



The Impact of Occupational Demands and Family Responsibilities on the Job Performance of Working Mothers

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Abstract

Working mothers' performances in organisation has been a major subject of debate in organisations given their responsibility as mothers and wives. This study examined the effects of Occupational demands and family responsibilities on the job performance of working mothers. The study is a descriptive survey with a sample of 225 working mothers through a convenient sampling method whom were either self-employed or employed by government, private or international organisations in Plateau State. With a linear regression analysis, the study found occupational demands of working mothers to predict job performance at 23.2% and family responsibilities of working mothers to predict job performance at 74.7%. It also found no difference in job performance of working mothers with children below 18years and mothers with children of 18 and above years with an independent t-test; $t(223) = 1.184, p = .205$. The study eluded that working mothers in Plateau State are economically/career driven and gives absolute concentration to their jobs.

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Introduction

The fast developing knowledge economy has given place for more number of women to be enlightened by higher education, thereby having robust careers. Intellectual ability being the requisite skill in this knowledge era, rather than endurance or physical strength has led to an influx of women workers in every industry on par with men. But this has indeed become a tough challenge for women as they have to perform a lot of duties in home and office as well (Delina & Raya, 2013).

Balancing an individual's work and private life on the scale of performance effectiveness has posed serious challenge to practitioners and researchers across the world. Scholars (Ajala 2017; Akbar, Jan, & Gul, 2012; Eze, 2017) tend to have for long used the concept of work-life balance to resolve contentions between the family responsibilities of an individual and demands from work. Akbar et al (2012) emphasized that work and family lives are co-dependent and any conflict between work and family can have detrimental consequences on either work or family role. Conflict arises when strains produced performing one role make it difficult to perform the other. More seriously is it with women, given their basic and essential role in the family as mothers. Mothers play vital role in the nurturing of children for proper child development and upbringing (Bianchi, 2006, cited in Ering, Akpan & Echiegu, 2014). According to Schochet (2019), this role of women in the household is one reason for few populations of women in the workforce.

Across cultures, it has been noted that, majority of women work so as to support the family financially and have rejected the idea of women returning to their traditional and cultural roles in the society (Ering et al, 2014). For instance, in Eastern countries such as Tanzania and Pakistan, mothers opt to working in order to economically support the family while they ensure a safe, protective and nurturing environment for their children (Almani, Abro & Mugheri, 2012; Akbar et al, 2012). In Australia, supporting the family financially is one of the responsibilities of women and why they resolve to work. Women work in paid workforce to prevent their families from falling into poverty (Austen & Birch, 2000). This favours the argument for mothers to acquire white collar jobs (Singh, 2019; Ering et al, 2014). Singh (2019) holds that a working mother with some sense of accomplishment and satisfaction can serve as a good role model for her children and also inspire them to pursue their dreams and ambition. Meanwhile, Sheikh, Ashiq, Mehzar, Hassan and Khalid (2018) argued that the typical Nigerian family leaves all the home duties as the responsibility of women and by such, it becomes more stressful for women to combine family responsibility with work demands. More so, the occupational demands on working mothers are no different from the demands pledged on other female counterpart and other males as long as a particular job is concerned. Typical examples of job demands are time, intellectual knowledge, physical and cognitive efforts.

On the other hand, effective and efficient performance of organisations is determined by the quality of performances exhibited by her employees (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). To this end, managers constantly research on different strategies to boost their organisations performance. Sonnentag and Frese (2001) observed that organisations need high performing individuals in order to meet their goals, to deliver products and services they are specified in and to achieve a competitive advantage. In the light of this, much research evidence has unveiled several hindrances to effective employees' performance ranging from work attitudes and other emotional factors (Paracha, Qamaz, Mirza, Hassan & Waqas, 2012). Akanji (2013) observed that an unbalance work role and other home roles threaten performance at work. Most employers as observed in the study neglect work-life balance, alluding to it as the employees' burden, while placing emphasis on the employees' performance at work. Nevertheless, since a worker is more emotionally attached to the family than the work, the effect of family responsibility on work performance cannot be undermined (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger & Schmidt, 2008). The study hypothesized that;

1. Occupational demands of working mothers will significantly predict job performance.
2. Family responsibilities of working mothers will significantly predict job performance.

3. There is a significant difference in job performance of working mothers with children above 18 years and mothers with children below 18 years.

Statement of the Problem

Given that working mother's family responsibility/roles are indispensable, their performance at work may be quite tragic. The relevance of a mother's emotional attachment to her family cannot be overemphasized. It is a phenomenon that cannot be neglected in the mother's daily affairs. When this family responsibilities demands a behaviour that conflicts with an organisations demands, there tend to be a chaos, leading to flaws in work related behaviours. Among others, the quality of performance of such working mother may deplete based on the divided attention given to family responsibilities and occupational demands.

Theoretical Framework: Job demand-Resources (JD-R) Model

The job demand-resources model is a leading model usually used to analyse the cause and experience of stress at work and more specifically to predict burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). The model assumes that employees' health and wellbeing result from a balance between positive (resources) and negative (demands) job characteristics. Job demands are those physical, social, or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs. Examples of job demands are work overload, heavy lifting, interpersonal conflict, and job insecurity. Job resources are defined as those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development. Examples of job resources are feedback, job control, and social support (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001).

The fundamental characteristics of the JD-R model are its generality and flexibility. Generality implies that it can be used in different array of job situation. It also can be tailored to specific occupation under consideration (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Proponents of the theory, Demerouti et al (2001) observed that job resources are not necessary to resolve or curtail job demands but are important in their own respect. The degree to which employees job resources can contain its demands determines the quality of performance. Job resources can stem from effective work-family balance policies such as leave for working mothers, lesser work-time, or less mental/physical tasking job roles for mothers.

Literature Review

Most literatures that tend to examine the interactions of occupational demands and family responsibility on working mother's performance are primarily concerned on the level these mothers have been able to balance both (Nart & Batur, 2013; Eze, 2017; Schochet, 2019; Sheikh, et al, 2018; Boakye, Fiakporonu, Yeboah & Addai, 2022). Hence, the concept of work-life conflict/balance has prevailed in these studies. Nevertheless, either of occupational demands and family responsibility has distinctive effect on job performance of working mothers. Maryhover et al (2008) tend to uncover the influences of family responsibilities on career success and gender relationships and found that more duties and efforts for family affairs reduce working hours for women and energy left for the job.

Eze (2017) examined how work and family life are being balanced to ensure effective performance. One of the participants, a lecturing professor reported that "she had to work harder than her male counterparts to fit in on the job to avoid letting her gender be a hindrance to her performances" (*p* 12). Peculiar to this finding is that the academia does not recognise that women are battling to balance work and family life. Therefore, work life balance is not seen challenging in the academia. Nevertheless, the study found that multiple role played by women makes work-life balance difficult. Another study uncovered that work demands and home

demands has a negative effect on work-life balance amongst female doctors. While work demands and home demands had a positive effect on work-life conflict (Sheikh, et al, 2018). The study was designed to investigate the mediating relationship of work family conflict with work family balance work demands and home demands. It stresses that work-demands and home demands causes work-life conflicts that is eventually resolved by work-life balance. The study found work-life conflict to have a negative effect on work-life balance. Work-life conflict had a negative significant mediating effect on the relationship between work demands, home demands and work-life balance (Sheikh et al, 2018).

When Work-family conflict was examined along with job stress, organisational commitment and job performance, work-family conflict was found to have a meaningful effect on job stress, contributing relatively to the sources of job stress. Nevertheless, the study found that work-family conflict and job stress do not have effect on the job performance of primary level teacher in Turkish public school (Ajala, 2017). More study, another study found work-life balance to have positive effects on job performance while increasing job demands had negative effects. The study further showed that employee wellbeing can fully mediate the relationship between job demands and employee performance (Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021).

The incompatibility, between family and work roles are the major sources of stress at work. Moreover there are many other facets in the working mothers' life that subject them to stress beyond work and family roles (Nezhad, Goodarzi, Hasanneja & Roushani, 2010). Nezhad et al (2010) evaluated occupational stress and family responsibilities of working mothers. The result shows that there are significant positive relationship between occupational stress and family difficulties amongst working women. Mothers who experience high levels of stress at work also experienced difficulty in family adaptability and cohesion (Nezhad et al, 2010). The studies of Akanni and Ajila (2021) showed that the availability of social support networks, helpful relationships in co-workers and family can improve work family balance. Boakye et al (2022) studies with selected banking industries in Ghana revealed that while job demands had a positive effect on work-family conflict, job support had a negative effect on family-work conflict. In addition Boakye et al (2022) added that there is no difference in the experience of work family conflict between males and females.

To this end, there are family friendly working policies to balance work and family life most especially for mothers which include flexible working hours. Several other initiatives have been adopted in Nigeria and beyond to bring about an effective work-life balance (Oludayo, Gberevbie, Popoola, & Omonijo, 2015). However, the findings of Oludayo et al (2015) revealed that employees' work-life conflict is not reduced by the work-life initiatives on time usage in the Nigerian banking sector, having examined work-life balance initiatives desired by employees of banks. According to Chung and Lippe (2018), gender plays the core matter in understanding the outcome of flexible working environment. This is due to the peculiar home roles of women which includes pregnancy discomfort, birth and care for children. Furthermore, another study observed that good family planning and pre-arranging the timing for having children is important for women ability to manage career and family-life (Eze, 2017).

Method

Design & Participants

The study is survey which utilised 225 participants who were working mothers who were either self-employed (18.2%) or employed by the government (42.7%), private companies (24%) or international organisations (0.9%) in Plateau State (though 14.2% were missing scores in the questionnaire). The participants were selected through a convenient sampling.

Instruments

Job Content Questionnaire by Krasek, Brisson, Kawakami, Houtman, Bongers and Amick (1998). The scale has two sections. The first section contain 24-items scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from

ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). While, the second section contains 3-items with each having its scoring range. It is scored with 1-Regular & Steady, 4-Seasonal, 4-Frequent layoffs, 4-Both seasonal and frequent layoffs and 9-other. Krassek et al (1998) gave the formula for job demand from the scale as: $Job\ demands = 3*(q10 + q11) + 2*(15 - q13 - q14 - q15)$. (12-48)*** Where 12-48 is the range of possible scores. The scale has internal consistency reliability and a concurrent validity assessed by correlations between scales and subscales and by correlation of scales with age and education (Krassek et al, 1998). The researchers re-examined the scale and found a Cronbach alpha of .892. Also,

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES IV) was adapted to measure mothers' family responsibilities. The FACES IV was developed by Olson, Gorall and Tiesel (2006) to assess family cohesion and adaptability in family interactions. 15 cohesion items were selected from the scale and personified for mothers. Cohesion refers to the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another (Olson et al, 2006). Therefore, cohesion would be the reason why a mother will value her responsibility towards the family. A sample item is 'I am supportive of my children and husband in difficult times'. The researchers found the adapted scale to have a convergent validity ratio of 0.62 with Parental Stress Scale developed by Berry and Jones (1995). The re-examination of the scale found its Cronbach alpha at .637.

Task Performance Scale developed by Williams and Anderson (1991) was deployed to measure performance on a job. It has 22-items scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Williams and Anderson, (1991) reported an alpha reliability of 0.68 for the scale. The researchers examined the Cronbach alpha and found it at .719.

Results

Test of Hypothesis

The data for the study was tested with multiple linear regressions model at 0.05 significance levels. The results obtained are as follows;

Table 1: Correlation Table

	Occupational demands	Family responsibility	Job Performance
Occupational demands	1.00	.966	.954
Family responsibility	.966	1.00	.972
Job performance	.954	.972	1.00

All correlations were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$). There was found a strong positive relationship between inter variable correlations; occupational demands, family responsibility and job performance.

Table 2: Model Summary of Regression Model 1

R Square change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.948 ^a	2021.533	2	223	0.000

Results of the regression Model 1 revealed that the coefficient of determination as follows; $R^2 = 0.948^a$, $F_{(1, 223)} = 2021.533$. This indicates that Model 1 and Model 2 accounts for 94.8% of the change in job performance.

Table 3: Coefficients of Regression Models (predicting job performance)

Models	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Occupational Demands	.027	.007	.232	3.943	.000
Family Responsibility	.734	.058	.747	12.676	.000

Hypothesis One: The Regression coefficient of occupational demands in the estimated regression line is 0.232 which indicates that 23.2% of the variability in job performance was accounted for by occupational demands. The significance value of 0.000 shows that $p < 0.05$ indicating that occupational demands is a significant predictor of job performance.

Hypothesis Two: The Regression coefficient of family responsibilities in the estimated regression line is 0.747 which indicates that 74.7% of the variability in job performance was accounted for by occupational demands. The significance value of 0.000 shows that $p < 0.05$ indicating that family responsibilities is a significant predictor of job performance.

Hypothesis Three: Table 4 showed that t-test for difference was not significant ($p = 0.205$) between job performance for mothers with children's age greater than or equal to 18 years and mothers whose average children age is less than 18. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported. There is no significant difference in job performance of working mothers with children's age greater than or equal to 18 years and mothers whose average children age is less than 18.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test for Job Performance across Age Groups

	Test for equality of variance		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig	T	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Diff.	Stand Error Diff.	95% confidence interval of Diff.	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variance assumed	1.619	.205	1.184	223	.238	.25263	.21338	-.16787	.67314
Equal variance not assumed			2.061	55.08	.049	.25263	.12530	.00153	.50374

Discussion

The major finding from this study shows that both occupational demand and family responsibilities predicted the job performance of working mothers. While occupational demands had a lesser predictor value, the family responsibilities of these mothers had a higher predictor value on job performance. This implies that the family responsibility on working mothers' instigates them to performing better on the job than does

the demands of their jobs. This suggests that mothers might have considered their job a responsibility to the family as such perform more and better on their jobs to be able to meet up every responsibility in the family. This supports Almani et al (2012) and Akbar et al (2012) who elucidated that one of the responsibilities of mothers in Asian countries is to work to support the family financially. It also supports Sheikh et al (2018)'s finding on the relationship between home demands and work life balance. Sheikh et al (2018) as well observed the new trend in gender role that extends the female role to include economic provision for the family in Nigeria. Plateau State without exception is characterised by a majority with low standard of living and their women often work/trade to support the house. Therefore, family responsibilities can propel better job performance to support the house financially. Another perspective can be drawn from the idea of "being a career woman". Ering et al (2014) observed that a career woman is often concerned about her jobs responsibility than family responsibility. Therefore the higher the responsibilities at home the more better their performance becomes at work.

Furthermore, the study found that there was no difference in work performance between mothers with children of 18 years or more and mothers having children less than 18 years old. Irrespective of the ages of the children of working mothers they tend to have some focus on the job and their performance is not being affected. This finding does not support Ajala (2017)'s notion of family-work conflict that the pressure, strain and time devoted to the family could affect job performance. One plausible reason for is that the economic situation of Nigerian has forced mothers to acquire jobs or become self-employed to support the house financially and demonstrate a high level of commitment to their jobs to achieve this end. Therefore, they tend not to be influenced by the level of responsibility the family calls for and as such perform their jobs better.

The findings of this study supports many work life balance literatures (Asghar et al, 2018; Eze, 2017; Sheikh, et al, 2018; Nezhad et al, 2010; Kurnia & Widigdo, 2021) which emphasize that people tend to create a balance between work and personal life even without being enlightened on the necessity for work-life balance. Working mothers in the study might have in themselves strategically balanced work demand with family demands in a way that their job performance is not being affected, rather propelled by greater family responsibilities.

Limitations and Suggestion for Further Studies

The study is limited in terms of evaluation of the work-life balancing practices of working mothers which may exert influence on job performance. Therefore, it is suggests a study on the effect work-life balance on job performance and family role in Plateau State.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that occupational demands and family responsibilities are important predictors of job performance of working mothers in Plateau state, with family responsibilities owning a greater predictor magnitude. Women in Plateau State probably work to support the house financially since their job performance becomes better with rising family responsibility. More so, as there was found no difference in job performance of working mothers with children of different ages.

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