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Correlates of Family Efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the correlates of family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. Family efficacy, defined as a family unit's ability to effectively manage relationships and responsibilities, is shaped by socioeconomic, psychological, and interpersonal factors. Data were collected from a representative sample using structured questionnaires and analyzed to rank the perceived constraints. The findings indicate that 86.9% of families demonstrate high efficacy, with scores above 21, suggesting strong cohesion and resilience, often supported by extended family systems and adaptive strategies. In contrast, 13.1% of families fall into the low-efficacy category, primarily affected by poor inter-spousal communication, ranked first (Mean = 2.80), and health issues (Mean = 2.80). Moderate constraints include financial obligations (Mean = 2.76), spousal conflict (Mean = 2.76), and the inability of children to maintain regular routines (Mean = 2.77). Lower-ranked constraints, such as inadequate education (Mean = 2.70) and children's crises (Mean = 2.64), suggest that families prioritize immediate interpersonal and health challenges over educational or behavioral factors. The study underscores the need for interventions, such as communication training, financial empowerment programs, and health support initiatives. These findings provide a roadmap for policymakers and practitioners to enhance family resilience and address disparities in similar contexts.

Keywords: Family efficacy, inter-spousal communication, health challenges, financial stability, Ahiazu Mbaise, resilience

1. Introduction

Family efficacy, a concept rooted in social and psychological studies, pertains to a family's collective ability to manage challenges, maintain cohesion, and foster individual and collective well-being (Kao *et al*, 2017). It reflects the adaptive functioning of family systems and is influenced by a web of interrelated factors such as communication patterns, parental involvement, socio-economic status, cultural norms, and broader societal influences (Pelletier and Brent, 2002). A family with high efficacy not only copes effectively with adversity but also nurtures resilience in its members, enabling them to thrive in diverse circumstances.

Understanding the correlates of family efficacy is critical, as families are central to individual development and societal stability. From a theoretical standpoint, Bandura's (1997) concept of self-efficacy provides a foundational framework, emphasizing belief systems in determining behavior. By extension, family efficacy is shaped by the confidence families collectively hold in their ability to navigate complex interpersonal and external challenges (Walsh, 2015). This confidence is influenced by various psychosocial and contextual factors, which, when synergistically aligned, create a supportive environment conducive to positive outcomes for all members.

At the heart of family efficacy lies communication, which serves as the lifeline of familial relationships. Families with open, empathetic, and consistent communication patterns tend to exhibit higher levels of efficacy (Miller-Day, 2011). Communication fosters trust, conflict resolution, and mutual understanding, creating a framework for shared decision-making and collaboration.

Studies by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) highlight that families with a "conversation-oriented" communication style, where all members feel heard, are better equipped to navigate challenges effectively. This reinforces the argument that the quality of communication is a key determinant of a family's ability to function cohesively. However, communication is often impacted by external stressors, such as economic difficulties or parental work-related stress. For example, Repetti *et al*. (2009) explored how job-related stress can trickle down to family dynamics, leading to disruptions in communication and ultimately lowering family efficacy. Families that implement structured strategies to mitigate such stressors, including regular family meetings or stress-reduction activities, are more likely to maintain effective communication.

Parental involvement is another vital correlate of family efficacy. Engaged and nurturing parents create a stable and secure environment where children can flourish. Parenting styles, as conceptualized by Baumrind (1967) [4], significantly influence family dynamics and efficacy. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and clear boundaries, is associated with high levels of family efficacy. Children in such families tend to exhibit higher self-esteem and social competence, contributing positively to overall family functioning (Sorkhabi, 2012). Conversely, authoritarian or neglectful parenting styles can impede the development of family efficacy. Neglectful parenting, in particular, disrupts family cohesion and undermines the collective confidence needed to address challenges. A longitudinal study by Durbin *et al*. (1993) found that consistent parental involvement, even amidst socio-economic hardships, serves as a protective factor that bolsters family efficacy. This underscores the role of parenting in fostering a family's adaptive capacity.

The socio-economic context in which a family operates is a powerful determinant of family efficacy. Financial stability provides families with access to resources, education, and healthcare, which directly impact their ability to meet collective needs. Research by Conger *et al*. (2002) demonstrates that families experiencing economic strain are more likely to encounter conflict and stress, which can erode family efficacy. On the other hand, families with access to stable income and community resources often display higher levels of resilience and collective efficacy. Cultural norms further shape family efficacy by influencing expectations, roles, and values within familial systems (Yang and McDonnell, 2024). For instance, collectivist cultures, which prioritize family interdependence and community, may inherently foster higher family efficacy due to shared responsibilities and support networks (Achola and Greene, 2016). In contrast, individualistic cultures, with their emphasis on personal autonomy, may require deliberate efforts to cultivate a sense of collective efficacy within families.

Beyond the family unit, societal structures and policies play a significant role in shaping family efficacy. Access to quality education, healthcare, and social support systems can enhance a family's ability to cope with challenges. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory emphasizes that families do not exist in isolation but are influenced by the broader socio-political environment. Policies promoting family-friendly workplaces, affordable childcare, and mental health services contribute significantly to strengthening family efficacy. Conversely, systemic inequalities, such as discrimination or lack of access to resources, can undermine family efficacy (Braveman *et al*., 2022). For example, families from marginalized communities often face additional stressors that hinder their ability to function effectively. These disparities highlight the importance of addressing structural barriers to ensure that all families have the opportunity to develop and sustain high efficacy.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to explore the correlates of family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise. This framework emphasizes the interaction between individuals and their environment, considering how family functioning is influenced by microsystems (e.g., family and peers), mesosystems (e.g., school-community interactions), and macrosystems (e.g., cultural and economic conditions) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). By applying this theory, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to or hinder family efficacy in the local context.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to ascertain the corrects of family efficacy in the study area, while the specific objectives of this study were as follows:

1. Ascertain the demographic characteristics of families in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area;
2. assess the level of family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area;
3. determine the constraints to family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area; and
4. evaluate the correlates of family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area;

2.0 Methodology

Design for the Study

This study utilizes a descriptive survey design to investigate the correlates of family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. Descriptive surveys are ideal for capturing the characteristics of a population and examining existing conditions (Creswell, 2014). The design allows for the collection of quantitative data from a sample of individuals, using structured questionnaires. Respondents are selected to ensure diversity in demographic representation. Data is analyzed using descriptive statistics and factor analysis to identify patterns and relationships in the causes and prevalence of incest (Kumar, 2019). This approach provides a comprehensive overview of the issue.

2.1 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area (LGA) of Imo State, Nigeria which came to existence as a result of the merger between Ahiara and Ekwerazu communities with its headquarters in Afooru. There are 12 wards divided into 14 towns that make up the LGA namely; Mpam, Ihitte Afor, Opara-Nadim, Akabor, Ogwuama/Amuzi, Obodo-Ujichi, Otulu/Auneze, Umu-Okrika, Obohia, Ekwereazu, Obodo-Ahiara, Lude/Nnara-Mbia, Ogbe, and Oru-Ahiara. The LGA has a landmass of 114 km^2 and a population of 170,902 at the 2006 census. It is bordered at the north by Ishiala Mbano and Ehime Mbano, to the east by Obowo and Ihitte Uboma, to the south by Ezinihitte Mbiase and Aboh Mbiase and to the west by

Ikeduru.

2.2 Population and Sample Selection

The target population for the study were all parents in Ahiazu Mbiase LGA in Imo State, which had a total of 8319 parents (National Nutrition and Health Survey (NNHS), 2022). The sampling technique used in the study was the simple random technique used to select 382 respondents based on the Yamane formula. Every parent in the study area had an equal opportunity of being selected for the study.

2.3 Instrument for Data Collection and Study Procedure

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire used to gather primary data from the field for analysis. The questionnaire was divided into sections. The questionnaire was prepared in line with the study's objectives in order to meet the study's goals. The instrument was divided into sections A, B and C. Section A sought information on demographic characteristics of respondents, section B haad a 21-item scaled statement on the level of family efficacy named family efficacy scale (FES) with response options: always, sometimes and never, scored 2, 1 and zero (0) respectively. The total summary score of the family efficacy scale was 42 with the mean score 21indicating a cutoff point between low (<21) and high (>21) level of family efficacy.

Moreover, to ascertain that the research instrument (questionnaire) was adequate enough to achieve the result, it was validated by a professional in the Department of Home Economics, University of Uyo. The instrument was examined for corrections and suggested restructuring where made as necessary. The research instrument was subjected to face and content validation (Reis and Judd, 2000).

2.4 Data Collection Technique

Data for the study were derived from the questionnaires administered randomly to 382 respondents in the study area. All the questionnaires administered were retrieved from the respondents for analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, ranking and correlation analysis. All these analysis were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic characteristics of families in Ahiazu Mbaise

The results of Table 1 indicate a slight female majority, with women constituting 53.7% of respondents compared to 46.3% males. The gender composition has implications for family efficacy, particularly in patriarchal societies such as Nigeria, where traditional gender roles often place women as primary caregivers and men as breadwinners (Jacob *et al*., 2020a, b; nelson *et al*., 2017a,b). Women's dominance in the survey suggests that the efficacy of families in this region heavily relies on women's capacity to manage household responsibilities, including child-rearing, education, and health care. Studies such as Nelson *et al* (2018) and Scheuler *et al*. (2014) shows that empowered women contribute significantly to family stability and well-being. However, cultural and economic constraints might limit their ability to maximize family efficacy.

The findings on respondents age distribution and family functioning show that 44.8% of respondents are aged 40–59 years, followed by 33% aged 20–39 years. This age distribution suggests that most families are headed by individuals in their most productive years, which positively correlates with family efficacy. Middle-aged adults often have more resources, experience, and stability to support their families (Infurna *et al*., 2020; Jacob *et al*, 2018). However, younger family heads (20–39 years) may face challenges such as limited financial resources, reduced parenting experience, and unstable marital relationships, which can reduce family efficacy. Older respondents (70+ years), though fewer, are likely to depend on younger family members, potentially placing additional stress on family resources (Boss, 2024) [8].

Marital status is a crucial determinant of family efficacy. The data shows that 70.7% of respondents were married, while 16.5% are divorced/separated, and 12.8% are widowed. Marriage has been shown to enhance family efficacy by fostering collaboration between partners in fulfilling family responsibilities (Bandura *et al*., 2011) [2]. In contrast, divorced and widowed families might experience diminished efficacy due to the absence of one partner, leading to reduced economic and emotional support (Sbarra *et al*., 2011). Divorced and widowed respondents, constituting 29.3% of the sample, may require external support systems to maintain family functionality. Also, the majority of respondents (57.5%) had been married for 1–10 years, followed by 25.7% with 11–20 years of marriage. Length of marriage often correlates with family stability and efficacy (Jolly-James Nneoma, 2023). Newly married couples may face challenges in establishing roles and managing resources effectively, which could hinder family efficacy (Walsh, 2015). Conversely, families with longer marital durations tend to exhibit stronger bonds and better coping mechanisms, contributing positively to family efficacy. However, the low percentage of respondents married for more than 30 years suggests potential instability or high mortality rates, which could affect family structures and support systems.

Results on number of children reveal that 79.3% of families have 1–4 children, while 20.7% have 5–8 children. Family size directly impacts family efficacy (Du and Kim, 2020), particularly in resource-constrained environments like Ahiazu Mbaise. Smaller families are more likely to allocate resources effectively, ensuring that children receive adequate education, healthcare, and emotional support (Halfon *et al*., 1995). Larger families, on the other hand, may struggle with resource dilution, which can undermine family efficacy. These findings align with studies suggesting that family planning and smaller family sizes enhance overall family functionality (Blake, 2022).

Education also plays a pivotal role in family efficacy, as it equips parents with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their family's welfare (Bogenschneider, 2014). The majority of respondents (85.3%) had 1–5 years of formal schooling, while only 2.1% had 11–15 years of education. The low educational attainment reflects systemic issues in access to education, which may hinder families' ability to achieve optimal efficacy. Studies indicate that higher parental education levels are associated with better family outcomes, including improved child health, higher household incomes, and effective conflict resolution (Davis-Kean, 2005). Thus, interventions aimed at increasing educational opportunities in

this region could enhance family efficacy. Furthermore, economic stability is a critical determinant of family efficacy (Lee and Mortimer, 2009). The majority of respondents (48.4%) earn between ₦50,001–₦100,000 monthly, while 41.1% earn less than ₦50,000. Only 9.9% of respondents reported earnings of ₦100,001–₦150,000, and a negligible 0.5% earned above ₦150,000. These income levels suggest that many families in Ahiazu Mbaise operate within low-income brackets, which could limit their ability to provide for their members' needs. Economic constraints are often associated with reduced family efficacy, as families struggle to afford healthcare, education, and basic necessities (Lazar and Davenport, 2018). Poverty alleviation programs and economic empowerment initiatives could significantly enhance family efficacy in this region.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Families in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area in Imo State

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	177	46.3
Female	205	53.7
Age		
20–39 years	129	33.0
40–59 years	171	44.8
60–69 years	49	12.8
70–79 years	26	6.8
Above 79 years	10	2.6
Marital Status		
Married	270	70.7
Divorced/Separated	63	16.5
Widowed	49	12.8
Years of Marriage		
1–10	219	57.5
11–20	98	25.7
21–30	50	13.1
31–40	14	3.7
41–50	1	0.3
Number of Children		
1–4	303	79.3
5–8	79	20.7
Years of Formal Schooling		
1–5	326	85.3
6–10	48	12.6
11–15	8	2.1
Monthly Income (₦)		
1–50,000	157	41.1
50,001–100,000	185	48.4
100,001–150,000	38	9.9
Above 150,000	2	0.5

3.2 Level of Family Efficacy of the Respondents' Families

The findings in Table 2 indicate that the majority of families (86.9%) demonstrated a high level of efficacy, with scores of 21 or above. This high percentage suggests a strong capacity for cohesion, role management, and problem-solving among most families in Ahiazu Mbaise. Several cultural and socioeconomic factors may contribute to this resilience. For instance, the community-oriented nature of many rural Nigerian families often fosters a strong support network. Extended family systems, where relatives share resources and responsibilities, enhance collective family efficacy. Research by Pilisuk and Parks (2014) emphasizes that these extended networks can buffer families against external pressures, providing essential support that sustains family functionality. Furthermore, the high efficacy scores might also reflect adaptive strategies employed by families to overcome challenges such as economic instability or health crises. Walsh (2015) emphasize that families with strong interpersonal relationships and clear communication patterns tend to exhibit higher resilience, even under adverse conditions. This aligns with the findings in Ahiazu Mbaise, where high family efficacy could be an outcome of culturally ingrained values of togetherness and mutual support.

On the other hand, 13.1% of families were classified as having low efficacy, with scores below 21. Although a relatively small proportion, this group represents a vulnerable subset of the population whose needs require attention. Families with low efficacy may struggle with inter-spousal conflicts, financial constraints, or health-related challenges that undermine their ability to function effectively. As Walsh (2015) and Halpern-Meekin (2019) observed, such families are often caught in a cycle of stress and limited resources, which perpetuates their struggles. For these families, external pressures, such as financial instability or chronic health issues, may compound existing relational difficulties, leading to a diminished capacity to manage daily tasks and emotional needs. One possible explanation for low efficacy in these families could be the impact of socioeconomic disparities. Families with limited income may find it harder to meet basic needs, leading to increased tension and reduced cohesion. In this study, the proportion of households earning below 50,000 naira monthly constituted a significant share, which may correlate with the low efficacy group. Low-income families often face a range of stressors, including food insecurity, poor housing, and lack of access to education, all of which can significantly impact family functionality. As Walsh (2015) highlight, such families may have fewer resources to draw on, which can increase vulnerability to conflict and reduce their ability to engage in proactive problem-solving. Additionally, families experiencing chronic health issues or lack of support from extended relatives are more likely to exhibit lower scores, as emphasized by Walsh (2015).

Table 2: Level of Family Efficacy of the Respondents' Families

Level of Family Efficacy	Family Efficacy Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	<21	50	13.1
High	≥21	332	86.9
Total		382	100

3.3 Constraints to Family Efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise LGA, Imo State

The results in Table 3 presents a ranking of constraints to family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State, based on respondents' perceptions. These constraints are ordered according to their mean values, with the lower values indicating greater significance. The top-ranked constraint, *poor inter-spousal communication* (mean = 2.80, rank = 1.5), is a critical factor in determining family efficacy. Effective communication between spouses is fundamental for shared decision-making, conflict resolution, and maintaining emotional intimacy within a family (Halim *et al*., 2024). The absence of communication can lead to misunderstandings, emotional distance, and dysfunctional relationships. In this cultural context, where family cohesion is highly valued, poor communication between spouses can significantly disrupt family functioning (Bomba *et al*, 2013).

This finding resonates with existing literature, where communication difficulties have been shown to reduce relationship satisfaction and impair overall family dynamics (Cole and Gottman, 2019).

The *health of a family member* is also tied for the highest-ranking constraint (mean = 2.80, rank = 1.5). Illnesses, whether physical or mental, place considerable emotional and financial strain on the family. Families facing chronic health issues may experience reduced capacity to perform daily tasks, manage relationships, and provide adequate care. Chronic health challenges can lead to caregiving demands, financial strain, and emotional exhaustion, all of which negatively impact family efficacy (Schulz and Eden, 2016). This constraint is particularly pronounced in rural settings like Ahiazu Mbaise, where healthcare access may be limited, further exacerbating the burden on families.

Another critical constraint is the *level of trust between spouses* (mean = 2.79, rank = 3), which plays a central role in marital satisfaction and family cohesion. Trust is foundational to effective communication, collaboration, and emotional support within the family unit. The absence of trust often leads to conflict, reduced cooperation, and a decline in family functioning. In Ahiazu Mbaise, trust issues may arise from factors such as financial stress, infidelity, or unmet expectations, all of which can undermine the marital relationship and hinder family efficacy (Rokah and Chan, 2023). Research consistently underscores the importance of trust in sustaining family resilience and supporting effective family management (Walsh, 205).

The *inability of children to fall into regular activities* (mean = 2.77, rank = 4) is another prominent constraint. Routine activities such as attending school and performing household chores contribute to the structure and stability of family life. Disruptions in children's routines can create disorder within the family system, leading to frustration, stress, and challenges in managing day-to-day responsibilities. The prominence of this constraint highlights the need for interventions focused on child discipline, time management, and fostering regular routines to improve family efficacy (Sanders *et al*., 2019).

Several other constraints rank moderately, including *spousal conflict* (mean = 2.76, rank = 6), *inability to meet family financial obligations* (mean = 2.76, rank = 6), and *the health of a family member* (mean = 2.76, rank = 6). Spousal conflict, closely related to issues of communication and trust, can lead to emotional distress and reduced cooperation. Financial difficulties, while moderately ranked, are still significant, as they influence access to resources like healthcare, education, and basic necessities. In rural areas, informal support systems, such as extended families and community networks, may mitigate some financial stressors, but families still struggle with meeting basic needs and ensuring their well-being (Cutrona, 2000). Other notable constraints include *lack of support from family members or relatives* (mean = 2.75, rank = 8.5) and *lack of support from friends or colleagues* (mean = 2.74, rank = 10). Social support is critical in maintaining family efficacy, as it provides emotional, financial, and practical assistance during times of need. In the absence of support from extended family, friends, or colleagues, families are more likely to experience increased stress, isolation, and difficulty managing challenges (Price *et al*., 2010). These findings underscore the importance of strong social networks in buffering against family stressors and enhancing overall family functioning.

Finally, *constraints such as low/inadequate level of education (mean = 2.70, rank = 12) and high activity level of children* (mean = 2.71, rank = 11) are ranked lower, suggesting that while these factors can impact family efficacy, they may be more manageable than others. Education is critical for family mobility and stability, but in this context, immediate interpersonal and health-related challenges seem to take precedence. Similarly, while children's high activity levels may create challenges, they are generally viewed as manageable unless compounded by other issues, such as behavioral problems or lack of resources (Thompson, 2014).

Table 3: Constraints to Family Efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State

S/N	Constraints	Mean	Rank
1	Inability to meet family financial obligations	2.76	6
2	Low/inadequate level of education	2.70	12
3	Age of family members	2.75	8.5
4	Poor inter-spousal communication	2.80	1.5
5	Spousal conflict	2.76	6
6	Level of trust between spouses	2.79	3
7	High activity level of children	2.71	11
8	Children's crises/problems	2.64	13
9	Inability of children to fall into regular activities	2.77	4
10	The health of a family member	2.76	6
11	Depression of family member	2.74	10
12	Lack of support from family members/relatives	2.75	8.5
13	Lack of support from friends/colleagues	2.74	10

3.4 Correlation of Demographic Variables with Family Efficacy

The findings in Table 4 present insights into how various demographic and socioeconomic variables correlate with family efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise, Imo State. The correlation coefficient for age is 0.100, indicating a positive and significant relationship between age and family efficacy at the 10% level of significance. This finding suggests that as individuals grow older, their capacity to contribute to family efficacy improves. Age often brings maturity, experience, and stability, which may enhance problem-solving skills and resilience in managing familial challenges (Walsh, 205). In the context of Ahiazu Mbaise, older family members might draw on cultural values and traditions, using their wisdom to navigate challenges effectively. However, this relationship is relatively weak, indicating that while age plays a role, other factors may have stronger influences on family efficacy. The finding aligns with previous studies that highlight the role of life-stage experiences in shaping family management skills, especially in regions with communal family structures (Korin *et al*., 2002).

The years of schooling variable has a correlation coefficient of **0.302**, which is highly significant at the 1% level. This result underscores the importance of education in fostering family efficacy. Education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities, which are essential for effective communication, conflict resolution, and financial planning within families. In Ahiazu Mbaise, education may also influence family efficacy by enhancing the socioeconomic status of individuals. Those with higher levels of education are likely to secure better-paying jobs, enabling them to meet family financial obligations, as reflected in the study's earlier observations. This finding aligns with the human capital theory, which posits that

education is a critical determinant of productivity and problem-solving capabilities (Becker, 2009).

Income exhibited a very weak positive correlation with family efficacy (coefficient = 0.013), though it is deemed statistically significant. This result may appear surprising given the intuitive assumption that higher income levels would directly enhance family efficacy by improving access to resources and reducing financial stress. One possible explanation for this weak correlation could be the prevalence of other social or cultural factors in Ahiazu Mbaise, such as extended family support systems, which mitigate the direct impact of income on family functioning. Additionally, the modest income levels in the region might limit the potential for income to play a transformative role in family dynamics. Similar findings have been reported in rural African communities, where social capital and kinship networks often buffer the effects of low income on family well-being (Cassidy and Barnes, 2012).

The relationship between years of marriage and family efficacy, with a correlation coefficient of 0.073, is positive and significant at the 10% level. This finding indicates that longer marital duration contributes positively to family efficacy, albeit modestly. Couples with more years of marriage likely develop stronger bonds, improved communication patterns, and better strategies for resolving conflicts, all of which enhance family efficacy. In Ahiazu Mbaise, where traditional values emphasize the stability of long-term marriages, the accumulation of shared experiences over time may reinforce cooperative efforts in managing family responsibilities. This result resonates with previous research suggesting that marital stability enhances the psychological and emotional environment of families, promoting overall efficacy (Bagheri *et al*, 2024).

Interestingly, the number of children variable shows a negative correlation with family efficacy (coefficient = **-0.064**) and is not statistically significant. This result suggests that having more children does not necessarily improve family efficacy and may, in some cases, strain resources and family dynamics. Larger family sizes are often associated with increased financial and emotional demands, which can challenge the ability of families to function effectively (Walsh, 2012). In Ahiazu Mbaise, where extended family systems are common, the lack of significance might reflect the role of communal child-rearing practices that offset some of the challenges associated with larger families. However, the negative correlation aligns with findings from other studies, which highlight that larger family sizes often dilute parental attention and resources, thereby reducing family efficacy (Sandberg and Rafail, 2014).

Table 4: Correlates of Family Efficacy in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State

S/N	Variables	Correlation Coefficients	Decision
1	Age	0.100*	Significant
2	Years of Schooling	0.302***	Significant
3	Income	0.013	Significant
4	Years of Marriage	0.073*	Significant
5	Number of Children	-0.064	Not significant

Note: * and *** denote significance at 10% and 1% levels, respectively.

4.0 Conclusion

The concept of family efficacy holds immense significance in understanding the dynamics of families in Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. This study highlights that family efficacy is influenced by a multifaceted interplay of cultural, socioeconomic, and relational factors. While the traditional family structure in this region emphasizes collective well-being and interdependence, challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and evolving gender dynamics present obstacles to achieving optimal family efficacy. The findings underscore the importance of fostering strong family relationships, enhancing parental self-efficacy, and addressing structural challenges to enable families to thrive amidst these complexities. The role of cultural norms in shaping family efficacy cannot be overlooked. In Ahiazu Mbaise, the extended family system, traditional conflict-resolution mechanisms, and communal values remain crucial pillars of family functioning. However, as socioeconomic realities evolve, families are increasingly navigating the tension between traditional expectations and modern demands. This shift necessitates targeted interventions that balance cultural preservation with the need for adaptability and resilience.

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