

**THE PLACE OF OLDER ADULTS IN FAMILY STABILITY IN EGOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA. EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL PRESENTED TO POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the proposal titled Older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area Edo State Nigeria was written out by Fatima Sanu with matriculation number PG/SSC9100346 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Award of Master's Degree in Gerontology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

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Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God almighty, whose grace and guidance sustained me throughout this academic journey, and to my family for their unwavering love, support and prayers.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and a total of 520 questionnaires were administered to older adults across Egor LGA. In addition, an In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide was used to collect qualitative data from selected stakeholders to complement the survey findings. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores), while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed. The findings revealed that older adults play crucial roles in family stability, with overall mean score of 3.74 out of 5.0 max for 5 likert scale (representing 74.8%) confirms that older adults play positive and multifaceted roles in sustaining family stability; and inferentially $X^2=608.5$ ($p<0.05$) reveals that older adults have significant role in family stability. Secondly, there was a positive and significant impact of the economic status of older adults have on family stability (overall mean = 3.78 (75.6%); $X^2 = 538.9$, $P < 0.05$). Thirdly, there was also a positive and significant effect of support networks of older adults on family stability (overall mean = 3.50 (70%); $X^2 = 450.1$ ($P < 0.05$). Lastly, the health status of older adults has no positive and significant impact on family stability (Overall mean = 3.31 (66.2%), $X^2 = 329.3$, $P < 0.05$). these results were complemented by IDI responses. The study recommended targeted policies and interventions by government, families, social workers, and community organizations to support older adults' economic empowerment, health, and social integration.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The family unit is the fundamental building blocks of any society, and its stability is crucial for the overall well-being and development of a nation. In Nigeria, the Older adults play a significant role in maintaining family stability, providing wisdom, guidance, and support to younger generations (Ibe, 2017). Nigeria is a country with a diverse cultural heritage and a large population, currently estimated to be over 200 million (Eze, 2018). The Nigerian family structure is typically extended, with several generations living under one roof and the Older adults playing a central role in family decision-making and conflict resolution. However, with the advent of modernization and urbanization, the traditional Nigerian family structure is evolving, and the role of the Older adults in family stability is becoming increasingly complex (Nwosu, 2017).

The traditional extended family system in Nigeria, which typically includes multiple generations living together or in close proximity, has been undergoing transformation due to urbanization, migration, and changing social norms. As a result, the support networks that once ensured the well-being and care of the Older adults are becoming strained, leading to potential challenges in meeting the needs of this vulnerable population (Nkosi & Moyo 2021). Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of nuclear families, where only the immediate family members reside together, has raised concerns about the potential isolation and neglect of older adults' individuals who may not have strong familial support systems. This shift in family structure has implications for the well-being and social integration of the older adults in Nigeria (Ogundele, 2016).

Additionally, issues such as poverty, limited access to healthcare, and inadequate social support systems further compound the challenges faced by the Older adults population in Nigeria.

Many Older adults individuals struggle to access essential services and resources, leading to increased vulnerability and marginalization within society. Given these complex dynamics, there is a growing need to examine the place of the Older adults in family stability in Egor local government Edo state and to explore strategies for promoting their well-being and social inclusion. Understanding the role of the Older adults in maintaining family cohesion and stability is essential for developing targeted interventions and policies that support healthy aging and foster intergenerational relationships (Ogundele, 2016).

This study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the importance of the Older adults in family stability in Egor local government Edo state and to provide insights that can inform evidence-based interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being and social integration of older adults individuals in the country. By recognizing and valuing the contributions of the Older adults within the family unit, Nigeria can work towards building stronger, more resilient communities that uphold the dignity and rights of all generations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Egor Local Government Area in Edo State, Nigeria, is home to a diverse population, including a significant number of Older adults who play a crucial role in the family structure and community dynamics. However, the Older adults population in Egor faces various challenges that can impact their well-being and influence family stability. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential for promoting the overall welfare and social integration of the Older adults in the local government area.

There are key issues that form the basis of the problem statement

Many Older adults in Egor may experience social isolation and loneliness due to changing family structures, migration patterns, and limited social networks. The lack of social

connections can have detrimental effects on the mental and emotional well-being of the Older adults, potentially leading to feelings of neglect and marginalization. Access to healthcare services is a critical issue for the Older adults population in Egor. Limited healthcare facilities, financial constraints, and inadequate transportation options may hinder Older adults individuals from receiving timely and appropriate medical care, leading to unmet health needs and reduced quality of life (Ikolo, 2018).

The Older adults in Egor may face economic challenges, including limited financial resources, lack of pension support, and dependency on family members for financial assistance. Economic vulnerability can impact the ability of the Older adults to meet their basic needs and maintain a sense of autonomy and dignity. Shifts in cultural values, generational differences, and changing societal norms may contribute to intergenerational conflict within families in Egor. Misunderstandings, communication barriers, and conflicting expectations between the Older adults and younger family members can strain relationships and disrupt family stability (Ibe, 2017).

The absence of formal support systems and community resources tailored to the needs of the Older adults in Egor can exacerbate the challenges faced by this vulnerable population. Limited access to social services, counseling, and advocacy programs may leave the Older adults without adequate support to address their unique needs and concerns. By addressing these critical issues, this research study aims to identify opportunities for enhancing the well-being and social integration of the Older adults in Egor Local Government Area, ultimately contributing to improved family stability and community cohesion.

1.3 Research Question

The following research questions will guide the study

- i. What are roles of older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area?
- ii. What impact does economic status of the older adults has on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.?
- iii. What is the effect of support networks of the older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area?
- iv. What is the impact of health status of the older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area?

1.5 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to assess the place of the older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the roles of older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area.
- ii. examine the impact of economic status of the older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.
- iii. examine effect of support networks of the older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.
- iv. investigate the impact of health status of the older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

1.5 Hypotheses

Each of the objectives were hypothesized in null form as follows:

H₀₁: Older adults have no significant role in family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

H₀₂: The economic status of older adults has no significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

H₀₃: Support networks of older adults have no significant effect on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

H₀₄: The health status of older adults has no significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will be conducted to educate the people on the place of the older adults in family stability using Egor local government as a base for the subject matter. The significance of studying the place of the older adults in family stability in Nigeria lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural norms, economic factors, social support and health status within the Nigerian context. There are some key reasons why this study is significant Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage with diverse traditions and values regarding the role of the older adults in families. Understanding how these cultural norms influence the place of the older adults can help in promoting cultural sensitivity and developing interventions that are culturally appropriate.

The older adults often play a crucial role in maintaining family cohesion and providing guidance and support to younger generations. Studying their place in family stability can shed light on the importance of intergenerational relationships and the impact on overall family well-being. In Nigeria, family members are often the primary source of support for the older adults. Examining the place of the older adults in family stability can help identify gaps in social support

systems and inform strategies to strengthen support networks for aging individuals. The well-being of the older adults is closely linked to their social connections, living arrangements, and access to care. Understanding how these factors contribute to family stability can inform policies and programs aimed at improving the health outcomes of the older adults population in Nigeria. Furthermore this study will be of immense benefit to other researchers who intend to know more on this study and can also be used by non-researchers to build more on their research work. This study contributes to knowledge and could serve as a guide for other study.

This study will also emphasize the importance of preserving intergenerational knowledge and traditions. The older adults often serve as repositories of cultural history, passing down values, practices, and wisdom that help maintain a family's identity and cohesion. By analyzing their roles, this study highlights how the preservation of these traditions contributes to family unity and a sense of continuity across generations, which is vital in a rapidly modernizing society like Nigeria. Additionally, the study seeks to address the challenges faced by the older adults in a changing social and economic environment. As family structures evolve due to urbanization, migration, and globalization, the traditional roles of the older adults may be diminished or overlooked. Understanding these shifts is crucial for designing inclusive policies that integrate the older adults into the family unit and ensure their active participation in fostering family stability. By providing these insights, the study underscores the importance of adapting social systems to support the older adults and their families in a dynamic world.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the place of the older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government area Edo State. The scope of the study on the place of the older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria, would involve a focused

examination of the following key aspects: The study would include an analysis of the demographic characteristics of the older adults population in Egor Local Government Area, such as age distribution, gender, marital status, living arrangements, and educational background. The research would explore the prevailing family structures in the area, including nuclear families, extended families, and multigenerational households. It would also examine the roles and relationships of the older adults within these family units. The study would investigate the cultural norms, values, and traditions that shape the place of the older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area. This would involve understanding the cultural expectations regarding caregiving, respect for elders, and intergenerational relationships.

The research would assess the social support systems available to the older adults in the local government area, including family support, community resources, and formal support services. It would explore the extent to which these support networks contribute to family stability and the well-being of the older adults. The study would examine the health status, access to healthcare services, and overall well-being of the older adults population in Egor Local Government Area. This would include an assessment of chronic conditions, disabilities, mental health issues, and functional abilities.

1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Older Adults

They are individuals otherwise known as senior citizens who are sixty-five (65) years and above. They could also be referred to as older persons of them as bread eaters and not bread winners. Basically they are custodians of wisdom, norms and value system.

2. Cultural norms

Cultural norms are the rules or expectations that guide behavior in a given culture. They dictate what is considered appropriate or inappropriate in various social situations. Cultural values, on the other hand, are the beliefs and principles that are important to the members of a culture. They influence attitudes, priorities, and decision-making.

3. Family Stability

Family stability refers to the ability of a family unit to maintain a sense of security, consistency, and support over time. It involves factors such as strong relationships, effective communication, financial security, emotional well-being, and a safe and nurturing environment for all family members. Family stability is important for the overall well-being and development of individuals within the family, as it provides a foundation for growth, resilience, and positive outcomes.

4. Economic Condition

Economic factors refer to the conditions and influences that impact the financial well-being and activities of individuals, businesses, and societies. These factors can include aspects such as employment rates, inflation, interest rates, economic growth, income levels, consumer spending, and overall economic stability. Economic factors play a significant role in shaping the economic environment and can have a direct impact on decision-making, investment, consumption patterns, and overall economic performance. Understanding and analyzing economic factors is essential for making informed decisions in various aspects of business, finance, and public policy.

5. Social Support

Social support refers to the assistance, care, and resources that individuals receive from their social networks, such as family, friends, peers, and community members. This support can be emotional, instrumental, informational, or appraisal-based, and it serves to provide comfort, encouragement, guidance, and practical help during times of need or stress. Social support plays a crucial role in promoting mental health, well-being, and resilience, as it can help individuals cope with challenges, reduce feelings of isolation, and enhance their sense of belonging and connection to others. Strong social support networks are associated with better health outcomes, increased resilience, and overall improved quality of life.

6. Health Status

Health status refers to an individual's overall physical, mental, and emotional well-being at a specific point in time. It encompasses various aspects of health, including the presence or absence of illness or disease, functional abilities, quality of life, and overall health-related factors. Health status is influenced by a combination of genetic, environmental, lifestyle, and socioeconomic factors, as well as access to healthcare services and preventive measures. Monitoring and assessing health status is important for identifying health risks, guiding treatment decisions, and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving health outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Concept of the Older adults and Family Stability

The older adults, often defined as individuals aged 60 and above, play a pivotal role in maintaining family stability. Family stability refers to the harmonious functioning of a family unit, where members share responsibilities, provide mutual support, and maintain emotional connections. In many traditional societies, including those in Africa, the older adults are considered custodians of cultural heritage, moral values, and familial traditions. Their roles often extend beyond caregiving to include mentorship, conflict resolution, and the preservation of family history, making them central to family dynamics. The active involvement of older adults individuals contribute significantly to intergenerational bonding and cohesion. Studies, such as those by Etim and Odimegwu (2017), highlight the importance of the older adults in fostering family harmony. Their wisdom, derived from life experiences, enables them to act as stabilizers during family crises, offering guidance and support to younger members. This advisory role not only strengthens familial bonds but also equips families to navigate challenges collectively, ensuring resilience over time.

In traditional African settings, particularly in Nigeria, the older adults are key figures in moral and cultural education. They socialize younger generations by instilling societal norms, values, and traditions, thus maintaining cultural continuity. This role is especially critical in an era of globalization, where rapid modernization threatens the erosion of indigenous cultural practices (Popoola et al., 2019). By sharing stories, proverbs, and traditional wisdom, the older adults connect family members to their cultural roots, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging. Moreover, the older adults often act as bridges between the past and present,

facilitating the transfer of knowledge and experiences that shape the family's collective memory. Their role as keepers of family history fosters a shared sense of purpose and pride among younger generations. Through their contributions to caregiving, mentoring, and cultural preservation, the older adults reinforce family stability, ensuring that family structures remain cohesive and functional across generations.

2.1.1 Family Stability

Family stability is a crucial aspect of societal well-being, and the older adults population plays a significant role in maintaining family cohesion and support systems in many societies, including Nigeria. In this conceptual review, we will examine the social support networks of the older adults and their impact on family stability in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the older adults are often seen as the custodians of cultural values, traditions, and family norms. They play a vital role in providing guidance, support, and care for younger generations, thereby contributing to the overall stability of the family unit (Igwe & Ugwu, 2017). Their wisdom and experience are highly valued in decision-making processes and conflict resolution within the family. The social support networks of the older adults in Nigeria usually consist of kinship ties, religious organizations, and community groups. These networks provide the older adults with emotional, financial, and practical support, enhancing their well-being and ability to function effectively within the family setting (Adebayo et al., 2019). Through these networks, the older adults receive assistance in caregiving, socialization, and coping with challenges. The presence of strong social support networks for the older adults has a positive impact on family stability in Nigeria. Research has shown that older adults individuals who receive adequate support from their networks are more likely to have better mental and physical health outcomes, leading to reduced

stress levels within the family (Ogunniyi & Akintoye, 2015). This, in turn, contributes to a harmonious family environment and overall well-being of family members.

Despite the importance of social support networks for the older adults, there are challenges such as limited access to healthcare, financial constraints, and changing family dynamics in Nigeria. It is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to develop interventions that strengthen these networks, improve access to resources, and promote intergenerational solidarity within families (Adepoju & Kupolati, 2020). Empowering the older adults through social support programs and community initiatives can help ensure their continued contribution to family stability in Nigeria.

2.2 Roles of the Older adults in Family Dynamics

The older adults play vital roles in shaping and maintaining family dynamics, particularly in Nigerian households, where they serve as caregivers, advisors, cultural custodians, and financial supporters. Their involvement enhances intergenerational relationships and fosters the overall stability of the family unit. This section discusses the various roles the older adults assume in Nigerian families, highlighting how these roles significantly contribute to family cohesion, emotional well-being, and cultural preservation.

One of the most prominent roles the older adults play in family dynamics is caregiving. In many Nigerian families, especially in urban areas where both parents often work, grandparents step in to care for grandchildren. This caregiving role is crucial for families in dual-income households, as it helps reduce the burden on working parents. Ashipa (2016) points out that older adults caregivers help create a culturally grounded environment for children, nurturing them with values, traditions, and life lessons that might otherwise be neglected due to time constraints. In doing so, the older adults reinforce their role as pillars of family stability, ensuring

that younger generations grow up with a solid foundation of family values and cultural understanding.

The advisory role of the older adults is another critical aspect of their contribution to family dynamics. With their vast knowledge and life experiences, older individuals often become the go-to figures for advice and guidance during difficult situations or important family decisions. Their ability to offer impartial and well-considered counsel can help mediate conflicts and maintain harmony within the family. Ogunniyi et al. (2012) found that older adults individuals in Southwestern Nigeria are highly regarded for their wisdom and often sought after for advice in family matters, especially when tensions arise. In this way, they act as stabilizers in the family unit, helping to resolve disputes and preventing the escalation of conflicts. Their role as mediators extends beyond just resolving disputes; they often provide emotional support and act as confidants, creating an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

Additionally, the older adults serve as the keepers of family history, traditions, and cultural knowledge. In many African cultures, oral traditions are crucial for preserving the past and transmitting values to future generations. The older adults, with their wealth of stories, experiences, and family lore, are in a unique position to pass down this knowledge. By engaging in storytelling, the older adults help younger family members understand their heritage, the struggles their ancestors faced, and the values that have shaped their family's identity. This role of the older adults is particularly significant in societies where modernity and globalization may threaten the erosion of traditional values. Through their stories, the older adults foster a sense of belonging and pride in their cultural identity, reinforcing the continuity of family traditions across generations. The preservation of family history not only strengthens individual family bonds but also creates a shared identity that contributes to the overall resilience of the family.

Furthermore, the older adults's financial contributions significantly impact family stability. In many Nigerian families, especially in extended family systems, the older adults often provide financial support, whether through pensions, savings, or other means. This financial assistance is essential in alleviating the financial pressures faced by younger family members, particularly in situations of unemployment, illness, or economic hardship. Adepoju et al. (2016) discuss how older adults individuals, especially those with pensions or accumulated wealth, can act as financial buffers, supporting their children and grandchildren during times of need. This economic support not only enhances the well-being of the younger generation but also promotes family cohesion by reducing financial stress and preventing tensions that could arise from economic struggles. By contributing financially, the older adults reinforce their role as important providers within the family, even as they age, ensuring that family members continue to benefit from their resources and stability.

Therefore, the older adults in Nigerian families serve multifaceted roles that are essential for maintaining family stability. Their involvement as caregivers, advisors, cultural preservers, and financial supporters strengthens the bonds within families and helps ensure that families remain resilient in the face of challenges. As society continues to change, particularly with the pressures of urbanization and modernization, the roles of the older adults in family dynamics become even more critical in preserving cultural heritage and ensuring intergenerational support. The wisdom, experience, and love that older adults' family members provide are indispensable, contributing to the ongoing stability and harmony of Nigerian families.

2.3 Cultural Context of Older adults Support in Nigeria

In Nigeria, cultural values emphasize the care, respect, and veneration of the older adults, deeply embedding these principles into the fabric of society. Older adults individuals are revered

as the custodians of tradition, moral guides, and spiritual leaders. Across various ethnic groups, the older adults are central figures in maintaining both societal and familial order. For instance, in Yoruba culture, the adage “*Agba kii wa loja, ki ori omo tuntun wo*” (an elder’s presence ensures harmony) reflects the vital role elders play in promoting peace and social order. Similarly, the Igbo saying “*Nwata kwo aka, osoro okenye rie nri*” (a child washes their hands and dines with elders) underscores the respect accorded to the older adults, implying that children who honor their elders are seen as mature and wise. These cultural proverbs highlight a profound societal belief in the importance of the older adults, not just as family members, but as pivotal figures whose wisdom shapes the dynamics of family and society. This respect is not only a moral but also a social imperative, as it ensures the cohesion of family structures and, by extension, the broader community. Traditional norms dictate that younger generations are responsible for the welfare of their elders, reinforcing the interconnectedness of all generations within a family (Ashipha, 2016).

Historically, the extended family system in Nigeria has served as the primary structure for supporting older adults members. Within this system, older adults individuals typically live with their children or extended family members who provide for their physical, emotional, and financial needs. This communal form of support reflects the collective values of Nigerian society, where family members share the responsibility of caring for one another, ensuring the well-being of the older adults, and preserving cultural continuity. In the past, this system was effective in providing care and support, with older adults individuals often serving as key figures who guided their families through life's challenges, including raising grandchildren, offering advice, and performing ritualistic duties.

However, the advent of urbanization and modernization has significantly altered these traditional family structures. In urban centers, nuclear families have become more prevalent due to economic pressures, lifestyle changes, and the influence of Western ideals. The shift from extended to nuclear families has reduced the frequency of interaction between the older adults and younger generations, leading to greater physical and emotional distance between them. As a result, the older adults often find themselves more isolated, and the level of support they receive from their families can be inconsistent or insufficient (Sowunmi et al., 2014). This decline in intergenerational interaction and support has created challenges for the older adults, with many facing neglect, loneliness, and financial insecurity.

The weakening of the traditional extended family system has placed additional strain on the well-being of the older adults . While younger family members may still express respect for their elders, the structural changes in family life have made it increasingly difficult for them to provide the level of care and support that was once standard. In urban settings, older adults individuals often live independently, sometimes far from their children and relatives, which increases their vulnerability to social isolation and neglect. Additionally, some older adults Nigerians, especially those without adequate savings or pensions, face financial hardship and struggle to meet basic needs. Popoola et al. (2019) highlight that despite Nigeria's strong cultural emphasis on older adults care, the practical challenges faced by older adults individuals in urban areas remain substantial, as family members are increasingly unable to provide comprehensive support.

Nevertheless, cultural norms continue to uphold the importance of caring for the older adults. Even in urban environments, many Nigerians still feel a moral obligation to provide for their elders, with younger generations striving to maintain these traditional values. Efforts to

ensure older adults well-being are visible in some family practices, such as sending financial support, organizing periodic visits, or involving the older adults in decision-making processes. In some rural areas, extended family systems remain intact, and the older adults continue to play central roles in both family and community affairs.

Government initiatives also play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by the older adults in Nigeria. Policies such as pensions and healthcare subsidies are designed to ease the financial burdens of aging individuals. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been limited by inadequate funding, lack of proper implementation, and bureaucratic challenges. For example, many older adults Nigerians do not have access to pension schemes due to informal employment or insufficient contributions during their working years. Similarly, healthcare access remains a significant issue for the older adults, particularly in rural areas where medical facilities are scarce, and affordable healthcare is not always available (Iloh et al., 2012). Therefore, while governmental programs are intended to provide a safety net for the older adults their reach and effectiveness remain limited.

To enhance the well-being of the older adults and ensure their continued role in promoting family stability, there is a need for comprehensive policies that address both financial and social support. Strengthening social welfare programs, improving healthcare access, and encouraging community-based initiatives are essential to ensuring that the older adults are adequately cared for and integrated into family and societal life. By reinforcing these systems, Nigeria can uphold the cultural values of older adults respect and care while addressing the challenges posed by modernization. Therefore, the cultural context of older adults support in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the values of respect, intergenerational responsibility, and family cohesion. While traditional family structures have been affected by urbanization, cultural norms

continue to emphasize the importance of older adults care and respect. However, the challenges brought about by modernization, urbanization, and inadequate government support highlight the need for renewed efforts to ensure the well-being of the older adults. Strengthening both family and government support systems is crucial for maintaining the stability of families and safeguarding the dignity and health of older adults Nigerians.

2.4 The Place of the Older adults in the Family Stability

The older adults play a crucial role in family stability in Nigeria. In traditional Nigerian societies, the older adults are highly respected and revered for their wisdom, experience, and leadership within the family unit. They are seen as the custodians of cultural norms and values, and their presence often provides a sense of continuity and stability within the family. According to a study conducted by Okunola et al. (2015), the older adults in Nigeria are often considered the backbone of the family, providing guidance and support to younger generations. They are responsible for passing down cultural traditions, values, and beliefs, which help uphold family traditions and maintain family cohesion. The study also found that older adults family members often serve as mediators in family disputes, offering wisdom and perspective to help resolve conflicts and maintain harmony within the family (Okunola, 2015).

Furthermore, the older adults in Nigeria play a crucial role in caregiving for younger family members, especially in times of illness or crisis. A study by Afolayan et al. (2019) found that older adults family members are often relied upon to provide emotional and physical support to family members during challenging times, such as illness or financial hardship. Their presence helps alleviate stress and strengthen family bonds during times of adversity. It is important to note that the role of the older adults in family stability in Nigeria is not without challenges. The aging population in Nigeria is growing, and many older adults individuals face issues such as

poverty, social isolation, and lack of access to quality healthcare. These challenges can impact their ability to effectively fulfill their role within the family unit and may strain family dynamics.

The older adults play a critical role in maintaining family stability in Nigeria. Their wisdom, experience, and caregiving support contribute to the overall well-being and cohesion of the family unit. However, it is essential for society to address the challenges faced by the older adults to ensure they can continue to play a vital role in family stability.

2.5 Economic Condition of the Older adults on Family Stability

The economic factors of the older adults play a significant role in the stability of the family unit. Research has shown that financial stability is closely linked to overall family well-being and functioning (Elder et al., 2015). As individuals age, they may experience a decline in income due to retirement or health issues, which can impact their ability to provide financial support to their family members. One important economic factor to consider is the cost of healthcare for older adults individuals. As individuals age, they are more likely to have health issues that require expensive medications, treatments, and care. These costs can place a significant financial burden on the older adults person and their family members, potentially leading to financial strain and instability within the family unit (Ling et al., 2018).

Additionally, the retirement income of the older adults can also have a major impact on family stability. older adults individuals who do not have enough savings or pension income may rely on their family members for financial support. This can strain the resources of the younger generation and lead to conflicts and tension within the family (Bengtson et al., 2017). Moreover, the economic resources of the older adults can affect intergenerational relationships within the family. For example, older adults individuals who have substantial wealth may be able to provide financial support to their children and grandchildren, fostering closer and more positive

relationships. On the other hand, older adults individuals who struggle financially may feel like a burden on their family members, leading to feelings of shame and guilt (Elder et al., 2015).

2.6 Social Support of the Older adults on Family Stability

In Nigeria, as in many other societies, family plays a crucial role in providing social support to the older adults. Social support networks are important for maintaining the well-being and stability of the older adults population, particularly in a country where formal social security systems are limited. This conceptual review will examine the impact of social support networks of the older adults on family stability in Nigeria. Family stability refers to the ability of a family unit to function cohesively and effectively, meeting the needs of its members and adapting to changes and challenges. Social support networks, including family members, friends, and community organizations, play a significant role in maintaining family stability by providing emotional, instrumental, and informational support to its members.

In Nigeria, the traditional extended family system has historically provided a strong support network for the older adults. Elders are highly respected and valued in Nigerian culture, and family members are expected to care for their aging parents and grandparents. This system of filial piety ensures that the older adults have access to social support within their own families, helping to maintain family stability. However, changes in societal and economic dynamics in Nigeria have challenged the traditional support systems for the older adults. Migration, urbanization, and economic pressures have led to increasing nuclearization of families and weakening of the extended family system. This shift has implications for the social support networks available to the older adults, potentially affecting family stability.

Research has shown that social support networks significantly impact the well-being and quality of life of the older adults in Nigeria. A study by Oni (2016) found that older adults

individuals with strong social support networks had better physical and mental health outcomes, as well as higher levels of life satisfaction. This suggests that social support networks can contribute to the overall well-being of the older adults, which in turn affects family stability. Furthermore, social support networks can also alleviate caregiver burden within families. Studies have shown that family members providing care to older adult's relatives often experience stress and burnout, particularly when the burden of care is high. Social support from friends, neighbors, or community organizations can help to alleviate this burden, reducing the risk of family breakdown and promoting family stability.

2.7 Health Status of the Older adults on Family Stability

The availability and quality of healthcare services for the older adults in Nigeria significantly influence family stability. When healthcare access is limited or age-related health conditions are poorly managed, families often experience heightened stress, as noted by Adebuseye et al. (2019). This stress can disrupt family dynamics, placing emotional and financial burdens on caregivers. Owoaje et al. (2013) further observed that chronic illnesses among older adults family members increase caregiving responsibilities, which can strain relationships and reduce the family's overall ability to maintain stability. This highlights the critical need for improved healthcare infrastructure tailored to the older adults, including accessible treatment for chronic and age-related conditions. Strengthening healthcare systems can not only improve the well-being of the older adults but also support family cohesion and reduce caregiver burden. Ensuring adequate healthcare policies and programs is essential for addressing the interconnected needs of families and aging populations in Nigeria.

Family members often take on the role of caregivers for older adults relatives in Nigeria, and the stress and burden of caregiving can have a direct impact on family relationships. A study

by Abegunde et al. (2017) highlighted the psychological and emotional toll that caregiving responsibilities can have on family members, potentially leading to conflicts and instability within the family. The presence of strong social support networks for the older adults can positively influence family stability. Adebowale et al. (2016) noted that when older adults individuals have access to social support from extended family members, community organizations, or religious groups, they are more likely to maintain their health and independence, thus reducing the strain on their families.

The economic burden of managing healthcare expenses for older adults family members can also impact family stability. According to a study by Ayalugba et al. (2018), families in Nigeria often face financial challenges in providing adequate care and treatment for older adults individuals, leading to increased stress and potential disruptions in family dynamics.

2.8 Challenges Faced by the Older adult in Families

The older adults population in Nigeria, as in many other countries, faces significant challenges that affect their well-being, especially in the context of family dynamics. These challenges are multifaceted, arising from societal changes, economic pressures, and the shifting roles of family members. Despite the deep cultural respect for the older adults in Nigeria, several obstacles continue to affect their quality of life within the family structure. This work explores some major challenges faced by the older adults in Nigerian families, including social isolation, economic insecurity, healthcare access, caregiving issues, loss of traditional roles, and more.

1. Social Isolation and Loneliness

One of the most pressing challenges for the older adults in Nigeria is social isolation. Traditionally, the older adults lived with extended family members, where they enjoyed constant interaction and emotional support. However, urbanization and modernization have altered this

dynamic, especially with the rise of nuclear families. As younger family members migrate to cities for work or education, older individuals are often left behind in rural areas or smaller towns, leading to isolation. The absence of regular family visits or communication can cause feelings of loneliness and abandonment, which, in turn, can negatively affect mental and emotional health (Ogunniyi et al., 2012). Social isolation is a major risk factor for depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline among the older adults. In addition, many older adults people find it difficult to engage in social activities outside the home due to mobility issues or lack of resources, further exacerbating their isolation.

2. Financial Insecurity

Financial insecurity remains a critical issue for many older adults individuals in Nigerian families. A large proportion of older adults people in Nigeria rely on family support, as they do not have access to pensions or social security benefits. In many cases, older adults Nigerians have not had formal employment, making it difficult to accumulate savings for retirement (Popoola et al., 2019). As a result, many older adults individuals face financial hardships, struggling to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing. Moreover, as economic pressures increase on younger family members, they may not always be able to provide the financial support that older relatives require. In some cases, the older adults may have to rely on charity or small-scale income-generating activities, which are often insufficient. This financial strain creates tension within families and can contribute to feelings of helplessness and frustration among the older adults.

3. Healthcare Access and Medical Support

Access to healthcare is a significant challenge for the older adults in Nigeria. As individuals age, they are more likely to develop chronic health conditions such as hypertension,

diabetes, arthritis, and other age-related diseases. However, healthcare services in Nigeria are often inadequate, particularly in rural areas where the older adults population is most concentrated. Many older adults individuals lack access to affordable healthcare facilities or face long distances to reach medical centers (Iloh et al., 2012). The high cost of medical treatment and medications further compounds the difficulties faced by older adults individuals. In many cases, older adults Nigerians must rely on family members to provide financial assistance for healthcare costs. However, this dependency can strain family resources, particularly in families that are already economically stressed. Furthermore, younger family members may lack the knowledge or resources to provide adequate caregiving for older adults relatives, leaving them vulnerable to health complications.

4. Caregiving and Dependence

The caregiving role traditionally played by the older adults is now being reversed, with many older individuals in Nigeria depending on their children or younger relatives for support. While the older adults were once providers of care for their grandchildren or extended family members, they now require caregiving themselves due to aging-related health issues. In some cases, older adults individuals are physically frail or disabled, making them dependent on family members for daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility. This role reversal can create a significant emotional burden for younger family members who are already balancing work and personal responsibilities. For some, caregiving may become overwhelming, leading to caregiver burnout, family conflicts, and diminished quality of care for the older adults. Additionally, some family members may view caregiving as a burden rather than a responsibility, leading to neglect or inadequate care for older adults relatives (Ashipa, 2016).

5. Changing Family Structures and Loss of Intergenerational Support

The traditional extended family system in Nigeria, where older adults members lived with their children or close relatives, has been eroded by urbanization and the rise of nuclear families. As younger generations move away for educational or economic opportunities, older adults family members are often left behind or placed in institutions. This change has led to a loss of intergenerational support, which historically played a significant role in Nigerian family life.

In many rural areas, the older adults are still revered as the heads of the family, offering guidance and wisdom to younger generations. However, in urban areas, the absence of extended family structures has made it harder for the older adults to maintain their traditional roles as family leaders. As a result, older adults individuals may feel marginalized or irrelevant in modern family structures, further exacerbating their emotional well-being (Etim & Odimegwu, 2017).

6. Cultural Erosion and Loss of Respect

Cultural erosion is another challenge facing the older adults in Nigeria. While the older adults have traditionally been seen as the custodians of culture and values, younger generations, particularly in urban areas, are becoming increasingly influenced by Western ideals. Modernization, technological advancements, and the breakdown of traditional family structures have contributed to a decline in the respect and reverence accorded to the older adults. As younger family members embrace new cultural norms, they may no longer seek the advice or guidance of older relatives, undermining their sense of worth and purpose. This lack of respect can lead to feelings of alienation among the older adults, who may feel disconnected from their families and communities (Sowunmi et al., 2014).

7. Poverty and Lack of Social Support

Poverty is another major challenge for many older adults individuals in Nigeria, particularly those without access to pensions or regular income. The lack of a robust social safety net means that older adults Nigerians who cannot work often face financial insecurity. In some cases, older adults individuals may be forced to live in poverty, relying on the charity of family members, neighbors, or community-based organizations. The absence of sufficient social support mechanisms from the government or other institutions exacerbates the plight of the older adults. While some government initiatives, such as pension schemes and health subsidies, exist, access to these resources is often limited or inadequate, leaving many older adults individuals vulnerable to economic hardships (Iloh et al., 2012).

8. Lack of Legal Protection

The lack of legal protection for the older adults is another critical issue in Nigeria. older adults individuals, particularly women, are often vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and neglect, yet legal frameworks to protect their rights are weak or under-enforced. In some cases, older adults individuals may be coerced into giving up their property or assets by family members, further compromising their financial security and well-being. While there are laws in place to address elder abuse, these laws are not always effectively implemented, and many older adults people may not be aware of their legal rights or the resources available to protect them. This lack of legal protection leaves the older adults at risk of exploitation, particularly in the absence of strong family or community support systems.

9. Mobility and Physical Limitations

As people age, they experience a decline in mobility and physical capabilities. The older adults in Nigeria often face difficulties in performing basic tasks such as walking, climbing stairs,

or carrying out household chores. In rural areas, where infrastructure may be underdeveloped, physical limitations can prevent older adults individuals from accessing essential services, such as healthcare or social activities. The lack of transportation options, particularly in rural areas, further exacerbates the mobility challenges faced by the older adults. Many older adults individuals are unable to travel to medical appointments or visit family members, contributing to their sense of isolation and dependency.

10. Psychosocial Challenges and Mental Health Issues

Finally, the older adults in Nigerian families often face psychosocial challenges related to mental health. Depression, anxiety, and cognitive decline are common among the older adults, particularly in the absence of social support or engagement. The stress of financial insecurity, caregiving burdens, and family conflicts can contribute to poor mental health among older adults individuals.

Many older adults Nigerians do not have access to mental health services or support networks, which can lead to untreated mental health conditions. The stigma surrounding mental health issues may also prevent older adults individuals from seeking help or discussing their struggles with family members.

The challenges faced by the older adults in Nigerian families are diverse and complex, stemming from societal, economic, cultural, and healthcare-related factors. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach, including strengthening family support systems, improving access to healthcare, promoting financial security, and reinforcing cultural respect for the older adults. Government policies and community-based initiatives also play a crucial role in alleviating the difficulties faced by older adults individuals and ensuring their well-being within the family unit. By tackling these issues, Nigeria can improve the quality of life for its aging

population and ensure that the older adults continue to play a vital role in maintaining family stability.

2.9 Empirical Review

Research has consistently emphasized the critical role of social support networks in fostering the well-being of the older adults and promoting family stability in Nigeria. Various studies underscore how family and community ties influence the emotional, physical, and psychological health of older adults individuals, contributing significantly to family cohesion.

Etim & Odimegwu (2017) examined family support networks for older persons in Nigeria, highlighting their role in offering care and emotional assistance. Their study revealed that these networks are vital for maintaining the health and emotional stability of older adults individuals, reinforcing family bonds. Similarly, Ashipa (2016) explored the impact of social support on the health outcomes of older adults individuals in South eastern Nigeria. The findings showed that strong social support systems not only improved the well-being of the older adults but also played a significant role in strengthening family dynamics and ensuring family cohesion.

Popoola et al. (2019) focused on the social support networks of aging populations in urban Ibadan. Their study revealed that both emotional and physical support from family members was essential in promoting the well-being of older adults individuals, thereby fostering family stability. Adepoju et al. (2016) also explored the relationship between social support and the quality of life for older adults individuals in Oyo State. They found that consistent family support significantly enhanced the quality of life for older adults individuals, emphasizing its importance in promoting unity and stability within families.

Ogunniyi et al. (2012) investigated caregiving roles in Southwestern Nigeria, demonstrating that older adults individuals heavily rely on family members, particularly adult

children, for support. The study highlighted the reciprocal role of the older adults in maintaining family structure through their wisdom and intergenerational contributions. These findings underscore how family ties are mutually beneficial, with the older adults playing an active role in promoting cohesion. Similarly, Sowunmi et al. (2014) explored the impact of family support on the quality of life for older adults individuals in Lagos State. Their findings indicated that older adults individuals who received consistent family support reported higher levels of life satisfaction and psychological well-being, further reinforcing the importance of family ties in maintaining overall stability.

In addition, Iloh et al. (2012) discussed challenges faced by older adults individuals in Nigeria, including poverty, social isolation, and limited healthcare access. Their study emphasized family support as a critical buffer against these challenges, advocating for strengthened social systems to address the needs of aging populations. They also recommended increased government intervention to develop robust social safety nets, which would alleviate the burdens faced by older adults individuals and their families. Together, these studies highlight the vital role of social support in enhancing the lives of older adults individuals and maintaining family stability. They underscore the need for families, communities, and policymakers to prioritize the well-being of the older adults, recognizing their contributions to familial and societal cohesion.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

Family stability remains a cornerstone of societal cohesion, and the senior citizens play a pivotal role in maintaining this stability. Structural Functionalism **and** Symbolic Interactionism offer valuable frameworks to understand how the older adults contribute to family resilience, continuity, and intergenerational unity. These theories emphasize their roles as cultural

custodians, emotional anchors, and mediators, demonstrating the critical link between the older adults and family stability.

2.10.1 Structural Functionalism

Structural Functionalism, articulated by Talcott Parsons (1951), posits that the family operates as a system where each member fulfils distinct roles essential for stability. The older adults, in particular, contribute to the family's equilibrium by assuming roles that reinforce cultural, social, and emotional cohesion. The older adults serve as custodians of cultural norms, moral values, and traditions, ensuring intergenerational continuity. By sharing family histories, leading cultural rituals, and mentoring younger members, they provide a sense of identity and grounding. This role is especially vital in multicultural societies where globalization and migration often erode traditional values (Hoffman, 2020). Through these efforts, the older adults mitigate generational conflicts and ensure that family members remain united.

Life experience equips the older adults with the capacity to mediate conflicts and foster harmony within families. They often act as neutral advisors during disputes, offering wisdom and perspective that de-escalate tensions (Bengtson et al., 2018). In multigenerational households, this stabilizing influence creates a supportive environment that strengthens interdependence among family members. Economic stability is another critical aspect of family cohesion. The older adults often provide financial support through pensions, savings, or caregiving roles. This reduces the financial burden on younger family members, fostering stability and enabling the family to focus on collective growth. Research by Phillips and Ajrouch (2021) shows that economically active older adults individuals significantly contribute to reducing family stress, particularly in low-income households.

4.10.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism, as theorized by George Herbert Mead (1934), emphasizes the importance of everyday interactions and shared meanings within families. This perspective highlights how the older adults contribute to family stability through relationships and communication. Through daily interactions, the older adults strengthen family unity by fostering emotional connections with younger generations. For example, grandparents often act as confidants and sources of support for grandchildren, promoting trust and mutual respect. These bonds are critical in times of stress or family transitions, such as relocations or the loss of a family member (King & Elder, 2020).

The older adults help shape the family's collective identity through storytelling, mentorship, and guidance. Sharing their life experiences and lessons provides younger members with a broader perspective on life, instilling resilience and a sense of purpose. This process nurtures a shared sense of belonging, essential for long-term family stability. As families evolve, the older adults negotiate their roles within the household, transitioning from primary caregivers to mentors or advisors. This dynamic fosters adaptability and ensures that all family members feel valued. The flexibility in these roles supports emotional stability and a collaborative family structure (Silverstein & Giarrusso, 2019).

Theoretical Implications in the field of Gerontology

Gerontology professionals can apply both theories to enhance the role of the older persons in family stability. From a Structural Functionalist perspective, advocating for social policies that provide financial support, healthcare access, and community-based resources for the older adults can empower them to fulfil their roles effectively. For example, initiatives that promote financial literacy or healthcare subsidies can alleviate the economic burdens faced by

older adults individuals. From a Symbolic Interactionist standpoint, gerontologists can facilitate intergenerational programs and family counselling sessions to strengthen relationships between the older adults and younger family members. Programs like storytelling workshops or mentorship initiatives can help bridge generational gaps, fostering understanding and cohesion.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presented a comprehensive explanation of the methodological framework that guided the conduct of this study titled “Older Adults in Family Stability in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.” It outlined and justified the procedures being adopted in addressing the research objectives. The chapter detailed the research design, area of study, population, sample size determination, sampling techniques, instrument of data collection, validity and reliability of the instrument, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, ethical considerations, and the appendix which contained the research questionnaire. These procedures were systematically aligned with the nature of the research problem and the objectives of the study in order to ensure credibility, reliability, and generalizability of findings.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for examining social phenomena as they exist in their natural setting. This design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from a relatively large population at a single point in time without manipulating any variables. The choice of this design is justified by the study’s focus on assessing perceptions, experiences, and roles of older adults within family systems, rather than establishing causal relationships. Triangulation for both quantitative and qualitative data will be employed

The descriptive survey design also allowed the identification of patterns and variations in the roles played by older adults across different households, family structures, and socio-economic backgrounds within Egor Local Government Area. Furthermore, the design provided a

suitable framework for the application of statistical techniques that facilitate comparison, generalization, and inference.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, one of the metropolitan local government areas that make up Benin City. Egor LGA is bounded by Oredo and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs and is characterized by rapid urbanization, population growth, and socio-cultural diversity.

The area comprised several wards with mixed residential patterns, including nuclear and extended family arrangements. The presence of older adults living within family settings, coupled with traditional cultural expectations surrounding respect for elders, authority, conflict mediation, and caregiving, made Egor Local Government Area a suitable and relevant setting for investigating the contribution of older adults to family stability.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised adult residents of Egor Local Government Area, with particular focus on individuals who are actively involved in family life and intergenerational interactions. The target population included:

Older adults aged 60 years and above,

Heads of households, and

Adult family members aged 18 years and above who participate in family decision-making or caregiving processes and their population was 209,715 according to NPC 2006 and the projection up to 2025 at 3% population growth rate was 367,480.

These categories of respondents were selected because they possess relevant experiences and knowledge concerning family cohesion, intergenerational relationships, authority structures,

and conflict resolution within households. The population covered both male and female respondents from different socio-economic backgrounds.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula, which was considered appropriate for large populations:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size

N = estimated population size

e = margin of error (0.05)

Based on population projections of adult residents in Egor Local Government Area, the application of Yamane's formula is yielding a minimum sample size of approximately 400 respondents. However, in order to improve the statistical power, increase representativeness, and reduce the effect of non-response or improperly completed questionnaires, the study deliberately increased the sample size to 520 respondents. This expanded sample size was to strengthen the robustness of the findings and enhancing their generalizability.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique, which is suitable for large and geographically dispersed populations. 20 older adults were selected for the in-depth Interview (IDI). The sampling process was conducted in the following stages:

1. Stage One – Selection of Wards:

Selected wards in Egor Local Government Area were chosen using simple random sampling techniques to give equal chance of selection.

2. Stage Two – Selection of Streets:

Streets within the selected wards were selected through systematic sampling, based on established sampling intervals.

3. Stage Three – Selection of Households:

Households along the selected streets were chosen using systematic sampling methods.

4. Stage Four – Selection of Respondents:

One eligible respondent was selected from each household using simple random sampling. In households where more than one eligible respondent exists, balloting was used to determine participation.

This multi-stage procedure was to ensure adequate coverage of the study area while minimizing sampling bias.

3.6 Instrument of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire titled “Older Adults and Family Stability Questionnaire (OAFSQ)” was designed to measure respondents’ perceptions and experiences regarding the contributions of older adults to family stability.

The instrument used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) to enhance precision, reliability, and ease of statistical analysis.

The questionnaire was structured into five thematic sections:

Section A: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Section B: Roles of older adults in family stability

Section C: Economic status of older adults and family stability

section D: support networks of older adults and family stability

Section E: health status of older adults and family stability

Secondly, the study employed an In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide to complement the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. The IDI guide was carefully redesigned to align with the objectives and research questions of the study while avoiding direct repetition of questionnaire items. It comprised two major sections: a socio-demographic profile section and thematic questions structured around the four research questions of the study. Specifically, two open-ended questions were developed for each research question to elicit detailed narratives on the roles of older adults in family stability, the influence of their economic status, the effect of their support networks, and the impact of their health status on family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. The open-ended nature of the IDI guide enabled participants to freely express their experiences, perceptions, and lived realities, thereby providing in-depth qualitative insights that enriched and triangulated the quantitative findings of the study.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity procedures. Specialists in sociology, gerontology, and research methodology assessed the questionnaire for relevance, coverage, and clarity. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test–retest method. The questionnaire was administered to thirty (30) respondents outside the study area on two separate occasions with a two-week interval. The responses were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.84, indicating a high level of consistency.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data for the study was collected through direct survey and interview by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Respondents were approached in their households, informed of the purpose of the study, and assured of confidentiality. This approach was to enhance participation, reducing non-response, and allowing clarification of questionnaire items where necessary.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data collected were be coded, entered, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to summarize respondents' characteristics and responses.

Inferential statistical techniques, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were used to test relationships between variables at a 0.05 level of significance, where applicable. The results were presented using tables for clarity and interpretative depth.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to established ethical standards in social research. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the research. Anonymity and confidentiality are being guaranteed, and no personal identifiers were collected. Data obtained was used strictly for academic purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the results derived from the quantitative analysis of data collected for the study titled “Older Adults in Family Stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria.” The presentation of results is structured into three major sections. The first section focuses on the distribution and return rate of the questionnaires, the second section examines the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the final section presents and interprets findings based on the research questions of the study.

4.1 Distribution of Questionnaires to the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution and Return of Questionnaires

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Returned	500	96.2
Not Returned	20	3.8
Total	520	100.0

Note: Percentages are based on the total number of questionnaires distributed (520).

From Table 1 above, it was recorded that out of the five hundred and twenty (520) questionnaires distributed to older adults in Egor Local Government Area, five hundred (500) were duly completed and returned, representing 96.2% of the total questionnaires administered. However, twenty (20) questionnaires, representing 3.8%, were not returned.

This result indicates a very high response rate, suggesting strong cooperation and participation among the respondents. The high questionnaire return rate implies that the data generated from the survey are adequate, reliable, and suitable for meaningful statistical analysis on the role of older adults in family stability within the study area.

The distribution of the questionnaire is represented in fig. 1 as follows:

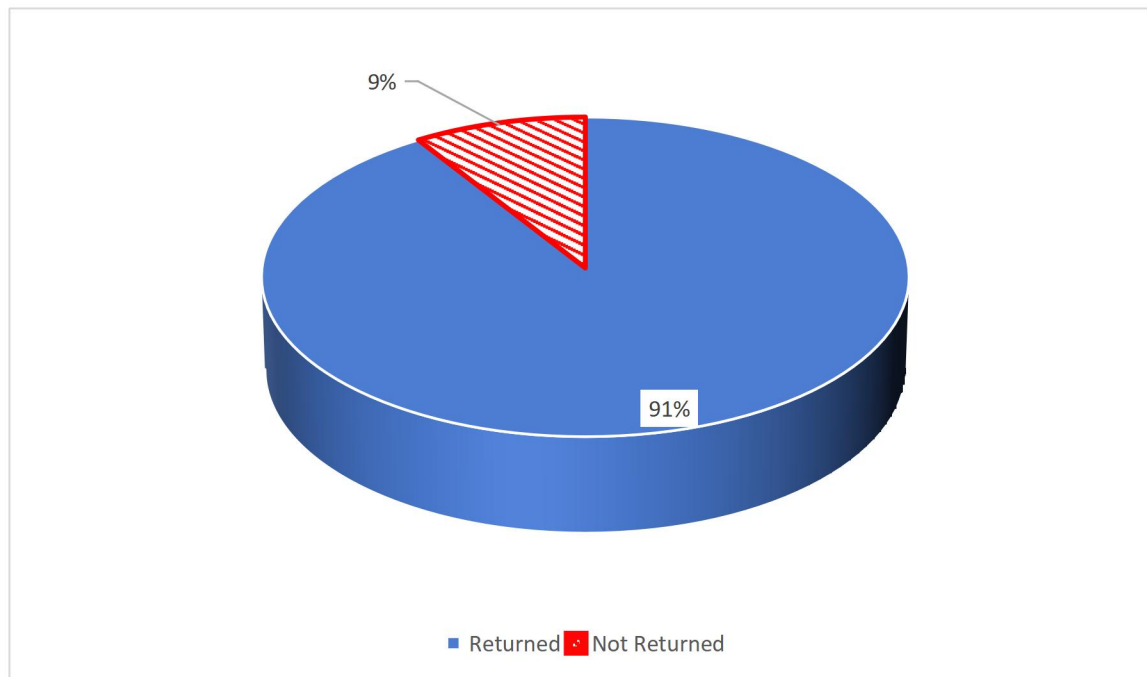


Fig. 1: Percentage of returned and unreturned questionnaires

Source: *Survey, 2025*

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents involved in the study. The variables examined include sex, age group, marital status, educational attainment, and occupational status. These characteristics provide important background information for understanding how older adults contribute to and experience family stability.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Variables	Cohorts (Category)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	233	46.6
	Female	267	53.4
	Total	500	100.0
Age Group (Years)	18–29	101	20.2
	30–39	113	22.6
	40–49	126	25.2
	50–59	86	17.2
	60 and above	74	14.8
	Total	500	100.0
Marital Status	Married	221	44.2
	Widowed	173	34.6
	Divorced/Separated	53	10.6
	Single	53	10.6
	Total	500	100.0
Educational Level	No Formal Education	82	16.4
	Primary Education	115	23.0
	Secondary Education	182	36.4
	Tertiary Education	121	24.2
	Total	500	100.0
Occupation	Retired	231	46.2
	Self-employed	125	25.0
	Employed	96	19.2
	Unemployed	48	9.6
	Total	500	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

In Table 2 the gender category shows that 267 respondents, representing 53.4%, were female, while 233 respondents, representing 46.6%, were male. This indicates that both male and female older adults were adequately represented in the study, although females slightly outnumbered males. The fairly balanced gender distribution suggests that the findings reflect the perspectives of both sexes regarding family stability within Egor Local Government Area.

The gender distribution is presented in the Fig. 2 as follows:

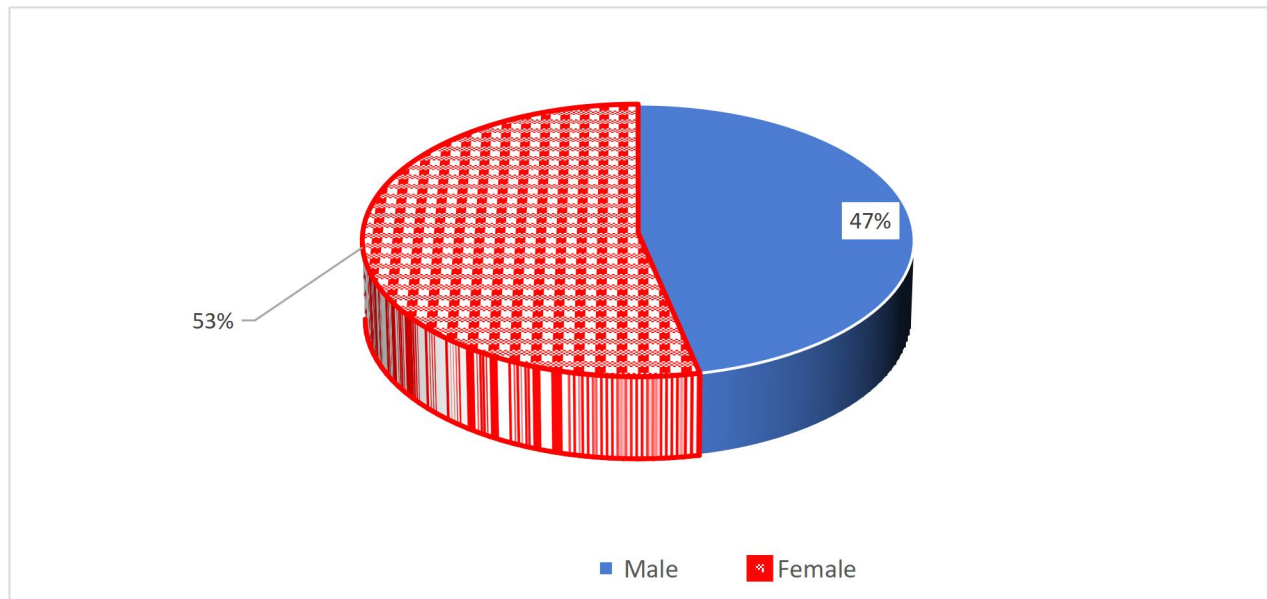


Fig. 2: Gender distribution of the sample respondents

As regards the age group, the Table 2 also shows that 126 respondents (25.2%) were within the 40–49 years age group, representing the largest proportion of the sample. This was followed by respondents aged 30–39 years, who accounted for 113 (22.6%), while 101 respondents (20.2%) were within the 18–29 years category. Respondents aged 50–59 years constituted 86 (17.2%), whereas those aged 60 years and above accounted for 74 respondents (14.8%) of the total sample.

This distribution indicates that the study captured respondents across all adult age categories, with a reasonable representation of older adults (60 years and above), who are central to the investigation of family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The inclusion of younger and middle-aged adults also provides valuable perspectives on intergenerational interactions and perceptions of the role of older adults within families. The age distribution is presented in Fig. 3 as follows.

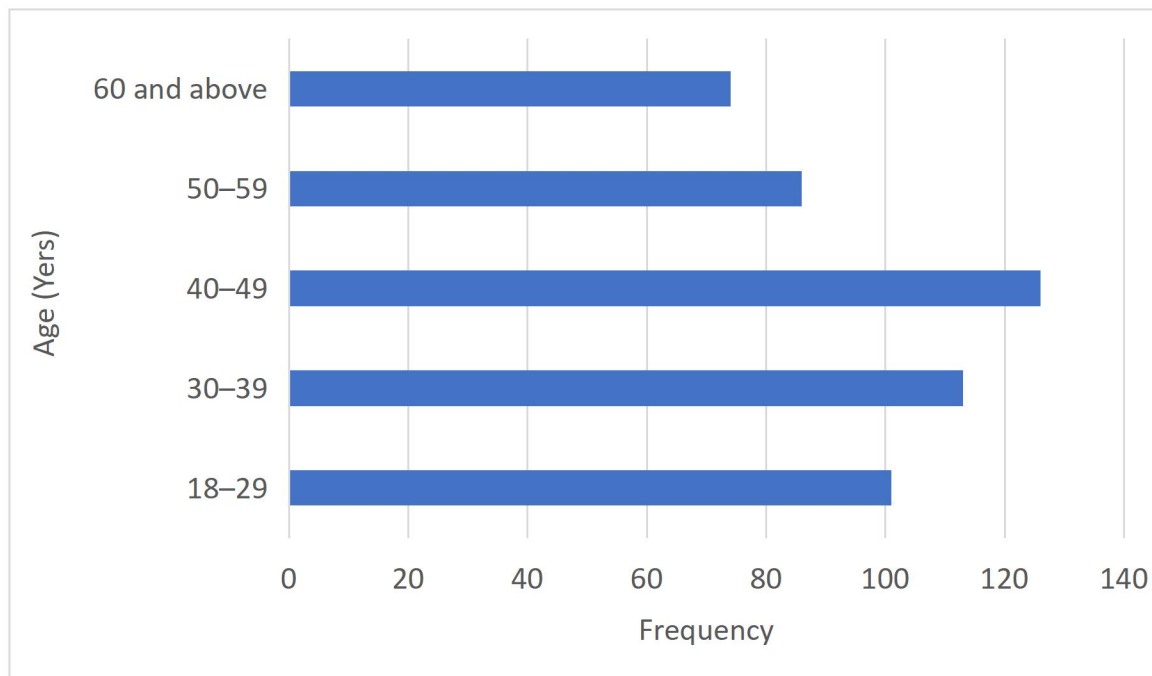


Fig. 3: Age distribution of the sample respondents

In addition, the Table 2 shows that 221 respondents (44.2%) were married, while 173 respondents (34.6%) were widowed. Divorced or separated respondents accounted for 10.6%, while those who were single constituted another 10.6%.

This indicates that the study consists of respondents from diverse marital backgrounds, which is important for understanding variations in family stability, caregiving responsibilities, and household leadership among older adults in Egor Local Government Area. The marital status distribution is presented in the Fig. 4 as follows:

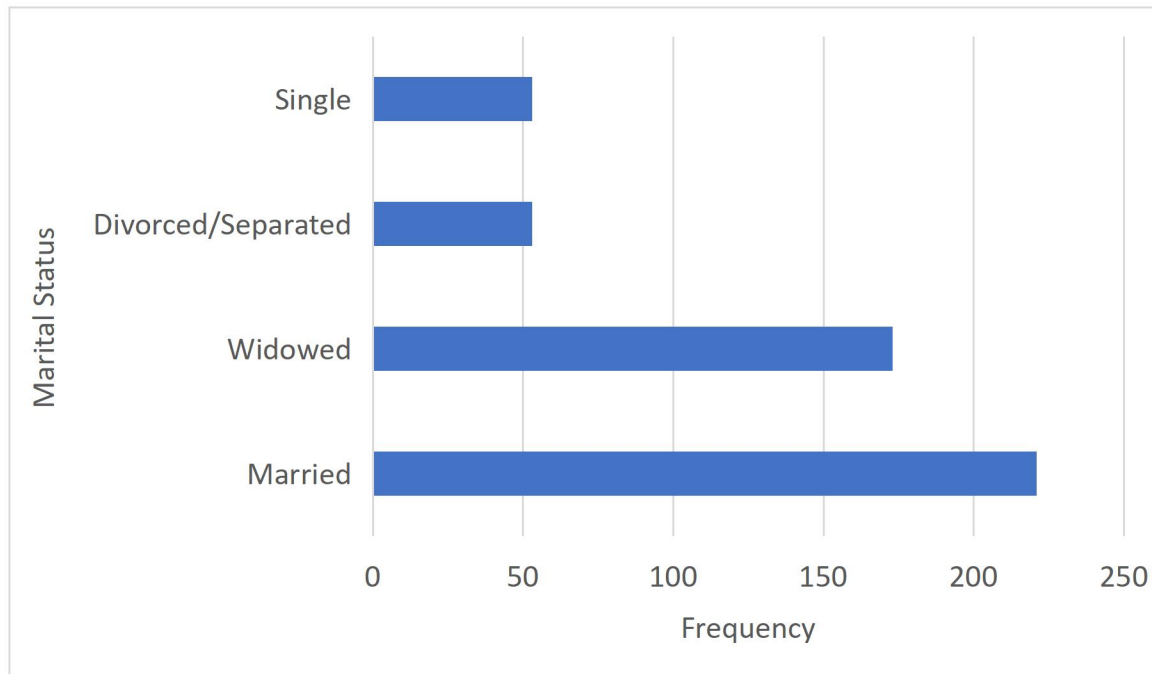


Fig. 4: Marital status of the sample respondents

As regards the levels of education, the Table 2 further reveals that the largest proportion of respondents, 182 (36.4%), had secondary education, while 121 respondents (24.2%) attained tertiary education. Respondents with primary education accounted for 23.0%, whereas those with no formal education constituted 16.4%.

This distribution suggests that a significant proportion of older adults in the study area possess basic to advanced educational backgrounds, which may influence their capacity to contribute to family decision-making, conflict resolution, and social stability. The educational level distribution is presented in the Fig. 5 as follows:

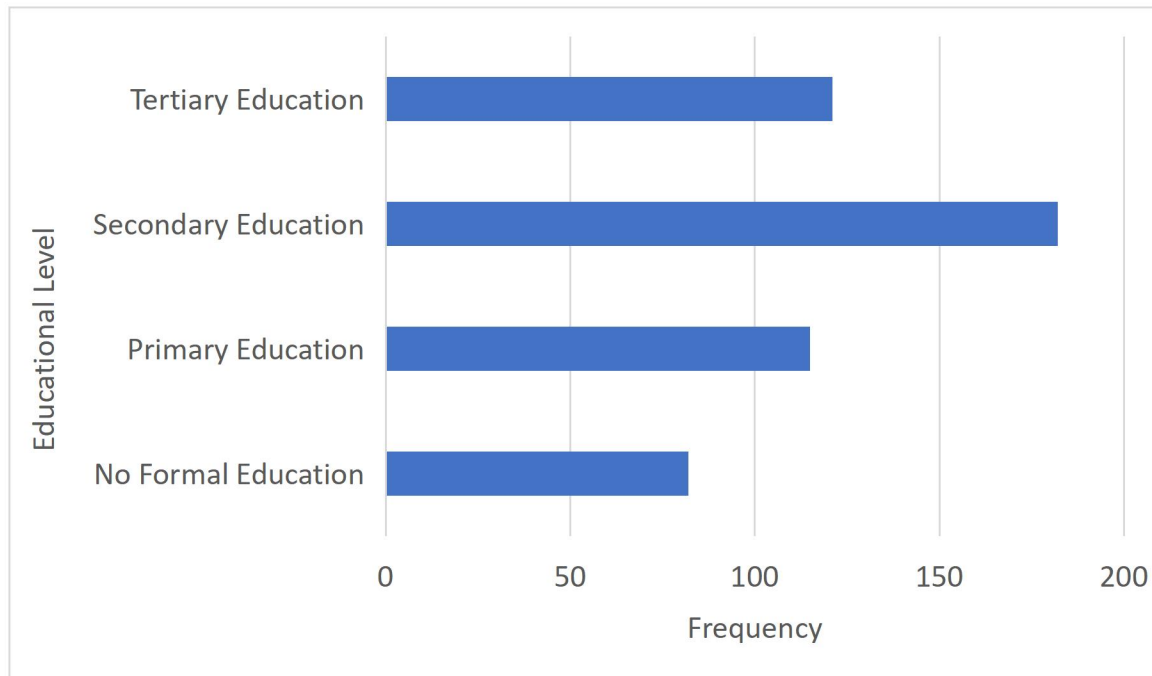


Fig. 5: Educational level of the sample respondents

As regards the occupational status of the respondents, Table 2 also indicates that 231 respondents (46.2%) were retired, while 125 respondents (25.0%) were self-employed. Those still actively employed accounted for 19.2%, while 9.6% were unemployed. This result suggests that despite retirement, many older adults remain economically active, which enhances their ability to support household needs and maintain family stability within the community. The Occupational Status distribution is presented in the Fig. 6 as follows:

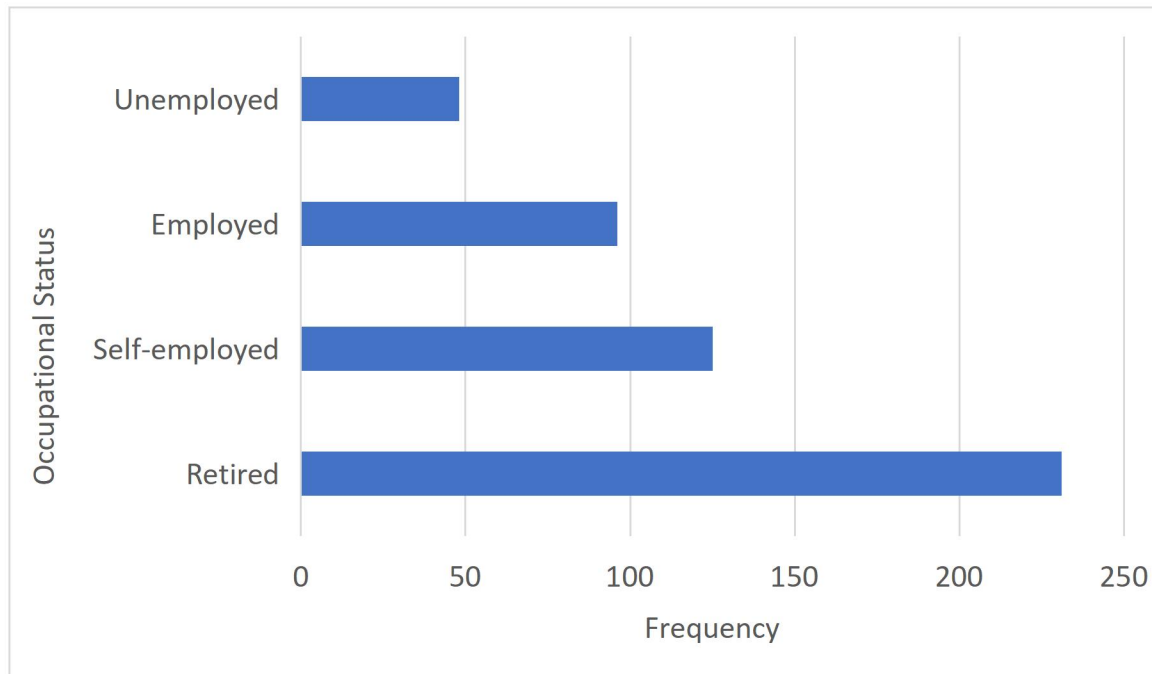


Fig. 6: Occupational status of the sample respondents

4.3 Answering Of Research Questions

Research Question 1:

What are the roles of older adults in family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State?

To answer this question, questionnaire items Q7–Q14 were employed as presented below:

Table 3: Older Adults' Responses on the Roles of Older Adults in Family Stability (N = 500)

S/N	Item	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	U (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)	Total (N)	Mean	Rank	Decision
1	Older adults play an important role in maintaining peace within the family	171 (34.2%)	158 (31.6%)	81 (16.2%)	58 (11.6%)	32 (6.4%)	500	3.76	2nd	Agreed
2	Older adults provide guidance that helps family members make responsible decisions	180 (36.0%)	161 (32.2%)	53 (10.6%)	65 (13.0%)	41 (8.2%)	500	3.75	3rd	Agreed
3	Families rely on older adults for advice during critical family matters	168 (33.6%)	177 (35.4%)	68 (13.6%)	51 (10.2%)	36 (7.2%)	500	3.78	1st	Agreed
4	Older adults help in preserving family traditions and values	175 (35.0%)	146 (29.2%)	71 (14.2%)	69 (13.8%)	39 (7.8%)	500	3.70	8th	Agreed
5	The presence of older adults promotes discipline among younger family members	170 (34.0%)	170 (34.0%)	65 (13.0%)	47 (9.4%)	48 (9.6%)	500	3.73	5th	Agreed
6	Older adults contribute to unity by encouraging cooperation among family members	175 (35.0%)	153 (30.6%)	67 (13.4%)	64 (12.8%)	41 (8.2%)	500	3.71	7th	Agreed
7	Families without older adults experience greater difficulty in maintaining stability	169 (33.8%)	173 (34.6%)	60 (12.0%)	53 (10.6%)	45 (9.0%)	500	3.74	4th	Agreed
8	Older adults act as custodians of family norms and expectations	182 (36.4%)	148 (29.6%)	61 (12.2%)	69 (13.8%)	40 (8.0%)	500	3.73	6th	Agreed
Overall Mean								3.74		Agreed

Note: Likert Scale Scores: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agreed; Mean < 3.00 = Not Agreed

Table 3 presents the responses of older adults on the roles they play in promoting family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The findings indicate that respondents generally agreed on all the listed roles of older adults as contributors to family stability, as reflected by the mean scores, all of which are above the 3.00 benchmark. This shows that older adults are widely perceived as important actors in maintaining stable family structures.

Among the items, “Families rely on older adults for advice during critical family matters” ranked highest with a mean score of 3.78, indicating that respondents perceive advisory and decision-making roles as the most significant contribution of older adults to family stability. This suggests that older adults are regarded as custodians of wisdom whose opinions are highly valued during important family situations.

The second-ranked item, “Older adults play an important role in maintaining peace within the family” (mean = 3.76), highlights the mediating role of older adults in resolving conflicts and promoting harmony. This implies that their presence helps reduce tension and fosters peaceful coexistence among family members.

The third-ranked item, “Older adults provide guidance that helps family members make responsible decisions” (mean = 3.75), further emphasizes the leadership and moral guidance functions of older adults within families. Closely following is “Families without older adults experience greater difficulty in maintaining stability” (mean = 3.74), which underscores the stabilising influence older adults exert by their mere presence.

Items such as “The presence of older adults promotes discipline among younger family members” (mean = 3.73) and “Older adults act as custodians of family norms and expectations” (mean = 3.73) ranked next, indicating that respondents acknowledge the role of older adults in instilling values, discipline, and expected behaviours within the family system.

The least-ranked item, “Older adults help in preserving family traditions and values” (mean = 3.70), though ranked lowest, still exceeded the decision threshold, showing that cultural preservation remains an important role of older adults.

Overall, the mean score of 3.74, which is above the decision rule of 3.00, confirms that older adults play significant and multifaceted roles in sustaining family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State.

Research Question 2:

What impact does the economic status of older adults have on family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State?

To answer this question, questionnaire items **Q15–Q22** were employed as presented below:

Table 4: Older Adults' Responses on the Impact of Economic Status on Family Stability (N = 500)

S/N	Item	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	U (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)	Total (N)	Mean	Rank	Decision
1	The economic independence of older adults enhances their contribution to family stability	178 (35.6%)	162 (32.4%)	71 (14.2%)	54 (10.8%)	35 (7.0%)	500	3.78	2 nd	Agreed
2	Older adults who have stable income provide meaningful support to their families	185 (37.0%)	168 (33.6%)	60 (12.0%)	52 (10.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500	3.82	1 st	Agreed
3	Financial contribution from older adults reduces economic tension within the family	172 (34.4%)	165 (33.0%)	74 (14.8%)	56 (11.2%)	33 (6.6%)	500	3.76	3 rd	Agreed
4	Economic dependence of older adults places pressure on family relationships	68 (13.6%)	72 (14.4%)	95 (19.0%)	155 (31.0%)	110 (22.0%)	500	2.47	6 th	Not Agreed
5	Families experience conflict when older adults lack adequate financial resources	61 (12.2%)	70 (14.0%)	88 (17.6%)	168 (33.6%)	113 (22.6%)	500	2.42	7 th	Not Agreed
6	Older adults' pensions or savings contribute to household stability	169 (33.8%)	171 (34.2%)	69 (13.8%)	55 (11.0%)	36 (7.2%)	500	3.77	4 th	Agreed
7	Economic hardship limits the ability of older adults to support family needs	73 (14.6%)	75 (15.0%)	92 (18.4%)	155 (31.0%)	105 (21.0%)	500	2.49	5 th	Not Agreed
8	Financial security of older adults strengthens their influence in family affairs	170 (34.0%)	164 (32.8%)	71 (14.2%)	58 (11.6%)	37 (7.4%)	500	3.74	5 th	Agreed
Overall Mean 3.28									Agreed	

Note: Likert Scale Scores: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Decision Rule: Mean $\geq$ 3.00 = Agreed; Mean < 3.00 = Not Agreed

Table 4 presents the responses of older adults on the impact of their economic status on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The findings show that respondents generally agreed

on several economic factors as important contributors to family stability, as indicated by mean scores above the 3.00 benchmark, although disagreement was observed on some negatively worded items.

Among the items, “Older adults who have stable income provide meaningful support to their families” ranked highest with a mean score of 3.82, indicating that stable income is perceived as the most important economic factor through which older adults contribute to family stability. This suggests that financial independence enhances the capacity of older adults to support household needs and reduce family stress.

The second-ranked item, “The economic independence of older adults enhances their contribution to family stability” (mean = 3.78), reinforces the importance of self-reliance and financial autonomy in strengthening the position of older adults within family structures. This implies that economically independent older adults are better able to influence family affairs positively.

The third-ranked item, “Financial contribution from older adults reduces economic tension within the family” (mean = 3.76), indicates that financial support from older adults helps ease household pressure and promotes harmony. This is closely followed by “Older adults’ pensions or savings contribute to household stability” (mean = **3.77**), highlighting the stabilising role of retirement benefits and savings.

The item “Financial security of older adults strengthens their influence in family affairs” (mean = 3.74) further shows that economic security enhances respect, authority, and participation of older adults in family decision-making.

However, items such as “Economic dependence of older adults places pressure on family relationships”, “Families experience conflict when older adults lack adequate financial resources”, and “Economic hardship limits the ability of older adults to support family needs” recorded mean scores below 3.00, indicating disagreement among respondents. This suggests that economic dependence of older adults is not widely perceived as a major source of family instability in the study area.

Overall, the mean score of 3.28, which is above the decision threshold of 3.00, confirms that the economic status of older adults positively influences family stability, particularly when older adults are financially secure or economically independent.

Research Question 3:

What is the effect of support networks of older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State?

To answer this question, questionnaire items Q23–Q30 were employed as presented below:

Table 5: Older Adults' Responses on the Effect of Support Networks on Family Stability (N = 500)

S/N	Item	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	U (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)	Total (N)	Mean	Rank	Decision
1	Strong family support networks improve the wellbeing of older adults	176 (35.2%)	164 (32.8%)	73 (14.6%)	52 (10.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500	3.79	2 nd	Agreed
2	Older adults who receive emotional support contribute more positively to family stability	181 (36.2%)	170 (34.0%)	62 (12.4%)	52 (10.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500	3.82	1 st	Agreed
3	Community support systems enhance the role of older adults in family life	174 (34.8%)	168 (33.6%)	69 (13.8%)	56 (11.2%)	33 (6.6%)	500	3.79	2 nd	Agreed
4	Lack of support for older adults negatively affects family harmony	78 (15.6%)	82 (16.4%)	95 (19.0%)	138 (27.6%)	107 (21.4%)	500	2.57	7 th	Not Agreed
5	Support from children and relatives enables older adults to function effectively in families	179 (35.8%)	165 (33.0%)	71 (14.2%)	54 (10.8%)	31 (6.2%)	500	3.82	1 st	Agreed
6	Older adults with strong social ties help reduce family conflicts	173 (34.6%)	169 (33.8%)	70 (14.0%)	56 (11.2%)	32 (6.4%)	500	3.78	4 th	Agreed
7	Extended family support strengthens the stabilizing role of older adults	170 (34.0%)	167 (33.4%)	74 (14.8%)	57 (11.4%)	32 (6.4%)	500	3.77	5 th	Agreed
8	Weak support networks make older adults vulnerable and affect family cohesion	82 (16.4%)	86 (17.2%)	98 (19.6%)	134 (26.8%)	100 (20.0%)	500	2.63	6 th	Not Agreed
Overall Mean 3.50									Agreed	

Note: Likert Scale Scores: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agreed; Mean < 3.00 = Not Agreed

Table 5 presents the responses of older adults on the effect of support networks on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that support networks play a positive role in enhancing family stability, as reflected by mean scores above the 3.00 benchmark for most items.

The highest-ranked items, “Older adults who receive emotional support contribute more positively to family stability” and “Support from children and relatives enables older adults to function effectively in families” (mean = 3.82), show that emotional and familial support are perceived as the most critical factors enabling older adults to fulfil their stabilising roles. This suggests that supported older adults are better positioned to promote harmony and cohesion within families.

The second-ranked item, “Community support systems enhance the role of older adults in family life” (mean = 3.79), highlights the importance of broader social and community networks in strengthening the contributions of older adults. Similarly, “Strong family support networks improve the wellbeing of older adults” (mean = 3.79) underscores the link between wellbeing and effective family participation.

Items such as “Older adults with strong social ties help reduce family conflicts” (mean = 3.78) and “Extended family support strengthens the stabilising role of older adults” (mean = 3.77) further emphasize the role of social connections in maintaining family harmony.

The least-ranked items, “Lack of support for older adults negatively affects family harmony” and “Weak support networks make older adults vulnerable and affect family cohesion”, recorded mean scores below 3.00, indicating disagreement. This suggests that respondents perceive existing support systems as generally adequate within the study area.

Overall, the mean score of 3.50, which exceeds the decision rule of 3.00, confirms **that** support networks significantly enhance the role of older adults in promoting family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

Research Question 4:

What is the impact of health status of older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State?

To answer this question, questionnaire items Q31–Q38 were employed as presented below:

Table 6: Older Adults' Responses on the Impact of Health Status on Family Stability (N = 500)

S/N	Item	SA (n/%)	A (n/%)	U (n/%)	D (n/%)	SD (n/%)	Total (N)	Mean	Rank	Decision
1	Good health enables older adults to actively support family stability	179 (35.8%)	168 (33.6%)	71 (14.2%)	52 (10.4%)	30 (6.0%)	500	3.82	1 st	Agreed
2	Poor health of older adults increases caregiving responsibilities for family members	79 (15.8%)	83 (16.6%)	92 (18.4%)	140 (28.0%)	106 (21.2%)	500	2.58	6 th	Not Agreed
3	Health challenges of older adults sometimes cause stress within the family	74 (14.8%)	86 (17.2%)	94 (18.8%)	142 (28.4%)	104 (20.8%)	500	2.57	7 th	Not Agreed
4	Families function better when older adults are physically and mentally healthy	172 (34.4%)	165 (33.0%)	74 (14.8%)	56 (11.2%)	33 (6.6%)	500	3.78	2 nd	Agreed
5	Chronic illness among older adults affects emotional stability in the family	70 (14.0%)	82 (16.4%)	96 (19.2%)	141 (28.2%)	111 (22.2%)	500	2.55	8 th	Not Agreed
6	Access to healthcare improves the ability of older adults to support family life	170 (34.0%)	169 (33.8%)	75 (15.0%)	55 (11.0%)	31 (6.2%)	500	3.78	2 nd	Agreed
7	Poor health reduces the involvement of older adults in family decision-making	76 (15.2%)	85 (17.0%)	97 (19.4%)	137 (27.4%)	105 (21.0%)	500	2.59	5 th	Not Agreed
8	Family stability is strengthened when older adults receive adequate health care	168 (33.6%)	171 (34.2%)	74 (14.8%)	56 (11.2%)	31 (6.2%)	500	3.78	2 nd	Agreed
Overall Mean 3.31									Agreed	

Note: Likert Scale Scores: SA = 5, A = 4, U = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Decision Rule: Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agreed; Mean < 3.00 = Not Agreed

Table 6 presents the responses of older adults on the impact of health status on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The findings show that respondents generally agreed that good health and access to healthcare enhance family stability, as reflected by mean scores above the 3.00 benchmark for positively framed items.

The highest-ranked item, “Good health enables older adults to actively support family stability” (mean = 3.82), indicates that physical and mental wellbeing is perceived as the most important health-related factor influencing family stability. This suggests that healthy older adults are more capable of participating actively in family roles.

The second-ranked items, “Families function better when older adults are physically and mentally healthy”, “Access to healthcare improves the ability of older adults to support family life”, and “Family stability is strengthened when older adults receive adequate health care” (mean = 3.78), further emphasize the importance of healthcare access in sustaining the stabilising roles of older adults.

Items relating to poor health, chronic illness, caregiving burden, and family stress recorded mean scores below 3.00, indicating that respondents generally disagreed that ill-health of older adults necessarily destabilizes families. This suggests that families in the study area may have coping mechanisms and shared caregiving practices that reduce negative impacts.

Overall, the mean score of 3.31, which is above the decision threshold of 3.00, confirms that the health status of older adults significantly influences family stability, particularly when good health and healthcare access are ensured.

4.4 Answering of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One [H_{01}]: *Older adults have no significant role in family stability in Egor Local Government Area.*

To answer the hypothesis one as above, the average responses of the respondents on Q7-Q14 on the questionnaire are subjected to Chi-Square as follows:

Table 7: Hypothesis One Testing using Chi-Square

RQ1_AV	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Sig. (P-value)
D	3	125.0	-122.0	608.5	3	0.001
U	118	125.0	-7.0			
A	352	125.0	227.0			
SA	27	125.0	-98.0			
Total	500					

Source: SPSS Version 25.0

From the above table, $X^2=608.5$, $df=3$, $P=0.0001$, since $P<0.05$, reject the null hypothesis, this implied that older adults have significant role in family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Two [H_{02}]: *The economic status of older adults has no significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.*

To answer the hypothesis two as above, the average responses of the respondents on Q15-Q22 on the questionnaire are subjected to Chi-Square as follows:

Table 8: Hypothesis Two Testing using Chi-Square

Q_2av	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square (X ²)	df	P-value
D	16	125.0	-109.0	538.9	3	0.0001
U	322	125.0	197.0			
A	161	125.0	36.0			
SA	1	125.0	-124.0			
Total	500					

Source: SPSS Version 25.0

From the above table, $X^2=100.3$, $df= 2$, $P=0.0001$, since $P<0.05$, reject the null hypothesis, this implied that the economic status of older adults has significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Three [H_{03}]: *Support networks of older adults have no significant effect on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.*

To answer the hypothesis three as above, the average responses of the respondents on Q23-Q30 on the questionnaire are subjected to Chi-Square as follows:

Table 9: Hypothesis Three Testing using Chi-Square

RQ_3av	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square (X ²)	df	P-value
D	12	125.0	-113.0	450.1	3	0.0001
U	259	125.0	134.0			
A	227	125.0	102.0			
SA	2	125.0	-123.0			
Total	500					

Source: SPSS Version 25.0

From the above table, $X^2=450.1$, $df= 2$, $P=0.0001$, since $P<0.05$, reject the null hypothesis. This implied that support networks of older adults have significant effect on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Four[H0₄]: *The health status of older adults has no significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.*

To answer the hypothesis four as above, the average responses of the respondents on Q31-Q38 on the questionnaire are subjected to Chi-Square as follows:

Table 10: Hypothesis Four Testing using Chi-Square

RQ_4av	Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square	df	
D	55	166.7	-111.7	329.3 ^a	2	0.0001
U	357	166.7	190.3			
A	88	166.7	-78.7			
Total	500					

Source: SPSS Version 25.0

From the above table, $X^2=329.3$, $df=3$, $P=0.001$, since $P<0.05$, reject the null hypothesis. This implied that the health status of older adults has significant impact on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

4.5 In-Depth Interview (IDI) Analysis

The In-Depth Interview (IDI) responses were analysed thematically to complement the quantitative findings presented earlier in this chapter. The analysis is organised according to the four research questions of the study. Each theme reflects the perspectives of residents and key stakeholders within Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. Direct quotations are used to illustrate participants' lived experiences and perceptions.

Theme 4.5.1: Roles of Older Adults in Family Stability

This theme explores how older adults contribute to family stability through conflict resolution, guidance, and decision-making within the family. Responses from the interviewees indicate that older adults play significant mediating, advisory, and moral roles, although a few respondents raised concerns about changing family dynamics and generational tensions.

One of the respondents emphasized the peace-making role of older adults within families, stating that:

“In most families here in Egor, when there is misunderstanding between husband and wife or among siblings, older adults are usually called upon to intervene. Their words carry weight because they are respected and seen as neutral. Many conflicts are settled peacefully because elders encourage dialogue and patience rather than anger.” (Community Elder, Egor LGA)

Similarly, another respondent highlighted the advisory role of older adults in guiding younger family members, noting that:

“Older adults guide the younger ones by sharing their life experiences. They advise them on marriage, business decisions, and family responsibilities. Many young people listen to them because they have passed through similar challenges and can warn against mistakes.” (Religious Leader, Egor LGA)

A third respondent stressed that older adults help prevent family breakdown by promoting unity and understanding:

“When disputes arise in the family, elders usually remind everyone of family values and the need to stay united. They discourage prolonged quarrels and encourage forgiveness. This helps maintain peace and stability in the household.” (Women Leader, Egor LGA)

However, not all respondents expressed entirely positive views. One interviewee argued that the influence of older adults is gradually declining due to modern lifestyles:

“In the past, elders played a strong role in resolving conflicts, but nowadays, some young people do not listen to older adults anymore. Exposure to social media and western values has reduced respect for elders, making their guidance less effective in some families.” (Youth Representative, Egor LGA)

Another respondent offered a constructive critique, pointing out that while older adults play important roles, their advice may sometimes be outdated:

“Older adults mean well, but sometimes their advice does not fully reflect today’s realities. Some young people feel that elders do not understand modern economic pressures and social changes. This can lead to disagreements, even though the elders’ intentions are good.” (Civil Servant, Egor LGA)

From the IDI responses, it is evident that older adults play crucial roles in promoting family stability in Egor Local Government Area through conflict mediation, moral guidance, and participation in family decision-making. Most respondents acknowledged that elders serve as peacekeepers and advisers whose experiences help families navigate challenges. However, some participants noted a gradual decline in the influence of older adults due to generational gaps and changing social values. Despite these challenges, the findings suggest that older adults remain central to maintaining family cohesion and stability, thereby reinforcing the quantitative results of the study.

Theme 4.5.2: Economic Status of Older Adults and Family Stability

This theme examines how the economic status of older adults influences family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The responses from interviewees reveal that the financial condition of older adults positively affects their roles, relationships, and influence within the family. While many respondents emphasized the stabilising effect of economic independence among older adults, others raised concerns about economic dependency and the realities of limited income in old age.

One of the respondents highlighted that financially stable older adults contribute positively to family harmony, stating that:

“Older adults who have pensions, savings, or small businesses are better able to support their families. They help with children’s school fees, healthcare expenses, and household needs. This reduces tension in the family and promotes peace because everyone is not depending on one person alone.”
(Retired Civil Servant, Egor LGA)

Similarly, another respondent emphasized that economic independence enhances the respect and authority of older adults within the family:

“When older adults are financially independent, their opinions are respected. Family members listen to them more because they are not seen as a burden. Their ability to contribute financially strengthens family unity and stability.”
(Community Development Association Member, Egor LGA)

Another respondent added that even modest financial support from older adults can have a meaningful impact:

“Some older adults may not be very rich, but even small contributions from their pensions or savings help families plan better. This support encourages togetherness and reduces arguments over money.” (Religious Leader, Egor LGA)

However, not all respondents viewed economic status as entirely positive. One interviewee pointed out the challenges associated with economic dependence:

“Many older adults do not have steady income or pensions. When they depend fully on their children, it can create stress in the family, especially when resources are limited. This sometimes leads to disagreements and tension within the household.” (Private Sector Employee, Egor LGA)

Another respondent provided a constructive critique, emphasizing broader structural issues:

“The problem is not that older adults want to depend on their families, but that the system does not support them. Lack of social welfare and inadequate pension schemes make it difficult for many elders to be financially independent. This economic hardship can affect family stability.”
(Local Government Official, Egor LGA)

The IDI findings indicate that the economic status of older adults plays a critical role in family stability in Egor Local Government Area. Most respondents agreed that financial independence and economic contribution by older adults enhance respect, reduce household tension, and promote harmony within families. However, some participants highlighted that economic dependency, often resulting from inadequate pension systems and limited welfare support, can strain family relationships. Overall, the qualitative findings complement the quantitative results by showing that while economic security strengthens the stabilising role of older adults, structural economic challenges continue to shape family dynamics in the study area.

Theme 4.5.3: Support Networks of Older Adults and Family Stability

This theme focuses on the effect of support networks available to older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The interview responses reveal that family, community, religious, and social support networks play an important role in strengthening the capacity of older adults to contribute meaningfully to family stability. While most respondents emphasized the positive influence of strong support systems, a few highlighted challenges arising from weak or declining support networks.

One of the respondents emphasized the importance of family support in enhancing the emotional wellbeing of older adults, stating that:

“When older adults receive support from their children and relatives, they are happier and more at peace. This emotional stability reflects in how they relate with others in the family. Supported elders are more patient and understanding, which helps maintain family harmony.”(Family Head, Egor LGA).

Similarly, another interviewee highlighted the role of community support networks in strengthening family stability:

“Support from neighbours, religious groups, and community associations helps older adults feel valued. When elders feel supported outside the family, they do not place too much pressure on their children, and this reduces conflict within the household.”(Community Development Association Executive, Egor LGA)

Another respondent pointed out the importance of religious institutions as part of older adults’ support networks:

“Churches and religious groups play a major role in supporting older adults through counselling, prayers, and sometimes material assistance. This support improves the wellbeing of elders and strengthens family relationships.” (Religious Leader, Egor LGA)

However, one interviewee raised concerns about weakening support networks due to modern social changes:

“Support networks are not as strong as before. Many families are becoming nuclear, and neighbours are less involved in each other’s lives. Some older adults feel isolated, and this affects their emotional health and their ability to contribute positively to family stability.” (Community Youth Leader, Egor LGA)

Another respondent provided a constructive critique, noting economic and social barriers to effective support:

“Not all older adults benefit equally from support networks. Poverty, poor health, and lack of awareness limit their access to community or social support. Without adequate support, some elders struggle emotionally, which can affect family relationships.” (Non-Governmental Organisation Worker, Egor LGA)

The IDI findings indicate that support networks play a significant role in enhancing family stability in Egor Local Government Area. Strong family, community, and religious support systems contribute to the emotional wellbeing and social inclusion of older adults, enabling them to function effectively as mediators and advisers within families. However, weakening communal ties, social isolation, and unequal access to support networks pose challenges to some older adults. Overall, the findings support the quantitative results by demonstrating that robust support networks strengthen the stabilising influence of older adults within families.

Theme 4.5.4: Health Status of Older Adults and Family Stability

This theme examines the impact of the health status of older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. The responses from interviewees reveal that the physical and mental health of older adults significantly influences their participation in family life, their relationships with family members, and overall household stability. While many respondents emphasized that good health enables older adults to contribute positively to family stability, others highlighted the challenges posed by poor health and caregiving demands.

One of the respondents emphasized that good health enhances the ability of older adults to fulfil their family roles, stating that:

“When older adults are healthy, they are more active in family activities. They attend family meetings, advise younger ones, and help settle disputes. Their good health allows them to contribute meaningfully to family stability.”
(Community Elder, Egor LGA)

Similarly, another interviewee highlighted the connection between health and emotional balance within families:

“Healthy older adults are usually happier and less dependent. This reduces stress in the family because they can take care of themselves to some extent. Their presence brings calmness and stability to the household.”(Health Worker, Egor LGA)

A third respondent noted that access to healthcare plays a crucial role in maintaining family harmony:

“When older adults have access to medical care and regular check-ups, it prevents serious health problems. This reduces emergencies that can disrupt family life and finances, thereby promoting stability.” (Primary Healthcare Official, Egor LGA)

However, one respondent raised concerns about the burden associated with poor health:

“When an older adult is seriously ill, the family can become overwhelmed. Caregiving responsibilities, medical bills, and emotional stress can lead to tension and sometimes conflict among family members.” (Caregiver, Egor LGA)

Another interviewee provided a constructive critique, linking health challenges to broader systemic issues:

“The problem is not only illness but poor access to affordable healthcare. Many older adults cannot afford treatment, which worsens their condition. This puts pressure on families and affects family stability.” (Non-Governmental Organisation Representative, Egor LGA)

The IDI findings show that the health status of older adults has a significant influence on family stability in Egor Local Government Area. Good physical and mental health enables older adults to participate actively in family life, provide guidance, and promote harmony within households. Conversely, poor health and limited access to healthcare increase dependency and caregiving

burdens, which may strain family relationships. Overall, the qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative results by demonstrating that maintaining the health and wellbeing of older adults is essential for sustaining family stability.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study on Older Adults in Family Stability in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State, *Nigeria*. The discussion integrates quantitative results from Chapter Four with qualitative insights from the In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and situates the findings within existing empirical and theoretical literature. The discussion follows the sequence of the study objectives.

Roles of Older Adults in Family Stability

The findings of this study revealed that older adults play significant and multifaceted roles in maintaining family stability in Egor Local Government Area. Quantitative results (Table 3) showed a high level of agreement among respondents that older adults contribute to family cohesion through guidance, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and moral instruction, with an overall mean score of 3.74. This indicates that older adults remain central figures in family decision-making and stability.

The qualitative findings from the IDI further reinforced this result, as participants consistently described older adults as mediators during family conflicts, advisers on marriage and economic decisions, and custodians of family norms. These findings align with earlier studies which argue that older adults serve as repositories of cultural values and play stabilising roles in family

systems, especially in African societies where respect for age is culturally embedded (Adebayo & Ogunyemi, 2021; Mobolaji, 2024).

This finding also supports the socio-emotional selectivity theory, which posits that older adults prioritise emotionally meaningful roles and relationships, particularly within the family, as they age (Carstensen, 1992). By focusing on harmony and emotional regulation, older adults help sustain family cohesion. However, some IDI respondents noted that modernization and changing value systems have reduced younger people's receptiveness to elders' advice. This observation supports existing literature that highlights the erosion of traditional authority of elders due to urbanisation, westernisation, and nuclear family arrangements (Aboderin & Hoffman, 2019).

Overall, the findings suggest that while the roles of older adults in family stability remain significant, their influence is increasingly mediated by socio-cultural transformations.

Economic Status of Older Adults and Family Stability

The second objective examined the impact of older adults' economic status on family stability. The quantitative findings (Table 4) showed that respondents generally agreed that economic independence and financial contribution by older adults enhance family stability (overall mean = 3.28). Older adults with stable income, pensions, or savings were perceived as contributing to reduced household tension and improved family relationships.

The IDI findings corroborated this result, as participants emphasized that financially independent older adults command greater respect and reduce economic pressure within households. These findings are consistent with previous studies which indicate that economic security enhances

older adults' autonomy, social status, and participation in family decision-making (Gureje et al., 2020; Mobolaji, 2024).

However, both quantitative and qualitative findings revealed concerns regarding economic dependency. Some respondents noted that older adults without stable income could place financial strain on families, potentially leading to conflict. This finding aligns with Aboderin (2017), who argued that weak pension systems and inadequate social protection in Nigeria increase intergenerational dependency, thereby straining family relationships.

Thus, the study demonstrates that economic status functions as a double-edged factor: while financial independence strengthens family stability, systemic economic vulnerabilities undermine the capacity of older adults to fulfil stabilising roles.

Support Networks of Older Adults and Family Stability

The third objective assessed the effect of support networks on family stability. Quantitative findings (Table 5) indicated strong agreement that family, community, and social support networks enhance the contribution of older adults to family stability (overall mean = 3.50). Respondents acknowledged that supported older adults are emotionally balanced and better positioned to guide and mediate within families.

IDI responses further highlighted that emotional, religious, and community-based support systems reduce isolation among older adults and enable them to function effectively within family structures. This supports empirical evidence that strong social networks are positively associated with older adults' wellbeing, emotional regulation, and family engagement (Antonucci et al., 2018; Wrzus et al., 2024).

However, some interviewees raised concerns about weakening communal bonds and reduced neighbourly interactions due to urbanisation. This finding is consistent with Aboderin and Hoffman (2019), who observed that the decline of extended family systems in sub-Saharan Africa has increased vulnerability among older adults.

Overall, the findings confirm that support networks serve as critical social resources that enhance both older adults' wellbeing and family stability.

Health Status of Older Adults and Family Stability

The fourth objective examined the impact of health status on family stability. Quantitative results (Table 6) showed that good physical and mental health enables older adults to participate actively in family life, with an overall mean of 3.31. Respondents agreed that healthy older adults contribute more effectively to family stability.

The IDI findings complemented this result, as participants noted that healthy older adults are less dependent, emotionally stable, and more capable of guiding younger family members. This finding aligns with existing studies which establish a strong link between health status, functional ability, and social participation among older adults (World Health Organization [WHO], 2015; Gureje et al., 2020).

Conversely, poor health was reported to increase caregiving burdens, emotional stress, and financial strain within families. This supports earlier research indicating that chronic illness among older adults can destabilise family dynamics, especially in contexts with limited access to affordable healthcare (Aboderin, 2017).

Thus, the findings suggest that health status significantly determines whether older adults function as stabilising agents or sources of strain within family systems.

Drawing from socio-emotional selectivity theory and activity theory, the findings suggest that older adults contribute most effectively to family stability when they are healthy, economically secure, socially supported, and actively engaged in family life (Carstensen, 1992; Havighurst, 1961). The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings strengthens the validity of the study and underscores the interdependence of economic, social, and health factors in shaping family stability.

In sum, the study demonstrates that older adults remain critical actors in sustaining family stability in Egor Local Government Area. Their roles as advisers, mediators, and moral guides are reinforced by economic independence, strong support networks, and good health. However, structural challenges such as poverty, declining communal ties, and inadequate healthcare continue to moderate these roles. The integration of IDI findings with survey results provides a nuanced understanding of older adults' lived experiences and affirms the relevance of family-centred ageing policies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provided the last section of the study. These include summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study examined the role of older adults in promoting family stability in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by growing socio-economic and demographic changes that are reshaping traditional family structures and redefining the roles of older adults within Nigerian families. Despite the increasing population of older adults, empirical evidence on their contributions to family stability at the local government level remains limited, particularly within urbanising communities such as Egor LGA.

The study was guided by four specific objectives and corresponding research questions, namely:

- (i) to examine the roles of older adults in family stability;
- (ii) to assess the impact of the economic status of older adults on family stability;
- (iii) to determine the effect of support networks of older adults on family stability; and
- (iv) to examine the impact of health status of older adults on family stability in Egor Local Government Area.

The study adopted Socio-emotional Selectivity Theory and Activity Theory, which emphasise the importance of emotional regulation, meaningful social roles, active engagement, and social

participation in old age. These theories provided a suitable framework for understanding how older adults remain relevant contributors to family life and stability.

A mixed-methods research design was employed. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 520 older adults, out of which 500 valid copies were returned, representing a high response rate. The population of the study comprised older adults aged 60 years and above residing in Egor Local Government Area. Qualitative data were generated through In-Depth Interviews (IDI) with selected residents and stakeholders to complement and enrich the survey findings.

Major findings from the study revealed that older adults play significant roles in family stability through conflict resolution, moral guidance, advisory functions, and the transmission of family values. The economic status of older adults was found to influence family stability, with financial independence enhancing respect, reducing household tension, and strengthening family cohesion. Support networks—particularly family, community, and religious networks—were identified as critical factors that enhance the emotional wellbeing and stabilising roles of older adults. Furthermore, the health status of older adults was shown to affect family stability, as good physical and mental health enables active participation in family life, while poor health increases dependency and caregiving burdens.

Overall, the quantitative findings were strongly reinforced by qualitative insights from the IDI, providing a comprehensive understanding of the contributions and challenges of older adults within families in Egor Local Government Area.

5.2 Conclusion of the Study

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that older adults remain indispensable actors in sustaining family stability in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Despite socio-cultural changes and modern pressures, older adults continue to serve as advisers, mediators, peacekeepers, and custodians of family norms. Their accumulated life experiences and moral authority enable them to guide younger family members and manage conflicts effectively.

The study further concludes that the economic independence of older adults significantly enhances their ability to contribute positively to family stability, while economic dependency—largely driven by weak pension systems and limited social protection—can strain family relationships. Strong support networks were found to mitigate such challenges by improving emotional wellbeing and reinforcing the social inclusion of older adults. Additionally, the health status of older adults plays a decisive role in determining whether they function as stabilising agents or sources of strain within families.

In essence, family stability in Egor Local Government Area is shaped by an interrelated combination of social roles, economic security, support systems, and health conditions of older adults. Strengthening these areas is therefore essential for sustaining cohesive and resilient family structures.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed for relevant stakeholders:

1. Government at all levels should strengthen social welfare and pension schemes to enhance the economic independence of older adults and improve access to affordable healthcare services to ensure their wellbeing. Policies should also recognise and integrate older adults into community and family development programmes.
2. Local governments should establish community-based support centres that provide counselling, social interaction, and health education for older adults, while promoting intergenerational dialogue and partnering with NGOs to support vulnerable elders
3. Families and caregivers should actively involve older adults in family decision-making, provide consistent emotional support, and care for those with declining health or limited income to maintain family stability
4. Community and Religious Organisations should strengthen social, emotional, and material support systems for older adults and organise programmes to reduce social isolation while facilitating mediation and guidance within families.
5. Social Workers and Practitioners should advocate for the rights and wellbeing of older adults, provide family-centred interventions to support caregiving and conflict resolution, and connect older adults with community resources and social services.
6. Researchers and Academics should conduct further studies on ageing and family dynamics in other local government areas and pursue longitudinal research to examine changes in older adults' roles over time, including gender-specific experiences in family stability.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**OLDER ADULTS IN FAMILY STABILITY IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

I am a masters student from the University of Benin, Faculty of Social Science, and Department of Sociology and Anthropology carrying on research on the above stated subject matter. Your assistance is highly needed in arriving at reasonable conclusion in the research work.

Please kindly complete the questionnaire as honestly as you can, your opinion/information supplied will be used purely for research purpose of study and will be treated with confidentiality.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Fatima Stella Sanu

OLDER ADULTS AND FAMILY STABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (OAFSQ)

Instruction:

This questionnaire seeks your informed opinion on the role of older adults in family stability. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate option.

Response Scale:

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

U = Undecided

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

1. Sex:

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age (in years):

☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–49 ☐ 50–59 ☐ 60 and above

3. Marital status:

☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced/Separated

4. Educational attainment:

☐ No formal education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary

5. Occupation status:

☐ Employed ☐ Self-employed ☐ Retired ☐ Unemployed

6. Length of residence in Egor LGA:

☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5–10 years ☐ 11–20 years ☐ Over 20 years

SECTION B: ROLES OF OLDER ADULTS IN FAMILY STABILITY

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
7	Older adults play an important role in maintaining peace within the family.					
8	Older adults provide guidance that helps family members make responsible decisions.					
9	Families rely on older adults for advice during critical family matters.					
10	Older adults help in preserving family traditions and values.					
11	The presence of older adults promotes discipline among younger family members.					
12	Older adults contribute to unity by encouraging cooperation among family members.					
13	Families without older adults experience greater difficulty in maintaining stability.					
14	Older adults act as custodians of family norms and expectations.					

SECTION C: ECONOMIC STATUS OF OLDER ADULTS AND FAMILY STABILITY

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
15	The economic independence of older adults enhances their contribution to family stability.					
16	Older adults who have stable income provide meaningful support to their families.					
17	Financial contribution from older adults reduces economic tension within the family.					
18	Economic dependence of older adults places pressure on family relationships.					
19	Families experience conflict when older adults lack adequate financial resources.					
20	Older adults' pensions or savings contribute to household stability.					

21	Economic hardship limits the ability of older adults to support family needs.					
22	Financial security of older adults strengthens their influence in family affairs.					

SECTION D: SUPPORT NETWORKS OF OLDER ADULTS AND FAMILY STABILITY

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
23	Strong family support networks improve the wellbeing of older adults.					
24	Older adults who receive emotional support contribute more positively to family stability.					
25	Community support systems enhance the role of older adults in family life.					
26	Lack of support for older adults negatively affects family harmony.					
27	Support from children and relatives enables older adults to function effectively in families.					
28	Older adults with strong social ties help reduce family conflicts.					
29	Extended family support strengthens the stabilizing role of older adults.					
30	Weak support networks make older adults vulnerable and affect family cohesion.					

SECTION E: HEALTH STATUS OF OLDER ADULTS AND FAMILY STABILITY

S/N	Items	SA	A	U	D	SD
31	Good health enables older adults to actively support family stability.					
32	Poor health of older adults increases caregiving responsibilities for family members.					
33	Health challenges of older adults sometimes cause stress within the family.					

34	Families function better when older adults are physically and mentally healthy.					
35	Chronic illness among older adults affects emotional stability in the family.					
36	Access to healthcare improves the ability of older adults to support family life.					
37	Poor health reduces the involvement of older adults in family decision-making.					
38	Family stability is strengthened when older adults receive adequate health care.					

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**OLDER ADULTS IN FAMILY STABILITY IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age (in years): ☐ 18–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–49 ☐ 50–59 ☐ 60 and above
3. Marital status: ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced/Separated
4. Educational attainment: ☐ No formal education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary
5. Occupation status: ☐ Employed ☐ Self-employed ☐ Retired ☐ Unemployed
6. Living arrangement: ☐ Living alone ☐ Living with spouse ☐ Living with children/relatives
7. Length of residence in Egor LGA: ☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5–10 years ☐ 11–20 years ☐ Over 20 years

IDI Question 1:

From your experience, how do older adults contribute to resolving conflicts or misunderstandings within the family?

IDI Question 2:

Can you describe specific ways older adults help to guide younger family members in making important life or family decisions?

IDI Question 3:

How does the financial situation of older adults affect their relationships with other family members?

IDI Question 4:

In what ways does having (or not having) income, pension, or savings influence the respect and responsibilities given to older adults in the family?

IDI Question 5:

How do relationships with children, relatives, or neighbours affect the emotional wellbeing of older adults in the family?

IDI Question 6:

Can you share how community groups, religious organizations, or social associations support older adults and influence family harmony?

IDI Question 7:

How does the health condition of older adults affect their participation in family activities and responsibilities?

IDI Question 8:

In what ways do caregiving demands related to older adults' health influence family relationships and stability?

Closing: Is there anything else you would like to share about how older adults contribute to or affect family stability in your community?