

Pattern of Time-Use for Household Chores among Working Class Spouses in Jos Metropolis

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Abstract

The study investigated the pattern of time use for household chores among married working spouses in Plateau State. Survey design was used. Sample size was 235 spouses made up of doctors, teachers and bankers across Jos Metropolis from the population of 2,924 spouses. The sample consists of 122 (52.3%) males and 112 (47.70%) females. The spouses comprised of bankers of 78(33.19%), teachers 84(35.74%) and doctors 73 (31.06%). Questionnaire was used for data collection. Percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Findings reveal that most spouses used 30-1hour time for household task. Also, in terms of gender role female had the highest percentage of 66% while male had 34% in kitchen and food task. It was recommended, among others, that employers and management of organizations should evolve ways of helping their employees in coping with work and household chores. Husbands should assist wives in the traditional women chores.

Key words: Pattern, Time, Household chores, Married spouses, workers.

Introduction

Household chores encompass all tasks and activities that go into maintaining households and their members, such as caring for children, cooking and cleaning. These activities are fundamental to everyday living and make a significant contribution to the welfare of the society. The nature and distribution of household chores are important for a number of reasons. First, these activities and role distribution are important in their own right in considering gender differences in house chores. Secondly, studying the gender distribution (division) of these household tasks contributes to the understanding of gender inequality in the public sphere. Thirdly, the value of

household chores, particularly caring, is an important issue in relation to a range of policy debates, such as provision and funding of childcare, individualization of taxation and the employment requirements attached to benefits for single parents (Sean, 2009). House chores involve those activities that are undertaken on a regular basis for the good management of the home and the well-being of the family (Coltrane, 2000). House chores are the unpaid domestic duties that need to be performed in order to safeguard the society.

Time is a finite resource and couples negotiate implicitly or explicitly how both partners spend their time in paid and

unpaid work. The disposable time can be divided into time spent on childcare, household chores and shopping (Sayer, 2005).

The pattern of time uses and how time is used affects each person's goal attainment and the use or development of other resources. Time is often used with energy, to reach a goal. Time, like other resources, is limited and can be spent wisely or wasted through poor management. The ability to manage time effectively can give order and direction to life. The amount of time spent and conditions of chores are prominent issues that are of interest across professions, as time affects our lives directly. Time is the fourth dimension and a measure in which events can be ordered from the past through the present into the future and also the measure of durations of events and the intervals between them (Le Poidevin, 2004). Diverse fields such as business, industry, sports, science and arts incorporate some notion of time into their respective measuring systems.

Until recently, the division of labour has been an integral aspect of life in Nigerian family. Men were the main breadwinners, while women were saddled with domestic responsibilities. Numerous studies on household chores have included child care and domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, and gardening (Hakim, 2004). An important component of the domestic responsibilities of women is caring for family members (Adepoju&Mbugwa, 2005). Adepoju and Mbugwa (2005) maintained that men could work away from home, while women were engaged in activities that could be carried out within or around the home. Women were encouraged to

concentrate on household chores and the socialization and monitoring of young children.

In other to have an effective distribution of roles and effective execution of such roles there is a great need for the spouse to create time for unwinding after the day's activities. Darby E. *et al* (2011) supports this view where they stated in their work "Time Spent in Housework and Leisure" that Families reunite after work or school with dual goals: to recover from the stresses of the day and to tackle the evening's agenda. Within the contemporary family, these goals often compete, as parents must unwind from increasingly longer workdays while continuing to coordinate the home-based demands of chores and childcare.

The interplay between their work life and family demands puts pressures on employees and organizations especially those in the banking, educational and health sector. Long working hours (that is, more than 48 hours a week) are associated with increased errors, workplace injuries and health problems (Ajayi, 2013). It has also been argued that long heavy workload and lack of flexibility in the use of chores time pattern provoke stressful conflicts between chores and private life for many working spouses (Ajayi, 2013) and this is likely to have a negative impact on organizations. Although their experiences may vary with regard to differences in economic stance, age category and type of family, the actual experience is that the challenges cut across all socio-economic levels and are felt most by women because they are the burden bearer of household chores and child care. The daily confirmations around us are the

evidences of what workers face as a result of multiple demands on their time.

The time allocated to family activities and professional career of spouses play a vital role in stability of marriage, as research has shown that married spouses are faced with various confronting problems both at home and at work places (Mawusi&Manieson 2015). Although several studies have assessed the challenges of spouses in paid chores with emphasis on time use and its effect on productivity within organizations, not much has been done in the area of how time used by working spouse influences time used in household chores. More so, there is a dearth of studies with populations in the banking, educational and health sectors with reference to how working married spouses in these sectors manage household chores considering the tight working schedules in these organizations. However, very little has been written in West Africa focusing on the pertinent challenges that married spouses in paid labour force go through. Hence, researching this sensitive aspect of life will shed light on the coping strategies on the pattern of time use by the married spouses for house chores. This study, therefore, fills this gap by examining the use of time allocated to household chores among working-class spouses, the labour force that cannot be despised. Therefore, this study is significant because it seeks to construct an evidence-based taxonomy on Nigerian working spouses and the pattern of time use and serve as a foundation for further research extension. It will help the concern organization to improve on the social welfare policies for working spouses such as bankers, doctors and school teachers.

According to Anyakoha and Eluwa (2015), human resources are those that exist within people such as energy, time, skills, knowledge, attitude, creativity, etc. and material or non-human resources are those that exist outside people and can be controlled or owned or used by the family for example tools, money, social facilities, goods etc. Time is often used with their recourses such as energy to reach a goal. Temporal component is the time of the workers and how he or she allocates to activities. Factors affecting temporal components include control of time, timing and time allocation. Control of time is restricting or managing something in order to keep within bounds or on a course. Control of time therefore has to do with how time is managed to accomplish household task or the process of planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating with control of time, home makers can utilize their resources effectively so as to meet up with pattern of time use for household chores by spouses.

Galinsky, (2011), opined that the home maker should have a good timing of events both at home and work place considering flexible and inflexible event. The inflexible events include the time for being in the working place hours when children are in school. The work at home is a flexible event and time allocated to events at home and other activities should not be overemphasized. The time needed to sleep, personal care, medical care, to take care of children and leisure time should be put into consideration. The length of time span of 24 hours for a full time housewife and about 14 hours for employed spouses should be utilized well. Therefore, the employed spouses must strictly manage, control and allocate time

to the activities both at home and work place.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective was to investigate the pattern of time use for household chores among married working spouses. Specifically, the study determined:

1. time allocated to household chores per hour by the married spouses in Jos Metropolis Plateau State.
2. household chores performed by spouses based on gender in Jos Metropolis Plateau State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are stated to guide the study:

- 1 What is the time allocated per hour to household chores by the spouses in Jos Metropolis Plateau State?
- 2 What are the household chores performed by the spouses based on gender in Jos Metropolis Plateau State?

Methodology

Area and Design of the Study: This study was carried out in Jos Metropolis which is the capital city of Plateau State and it is situated in the middle belt of Nigeria and one of the oldest regions in Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design with the aim of collecting data from the sample of each category of chores type and generalize the information upon the said population in the study area.

Population for the study: The population of the study consist of 2, 924 working class couples within Jos Metropolis, with specific focus on teachers, 1718, bankers 851; and medical doctors 355. The reason for choosing these categories of workers is due to the tasking and complex nature of

their work and working environment. They need to balance household chores².

Sample for the study: A sample size of 235 from the population were selected using stratified random sampling technique and simple random sampling. The stratified sampling technique was used to divide the working spouses into categories of the doctors, bankers and teachers. Therefore, a simple random sampling technique was used to select sample size from each stratum. The distribution of the respondents was 73 (31.1%) doctors, 84, (35.7%) teachers, and 78 (33.2%) bankers.

Instrument for data collection: A Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. It was developed based on the literature reviewed and the objectives of the study. It had three sections Section A sought demographic information on the respondents. Section B dealt with household chores and section C on time use on the household chores. The instrument was Face and validated

Data collection techniques: The instrument was administered to the categories of the respondents by the researchers and was collected immediately. This allowed the retrieval of the entire questionnaire distributed.

Data Collection Techniques: The data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics were used to provide answers to research questions raised in the study using mean and standard deviation, frequency counts and percentage.

Findings of the Study: The findings of the study are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

²{Head of Operations (banking Sector), Jos (2015); Ministry of Education, Planning, Research and Statistic Department, Jos, 2013/2014; Associations of Resident Doctors (ARDs), Jos, 2015}.

Table 1: Percentage Response on Time Allocated to Household Chores by Spouses in Plateau State

| S/No | Types of household chores | 30-1hr (%) | 1-2hrs (%) | 2-3hrs (%) | Above 3hr (%) |
|------|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 | Shopping for food | 43.0 | 38.3 | 11.9 | 6.8 |
| 2 | Cooking | 34.5 | 40.0 | 15.3 | 10.2 |
| 3 | Cleaning of Kitchen | 61.7 | 21.7 | 11.1 | 5.5 |
| 4 | Washing of dishes by hand - drying | 73.2 | 16.6 | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| 5 | Tiding up sitting room bedroom | 53.2 | 29.4 | 11.1 | 6.4 |
| 6 | Washing clothes by hand - hanging | 36.6 | 38.3 | 17.9 | 7.2 |
| 7 | Ironing clothes | 50.6 | 36.6 | 9.4 | 3.4 |
| 8 | Cleaning yard - garden | 42.6 | 34.9 | 15.7 | 6.8 |
| 9 | Repairing other things | 53.6 | 37.0 | 6.8 | 2.6 |
| 10 | Taking the trash out | 74.9 | 11.5 | 8.1 | 5.5 |
| 11 | Bathing of Children | 61.7 | 11.1 | 21.7 | 5.5 |
| 12 | Preparing children for school | 43.0 | 38.3 | 11.9 | 6.8 |
| 13 | Helping children on home chores | 50.6 | 36.6 | 9.4 | 3.4 |
| | Overall average percentage | 52.3 | 30.0 | 12.0 | 5.8 |

Table 1 shows the percentage responses on time allocated to various household chores by all the spouses under study. The overall percentage shows that between 30minutes -1hr had the highest percentage which is 52.3% followed by 1-2hrs 30.0% next is 2-3hrs with 12.0% and above 3hrs which is 5.8%. The result obtained shows

that most married spouses spend 30min-1hrs major to do the household chores based on their responses. Furthermore, 1-2hrs also had a reasonable percentage indicating that the married spouses in Jos metropolis 30min-2hrs mostly for household chores.

Table 2: Differences in Gender Roles in Household Chores among Spouses

| Household chores | Doctors | | Teachers | | Bankers | | Total | |
|--|---------|--------|----------|--------|---------|--------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male (%) | Female(%) |
| Personal task (dressing, showering etc.) | 40 | 24 | 25 | 40 | 36 | 33 | 101 (51.0) | 97(49.0) |
| Housekeeping chore | 34 | 17 | 25 | 31 | 35 | 26 | 94 (56.0) | 74(44.0) |
| Kitchen & food related chores | 23 | 22 | 14 | 45 | 14 | 34 | 51 (34.0) | 101(66.0) |
| Clothing & laundry related | 34 | 16 | 17 | 25 | 24 | 25 | 75(53.2) | 66(46.8.0) |

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage of the gender role in house chores. It shows that 51% of male response performed personal task while 49% of

female they performed personal tasks which are medical care, showering, dressing/ make up and eating. In term of home task which includes cleaning house,

home repairs, school runs, paying bills the male had 56% while female is 44%. The kitchen and food task the male had 34% while female had 66% this task includes cleaning up the kitchen, cooking of food, washing/drying of dishes etc. The clothing and laundry task the male had 53.2% while the female had 46.8% which are washing by hands, ironing/folding of clothes washing by machine and sewing of cloth. Generally, both genders that is male and female had roles to play in household chores based on the response of the married spouses in Jos metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

The present research found that most of the spouses from the three categories spent an average of 30min-1hr in performing most of the household chores. This has implication on the ability of the working class spouses on a daily basis because time plays a vital role in their chores life as it increases the working hours every day. This finding was in agreement with the Ajayi(2013) long working hours are associated with increase chores error in chores place and health. This indicates that time use on the household chores on daily basis put more pressure on the married spouses as they interplay between chores and family demand.

The study also found that both male and female engages in household chores even as they perform their organization duties. The study established that males are getting more involved in some household chores than their females' counterpart. Chores such as home task which include cleaning of house, home repairs children school activity and bill payment tend to more performed by male

spouses' participants in the study. The finding disagreed with Milkie, *et al* in Ajayi (2013) where it was asserted that women performed more household chores than men. The paper has been able to establish that both male and female play a significant role in household chores in Jos metropolis this gives credence to Varjonen (2006) that say men and women play equal role in household chores, except in area of kitchen and food task where the female performs more than the male working-class spouses. However, the study revealed that both gender played their different role in performing the household chores on daily basis. The study to a very great extent agrees with Mondy and Ojo (2011) who opined that men may be supportive of their working wife because of the extra family income and might help her with some errand, but may not support an equal sharing of household chores due to traditional role sharing ideology of an average Nigeria.

In other to have an effective distribution of roles and effective execution of such roles there is a great need for spouse to create time for unwinding after the day's activities. Darby *et al* (2011) supports this view where they stated in their work "Time Spent in Housework and Leisure" that Families reunite after work or school with dual goals: to recover from the stresses of the day and to tackle the evening's agenda. Within the contemporary family, these goals often compete, as parents must unwind from increasingly longer workdays while continuing to coordinate the home-based demands of chores and childcare.

Time is a finite resource and couples negotiate implicitly or explicitly how both

partners spend their time in paid and unpaid work. The disposable time can be divided into time spent on childcare, household chores and shopping (Sayer, 2005).

This study agreed with Anyakoha (2015) who reported that avoid procrastination, i.e. delaying activities. For instance, one may put off an activity that should be accomplished today till tomorrow or even next week. The risk is that it may remain undone. The findings shows that there is no significant different on gender roles. Cooking and shopping recorded the highest allotted time at 1 – 2hrs Varjonen (2007). The study found that there is relationship between type of work and pattern of time spent on household chores.

The finding agreed with the finding of Aalto and Varjonen (2006) where the researchers found that the larger the family size the more time spend on household chores among married persons.

Conclusion

Household chores is a must for all spouses and it required time to perform. This task is a problem that has been confronting so many married spouses in Jos metropolis due to the nature of chores and time available for them. The study investigated pattern of time use for household chores among married spouses working in Jos metropolis in Plateau state. Based on the findings of this study there is relationship between type of chores and pattern of time spent by married spouses to perform their household chore.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were therefore, made:

1. Husbands should assist their wives in tasks such as cooking, cleaning and washing which are traditionally done by women.
2. Procrastination on paid and unpaid chores should be avoided to reduce over chores load on the working spouses.
3. Employers and management of organizations should evolve ways of helping their employees in balancing and coping with the demands of their jobs and household chores.

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