

# Role of Work-Family Conflict on Paid and Self Employed Mothers in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined the role of work-family conflict on two groups of mothers whose ages were between 25 years and 42 years with a mean age of 34.5 years. Both groups of mothers were involved in paid and self-employments in a University sub-urban town, South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. A survey research design was utilized in which a survey questionnaire was used in selecting 102 mothers. Out of this number, 62 (63. 24%) of these mothers were in self employments, whilst 40 (40. 8%) of them were in paid employments. One research question / research hypothesis was formulated which guided this study and one research instrument namely, work-family conflict a 12-item questionnaire was used as the research instrument [1] with a reliability index of 0.82. The simple mean (x), standard deviation (sd) and a t-test were computed for the two groups of mothers. The independent t-test statistic computed revealed the manifestation of work-family conflict in both groups of respondents ( $P > 0.05$ ;  $T = 1.04$ ;  $DF = 100$ ;  $SD = 3.805$ , Mean = 12.895). In order to mitigate the stressful effects of work-family conflict on mothers whether in paid or self-employments, spousal, emotional support and good time management were recommended. The study concluded by asserting that both mothers in paid and self-employments manifested evidence of work-family conflict.

**Keywords:** Work-family conflict, paid-employments, self-employments mothers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Very often competing demands arise between the work we engage in and our personal roles and what happens is that, there is a conflict for the job employee and / or worker. This explains the reason why in recent years there has been an increased interest in the work and family domains and its effects on many study variables in the industrial-organisational, educational, management, human resource and business literature. Similarly, research suggests that individuals and employees with work-family conflicts are several times more likely to suffer from stress, anxiety, mood, irritation and drug abuse disorders. It has also been systematically demonstrated across studies that work-family conflict and its effects on stress has been very heavily implicated in low job performance, illness and health of individuals and employees at the workplace.

Work and family conflict has led to psychological symptoms such as higher stress [2], increased depression [3], physical ailments [4], increased somatic complaints [5], lower life satisfaction [6], lower quality of family life and lower energy levels. It is a well known fact that stress can impact a person's health. It is a potential source of both anxiety and frustration which can harm the body's physiological and psychological well-being. Work-family conflict reduces psychological well-being and may cause short term and long term consequences on health, thus aggravating chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma. Work-family conflict has also been found to be associated with stress induced behaviours that negatively impact health such as heavy drinking and problem drinking.

A number of studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between work-family conflict and negative physical health attributes such as poor appetite, chronic fatigue and feeling of tension.

### Statement of the Problem

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the work-family interface and its effects on many study variables both in the industrial-organisational, educational, business, management, and human resources management literature [7].

Research suggests that job employees with work-family conflicts are several times more likely to suffer from stress, mood, anxiety, irritation and substance abuse disorders [8].

Despite the recent surge of interests in work and family issues among leaders, family advocates and employers both cross culturally and locally in Nigeria, there has been little or no systematic attempt and/or effort made to investigate the role of “work-family conflict” on both paid and self-employed mothers in a sub-urban town such as Ekpoma which is largely a university town in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. This is the gap in the literature that this study seeks to fill. In order to solve this problem, the under-listed research questions were posited.

### Research Objective

The broad general objective of this research survey was to investigate the role of work-family conflict on both paid and self-employed mothers.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A series of studies carried out by Lyness and Kropf [9], Briggs [10], Grzywacz, Arcury, Mari' n, Carrillo, Burke, Coates & Quandt [11], revealed that female employees of their studies, experienced more work-life conflict than the male employees. In an entirely different study, done by Quesenberry, Trauth and Morgan [12], the results upheld those of previous studies Lyness and Kropf [9], Briggs [10] and Grzywacz *et al.*, [11]. Referring to the study by Quesenberry, Trauth and Morgan [12], Uhiara [13] contends that these researchers maintain that women experience higher work-life conflict since they need to balance domestic responsibilities whilst simultaneously, trying to keep pace in a rapidly changing information technology (IT).

Ugwu [14] investigated the multiple role stress sandwich generation female employees experience both at home and at the work place and how they cope with such stress in Nuskka, South-East, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and forty seven (147) sandwich generation women participated in this study. Results indicated that sandwich generation women that receive care giving supports either from their husbands or from house-helps experienced less stress than their counterparts without

such care giving supports ( $X^2 = 21.58$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;) sandwich generation women who cared for the sick and aged parents experienced more stress than their counterparts who cared for healthy aged and parents ( $X^2 = 14.71$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Sandwich generation female employees who provided care giving services to large families did not differ from their counterparts in the normal family size on measures of multiple role stress.

A related study was carried out by Ogbogu [15] on work-family role conflict among academic women in Nigerian Public universities. This study which adopted the survey research design was carried out in three purposively selected Nigerian Public Universities. The study obtained its data from both primary and secondary sources. In order to locate women who were involved in work and family roles, only married women with children were used for this study. Consequently the random sampling technique was used in picking 250 of such female academic staffs from three universities located in Southern Nigeria. This was done because the central interest of the study was to examine academic women's experience of conflict that arises due to work and family responsibilities. The respondents' demographic data, the intersection of the conflict between work and family domains, their causes as well as the implications on the job performance and well-being of female academic staff were measured by a four-point likert scale questionnaire, which ranged from strongly agree to disagree. Being a survey and a descriptive research, the statistical technique used for analyzing the retrieved data was the simple percentage.

### Hypothesis

There will be no statistically significant difference in the degree of manifestation of work-family conflict between paid and self-employed mothers with children below 10 years of age.

### Procedure

Prior to the commencement of the study, consent of the participants was sought and obtained from The Headmaster of the Private Nursery and Primary School. The class room teachers were used as the “research assistants” because they had had an established rapport with the respondents over the period of time they have been bringing their children/wards to school and back in the afternoon to pick them. A total of one hundred and thirty (130) copies of the questionnaire were administered on these two groups of mothers via the class room teachers as was previously stated above. Before filling out the questionnaires, the respondents were told to respond to the questions as it affected them.

### Instruments

The research instruments utilised for this study were the survey questionnaire and an unstructured interview schedule. The survey questionnaire consisted

of two sections: sections A and B. Section A consisted of items which generated data on socio-demographic characteristics of the study population. Demographic questions about age, gender, marital status, number and ages of children, number of dependents and nature of employment were asked. Section B consisted of the Work-Family Conflict Scale (WFC Scale) which was developed by Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian [1]. It includes two sub-scales: Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Family-Work Conflict (FWC). The work-family conflict scale is a 35-item self-report scale with five statements for each sub-scale intended to measure the level of work-family conflict employee's experience. Each sub-scale consists of five items with a seven point likert rating scale where 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=slightly disagree; 4=slightly agree; 6=agree, 7= strongly agree. Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian [1], described high internal consistency of five items sub-scales for both WFC and FWC that is Cronbach's alpha range from .82 to .90. The scales measure the respondent's degree of agreement with each statement.

### Reliability and Validity

In order to establish the reliability index of the research instrument, the survey research instrument was administered on 20 participants randomly selected from the study population whose results were not incorporated into the main study. Reliability analysis was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82 for the work-family conflict instrument was calculated, implying that the instrument was reliable and valid for the current study.

### Data Analysis and Statistics

Data derived from the field study were statistically analysed using the Student t- test statistic for testing the hypothesis formulated.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION RESULT

Table-1 above shows the t-test analysis of the hypothesis which states that there will be no statistically significant difference in the degree of manifestation of work-family conflict between paid and self-employed mothers with children below 10 years of age.

**Table-1:**

Participants	N	Mean	SD	T Calculated	T Critical	DF	Significant Level
Women in Paid Employments	40	12.78	3.89	1.04	2.38	100	0.05
Women in Self-Employments	62	13.01	3.72				
Total number of women in Paid and Self	102						

The results in Table-1 above, indicate that the t- test computed (1.04) is less than the t-critical or t-observed (2.38). The results are therefore not significant. We then reject the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>i</sub>) and accept the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) which states that there will be no statistically significant difference of work-family conflict between paid and self-employed mothers with children below 10 years of age ( $P > 0.05$ ;  $t = 1.04$ ;  $df = 100$ ;  $sd = 3.805$ ,  $mean = 12.895$ ).

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Results from Table-1 above reveal that women in paid employments had a mean score of 12.78 and a standard deviation of 389. By contrast, women in self-employments had a mean score of 13.01 and a standard deviation of 3.72. Statistically speaking, there does not appear to be a too much significantly difference between those mothers who are in paid employments and those who are in self employments. The implication of this is that both groups of women and/or mothers are equally susceptible to work-family conflict. But nevertheless, these results indicate that overall, women who are in self employments may be slightly vulnerable to the effects of work-family conflict.

Broadly speaking, these results are in alignment with the extant literature on work-family conflict such as that of Lyness and Kropf [9], Briggs [10], Grzywacz, Acury, Carrillo, Burke, Coates and

Quandt [11] which all suggest or reveal that female employees whether in paid or in self employments experience more work-life conflict than male employees.

Still along this line, another research Uhiara [13] contends that women experience higher work-life conflict since they need to balance domestic responsibilities whilst simultaneously, trying to keep pace in a rapidly changing information technology age (IT age). Furthermore, these findings uphold Ogbogu [15] on work-family role conflict among academic women in Nigerian universities. Ogbogu's [15] work revealed that several factors such as long hours of work, inflexible work schedules, inadequate work facilities family and domestic responsibilities accounted for greater work-family conflict. This study [15] also found that when women experience work-family conflict, it impacted negatively on their level of job performance and well-being.

In a study, which investigated the multiple role stress sandwich female employees experience both at home and at the work place, sandwich generation women that receive care giving supports either from their husbands or from house help experienced less stress than their counterparts without such care giving supports ( $X^2 = 21.58$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ; sandwich generation women who cared for the sick aged parents experienced

move stress than their counterparts who cared for healthy aged parents  $X^2=14.71$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Arising out of the present study, it might be safe to speculate that the women of this study may either not be receiving adequate care giving supports from their husbands or from house helps. Furthermore, they may be experiencing almost the same level of work-family conflict because they might be taking care of six aged parents.

### Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the implications of this research study seem pretty obvious. It is important to bear in mind that the study set out to explore the effects of work and family conflict on two groups of mothers. That is, those mothers who are involved in self-employments, and, those mothers who are involved in paid employments in different occupations within a particular socio milieu of a university sub-urban town in the South-South Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. This study is perhaps one of the first studies; if not the first study to examine these types of participants within a particular social setting of a university sub-urban town who are engaged in two different work situations.

### Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study, find their most visible expression within the job stress framework. Bell, Rajendran, Theiler [16], Hardie, Kashima, Pridmore [17], Lazarus and Folkman [18], have all argued in their own separate ways how stress which is a concomitant of the work-family interplay depletes a person's psychological well-being, physiological welfare and physical affect. Another practical implication of this study situates in the fact that its finding will help to equip mothers with the techniques of mitigating stress [19]. Advancing this argument further, it is safe to postulate that knowledge gained from the results of this study, will assist in developing household coping strategies among women and mothers.

### Limitations of the Study

The research study is limited by the following factors:

- The study population was restricted to only mothers in one Private School.
- Generalizability of its finding(s) does not extend to other situations since the study was carried out in one Geo-Political Zone (that is, South-South) of Nigeria, whereas there are six Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria. It May be that, studying three or four Geo-political Zones would have allowed for more robust and sensitive results which would have allowed for a broad generalisation of the findings. Regardless of these methodological shortcomings, the study is in itself, original,

unique and forms a lee way for studies in future research work.

### Suggestion for Future Research

From the foregoing discourse, it is clear that this study has only scratched the surface of the research on the role of work-family conflict on mothers. Researchers are therefore invited to carry out more active research in this area. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see what the results would be if this study is replicated in a similar setting outside Ekpoma which is just but a small sub-urban town with a university serving as its economic, academic and political hub.

Perhaps, if the sizes of the two groups are increased, more sensitive results would be obtained. As is always the custom in academic researches, the present study is a clarion call for researches along this direction.

### Recommendations from the Study

In light of the foregoing findings of the present study, the under-listed recommendations are proffered:

1. **Spousal and Emotional Support:** Paid and self employed mothers should be given family support especially spousal and emotional support which has been linked to positive outcomes for spouses under stress in order to help reduce daily stress.
2. **Time Management:** Paid and self-employed mothers should be taught how to manage their time. To manage time, one must first decide what activities are important. This involves deciding what one's goals and values are.

## CONCLUSION

The study investigated the role of work-family conflict on paid and self-employed mothers with children below 10 years old. Some suggestions were proffered such as time management, effective role behaviours, as panaceas for the pathogenic effects of work-family conflict within the two main domains of life and work. Finally the study found that home care is stressful to mothers with children and that both the paid and self-employed mothers showed evidence of stress, engendered by the concept of work-family conflict.

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