

# **STRAIN-BASED FAMILY INTERFERENCE WITH WORK AND FEELING OF REDUCED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT AMONG MOTHERS IN HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSION**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among mothers in human service profession. Participants comprised 304 female secondary school teachers between the ages of 26 to 54 years ( $M = 40.37$  and  $SD = 4.09$ ) with educational qualifications ranging from National Certification of Education to Masters of Education Degree drawn from 24 Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern part of Nigeria using criterion sampling technique. Correlational design was used and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used as statistical test for data analysis. Strain-based family interference with work was positively related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment,  $r(302) = 0.14, p < .01$ .

## INTRODUCTION

Nigerian women like other women in other parts of the world irrespective of their preserve which is taking care of family responsibilities engage in paid work. However, despite the participation, strides and contributions made by Nigerian women in the workplace, the division of labor still falls along pretty traditional lines which leave them with the primary responsibilities of overseeing household works. Women, irrespective of their involvement in paid work, have been found to bear primary responsibilities of home care and childcare (Lero, 1992). Combining these primary responsibilities of home care and childcare with paid work results in family interference with work.

Family interference with work occurs when participation in family responsibilities makes it difficult for an employee especially a woman to meet work responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Family- related variables have significant impact on family interference with work. As noted by Adebola (2005), family interference with work is primarily determined by family demands and predicts negative work outcomes. The foremost family-related variables that interferes with work behavior expectations is the 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,

1980). Moreover, having young children at home is consistently related to role strain and time shortage for women (Voyandoff & Kelly, 1984).

Owing to the traditional sex-role ideology in Nigeria, women are socialized to have a stronger orientation to and greater involvement in the family than men. Therefore, for working mothers, strain-based family interference with work might occur more frequently as a result of dual commitments to family and to the job. Strain-based family interference with work is a situation in which strain symptoms such as stress, pressure, tension and fatigue experienced within family role intrude into work role and affect one's job performance (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2000). Thus, the two roles are incompatible in the sense that the strain and stress generated by family role make it difficult for one to comply with the demands of the paid employment.

Interestingly, married working women in Nigeria because of traditional sex-role ideology, are socialized to have a stronger orientation to and greater involvement in the family. Being an African society, Nigeria has been characterized by a marked sex division of labour both inside and outside the family (Adekola, 2006). For working wives, role strain might occur more frequently as a result of dual commitments to employment and the family (Adekola, 2010). In view of the sex-role socialization which leaves Nigerian women with greater involvement in the family, it is

suggested that strain emanating from family responsibilities will interfere with work responsibilities among working mothers. And this interference precipitates role strain which often results in a variety of negative consequences in the workplace (Frone, Rusell & Cooper, 1992). To this end, the attention of the researcher was drawn to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is an aspect of burnout which is characterized by a decline in one's feeling of accomplishment and successful achievement (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Individuals in this phase of burnout view themselves negatively in both their ability to perform their jobs and their ability to have positive personal interactions. Such people trivialize the things that they are successful at and no longer feel they are able to make difference through their personal interaction (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment like other phases of burnout is prevalent particularly in the human services professions (e.g. teaching, nursing, banking etc) where clients impose constant demands (Duxbuy & Higgins 1998). Given the fact that teaching responsibilities (e.g. preparing lesson notes, marking exam scripts, reading etc) which are typical of human services professions extend beyond the work setting to the family setting, strain is likely to occur. This extension of work responsibilities to home requires them to divide between work and family responsibilities the time which would have been strictly

reserved for family responsibilities. Consequently, sharing this limited time between work and family responsibilities at home will likely result in role pressure, hence strain-based family interference with work. Invariably a vicious cycle emerges whereby strain is transferred back to the workplace. Thus, inefficiency and ineffectiveness will likely rear their heads resulting in a negative outcome like feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Therefore this study was interested in the relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among mothers in human service profession (teaching as done by mothers).

However, it was hypothesized that strain-based family interference with work will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Participants were 304 female secondary school teachers between the ages of 26 to 54 years ( $M = 40.37$ ,  $SD = 4.09$ ) and with educational qualifications ranging from National Certificate of Education to Master's of Education Degree. They were drawn from 24 State Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern part of Nigeria using criterion sampling technique. To this end, the female

teachers selected for this study met certain criteria which included spending at least one year as teachers in their respective 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 to avoid confounding of the results.

### **Instrument**

Three instruments were used which included demographic information, 4-item strain-based family interference with work scale drawn from Okonkwo (2011) 32-item Work-Family Conflict Scale and 8-item feeling of reduced personal accomplishment scale drawn from Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item Burnout Inventory.

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. The item loadings of the 4-item strain-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 4 items yielded split-half reliability of 0.87 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 4-item 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. Okonkwo (2011) in a pilot study reported Split-half reliability coefficient of 0.95 for the 8-item feeling of reduced personal accomplishment scale. The 8 items had reversed scoring. Therefore, a response of a few times a year = 6, many times a year = 5, a few times every month = 4, many times every month = 3, a few times every week = 2 and everyday = 1.

## **Procedure**

Stage one, the researcher wrote 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, the researcher equipped with the requested information (e.g. 24 state secondary schools and their locations) and permission, visited the principals of the schools in their schools respectively. The principals

serving as research assistants enabled the researcher to go through the files of these teacher and identified 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 in the study, the researcher selected all (N =356) for the study. 356 copies of the questionnaire (measuring demographic variables, strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment) 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 questionnaire home, study it carefully, complete it and return to the principals within one week. This was the procedure in each of the 24 schools.

Stage four; the researcher went back to the schools at the end of the exercise in each school to collect the returned copies of the questionnaire 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**

Correlational design was used. This enabled the researcher to administer simultaneously the measures of strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

## **Statistics**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used as statistical test for data analyses and subsequently testing the hypothesis. This enabled the researcher to study simultaneously the degree and direction of the relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

## RESULTS

**Table 1**

**Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.**

Variances	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares & Cross Products	Covariance	DF	r	P
Strain-based FIW	8.07	7.62	17621.549	58.157	302	0.14	<.05
Feeling of Reduced Personal Accomplishment	21.14	11.70	3849.961	12.706			

Result as shown in table 1 indicated a significant positive relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment,  $r(302) = 0.14$ ,  $p < .05$ . In other words, the higher the score on strain-based family interference with work, the higher the score

on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Similarly, the lower the score on strain-based family interference with work, the lower the score on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Thus, the hypothesis which stated that strain-based family interference with work will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment was disconfirmed and rejected.

## **DISCUSSION**

In congruence with earlier result which indicated positive relationship between family role stress and family interference with work (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1998), this present study indicated a positive relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Among these women (teachers), the positive relationship demonstrated that an increase in their experience of strain emanating from discharging their domestic responsibilities interfering with their work responsibilities was linked to an increase in their feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. And a decrease in their strain-based family interference with work was linked to a decrease in their feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement.

This finding is in line with Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) finding which noted that parents experienced higher family interference with work than non-parents. And in line with this present study, Pleck (1980) noted that women are primarily responsible for the household responsibilities (e.g. child care) which result in family role stress. This primary responsibility of taking care of family often lead to family demands interfering with work demands for women. As the family responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities, these women struggle to balance the two roles. This struggle often creates chronic pressure (strain) which likely leads to feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. In support of this consistency between the present finding and the previous in other cultures, it is obvious that running of one's home is the woman's responsibilities even though she may employ house helps to do the cooking, washing or cleaning the house (Gannon, 2004). Moreover, there is no regulation of domestic workforce in Nigeria. This makes the readily available domestic helpers children and adults who are untrained. Considering these circumstances, Nigerian working women despite their work responsibilities still participate deeply in domestic chores. This deep participation to an extent might have led to family responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities. And because this usually goes on for a long time unabated, these women easily slide into feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. In

addition, the burden of multiple roles emanating from the combination of work and family responsibilities depletes psychological and financial resources required for personal growth and accomplishment. It is important to note that in Africa especially Nigeria characterized by extended family system, although extended family members provide social support, it involves additional burden with heavy demands which depletes the resource of these women.

However, in the light of these findings, it was concluded that combination of work and family responsibilities made it difficult for this category of women (e.g. Female teachers) to balance their work and family lives, and thus, the interference of family responsibilities with work responsibilities resulting in strain been positively linked to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

### **Implications of the findings**

In accord with previous studies, this present study has shown that combining family and work responsibilities resulted in strain-based family interference with work.

Considering the traditional gender-role ideology in Nigeria which saddles women with more domestic responsibilities than men, the findings of this study have shown that combining such demands with work demands

especially that which extends beyond the work setting into family (e.g. teaching) created strain. And this strain which was found to exist in family interference with work resulted in negative outcome like feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement.

These findings without doubt have lent support to the ongoing researches which support family-friendly organization. To this end, family friendly organization should develop policies that will provide among other things job flexibility and autonomy which will enable women have enough time for domestic chores. Also, such policies can make provisions for supportive practices (e.g. on-site day care/ schools) which will reduce the domestic burdens of women. These family-friendly policies by organizations could serve as interventions which will help this category of women achieve work-family balance thereby enhancing their well-being and productivity.

The positive relationship between family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment has implications for policies made by Nigerian Union of Teachers, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women Affairs and the world at large. To this end, policies to cushion strain emanating from combination of work and family responsibilities by women especially teachers should be part of the efforts to enhance the welfare of teachers and other female employees.

This positive relationship has far-reaching theoretical and practical implications for Industrial Psychologists and Ministry of Labour and Productivity. Drawing on this result, they would learn that feeling of reduced personal accomplishment been linked to strain emanating from family interference with work could lead to reduced job commitment, involvement, performance and job satisfaction resulting in remarkable decline in productivity of labour in Nigeria and the world at large. Therefore, they should devise intervention programmes to check this trend.

Moreover, this association between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among this category of women could have implications for the competence of women in the work setting especially in the area of job stress, commitment and satisfaction.

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