



Consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to identify the challenges faced by working mothers in Makurdi Metropolis and to identify the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members. Two research questions guided the study. Mean and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. The study employed survey design. The population was 327 female bankers, the sample size was 118. Purposive sampling technique was used. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Based on the findings the challenges faced by working mothers were high stress load (3.73) and neglect of their husbands' sexual need (3.72). The consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members were: working mothers spent less time with their family members (3.73) and little attention is given to the children due to the stress experienced at work (3.63). The following were recommended: Marriage counselors should enlighten working mothers on how to manage stress, which when reduced will help them become less fatigued and helps them satisfy their husbands' sexual needs. Home economists that are time managers should help working mothers develop appropriate plans, which will help them with the proper management of their time. This will improve the quality of time spent with their children.

Keywords: Employment time, working mothers, consequences, Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Maternal employment time is the length of time spent by mothers in their place of work. The existence of the family has been affected by the working of mothers in our society. There are consequences on marriages and families when there is no balance between employment time and home life. Women have negative emotions when they lose out on family time or when they are not present in events that affect their families, due to work in their various places of employments. Maternal employment has long been considered one of the most important determinants of marital instability¹.

Maternal roles and the length of time in their work places negatively impact on them, which could threaten the unity and stability of marriages. Research on the effects of women's employment on marital quality suggested that maternal employment lowered marital quality². This is as a result of inadequate time spent together by women and their spouses. Maternal full time employment was associated with greater marital instability³.

Challenges faced by working class mothers: Working moms face challenges when they combine the work at home and office. They have to perform their maternal roles and must attend to work at the office. The following are some challenges faced by working class women:

Juggling maternal roles and responsibilities at work:

Mothers are obligated to perform their maternal roles, whether they are employed or not. Most times coping with work at home and in the office could be difficult. Combining the dual responsibilities is usually tasked. They have to balance motherhood, functions as wives and maintaining their sources of income. It requires planning and perseverance; successfully managing a career and meeting familial obligations is a realistic expectation for most working women⁴.

Lack of Flexibility at Work: In most working environments, there are no provisions for nursing mothers. No crèche or child care facilities. These usually cause instability and lack of concentration for mothers during work. They have to breastfeed their babies, change their diapers and sometimes give attention when needed for their children at various points. This occurs when babies are too young to be sent to child care services (between 2 to 4 months old). Some employers are not patient with nursing mothers; they do not accommodate flex time for family obligations in the office. In fact, some organizations in Nigeria do not employ married or pregnant women. Within legal guidelines established to protect mothers' rights, employers initiate their own individual policies relating to child care practices. Some progressive organizations, for example, make provisions for employer-sponsored child care alternatives extended to workers as a benefit.

Other employers allow flextime and other accommodations built-in to an employee's compensation package to account for pop-up family needs⁴.

Slow Career Mobility: In order to be mobile or climb the ladder of success in one's careers, focus and commitment is needed to achieve such goals. Work environments are usually competitive. Working mothers' career mobility is slow, when the obligations at home become obstacles to their career growth. The weight of family and child care at home is so much on mothers, that it decreases career mobility.

Missing Developmental Milestones Children: Developmental stages of children are important to family life. Periods they start crawling, standing, walking, talking, etc., usually help family unity and improves or strengthens parent child relationships. Unfortunately, due to work related absences mothers miss the developmental milestones of their children. Children develop on their own schedules, so balancing career obligations sometimes means missing out on important family milestones. While it can be challenging to reconcile work-related absences, working moms can benefit from modern communications technology, which keeps family members linked when apart⁵.

Childcare Shortcomings: The main concerns of most working class mothers are to find adequate, quality child care services/facilities for their children. Getting the right conducive environment for their children could be challenging. Some places have inadequate facilities, and they are not convenient for child care. In addition, when there are so many child care providers, the adequate and preferred ones are more expensive. Most mothers desire high standards for childcare, so finding adequate help can be a challenge for families. Convenience and affordability are what mothers desire most, but when there are stimulating environments that help in children's developmental growth the cost is not bargained. Child-rearing is expensive, so costs have a very strong influence on the paths families choose⁶.

When both parents work, the responsibility of a sick child usually falls on the mother: Unexpected absence of working mothers could be due to the sickness of their children, sometimes resulting into unplanned leave from work. In families where both parents work, it is expected that working mothers stay at home or in the hospital to take care of their sick children. It is opined that fathers have more job responsibilities and it is easier for mothers to be permitted by employers to stay at home for sick child care than fathers. Working mothers usually have piled work left for them when they return. In situations where mothers are not permitted to care for sick children or they engaged in important assignments, they feel sad and most times lose concentration. Around one in 10 working mothers feel guilty about their child care arrangements whatever those arrangements may be when their child is sick⁷.

Most working women are over fatigued or stressed and neglect their husbands' sexual satisfaction: After long hours of work, most working wives get home so stressed and

exhausted, all they want to do is have a good rest. The thought of sex is the last thing on their minds. Some working wives become angry with their spouses, because after a hard day's work they still have to do all their domestic responsibilities without assistance from their husbands. Due to the fatigue of wives, the result is usually little or no sexual desire from the wives, and sexual dissatisfaction of the husbands. This can also result in marital instability.

High stress load: Working mothers are stressed from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. They are stressed waking up early to cook, prepare the children for school, make sure they all leave home for school and work on time. Sometimes, she has to pick the children from school and go back to work, etc. These stress loads are quite high and it can affect relationships at home.

Consequences of the Employment Time of Working Mothers on family members: Wives employment time can be strenuous on the family. This can affect both husband and children in the home. Wives in dual-earner families who work full-time and who earn more than 50 percent of the family income do less housework, than if they earned less than 50 percent of the family income⁸. Employment time of working mothers has the following consequences on their family members:

Working mother spends less time devoted to the maintenance of the home: Time management is a major problem facing working class mothers. They spend less time in the care of the home and more time in their various offices. If time is not allotted to the various activities of the day, beginning from rising up in the morning till the last activity of the day, mothers become choked and unfulfilled at the end of the day. They have to plan for the day or make a To Do list, to enable them to catch up with each day. Housework is either delayed, avoided, or undertaken by other paid or unpaid labors. The sometimes hectic demands and schedules of couples' work life have also limited the amount of time and energy they have to develop to household life, and consequently have impacted the quality of household life⁹.

Husband compensates by increasing the time they contribute to the household work: When husbands help wives in household works, it may improve husbands' social integration into families and improve their well being. Prior research often finds that husbands work has a null or a positive relationship with women's health¹⁰. Women may benefit from the income that husbands earn or by having a husband who fulfills traditional gender roles. In households where there may be numerous demands to care for younger or older dependents. In those cases, women may benefit when husbands work somewhat less time and contributing more time to the households¹¹.

Working mothers spend less time with their family members: Due to the nature of their work, most working mothers spend less time with their family members, especially married female bankers who work 11-12 hours a day. They have less time with their family member, because of the stress experienced at work. These often results to the wayward behaviors of the children and the husbands due to the lack of monitoring, supervision and co-ordination of the home by mothers.

Time conflicts arise when the demands imposed by different roles make time management difficulties: A person performing one role spends more time on it, which makes her unavailable to devote time to another role. Moreover, when occupied with a role it can affect a person's availability to perform tasks related to another role even if the person is physically present.

Little attention is being given to the children due to the stress experienced at work: Working mothers who work long hours spend less time devoted to the children due to the stress experienced at work, men are the ones likely to care for children when the mother works long time or when the couples works alternate shifts¹². These can affect the quality of the training of children by mothers. However, when both parents are home, child care giving is usually done the mothers. The fathers' involvement is important to the children. Children whose fathers have been actively involved in their care tend to have higher self-esteem and less gender-tipped behaviors and attitudes than with less involved fathers.

Employment time decreased the amount of time women spent in communication with their husbands: Wives who work long hours at work or doing businesses have little amount of time to spend together with their husbands. Employment time reduces the communication process between couples. When the time by working mother who labor outside the home is added to the time they do household chores, it reduces the communication process between couples. For example, while most men are just starting to become involved in household responsibilities, this trend soon may be the single largest impact on families associated with mothers entering the labor force¹³. The involvement of spouses working together in doing household chores can improve the communication process between them; as long as they can work together.

It was based on the above background of study that the researcher was motivated to find out about the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members.

Major objective of the study: The major objective of the study was to examine the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members.

Specific Objectives of the Study: i. To identify challenges faced by working mothers in Makurdi Metropolis. ii. To identify

the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members.

Research Questions: i. What are the challenges faced by working mothers in Makurdi Metropolis? ii. What are the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members in Makurdi Metropolis?

Methodology

Research Design: Survey design was used, because the study was to assess thoughts and opinions from a representative population¹⁴.

Population of the Study: The population of the study comprised of three banks in highly populated areas in Makurdi Metropolis, which included: First bank, Union bank and UBA bank with 327 female married bankers. (Source: Bank managers).

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample size was 118. The study used purposive sampling techniques and proportionate stratified sampling technique to distribute samples appropriately.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument used in this research was a structured questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire were derived from the review of the related literature.

Section A: was titled Bio data of respondents.

Section B: was titled challenges faced by working mothers

Section C: was titled the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on their family members

The questionnaire was constructed using a four Likert scale. (Agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). The benchmark was 2.50

Validation of instrument: The instrument was validated by two experts in the field and a statistician. They scrutinized the items to ensure that those that were not appropriate were eliminated. Only suitable items were included in the questionnaire.

Data collection procedures: 118 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to female bankers. The completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved within a period of three days.

Method of data analysis: Data analysis was done through the use of simple percentages, frequency distribution and mean scores.

Results and discussion

The result showed that the working hours of mothers was 11 – 12 hours with 53.4%

Table 1: Bio data of female respondents

	Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	118	100
Duration of marriage	1-2	6	5.0
	4-6	5	4.2
	7-9	19	16.1
	10-12	81	68.6
	13 and above	7	5.9
Working hours of mothers	6-8 hours	9	5.2
	9-10 hours	46	38.9
	11-12 hours	63	53.4

Question-1: What are the challenges faced by working mothers in Makurdi Metropolis?

Table-2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Challenges Faced by Working Mothers.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
Juggling of responsibilities alongside work obligations	3.59	0.92	Accepted
Lack of flexibility of work	3.56	0.93	Accepted
Limited mobility	3.70	0.73	Accepted
Missing an important development milestone of their children	3.70	0.75	Accepted
Even when both parents work, the responsibility of sick children usually falls on the mother	3.63	0.87	Accepted
There is no provision of employment sponsored child care alternatives for working mothers	2.49	2.49	Accepted
Most working women are over fatigued or stressed and neglect their husbands sexual satisfaction	3.72	0.74	Accepted
Stress loads are high for working mothers	3.73	0.74	Accepted

Result of findings in Table-2 above showed that all items were accepted.

Research question-2: What are the consequences of the employment time of working mothers on family members in Makurdi Metropolis?

Table-3: Mean ratings of Respondents on the Consequences of Employment time of Working Mothers on Family Members

Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
Working mothers spend less time devoted to the maintenance of the home	3.54	0.83	Accepted
Husband compensated by increasing the time they contribute to household work	3.53	0.73	Accepted
Housework is either delayed, avoid, or undertaken by other paid or unpaid labour	3.62	0.85	Accepted
Working mothers spend less time with their family members.	3.73	0.93	Accepted
Time conflicts arise when the demands imposed by different roles make time management difficulties	3.67	0.80	Accepted
Little attention is being given to the children due to the stress experienced at work.	3.67	0.70	Accepted
Employment time decrease the amount of time women spend with their husband	3.48	0.92	Accepted
It reduces communication process between the husbands and wives	3.63	0.91	Accepted

Result on findings in Table-3 showed that all items were accepted.

Discussion: Table-1 showed that working mothers with 10-12 years of married life was the highest with 68.6%, followed by 13 years and above which had 15.1%, 7-9 years had 5.9%, 4-6 years had 4.2% and 1-2 years had 5.0%. Table-1 also showed that employment time of working mothers had 11-12 hours as the highest (53.3%), 9-10 hours (17.7%), 6-8hours (6.5%).

The result in Table-2 showed that challenges faced by working mothers from the highest to the lowest mean rating were: stress load was high for working mothers, most working mother were over fatigued or stressed and neglected their husbands sexual satisfaction, limited mobility, they missed important development milestone of their children, when both parents worked, the responsibility of sick children usually fell on mothers, they juggled responsibilities alongside work obligation, they lacked of flexibility of work, and there was no provision for employment sponsored childcare alternatives for

working mothers (3.73, 3.72, 3.70, 3.70, 3.63, 3.59, 3.56, 2.49). A study by Breuster, and Ronald showed that stress load for working mothers was high and it often reflected in their relationships at home, they were stressed to reach work on time, to send their children to school and to meet up their deadline on time including food and dress; and they also pressed for time to look after the home simultaneously⁶.

The result from Table-3 showed that working mothers spent less time with their family members, little attention was given to the children due to the amount of stress experienced at work, time conflict arose when the demand imposed by different roles make time management difficult, house work was either delayed, avoided or undertaken by other paid or unpaid laborers, it reduced communication process between husbands and wives, working mothers spent less time devoted to the maintenance of the home, husbands compensated by increasing the amount of time they contribute to household work, employment time decreased the amount of time women spent with their husbands (3.73, 3.67, 3.67, 3.63, 3.62, 3.54, 3.53, 3.48,). The result from Table-3 is similar to the findings in a study by Alexander and Baxter. Their study showed that working mothers spent less time with their family members⁵. This relates to the highest mean in Table-3, which showed that most married women faced the challenges of spending enough time with their family members (3.73), because of the nature of their job; especially married female bankers who work 11-12 hours a day. They have less time with their family members, because of the stress experienced at work.

Conclusion

The challenges faced by working mothers were high stress load and neglect of their husbands' sexual satisfaction. This meant that the stress faced by working mothers leads to the neglect of their husbands' sexual satisfaction which could cause conflict in their marriages.

The consequences of maternal employment time on household were found to be working mothers spent less time with their family members and little attention was given to the children due to the stress experienced at work. When mothers worked long hours they came home usually tired, and they needed to rest. They did not have the energy to spend time with the family, which could lead to the neglect of the children.

Recommendation: Based on the findings, the following were recommended: i. Marriage counselors should enlighten working mothers on how to manage stress, which when reduced will help them become less fatigued and help them satisfy their husbands' sexual needs. ii. Home economists that are time managers should help working mothers develop appropriate plans, which will help them with the proper management of their time. This will improve the quality of time spent with their children.

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