

Causes of Household Conflict and Children Socio-Economic Growth in Lubero Territory, Democratique Republique of Congo

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Abstract

In many families, conflicts are unavoidable. Lack of respect, communication, and harmony create frictions between partners and family members. The conflict has an effect on the future socio-economic growth of children. Conflict is a misunderstanding between parents. Many factors are causes of conflicts. Banks (2015) reported that among those sources lack of financial autonomy, in-laws (especially mothers-in-law) involved in disagreements of husband/wife, lack of employment, etc. Many children have suffered and living out of their parental care because of their conflicts. This study provides considerate contributions to the understanding of the causes of household conflicts and their impact on children socio-economic growth. Survey and correlational research designs were used. A questionnaire was distributed to 167 respondents selected using the purpose-sampling technique. The findings show that there is very significant positive influence from households' causes of conflicts and children socio-economic growth. It is also observed from results a negative relationship between parents and no care for children, which lead children to drop out from their studies ($r=-0.154$, $p=0.047$). Therefore, lack of adequate family conflicts management has led many families irresponsible to take care of their children socio-economic growth because of frictions between parents.

Keywords: Households, family conflicts, causes of conflicts, children socio-economic growth

INTRODUCTION

Family conflicts generate misunderstanding between members of households; frictions that push especially children run out of their home. It is true that (Waslay, 2005) misunderstanding between family heads has an effect on the youngsters and neighbors. Young ladies seem to be more affected and feel hopelessness when there are frictions between parents' relationship (Syenson, 2006). In Tanzania, divorce resulted from family conflicts and children become victims of having known only their mothers who are unable to take care of them (Myenjwa, 2012). In Ghana, nearly 80 % of children lived in rural areas practicing agriculture and fishing (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003) while many of them were forced to work out of their parental houses and survive on street. Gaydosh (2015), using detailed longitudinal demographic surveillance data from Rufiji area in Tanzania from 2001 to 2011 found that of native children from two-parents' households, the majority (70%) did not have any maternal support by age of 10 and 40% of them did not know their fathers. Roughly one-quarter of children are born into single-mother families with the absence of the father at birth. Households conflicts need to be well managed so that companies and people around do not take advantages of using abusively children running from their homes due to parents' frictions.

In the Democratic Republic of Congolese child protection law has set the minimum working age at 16 to prohibit all harmful forms of child labor and sexual exploitation. However, it was found that the mining industries hired more workers below 16 years old (Marrion, 2013). Separation of parents has greater impact on children socio-economic growth. Children experiencing family conflicts at their low age of life become violent. Family conflicts establish empire of street teenagers with no parental support and homes. Conflicts generate discipline issues; children decide to live outside in hope to find happiness which they miss from their homes (Muzelu, 2007). Unfortunately, it does not happen and many children end up becoming thieves and prostitutes.

ILO (2006) reported that majority (191 millions) of children between 5-14 years old were engaged in economic activity throughout the world, where more than one-third of these children, 74.4 million were involved in dangerous occupations. The stability of the family conserves child's socio-economic safety. The breakdown of this primary social unit adds disruption to the children socio-economic growth. Children at adult age adapt struggle for their living and many ends up in negative forces disturbing the community.

Understanding the impact of family conflicts on children growth is a function of time-related processes that remains a gap in a process-oriented conceptualization of effects, which combines the use of dual awareness; an attitude of inclusiveness towards subjective experience and an integrated practice to prevent harms to children (Siver, 2005).

Family conflict is a major problem for children socio-economic growth. Children are vulnerable and innocent victims of consequences from parents' separation. Children abandoned to themselves are involved and forced into hard labor. They are left with no choice to join the street and practice indulge, drug abuse, stealing and prostitution without care. The aim of this study was to analyze the effect of causes of household conflicts on children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To determine the causes of conflict from households in Lubero Territory.

- To find out children's socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory
- To determine the effect of causes of households' conflict on children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory

LITERATURE REVIEW

Household conflict

Conflicts within families start with the premise that family members are in disharmony of relationship and understanding from one another. The conflict in the family is the revelation of how the family members agree with changes and adversities. To accommodate one another in the family Ray (2015) stated that causes of conflicts were to be identified. Accepting the influence of conjugal conflict on children is a function of time-related processes that remains a gap in a process-oriented conceptualization of effects on them (Siver, 2005).

Disagreements among couples have great consequences to the society. In society children between the ages of 6 -17 years show signs of emotional and social distress when exposed to ongoing discordant exchanges between parents. The exposure to this form of disagreement can manifest itself in a number of ways such as increased anxiety, depression, aggression, hostility, anti-social behavior, and criminality as well as deficits in academic attainment (Harold, Aitken & Shelton, 2007).

Conflict influences the emotional security of the child (Go eke-Morey, Cummings, Harold & Shelton, 2003). Two types of conflicts are identified in life; a destructive conflict that includes verbal or corporal aggression towards the partners or objects, hostility and violence, and constructive conflict characterized by finding a resolution and explanations to the child who was an observer and reestablish good relationship in the family (Cummings & Davies, 2002). Conflict within families has been found to pass from one generation to another (Reynolds, Houlston, Coleman and Harold, n.d).

Studies done on mothers and their 2-year-old children using longitudinal design with 3 annual measurement occasions, both studies revealed that children's emotional insecurity in the inter-parental relationship facilitated associations between destructive inter-parental conflict and children's growth (Davies, Martin, and Cicchetti, 2012). Conflict is unavoidable in the family. It is a combination of individuals (family and non-family members) who are more likely to hold different opinions on a matter that result in disagreements to create issues. Some factors are considered as causes of conflicts in the family: lack of clarity in decision-making, role-overlaps and poorly described performance expectations, compensation, and benefits from employment, personality differences and in-laws involvement into their families (Rivers, 2012). These factors create gaps in conjugal relationships and children socio-economic growth.

There are many causes of conflicts in families. Some are not avoidable and some are created by circumstances. Studies found that one of the major sources of family conflicts is lack of financial means for daily needs of the family (Banks, 2015), in-laws (especially mothers-in-law) involvement in disagreements create friction between partners of the family. He further found that there is effect between household conflicts and children development.

Children socio-economic growth

Family conflicts affect children socio-economic growth (Finger, Eiden, Edwards, Leonard & Kachadourian, 2010). The family conflicts develop stress for children to lose control of their internal and external relations (Coln, Jordan, and Mercer, 2013). Different issues within families push children to quit and live outside. They decide to live in outside places that seem to be safe than being always terrified my parents' fights. For some children, conflicts in family put them in a position of struggling to obtain food and shelter (Hart, n.d)

Family characteristics matter for the socio-economic growth of children; attachment and relationships with their parents. The lack of success of parents affects children's socio-economic development. Many kids are homeless not only because their parents are separated but also that they can't support and take care of their daily basic needs. Children socio-economic growth remains uncertain and they are helpless to the crash of a high conflict of their parents (Sutherland, 2014).

The effects of conflict on children socio-economic growth included internal displacement and denial of sources of livelihood, that aggravate under-nourishment, malnutrition, and school dropout, etc. For Yahaya and Tinab (2015) children socio-economic growth needs support to facilitate their access to education and integration into the community. ILO (2006) reported that children aged 5-14 years engaged in economic activity throughout the world, involved in early employment and hard services looking for financial assistance while abandoned by parents. Nearly 80 % of children in Ghana were involved in agriculture and fishing (Ghana Statistical Service 2003) to find out how to get service on their own.

Until now it has been difficult to assess the trends of children labor in Lubero, North Kivu Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. For instance, young girls and boys are sent from one family to another within the extended family and outsider to serve as house-maids and houseboys. Izuora and Ebigo (2005) reported that in Nigeria children who work as house-help are required to sell items like food, clothing and general stuff on streets. Every day, family conflicts open wider roads for children to become street livers. Children tend to run

away from places where they got jobs under pressure to accomplish work. In Kenya, problems are visible for kids working on the street (Bahemuka, et al, 2000), they are forced to participate financially in their schooling. When working positively, family conflicts become a good instructor for those children having senses to do what is right up to develop their socio-economic lifestyle. But many of the young people end up in prostitution and drug obsession (Klain, 2009).

In the United States, 61 % of child abuse victims suffer from abandonment. There is a substantiation rate of 7.5 per 1000 for a neglected child compared with 2.3 per 1000 for physical abuse (USDHHS, 2005). Contrary to the USDHHS report of 2015 about the United States, Krantz (2008) thought that children suffering within lower socio-economic groups after a divorce of their parents live in West Africa, notably Nigeria. In addition, Kalter, Kloner, Schreier, and Okla (2009) found a negative relationship between socioeconomic status and children's adjustment in post-divorce households. ANPPCAN Uganda Chapter (2007) shown that the deprivation of basic needs in a significant action causes harm to a child. It is an act of exclusion that denies minors of the attention and supervision necessary for their well-being and development.

Separation of parents has an impact on the child's behavior and it is a cause of adolescent wrongdoing. This behavior of the children can also be worse when they are subjected to harsh conditions by the step-parents. Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's socio-economic growth. This aspect hinders the socio-economic growth and development of child's desire and the ability for creativity (Miller, 2007; Stevenson, 2007).

In New Zealand, children life is like living in a war zone. They live in an environment characterized by fear, frustration, anger, cruelty, and violence (Grych, 2003). Researchers have found that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to experience difficulties in school and score lower on assessments of verbal, motor, and cognitive skills. (Edleson, (2006), Silvern et al., (2005) revealed that exposure to domestic violence is also one of several adverse childhood occurrences that have contributed to premature death in the United States.

Children's exposure to discordant conflicts between parents demonstrates negative effects in their future life (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Rhoades, 2008). Indeed, researchers support the proposal that conflicts between parents, simple or complex influence conflicted behavior of children.

Many types of research have shown the effect of family conflicts on child development. There was no clear emphasis on the causes of conflicts in relations of socio-economic growth of children. This seems to have little evidence from studies, especially in the Lubero Territory in Democratic Republic of Congo, where no one has come up with such study to describe the causes of households' conflicts and children socio-economic growth. Therefore, this made us come up with the study that will try to clarify the causes of conflicts and their relationship to children growth.

METHODOLOGY

The study used survey and co-relational research designs. The study described the causes of households' conflict and children socio-economic growth at the time of the study June 2017. Correlation research design was utilized to find out the relationship between households' causes of conflict and children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory.

The study targeted adult men and women living in Lubero Territory. The researcher targeted those men and women married and of marriage age who could have experienced in one way a form of family conflict in the past decade. The researcher chose this group because they were at once or was directly witnesses or affected by family conflicts and therefore were able to provide relevant information for this study. Children were not concerned at this point of the study.

The study sample was achieved through purposive sampling technique because the researcher selected respondents on the basis of specific characteristics which, according to this study were a parent or guardian. The researcher used a self-administered questionnaire for data collection. The instrument contained closed-ended questions guided by a four-point Likert scale on the objective questions from Strongly Agree – Agree- Disagree- Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire consisted three sections: the respondent's demographic information; causes of household's conflicts and children socio-economic growth.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics where mean and standard deviation were used to describe the data. Pearson moment correlation was used to determine the effects of households' conflict and children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents Demographic Characteristics

The study looked at respondents' demographic characteristics in terms of age, sex, occupation and marital status. The main objective of studying the demographic characteristics was to find out whether there were any variations in the respondents' background

Table 1: Showing the Respondents Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	124	74.3
	Female	43	25.7
Age	20-30	34	20.4
	31-40	53	31.8
	41-50	48	28.8
	51-60	29	17.4
	61 and above	3	1.8
	Average Age		40.0
Occupation	Unemployed	28	16.8
	Employed	35	21.0
	Self-employed	103	62.0
Marital status	Married	125	74.9
	Divorced	7	4.2
	Single	35	21.0

n=167

The findings in Table 1 reveal that majority of respondents were male (n=124; 74.3%), the majority of them were in average 40 years old, more than half (n=103, 62.0%) were self-employed and majority (n=125; 74.9%) of them were married. In this case Single does not mean, not having a child or a wife, but had a wife or a husband with not legally married and had a child or children.

Sources of Family conflicts

The first objective of the study was to assess the sources of household's conflict in Lubero Territory.

Table 2: Sources of Family conflicts

Items Rated	μ	SD
Lack of money of basic needs to sustain the life of family members	3.18	0.90
In-laws involved into family matters defending their girl (wife) or boy (husband)	3.31	0.61
Unemployment	2.92	0.91
Social relationship	3.10	1.07
Early marriage for partners without preparation	3.03	0.95
Moral and traditions of partners	3.11	1.07

Scale: 1.00-1.75=Strongly Disagree,

1.75-2.50=Disagree,

2.50-3.25=Agree and

3.25-4.00=Strongly Agree

The findings in table 2 show that respondents strongly agreed that conflicts in the families were generated from the involvement of in-laws in family matters and lack of employment that created frictions of relations between husbands and wives. It is clear that respondents agreed that some were early married without a proper understanding of traditions and with no plans for finances. This means that many in-laws wish their sons/daughters follow strictly their instructions even when they are married as it is per tradition in the region. Nowadays, people in Lubero Territory are sensitive to such kind of interactions in their family. In past decades people could get married and stay many years and make children while living in the same compound with their parents (in-laws). The new married man and woman like to live happily far from their in-laws. Banks (2015) support the results. In-laws (especially mothers-in-law) involvement in family matters and lack of enough food to take care of children socio-economic growth are main causes of conflicts in many families. Although it is preferable to reverence and listen to your parents and grandparents on both sides equally, this can prove to be challenging if relatives or your relations consistently interfere in your family's decisions and lifestyle. Conflict is unavoidable in the family.

Conflict comes from a combination of individuals who are more likely to hold different opinions on a matter that result in disagreements to create issues. The findings of Rivers support the above results. He indicated that some of the causes of conflicts in the family are compensation and benefits from employment, personality differences and in-laws' involvement into families matters, etc. (Rivers, 2012). This implies that family conflicts are caused by various factors, may differ from one family to another.

Children Socio-economic growth

The second objective of the study was to find out how children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory. The variable investigated was Labor, education, and lifestyle and were analyzed in the table below.

Table 3: Child socio-economic growth

Items	μ	SD
Children participate hard labor due economic hardship experienced from their home	2.81	0.90
Children labor for their survivor out of their homes	2.44	1.03
Conflicts and breakdown of parents lead children to street life and prostitution	2.86	1.07
Children from families experiencing domestic violence are more likely to exhibit aggression	3.23	0.80
Children from conflict families are more likely to drop from school	2.83	0.99
Children who are from conflict families are more likely to become part of negative forces (thieves and criminals)	2.92	0.91

Scale: 1.00-1.75=Strongly Disagree,
 1.75-2.50=Disagree,
 2.50-3.25=Agree and
 3.26-4.00=Strongly Agree

The findings in Table 3 reveal that respondents agreed that children are more involved in hard labor for their survival, violent and attached to destructive groups in the Territory. Respondents indicated that children running from home conflicts don't contribute much labor for their education much and drop out school. This means that conflicts in the family affect children's socio-economic growth and their future. As supported by Finger, Eiden, Edwards, Leonard & Kachadourian, (2010), children lack means of surviving and remain without assistance. Conflicts become a burden towards their socio-economic growth. Others studies also support the results. Children lose control of their internal and external relationships (Coln, Jordan, and Mercer, 2013). Further, they stated that family characteristics matter for the socio-economic growth of children for their relationships and attachment to the society. The lack of successful parents' relationships affects children's socio-economic development. Many kids become homeless not because their parents are separated but because parents are unable to take care of their daily basic needs. Supported by Sutherland (2014), children socio-economic growth remains uncertain due to constant conflicts of parents.

Effect of Households Conflict and Children Socio-economic Development

The third objective was to find the relationship between household conflicts and children socio-economic growth in Lubero Territory. Pearson Moment correlation was used to establish the relationship that is shown in the table below.

Table 4: Effect of Households Conflict on Children Socio-economic Development

	Unemployment	Social relationship	Early marriage	Moral & Traditions
Children participate hard labor due economic hardship experienced form their home	.335** (0.00)	.385** (0.00)	.407** (0.00)	.479** (0.00)
Children labor for their survivor out of their homes	-.154* (0.047)	.275** (0.00)		.234** (0.002)
Conflicts and breakdown of parents lead children to street life and prostitution	.208** (0.007)	.515** (0.00)	.219** (0.004)	.159* (0.04)
Children from families experiencing domestic violence are more likely to exhibit aggression	.641** (0.00)	.315** (0.00)	.391** (0.00)	
Children from conflict families are more likely to drop from school		.266** (0.001)	.302** (0.00)	-.162* (0.037)

The findings in Table 4 reveal that there is very significant positive effect between households' source of conflicts and children socio-economic growth. They participate into hard labor, live on the street, become more aggressive, they associate with negative forces (thieves, prostitution, etc.) because of family conflicts caused by those factors. The more these sources create conflicts in families, the higher the involvement of children in different negative lifestyle. This implies that family conflicts push children to find out how to settle for their lives. Grych (2003) study support the findings that children from clashed families live with horror, irritation, and anger. Other researchers support the findings showing that children exposed to discordant and conflicts of parents exercise negative effects social development in their future (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Rhoades, 2008). The exposure to this form of disagreement can manifest itself in a number of ways including increased anxiety, depression, aggression, hostility, anti-social behavior, and criminality as well as deficits in academic attainment (Harold, Aitken & Shelton, 2007).

The results show a negative relationship between unemployment of parents and children labor for survival. This means that when parents do not have work to do or practice anything for their socio-economic growth ($r=-0.154$, $p=0.047$), children struggle for their own life. Also, there is a negative relationship between children dropping out of school and moral /traditions ($r=-.164$, $p=0.037$). This implies that conflicts in the family take away the joy of children to benefit for their rights to live happily with their parents. Instead of parents work hard

for children, they struggle for their survival far away from their parents. The results are supported by Go eke-Morey, Cummings, Harold & Shelton (2003) that household conflicts have a significant impact on the well-being of the children. Therefore, the study confirms the hypothesis stated that there is a very significant positive effect on households' conflicts and children socio-economic growth for their participation into hard labor, street life and aggressiveness/violence in their future life, and negative effect on employment and children working for their education and survival. Other factors and source of conflicts have no effect on children socio-economic growth.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it is revealed that in-laws' involvement in family matters for lack of resources in the family of their children (mother-in-law), early marriage without a plan and knowing the traditions create frictions between husband and wife. The findings reveal that children running from home conflicts are more involved into hardship for their survival and tend to become aggressive, violent and attached to destructive groups in the Territory. It was observed that children running from parental conflicts labor for their survival and don't drop from School.

The findings reveal that there is very significant positive effect between households' source of conflicts and children socio-economic growth (children participate in hard labor, live on the street, become more aggressiveness, associated with negative forces (thieves, prostitution, etc.). There is a negative effect between conflicts due to lack of employment of parents and children education and survival. When there are conflicts for no employment, children struggle for their survival. It is also indicated that without guidance from parents, children drop from work hard for their life strong ($r=-0.154$, $p=0.047$), but also drop out of school because of lack of guidance with good moral and traditions of life ($r=-.0162$, $p=0.037$). This means that the lack of adequate family causes of conflicts management has led many families to destroy the future and life of their children. Durable frictions between parents have created an empire of carelessness towards children. From the above results conclusion, the research recommends that:

- Government is involved in conflicts resolution from the families to protect hardship of children and reinforce policies that protect children right in the region Lubero.
- Open entrepreneurship centers to support children who were affected by family conflicts for their future or education
- Establish conflict resolution framework in the household that can handle the matters of divorce and separation which can eventually result in child neglect in Lubero, by renewing the tradition administration system where everyone is known and all his/her deeds can be counseled without involving political administration
- Further study is needed to find out the perceptions of children involved in different kind of life and their level of socio-economic development.

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