Work-family conflict and career women home chores demand: Experience from two higher institutions in Ogun Sate, Nigeria

Otufale, G. A. and Aina, A. S.

Department of Agricultural Education, Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu, Ogun State, Nigeria

Correspondence E-mail: ainaabiona@yahoo.com, +2348052458428

ABSTRACT

The study examined work-family conflict among career women from two higher institutions in Ogun state, Nigeria. Respondents (52) were drawn from Federal College of Education (FCE) and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB) through a simple random sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit information on respondents' personal characteristics, conflicts that arise from the work-family conflict, work/home chore demands experienced by the respondents and coping strategies adopted to reduce the stressors. Data were subjected to frequency counts, percentages, means and one sample t-test. Results reveal that 34.0% and 37.7% of the respondents were between 31 and 50 years, had at least NCE/OND qualifications (90.5%), married (94.3%) with mean household size of 4 persons. Respondents' lack of sufficient time to do home chores after work (mean = 3.06) and strenuous nature of daily workload (3.46) were work-family conflicts identified by the respondents. Coping strategies employed by the career women include planning ahead of daily tasks and workloads (mean = 2.78) and giving priority to most important tasks and workloads (mean = 2.64). There was a significant difference between the work-family conflict (t = 25.23, p<0.01) and work/home chore demand (t = 20.76, p<0.01) among career women in FCE and FUNAAB. The study concludes that conflict exists between career women's work and home chore demands. It therefore recommended that career women should find a way to balance the conflict between work demand and home chores.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, Career women, Home chores demand

INTRODUCTION

Work–family conflict generally refers to the extent to which work and family-related responsibilities interfere with each other and is typically defined as "a type of inter-role conflict that occurs as a result of incompatible role pressures from the work and family domains" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). According to Frone, Yardley, & Markel (1997), work–family conflict is posited to be bidirectional, such that work can interfere with family (work-to-family conflict) and family can interfere with work (family-to-work conflict), and evidence suggests that work-to-family and family-to-work conflict are distinct but reciprocally related (Byron, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005).

Women's participation in the workforce has been increasing all around the world (Adler and Izraeli, 1994) and has led to changes in the roles of women and men in society. According to the Expansionist Theory (Barnett and Hyde, 2001), gender-roles are expanding: women are more active in professional work life, whereas men are more active in family life. As the consequence of this trend, maintaining a balance between work and family responsibilities has become a challenge for working class. The problem of work–family conflict has been extensively reported in literature, and has been dominated by research conducted mainly on white-collar managerial and non-managerial employees working in private sector organisations (Eby *et al.*, 2002).

Women are expected traditionally to be homemakers to take care of their husbands, children and other members of the family within the confines of the household while the men are expected to be the breadwinners of the family; they are required to make adequate provisions for their family. Women are more likely than men to be engaged with household chores, to be self-employed or to work in small unregulated businesses, and are less likely to be members of trade unions. However, with economic downturns and social exigencies women are assuming new roles as mothers as well as an employee in the world of work. In some cases, women are the head of the households as single parent. Women's contribution to the household economy is greatest among female heads of household, and their proportion has increased since the 1970's (Valls *et al.* nd). These new roles of women come with responsibilities of being employees and taking care of the household chores. It also involves alternating their time and schedule between their work schedule and domestic chores. Much of the recent expansion of the female paid

labour force has taken place among married women with children, who fit their hours around their children's needs and their domestic responsibilities, often leaving little time for themselves (Morris, 1990; UN, 1991).

This scenario can be understood with a woman coming home after long hours at work and next port of call is the kitchen. Data from the African and Asian regions indicate that on average, women work at least 12 hours longer each week than men (UN, 1991). This involves a lot of stress and health implications/hazards to women's well-being. The conditions under which women perform their domestic work, and the relations of dependency and inequality that often underline it, can all limit women's potential for positive mental and physical health. Women may also be responsible for the production of food and other item to meet their family's needs, as well as carrying out a variety of economic activities to earn extra income. Even when they take on paid work, most women retain responsibility for domestic labour (Valls *et al*. nd).

The challenges of marrying work and family life are part of everyday reality for the majority of Nigerian working families. Although, these are dependent on income, occupation, stage in life, they also cut across all socioeconomic levels and are felt directly by both women and men.

Work-family balance is an important issue particularly in a society characterised with conflicting roles and obligations for women like Nigeria. Hence, women engaging in traditionally "male" fields (academics) often find it difficult to integrate harmoniously work and family duties (Aluko, 2009). Generally, in Nigeria the issues enumerated above are further compounded by the cultural values and societal expectations of men and women. Work relations are often governed by patriarchal systems of socialisation and cultural practices (Mordi, *et al*, 2010).

As result of the trend above the following research questions were generated;

1. What are the personal characteristics of the respondents?

2. What are the conflicts that arise from the work-family conflict among the respondents?

3. What are the work/home chore demands experienced by the respondents?

4. What are the coping strategies adopted to reduce the stressors?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in two federal higher institutions in Ogun state, Nigeria namely Federal College of Education Abeokuta and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. Ogun state has one of the highest concentrations of higher institutions in Nigeria. It also has its fair share of public institutions, parastals and establishments. The state is noted for Agricultural activities. Simple random techniques was used to select 28 women staff and 24 women staff at FCE and FUNAAB, respectively making a total of 52 respondents.

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information on on respondents' personal characteristics, conflicts that arise from the work-family conflict, work/home chore demands experienced by the respondents and coping strategies adopted to reduce the stressors after it was content and faced validated by professionals. Also a reliability test was conducted using ten respondents from Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu, Ogun State that were not included in the study sample. Work-family conflict was measured using with a 16-item scale using a Likert type scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), slightly agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means and one sample t-test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal characteristics of the respondents

The socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Findings reveal that respondents' age was 47.0± 7.66 years. Most of the respondents (37.7%) belonged to the age range of between 41 and 50 years while 34.0% were in the age range of 30 and 40 years. Tenure of the respondents were 9±5.91 years.

Majority of the respondents (73.6%) had spent less than or up to 10 years in the employment of their organisations. This shows that most of them are in the junior cadre in their respective organisations and they are likely to experience the pressure of work-family conflict and career women home chores demand. As regards education status of the respondents, 26.4% were NCE/OND holders, which is equally buttressed by the inference on the tenure above. Majority (94.3%) of the respondents were married. Most of the respondents (64.2%) had 4-6

persons in their households. The mean income of the respondents was ₦68, 644, while the range shows that majority (64.2%) earned less than or up to ₦50,000 per month.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by their personal characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age (Years)			
Less than 30	10	18.9	41.0±7.66
31-40	18	34.0	
41-50	20	37.7	
51 and above	5	9.4	
Tenure			
Less than or equal 10years	39	73.6	9±5.91 years
11-20 years	13	24.5	
21 years	1	1.9	
Education Status			
SSEC	3	5.7	
GRADE 11	2	3.8	
NCE/OND	14	26.4	
HND	13	24.5	
BSc	12	22.6	
Post Graduate Diploma	2	3.8	
M.Sc	3	5.7	
M.Phil	2	3.8	
PhD	2	3.8	
Marital Status			
Married	50	94.3	
Widowed	2	3.8	
Separated	1	1.9	
Household Size (person)			
Less than or equal to 3	15	28.3	4±1.49 persons
4-6	34	64.2	
7 and Above	4	7.5	
Income (₦)			₦68, 644
Less than or equal to 50,000	34	64.2	
51,000-100,000	12	22.6	
101,000-150,000	6	11.3	
Above 150,000	1	1.9	
Do you stay with your spouse			
Yes	47	88.7	
Do you have a house maid			
Yes	7	13.2	
No	46	86.8	

The implications of the socioeconomic trend above is that challenges of managing work and family life are part of everyday reality for the majority of Nigerian working families and are linked with income, occupation, stage in life, and cut across all socioeconomic levels, felt directly by both women and men.

Work-family conflict of respondents

The work-family conflict of the respondents is presented in Table 2. Findings reveal that the respondents' lack of sufficient time to undertake home chores after work (mean = 3.06) ranked first among the work-family conflicts. Work was also reported to prevent the respondents from spending sufficient time with family and friends (mean = 3.04), and does not allow the respondents to feel relaxed (mean = 2.96). The implications of these findings are that work does not give them sufficient time to spend with their family and friends, prevents them from relaxing and doing home chores. These may be as a result of pressure emanating from meeting with

demands of nature of work environment; in this case academic environment. This corroborates the view of Finkel and Olswang (1996) that there are several characteristic aspects of employment in academia that impact on work and family roles. For instance, academics facing review for promotion are expected to demonstrate high levels of competence in cutting edge research and publishing the outcomes in high impact factor journals A lot of time is spent in this aspect coupled with the multitude of job responsibilities that must be managed on a daily basis which range from being a teacher, adviser, editor, consultant to being a committee member etc. Such multiple responsibilities that do not overlap create a sense of dissonance (Holton and Sonnet, 1996).

Table 2: Work-family conflict

Work-Family Conflict	SA	A	S	D	SD	Mean
My work prevents me from spending sufficient quality time with my family	11(20.8)	7 (13.2)	10(18.9)	16 (30.2)	8 (15.1)	2.94
There is no time left at the end of the day to do the things I'd like at home	11(20.8)	9 (17.0)	9 (17.0)	18 (34.0)	5 (9.4)	3.06
My work takes up time that I'd like to spend with my family/friends	9 (17.0)	11(20.8)	11(20.8)	15 (28.3)	6 (11.3)	3.04
I am often distracted by thoughts about work while spending time with my family	7 (13.2)	5 (9.4)	8 (15.1)	20 (37.7)	13 (24.5)	2.49
My work demands often interferes with my responsibilities at home	7 (13.2)	5 (9.4)	9 (17.0)	25 (47.2)	7 (13.2)	2.62
My work obligations make it difficult for me to feel relaxed at home	11 (2.8)	9 (17.0)	7 (13.2)	19 (35.8)	7 (13.2)	2.96
I work so hard that I do not have the energy to engage in leisure activities with my family/friends	6 (11.3)	5 (9.4)	13(24.5)	21 (39.6)	8 (15.1)	2.62
I often complete work tasks outside of work hours	8 (15.1)	7 (13.2)	12(22.6)	21 (39.6)	5 (9.4)	2.85
My family misses out because of my work commitments	6 (11.3)	7 (13.2)	7 (13.2)	22 (41.5	10 (18.9)	2.56
My work performance suffers because of my personal and family commitment	8 (15.1)	3 (5.7)	9 (17.0)	21 (39.6)	12 (22.6)	2.51
When work and family commitments clash I usually fulfil work commitments first	6 (11.3)	12(22.6)	17(32.1)	9 (17.0)	8 (15.1)	2.98
At the end of the day I am too tired to enjoy spending time with my family	7 (13.2)	3 (5.7)	11(20.8)	25 (47.2)	5 (9.4)	2.65
I often arrive at work late or in bad mood because of something that has happened at home	5 (9.4)	3 (5.7)	7 (13.2)	16 (30.2)	21 (39.6)	2.13
My family commitments stop me from spending as much time at work as I would like	5 (9.4)	6 (11.3)	8 (15.1)	15 (28.3)	18 (34.0)	2.33
My family has a negative impact on my day to day work duties	3 (5.7)	5 (9.4)	4 (7.5)	15 (28.3)	22 (41.5)	2.02
If I could relax more at home I wouldn't be as stressed and irritable at work	10(18.9)	11(20.8)	9 (17.0)	11 (20.8)	10 (18.9)	3.00

Work demand

The home chores demand of the respondents is presented in Table 3. Findings reveal that the strenuous nature of daily workload ranked first among the home chores demand of the respondents with a mean value of 3.46. This is followed by the respondents' responsibility for family upkeep (mean

= 2.85). Others included the fact that the respondents had no choice but to continue with daily workload (mean = 2.79) and tiredness after the day's activities (mean = 2.69).

Table 3: Work demand

Home Chores Demand	SA	A	S	D	SD	Mean	S.D
The daily workload is too strenuous most of the time	13 (24.5)	14(26.4)	9 (17.0)	11(20.8)	3 (5.7)	3.46	1.26
I am always late to the office because the household chores consume lot of time	5 (9.4)	7 (13.2)	7 (13.2)	17(32.1)	15(28.30	2.41	1.31
My partner does not assist with the household chores	2 (3.8)	9 (17.0)	12(22.6)	17(32.1)	12 (22.6)	2.46	1.14
I am saddled with a lot of responsibility at my workplace	4 (7.5)	9 (17.0)	10(18.9)	19(35.8)	9 (17.0)	2.61	1.20
I have back pain and other health issues as a result of daily workload	5 (9.4)	6 (11.3)	13(24.5)	18(34.0)	10(18.9)	2.58	1.21
I find it very difficult to concentrate at workplace as a result of the daily home chores activities	3 (5.7)	3 (5.7)	8 (15.1)	21(39.6)	16(30.2)	2.14	1.11
My boss always complain on my work output	3 (5.7)	3 (5.7)	4 (7.5)	22(41.5)	19(35.8)	2.00	1.11
I feel I should leave my work for the home chores activities because I cannot cope.	2 (3.8)	4 (7.5)	6 (11.3)	15(28.3)	24(45.3)	1.92	1.12
I have no choice, I must continue with the daily workload.	5 (9.4)	15(28.3)	6 (11.3)	16(30.2)	10(18.9)	2.79	1.31
I am responsible for the upkeep of my family.	7 (13.2)	11(20.8)	12(22.6)	11(20.8)	11(20.8)	2.85	1.34
I am always tired at the end of the day activities.	7 (13.2)	6 (11.3)	13(24.5)	14(26.4)	11(20.8)	2.69	1.31

Coping strategies adopted by respondents to reduce the stressors

To minimize the stressors of work -family conflict, the respondents adopted some coping strategies. Table 4 reveals that the most frequently used coping strategies are planning ahead of daily tasks and workloads (mean = 2.78), giving priority to most important tasks and workloads (mean = 2.64), putting extra efforts on the home chores to be in tandem with their job design (mean = 2.56) and showing more affection to partners in order to give helping hands (mean = 2.39).

This implies that various coping strategies are employed to ameliorate work-family conflict and major one being planning ahead of daily tasks and workloads, with these strategies in place, the effect of stress received from work may not be significantly felt on family and home activities. For instance, with the findings of Arisi-Nwugballa (2016) and Adesinaola (2012) that spouses should concede greater support (involvement) in women 'domestic obligation as well as emotional support from the husband is a crucial factor for marital conflict and peace. Husband-wife relationship that is devoid of husband emotional supports attracts conflict, stress and could disintegrate the entire family.

Table 4: Coping strategies

Coping Strategies	Often	Rarely	Never	Mean	S.D
I plan my time ahead against any tasks/workloads	42 (79.2)	7 (13.2)	2 (3.8)	2.78	0.50
I give priority to the most important tasks/workloads	34 (64.2)	14 (26.4)	2 (3.8)	2.64	0.56
I encourage my partners to assist me	24 (45.3)	19 (35.8)	7 (13.2)	2.37	0.74
I employ the services of housemaid to assist me	11 (20.8)	8 (15.1)	31 (58.5)	1.60	0.83
I put extra efforts on the home chores to be in tandem with my job design	31 (58.5)	13 (24.5)	5 (9.4)	2.56	0.70
I show more affection to my partner in order to give helping	26 (49.1)	16 (30.2)	7 (13.2)	2.39	0.73

Coping Strategies	Often	Rarely	Never	Mean	S.D
hand					
I encourage my older children to be involved in the unpaid activities.	19 (35.8)	20 (37.7)	11 (20.8)	2.16	0.76

Difference of work-family conflict between career women at FCE and FUNAAB

Table 5 shows a significant difference in the work-family conflict experienced between the career women at FCE and FUNAAB (t = 8.913, p<0.01). This implies that what contribute to the work-family conflict experienced by the career women in FUNAAB is quite different from that of their counterparts in FCE.

Table 5: Test of significant difference of work-family conflict between career women at FCE and FUNAAB

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error	T	Sig.	Decision
FCE	28	35.50	8.913	1.684	25.23	0.00	Significant
FUNAAB	24	42.63	12.789				

Test of difference of work/home chore demand between career women at FCE and FUNAAB

Table 6 reveals that there was a significant difference between the work/home chore demand of career women at FCE and FUNAAB (t = 7.835, p<0.01). This means that FUNAAB career women and their counterparts in FCE had different involvement with regard to work/home chore demand.

Table 6: Test of significant difference of work/home chore demand between career women at FCE and FUNAAB

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error	T	Sig.	Decision
FCE	28	30.75	7.835	1.481	20.76	0.00	Significant
FUNAAB	24	42.63	6.630				

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that conflict exists between career women's work and home chore demands. It therefore recommended that career women should find a way to balance the conflict between work demand and home chores.

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