

Parental Roles in Conflict Prevention and Resolution among Siblings in Families in Adamawa State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Adamawa State Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were developed to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was the 992,328 couples from Adamawa State. Multi stage involving purposive-random sampling techniques were employed in selecting 144 couples that constituted the sample frame for the study. The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured 37-item questionnaire titled: "Parental Roles in Conflict Prevention and Resolution among Siblings Questionnaire (PRCPRASQ). The questionnaire was structured into 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts while Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used in which a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.83 was obtained for the instrument. The data collected were analysed using mean for answering the research questions while t-test statistics were used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. From the data analysed, the study found that giving preferential treatment by parents in favour of some children in the family and inability of parents to instil discipline and sense of respect among children are chief causes of conflict among siblings. In addition, parental roles in conflict prevention and resolution among siblings include giving equal treatment to children, instilling in children proper sense of discipline and respect, balancing love and affection among the children to avoid preference. Based on these findings, the study among others recommended that parents should discourage wrong behaviours and activities that can trigger conflict among their children, and that parents should inculcate acceptable behaviours in the children such as love, peace, tolerance, honesty, integrity and good morals.

Key words: conflict prevention, resolution, parents, siblings, families, Adamawa State.

Introduction

Family is the basic social unit of the society. It is made up of a group of people that reside together and are related by blood or adoption. According to Anyakoha and Eluwa (2010), family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage or blood (ancestry) and having one or more children of their own or adopted and often times characterized by common residence and economic cooperation. In the opinion of Olaitan and Akpan (2003), a family is described as a unit of interacting persons related by ties of marriage, birth or adoption whose central purpose is to maintain a common culture which promotes physical, mental, emotional and social development of each of its members. Sharing their view, Lamanna and Reidman (2003) defined family as any sexually expressive or parent-child or other kin relationship in which people usually related by ancestry, marriage or adoption form an economic unit and commit to maintaining that group over time. There are two main types of families in Nigeria: nuclear and polygamous family. According to Roberts (2008), a nuclear family is a family group consisting of a father and mother and their children, who share living quarters. Polygamous family on the other hand is a marriage union of one man with more than one woman (Githinji, 2011). Irrespective of the type, families constitute the corner stone of the society and key institution that provides customs and behavioural patterns in society

(McGregor, 2009). The family performs multifaceted roles in the society which among others include emotional care and physical maintenance of group members, addition of new members through reproduction or adoption, socialization and education of children, social control of members by setting boundaries, disciplining, mentoring and protection of family members against all forms of violence and maintenance of family morale (McGregor, 2009). The multiple roles are championed by the parents (father and mother) who constitute the family heads.

Parents are biological or foster fathers and mothers that raise a child from infancy to adulthood (Lareau, 2002). According to the author parents promote and support the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Kerby (2008) stated that parents are responsible for providing the basic resources that are needed, like a home, food and clothing. They are also responsible for taking good care of these resources, such as insuring that the home environment is safe and clean, and that foods and beverages are made available for the growth and development of the child and other members of the family. Parents are responsible for protecting children from physical or psychological harm such as predators, prejudice, and discrimination, as well as diseases, bullies, gangs, violence and conflicts among the children or siblings.

Siblings are group of persons from the same parents. In early childhood, three major characteristics of sibling relations are prominent (Dunn, 2002). Firstly, sibling interactions are emotionally charged relationships defined by strong, uninhibited emotions of a positive, negative and sometimes ambivalent quality (Dunn, 2002). Secondly, sibling relations are defined by intimacy as youngsters spend large amounts of time playing together, they know each other very well Howe and Rinaldi (2004) engaging in pretend play for conflict and for understanding others' points of view. Thirdly, sibling relations are characterized by large individual differences in the quality of children's relations with one another. Carpendale and Lewis (2004) noted that the age, individual and personality differences among siblings often make the issues of power, control and rivalry an inevitable source of conflict among the children.

Conflict is a state of resistance or opposition between two or more individuals. According to Goodhand and Hulme (1999), conflict is a struggle between individuals over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to assert their values or claims over those of others. Conflict in the view of Malloy and McMurray (1996) is a relationship where two people have incompatible goals, and use a variety of prosocial and antisocial strategies to influence each other's behaviour. For young children, Vespo and Pederson (1995) described conflict as one child protesting, retaliating against, or objecting to the behaviours and/or actions of another child. Conflict has also been defined as one's actions that block, interfere, or prevent another child's ability to reach and accomplish his/her own goals or wants (Stevahn, 2004) or contrary goals between children (Thornberg, 2006). In daily interactions between siblings, conflict commonly occurs over issues such as possession of an item, what roles are played, and over the actions/lack of actions by other siblings. Conflicts such as these are inevitable due to the close relationships between children (Vespo and Pederson, 1995). In a review of conflict among siblings, Boulter, Von Bergen, Miller and Wells (2001) stated that conflict involves both competitive and joint interests in which there are techniques, tactics, and strategies individual child use for dealing with conflict with other siblings. Conflict is naturally embedded in life of human beings and cannot be separated from social processes but must always be prevented and resolved when it occurs. Therefore, conflict prevention and resolution between or among siblings constitute part of the major responsibilities of parents.

Conflict prevention refers to efforts or strategies that ensure peaceful relationship between or among parties with diverse aims and interests in order to prevent conflict from erupting (Sharma, 2003). In conflict prevention, the interests of parties or individuals involved are

harmonized to prevent conflict from taking place in the first instance. On the other hand, conflict resolution involved the management of already established conflict between aggrieved individuals or parties. According to Otite and Albert (1999), conflict resolution is more elaborate and wider in conception and application. Conflict resolution utilizes communication and analytical thinking to manage and peacefully resolve conflicts between and among the parties involved. It is more of a long-term arrangement involving institutionalised provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts wherever they occur. Conflict prevention and resolution among children is an important responsibility of parents due to the negative effects of the children. For instance, Goodhand (2001) stated that the conflict of unresolved conflict include poor relationships, injury, deaths, disablement, displacement and poverty increase which have both short and long-term effects on families and society at large most especially when not resolved.

The increasing trend in conflict and crisis in northern Nigeria is worrisome and has been well documented in the literature. For instance, Akinlade (2013) stated that the Nigerian state is aggressively in search for peace, particularly in the North as conflict and violent had eroded most parts of the region. Similarly, International Crisis Group (2010) shared that violence in northern Nigeria has flared up periodically over the last 30 years. Based on these pieces of information, it is the candid view of the researcher that the present alarming increase in crisis in the northern Nigeria, Adamawa state inclusive could be linked with poor management of conflict by parents among children who grow to adult to disrupt the peace in the society. The overriding effect of conflicts on socio-economic advancement of Nigeria and the northern region in particular is detrimental to the nation's economic growth and development. It was based on this background that this study was conducted to identify parental roles in conflict prevention and resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study identified:

- i. major causes of conflicts among siblings in Adamawa State;
- ii. parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State; and
- iii. parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

Research Questions

Based on the specific purposes of the study, the study answered the following research questions:

- i. What are the major causes of conflicts among siblings in families in Adamawa State?
- ii. What are parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State?
- iii. What are parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on major causes of conflicts among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Adamawa State Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were developed to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey research design in the opinion of Owens (2002) is that in which the same information is gathered from an unbiased representative group of

interest using questionnaires, interview and observation. Anyakoha (2009) also shared that descriptive design uses questionnaires, interview and observation in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perception of group of interest to the investigator. Therefore, descriptive survey design was found suitable for this study because questionnaire was used to collect data from the representative group of respondents.

The population for the study was the 992,328 couples from Adamawa State. Multi stage, purposive - random sampling techniques were employed in selecting 144 couples that constituted the sample frame from which data were collected for the study. Firstly, all the three senatorial zones in Adamawa State were purposively selected based on the prevalence of cases of conflict among siblings across the State. Secondly, one Local Government Area (LGAs) was randomly selected from each of the three senatorial zones making three LGAs for the study. Thirdly, two communities were randomly selected from each the three LGAs making six communities for the study. The fourth stage of the sampling involved purposive and random selection of 12 literate couples with children from each of the six sampled communities making 72 couples (72 fathers and 72 mothers) which gave to total sample size to 144 respondents. Literate couples were purposively sampled in order to ensure that the couples selected are educated and have children. The list of the literate couples with children in each of the selected communities was compiled by the researcher with the help of key informants that also worked as research assistants in the study. In case of polygamous families, the husband and the first with highest number of children were selected.

The instrument for data collection for the study was a structured 37-item questionnaire titled: "Parental Roles in Conflict Prevention and Resolution among Siblings Questionnaire (PRCPRASQ). The questionnaire was structured into 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Home Economics Unit of the Department of Vocational Teacher Education and one from Childhood Education of the Department of Educational Foundation, all of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. For the purpose of obtaining the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used in which a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.83 was obtained indicating high reliability of the instrument. The data for the study were collected by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. Out of the total 144 copies of the questionnaire administered, 138 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved indicating 95.8% rate of return. Data collected were analysed using mean for answering the research questions while t-test statistics were used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In taking decision on the research questions, 2.50 on 4-point rating scale was used as cut-off point. Therefore, items with mean value of 2.50 or above were regarded as "Agreed" while any item with mean value of less than 2.50 was regarded as "Disagreed". The null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted for items whose p-values were greater than 0.05 level of significance while hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected for items whose p-value were less than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results for this study were obtained based on the research questions answered and hypotheses tested. Both the research questions and the hypotheses are presented in tables 1, 2 and 3 as follows:

Research Question 1

What are the major causes of conflicts among siblings in families in Adamawa State?

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on major causes of conflicts among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

The data for answering research question one and testing hypothesis one are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Mean Ratings and t-test Statistics of the Responses of Fathers and Mothers on Causes of Conflicts among Siblings in Families in Adamawa State. (N = 138)

SN	Causes of conflicts among siblings include:	\bar{X}_f	\bar{X}_m	\bar{X}_G	SD	p-value	Remarks RQ	H0
1	Inadequate family resources to cater to individual needs of the children.	3.36	3.33	3.34	0.56	0.67	A	NS
2	Preferential treatment in favour of some children in the family at the detriment of the others.	3.49	3.47	3.48	0.60	0.55	A	NS
3	Different character formation and personality traits among children.	3.45	3.50	3.47	0.71	0.41	A	NS
4	Inability of parents to instil discipline and sense of respect among children	3.51	3.53	3.52	0.62	0.32	A	NS
5	Lackadaisical attitude by most parents to properly guide the conduct of their children at home.	3.38	3.32	3.35	0.63	0.58	A	NS
6	Conflict among sibling often result from negative emulations of such from their parents	3.46	3.48	3.47	0.58	0.46	A	NS
7	Inability of parents to balance love and affection between and among the children.	3.45	3.23	3.34	0.63	0.02	A	S*
8	Younger siblings claiming equality with their elder brothers and sisters.	3.61	3.55	3.58	0.54	0.34	A	NS
9	Raising siblings from different parental background outside marriage together in a home.	2.96	3.46	3.21	0.73	0.00	A	S*
10	Domineering attitude by elder siblings at the disadvantage of the younger ones	3.49	3.48	3.48	0.56	0.63	A	NS
11	Vary wide age brackets among siblings could cause conflict among children.	2.36	2.40	2.38	0.87	0.55	D	NS
12	Polygamous nature of most families cause conflict among the children	3.28	3.65	3.46	0.65	0.01	A	S*
13	Sharing of parents properties at their demise by children or siblings.	3.60	3.64	3.62	0.69	0.54	A	NS

Key: \bar{X}_f = Mean of Fathers, \bar{X}_m = Mean of Mothers, \bar{X}_G = Overall Grand Mean; A = Agreed; D = Disagreed; Level of Sig. = 0.05; S* = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

From the data presented in Table 1 above, it was revealed that the grand mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on 12 out of the 13 items in the table ranged from 3.21 to 3.62 which were above the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the respondents (parents) agreed that all the 12 identified items are major causes of conflict among siblings in families in the study area. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on item 11 in the table was 2.38 which was below the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale indicating that the respondents (parents) disagreed with item 11 as part of major causes of conflict among siblings in families. The standard deviation values of the 13 items ranged from 0.54 to 0.87 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

The data presented in Table 1 on hypothesis one showed that p-values of 10 out of the 13 items in the table ranged from 0.32 to 0.67 which are greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implied that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the 10 identified items in the table. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was accepted on the 10 items. The p-values on the remaining three items in the table, specifically, items 7, 9 and 12 were 0.02, 0.00 and 0.01 respectively which are in each case less than 0.05 level of significant. This indicated that there are significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the three identified items in the table. Therefore, the null

hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was rejected on the three items.

Research Question 2

What are parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State?

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

The data for answering research question two and testing hypothesis two are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Ratings and t-test Statistics of the Responses of Fathers and Mothers on Parental Roles in Conflicts Prevention among Siblings in Families in Adamawa State (N = 138)

SN	Parental roles in conflicts prevention among siblings include:	\bar{X}_f	\bar{X}_m	\bar{X}_G	SD	p-value	Remarks RQ	H0
1	Seek for God's intervention by prayers for peaceful coexistence among children as they grow.	2.46	3.13	2.79	0.56	0.00	A	S*
2	Providing for individual needs of the children in the family such as book, clothes etc.	3.50	3.51	3.50	0.44	0.86	A	NS
3	Give equal treatment to all children in the family irrespective of gender, age or whichever of the wives the child comes from.	3.58	3.46	3.52	0.63	0.45	A	NS
4	As a parent, instil proper sense of discipline and respect among children for peace	3.55	3.52	3.53	0.56	0.81	A	NS
5	As a parent, balance love and affection between and among the children to avoid preference.	3.56	3.54	3.55	0.60	0.62	A	NS
6	Avoiding children from extra marital relationship from mingling with children from husband or wives at home.	3.03	3.40	3.21	0.71	0.01	A	S*
7	As parents, be of good conduct in the home to act as good role models for children.	3.47	3.56	3.52	0.69	0.56	A	NS
8	Paying proper attention to individual child character in the family.	3.47	3.49	3.48	0.66	0.62	A	NS
9	Exposing children to the preaching of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the family	3.33	3.45	3.39	0.45	0.67	A	NS
10	Give room for proper social interaction among children in the family.	3.28	3.24	3.26	0.61	0.68	A	NS
11	As, parents create good time for social interaction with children in the home.	3.43	3.46	3.44	0.54	0.57	A	NS
12	Preparing a legal will by parents at old age for sharing of their properties among children.	3.54	3.52	3.53	0.58	0.59	A	NS

Key: \bar{X}_f = Mean of Fathers, \bar{X}_m = Mean of Mothers, \bar{X}_G = Overall Grand Mean; A = Agreed; Level of Sig. = 0.05; S* = Significant; NS = Not Significant.

The data presented in Table 2 above showed that the grand mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the 12 items in the table ranged from 2.79 to 3.55 which were above the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the respondents (parents) agreed that all the 12 identified items in the table are parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings in families in Adamawa State. The standard deviation values of the 12 items ranged from 0.44 to 0.71 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

The data presented in Table 2 on hypothesis two revealed that the p-values of 10 out of the 12 items in the table ranged from 0.45 to 0.86 which are greater than 0.05 level of significance.

This implied that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the 10 identified items in the table. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was accepted on the 10 items. The p-values on the remaining two items in the table, specifically, items 1 and 6 were 0.00 and 0.01 respectively which are in each case less than 0.05 level of significant. This indicated that there are significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the two identified items in the table. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was rejected on the two items.

Research Question 3

What are parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State?

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in Adamawa State.

The data for answering research question three and testing hypothesis three are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Mean Ratings and t-test Statistics of the Responses of Fathers and Mothers on Parental Roles in Conflicts Resolution among Siblings in Families in Adamawa State (N = 138)

SN	Parental roles in conflicts resolution among siblings include:	\bar{X}_f	\bar{X}_m	\bar{X}_G	SD	p-value	Remarks RQ	H0
1	As parents, report conflicting cases among children to man of God for counselling	2.21	2.33	2.27	0.85	0.53	D	NS
2	Use good and friendly voice in settling conflict among children.	3.30	3.45	3.37	0.56	0.50	A	NS
3	Communicate with children during conflict using simple and clear messages as parents.	3.35	3.42	3.38	0.58	0.61	A	NS
4	Listen well to children during conflict resolution before responding in order to avoid hurting either of the children involve in conflict.	3.52	3.56	3.54	0.63	0.72	A	NS
5	Be objective in settling conflict among children irrespective of the age, gender or wives from which the children come from.	3.43	3.58	3.50	0.66	0.51	A	NS
6	Avoiding harmful or inflammatory statements when resolving conflict among the children to avoid further damage.	3.50	3.57	3.53	0.56	0.45	A	NS
7	Coming together by father and mother to find out the cause of the major of reoccurring conflict among children.	3.43	3.67	3.55	0.72	0.02	A	S*
8	Practice mutual conflict resolution method to settle problems among children.	3.32	3.47	3.39	0.45	0.54	A	NS
9	As parents, studying individual children to know what annoys them will help in resolving conflict among them.	3.38	3.36	3.37	0.44	0.35	A	NS
10	Practicing diplomatic sidestepping on conflicting issues among children in the family.	1.35	1.32	1.33	0.89	0.77	D	NS
11	Postponing conflict resolution until a better time when the parent is in a better mood to settle conflict.	1.94	1.86	1.90	0.83	0.65	D	NS
12	As parents, give proper punishment, reproach or warning to a guilty child during conflict resolution to avoid reoccurrence.	3.55	3.48	3.51	0.55	0.54	A	NS

Key: X_f = Mean of Fathers, X_m = Mean of Mothers, X_G = Overall Grand Mean; **A** = Agreed; **D** = Disagreed; Level of Sig. = 0.05; **S*** = Significant; **NS** = Not Significant.

The data presented in Table 3 above revealed that the grand mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on 9 out of the 12 items in the table ranged from 3.37 to 3.55 which were above the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale. This indicated that the respondents (parents) agreed that the 9 identified items in the table are parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families in the study area. On the other hand, the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the remaining three items in the table, specifically items 1, 10 and 11 were 2.27, 1.33 and 1.90 respectively which were below the cut-off point value of 2.50 on 4-point rating scale indicating that the respondents (parents) disagreed with the three items as part of parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings in families. The standard deviation values of the 12 items ranged from 0.44 to 0.85 which indicated that the responses of the respondents are close to one another and the mean.

The data presented in Table 3 on hypothesis three showed that p-values of 11 out of the 12 items in the table ranged from 0.35 to 0.77 which are greater than 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there are no significant differences in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the 11 identified items in the table. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was accepted on the 11 items. On the other hand, the p-value on the remaining one item, that is item 7 was 0.02 which was less than 0.05 level of significant. This indicated that there was significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of fathers and mothers on the item. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents was rejected on the item.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study on causes of conflicts among siblings include inadequate family resources to cater to individual needs of the children, preferential treatment by parents in favour of some children in the family, different character formation and personality traits among children, inability of parents to instil discipline and sense of respect among children, children may emulate conflicting character from parents, lack of respect for elder by younger siblings and sharing of parents properties at their demise by children or siblings among others. The findings of this study on causes of conflict among siblings agreed with the result of the study of Brody (1998) who reported that giving different treatments to children by parents by directly varying amounts of positive responses and intrusiveness are likely to result to more conflicts and less friendliness among siblings. Howe and Rinaldi (2004) also found that sibling conflict in childhood could be worsened by parents when not properly handled and the situation according to the author could be associated with poorer adjustment of sibling later in life.

This study found that parental roles in conflict prevention among siblings include providing for individual needs of the children in the family, giving equal treatment to all children, instilling in children proper sense of discipline and respect, balancing love and affection between and among the children to avoid preference, paying proper attention to individual child character in the family and giving room for proper social interaction among children in the family among others. The study found that parental roles in conflict resolution among siblings include using friendly voice in settling conflict among children, listening well to children during conflict resolution before responding in order to avoid hurting either of the children involves in conflict, be objective in settling conflict among children irrespective of the age and gender and giving proper punishment, reproach or warning to a guilty child during conflict resolution to avoid reoccurrence. These findings corroborated that of Perlman and Ross (1997) who found that stepping in and resolving conflicts by parents help to make conflicts less intense and lead to more constructive resolutions among siblings. In addition, the findings also supported that of Howe and Recchia (2006) who found that sensitive

parenting requires that parents in resolving conflict among children employ developmentally appropriate strategies with the children of different ages. Howe and Recchia (2006) also found that parental strategies for managing sibling conflicts, particularly the promotion of constructive (e.g. negotiated and fair resolutions) versus destructive (e.g. use of power and aggression) strategies, is vitally important for teaching the children how to get along with others as they grow to adults.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The sibling relationship is a natural laboratory for young children to learn about their world. It is a safe and secure place to learn how to interact with others who are interesting and engaging playmates, learn how to manage disagreements in constructive ways, and learn to regulate both positive and negative emotions in socially acceptable ways. There are many opportunities for young children to develop an understanding of social relations with family members who may be close and loving at times and nasty and aggressive at other times. Therefore, as parents, there are many opportunities to use cognitive skills to effectively manage conflicting situations among the children. This is because, the positive benefits of establishing warm and positive sibling relationships by parents will last a lifetime, whereas unresolved conflicts among siblings may result to poor developmental outcomes. On this background, the study examined parental roles in conflict prevention and resolution among siblings using the case of Adamawa State Nigeria. The study found that giving preferential treatment by parents in favour of some children in the family, different character formation among children and inability of parents to instil discipline and sense of respect among children are chief causes of conflict among siblings. In addition, the study also found that parental roles in conflict prevention and resolution among siblings include giving equal treatment to all children, instilling in children proper sense of discipline and respect, balancing love and affection between and among the children to avoid preference, paying proper attention to individual child character in the family and giving room for proper social interaction among children in the family among others. Based on these findings, the study recommended that:

- parents should discourage wrong behaviours and activities that can trigger conflict among their children within and outside the house;
- parents should inculcate acceptable behaviours in the children such as love, peace, tolerance, honesty, integrity and good morals;
- parents should check all activities that induce or influence negative behaviours and influences, such as jealousy and rivalry, hitting and fighting, teasing and biting among children in the home;
- constant corrective measures should be taken against children who show bad behaviours;
- parents should read books, attend workshops, use the internet to obtain information, and even videos to help them use and teach this technique to their children.

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