

INVESTIGATING FAMILY-RELATED VARIABLES AND FAMILY TIME INTERFERENCE WITH WORK IN SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The traditional gender-role socialization in sub-Saharan African especially in the Enugu, South-eastern Nigeria saddles women with greater percentage of domestic responsibilities such as child care despite their participation in paid employment. This situation, perhaps, could result in time spent on family responsibilities such as child care interfering with work responsibilities. Thus, this study investigated the influence of number and age of children on time-based family interference with work. Participants comprised three hundred and four (304) female secondary school teachers between the ages of 26 to 54 years ($M = 40.37$, $SD = 4.09$) drawn from 24 state government secondary schools in Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern Nigeria using criterion sampling. Okonkwo (2011) 6-item time-based family interference with work scale was administered. Cross-sectional survey design was used. 2x3 Analysis of Variance F-test as statistical test for data analysis revealed no significant influence of number of children on time-based family interference with work, $F(2, 303) = 1.56$ at $p > .05$. Also, no significant influence of age of children on time-based family interference with work, $F(2, 303) = 0.07$ at $p > .05$. It was concluded that inability of number and age of children to influence time-based family interference with work could be attributed to the traditional gender-role socialization and collectivist culture in South-eastern Nigeria, social support from extended family members and availability of cheap house help prevalent in Nigeria.

Keywords: Family, number of children, age of children, time-based, family interference with work

Introduction

Today, Nigerian women are found in different professions with the greater percentage in human services professions (e.g. teaching) which are characterized by high level of interpersonal involvement and exposure to emotionally demanding situations. Despite the participation and strides made by Nigerian women in the workplace, the division of labor at home still falls along pretty traditional lines which leave them with primary responsibilities of overseeing household works. In the home domain, women irrespective of their involvement in paid work have been found to be significantly more likely than men to bear primary responsibilities of home care and child care (Lero, 1992). Thus, women might experience more role conflict as a result of simultaneity of their multiple roles Ajaja (2004).

In a bid to balance these work and family responsibilities, these women are caught between the cross role demands of family responsibilities and work behavior expectations. The cross role demands many a time precipitate family interference with work. The interference occurs when the employees (women) extend their efforts to satisfy their family demands at the expense of their work demands (Cole, 2004).

Family interference with work occurs when participation in family responsibilities makes it difficult for one to meet work responsibilities. Family-related variables have significant impact on family interference with work. Family interference with work is primarily determined by family demands and predicts negative work outcomes Adebola (2005). The foremost family-related variable that interferes with work is number of children at home (Pleck, 1980). Given that child care responsibilities normally rest on women, working wives with more children are likely to experience greater family interference with work (Voyandoff, 1988). Having young children at home, also, is consistently related to role strain and time

shortage for women (Voyandoff & Kelly, 1984). Family orientation is another factor that may lead to work-family conflict (Parasuraman, 1996). It has been observed that working women who have stronger identity with family roles are more likely to feel the incompatibility between work and family life (Bielby & Bielby, 1988). Owing to the traditional sex-role ideology, women are socialized to have a stronger orientation to and greater involvement in the family than men. For working wives, therefore, time-based conflict may occur more frequently as a result of dual commitments to employment and to the family.

Time-based family interference with work occurs when the time spent on family role activities makes it difficult for a working mother to participate in work role activities. Family role characteristics such as the presence of young children and availability of social support from household members were found to be associated with time-based conflict (Gove & Geerken, 1977). According to Lewis and Cooper (1998), specific antecedents of family interference with work include the number and ages of children. Similarly, positive correlation was found between work-family conflict and the number of children respondents reported living at home (Lambert, Kass, Priotrowski & Vodanovich, 2006, Boyar, Maertz, Mosley and Carr, 2008).

Focusing on the experiences of female teachers in Enugu in the South-eastern Nigeria, given that childcare responsibilities normally rest on women despite the built-in demanding nature of teaching job, working mothers with relatively more or younger children are likely to experience greater family interference with work than their counterparts with no, fewer, or older children (Voyandoff, 1988), thus the interest of this paper on time-based family interference with work.

Being a developing society, traditionally, Nigeria has been characterized by a marked sex division of labor both inside and outside the family (Adekola, 2006). Thus, roles such as childcare and other domestic responsibilities remain the primary responsibilities of women irrespective of their participation in paid employment. Considering this traditional gender-role obligation, time-based family interference with work may occur more frequently among working women as a result of dual commitments to employment and to the family (Adekola, 2010). Moreover, in spite of these challenges, employers and the government in Nigeria do not have any explicit work-family policies which would support these working women, hence this present study.

Theoretical Overview

In view of Hobfoll (1989) conservation of resources theory, a working mother with older independent children could be likened to an individual with a greater pool of resources. That is, because the children are independent and capable of taking care of themselves, they give the mother less pressure and more time since she spends less time and energy taking care of them. To this end, she is less vulnerable to resource loss or depletion, and more capable of resource gain. This gain translates into more time and energy being given to work responsibilities, thereby enabling her to spend more time on her job and become more committed. Invariably, this will enhance her job performance, improve opportunities for promotion and growth on the job (more resource gain), and reduce both actual and anticipatory stress.

In contrast, a working mother with large number of young dependent children is likely to spend more time at home and will lack enough resources (time and energy) to be spent on her work responsibilities. Thus, effort to share the weak resource pool between family and work responsibilities results in a continuous draw on resources, leaving her with depleted resources (e.g. time), thus the experience of time-based family interference with work.

Method

Participants

Participants were 304 female secondary school teachers between the ages of 26 to 54 years ($M=40.37$, $SD= 4.09$). They were drawn from 24 state government secondary schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern part of Nigeria (Idaw River Girls Secondary School, Uwani Boys Secondary School, College of Immaculate Conception, Maryland Secondary School, Girls Grammar School Awkunanaw, Army Day Secondary School, Uwani Girls Secondary School, Union Boys Secondary School, Holy Rosary College, Queens College, Iva Valley Secondary School, Metropolitan Girls Secondary School, Coal Camp Secondary School, Independence Layout Day Secondary School, Urban Girls Secondary School, New Layout Secondary School, City Girls Secondary School, Girls Secondary School Abakpa, St Patrick's Secondary School Emene, National Grammar School Nike, Trans Ekulu Girls Secondary School, Emene Girls Secondary School, Community High School Emene and New Haven Boys Secondary School).

However, 24.01% (n=73) had National Certificate of Education (NCE), 52.96% (n=161) had Bachelor's Degree in Education (B.Ed), 10.20% (n=31) had Post-graduate Diploma in Education and 12.83% (n=39) had Master's Degree in Education (M.ED). Moreover, 9.87% (n=30) were Master III, 19.08 % (n=58) were master II, 8.22% (n=25) were Master I, 8.88% (n=27) Senior Master, 9.54% (n=29) Principal III, 21.05% (n=64) Principal II, 20.39% (n=62) Principal I, 1.97% (n=6) Principal Special Class and 0.99% (n=3) Principal Special Grade. Years of teaching experience ranged from 1 to 33 years and mean of 14 years.

Criterion sampling was used to select the participants. Criterion sampling involves selecting cases (e.g. participants) that meet some predetermined criteria of importance (Patton, 1990). This sampling can be useful for identifying and understanding cases (e.g. participants) that are information rich, providing important qualitative component to quantitative data and for identifying cases from a standardized questionnaire that might be useful for follow-up. Specifically, the assumptions of criterion sampling hold that you set criteria and pick all cases (e.g. participants) that meet those criteria. Criterion sampling is strong for quality assurance (Patton, 1990). To this end, the female teachers selected for this chapter had spent at least a year as teachers in the schools, married, living with their husbands, had children (at least one) and living with their children (at least one). Widows and divorcees were not included.

Considering the Nigerian Ministry of Health National Population Policy (1988) which recommended four children as the ideal family, 29.28% (n= 89) of the participants had heavy family (nuclear family with parents and 5 children or more) while 70.72% (n=215) had ideal family (nuclear family with parents and 4 children or less). About 58.22% (n=177) of the participants had children 1 to 11 years, 28.62% (n=87) had children 12 to 17 years and 13.16% (n=40) had children 18 years and above. The ages of their children ranged from 1 to 30 years (mean=10.46). The mean age of the oldest children was 14.03 and that of the youngest children was 6.88. In addition, 65.13% (n=198) of the participants had at least one person assisting with domestic chores while 34.87% (n=106) had nobody assisting with domestic chores.

Measures

Two instruments were used which included demographic information and Okonkwo (2011) 6-item time-based family interference with work scale.

Demographic

Demographic information included age, educational qualification, rank, years of experience as a teacher, name of school, marital status, number of children, ages of children starting from the youngest to the oldest.

Time-based Family Interference with Work Scale

The item loadings of the 6-item time-based family interference with work scale ranged from 0.55 to 0.76 and were considered acceptable for validation of the instrument since Mitchel and Jolley (2004) noted that item loading of 0.30 is good and 0.70 very high. These 6 items yielded split- half reliability of 0.90 and was accepted as a good index of internal consistency since Mitchel and Jolley (2004) noted that an index of 0.70 (and preferably above 0.80) is needed to say that a measure is internally consistent.

The 6-item time-based family interference with work scale was in Likert form and had direct scoring for all the items. Therefore, a response of strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1.

Procedure

Stage one, a letter was written officially to the Ministry of Education, Enugu State, Nigeria requesting for the number of state Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu state and permission to use a sample of the female teachers in the schools as participants for the study. The requested information and permission were granted within two weeks of the application.

Stage two, equipped with the requested information (e.g. 24 state secondary schools and their locations) and permission, a visit was made to the principals of the schools in their schools respectively. The principals serving as research assistants facilitated the examination of files of these teachers in order to identify those teachers who met certain criteria which included spending at least one year in the schools, married with children (at least a child of one year per teacher), living with their husbands, living with their children (at least one child per teacher). However, divorces and widows were not included.

Stage three, considering the number (N= 356) of the identified female teachers who possessed these criteria and volunteered to participate, all (N =356) were selected for the study. Therefore, 356 copies

of the questionnaire (measuring number of children, age of children and strain-based family interference with work) were given to the principals (research assistants) who administered them to the identified female teachers in their respective schools. The participants were instructed to take the copies of questionnaire home, study them carefully, complete and return them to the principals within one week. This was the procedure in each of the 24 schools.

Stage four, copies of the completed and returned questionnaire were retrieved from the principals. Of the 356 copies of the questionnaire administered, 304 (85.39%) copies were properly completed and returned while 43 were returned but not properly completed and 9 were not returned. Therefore, the 304 copies properly completed and returned were used for analyses and testing of the hypotheses.

Design/Statistics

Cross-sectional survey design was used. 2x3 Analysis of Variance F-test for unequal sample was used as statistical test for data analysis.

Results

The overall findings from the study as shown in Table 1 and Table 2, using Okonkwo (2011) 6-item time-based family interference with work scale described above, indicated that the number and ages of children did not influence the experience of time-based family interference with work among the female teachers studied.

Table 1: Mean Scores on Number-age of Children and Time-based Family Interference with Work

Age	Number of Children	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1-11 yrs	Large Number	12.2778	4.47604	36
	Small Number	12.6809	5.01614	141
	Total	12.5989	4.90160	177
12-17 yrs	Large Number	12.4516	6.31843	31
	Small Number	11.9107	5.05705	56
	Total	12.1034	5.50905	87
18 yrs	Large Number	10.8636	4.50709	22
	Small Number	13.8890	8.30938	18
	Total	12.2250	6.58470	40

Dependent Variable: time-based family interference with work.

Large Number: (5& above)

Small Number: (4& below).

The means in table 1 indicated that teachers who had small number of children with those children 18 yrs and above experienced the highest level of time-based family interference with work ($x = 13.89$), followed by teachers that had small number with the children 1-11 yrs ($x = 12.68$), teachers that had large number with the children 12-17 yrs ($x = 12.45$), teachers that had large number with children 1-11 yrs ($x = 12.28$), teachers that had large number with the children 12-17 yrs ($x = 11.91$) and teachers that had large number with the children 18 yrs above having the least experience of time-based family interference with work ($x = 10.86$).

Similarly, teachers that had small number of children experienced higher level of time-based family interference with work ($x = 12.58$) than teachers that had large number of children ($x = 11.99$).

Also, teachers with children 1-11 yrs experienced the highest level of time-based family interference with work ($x = 11.55$), followed by teachers with children 18 yrs & above ($x = 12.23$) and teachers with children 12-17 yrs having the least experience ($x = 12.10$). However these mean scores were found not to be significantly different.

Table 2: 2x3 ANOVA on Number-age of Children and Time-based Family Interference with Work

Source	Type III sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected model	116.961	5	23.392	0.827	0.531	0.014
Intercept	29500.106	1	29500.106	1.043	0.000	0.778
Age	4.196	2	2.098	0.074	0.929	0.000

Number of Children	44.825	1	44.825	1.56	0.209	0.005
Age family & Number of Children	84.984	2	42.492	1.502	0.224	0.010
Error	8408.460	298	28.283	-	-	-
Total	55348.00	304	-	-	-	-
Corrected total	8545.421	303	-	-	-	-

Dependent Variable: time-based family interference with work.

As shown in table 2, age of the children of the teachers had no significant influence on the teachers' experience of time-based family interference with work, $F(2,303) = 0.07$, $p > .05$. The number of children the teachers had, did not have any significant influence on their experience of time-based family interference with work $F(1,303) = 1.56$, $p > .05$. No significant interaction influence of age of the children and number on their experience of time-based family interference with work, $F(2,303) = 1.50$, $p > .05$.

Discussion

Number of Children

The evidence in this study has shown that number of children did not influence the experience of time-based family interference with work among these working mothers (teachers). This outcome indicated that these teachers having either large or small number of children had nothing to do with their experience of time constraint emanating from family responsibilities interfering with their work responsibilities as teachers. Therefore, those that had large number of children were found to be the same with those with small number of children on time-based family interference with work.

In contrast to this evidence, Ngo and Lau (1998) found that number of children significantly predicted family interference with work. Moreover, Noor (1995) noted that the problem of having to shoulder most of the household chores while holding a job is acute for working women, not the least professionals. Following these earlier evidence, it would have been expected that those women with large number of children would have experienced higher level of time-based family interference with work because they ought to spend more time on family responsibilities coming from this large number of children.

Also, Eagle (1996) research indicated that the number of children one had significantly related to family interference with work. To this end, one would have expected mothers with large number of children to have more non-job responsibilities resulting in higher level of time-based family interference with work.

However, this present evidence supports an earlier research which observed that combining work and family responsibilities results in positive spillover (work-family enhancement) whereby satisfaction, energy and sense of accomplishment derived from one domain transfers to another (Frone, 1992). This positive spillover in a way explains the failure of number of children to influence the experience of time-based family interference with work among these female teachers.

Age of children

Further, the evidence as shown in this study revealed that age of the children did not influence the experience of time-based family interference with work. This outcome indicated that these teachers having either young dependent or adult independent children had nothing to do with their experience of time constraint emanating from family responsibilities interfering with their work responsibilities as teachers. Therefore, those that had young dependent children were found to be the same with those with adult dependent children on time-based family interference with work.

Prior to this chapter, Beutell and Greenhaus (1980) found that parents with young children experienced higher family interference with work than those with grown children. In addition, Keith and Schafer (1980) found that the greater the non-job responsibilities (e.g. house cleaning, childcare and eldercare), the less time likely to be spent on work except there is assistance from family members. Following these earlier research evidence, it would have been expected that those women with young dependent children would have experienced higher level of time-based family interference with work

because they ought to spend more time on family responsibilities coming from these young dependent children.

The findings of this present study revealing no influence of number and age of children on time-based family interference with work could be attributed to the traditional gender-role orientation in Africa especially in Nigeria. Precisely in South-eastern Nigeria where the participants for the study were drawn, socialization processes saddle women with greater portion of domestic responsibilities like childcare, cooking, laundry e.t.c. This view is in line with gender model which contends that on the basis of sex-role socialization, women are socialized to view their status of mother and wife as their primary role, and their social position as determined by the family (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979). Considering this deep seated gender-role orientation, women from this part of the world consider domestic responsibilities their preserve and take delight in shouldering them even when they are combined with paid employment. Thus, in Nigeria, women do not regard any form of domestic work as burden rather it is a way of life and pride of womanhood. In view of this, if shouldering domestic responsibilities is considered an integral part of womanhood, then it is unlikely that such responsibilities could interfere with their work responsibilities. In addition, these women believe that proceeds (e.g. income) from paid employment provide them with additional resources to shoulder their domestic responsibilities. This view is in line with a tenet of the conservation of resources theory which postulates that those who possess strong resource pools are more likely to experience cycles of resource gain and that initial resource gain leads to further resource gain (Hobfoll, 1998). Therefore, the traditional gender-role orientation of these women working women might have accounted for the initial strong resource pool which enabled them to competently fulfill their domestic roles irrespective of their engagement in paid employment. Moreover, the strong resource pool (e.g. salary and allowance) from work might have accounted for the further resource gain which provided additional resources to shoulder domestic responsibilities.

The findings of this study has, also, given credence to the collectivist culture in Nigeria (e.g. Hoftsede, 1997, Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2010) especially in the South-east where cultural orientation predisposes people to collectively assist one another in responsibilities such as child care, hence the inability of number and age of children to influence experience of time-based family interference with work. Thus, supporting earlier finding that people from collectivist culture experience fewer conflict between work and family (Grzywacz, Areury, Marin, Carrillo, Burke, Coates & Quantt, 2007) and the view that work and family issues are related to cultural values, norms, beliefs and assumptions (Poelmans, 2005).

Moreover, the kind of family system practiced could provide a plausible explanation. Africa especially the South-eastern part of Nigeria is predominantly characterized by extended family system. Extended family in Africa usually comprises the couple, their children, parents, siblings, in-laws, nephews, nieces, cousins and other extended family members living together. These extended family members because of their dependency on the couple are obligated to provide social support. In a situation whereby a married woman with children is working, the social support provided by these extended family members helps in taking care of domestic responsibilities to an extent. For instance, if such category of woman is living with her mother or sisters, they can help in domestic chores such as child care. In addition, it is important to note that in Africa, women are socialized to depend not just on their husbands but other relatives as well. Social support, therefore, does not only help women to take care of domestic chores but to develop emotional stability which enhances their well-being. Research has suggested that women are socialized to develop their sense of self from their relationship (Kendler, 2005). As a result, when women feel that their relationships are poor; this has enormous influence on their emotional well-being. This view further noted that support from family and spouse appears to mean somewhat more to women. Moreover, presence of young children and availability of social support from household members were found to be associated with strain-based conflict (Gove & Geerken, 1977) and highly effective intervention for coping with burnout (Pines, Aronson & Kafry, 1981). Thus, the high social support abound in South-eastern part of Nigeria which comes from extended family system might have cushioned family responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities which ordinarily would have made them sandwiched between family time and work time.

These findings support another tenet of conservation of resources theory role which suggests that individuals with greater resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of resource gain (Hobfoll, 1998). This follows because individuals use those resources that they have to offset resource loss, to protect resources, and to gain other resources. To this end, the social support provided by the

extended family system could have accounted for the greater resources which made these women less vulnerable to family responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities.

Moreover in Nigeria, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment levels are high. These high levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment make house helps readily available at a very cheap rate. Thus, in addition to the social support provided by extended family members, house helps are usually hired on permanent basis to take care of non-job responsibilities thereby giving Nigerian working women less stress and enough time to focus on work responsibilities. This social support from house helps might have ameliorated the influence of large number of dependent children on time-based family interference with work. This role of social support from extended family members and house helps is in congruence with Boyar, Maertz, Mosley and Carr (2008) observation that family social support and family-to-work social support were positively related to family demand, and the more resources available to an individual at home, the higher the level of mental health (Hanson, Hammer & Colton, 2006).

These results support a tenet of the conservation of resources theory which holds that individuals must invest resources in order to limit loss of resources, protect resources or gain resources (Hobfoll, 1998). Thus, hiring house helps on permanent basis to take care of domestic challenges might have enabled these women to invest more time and energy in their teaching responsibilities, hence protecting their resources (time and energy) and gaining more resources in the workplace (efficiency, effectiveness and productivity).

Conclusion

The findings of this study are true reflection of the traditional gender-role division of labour in the South-eastern Nigeria which saddle women with greater part of domestic responsibilities such as childcare irrespective of their participation in paid employment. To this end, these female teachers who view multiple roles as beneficial as they provide adequate opportunities and resources had no problem balancing the time given to both family and work responsibilities irrespective of the number and age of their children. This is indeed consistent with the Okonkwo (2011) findings that many Nigerian women are happy and satisfied with combining work and family responsibilities because resources from paid employment (e.g. salaries and wages) contribute immensely to the upkeep of their families by augmenting the meager income of their husbands, especially in the context of the high levels of poverty and underemployment and unemployment in the country. Moreover, despite the general poor working conditions and remuneration, the results of this study have shown that the Nigerian workforce especially female teachers remain resolute in shouldering family and work responsibilities.

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