

CARING FOR THE ELDERLY IN POVERTY DRIVEN ENVIRONMENT IN ENUGU

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Abstract

The study focused on the identification of caring activities which the co-operative members such as the government, community, philanthropist and non-governmental organizations could contribute to support the livelihood of the elderly in a poverty driven environment. Three research questions were answered by the study while three hypotheses were tested at $P \geq 0.05$ level of significance. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Enugu State Nigeria. The sample for the study was 117 respondents, made up of 27 government officials, 45 community members, 25 NGO officials and 20 lecturers in home economics. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was validated by five experts, one lecturer from home economics department, one from social work department, one senior government official, one local government chairman and one senior official of NGO, all from Enugu State. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire with an overall co-efficient of 0.81. Mean was used to answer the research questions, while standard deviation was used to determine the spread of the respondents around the mean in their opinion. T-test was used to test the hypotheses at $p \geq 0.05$ level of significance. It was found out that 10 contributions of government among others were required for caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment in Enugu State. It was recommended that the state and local government should develop these activities into policies for implementation in caring for elderly in Enugu State.

Key words: Caring, Elderly, Poverty Driven Environment, Poverty and Stakeholders.

Introduction

Ageing is a natural phenomenon in life. In Nigeria, it is the dream of everyone to age gracefully before dying. It is a blessing for one to get old and be an elderly person. Elderly is a real, normal and inevitable terminal point for those who are privileged to experience it. Rocbuck (2014), stated that classification of elderly varies among countries of the world and in many instances are based on social class differences or functions and ability related to work force. Brukaker & Power (2015) explained that most developed countries accept the chronological age of 65 years for elderly or old age. In Africa according to the Thane (2013), the age range of elderly is linked to 55 years and above. A study carried out by

Togunu and Bickersteth (2004) on elderly and their characteristics in Nigeria revealed that elderly is the same as 65 years in the developed countries. In this study elderly are those individuals that are 65 years and above. Classcork (2014), advanced that they experience changes in social role, work pattern, physical strength and other peculiar needs.

The elderly in the area of the study have so many needs that require attention they include physical, social, emotional and health. Joshi (2013) noted that health is the most important need of the elderly because as they advance in age, they become weaker physically, emotionally, susceptible to minor hazards and need regular care and support. The author further stated that elderly need modification in their diet since their digestive system gradually weakens as they grow old. Similarly, Edner (2015), opined that the elderly need modification in the pattern of their lifestyles for instance in their clothing and housing to meet their needs because as they advance in age they become weaker in strength in taking caring of house chores. Aken's (2015), explained that majority of the elderly have retired from active service and unable to earn income that could help them meet their needs in food, groceries and medicine and need financial support. These needs pose challenges to the elderly especially for those in the poverty driven communities in Enugu State.

In the area of the study, elderly are faced with general and peculiar challenges. Generally these challenges are financial, housing, feeding, clothing, health and socials. In terms of peculiarity, some are childless without attention and sympathy from extended family members; some inherited problems like taking care of orphans that is grandchildren that have lost both parents in addition to their own care and poverty and some are widows and widowers without attention from the living members of either family. The dilemma of these elderly in their environment pose challenges to the researcher who is interested in the welfare of these elderly that they should be helped or care for beyond what they can cope with, within their poverty driven community.

The poverty driven environment is a community where individuals could hardly generate income that is marginally sufficient for meeting their individuals and family basic needs. Poverty in the view of Abubakar (2012), is a totality state of being where individuals, households and communities are unable to afford or fulfill the basic necessity of life (food, shelter, clothing, economy and social life). World Bank (2012), described poverty as an unacceptable human deprivation in terms of economic empowerment, health, nutrition as well as social needs. This environment affects the elderly most, especially those with mega pension and without dependable landed properties like houses, farms, savings, shares among others. Most of these elderly still have some dependants like grand children who are orphans, extended family members that need help, large family members who are school dropouts within the environment. The level of poverty of these elderly makes coping with existence tedious, while they are still interested to continue living. Jaga (2011), noted that poverty had certain effect that may result into some consequences such as begging, borrowing, isolation, family crisis and conflict, underdevelopment and death. These consequences require urgent attention for improvement and sustenance of the elder by caring for them.

Caring in the view of Teasel (2013) is the process of providing physical assistance to individuals based on their needs, such as food, health, and clothing. In the context of this study, physical assistance for the elderly, involves, providing them with food at an

appropriate time, managing their health and emotion, providing them with social activities to keep them fit and happy. Caring of elderly is piloted by Watson (2008) in a theory of nursing the aging. The theory emphasized that nursing the aged is to improve their normal commitment, enhance human dignity, being with one another who is in need of healing from his/her environmental frustration. The theory is relevant to the study, though poor but showed the want to meet the needs of the individual elderly by reducing their problems to a coping level, through co-operate effort of partnership in relation to the demands of the environment. This could be joint care of the elderly from stakeholders such as State, local government, community, philanthropists, nongovernmental organization among others. World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA 2015), pointed out that there is a fundamental acceptance of NGOs in the society in the preservation and promotion of the elderly health through providing food, clothing, housing medical care and other necessary social services in the summit in America. World Health Organization (WHO) (2014), also noted that the community provides important link between the elderly and government through planning project to improve the nutritional needs of the elderly, housing state, safe drinking water and training in a broad range of skills for their youth.

Therefore the purpose of this study, was to identify those caring activities which the co-operate member could provide to support the livelihood of the elderly in the poverty driven environment. Specifically, the study sought to find out what the (1) government, (2) community, (3) NGOs and (4) philanthropists could provide to assist the livelihood of the elderly in a poverty driven environment in Enugu state.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. Survey research design in the view of Nworgu (2014), is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Survey research design is relevant to this study because it studied a few group of people that represented the large group. Three research questions were developed and answered while three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was carried out in Enugu state. The state has three senatorial zones and seventeen local government area at 6, 6, 5 local government areas per senatorial zone. Cluster sampling technique was used to select three local government areas from the three senatorial districts and 17 local government areas. From the three local government areas, purposive sampling technique was used to select 117 respondents from the population of 3,555. The 117 respondents comprised of 27 government officials, 45 community members and other related institutions and 25 senior officers of nongovernmental organization and philanthropists and 20 lecturers of home economics.

Three sets of questionnaire were developed from the literature and used for collecting data for the study. Set A was used to elicit information from the government officials on what the government could provide the elderly in poverty driven environment. Set B, collected information from the religious institution, community and others while set C was used to elicit information on what the NGOs and philanthropists could do for the elderly in caring for them in a poverty driven environment. Each item in the sets of the questionnaire had four response options of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) respectively. Five experts validated the questionnaire, one lecturer

from the department of Home Economics and Hospitality Education, one lecturer from Social Work Department, one senior officer of state government, one educated community leader validated one for the community, and one official of NGO validated one for the NGO, all from Enugu State. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items, with an overall co-efficient of 0.81.

Five research assistants helped to distribute the questionnaire to the respondent in the three Local Government Areas as follows 27 copies to the government officials on what government could contribute, 45 copies to the community on what community could contribute, 27 copies to NGOs, 20 copies to the lecturers of Home Economics who will react to the whole questionnaire. The researcher collected the completed copies from the research assistants at the headquarters of each local government, with an average return rate of 85 percent. Mean was used to answer the research questions while standard deviation was used to determine the spread of the respondents around the mean for each questionnaire items. t-test was used to test the hypothesis. For decision rule, any item, with a cut off points of 2.50 Or above, indicated that the respondents agreed on the item, while any item with mean less than 2.50 indicated that the respondents did not agree. For the hypothesis, when the t-calculated is less than t-table (1.64), it was accepted. This indicated that there is no significant difference in the opinion of the two groups of respondents when t-cal is greater than t-tab, it was rejected. This showed that there was significant differences, the respondents did not agree with one another.

Findings

Research Question 1:

What should be the contributions of government to care for the elderly in a poverty driven environment of Enugu state?

Table 1: Mean Rating of the responses of government official and home economic lecturers on what government should contribute for caring for elderly in a poverty driven environment.

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT STATE GOVERNMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X _G	X _L	Remark
1	Establish a functional welfare dept with budgetary allocation for the elderly	2.94	0.76	2.98	2.88	R, NS
2	Equip the welfare department with some trained staff also care for the elderly	2.89	0.74	3.00	2.79	R, NS
3	Provide blue print for functions of the trained staff who have custody of the elder	3.06	0.80	3.12	3.00	R, NS
4	Approve program from well-drawn department for elderly to receive	3.14	0.85	3.57	2.90	R, NS

	counseling from experts					
5	Foot some bills like hospital bills to take care of the elderly	3.0 5	0.94	2.9 8	3.76	R, NS
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT					
6	Sponsor established welfare center in giving drugs and other materials	3.0 5	0.89	3.2 3	2.88	R
7	Give incentives such as prices to encourage elderly in taking care of themselves	3.0 9	0.92	3.6 4	2.95	R
8	Encourage the relatives of the elderly in taking care of them	3.0 7	0.90	3.1 1	3.02	R
9	Intervene in legal property matters involving the elderly that are poor and could not defend their rights.	2.9 5	0.83	2.9 0	3.00	R
10	Subsidies, housing, utility, expenses of the elderly such as house and water bills	2.9 3	0.73	3.0 7	2.80	R

Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; R Required

Table 1, revealed that the 10 items had their means range from 2.89 – 3.14 and are above the cutoff point of 2.50 for decision rule. This indicated that the respondents agreed that the 10 items are contributions of the government in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment of Enugu state. The table also showed that the standard deviation ranged from 0.73 – 0.94 and are less than 1.96 (95percent confidence limit). This indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean or opinion of one another.

Research Question 2:

What should be the contribution of the community in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of the responses of the two groups of the respondent on what the community should contribute in caring for the elderly.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X _G	X _L	Remark
	RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION					
1	Assist the elderly in terms of food through offering in the church	2.98	0.87	3.07	2.82	R
2	Counsel them through program on the loss of faith and hope	2.99	0.89	3.06	2.93	R
3	Provide simple jobs that can earn them wages	2.92	0.85	3.05	2.78	R
4	Provide facilities for the elderly that have serious house problems	3.02	0.93	3.25	2.79	R

	community					
5	Assign special responsibility to the elderly as a means of coping	2.79	0.79	2.83	2.76	R
6	Sharing materials that are attracted by the community to the elders	2.91	0.83	3.01	2.80	R
	CHIEFS AND THE ELDERS					
7	Make available security for the elderly as vigilantes	2.79	0.78	3.08	2.50	R
8	Employ some member of their family to enable them take care of their elderly	2.77	0.77	2.96	2.58	R
9	Assist in providing water through bore holes for the elderly	2.95	0.58	3.04	2.85	R

Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; R Required

Table 2, had the mean of the 9 items presented on the table ranged from 2.77 – 3.02 and above 2.50 the cut off point for decision rule. This showed that the respondents agreed that items are contributions of the community in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment. The table also revealed that the standard deviation ranged from 0.77-0.93 and were less than 1.96 (95percent confidence limit). This indicated that the respondents are not far from mean or opinion of one another.

Research Question 3

What should be the contributions of the non-governmental organizations and philanthropists in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment?

Table 3: Mean Rating of the responses of the two groups of the respondents on the contribution of the NGO and philanthropist in caring for the elderly.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X_G	X_L	Remark
1	Attract fund to assist the elderly	2.85	0.79	3.00	2.79	R
2	Organize retreat for them and give support like food, clothing etc	2.94	0.82	2.99	2.90	R
3	Counsel them in time of trouble	2.92	0.84	2.93	2.91	R
4	Contribute in assisting the education of their dependent	3.09	0.91	3.12	3.06	R
5	Stand for them when they are	3.04	0.89	3.14	2.76	R

	maltreated by their community					
	PHILANTHROPIST					
6	Give scholarship award to their dependants for the elderly for help	3.37	0.96	3.12	3.48	R
7	Attract funds for the community to help subsidies their health bills	3.06	0.90	3.11	3.02	R
8	Sink boreholes for water supply to remove the burden of fetching water from a distance	2.99	0.83	3.04	2.98	R
9	Give material items such as food, clothing and others to be shared to the elderly	3.06	0.90	3.23	2.88	R
10	Building local parks where the elderly can stay for recreation	2.95	0.83	3.13	2.82	R

Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; R Required

Data presented in table 3 revealed that all the 10 items had the mean ranged from 2.85-3.37 and were above 2.50 cut off point for decision rule. This indicate that the respondents agreed that the items are contributions of the NGOs and philanthropists in caring for the elderly in a poverty driven environment. The items had the standard deviation ranged from 0.79-0.96 and were less than 1.96 (95% confidence limit), showing that the respondents were not far from one another in their opinion.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of the government officials and the lecturers of home economics on what government should contribute to caring for the elderly in a poverty driven environment in Enugu state.

Table 1: t-test Analysis of the Responses of Government

S/ N	ITEM STATEMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X_G	X_L	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
1	Establish a functional welfare dept with budgetary allocation for the elderly	2.94	0.76	2.98	2.88	0.11	1.64	NS
2	Equip the welfare department with some trained staff also care for the elderly	2.89	0.74	3.00	2.79	0.56	1.64	NS
3	Provide blue print for functions of the trained staff who have custody of the elder	3.06	0.80	3.12	3.00	0.68	1.64	NS
4	Approve program from well-drawn department for elderly to receive counseling from experts	3.14	0.85	3.57	2.90	0.59	1.64	NS
5	Foot some bills like hospital bills to take care of the elderly	3.05	0.94	2.98	3.76	0.68	1.64	NS
	LOCAL GOVERNMENT						1.64	
6	Sponsor established welfare center in giving drugs and other materials	3.05	0.89	3.23	2.88	0.60	1.64	NS
7	Give incentives such as prices to encourage elderly in taking care of themselves	3.09	0.92	3.64	2.95	0.85	1.64	NS
8	Encourage the relatives of the elderly in taking care of them	3.07	0.90	3.11	3.02	0.59	1.64	NS
9	Intervene in legal property matters involving the elderly that are poor and could not defend their rights.	2.95	0.83	2.90	3.00	0.50	1.64	NS
10	Subsidies, housing, utility, expenses of the elderly such	2.93	0.73	3.07	2.80	0.91	1.64	NS

	as house and water bills							
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Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; NS-Not Significant ; t-cal-t-calculated; t-tab- t-table

t-test analysis revealed that the items had their t-cal value ranged from 0.11 to 0.91 and were less than t-tab of 1.64 was accepted. This indicated that there was no significant differences in the mean ratings of the government officials and lectures of Home Economics on what government should contribute in caring for the elderly in a poverty driven environment.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the Home economics lecturers and the community leaders on what the community should contribute in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the Men Responses of the two Groups of Respondents.

Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; NS-Not Significant; t-cal-t-calculated; t-tab- t-table

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X _G	X _L	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
1	Assist the elderly in terms of food through offering in the church	2.98	0.87	3.07	2.82	0.94	1.64	NS
2	Counsel them through program on the loss of faith and hope	2.99	0.89	3.06	2.93	0.37	1.64	NS
3	Provide simple jobs that can earn them wages	2.92	0.85	3.05	2.78	0.65	1.64	NS
4	Provide facilities for the elderly that have serious house problems community	3.02	0.93	3.25	2.79	0.61	1.64	NS
5	Assign special responsibility to the elderly as a means of coping	2.79	0.79	2.83	2.76	0.72	1.64	NS
6	Sharing materials that are attracted by the community to the elders	2.91	0.83	3.01	2.80	0.82	1.64	NS
	CHIEFS AND THE ELDERS						1.64	
7	Make available security for the elderly as vigilantes	2.79	0.78	3.08	2.50	0.65	1.64	NS
8	Employ some member of their	2.77	0.7	2.9	2.5	0.5	1.6	NS

	family to enable them take care of their elderly		7	6	8	5	4	
9	Assist in providing water through bore holes for the elderly	2.95	0.5 8	3.0 4	2.8 5	0.5 6	1.6 4	NS

The table revealed that the items had their t-cal ranged from 0.37-0.94 and were less than t-tab and were accepted. This indicated that there was no significance deference in the mean rating of the lecturer of home economics and the community leaders on what the community should contribute in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment of Enugu state.

Hypothesis: There is no significant differences in the mean ratings of the lecturers of home economics and the NGOs and the contribution of the NGOs and philanthropist in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Mean Responses of the two Groups of the Respondents

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	\bar{X}	SD	X_G	X_L	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
	NGO							
1	Attract fund to assist the elderly	2.85	0.79	3.00	2.79	0.69	1.64	NS
2	Organize retreat for them and give support like food, clothing etc	2.94	0.82	2.99	2.90	0.87	1.64	NS
3	Counsel them in time of trouble	2.92	0.84	2.93	2.91	0.71	1.64	NS
4	Contribute in assisting the education of their dependent	3.09	0.91	3.12	3.06	0.69	1.64	NS
5	Stand for them when they are maltreated by their community	3.04	0.89	3.14	2.76	0.69	1.64	NS
	PHILANTHROPIST						1.64	
6	Give scholarship award to their dependants for the elderly for help	3.37	0.96	3.12	3.48	0.58	1.64	NS
7	Attract funds for the community to help subsidies their health bills	3.06	0.90	3.11	3.02	0.97	1.64	NS
8	Sink boreholes for water supply to remove the burden of fetching water from a distance	2.99	0.83	3.04	2.98	0.96	1.64	NS
9	Give material items such as food, clothing and others to be shared to the elderly	3.06	0.90	3.23	2.88	0.78	1.64	NS
10	Building local parks where the elderly can stay for recreation	2.95	0.83	3.13	2.82	0.81	1.64	NS

Key: \bar{X} -Grand Mean; X-Mean; SD-Standard Deviation; NS-Not Significant; t-cal-t-calculated; t-tab- t-table

The table revealed that the ten items had their t-cal calculated ranged form 0.58 to 0.97 and were below 1.64 of t-tab and were accepted. This showed that there was no significant differences in the main ratings of the lecturers of home economics and the NGOs on what the NGOs and philanthropists should contribute in caring for the elderly in poverty driven environment.

Discussion

In contribution of government in caring for the elderly, it was found out that most elderly in the poor environment were in a very bad condition health wise, feeding among others that required a welfare package from the government. Such packages include, providing housing, good drinking water electricity; establishing a functional health care centre with budgetary allocation for the elderly; equipping the welfare department with some training staff to care for their health; encouraging their wards by taking care of their need and five others. The findings were in agreement with the submission of World Health Organization WHO (2014) where it was stated that the community should provide important link between the elderly and the government through planning projects to improve needs of the elderly such as in providing housing, good drinking water, electricity and training of their wards in a broad range of skills for jobs. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (2012), had the same view that government should come into all stages of primary health care programme of the elderly. Abuchi (2014), ascertained that their exist poor health condition among elderly in poor environment in Enugu state. While Davis (2013) advanced that mobilizing the government by the stakeholders in the community to accept these measures will improve the health condition of the elderly.

On what the community could contribute in helping the elderly, it was observed that the communities have some responsibilities in helping to improve the life of the elderly in their environment. They include, assisting the elderly in terms of food, clothing, through church offering; counseling them through programme on the loss of faith and hope; providing facilities of elderly that have serious house problem, making available security for the elderly as vigilantes and five others. The findings were inline with the opinion of Clemon (2002), who stated that elderly need food, clothing and finance for good maintenance of their health. Joshi (2012) emphasized that health is the most importance need of elderly because as they advanced in age they become weaker physically, susceptible to minor harzards and need regular care and support. World Health Organization WHO, (2014), in the same view stated that elderly should be assured health security for good social life.

In respect to the contributions of Non-Governmental Organization and philanthropists, it was found out that NGOs and philanthropists could provide help to elderly that can reduce their motional disturbances and improve the shelf life. These contributions include; counseling them in time of trouble; contributing in assisting the education of their dependents; organizing retreat on health care for them and giving support like food, clothing and others. These findings were inline with the report of Federation of Public Health Association (WFPHA) (2005), where it was suggested that the NGO in various communities should assist the elderly in their health care. Ashford (2005) stated

that elderly every where still face formidable obstacles to good health. Pribia (2011) noted that, this is why health programs that will equip the elderly with knowledge, attitude and practices is still highly important to them.

Findings on the hypotheses revealed that there was no significance difference in the mean ratings of home economics lecturers and government officials, community leaders and NGOs on the contributions of that the government officials, community, NGO and philanthropists should provide for caring for the elderly in a poverty driven environment in Enugu state. The study identified 10 items on the contributions of the government, 9 items for the community and 10 items for the NGO and philanthropist towards caring for the elderly in a poverty driven environment. The implication of these findings is that professional qualification and work experience of the individual group of respondents did not significantly influence their responses on the items associated with each group and the lecturers of home economics. The contributions of the authors and organizations cited above helped to give credence to the findings of this study.

Recommendations

1. The findings of this study should be made available to government for development into policy for implementation towards assisting the caring of the elderly in poverty driven environment in Enugu state.
2. The findings should be an information to the members of the family that elderly need caring such as feeding, clothing and finances.
3. To inform the community, philanthropist, that they have obligation to the elderly in their community.

Conclusion

The elderly living in poverty driven environment of Enugu state have being observed to find coping with living difficulty especially in health care, access to good food, accommodation and meeting the basic needs of their dependants such as children and ground children who are orphans. This observation tends to suggest poor quality of life for the children of these elderly in future if assistance is not provided by relevant group or individuals in the society. This study therefore, was carried out to find out the type of assistance from the relevant orders to the elderly like the government, community, NGOs and philanthropists could provides to assist the caring of elderly in the area of study. It was found out that government should provide 10 initiatives, 9 items for community and 9 initiatives for the NGOs and philanthropists.

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