

Psychosocial Variables as Predictors of Work-Family Conflict among Secondary School Teachers in Irele Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated psychosocial variables as predictors of work-family conflict among secondary school teachers in Irele Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria. About 300 participants were selected through stratified random sampling from the population of staff in all secondary schools (teaching and non-teaching) in Irele Local Government Area. The study employed a descriptive survey method; data were collected through questionnaire administered on the subjects. The questionnaire included Work-Family Conflict Scale ($\alpha = 0.89$), Psychological Well-being Scale ($\alpha = 0.78$), Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) ($\alpha = 0.88$). Two research questions were answered at 0.05 level of significance. The data were analysed using multiple regression statistical method and correlation matrix. The findings revealed that the three independent variables (spirituality, psychological well being and gender) account for 11.3% of the total variance in work-family conflict (R^2 adjusted = 0.113). Each of the independent variables contributed to work-family conflict. In terms of magnitude of the contribution, gender contributed most to the prediction of work-family conflict ($\beta = 0.173$, $t = 2.618$; $p < 0.05$). This is followed by spirituality: ($\beta = -0.132$, $t = -2.298$; $p < 0.05$). On the basis of the findings of this study, it was recommended that employers should institute a framework of balance between work and family of their employees. Efforts should be made by organization to show commitment to employees.

Key words: Work-family conflict, spirituality, psychological well-being, gender, Ondo State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Profound changes in the world of work and the family in recent decades has stimulated much research on work-family conflict (Altucher and Williams, 2003). The growing body of research regarding the relationship between career and family has established that these 2 domains reciprocally determine the well-being of individual within the general social economic context. Men and women participation in work and family had been different. Traditionally men have been seen to be pre-occupied with career and economic jobs while women have the traditional role of performing household duties and raising the children or any other assisting roles assigned by their husbands (Barnett and Hyde, 2001). These rather conflicting roles for men and women are daily becoming obliterated as a result of changing socio-economic circumstances. Men and women are constantly faced with the problem of maintaining a balance between their jobs and family responsibilities. Inability to strike such a balance often resulted in work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict has been given tremendous attention by researchers as a result of its effect on production, physical and psychological well-being of workers (Bacharach *et al.*, 1991). Also, it has been

discovered to have an important effect on the quality of both work and family life (Greenhaus and Powell, 2002; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1983; Burke, 1988). In addition, research in this area explicitly recognized that the relationship between work and family are bi-directional. That is, work can interfere with family and family can interfere with work. They also reported that work interfering with family was negatively related to depression and health complaints among health care workers. That family interfering with work was negatively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and life satisfaction. This confirms the fact that the relationship between work and family are bi-directional (Gutek *et al.*, 1991).

This study investigated work-family conflict among teaching and non-teaching staff of secondary schools. The teaching job and the administrative task performed by the non-teaching staff may be highly demanding and coupled with the much workload. They are faced with the challenges of controlling unruly student's. All these in turn may have negative effect on the psychological well being of both the teaching and non teaching staff of secondary schools. The possible spillover of these can generate disharmony in the existing cordial relations existing at the family level.

It is therefore, imperative that for an organization or institution to sustain its goals and objectives, there is the need for effective work-family conflict management for the sustenance of harmony at the workplace and a peaceful and cordial relationship in the family.

The statement of the problem: Harmony in the workplace and the family is one of the main factors that determine job output and performance. In the secondary school system, where the employees are men and women of comparable size, there is need to identify those variables that may predispose work-family conflict.

In an attempt to improve the economic well-being of the family, men and women are engaged in work activities. These usually result in divided attention and responsibilities. At the work level, there must be sustained organizational commitment and at the same time, family commitment and responsibilities cannot be put aside. This necessitates that there must be effective management of those factors that are work-family centred that may generate conflict between the work and family.

Proper understanding and management of work conflict roles in the work-family will no doubt positively affect the mental health, psychological and spiritual well-being of the employees. This will have positive impact on job performance and the ability to balance family responsibilities with work role and thereby eliminating work-family conflict.

The purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to investigate how certain psycho-social variables cause inter-role conflict between work and family. The study therefore seeks to evaluate the psycho-social factors: Psychological-well-being, spirituality and age that induce work and family domain of secondary school staff (teaching and non-teaching) in Irele Local Government Area, Ondo State.

Review of related literature

Gender and work-family conflict: The current goal of most men and women is to combine career with family. There are challenges often faced by working parents, which have been clearly established as a result of such dual roles (Greenhaus and Powell, 2002; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1983). Lambert (1990) noted the need to study gender differences in details. The response to this assertion has been 2 ways. Existing literature suggests two hypotheses concerning gender differences in domain sources conflict: Domain flexibility and domain salience. The domain flexibility hypothesis predicts that the work domain is a greater source of conflict than the family domain for men and women. The domain salience

hypothesis predicts that the family domain is a greater source of conflict for men than the work domain. Conflict is greater from the domain that is, more salient to the person's identity. Therefore, women will experience more conflict from the family domain and men from the work domain (Bailyn *et al.*, 1996). It was noted by Hall (1972) that women might experience more role conflict as a result of simultaneity of their multiple roles.

Several researchers have commented on the importance of understanding factors that are associated with or are decedents of work-family conflicts. For instance, it has been documented that employees with significant dependent care, such as those who have responsibilities caring for young children, employees with large families, employees who care for dependent elders tend to report higher levels of work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1983). Some studies have found that women experience greater work family conflict (Gutek *et al.*, 1991). Research has also examined organizational factors such as characteristic of the employee's workplace, which can affect work-family conflict. For example, the impact of workplace culture on an employees' perception of the work-family conflict has been widely noted (Galinsky *et al.*, 1996).

Barnett and Rivers (1996) found that specific conditions that contributed most to the work-family conflict were: Excessive working hours, scheduling incompatibilities and physical/psychologically demanding duties that cause fatigue and irritability. Thus, husbands (men) were more likely to report to family work conflict caused by excessive work time whereas, wives (women) more than husbands (men) were more likely to report to work-family role conflict caused by schedule incompatibilities. Hammer and Thompson (2003) had predicted that women, because of responsibilities in the home, would have greater interference from family to work than men and that men, because of strong allegiance, would have greater interference from work to family than women. Barnett *et al.* (1992) also argued that work-family conflict must be successfully handled if gender inequities are to be discussed at all. This according to them is that the demands placed upon the ideal workers are almost without boundaries.

Combining the roles of work and family is generally conducive to the well-being of men and women (Barnett and Hyde, 2001; Barnett *et al.*, 1992). Women who work full-time experience less anxiety and depression and better physical health than full-time home makers and their husbands are more involved with caring for their children (Barnett and Rivers, 1996). Researches has shown that work provides men and women a buffer for the stresses in the home, a network of social relations and

opportunities for meaningful engagement and success that are not available to those who are not employed (Barnett and Hyde, 2001).

Spirituality and work-family conflict: Interest in workplace spirituality has increased steadily over the last decade of the twentieth century and into the new millennium (Garcia-Zamor, 2003). Research shows that employees are finding it difficult to continue to separate their spiritual lives from their work lives (Konz and Ryan, 1999). They believe that integrating meaning and purpose in life, not only do they become personally fulfilled, but the organization reaps the benefits of profit, high morale and less absenteeism. Research suggests that the encouragement of spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefits in the areas of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillments and commitments which will ultimately lead to increased organizational performance (Milliman *et al.*, 2001). In fact, some research reveals that organizations that encouraged spirituality experienced higher profits and success (Mitroff and Denton, 1999).

Spirituality in the workplace leads to intuitions, which in turn leads to creativity (Dehler and Welsh, 1994). When employees are allowed to bring the spiritual side of them to work, they become more creative, which leads to happiness and satisfaction. Neck and Milliman (1994) found that spirituality positively affects organizational performance. Research also found that workplace promote spirituality increases creativity satisfaction, team performance and organizational commitment (Dehler and Welsh, 1994).

As for personal fulfillment, Bruce (1996) noted, fostering spirituality will lead to employees feeling complete when they came to work. This will result in high degree of personal fulfillment and increased morale: This further would lead to increase organizational performance through greater financial success with regards to commitment, Bruce (1996) said spirituality increases thereby establishing a Trustful climate in the workplace. Milliman *et al.* (2001), found that attitudes of employees in organizations with high level of spirituality are positive, supportive of the organization and demonstrate commitment, to a much greater degree in organization without such values.

In support of other findings, Miller (1999) noted that to be effective, spirituality needs to be integrated into the corporate culture and reflected in organization policies and practices on a daily basis. If organizations want to reap the full benefits of spirituality on morale and productivity, an organizational transformation has to take place.

Psychological well-being and work-family conflict: The psychological well-being of employees is in the best interest of communities and organizations. Research on worker quality of life and performance originates positive feelings and positive perception (War, 1999). Proponents of well-being has found that the presence of positive emotional states and positive appraisals of the worker and his or her relationships within the workplace accentuate work performed and quality of life. Research has equally pointed out that when environment provide aid people seek out interesting, meaningful and challenging tasks, individuals in these situations are likely to have manageable difficulties and optimal states (Brim, 1992). That is, when demands matches or slightly exceed resources, individuals experience positive emotional states (e.g., pleasure, joy, energy) and they perceive themselves as growing, engaged and productive. Harter *et al.* (2002) in their work found out that a combination of cognitive and emotional antecedent variables in the workplace generates higher frequency of positive effect such as job satisfaction, commitment, joy, fulfillment, interest and caring. Positive effect then relates to the efficient application of work, employee retention, creativity and ultimately business outcomes.

Surveys of recent and upcoming generations of employees clearly show a majority of employees' desire greater meaning and personal development from their work and suggest many workers see their work as enjoyable, fulfilling and socially useful (Aryee and Luk, 1996; Calhoun and Acocella, 1978).

Studies now clearly reveal that the well-being of employees may be in the best interest of the employer in particular, researchers have studied the relationship of individual level job satisfaction to individual level performance (Judge *et al.*, 2001). Meta-analysis reveals positive relationships between job satisfaction and individual performance, particularly facet such as satisfaction with one's supervisor and satisfaction with one's work. It was revealed that more satisfied employees are more cooperative. They are more helpful to their colleagues, more punctual and time-efficient. They show up for more days of work and stay with the company longer than unsatisfied employees. Investigation of the happy-productive worker clearly links psychological well-being with work performance. Employees who report experiencing a greater balance of positive psychological and emotional symptoms over negative psychological and emotional symptoms received higher performance ratings. Judging from the psychological well-being perspective, a healthy workforce means the presence of positive feelings in the employee that should result in happier and more productive worker.

Research questions:

- To what extent when combined will the independent variables (i.e., gender, spirituality and psychological well-being) influence work-family conflict among the public secondary school staff?
- To what extent will each of the independent variables (i.e., gender, spirituality and psychological well-being) influence work-family?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: The study made use of a survey research method. The independent variables are gender, psychological well-being and spirituality. The dependent variable is Work-Family Conflict (WFC). The study intends to establish the joint and relative contribution of the independent variables to work-family conflict. The researchers do not wish to expose the variables to experimental inquiry.

Participants: The target population for the study consists of staff in all secondary schools (teaching and non-teaching) in Irele Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample size was 300 staff (comprising of both teaching and non-teaching staff) selected through stratified random sampling.

Research instruments

Work-family conflict scale: The work-family conflict scale was developed by Hassan (2004). The instrument was of 2 dimensions: Work-Family Reaction scale (WFR) and Family Work Reaction scale (FWR). The Likert format was used for the scale. The alpha coefficient of WFR Scale was 0.89 and that of FWR Scale was 0.87. This implies that the instruments have high reliability. The scale has also been reported to be valid (Hassan, 2004).

Psychological well-being scale: The psychological well-being scale was developed by Hassan (2004). The likert format was also used in the scale. The alpha coefficient was 0.78. This implies that instrument has high reliability. Convergent construct and predictive validity of this scale was reported to be high.

Daily spiritual scale: The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) was developed by Underwood and Teresi (2002). The scale has been included in a number of research studies, including the alcohol studies as well as projects funded from Fertzter Institute request for proposals, scientific research on Altruistic love and compassionate love. The alpha coefficient was 0.88. This implies that instrument has high reliability.

Procedure: Data were collected using the research instruments described above. The instruments were administered following the instructions carried by each instrument. To reach the individual respondents in their various schools, permission was sought from the schools management, specifically the vice-principal (Administration) in the respective school to administer the questionnaire on their staff. Since the identified staff had to respond to the instrument individually, it was therefore, not necessary to call them together but rather the instruments were distributed to the respondents through their respective heads of departments. The researcher was present on the day the instruments were administered. The general instructions were that any one that was not clear with any of the questions could meet the researcher for clarification. The respondents were expected to complete the instrument that very day and return them to the researcher through the head of department. This was possible because the average time for completing the instrument was 40 min.

RESULTS

The first research question examined the pattern of relationships which exist between spirituality, psychological well-being, gender and work-family conflict among the staff of secondary schools observed.

From the results presented on Table 1 above, both spirituality ($r = -0.129$; $p = 0.05$); psychological well being ($r = -0.150$; $p < 0.05$) and gender ($r = 0.146$; $p < 0.05$) correlate negatively and significantly with work-family conflict while gender correlates positively with work-family conflict.

The results on Table 2 above show that the three independent variables (spirituality, psychological well being and gender) account for 11.3% of the total variance in work-family conflict (R^2 adjusted = 0.113). The analysis of variance of the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio value which was found to be significant at 0.05 Alpha level ($F = 3.014$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that the independent variables jointly contributed to work-family conflict.

The results display on Table 3 above indicates the contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction. In terms of magnitude of the contribution, gender contributed most to the prediction of work-family conflict ($\beta = 0.173$, $t = 2.618$; $p < 0.05$). Next to it is spirituality: ($\beta = -0.132$, $t = -2.298$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, both gender and spirituality made significant relative contribution to the prediction of work-family conflict among the secondary school staff tested.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and inter-correlations among the variables

Correlations	N	Mean	Std.	1	2	3	4
Work-family conflict	300	76.31	14.84	1.000			
Spirituality	300	57.52	8.76	-0.129*	1.000		
Psychological well being	300	42.86	12.30	-0.150*	0.053	1.000	
Gender	300	1.45	1.32	0.146*	0.056	0.061	1.000

*Significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis on joint contribution of the variables

Model	ANOVA				
	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1310.738	3	436.912	3.014	S*
Residual	64580.179	296	218.176		
Total	65890.917	299			
Multiple R	0.441				
Multiple R ²	0.120				
Multiple R ² (Adjusted)	0.113				
Standard error of estimate	14.74590				

Predictors: (Constant), psychological well-being, spirituality, gender,
 Dependent variable: Work-Family conflict

Table 3: The relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the outcome measure

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Sig.
	B	SE	Beta	t	
Constant	86.271	6.264		13.772	0.000
Spirituality	-0.224	0.097	-0.132	-2.298	0.05
Psychological well being	6.830	0.069	0.057	0.984	NS
Gender	0.612	0.072	0.173	-2.618	0.05

Dependent Variable: Work-Family conflict

DISCUSSION

The results in Table 1 indicate that significant effect of the independent variables (gender, spirituality and psychological well-being) as predictors of work-family conflict amongst secondary schools staff. The results show that the independent variables (gender, spirituality and psychological well-being) when pulled together correlate significantly and positively with work-family conflict, respectively. The value of R (adjusted) = 0.441 and R² (adjusted) = 0.113. The analysis of variance performed on multiple regression yielded an F-ratio value which was found to be significant at 0.05 Alpha level (F = 3.014, p<0.05).

Furthermore, the inter-correlation results display on Table 3 indicates the correlation co-efficient values of each of the predicting variables to work-family conflict amongst secondary schools staff. It was revealed that work-family conflict correlated with: Gender (r = 0.146; p<0.05, spirituality (r = -0.129; p<0.05) and psychological well-being (r = -0.150; p<0.05).

Moreover, the results in Table 3 are evident that each of the independent variables made significant contribution to the prediction of work-family conflict amongst secondary schools staff. In terms of magnitude of the contribution, gender contributed most to the

prediction of work-family conflicts (B = 0.173, t = 2.618; p<0.05). Next to it is spirituality which contributed to the prediction of work-family conflict as follows: (B = -0.132, t = -2.298; p<0.05). Psychological well-being did not contribute to the prediction of work-family conflict (B = 0.057, t = 0.984; p>0.05). The findings of this study in relation to the gender issue corroborated those of Greenhaus and Beutell (1983) who noted that the current goal of most men and women is to combine career with family. Lambert (1990) noted the need to study gender differences in relation to work family conflict. To Cooke and Rousseau (1984), conflict is greater from the domain that is more salient to the person's identity. Therefore, women will experience more conflict from the family domain and men from work domain. Hall (1972) noted that women might experience more role conflict as a result of simultaneity of their multiple roles. Along the gender some family domain include pressures like the effect of presence of young children, Spouse time in paid work and work domain pressures like number of hours work per week are associated with work-family conflict (Burke *et al.*, 1979).

Barnett and Rivers (1996) write that specific conditions that contributed most to work-family conflict were: excessive working hours, scheduling incompatibilities and physical/psychologically, demanding duties that cause fatigue and irritability. Thus, husband (men) were more likely than women to report family work conflict caused by excessive work time whereas the wives (women) more than husband (men) were more likely to report work-family role conflict caused by scheduling incompatibilities. Hammer and Thompson (2003) had predicted that women, because of responsibilities in the home, would have greater interference from family to work than men and than men, because of strong work allegiance, would have greater interferences from work to family than women. Barnett *et al.* (1992) has argued that work-family conflict must be successfully handled if gender inequities are to be discussed at all. This according to them is because the demand placed upon the ideal workers is almost without boundaries. Whereas to become successful, women are continually been asked to merged family and career commitments an option that has never confronted men. To Grover and Crooker (1995) family responsive institutions generate reduced turnover and higher level of employee commitment among parent and non-parent employees. This in earnest is an admission to the fact that women are highly prone to turnover due to family commitment especially during childbearing ages.

In relating spirituality to work-family conflict, it has been asserted that today's workers is no longer willing to

work on an authoritarian and dehumanizing environment constantly prone to conflict. Workers now want meaning in their work and balance in their lives. Research has shown that employees are finding it difficult to continue to separate their spiritual lives from their work lives (Milliman *et al.*, 2001). They believe that integrating spirituality in the workplace will allow them meaning and purpose in life. Not only do they become personally fulfilled, but the organization reaps the benefits of profits, high morale, less absenteeism and more importantly a drastically reduced work family conflict. This is probably the reason why spirituality has negative correlation with work-family conflict.

Integration of spirituality in the workplace can lead to benefit in the areas of creativity, process improvement, customer service, honesty and trust, personal fulfillment and commitment, which will ultimately lead to increased organizational performance (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2002). Research conducted by East (2005) found that employees who feel spiritually connected at work experience peace of mind, inner strength, serenity, patience, calmness, sanity and positive attitude.

As for personal fulfillment, Bruce (1996) noted "Fostering spirituality will lead to employees feeling complete when they come to work. This will result in a higher degree of personal fulfillment and increased morale. This further would lead to increased organizational performance through greater financial success". With regards, to commitment, Bruce (1996) said spirituality increases commitment by establishing a Trustful climate in the workplace. This includes commitment of the employees to the organization and also commitment of the organization to quality and to customers. It has been found that attitudes of employees in organizations with high levels of spirituality are positive, supportive of the organization and demonstrate commitment to a much greater degree than in establishment without such values (Milliman *et al.*, 2001). According to Miller (1999), to be effective, spirituality needs to be integrated into the corporate culture and be reflected in organizational policies and practices on a daily basis. Therefore, spirituality should be made part and parcel of our everyday life.

Psychological well-being has also been found to be negatively correlated with work-family conflict. Studies have shown that the well-being of employees may be in the best interest of the employer. It has been established that there is positive correlation amongst behavioural, cognitive and health benefits of positive feelings and positive perceptions (War, 1999). The proponents of well-

being perspective has argued that the presence of positive emotional states and positive appraisal of the worker and his or her relationships within the workplace accentuate workers performance and quality of life (Harter *et al.*, 2002). When environment provide and people seek out interesting, meaningful and challenging tasks, individuals in these situations are likely to have what Brim (1992) has called manageable difficulties and optimal states. This is a situation in which the individuals experience positive emotional states (e.g., Pleasure, joy, energy) and they therefore, perceive themselves as growing, engaged and productive. From the well-being perspective a healthy workforce means the presence of positive feelings in the worker that should result in happier and more productive workers. Judge *et al.* (2001) and Aryee and Luk (1996) suggested that more satisfied employees are more cooperative, more helpful to their colleagues, more punctual and time-efficient, show up for more days of work and stay with the company longer than dissatisfied employees. Investigation of the happy-productive worker clearly links emotional well-being with work performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research have proved beyond reasonable doubts that some psychosocial factors significantly contributed to work-family conflict.

An effort should be made to help employees feel comfortable, expressing themselves and their ideas, provide them with immediate feedback, let them know that you are listening and that their ideas/suggestions or even complaints are not falling on deaf ears.

Efforts should be made by organizations to encourage balance between work and family; life off the job is just as important as life on the job to employees. When it comes to personal/professional balance, organizations need to be sensitive to the needs of its employees.

Efforts should be made to acknowledge and reward employee achievements. Organization should have a compensation policy to recognize and reward employees' contribution to the organization.

Efforts should be made by organizations to show commitment to employees. Organizations need to show their employees that they are valued based on who they are as an individual rather than what they can do for the company. Commitment can be shown through respect, listening and words of encouragement to let them know their contributions are not going unnoticed.

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