

Occupational Workload Of Female Employees And Family-Life Balance In Upscale Hotels In Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

In Nigeria, female employees form a significant portion of the workforce in the hotel industry. The hotel industry is however known for its physically and emotionally demanding nature which is as a result of long working hours and high level of customer interactions. This study examines occupational workload impact on job satisfaction, physical and mental well-being, and family responsibilities of female employees in upscale hotels. The study adopted survey research design. Multistage sampling technique was used to draw samples from the study population; purposive sampling method was utilized to select Lagos State, being Nigeria's most populous city, commercial nerve centre and the location with the highest concentration of upscale hotels. Stratified sampling method was further used to classify upscale hotels as a population sub-stratum from all hotels in Lagos. Simple random sampling method was used to select 15 upscale-hotels and 20 female-employees were selected from each of the upscale hotels using snowball method. This gives a total of 300 sample size, out of which only 275 questionnaire were returned valid. Findings from the study revealed that, dealing with challenging customers ($M = 4.01$; $SD = 1.13$) is the most prominent workload stress. Also, opportunities for professional growth and career advancement ($M = 4.01$; $SD = 1.04$) is reported to influence job satisfaction and professional fulfillment despite the workload. Majority (86.2%) of the respondents reported that they get physically exhausted from their job on daily basis ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.13$). Majority (68.4%) of the respondents also reported that they experience inappropriate comments and behaviors related to gender as a result of their job workload considering family responsibilities and social expectations. The study found that there is a significant ($p = 0.001$) relationship between workload stress and job satisfaction among female employees. Also, majority (73.5%) of the respondents reported that family and societal responsibilities of women do intersect with occupational workload in upscale hotels ($M = 3.12$; $SD = 1.25$). The study concluded that occupational workload in the upscale hotels negatively affects female workers' family-life balance. The study recommends implementation of flexible work schedules that would help female employees balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Keywords: Family-Life Balance, Female Employee, Upscale Hotels, Workload

Date of Submission: 08-09-2025

Date of Acceptance: 18-09-2025

I. Introduction

The hotel industry refers to establishments which provide accommodation, food, drink and other ancillary services to people who are "away from home"; it significantly contributes to global economies by creating employment opportunities (Baker *et al.*, 2014). The hotel industry, known for its dynamic and service-driven nature, relies heavily on human resources, with women constituting a 55% proportion of its workforce (Baum, 2013). Issue of occupational workload has gained prominence in the hotel industry particularly its impacts on female employees. It is important to recognize that the hotel industry often operates long and irregular hours, which can be particularly challenging for female employees, especially those with families; this can lead to higher level of stress and burnout, impacting their overall well-being (Faraaj, 2016).

Female employees face the challenges of balancing societal expectations with professional responsibilities, leading to increased stress and adverse effects on their health and career progression (Sampson and Akyeampong, 2014). In addition, the physical demands of certain roles in the hotel industry such as housekeeping and food service, can take a toll on the health of female employees. This can lead to issues like musculoskeletal disorders and fatigue, which can have long term effects on their health and job satisfaction (Afonso *et al.*, 2017) Furthermore, the nature of work in the hotel industry often involves dealing with demanding customers and high-pressure situations. This can lead to emotional exhaustion and mental health

challenges for female employees (Afonso et al., 2017). On the positive side, there are also studies that have highlighted the resilience and adaptability of female employees in the hotel industry (Yu et al., 2012; Peng & Cao, 2016). Many women have shown great strength in navigating the challenges they face and have also played a significant role in driving positive changes in the hotel industry (Yildiz et al., 2021). As women continue to contribute effortlessly and significantly to the hotel industry, understanding the effects of occupational workload on their well-being and professional experiences becomes very important.

In recent time, the emergence of upscale hotels in Nigeria has been on the rise and this remarkable growth is no doubt contributing to the nation's economic landscape. However, this expansion has raised concerns about the well-being of its workforce, particularly female employees who are exposed to a demanding occupational workload. Despite the essential role that women play in the hotel industry, little is known about how their occupational workload specifically affects their professional and personal lives. There is paucity of information on the challenges faced by female employees in upscale hotels in Nigeria, especially regarding work-family conflicts, career stagnation, and health implications. This gap hinders the formulation of policies that could improve working conditions and overall job satisfaction for female employees in this sector. This study therefore explores the effects of occupational workload on female employees and family-life balance in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria

Research Objectives

- i. Investigate the nature and extent of occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the influence of occupational workload on job satisfaction and professional fulfillment among female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- iii. Assess how occupational workload impacts the physical and mental wellbeing of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.
- iv. Examine the effect of family responsibilities on the occupational performance of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the nature and extent of occupational workload and the experiences of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and job satisfaction among female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and physical and mental well-being of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between family responsibilities and occupational performance of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

II. Overview Of Literature

Beehr and Newman (2019) define occupational stress as a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within the people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. Occupational stress can occur when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment/workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands. Stress related problems exert a heavy toll on individual's lives. (Cartwright et al., 2015). Females have played a significant and complex role in the hotel industry, facing both opportunities and challenges throughout history. Brownell and Walsh (2018) established that women in the hotel industry face particular difficulties due to the nature and traits of the industry.

These challenges that women face include family issues, work and life balance and long working hours (Denton et al., 2018). Because female employees must balance work and family obligations while adhering to traditional social norms that recognize them as the primary caregivers, women are more affected by this, particularly those who have a spouse and children. The pressure women face to perform well at work and at home, where dual roles are expected, has a significant negative impact on their commitment to their jobs and level of job satisfaction (Wen et al., 2019).

Struggling between personal and professional life, i.e., work-life balance is one of the major concerns for women, especially for working mothers (Greenhaus & Allen, 2017). Female employees may find it extremely difficult to stay motivated in the hospitality industry due to its fast-paced, demanding nature and frequently excessive workload (Patwardhan et al., 2016). Female hotel employees struggle to cope with high

levels of stress, with married women affected more severely because of the pressures of trying to maintain a home\workplace balance.

According to Pegg and Babal (2017), a number of complicated factors interact to create a significant barrier to motivation, including gender-specific challenges, work environment issues, and workload. Workload can deplete emotional reserves, resulting in detached and cynical thoughts and feelings that eventually erode motivation. When faced with a constant influx of tasks, effectively completing them all becomes challenging, hindering the sense of achievement that fuels motivation (Denton *et al.*, 2018). When career goals appear out of reach despite consistent effort, employees frequently become frustrated and cynical. This emotional depletion can cause feelings of hopelessness, making it difficult to manage demanding workloads (Pegg & Babal, 2017). Stagnant careers diminish the sense of purpose and value associated with work. This translates to lower commitment and engagement, making employees less inclined to go the extra mile or take on additional responsibilities, potentially impacting overall workload distribution (De Cieri & Ko, 2019).

The intrinsic motivation that drives initiative and effort is frequently fueled by a desire for growth and development. Without opportunities for advancement, motivation dwindles, potentially leading to a "go through the motions" mentality, affecting employee performance and contributing to increased workloads for others (Hekman, 2017). These effects often compound existing challenges faced by women in the hospitality industry, such as work-life conflict and societal expectations around childcare. The combination of a heavy workload, limited career prospects, and external pressures can create a significant burden, further perpetuating the cycle of demotivation and potentially leading to decreased productivity and job satisfaction (Blomme *et al.*, 2015). The demanding nature of the hotel industry, with long hours, unpredictable schedules, and physically demanding tasks, can have a negative impact on the health and well-being of female employees (Yu *et al.*, 2012).

While there is extensive research on occupational workload in the hotel industry (Pegg & Babal, 2017; Beehr & Newman, 2019; Wen *et al.*, 2019), very few studies focus specifically on female employees and the unique challenges they face. This study highlights the intersection of gender with occupational stress, examining how societal expectations, family responsibilities, and job demands affects women in this sector. Previous studies primarily examine occupational stress in a general context without delving into how gender-specific factors contribute to workload challenges. Also, work-life balance has been studied in various industries but, there is a lack of focus on how female employees in the hotel sector navigate the balance between work and family life. This study therefore addresses the gap by investigating work-life balance of women working in upscale hotels in Nigeria.

III. Methodology

This study adopted descriptive quantitative survey method as its research design. Data were gathered from a representative sample of female employees in selected upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to draw samples from the study population; purposive sampling method was first utilized to select Lagos State, being Nigeria's most populous city, commercial nerve center and the location with the highest concentration of hotels. Stratified sampling method was further used to classify upscale hotels as a population sub-stratum from all hotels in Lagos State. Simple random sampling method was further used to select 15 upscale-hotels and 20 female-employees were selected from each of the hotels using snowballing method. This gives a total of 300 sample size. Structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the selected respondents which is a primary means of data collection. The questionnaire was designed to cover the nature and extent of the occupational workload, impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing and other additional information. Data gathered were analysed with the use of frequency count, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation and Chi square tests were employed to analyse the research hypotheses.

IV. Results And Discussion Of Findings

Out of the 300 copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents for this study, only 275 respondents' properly filled questionnaire were returned valid, which represents 91.7% response rate. Therefore, data analysis for this study is based on the 275 validly returned questionnaire.

Nature of occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria

Table 1 shows results of varying situations that lead to occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. Majority of the respondents agreed to all the variables resulting to occupational workload. This implies that it is a common issue in most of the upscale hotels selected for the study. Regarding working overtime, 36.4% agree and 25.5% strongly agree that they often work extra hours, while 8.7% strongly disagree with a mean score of 3.64. 30.9% of the respondents agree and 28.4% strongly agree that they feel rushed to complete tasks with a mean score of 3.63, also for difficulty in meeting deadlines, 29.8% agree and 23.6% strongly agree with a mean score of 3.49, lastly, 46.2% strongly agree and

23.6% agree that they often deal with challenging customers with a mean of 4.01 (which is the variable with the highest mean). This implies that dealing with challenging customers is the most prominent issue posing occupational workload on the female employees.

Table 1: Nature of occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels.

Variables	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
I often have to work overtime or extra hours	24 (8.7%)	16 (5.8%)	65 (23.6%)	100 (36.4%)	70 (25.5%)	3.64	1.18
I feel rushed or pressured to complete tasks quickly	19 (6.9%)	31 (11.3%)	62 (22.5%)	85 (30.9%)	78 (28.4%)	3.63	1.20
I have difficulty in meeting deadlines due to workload demands	22 (8.0%)	32 (11.6%)	74 (26.9%)	82 (29.8%)	65 (23.6%)	3.49	1.20
My job requires me to deal with challenging customers	9 (3.3%)	22 (8.0%)	52 (18.9%)	65 (23.6%)	127 (46.2%)	4.01	1.13

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Influence of occupational workload on job satisfaction and professional fulfillment among female employees in Upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria

Table 2 presents result of the influence of occupational workload on job satisfaction and professional fulfillment among female employees in upscale hotels in Nigeria. Majority of the respondents agreed with all the variables assessed. 45.5% agree and 19.6% strongly agree that they are satisfied with their jobs, while only 5.1% strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.65, suggesting moderate satisfaction. Also, 37.8% agree and 20.7% strongly agree they have a good work-life balance, though a notable 26.5% are neutral. The mean score is 3.60, indicating moderate agreement, a strong majority feel appreciated at work, with 39.6% agreeing and 32.8% strongly agreeing. The mean score of 3.97 reflects positive sentiments. Also, most respondents feel they have opportunities for career advancement, with 30.3% agreeing and 40.9% strongly agreeing. The mean score of 4.01 suggests employees generally see good prospects for growth. Lastly, a significant portion (37.8%) strongly agree and 34.2% agree that they would recommend working in the hotel sector. The mean score of 3.91 indicates overall positive views toward the industry. From the above, it can be deduced that the occupational workload does not lead to job dissatisfaction for majority of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Influence of occupational workload on job satisfaction and professional fulfillment among female employees in Upscale hotels

Variables	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
I am satisfied with my current job in the hotel industry	14 (5.1%)	26 (9.5%)	56 (20.4%)	125 (45.5%)	54 (19.6%)	3.65	1.06
I have a good work life balance	12 (4.4%)	29 (10.5%)	73 (26.5%)	104 (37.8%)	57 (20.7%)	3.60	1.06
I feel my work is valued and appreciated	6 (2.2%)	10 (3.7%)	58 (21.6%)	106 (39.6%)	88 (32.8%)	3.97	.95
I have opportunities for professional growth and career advancement	9 (3.3%)	12 (4.4%)	58 (21.2%)	83 (30.3%)	112 (40.9%)	4.01	1.05
I would recommend working in the hotel sector to others	21 (7.6%)	11 (4.0%)	45 (16.4%)	94 (34.2%)	104 (37.8%)	3.91	1.18

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Impact of Occupational Workload on the physical and mental wellbeing of female employees in upscale hotels

Table 3 shows result of the impact of occupational workload on the physical and mental wellbeing of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State Nigeria. Majority of the respondents (59.7%) often or always feel physically exhausted from their work, with a mean score of 3.71, indicating frequent exhaustion. Also, for emotional exhaustion, majority (54.2%) of the respondents often or always feel emotionally drained, with a mean score of 3.54, showing obvious emotional strain. In addition, over half (56.7%) of the respondents often or always struggle to get enough sleep, with a mean score of 3.65, suggesting sleep issues are common among female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. Lastly, a little above average, (51.3%) of the total respondents for the study often or always find it difficult to balance work and personal life, with a mean score of 3.63, indicating the issue of work-life balance as a conspicuous challenge for female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Impact of occupational workload on the physical and mental wellbeing of female employees in upscale hotels

Variables	Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am always physically exhausted from my job on a daily basis	13 (4.7%)	25 (9.1%)	73 (26.5%)	81 (29.5%)	83 (30.2%)	3.71	1.13
I am always emotionally drained from my job on a daily basis	13 (4.7%)	32 (11.6%)	81 (29.5%)	91 (33.1%)	58 (21.1%)	3.54	1.09
I experience difficulty in getting enough sleep	10 (3.6%)	29 (10.5%)	80 (29.1%)	85 (30.9%)	71 (25.8%)	3.65	1.09
I experience difficulty in balancing work and personal life	13 (4.7%)	25 (9.1%)	96 (34.9%)	58 (21.1%)	83 (30.2%)	3.63	1.14

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Intersection of gender and workload, considering factors such as family responsibilities and societal expectations

Table 4 shows result of intersection of gender and workload considering family responsibilities and societal expectations from women. Majority of the respondents (sometimes - 31.6%, often - 15.3%, always – 12.0%) do experience difficulty in fulfilling family or childcare responsibilities as a result of stress from their office workload. Also, majority of the respondents (sometimes - 34.2%, often – 22.2%, always – 13.5%) do experience difficulty in attending social events or hobbies. In addition, majority of the respondents (sometimes - 32.0%, often - 18.5%, always – 12.7%) feel uncomfortable prioritizing their careers over family roles. Lastly, majority of the respondents (sometimes - 37.8%, often - 18.2%, always – 17.5%) reported that they experience inappropriate gender-related comments or behaviors from people within and outside their work places (M = 3.12; SD = 1.25). This implies that issues relating to inappropriate comments on the female gender in and outside workplaces obviously contribute to workload stress for female employees in upscale hotels in Nigeria.

Table 4: Intersection of gender and workload, considering factors such as family responsibilities and societal expectations

Variables	Never	Rarely	Some times	Often	Always	Mean	Std. Dev.
I experience difficulty in fulfilling family or childcare responsibilities as a result of stress from my office workload	78 (28.4%)	35 (12.7%)	87 (31.6%)	42 (15.3%)	33 (12.0%)	2.70	1.35
I experience difficulty in attending social events or hobbies	37 (13.5%)	46 (16.7%)	94 (34.2%)	61 (22.2%)	37 (13.5%)	3.05	1.21
I feel uncomfortable if I put my career ahead of traditional family roles	53 (19.3%)	48 (17.5%)	88 (32.0%)	51 (18.5%)	35 (12.7%)	2.88	1.28
I experience inappropriate comments or behaviors related to gender from people within and outside my work place	39 (14.2%)	34 (12.4%)	104 (37.8%)	50 (18.2%)	48 (17.5%)	3.12	1.25

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Results of Hypotheses Tested

The results of the four hypotheses tested for the study is presented in Table 5.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the nature and extent of occupational workload and the experiences of female employees. Since P-value 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the study conclude that there is a significant relationship between the nature and extent of occupational workload and the experiences of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and job satisfaction among female employees. Since P-value 0.001 is less than the significant level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the study conclude that there is a significant relationship between occupational workload and job satisfaction among female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and physical and mental wellbeing of female employees. Since the P-value (0.494), is greater than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted and the study conclude that there is no significant relationship between occupational

workload and its impact on the physical and mental well-being of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between family responsibilities and occupational performance of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. Since P-value 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the study conclude that there is a significant relationship between family responsibilities and occupational performance of female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Results of Hypotheses Tested

Hypothesis	T value	Df	Significance
H ₀₁ : There is no significant relationship between the nature and extent of occupational workload and the experiences of female employees.	49.330	16	0.000
H ₀₂ : There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and job satisfaction among female employees	44.416	20	0.001
H ₀₃ : There is no significant relationship between occupational workload and physical and mental well-being of female employees.	269.674	270	0.494
H ₀₄ : There is no significant relationship between family responsibilities and occupational performance of female employees in upscale hotels in Nigeria.	47.824	16	0.000

Discussion Of Findings

The study investigated the nature and extent of occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results indicate that a significant proportion of female employees often work overtime or extra hours, feel rushed to complete tasks quickly, and struggle to meet deadlines due to workload demands. This finding aligns with Denton et al. (2018), who identified long hours, shift work, and emotional demands as key stressors in the hospitality industry. The constant pressure to manage high workloads can lead to significant physical and mental strain, contributing to a challenging work environment.

The relationship between occupational workload and job satisfaction among female employees was another key focus of this study. The findings show that there is no significant relationship between high workload and job satisfaction amongst the sampled population. This implies that despite the workload, female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State are still satisfied with their job (that is, workload may not necessarily result into job dissatisfaction in all cases). This result negates the position of Sampson and Akyeampong (2014), who found that excessive workload leads to decreased motivation, engagement, and ultimately, higher employee turnover. Sampson and Akyeampong (2014) also reported that when employees are overburdened, they are less likely to feel satisfied with their jobs, which can affect their overall professional fulfillment. However, the implication of the researchers' findings in this study is that when employee motivational reward packages or programmes outweighs perceived job stress or excess workload, employees may likely remain satisfied with their job.

Despite the above findings, the study also found that female employees frequently feel physically exhausted, emotionally drained, and have difficulty getting enough sleep due to their job demands. This result is in agreement with Afonso *et al.* (2017), who noted that excessive workload in the hospitality industry is associated with physical health problems like musculoskeletal disorders, fatigue, and sleep disturbances. These health issues are compounded by the high levels of emotional labour required in hospitality roles, which can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. Afonso *et al.* (2017), also suggested that female employees are more susceptible to these issues due to societal pressures and limited coping mechanisms. The intersection of gender-related factors and occupational workload is another critical area explored in this study. The findings indicate that female employees often experience difficulty balancing work and family responsibilities, and they feel uncomfortable for prioritizing their careers over traditional family roles. Greenhaus and Allen (2017) state that work-family conflict exists when pressure from work and family roles are mutually incompatible. This conflict is particularly pronounced for women, who often bear the brunt of family responsibilities regardless of their own job requirements.

Providing flexible working arrangements can help employees balance their work and personal commitments, leading to increased job satisfaction and productivity. Supportive policies and practices, such as paid parental leave, flexible scheduling options, and predictable work hours, can significantly reduce work-family conflict and support working mothers. Stress management programs, such as workshops and counseling services, can help employees manage stress and its impact on mental health. Creating a supportive work environment that promotes inclusivity and offers clear career development pathways can also reduce workload pressures and retain talent in the industry.

V. Conclusion

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of the occupational workload experienced by female employees in upscale hotels in Lagos State, Nigeria. It also highlighted the effect of occupational workload on the job satisfaction, physical and mental well-being, and the intersection of gender-related factors. Findings revealed that female employees often work overtime, feel pressured to meet deadlines, and face demanding customer interactions, leading to physical and emotional exhaustion. These findings underscore the importance of supportive policies and interventions, such as flexible work arrangements, health and wellness initiatives, and stress management programs, to enhance the overall work experience for female employees. By addressing these challenges, the hotel industry can create a more equitable and supportive work environment for its female workforce.

Recommendation

1. **Flexible Work Arrangements:** There should be implementation of flexible work schedules to help female employees balance their professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.
2. **Health and Wellness Programs:** Employers should offer comprehensive health and wellness programs, including stress management workshops and access to counseling services.
3. **Supportive Policies:** There should be development of supportive policies such as paid parental leave, on-site childcare facilities, and predictable work hours to reduce work-family conflict.
4. **Employee Feedback Systems:** Employers should establish regular feedback mechanisms to understand the needs and challenges of female employees and to continuously improve the work environment.

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