

Family- Interference with work as a predictor of Marital Conflict and Depression among Women in Enugu South-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract:- The study investigated the family interference with work as a predictor of marital conflict and depression among women in Enugu. Using Criterion Sampling Technique, 114 mothers teaching in two schools in Enugu metropolis of Enugu state were drawn to participate in the study; comprising 60 mothers from Union Boys Secondary School and 54 mothers from Idaw River Girls Secondary School. Okonkwo (2009) family interference with work subscale, Omeje (1998) marital conflict behaviour checklist scale and Radloff (1977) center for Epidemiological studies depression scale (CES-D) were administered individually to the participants. A co-relational design and multiple regression statistics were used for data collection and analysis to test the hypothesis which states that family interference with work and marital conflict would neither jointly nor independently predict depression among women in Enugu. Result showed that family interference with work and marital conflict neither jointly nor independently predicted depression among mothers in the teaching sector. ($R^2 = .039$, $F(2, 114) = 2.27$, $P > .05$) level of significance and $F1W = 1.01$ ($t = 1.94$, NS) and marital conflict = $.07$ ($t = .78$ NS). These outcomes indicated that there is no significant relationship between the predictor variables (FIW and marital conflict) and the criterion variable (depression), $R = .198$. It was suggested that other variables capable of influencing depression should be studied. Since non significant (ns) was established between the three variables. Since family interference with work and marital conflict does not predict depression, women should take up teaching jobs and family responsibilities.

Keywords: *Family- interference with work, marital conflict, Depression, Teaching and Women.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social animals hence they are involved in different interpersonal relationships. One of such relationships is marriage. Marriage is one of the developmental tasks to be accomplished by any well-adjusted adult in every culture except for religious reasons. It is the union of male and female who have consented to live together as husband and wife most times for the purpose of procreation indirectly perpetuating the society. At a certain age, it is expected that a man (woman also) should leave his parents and get united with a woman (or man) of his/her choice. These two consenting adults come together with differences in background notwithstanding, to establish a family. The family is the basic unit of the society and has many functions to perform. Such functions include socialization of children, economic cooperation, care, supervision, monitoring and interaction, legitimizing sexual relations; reproduction; provision of status (social-familial attributes such as socio-economic status, ascribed birth order and achievement-based on individual effort and affection, emotional support and companionship (Schiamberg, 1983).

To accomplish these goals, division of labour becomes imperative. Traditionally, responsibilities were delegated to the people who volunteered to form a union and establish their family. These people are the male (father) and the female (mother). While the male is charged with the responsibilities of providing all the resources necessary for the family upkeep and fulfillment of other responsibilities, the females are charged with the responsibilities of socialization, caring, monitoring and emotional support and companionship. Since men are charged with economic responsibilities, they are expected to work outside the family in order to accumulate funds. To do this, they are expected to go into the world of paid employment. Women on the other hand, were expected to function within the family to take care of the psychological, physical, moral, social and emotional needs of the family members. The women nurture and manage the resources provided by their husbands. They were referred to as "oriaku" (wealth consumer) or odoziaku (wealth manageress). In recent times, the economic demands of the family have become wided that men's effort to provide for their families has limited impact hence the women are forced into paid labour/employment. Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics (1984), recorded that 48% of Nigerian women participated fully in agricultural production at all levels. Most recently, women engage in policy making and management at all levels of the economy thereby contributing to national development as workers (Onimode, 1998). Okiy (2002) observed that women in Nigeria like in other places, have found themselves in various professions such as, medicine, teaching, nursing, ministerial positions and in the legislative houses.

In Nigeria, it is a policy now that 35% of any appointment by government must go to women. Cognizance of the fact that women are at liberty to go into any profession, majority of them are found in human services profession. These professions are characterized by high level of interpersonal transactions and exposure to emotionally-demanding situations (Okonkwo, 2009). It has been noted that teaching profession appears to be more demanding than other human services professions (Mgbenkemdi in press). Everyday observation of activities or tasks of a teacher would reveal that teachers are overwhelmed with demands from students, parents, school management, principal and government; they spend much time in their offices and even extend the office work at homes. The future of these children would depend on how well the teachers are able to fulfill these tasks thus:

Teaching is a profession. And teachers are terrific professionals. They must be knowledgeable about such important things as child and adolescent development, learning theory, educational philosophy, history of education, and the like.

Teachers must also be subject experts! They select content, organize content, update content, and then deliver content in their disciplines. Clearly, they must know their subjects!

But knowledge, alone, does not make for a complete and competent teacher. In reality, very few students will be inspired and motivated solely by a teacher's professional and subject knowledge.

The best teachers are also good ACTORS/ACTRESSES! Skills relating to vocal expression, bodily actions, role-playing, and the use of space and props need to be honed. Techniques for generating surprise, creating suspense, and using humor in the classroom are other acting skills to master.

Teachers are also MANAGERS/MANAGRESSES! Techniques for planning, coordinating, commanding, controlling, organizing, guiding, coaching and facilitating are required. Classroom management skills are needed to ensure that all learners have an equal opportunity to learn. Note that **equal** opportunity does NOT mean the **same** opportunity.

Teachers must also be DEVELOPERS! They create and adapt a wide variety of audio –visual teaching materials for instructional use. Teachers need to be skilled in using both traditional tools and the technological tools like computer to enhance their professional productivity.

Teachers must teach with a PARENTAL HEART! Teachers are parents and are expected to create a family culture in their classrooms and schools. They need to feel that students are also their children and therefore committed to invest all of their heart into the children with the hope that the students will become the future kings/queens.

And finally, teachers must also be accomplished SELLERS! They need to be able to sell their subjects to students. Like good sales people, the best teachers will know their audience, plan the campaign accordingly, and then motivate their students to buy into their product, which is education!

Similarly, among many tasks of a teacher according to Gorki & Covert (2000), were thus:

- To have every student achieve his or her potential.
- To learn how to learn and think critically.
- To encourage students to take an active role in their own education by bringing in their stories and experiences into the classroom.
- To address diverse learning style.
- To appreciate the contributions of different groups who have contributed to our knowledge base.
- To develop positive attitudes about groups of people who are different from ourselves.
- To become good citizens of the school, the community, the country, and the world.
- To learn how to evaluate knowledge from different perspectives.
- To develop an ethnic, national, and global identity.
- To provide decision-making skills and critical-analysis skills so the students can make better choices in their everyday lives.

Thus, it would be deduced from the above assertions that teaching job is time consuming and energy sapping. This notwithstanding, women still go into the profession and majority end up as form teachers, labour mistresses, sport mistresses and house mistresses. However, despite participation of women in paid employment, they are still responsible for nurturing of the family members. Thus the women shoulder dual responsibilities: home maker and breadwinner. This dual responsibilities call for a balance. To strike a balance between family and work responsibilities, women are caught between cross-role demands of family responsibilities and work-behaviour expectation. Thus the cross-role demands seem to result in interference between family and work. This family and

work interferences at times result in marital –conflict leading to depression. Marital conflict according to Risdal and Singer (2004) is the situation of having the lowest level of family harmony. Family interference with work has been described as form of conflict in which pressures from family and work are incompatible. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) see it as a situation in which participation in one role makes it difficult for participation in the other role to take place. Thus, it could be posited that family-work conflict is bidirectional. While family interferes with work roles, work interferes with family roles. In other words, work interferes with family when work schedules make it difficult to attend to family responsibilities like cooking, shopping, attending to children’s emotional and psychological needs, washing, attending to social obligations etc. On the other hand, family interferes with work when due to family responsibilities, official deadlines are not met, and punctuality is neglected and overall output declines (Omeje, 2012).

The impact of family on work and vice versa depends on a number of factors namely:

1. Level of involvement in family and work: Wiley (1987) observed that high level of involvement in family is associated with high level of work conflict; this is because, if one is highly involved in family, the tendency is that work responsibilities would be neglected and this would result in conflict.
2. Nature of the job whether it is flexible or not. High job flexibility co-relates positively with low level of family interference with work (Ngo,1992), if the job is such that some of the duties could be handled at home, then it is likely that the individual could attend to family responsibilities as well as official duties thereby minimizing conflict.
3. Family conditions like number and age of the children, presence or absence of house-helps and social support network: Presence of these social support networks is associated with low conflict while absence is associated with high conflict. Moreover, the younger the children, the more attention and time required hence the higher the conflict.
4. Psychological identification with family or work. Any domain that gives more meaning and enhances the ego of the women gains more attention than the other.

Family interference with work is also multidimensional. It is strain-based, time-based and behavior-based (Carlson, Brooklyn Derr & Wadsworth 2003). Strain-based is characterized by the anxiety, tension, depression experienced in one role spilling over to the other role and affects performance of the other role; Time based occurs when the time spent in one role makes it difficult to participate in the other role and behavior based occurs when behaviours apposite to one role is incompatible with behavior expectations of other role.

Looking at the dimensions of family interference with work and the factors that influence it, it could be asserted that these conditions are present in the teaching profession. Teaching job is less flexible, time consuming, ego involving, strain-inducing and the behaviours are incompatible with family roles.

II. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

The nature of man makes it imperative that work and family roles must be fulfilled. The demands of family and work make marital- conflict inevitable. Participation in one role most certainly interferes with participation in the other hence conflict becomes imperative and omnipresent. This is because of limited resources in terms of time, energy, money and inability of man to be at different places at the same time. It is impossible that man will be in the work place and at the same time be in the home. Moreover, money and time are limited that you can hardly have enough to attend to the demands of daily living. These conditions notwithstanding, effort must be made to strike a balance since the two roles are indispensable part of human existence especially for the female gender. As such, were it becomes impossible to strike a balance; there is every tendency that it might lead to depression. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning. It can cause pain for both the person with depression and those who care about him or her (family/work roles). Depression is refers to as mood disorder or a state of low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being. It is characterized by disappointment, self criticism, low self-concept, sadness, guilt and boredom, lack of interest, feeling of helplessness, lack of meaning in life and suicidal ideation in case of psychotic depression (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 2009).

III. ROLE-STRAIN THEORY

There are many theories postulated to explain family -interference with work but for this study, Role-Strain Theory appears most appropriate. The theory postulates that family responsibilities compete with work responsibilities for limited time, physical energy and psychological resources (Chapman, Infersork-Dayton & Neal, 1994, & Small & Riley 1990). William & Alliger (1994) contend that competition for these limited resources by the family and work responsibilities lead to increased role conflict and role overload which results in negative consequences in both family place and the work. The theory contends that long hours of work (like we have in the class room) have negative effects on families and for teachers who struggle to strike a balance between family and

work demands (Hubbarrt 1997). Carlson, Kacmer & Williams (2000), noted that family- interference with work occurs when the amount of time devoted to one role makes it difficult for the person to participate in another role. For instance, if one devotes long hours at home or works, it is most likely to be impossible for the same person to find enough time for work or family hence conflict becomes inevitable. Gutek, Searle & Kiepa (1991) observed that the amount of time devoted to work, contributes to conflict between work and normal life of the individual.

Applying the Role-Strain theory to family-interference with work among mothers in the teaching job, attending to family responsibilities (e.g. child bearing and socialization, carrying out house hold chores, attending to the demand from spouse and relations) and work responsibilities (punctualities, administrative deadlines, service delivery) may compete for the limited resources (time, energy and psychological resources). This competition may make it difficult for working mothers in the teaching job to participate effectively in both family and work hence Role-Strain theory would be inevitable. Since it appears that getting into paid employment and shouldering family responsibilities result in marital conflict, it would be necessary to investigate the effect on the personality of those women.

Marital conflict according to Risdal and Singer (2004) is the situation of having the lowest level of family harmony. Omeje (2000) noted that marital conflict arises when one person in a relationship pursues his/her goals and in doing so, interferes with the other person's goals. Imobighe (1995) defined marital conflict as a condition of disharmony in an interactional process. Considering the fact that working mothers battle with conflict emanating from the dual responsibilities, could it be deduced that their marriage would be affected? Studies have been conducted to explore how far family interference with work influences marriage life of female workers since women are those who caught up in the web of marital conflict. Results have shown that family interference with work predicts burn out, marital conflict and depression (Raven & Ruby, 1983). This is as a result of inbuilt stress in the family interference with work relationship. It has also been observed that some devastating consequences accompany conflict especially in close relationship like marriage. These include externalizing problems such as conduct disorder, aggression, divorce, child delinquency, and antisocial behavior while internalizing problems include depression, withdrawal, anxiety as well as being predictive of behavioural problems in children of divorce (Emery, 1988 & Rutter, 1991). Major, Klein and Erhart (2012) found that family interference with work significantly correlated with depression. Voyandoff (1988) noted that family interference with work influenced a variety of outcomes (e.g depression). Stoeva, Chui & Greenhaus (2007) formed that negative affectivity and burnout are related to the three dimensions of family interference with work (Time, Strain & Behaviour).

IV. BEHAVIOURAL THEORY OF DEPRESSION

This theory emphasizes the organism's overt behaviours that can be directly observed, recorded, categorized and measured. Thus the theory postulates that both normal and abnormal behaviours can be learnt or unlearned. Specifically, in this study, the focus is on the depressive condition of the participants who are working mothers in the teaching profession. As the woman struggle to strike a balance between family responsibilities and work roles, were they depressed? Studies have been conducted to explore how far family interference with work influences the personality of these working mothers. Watson (1958) asserts that depression results from faulty learning. Considering the fact that working mothers battle with conflict emanating from the dual responsibilities, could it be inferred that their personality would be affected? This could be how they may have learnt to handle realistically predicting depression. Wetzel (1999) opined that activity of depressed persons and the feeling of sadness are partly due to the low rate of positive reinforcement and a high rate of unpleasant experiences.

In relation to stressful life experiences, studies have revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between stressful life experience and depression. Since in the extent literature, these studies carried out in non-Igbo culture, revealed that family interference with work impact negatively in the personality of female workers, the present study is not in tandem or did not explore this relationship in Igbo cultural environment. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between family interference with work and marital conflict would jointly or independently predict depression among mothers teaching in Enugu. It was hypothesized as follows:

1. That family interference with work and marital conflict would neither jointly nor independently predict depression among mothers teaching in Enugu.

V. METHODS

Participants:

A total of 114 mothers teaching in two schools in Enugu metropolis using criterion sampling technique. Their ages ranged between 25 and 55 years. They were all Christians, have Igbo cultural background and possessed a minimum educational qualification of Ordinary National Diploma (OND). They were all living with their husbands, having at least one child. They have taught as a teacher for over two years.

Instrument:

Three instruments were employed in the study, namely Okonkwo (2009) family interference with work subscale, Omeje (1998) marital conflict behavior checklist scale and Radloff (1977) center for epidemiological studies depression scale (CES-D).

Family interference with work (Okonkwo, 2009)

This is a subscale of (Okonkwo, 2009) family interference with work (FIW). It has 14 items which measure family interference with work. It has 5 response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Okonwo (2009) obtained Cronbach Alpha of .88 and convergent validity of 0.55 hence the instrument was considered valid and reliable.

VI. MARITAL CONFLICT BEHAVIOUR CHECKLIST SCALE

Omeje (1998), 37-item marital conflict behavior checklist scale measuring marital conflict with the reliability and validity index of 0.94 and 0.80 respectively. The MCBC was designed to assess the presence of conflict based on its frequency in marital relationships. Each item in the instrument was scored on a four point scale: rarely=1, sometimes=2, often=3 and always=4. The participants were instructed to place a check mark () in the column that best described their status. Based on the scores reflected by the frequency of the items in the lives of the participants, they were classified into high or low conflict groups using the median score as the point of discrimination. The MCBC has been used in both clinical practice and research with Nigerian Samples (Mgbenkemdi, 2014) and has been shown to be a reliable and valid instrument.

VII. CENTER FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES-DEPRESSION SCALE (CES-D)

This is a standardized psychological assessment instrument developed by Radloff (1977) and validated for use with Nigerian samples by Okafor (1997) with reliability index of 0.85, Ugwu (1998) with concurrent validity index of 0.41 and Omeje (2000) with reliability and validity index of 0.85 and 0.92 respectively. The instrument contains 20-items designed to measure symptoms of depression in the general population. The scale was developed at the American Institute of Marital Health. It is scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 4 (always). But, items 4, 8, 12 and 16 reflect positive outcomes and are scored in the reverse order, for instance rarely (4) to always (1). The remaining 16-items reflect negative outcome. The participants were instructed to report the frequency with which the 20-items were experienced within the previous 6 months. If any participants scored above 20, that indicated the participant had experienced depression.

VIII. PROCEDURE

The permission and cooperation of the school principals were solicited and obtained. 200 copies of each of the instruments were produced and distributed to the participants in the two schools. Out of these, only 114 were completed correctly, 50 were poorly completed and 36 copies were not recovered. 4 research assistants 2 from each school helped the researcher to collect the data. Participants were told that participating in the study was voluntary and they received no financial or monetary reward for their participation in the study.

IX. DESIGN AND STATISTICS

A co-relational design and multiple regression statistics were used for data collection and analysis.

X. RESULT

Table I summary table of multiple regression in Depression among mothers teaching in Enugu the role of Family Interference with Work and Marital Conflict.

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	B	Beta	t	p	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	P
Depression						.198	.039	.022	2.27	p>.05
	FIW	1.012	.181	1.943	.06					
	Marital conflict	.092	.073	.781	.44					

From the table above, the data revealed that FIW and marital conflict jointly did not predict depression among mothers teaching in Enugu of R² = .039, F (2, 113) = 2.27, P< .05 level of significance. These outcomes indicated that there is no significant relationship between the predictor variables (FIW and marital conflict) and the criterion variable (depression), R=.198. That is to say that the predictor variables (FIW and marital conflict) accounted for 2.2% of the variation in the criterion variable (depression) Adjusted R²=.022.

On the other hand, the regression coefficient for FIW was 1.01 and marital conflict (b) was .07. Hence, it will be concluded that the predictor variables and the criterion variables were positively co-related. Therefore, these population regression coefficients for FIW ($t=1.94$, ns) and marital conflict ($t=.78$, ns), meaning that the standard regression coefficients indicated that FIW and marital conflict independently did not predict depression among mothers teaching in Enugu.

XI. DISCUSSION

The result of this study showed no significant relationship between family interference with work and marital conflict hence the hypothesis which stated that family interference with work and marital conflict would neither jointly nor independently predict depression among mothers teaching in Enugu was accepted. This is in contrast to Sonnentag (2001); Major et al (2002) and Parasuraman (1996). This incongruence could be explained by cultural variation. In Igbo-African culture, women who succeed in getting into paid employment have a sense of accomplishment. Moreover, the earning capacity empowers the women with the resources they need to obtain health services when necessary. Thus, even when there is conflict between family and work, the resources accruable from work domain tend to douse its impact on the workers hence they remain peaceful. Besides, financial empowerment from the job enables women procure the necessary resources and support that will always ameliorate the impact of family-work conflict. The women can pay for the services needed so that she has time to take care of herself always. It could be asserted that women empowerment therefore engenders vitality, freedom from worry, opportunity for increase in financial security, strengthened parenting competence, personal satisfaction and self fulfillment. The result of this study has implication for employers of labour. Employers especially in teaching professions are encouraged to engage the services of women since the conflict resulting from this dual role (family-work) does not affect their marriage and personality. Women are also encouraged to seek employment opportunities especially in the schools since the result of this study did not show any significant relationship between the family interference with work and marital conflict did not predict depression. Although the finding indicated no significant relationship between family-interference with work and marital conflict as a predictor of depression the study has its weakness. The population and the sample size are too small compared with number of female teachers. Thus, it is suggested that further research be carried out to expand the areas of application of this finding. It is also necessary that other variables like coping strategies, job description/status, work environment and educational background be explored that would influence depression, but also in other establishments. The results from such studies will help to strengthen the validity of this finding and help employers of labour in personnel recruitment.

XII. CONCLUSION

The economic demands of the family make it imperative on women to engage in dual role activities. Thus women are found in paid employment while at the same time attend to their family responsibilities. These dual role activities result in conflict which has been associated with negative outcomes like marital conflicts. Fortunately, the result of the present study has shown that family-work and marital conflict has no significant relationship with depression of workers specifically, teaching mothers in the school sector. It is therefore concluded that women should take up jobs in the teaching sectors since conflict resulting from the dual roles they perform does not affect their personality (depression). Moreover, employers of labour should not hesitate to recruit women even when they are married since the result seems to allay the fears that are usually associated with mothers and level of productivity. If anything should come between working women and productivity, definitely it is not their personality (depression) based on the result of this present study.

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