

Influence of Professional Roles of Dual Career Women on their Traditional Roles

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Abstract

This Study focused on the influence of professional roles of dual career women on their traditional roles in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study determined ways dual career women influence their family finance and standard of living, as well as, ways dual career women can effectively cope with their multiple roles without conflict in their homes. The study was a survey design. The population was made up of working mothers in public and private sector. A multi-stage and non - proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 300 working mothers. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data obtained were analyzed using means. Finding revealed that working mothers engage in formal employment in order to increase their family standard of living and economic status. Although their dual role has been stressful and challenging, majority of the respondents agreed that they do not neglect their traditional roles. Ten ways of performing dual roles without conflict were identified. Base on this recommendations were made.

Keywords: Working, Mother, Roles, Traditional, work, Conflict.

Introduction

In the past women's lives revolved around household activities while men were the main bread winners, final authority in the area of discipline and decision making (Adebayo, 2001). However, due to the emergence of a new economic pattern and hardship prevalent in the country, increasing opportunities for education, rising standard of living and increased modernization, women have also started coming out of their traditional role of a home maker to join the work

force. Women have successfully invaded the previous dominated social and economic spheres as men folk. The notion that men are the sole breadwinner is no longer tenable. In the face of the present day economic realities, an increasing number of household depend on two earners to maintain a suitable standard of living (Anyanwu & Etonyeaku, 2009).

In 1990, approximately 57 million adult women ages sixteen and older were in the paid work force, while globally, it is estimated that women labour force

participation has increased from 36% in 1990 to 40% by 1997 (Watson, Quatman & Edler, 2002). According to the international labour organization (ILO) (2007), women's labour force participation has increased over the last five decades. Women today make up over 45% of the world's workforce with more women than ever before participating in the labour force or actively seeking for jobs. Further, International Labour organization (ILO) (2007) observed that 1.2 billion of the 2.9 billion workers in the world in 2006 were women. Fullerton, Jr (1999) projected a continued rise in women workforce participation through the year 2015. In the same vein, Laura (2003) in Nwankwo (2005) reported that sixty-eight percent of all women are working. The percentage of working women rises from 64% during the pre-school years to over 78% in the middle childhood (U.S bureau of census 2001). In 2006, 70.9% of women were in labour force (employed or looking for work). The unemployment rate among women was only 3.6% (U.S Department of Health and Human Resources, 2007). As the number of working women is increasing, today, one can say that a Nigerian woman social and economic position is changing. This is because more and more women are becoming salary earners both before and during marriage. This has affected their traditional position by giving them some kind of independence that they did not have formerly (Akpan & Inyang, 2001)

Women participation in the labour sector in Nigeria was given a boost by

the demise of colonialism and the subsequent accelerated effort at national development (Anugwom, 2009). Until the late 1960s, women were virtually not seen in the formal sector of Nigerian economy. It was the atmosphere of industrial revolution, large scale world wars, and urban growth that led to change in the economy. These changes also affected the pattern of family life. Some of the changes made it difficult for men alone to meet up with the needs of their families so women needed to come in to help by taking up jobs outside the home. Thus, the orientation towards women as people who could also be meaningfully used in the economic process of the family and society at large.

Women involvement in paid employment became possible due to their possession of skill and education. Their income earning increased with educational level. Thus, until women in Nigeria became serious human resources with all manner of qualifications, just as their male counterparts, they were not considered as real contributors to the economic system (Anugwom, 2009). Prior to this, women were mainly seen as reserve mental and physical resources called upon only in an emergency to help in national development (Afigbo, 1991 in Anugwom, 2009).

Similarly, the increasing number of women participation in Nigeria was due to the impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which has meant declining real wages, declining government social provisioning and withdrawal or cut

back on subsidies (Pearson, 1999 in Anugwom, 2009). These conditions have meant equally increased challenges of survival amongst families. This may have forced many women to seek employment in order to ensure family survival. According to Anugwom (2009), a lot of women who work do it out of concern to earn money in order to complement their husbands income or are driven out to work because of the non- existence of a male breadwinner (in the case of widows , Single parents and divorced women). According to Nwankwo, (2005) women also work to escape boredom and to satisfy professional goals, personal needs, care for their children and support their families. Work also allows women to realize their potentials, gain recognition and achieve power and status.

In the 21st century, Nigerian women have made some mark in their chosen profession be it education, business, or politics. Women now virtually do exactly the same work with their male counter- parts to support the home. The multiple roles of women as a wife, mother and formal sector employee is difficult and over bearing in most cases (Odunaike, 2012). This has brought about the common believe that the newly acquired professional status of women has made them deviate from child rearing and housekeeping activities. Some critics accused working mothers of being negligent mothers and even believed that their traditional female role has become a secondary consideration while their main activity lies in their newly acquired profession. Opportunities and right to work outside

the home are viewed as having a negative impact on family life as mothers in formal employment are usually accused of abandoning their homes for their jobs. It is necessary therefore to find out if the professional status of mothers in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State does affect their traditional role status.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of professional status of working mothers in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State on their traditional role Status. Specifically the study determined:

- Ways professional roles of dual career mothers influence their traditional roles.
- Ways dual career women influence their family finances and standard of living.
- Ways dual career women can cope with their multiple roles without conflict in their homes.

Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following research questions

1. What are the ways professional roles of dual career mothers influence their traditional role?
2. What are the ways dual career women influence their family finances and standard of living?
3. What are the ways dual career women can cope with their multiple roles without conflict in their homes?

Methodology

Design and Area of Study: The study used the survey research design. The study covered Port Harcourt Local Government Area (Phalga) in Rivers State of Nigeria. Port Harcourt is the Capital City of Rivers States. It lies along Bonny River and is located in the Niger Delta. It is densely populated with professional working mothers from private and public sector.

Population for the Study: Although the population size of working mothers in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State is not available, the population of women in labour force has increased over the years. About 73% of working women had white collar jobs in 2009, a percentage that is expected to increase.

In 2011, there was an increase number of women (25%) in the 24 ministries at federal cabinet , 5.5% at state level , 6.4 % as permanent Secretaries and 9.2% of the numbers of directors (Gender Statistics Newsletter, 2011. The population for the study comprised of all professional working mothers from private and public sector in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Sample for the Study: A multi - Stage Sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample for the study. The first stage involved the simple random selection of two areas {old G. R. A and town} out of the five areas {Borikiri, Town, old G. R. A, Diobu, Amadi flat, known locally as Port Harcourt township. The second stage involves selection of two private secondary schools and the state

secretariat from the areas. The third stage involves a purposive selection of six ministries out of the 24 ministries , four banks, a medical centre and business outlets all situated inside the state secretariat. A non - proportionate stratified random Sampling technique was adopted to select individual working mothers as follows: ministry of Education (49), Ministry of health (47), Ministry of Agriculture (39), Ministry of finance (38), ministry of Justice (41), Ministry of culture and tourism (22), medical centre (15), Banking sector (14), Business outlets (17), Private secondary schools (18). This is to ensure that the working women selected comprises of various profession. A total of 300 respondents participated in the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument used for data collection was a 4 - point rating scale of: strongly agree - 4, agree - 3, disagree-2, strongly disagree -1. The questionnaire was developed with various sections according to the various purpose of the study. The instrument was validated by three experienced teachers. Based on their comments, some corrections were made on the instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis Techniques: A total of 300 copies of the instrument were distributed by hand to the respondents. All the three hundred questionnaires were retrieved. Data were analyzed using mean values in this study. A cut off $\bar{X} = 2.5$ was considered as agreed and \bar{X} lower than 2.5 was considered disagreed.

Findings

Tables 1: Mean Response on ways professional roles of working mothers influence their Traditional Female Roles

| S/N | Views on ways professional Roles Influence traditional Roles | Mean \bar{X} | Rmk |
|-----|---|----------------|-----------|
| 1. | My job outside the home is stressful. | 3.90 | Agreed |
| 2. | I am usually tired at the end of the day. | 3.90 | Agreed |
| 3. | It is usually difficult to carry out domestic work along with professional ones. | 2.70 | Agreed |
| 4. | I find it difficult to prepare family meals. | 1.10 | Disagreed |
| 5. | I am always tired to supervise and care for the children. | 1.10 | Disagreed |
| 6. | House keeping are sparingly done by me. | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 7. | I have limited time with my family members daily. | 2.50 | Agreed |
| 8. | I delegate duties to house- helps and other family members. | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 9. | I make good use of available labour saving devices. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 10. | My husband helps out with domestics work. | 2.40 | Agreed |
| 11. | I experience a lot of resource wastage (food) on account of not being at home most times due to the nature of my job. | 3.00 | Agreed |

Table 1 shows eight ways the professional roles of working mothers influence their traditional roles. The table shows that the highest mean effect was that professional status of working mothers facilitates the use of labour saving devices to aid them perform their traditional female roles, ($\bar{X} = 4.00$). This is followed by respondents indicating that their jobs outside the home is stressful and that they are usually tired at the end of the day ($\bar{X} = 3.90$). The respondents also indicated that they delegate duties to house helps

and other family members and that they experience a lot of waste resources (food) on the account of not being around ($\bar{X} = 3.00$). Further, the respondents agreed that it is usually difficult to carry out domestic work and that they have limited time with their families ($\bar{X} = 2.70$ and 2.50 respectively) but disagree strongly that they find it difficult to prepare meals, care and supervise their children and that their husbands do not help out with domestic work despite their being tired at the end of the day.

Table 2: Ways Professional Roles of women Influence Family Standard of Living

| S/N | Ways professional roles of women influence Family standard of living | Mean \bar{X} | Remarks |
|------------------|--|----------------|---------|
| I contribute to: | | | |
| 1. | The feeding of my family | 3.80 | Agreed |
| 2. | Education of my children | 3.60 | Agreed |
| 3. | Clothing of my children | 3.80 | Agreed |

| | | | |
|-----|--|------|-----------|
| 4. | Health care services of my family | 2.80 | Agreed |
| 5. | My professional status improves the financial base of my family. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| | I work to: | | |
| 6. | Display affluence | 2.00 | Disagreed |
| 7. | Feel validated (important) | 2.50 | Agreed |
| 8. | Have economic stability | 3.80 | Agreed |
| 9. | Revive my dead home lives | 1.00 | Disagree |
| 10. | Teach my children independence | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 11. | Set an example | 2.80 | Agreed |
| 12. | Gain recognition | 2.20 | Disagreed |
| 13. | Achieve power and status | 2.40 | Disagreed |

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondent agreed strongly that their professional status contribute immensely to the economy of their families and that it has really improve the financial base and standard of living of their families as item 1-5 had a mean above 2.50. The respondents further agreed that they also work to feel validated, have economy stability, to set

an example and teach their children independence as seen in item 7, 8, 11 and 10 with mean above 2.50. Item 6, 9, 12 and 13 had a mean below 2.50 showing that working mothers do not work because they want to display affluence, revive their dead home lives, gain recognition and to achieve power and status.

Table 3: Ways professional women can effectively cope with their dual roles without conflict

| S/N | Ways of performing dual roles without Conflict | Mean X | Remarks |
|-----|--|--------|-----------|
| 1. | Effective time management. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 2. | Focus at job while at work. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 3. | Focus on husband and children while at home. | 4.00 | Agreed |
| 4. | Separate work and motherhood responsibilities. | 3.80 | Agreed |
| 5. | Make a list of priorities. | 3.60 | Agreed |
| 6. | Do what you can do yourself and involve others where possible and necessary. | 2.70 | Agreed |
| 7. | Delegate duties to other members of the family. | 3.50 | Agreed |
| 8. | Get house-helps. | 3.80 | Agreed |
| 9. | Perform office jobs at home. | 1.00 | Disagreed |
| 10. | Make daily schedules / time tables. | 3.00 | Agreed |
| 11. | Obtain husband approval and support for formal Employment. | 4.00 | Agreed |

Table 3 revealed that the respondents agreed on ten out of eleven ways working mothers can cope with their

multiple roles without conflict. Ten effective ways of performing dual role without conflict obtained mean scores of

2.70 and above, and was accepted as effective ways of performing dual roles without conflict. Item 9 had mean score of 1.00 which revealed that performing office jobs at home can result to conflict.

Discussion of findings

Findings from the study revealed that greater percentage of the respondents agreed that holding unto dual roles of home maker and formal employment outside the home is stressful and that they are usually tired at the end of the day to carry out some of their traditional roles. The respondent agreed it is usually difficult to carry out domestic work and that house cleaning is sparingly done by them. Some of the respondent agreed that they have limited time with their family and that they experience a lot of waste resources on the account of not being at home. In some measures this is in agreement with the point raised by family education network (2011) that professional status of women possesses a problem to them. Also, Ezeigbo, (1999) noted that most Nigerian mothers live and laboured under stress because they are overwhelmed by the responsibilities in their lives, those created by the society and themselves. Most of the respondent agreed that though tired due to official duties they make out time to cook family meals and oversee the supervision of their children. This finding is in consonance with the view of Bianchi (2000) and Ezeigbo, (1999) which portrayed that the rapid movement of women into the labour force appears to have been accomplished without hurting children

and that Nigerian women are expected to perform their traditional roles efficiently, run their homes, be good wives and mothers. The result of the findings could be attributed to the increase use of available labour saving devices by working mothers. Also, all works are not alike and the effect of mothers work on herself and family depend on what the work is like.

In contrast to this findings is the view of Sydarkasa (1985) that mothers holding unto dual role of home maker and formal employment can result in not properly attending to, or completely abandoning traditional female roles. Nwankwo (2005) also pointed out that growing children are negatively influenced when both parents work outside the home. With regards to research question two which borders on the influence of professional status of women on family standard of living, findings in Table 2 revealed that professional status of women helps improve family standard of living. Majority of the respondent agreed that they work to contribute to the livelihood of their family and to support children education. This finding is in line with Anugwom (2007); Odunaike (2012) who posited that women engage in formal employment basically for economic reasons in order to support as well as provide for the needs of the family due to stiff economic situation of the country. Hence, the reason for continuous support from their husbands as regards engagement in formal employment. World Economic forum, (2007) noted that decent work and wages lift women and their children out

of poverty and exert a positive and significant impact on the growth of nations and development. Equally, Synder (1990) stressed that women are principal, if not the sole economic support of their children, they ensure that their families have adequate supply of food. In the same vein, Ezeigbo (1996) also said that mothers are expected to contribute to the family income, cater for the extended family members and perform efficiently in their jobs or business. Ways of performing multiple roles without conflict in Table 3 shows that effective time management, making of daily schedules, making of a list of priorities, separating work and motherhood responsibility, focus at job while at work, focus on children, husband and domestic works while at home, delegating duties to house- helps and other members of the family, husband approval and support for formal employment are necessary in performing multiple roles without conflict, but performing unfinished job in the office at home may bring about conflict.

Conclusion

Changes in the economy and changes in family pattern in the 21st century has made women to go beyond home making to make the best use of their education, skills, talents and gift in improving their living standard as well as that of their families and nation at large. The dual roles of women can be stressful and challenging therefore the pursuit for success in ones profession should not hinder the proper management of the home so also the

traditional roles of women should not hinder the pursuit in ones career. Working mothers should strike a balance between these dual roles as traditional roles of women in the home are a God giving privilege. Women should give quality attention to their children who will become tomorrow leaders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made to help professional mothers become successful in performance of their dual roles.

- Professional mothers should work harder towards balancing their dual roles so that none suffers at the expense of the other.
- Husbands should embrace an equal sharing of domestic activities and help their wives with domestic work.
- Management concept should be followed strictly to ease time pressure.
- Experienced house helps, nannies or competent relatives should be employed to help them look after their home and maintain good use of resources.

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