

CORRELATES BETWEEN FAMILY AND EMPLOYEES' WORK LIFE IN NIGERIA: THE NEED FOR PROPER INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

The symbiotic relationship between the family and employees' work life in Nigeria; and the need for proper integration of work and family life is the concern of this paper. The study looks at how family pattern affects organizational policies, workers health, social organization of work, age of entering the labour force, moonlighting/supplementary livelihood, socialization at workplace, retirement, and occupational mobility. The study x-rayed the effect of work on family especially in areas of marriage decisions, breadwinners, parenting, pregnancy, number of children, and the employment of domestic staff or the keeping of extended relatives to assist in domestic activities. The paper concludes that the correlates between the family and work life of the Nigerian worker is significantly high; and as such, the relationship should be carefully managed to avoid negative effects on each other. We suggested among others that the family should be structured and managed in such a way that it does not negatively affect the employees' work life. In the same vein, managers should make policies that will have positive effect on the family, since the family is the sole supplier of labour in society. It was further recommended that government should make laws and regulations that will guide corporate entities in formulating policies that will properly integrate the family and employees' work life.

Keywords: Family, work life, employees, occupational mobility, and labour market.

Introduction

The family is the basic unit of society. According to Murdock (1949), the family is a social unit with common economic collaboration, residence, and reproduction. It includes the cohabitation of two adults

(male and female) who share socially acceptable sexual relationship, and have one or more children or adopted ones. Tanak (2014) posit that family and work are significant elements of worker's life. A stable family life is an asset to the employee; because the family affect the employees' performance at workplace. For this reason, most organizations are very much concerned about the marital status and family life of their employees. Some entities especially in the banking sector, view *women's family* as potential distractions to their female employees. Thus, recruitment officers in these organizations are very careful of sex ratio and age bracket of their intakes. The family in a great way affects company's policies, age of entering the labour market, retirement, alternative job seeking, occupational mobility, and turnover, among others.

The work life of employees' impacts on their families either negatively or positively. It could lead to role conflict or overload at home. It influences domestic work arrangement among couples and other members of the family. The work and the income accruing to it, affects the nutritional and health status of the family. The number and child spacing could also be influenced by spouses' nature of work. While the symbiotic relationship between the Nigerian workers' family and their work life is so crystal, there are near absent of studies and literature on the extent to these correlates. This study is not only posed to bridge these gaps, but to make vital suggestions on how employees' family and work life can be properly integrated for high productivity both at the family and organizational levels.

Conceptual explanation

(i) Work

Two principal concepts stand out in this study: The *family* and *work*. While attempt was made in our introduction to define *family*, we were however silent about the conceptual meaning of *work*. Thus, in this section, emphasis will be on meaning and attributes of work.

There are a number of definitions of the concept of work; attempt is made here to highlight some of them. Work could be viewed as activities that involve the mental and physical efforts of a worker, for the purpose of achieving set goals or objectives in the organization. Work is a task carried out by a worker or routine of activities that makes up the worker's job in an organization. It includes the application of physical and mental efforts, machines, and tools as well as directing such activities towards the accomplishment of set objectives or goals in the organization.

According to Morin (2004), work is purposeful activities carried out by a worker. It includes the expending of energy through a set of coordinated activities directed towards producing something meaningful in formal organization. Van de Ven and Joyce (1981) posit that work is *doing something that is useful* and contributes to the development of others, the organization, and society at large. It is a set of morally justified activities carried out by a worker in an organization. Work involves the utilization of a workers innate tendency, mental and physical powers, skills, and talents to produce something useful or to reach set goals in the organization.

Work is a coordinated activity designated for individual worker, web in a social and contextual relationship with other co-workers and directed towards accomplishing organization goals. It is for this reason Baron and Pfeffer (1994) observe that, the relationships among workers in the organization form the social fabric and context of *work*. Similarly, Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe (2003) argue that the cues a worker receive from co-workers in the course of carrying out his or her work speak directly to the value he or she ascribed to others in the organization. Thus, the concept of work is the blend of *the meaning of the job, the role, and the self in the job*. This suggests that, work is a group of activities that are divided into specialized components and carried out by a worker based on his or her own perception, and directed towards set goals in the organization. Work is done in the organization for pay or remuneration. The rewards accruing

from work enables the worker to meet some basic needs in the family. Work can also be carried out by self-employed persons in self-owned organization. Most persons today work in private organizations.

(ii) The family

The family according to Giddens (2006:206) is a group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for children. To this regards, the family is seen as the basic unit and cornerstone of pre-modern and modern societies. Haralambos, Holborn, and Heald (2004) observe that the family is one of the vital agents of socialization in society. The family is also an economic unit that pulls available resources to produce for it's upbringing/members. The family also provides the bases and platform for meeting the sexual needs of cohabiting adults.

The effect of work on the family can best be understood if we critically discuss the attributes and functions of the family. The family as earlier mentioned provide the social contexts within which new member of society (the child) is socialized. The family encourages children to develop basic skills necessary for survival in society. The family inculcate in the child societal norms, values, lifestyle and other social and morally acceptable behaviours necessary for individual and societal survival.

Apart from producing for members, the family is a consuming unit of society, and its ability to make choice and consume goods and services depends on resources at its disposal. Meaning the working adults (the man and/or the woman) as the case may be, have to provide money to strengthen the purchasing power of the family, and this is dependent on the remuneration they receive from their organizations.

Reproduction is another vital function of the family (Tischler, 2002). Society and their institutions (organizations) must replace its aging and dead members. The family also need resources to carry out its function. The income of the principal adults of the family is needed in this regards. This is because; the offspring must be provided for, and protected from hazard and societal crisis. The family must provide needed food and shelter for their offspring. For the children to be useful members of society, basic needs of food, cloths, shelter, and education must be met by parents. Karl Mark posits that for any member of society to prosperize, he/she must be able to cloth, feed well, and put a shelter over his/her head. To meet this need, the family needs income; and the sure way of getting this is through *work*, and such work must be properly remunerated. Where there is poor pay, the family will not be able to meet these fundamental needs.

Theoretical consideration

This study adopts the *work-family border theory* of S. C. Clarke (2000^a). The work-family border theory originated from the works of S. Campbell Clarke, title – *Workfamily border theory: A new theory of work/family balance*; and *Borders between work and home, and work/family conflict* both published in 2000. The theory in the past one and half decade has gained much publicity because it provides significant explanation on the correlates between work and family lifestyle. According to Desrochers and Sargeant (2005), work-family border theory is devoted fundamentally to *work and family domains*. The theory suggests better ways of ensuring work-family balance. It provides grounds for proper integration of work and family – with minimum role conflict.

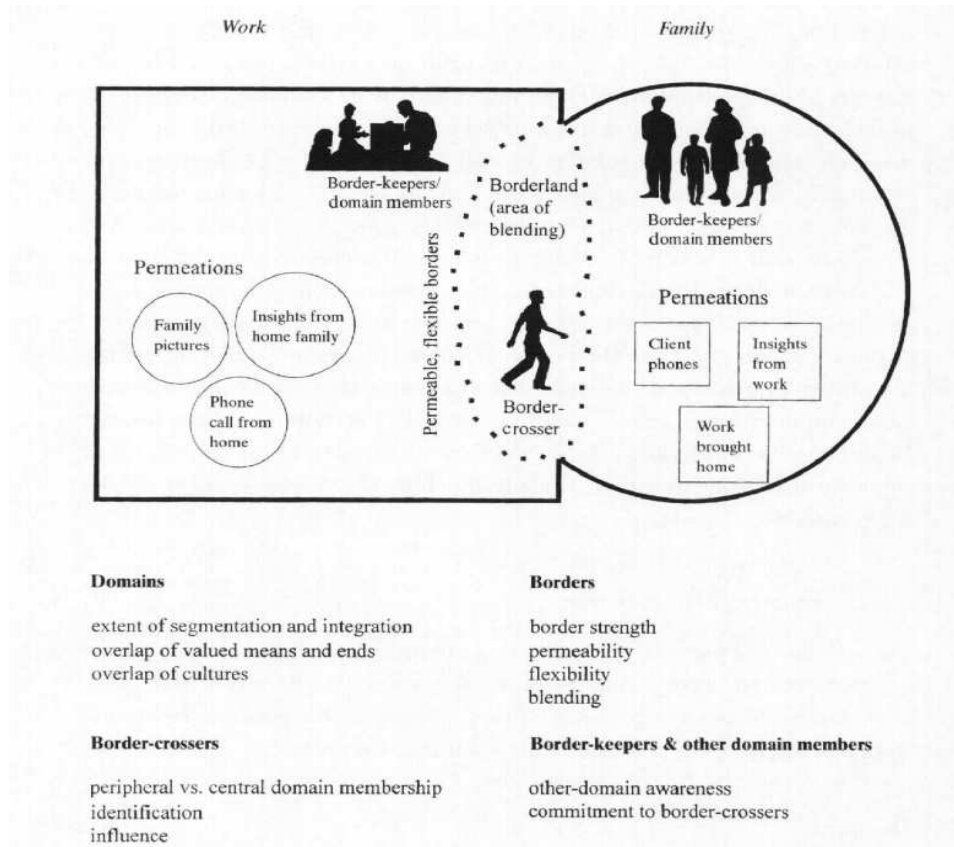
The theoretical postulate of work-border theory propels satisfaction and good functioning of the worker at home and at work with limited personal and group conflict. The theory defines tangible boundaries between time spent at work and at home. It specifies boundaries between time, place, and individuals'

association with work versus family. The theory provides explicit explanations on how employees' manage and negotiate or navigate between work and family spheres to strike a balance. To achieve this, work-family border theory provides a clear-cut-dichotomy between work and family. It crystally defines the border between work and family in order to obtain equilibrium between them. The theory posits that *work and family* are of two different spheres or domains because of their contrasting *purposes and cultures*. This suggests that, the language and way of life in each of these domains (the family and work) contrasts the other. It means that behavioural patterns and means of accomplishing tasks between the two spheres vary significantly (Clarke, 2000^b). Minuchin (1974) have earlier argued that the cultural system of the family and its struggle to *maintain a sense of continuity and equilibrium* among members creates a divide between (the family and work).

Similarly, Brett and Stroh (1995) posit that when the border between the family and work is not clearly defined, pressure from workplace have potential of obstructing the equilibrium in the family. Work-family border theory holds that domains (family and work domains) conflict as they compete for attention and finite resources (Higgins, Duxbury & Johnson, 2000). This is because the family and work domains operate from different cultural systems. According to Clarke (2000^a), the border between the family and home domains provides the bases for classifying workers into those who cross the borders and employees who keep the borders.

More so, work-family border theory examined how workers construct, maintain, demarcate, negotiate, and cross borders between work and family. The theory holds that flexibility and permeability are the basic characteristics that allow individuals to cross demarcated borders between the family and work. This suggests that when the two domains are highly flexible and permeable with each other integration is possible and inevitable. According to Desrochers and Sargeant (2004), border theory posits that the similarity between domains, also allows for proper knitting or integration of the family and work (see Fig. 1). Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) observe that the integration between work and family as x-rayed by work-family theory diminishes or improves workers wellbeing.

Fig. 1: Work family border theory of Clarke



Source: Adopted from Clarke (2000^a); Othman, Yusof, & Osman, (2009).

Work-family theory of Clarke (2000) is significant to this study because it amplifies the dichotomy between the family and work. It shows the cultural difference between the family and work, and how well both domains can be integrated to maintain a balance or equilibrium. It emphasized the need for proper management of the borders between the family and work to ensure the wellbeing of workers. It suggests that, if work and family are not properly integrated, the wellbeing of employees or the worker will be adversely affected. The theory further reveals how balance work-family life ensures satisfaction, health, love, and productive life among workers.

Historical origins of the separation of work from family and the emergence of working-class women in Nigeria

Historically, work as economic activity was carried out within the family; and agriculture was the main stay of the family. The man was the head and manager of the family

production sector while the women and his children provide the needed labour. The number of children a man has was then a great determinant of his labour force and his production capacity in society. This economic condition led to the emergence of large family sizes across the over 250 ethnic groups that makes up the present Nigeria state. Polygyny became a way of life and people could raise large number of children to cater for their labour demands in their various agricultural activities. This scenario continued till the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries, when *male breadwinner household* was established across ethnic nationalities that make up the present Nigeria. This change was a product of industrial capitalism that swept across Europe, America, and extended to the continent of Africa (Agba & Odu, 2013).

The industrial revolution (industrialization) according to Saito (2014:5) informed not only *expansion of manufacturing and other non-agricultural sector*, but occasioned the separation of the family from work. The rising standards of living also informed the emergence of the male and female breadwinner households. In Nigeria, industrialization during the colonial era was slow and agriculture was still the main stay of most families up to the 1950s when the civil service expanded and career civil servants were recruited. The discovering of crude oil by Shell Petroleum Company in the present Delta State of Nigeria (Agba & Ushie, 2005) occasioned yet another dynamics in the family structure, as able men have to leave their villages (agriculture) to work in the oil sector and other subsidiary companies. The expansion in the mining and manufacturing industries between 1970s and 1990s (Agba & Odu, 2013), led to mass exodus of men and women especially youths to cities and towns for better jobs and living conditions. Thus, the Nigerian family metamorphosed into wage oriented one.

The family also began to respond to labour market demands by enrolling children for school; both sexes were allowed to study courses especially in polytechnic that enable them to compete for job in any part of the country. School demands, accommodation/shelter, rents, transportation and other bills confronting families in urban areas and cities, coupled with inflation made the male breadwinner's income grossly inadequate. Consequently, most women have to work to make earnings meet. The emergence of increasing working-class women in Nigeria was also orchestrated by the gender equality propagated by feminist organizations across the world. The domestic servant phenomenon in Nigeria expanded the frontier of working-class women in the country.

As the family becomes more a *consumer-economy*, the need for the woman to work became more imperative in Nigeria. The salary discrimination and the expanding size of the labour market, made most employers to offer less salary for jobs. This trend continued making the Nigerian worker according to Agba and Ushie (2013) the least paid

in sub-Saharan Africa. An average worker in Nigeria earns less than 550 US Dollars per annum despite the huge revenue accruing the government from crude oil. This scenario is worst in the civil service at all levels (federal, states, and local government levels). This economic reality compelled most women to pick-up jobs to assist their male spouse. As the demands for household activities and child-care responsibilities increases, the working-class women have to shuttle between home/family and her work to make earnings meet.

Demography survey of workers according to economic sectors in Nigeria

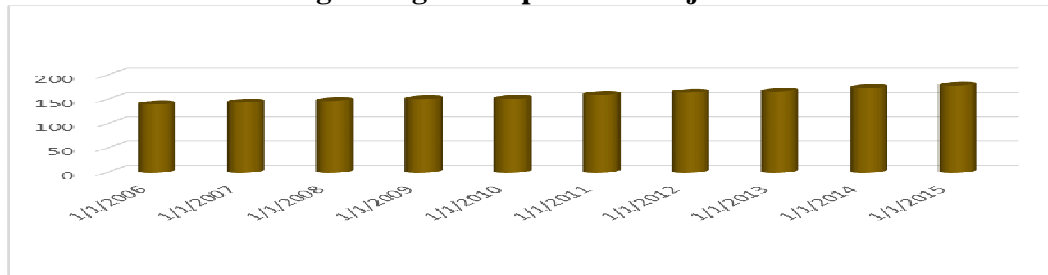
Nigeria is the largest and most populated nation in Africa. With a population of 173.6 million people spread across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja (see Figs. 2, 3, and Table 1), its workforce and families are equally large. It was estimated by the then Minister of Finance, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in 2014, that no fewer than 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market every year. The implication of this figure shows that government alone cannot accommodate graduates in Nigeria. Thus, a great number of workers are employed in the private sector of the Nigerian economy.

Fig. 2: Map of Nigeria showing 36 states and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja



Source: Adapted from Geoatlas. available online at: www.worldatlas.com/africa/nigeria/htm.

Fig. 3: Nigeria Population Projection



Source: Adopted from National Bureau of Statistics

Table 1

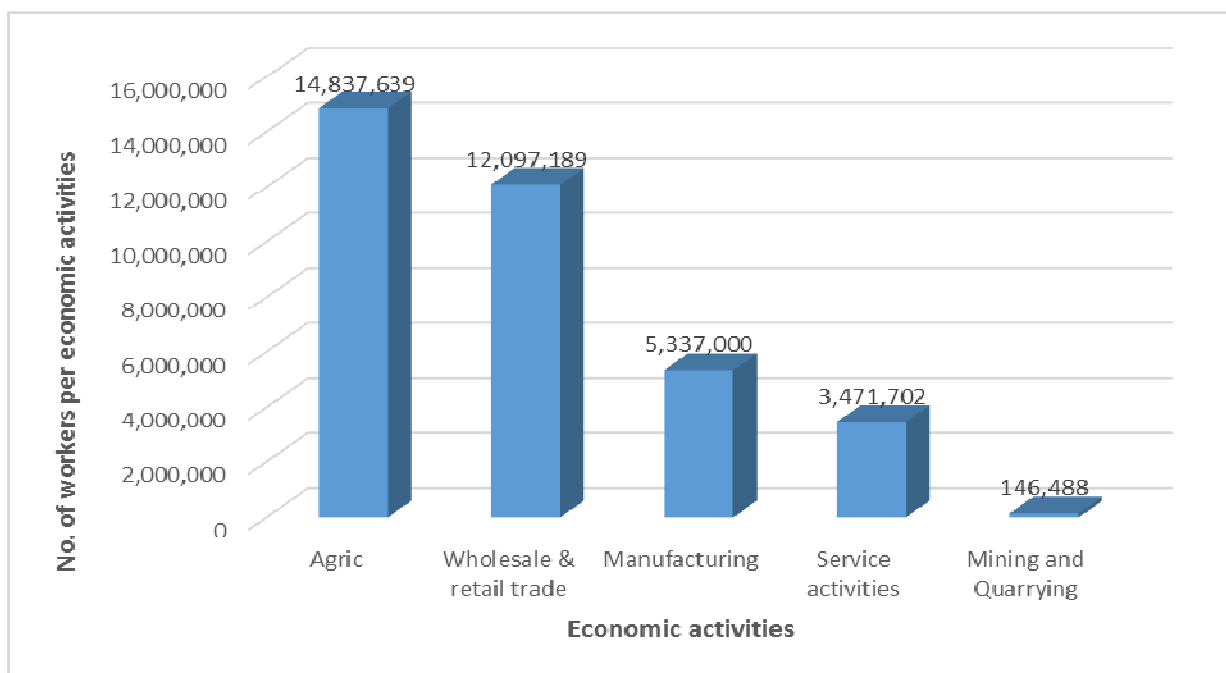
Population of Nigeria (2015 and historical)

Year	Population	Yearly % Change	Yearly Change	Migrants (net)	Median Age	Fertility Rate	Density (P/Km ²)	Urban Pop %	Urban Population	Country's Share of World Pop	World Population	Global Rank
2015	183,523,432	2.82%	4,763,130	-60,000	17.7	6.01	199	52%	95,564,322	2.51%	7,324,782,225	7
2014	178,516,904	2.82%	4,901,559	-60,000	17.8	6.01	193	51%	91,834,051	2.46%	7,243,784,121	7
2010	159,707,780	2.73%	4,024,378	-60,000	17.9	6.01	173	49%	78,258,409	2.31%	6,916,183,482	7
2005	139,585,891	2.58%	3,341,833	-34,000	18.0	6.05	151	46%	63,860,545	2.14%	6,514,094,605	9
2000	122,876,727	2.53%	2,890,380	-19,005	18.0	6.17	133	42%	52,039,523	2.01%	6,127,700,428	10
1995	108,424,827	2.55%	2,561,495	-19,154	17.7	6.37	117	39%	42,115,456	1.89%	5,741,822,412	10
1990	95,617,350	2.65%	2,343,156	-18,281	17.5	6.60	104	35%	33,735,713	1.80%	5,320,816,667	10
1985	83,901,572	2.63%	2,040,695	-134,328	17.5	6.76	91	32%	26,711,743	1.73%	4,863,601,517	10
1980	73,698,099	3.00%	2,026,500	170,930	18.0	6.76	80	29%	21,064,391	1.66%	4,449,048,798	11
1975	63,565,601	2.52%	1,486,751	-7,705	18.3	6.61	69	26%	16,230,205	1.56%	4,071,020,434	11
1970	56,131,845	2.24%	1,178,655	-8,669	18.7	6.35	61	23%	12,745,297	1.52%	3,691,172,616	11
1965	50,238,570	2.13%	1,005,391	204	18.9	6.35	54	20%	10,101,972	1.51%	3,329,122,479	13
1960	45,211,614	1.91%	817,856	541	19.0	6.35	49	16%	7,306,649	1.49%	3,026,002,942	14
1955	41,122,332	1.67%	652,518	674	19.1	6.35	45	12%	5,039,131	1.49%	2,761,650,981	13

Source: Adopted from *Worldometers* (2012) (www.Worldometers.info)

According to National Bureau of Statistics, 48,533,319 persons in Nigeria engaged in one form of economic activities or the other. The distribution shows that the highest number of persons are employed in the agricultural sector (14,837,693); followed by wholesale and retail trade sector, which employed 12,097,189 persons. The manufacturing sector employed 5,337,000 persons while service activities employed 3,471,702 employees. Mining and quarrying employed 146,488 persons only being the least in the country (see Fig. 4).

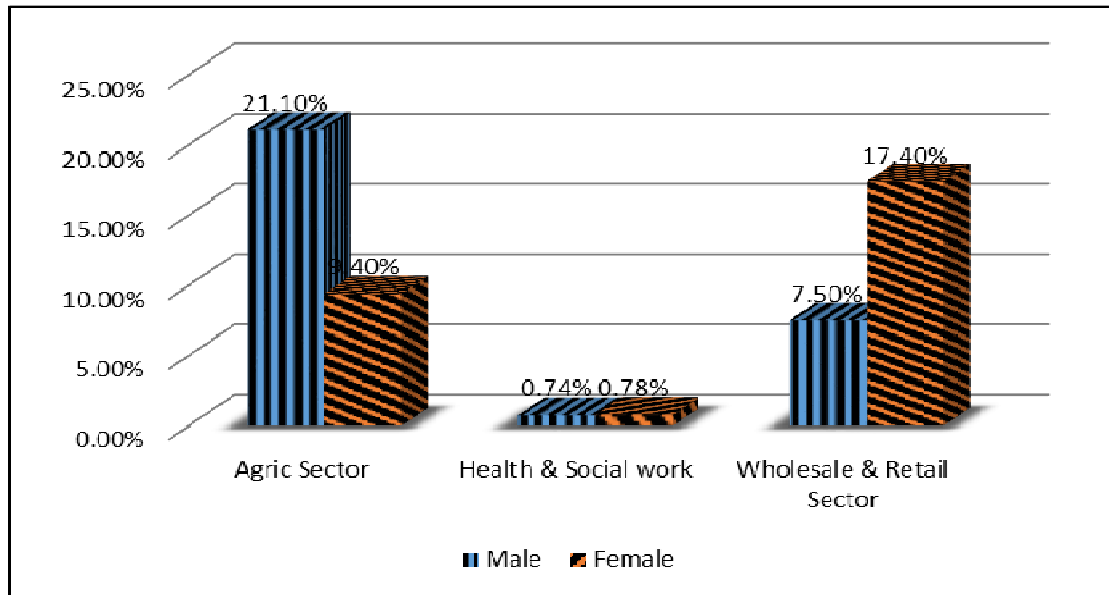
Fig. 4: Distribution of workers in Nigeria into economic activities in Nigeria



Source: Adopted from National Bureau of Statistics (2010)

The sex distribution of workers across economic sectors shows that 21.1 percent of the males are employed in the agriculture sector as against 9.4 females (See Fig. 5). In the wholesale and retail sector, 17.4 percent are females as against 7.5 percent males. Human health and social work revealed that 0.74 percent are males while 0.78 percent are females (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Fig. 5: Sex distribution of workers across economic sectors in Nigeria



Source: Adopted from National Bureau of Statistics (2010)

This survey reveals the number of persons/workers who engaged in economic activities and are accounted for by the National Bureau of Statistics. It further revealed that over 48,533,319 persons out of 173.6 million persons are actively working in one sector or the other. It shows that over 49 million families of workers could be directly influenced by their jobs, while 124.6 million persons who could be relatives or dependents of the working class-persons will be facing indirect influence from work. Suggesting that more than one-third of the Nigerian family is directly influenced by the jobs spouses engaged on.

The sex distribution of workers as revealed in Fig. 5 shows that wholesale and retail sector as well as human health and social works are more likely to witness maternity leaves than other sectors since majority of her work force are females. This is against the agricultural sector which dominant work force are males. This suggests that, managers in the wholesale and retail sector, as well as human health and social works sector are more likely to be careful on work plan in the organization, so that frequent maternity leaves by female workers do not affect the operations of the company. This involves training of alternative/supplementary or subordinate workers within the organization who can stand-in for female employees who are on maternity leave. Where alternative employees cannot be raised to stand-in for female workers on leave, the employee involved may have to shuttle between the home/family and her workplace. In the alternative, the manager may

have to make provision for day-care facilities within the organization to cater for the terming female workers and their young babies/children.

Correlates between the family and work

The relationship between the family and work can best be explained via the following sub-headings:

(i) Marriage and work

There is a significant symbiotic relationship between marriage and work life. The family structure since the advent of industrialization in Nigeria have drastically changed; with more women working outside the home. According to Bailey (2002:1), women working outside the home *have positive rather negative effect on marriage*. This is often possible when the woman takes up a second shift job. However, in situations where shift jobs are not readily available, the home/marriage usually suffered from the woman's absence. At most, the woman has to shuttle between the home and work; and this may negatively affect both the marriage/home and work.

In order for women to meet up their home/marriage and work obligations, most women in Nigeria ends up working in wholesale and retail sector of the economy where shift duties are allowed. Women engagement at workplace is also changing the family structure as men are now doing domestic work than they have done before the advent of industrialization in Nigeria. Gottman (1994; 1999) posit that men who do household work are *happier and more involved in their marriages* than those who avoid domestic tasks. Again, Gottman observe that men who carryout domestic duties and assist their wives in housework are less stressed, less lonely and physically, morally and psychologically healthy than men who avoid household tasks. This is because; women generally love husbands who assist in household tasks.

Work on the other hand determine the age of entering family life or marrying. In Nigeria, graduates who work in well paid organizations marry earlier than those in poor remunerated jobs. This is because family life/marriage demands a lot of money especially in our traditional settings where the culture requires much from the groom. Marriage involves raising of kids and proper parenting; these also needs cash.

(ii) Family and work environment

Most work environments across the world are adjusting to meet the demands of the ever increasing women workers. Organisational policies that support the establishment of day-cares for children whose mothers work are promulgated daily. However, there are some organizations with difficult work environment that make workers exhausted at work; these workers are more likely to have difficulties focussing and taking care of their homes/families. This could negatively affect the relationship among couples, since women are more likely to be happier with men who help in domestic tasks.

Again, negative or positive feelings may follow a worker to the workplace because of the condition at the home (Lawler, Robertson & Hankins, undated). A difficult family where there is disagreements, conflicts, abuse, and violence, will likely produce negative effect on the worker and could affect his/her output at workplace. On the other hand, a family that is under control will produce positive work attitude on the worker. Meaning, workers from good homes are more likely to perform better than those from broken or difficult families.

(iii) Work, role conflict and role overload at home

Many families today are experiencing role conflict and role overload at home because of *role shifts* emanating from mothers and fathers working. Magid (1987), Lizotte and Litwak (1995) posit that, for families to enjoy peace and good marital life, creative strategies for balancing work and family or career and domestic tasks must be developed. In most families this strategy is lacking making role conflict among spouse inevitable.

Spouse who try to ensure that role conflict are avoided as well as please their counterpart end up carrying most of the domestic tasks on their shoulders. Role overload can also be on the house-help or domestic servants who will have to perform majority of the household task, which would have been done by couples. Role overload may occur when a young adult who married newly and have to combine work and family life which was not part of his/her life before. The incoming of children into the family is often a burden to both spouses who have to combine child-care and work. When imbalance occurs, one of the spouse bears the burden and thus experience domestic talks overload.

Work overload can also be experienced at the organizational level. An employee who have to cover or hold brief for a woman or a staff on maternity leave may have to work extra hard to carryout his/her routine as well as that of his/her

colleague on leave. This scenario is common in both the private and public sectors of the Nigerian economy. Role conflict may occur when a worker tries to carry out his/her routine as well as that of his/her colleague on leave. Under such circumstance, the output of the individual could be affected and may negatively impact on the overall performance of the unit or even the organization.

(iv) Work arrangement, leisure and parenting

Work arrangement especially among couples with dual careers and earnings complicates their commitments to household tasks. The issue of commitment is affecting parenting and spouse leisure period with children and other members of the family. In cases where both spouses work, office schedules such as overtime, work at nights, holidays, and weekends; leaves couples with little time for themselves and family. Hodson and Sullivan (2002), observe that the problem of parenting and leisure among spouse is worst when they decide to bring work home, making the home an extension of the workplace.

Proximity of workplace and home is another major challenge to parenting in Nigeria especially in mega cities where working-class spouses have to wake up very early to beat traffic and get to work on time. It was severally reported that some children in Lagos city, Nigeria, called their parents (father) uncle, while their mother aunty, because such spouse have little or no time with their children/family. A child who wakes up in the morning and do not see either of the parent, goes to bed without seeing them because the father or mother arrives home when the child is in bed; such a child is more likely to have parenting problem. Children like that are left in the hands and mercies of domestic staff or relatives. The situation is even worst in some sectors (like the banking sector) where work extends to weekends, and most staff have to close late in order to balance accounts for the day.

(v) The family, choice of work and year of entering the labour market

The choice of work and the year of entering the labour market in Nigeria is not made in a vacuum. It is conditioned by a number of variables including the family/home, children, friends, availability of jobs, hired help/domestic staff, school, social group, self-image, religion/church, proximity to the home, etc (Mortimer, Lorence & Kumka, 1986). The financial state/status of the family may also spore spouse to choose whether to work or not, or even when both spouse should work and retire.

The families in Nigeria where one of the spouse is working, the take-home-pay from workplace could influence the other spouse decision on whether to pick-up a job or not. The *choice of work* by families in Nigeria is also conditioned by *work and time schedule* in the proposed job. Families with kids aged 0 to 10 years may avoid jobs that give them little or no time for proper parenting of their children. The choice of part-time or full-time employment by spouses in Nigeria is defined by the nature of the job itself, the reward and whether the family is a young one without kids

(vi) Family and turnover or occupational mobility

The turnover rate among youths who are not married in Nigeria is high. Turnover here means moving from one occupation to another; it could involve moving from one location to another or changing jobs at different locality. Although, Agba and Ushie (2010) observe that turnover in Nigerian hospitality industry is conditioned by remuneration or motivational incentives, it is also true that some persons/workers who are married will avoid changing jobs and locations because of their children schools; family business or job of the other spouse.

On the other hand, some spouses in Nigeria who cannot take care of their families obligations/responsibilities because of poor remuneration, considers turnover or relocation as best option to better their living condition. Seeking for *greener pasture* for the family have lead many spouse into turnover in Nigeria. Thus, the symbolic relationship between family life and labour turnover in Nigeria cannot be relegated to the background. Organizational experts who ignore this fact are likely to face challenges when making turnover policies or recommendations to government or any formal entity.

(vii) The family and fringe benefit policies of organizations

Some organizations in Nigeria are using family related benefits to help their employees coordinate their families and work. This is obtainable mostly in the petroleum sector, some federal government parastatals, agencies and departments. Leave benefits such as maternity and family leaves, children and health insurance schemes, are provided by some employers' to ease the problem of coordinating the family and work. These incentives or benefits could be a lift from advanced industrialized nations. According to Ferber and O'Farrell (1991), most organizations and even government establishments in advanced countries make family-related fringe benefits such as maternity and paternity leaves to help ease spouses' transition into parenthood. They posit that national legislation in such

countries further guaranteed and propelled the frontiers of employment leaves/benefits in organizations.

While most public and private organizations accept maternity leave for their female workers; paternity leave is highly objected in Nigeria. This is not unconnected with lack of national legislations that guarantees employees' rights, protection for mothers and eliminates all forms of discrimination. Suggesting that, the 8th National Assembly in Nigeria has a lot of bills to pass into law to salvage the Nigerian worker. The National assembly have to also look at existing laws and ensure compliance by stakeholders.

(viii) Work and arrival of children

Like other advanced industrialized countries, Nigeria is experiencing a decline in birth rates among educated and well-exposed workers. The number of children born by women, who work in well paid but tasking organizations, dwindles yearly. Births in such families range between 1 to 3 children; as against 5 to 7 children, which was the order of the day before industrialization. Although, health, sex, and family planning education is helping in many ways to curtail unwanted pregnancy among *working-class-women*, the level of spouses' education and work-place policies significantly influence the arrival and number of kids couples may want to have.

It is a common characteristic in some organizations in Nigeria that workers especially female employees do not marry until they clock certain age. This importantly determines the number of children couples will have, considering the age they enter into marriage and the years of child-upbringing. Although, not very common in Nigeria, about 0.2 percent of couples may decide not to have children; the figure is insignificant because African culture generally frown at childless couples or families. Hodson and Sullivan (2002) observe that in the U.S, over 10 percent of couples intentionally decide not to have children; reasons includes spouses' inability to combine childcare with work; or rightful refusal to have children.

Ways for proper integration of work with family life

Given the increasing rate of working-class couples in Nigeria; and the symbiotic correlates between work and family, there is need for proper integration. The family cannot do without work; likewise, organisations cannot survive with workers. We therefore recommend the following as proper ways of integrating work with family life, to avoid negative effects on each other:

- (i) Most family/couples suffered combining work with child parenting because of lack of nearby childcare facilities. We suggest that on-site child care should be provided especially in big organizations to ease the child-care burdens of young couples. Alternatively, organizations that share the same premises can jointly provide child-care facilities at a nearby location to cater for their staff with children between the ages 0 to 2 years.
- (ii) Childcare is not just the responsibility of women. Men play significant role too. While maternity leaves are granted to women in Nigeria, heads of formal organizations should make policies that will enable men to go on paternity leave as is obtainable in most developed or advanced industrialized countries. These calls for relevant legislative bodies in the country to make laws that eliminate all forms of discriminations at workplace. This will enable men and women in formal organizations to enjoy the same privilege when it comes to leave and other family-related fringe benefits.
- (iii) Employers of labour can reschedule talks or jobs at workplace to provide more flexible time for workers to alternate between work and their families. It includes providing time for break, school-runs, and weekend holidays for workers. Flexible time should include time for arrival and time to leave the workplace.
- (iv) Top-up salaries should be provided by employers to enable employees hire the services of domestic servants/staff.
- (v) Couples should also learn how to complement each other. Home talks should be arranged to avoid role conflict or overload, although the culture in Nigeria prescribes domestic talks for women, the male couple should assist significantly in household activities. This will go a long way in making the family and marriage a happy one.
- (vi) Couples should realistically evaluate their job decision. Consideration should be given on whether to work full-time, part-time, or pick a permanent job. Occupational mobility should be well considered by couples before embarking on one.
- (vii) Employees should also learn how to plan ahead for the next working day. This includes using weekends to plan for meals, chores, and other household activities. The clothes for the next day's work and other items should be properly arranged. It will help to avoid morning rush. This suggests that, employees should not take their office work home. Time should be created for leisure and proper parenting.

- (viii) Couples should learn how to set priorities or organize family activities based on most essential tasks. It involves careful consideration of tasks that is quintessential to the health and safety of family members at all times.
- (ix) Government should make laws that mandate employers of labour to provide conducive work environment for workers. The law should ensure that workplaces in Nigeria are safe and healthy for workers. Stress free/minimal work environment should be provided for workers. This will enable workers put in their best as well as reduce the transfer of stress to their individual homes.

Conclusion

There is a significant symbiotic relationship between work and family life. There is also potential conflict between family life and work especially when both couples are working. Vast number of literature across the world revealed that managing responsibilities of work and family remain a high profile task for working parents. In Nigeria, the situation is not different, a great number of couples are finding it difficult to blend work with family chores or talks; and this is affecting their productivity at work place and performance at home. It is also responsible for stress, physical and emotional health challenges among many couples in the country. We acknowledge all these challenges in this study, and thus recommended a balance and proper integration of work with family life as a panacea for reducing worker (spouses) stress, increase their performance at home and workplace as well as help in keeping the individual workers and family physically and emotionally healthy.

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