial resources could be managed during the period of economic meltdown.

Purpose of the study

The intent of this study is to investigate managing family resources in a period of economic meltdown, while the following are kept in view:

1. Identify ways for managing family resources in the period of economic meltdown.
2. Determine the influence of economic meltdown on family resources.
3. Ascertain ways to improving the management of family resources in a period of economic meltdown

Research Questions

1. What are the ways for managing family resources in the period of economic meltdown?
2. What are the influences of economic meltdown on family resources?
3. What are the ways for improving the management of family resources in a period of economic meltdown?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated at $p > 0.05$ level of significance guided the study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male Christians association members on ways for managing family financial resources in the period of economic meltdown.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of female and male Christian association on the influence of economic meltdown on family financial resources.

Methodology

This research was a descriptive survey aimed at investigating the management of family resources during the period of economic meltdown in Ado Education Zone of Benue State. This Zone comprised Ado, Utonkon, Apa, Ulayi, Agila, Igumale and Ekile communities.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 591 respondents, made up 300 Christian men and 291 Christian women association member. The respondents were chosen in order to ensure that those used for the study were sufficiently knowledgeable about the variable under study and could supply useful information on the research instrument.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A population of 591 men and women Christian association members was used for the study. This is because the figure could fairly be managed where there was no sample and sampling technique adopted.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a researcher' developed questionnaire entitled: "Economic Challenges and Strategies for Managing Family Financial Resources In Nigeria.

A twenty-one (21) item survey instrument was structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items were developed through information obtained from literature review and was based on the three research questions. The items elicit information on managing family financial resources in the period of economic meltdown.

Reliability of Instrument

The validated instrument was pre- tested outside Ado Education Zone of Benue State, Nigeria with families that possess the similar characteristics. This was done to ensure the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach alpha method. The co-efficient 0.69 showed that the instrument was reliable.

Data Collection

Three research assistants were trained to distribute the instrument and collect data. The data were collected after the respondents responded to the research instrument.

Method of Data Collection

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the three research questions. The two null hypotheses were analyzed using student t-test statistical tool. The null hypotheses are rejected if the t-calculated is equal to or higher than table values. Items of the research questions with mean value 2.50 and over were accepted while items with mean value less than 2.50 were rejected.

Results

The results are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Table 1: Mean responses on Ways for managing Family Resources

Ways for Management		SD	Dec	SD	Dec		
1	Adequate financial budget	2.59	0.80	A	2.73	0.82	A
2	Prudent financial planning	3.04	0.86	A	3.43	0.92	A
3	Avoid unnecessary expenditure	2.94	0.94	A	2.64	0.81	A
4	Encourage joint savings	2.56	2.80	A	2.59	0.80	A
5	Planning of income and expenditure	3.41	0.92	A	2.83	0.79	A
6	Investment of business ventures	2.80	0.83	A	2.56	0.80	A
7	Efficiency in management	2.77	0.83	A	3.11	0.87	A
8	Financial accountability	3.04	0.87	A	3.27	0.90	A
Grand mean		2.89	0.85	A	2.89	0.83	A

Table 1 indicates the response of the respondents on ways for the management of family financial resources. The table revealed that items 1- 8 are rated with mean score of 3.14, 3.04, 3.04, 2.94, 2.80, 2.77, 2.59 and 2.56, and by male Christians. Female Christians rated the same items with mean values 3.43, 3.27, 3.11 2.83, 2.73, 2.64, 2.59 and 2.56 respectively. The table revealed that the respondents accepted the items as ways of managing family financial resources during the period of economic meltdown.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Influence of Economic meltdown on Family Resources

Ways for Management		SD	Decision	SD	Decision		
9	Poverty in the family	3.66	0.95	A	2.91	0.84	A
10	Over-dependency on others	2.74	0.82	A	2.71	0.81	A
11	Problem of ill-health	2.91	0.84	A	3.46	0.92	A
12	Low standard of living	3.47	2.92	A	2.86	0.84	A
13	Money chasing few goods (inflation)	2.59	0.80	A	3.41	0.92	A
14	Inability to meet economic needs	3.47	0.92	A	2.71	0.81	A
Grand mean		3.14	0.87	A	3.01	0.85	A

Table 2 presents the opinion of the respondents on influence of economic meltdown on family resources. Item 9-15 are rated with 3.66, 3.47, 3.47, 2.91, 2.74, and 2.59 by Christian men association. Christian women association rated the same items with mean score of 3.46, 3.14, 2.91, and 2.71 respectively. The respondent agreed with all the times presented on the table as influence of meltdown on family financial resources. This implies that all the items on the table influence family resources in a period of economic meltdown.

Table 3: Mean responses on ways for improving the management of family resources

Ways for Management		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
15	Enhancing creativity	2.91	0.84	A	2.56	0.80	A
16	Inculcate skills for self reliance	3.01	0.86	A	2.74	0.82	A
17	Creation of employment	2.56	0.80	A	2.59	0.80	A
18	Being actively employed	2.94	0.85	A	3.91	0.98	A
19	provide means of generating income	3.04	0.87	A	3.44	0.92	A
20	Provide skill to manage capital	2.56	0.80	A	2.96	0.86	A
21	Ability to invest	2.66	0.81	A	2.97	0.85	A
Grand mean		2.81	0.83	A	2.97	0.85	A

Table 3 reveals the views of the respondents on ways for improving the management of family financial resources. Christian men association rated items 15-21 with mean score of 3.04, 3.01, 2.94, 2.91, 2.66, 2.56 and 2.56. Christian women rated the same items with mean score of 3.44, 3.91, 2.96, 2.74, 2.59 and 2.59 and 2.56, respectively. The highlight of the results indicates that the respondents agreed with the items as ways for managing family financial resources in a period of economic resources.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Christian men and women on ways for managing family financial resources.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on ways for managing family financial resources.

S/N	Source	N	X	SD	Diff	t-cal	t-cal	Lev	Decision
1	Male Christians	300	2.89	0.85					
				589	0.53	1.96	0.05		Not Sign.
2	Female Christians	291	2.89	0.83					

Table 4 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.53 at 589 at degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance is less than the table value of 1.96. since the t-calculated value is less that the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Christian men and women on ways for managing family financial resources in period of economic meltdown.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Christian men association and Christian women on influence of economic meltdown on family financial resources.

Table 5: Summary of t-test on influence of economic meltdown on family resources.

S/N	Source	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal	t-val	Lev.	Dec
1	Christian men	300	3.14	0.87	589	0.58	1.96	0.05	Not Sign.
2	Christian women	291	3.01	0.85					

Table 5 reveals that the calculated t-value of 0.58 is less than the table value of 1.96 at 589 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the table value is higher than the calculated t-value, the stated null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Christian men and Christian women with regards to the influence of economic meltdown on family financial resources.

Discussion

The result of “economic challenges and strategies for managing family financial resources in Nigeria” was analyzed. It was obvious that there are similarities between the responses of Christian men association and Christian women association. The question one results indicates the ways for managing family financial resources to include financial budget, prudent financial planning and efficient financial management. The findings are in line with Ogbonnaya (2000) who opined that financial budget and effective planning reduce cost by avoiding waste in expenditures. The findings showed that effective financial management could lead to the achievement of family goals and desires in a period of economic meltdown. The results from the respondents agreed with the hypothesis made that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Christians men association and Christians women association with regards to ways for managing family financial resources in a period of economic meltdown.

The major findings on the influence of economic meltdown on family financial resources shows low standard of living, inability to meet family demands and high level of poverty. This finding was in line with the findings made by Akinwumi (2008) revealed that the influence of economic meltdown are attributed to unemployment corruption in the society and low services. This implies that economic meltdown has much influence on family finance because of the inability of the family to access funds that could be used to improve the living conditions. The result of the analytical findings is in support, accepting the null hypothesis as stated, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of Christians men and women associations on the influence of economic meltdown on family financial resources.

The findings on ways for improving the management of family financial resource in a period of economic meltdown indicates inculcating entrepreneurship on members of the family; encourage savings and enhancing creativity. This finding was in agreement with Nwangwu (2007) who indicated the need for training people in entrepreneurship skills as a functional education to enable family members to be self employed and self-reliance thereby generating income for sustainable living.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of the study, there is need for managing family financial resources in a period of economic meltdown. This is evident in the finding of this study which indicated adequate financial budget, prudent financial planning and efficiency in financial management. The findings have led the researchers to conclude that enhancing creativity, ability to invest is significantly related to ways of improving the management of family fiancé. It was therefore concludes that low standard of living, inability to meet family demands and high level of poverty are the major influences.

Recommendations

Bases on the findings the following recommendations were made bearing in mind the needs for managing family financial resources in a period of economic meltdown.

1. Government and financial institutions should provide Nigerian family with micro-finance to enable them invest in business transaction for income generation.
2. Corruption syndrome should be tackled and address properly by the government of the day. This could help reduce the problem of unemployment.
3. Self-employment opportunity should be created by the government and private sectors for income generation.
4. Entrepreneurship education should be made compulsory for all students at all levels of the education system in Nigeria.
5. Government should assist family with resources to reduce the influence of economic meltdown on families.

Summary:

The study examined the management of family financial resources in a period of economic meltdown. The study was a descriptive survey. The findings of the study revealed adequate financial budget, prudent financial planning and efficiency in financial management are the ways for managing family financial resources. It is suggested that government and financial institutions should provide Nigerian families with micro-finance for small scale business, among other recommendations.

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