

# The Role of Self Employment in Family Work Conflicts Among Mothers With Children Below 10 years old.

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## Abstract

This study investigated family/work conflict among mothers, who has children below 10 years. The reason for this study is to x-ray the advantages of self employment in this category of women.. A total of 102 women made up of equal number of (40) employed and (62) self employed women within the ages of 25-42. with children below **10 years were selected** as participant they responded by completing the Kopelman, Greenhaus and Connolly, (1983) Work/family Scale. Findings revealed the existence of family/work conflicts, and that world/family conflict causes more stress for women in employment than self-employed ( $t=1.04$  DF(1) ). Based on the findings family/ work conflict was seen as additive stress, spousal support, effective **time management**, and reduction of catastrophizing cognitions were recommended **as efforts to balance** the family/ workplace conflict so as to facilitate the psychological well being

**Key words : family, work-conflict, and Employed mothers**

Work and family are the two major domains of life that individuals can be involved in simultaneously, certain events and structural aspects of work constitute stressors that can have negative influence on the behaviour of individuals. Events prior to getting to the workplace may also influence subsequent behaviour in the workplace. Family-Work conflict refers to lack of compatibility between the roles one plays at work and in the family such that family related role pressure obstruct performance. The conflict could be time based, behaviour based, and role based (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) These could result to stress.

The impact of stress has been of interest to psychologist, and allied professionals, as stress has been implicated in low performance at the workplace, illness and health and behavioural change, this has led to major research on stress at the workplace which is usually studied as occupational stress, organisational stress, workplace stress, role stress, and work-related stress (Quick, 1999, Iwanaga, Yokoyama, and Seiwa, 2000) Brooks, (1999). Asserted stress whether termed family, workplace, or organisational are indeed role stress as H is the role the individual plays that is stress associated. There is a need to understand, the effects of the daily demands in the family that poses stress on women as it causes psychological distress, it is well known that stress can impacts a person health, it is a potential source of both anxiety and frustration which can harm the body physiological and psychological well being, reduces psychological well being, and may cause short term and long term consequences on health, thus aggravating chronic illness such as diabetes, hypertension, and asthma, its understanding helps to reduce psychopathology.

It is likely that house hold chores which involves taking minor decision, cooking for the family, caring for children, buying things for home, and taking to and bringing back children from school, (school run) constitute a degree of conflict, pressure, demands, and can influence work related activities, this influence can give rise to stress, and stress manifestation. Kaplan and Saccuzo, (1993). defined conflict as a type of stress that occurs when a choice must be made between two or more important goals. Pressure is when an individual has to speed up activities. Stressors has been identified to elicit stress response on organism. (Selye, 1956, 1976, Holmes and Rahe, 1967 Lazarus and Folkman, 1984. Cohen and Williamson, 1988) Stress is associated with modern living, these demands, pressure and opportunities has led to an increase in psychopathology and poor well being

Conflict here refers to the subjective experience of discomfort and tension associated with the role of home chores which involves the behaviour and reactions that occurs in response to the discomfort and tensions. (stressors) such as expressions of anger and other intense emotions. Life stressors can affect the way people feel and behave on their roles. This study is interested in household, family or domestic activities as it influences workplace expectations, as stress is not only a matter of workplace but also family, and it is often difficult to separate work from non work life. It appears that factors occurring outside the workplace can have potential influence on job attitudes and behaviours. So, there is need to understand the household chores on women who are in self employment and employment as family work involvement may interfere.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the role of self employment among women, hence this study is comparing self employed and paid employment as

women in paid employment has to key into the work expectations which further aggravates the cognitive stress that may manifest as physiological and physical stress. In Nigeria, today more women are now entering the workforce, women constitute about 45% of the workforce and Married women contribute about 35% of family income. (Levine and Perkins, 1997). However, bringing in income and spending time have consequences for family relationships. Work and family responsibilities including the care of the elderly relatives, creates stress for some, the high percentage of working mothers also underscores the need for affordable child care such leading to work/ family conflict.

Research has reported that family and work are bidirectional that is work can interfere with family, and family can interfere with work. Work/family conflict results when involvement in work interferes with effectiveness in family roles and vice-versa . Weissman and Klerman (1977) maintain that there is strong evidence that social role contributes to the vulnerability of women to mental illness. One way in which it might ,be true may be the level of stressful home activities they undergo. There is therefore a strong need to understand the effects of daily domestic chores and involvement in the workplace on women, as they constitute home caregivers throughout their lives, knowledge gained from this study will be of help in developing household coping strategy among women, which will thus reduced the encountered family stress, which can be contagious to the entire family and is capable of reducing quality of life and increase in psychopathology which include anxiety, emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic or health outcomes

It is worthy to note that stress people experience at the workplace, which has been the focus of many researchers(Cole, 2002, Robbins and Judge, 2009) results not only from one role in their lives but from the combination of several roles, as individuals most of us are workers, partners, and parents and each of these roles entails heavy obligations. Stress from one domain of life spills over to the next. Paula(2002) reported that daily hazzles contribute more to job satisfaction levels. She reported that daily hazzles are often not addressed hence this study wish to add to the body of knowledge on family stress as it interferes with workplace demands.

Though, Holmes and Rahe (1967) focused on stressful life events. These range from cataclysmic events, such as death of ones spouse or being fired from a job to a more mundane but still problematic events. Holmes and Rahe argued that, when an individual must make a substantial adjustment to the environment, the likelihood of stress is high. They developed an inventory, The Social Readjustment Rating Scale(SRRS) in an attempt to measure stress. Specifically, they identified which events force people to make the most changes in their lives and then assigned point values to those events to reflect the amount of change that must be made. For example, if ones spouse dies, virtually every aspect of his life is disrupted.

Minor stressful events or daily hassles which are encountered in the family has been described to have a cumulative impact on health and well being, as it constitutes stress. Such hassles which include keeping tab on children when playing, bathing, ensuring that food is ready, tidy them before school to meet up with school time, taking minor decision, and doing household chores reduces psychological well being

over the short term and produce physical symptoms. These events and activities in the house hold constitute stressors that can have negative effect on the behaviour of individuals. Such events prior to getting to the workplace may also affect subsequent behaviour in the workplace ,for example late coming Cooper (1995) assertsihat every job has stress in its finger print

This study is therefore interested in understanding the effects of self employment over paid employment in women who has children below 10 years old, who are dependants. The study will therefore test the hypothesis, that women in employment( working class) will report more stress than self employed women.

Participants- One hundred and two(102) employed and self employed mothers within the age 25-45 with a mean age of 34,5 participated in this study. The participants were drawn from a developing part of an urban population in an urban city using the simple purposive sampling technique as they were women who do bring their wards to a private nursery and primary school (school run).The working class women(who are in employment) were 40(40%) and 62(60%) of non working women.(who are not in paid employment)

Instrument. A paper and pencil self report questionnaire was used in this study, the instrument is a scale developed by Kopelman , Greenhaus, and Connolly, 1983 and was used by Gutek, Searle,and Klepa(1991) and used by Amah, O (2005).Work-Family scale measures the extent to which being involved in work activities affects the family activities emotionally and psychologically. 12 item Family Stress Scale designed by author for the research purpose. It contain two parts, namely part A, which taps the demographic variable which o the independent variables, viz age, working and non-working, number of children. Part B contained the 12 items. The items were in question forms to which the respondents were asked to provide the degree of discomfort associated with the Hem viz my job keep me away from my family, my family activities makes me report late. The responses were in likert-like form in four response mildly, moderate, severe and more severe. The internal consistency of the scale as measured by Cronbach alpha was 0.74, it was validated by a senior colleague in the department.

Procedure: The instrument on a one page was given to the classroom teachers who have had an established rapport with them, this was after due consultation with the headmaster to obtain their consent. One hundred and thirty questionnaires was distributed and given out and collected within one week, only 105 was returned and three were not completely filled, h was scaled down to 102 for equitable comparison . They were told to respond to it as h affects them, and quality of care to their wards as participation was not tied to the welfare of their wards in school so there is no penalty attached to participation, but they should earnestly respond to it.

## RESULT

T-test table Showing Differences in the degree of stress manifestation by working and non working mothers.

	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Working in employment	40	12.78	3.87	1.04		
Women in self employed	62	13.01	3.72		238	n.s

Note n.s = not significant at 0.05

## DISCUSSION

This study investigated work/ family conflict manifestation among self employed and employed mothers with children below 10 years. The role of self employment. This means that caring, and keeping tab on children preparing them for school to meet up with school time on school days, going to pick them from school and on Sundays meeting up with church activities places a strong demand on women, in addition getting involved in work activities, which creates workplace expectations these demand poses stress, that may make them become hostile, anxious, annoyed, and irritable, thus exposing them to anxiety disorders, emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic health outcomes.

The study revealed that family/ work conflict is stressful for females and more for mothers who are on paid job compared to those on self employed , it therefore means that self employment helps in moderating family/work conflict., thus this means that women suffers work/family conflict as evidenced in this study and it is relatively more stressful for working mothers. Levine and Perkins(1997) reported similar findings that work and home responsibilities, create stress for some, mothers as they have to meet up with timely demands, formal activities and function under constituted authorities, this may make them develop fatigue, insomnia, depending on the number of children, their age, home type and domestic social support may influence degree of stress on women . Though both reported significant level of stress, it is more likely to be more serious on the working class mothers as they function in the workplace which is more coordinated i.e. not under their control and home, while their counterpart are not under constraint or pressures.

The daily routine activities in the family, home are demands, caring for children, keeping tab on them, meeting up with school time are more during school days and meeting up with church service time takes up the weekends activities, The stress manifestation among women must be responsible for the common headache, insomnia and mild behavioural change commonly observed in women, these changes may be responsible for the every visit to drugs shop with the need to buy analgesics and sedative drugs and clinics with complain of somatic pains and feelings of being unwell.

Exposure to stressful situations can cause an observable reaction known as anxiety. Anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state marked by worry, apprehension, and tension. When you are anxious, your autonomic nervous system becomes activated; your heart beats fast, your pulse rate goes up, your hands tend to sweat. It is possible that this family stress contributes to gestational hypertension experienced during pregnancy known as hypertension in pregnancy (HEP) and the gestational diabetes experienced during pregnancy. These findings give credence to the social role theory frequently referred to as the sex-role theory. Household chores can conceivably produce stress and aggravate physical and psychological health in several ways. First, the cumulative impact of small stressors may wear down an individual, predisposing him or her to become ill. Second, such events may influence the relationship between major life events and illness. Pillow, Zautra, and Sandler, (1996). reported that major life events may have their effects on distress primarily by increasing the number of daily hassles. Stress has been linked to many somatic conditions of varying degrees of severity. The APA has estimated that approximately 75% of the American population has experienced stress-related physical symptoms. Stress has been found to significantly contribute to several diseases and conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, gastrointestinal disorders, musculoskeletal symptoms, respiratory illness, immune diseases, headache, insomnia, changes in appetite, and accidental injuries (McKee and Ashton, 2003) The most common stress-related physical symptom is fatigue; in a survey of burnout among 600 American workers, "exhaustion" was reported by 62% of those who said they felt stressed and burned out by work. Lack of work/ life balance contributes to burnout, thus hampering subjective well being..

Studies have shown that daily stress (specifically, domestic which include minor decision making) has a significant effect on ambulatory blood pressure and left ventricular mass index, which provides a partial explanation for the link between stress and heart disease (Tobe, Kiss, Szalai, Perkins, Tsiguoli, and Baker, 2005). The findings of large-scale studies further support stress as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. And an important contributor to coronary heart disease through direct effects on the neuroendocrine stress pathways and indirect effects on health behaviors (Kuper, and Marmont, 2003). In fact, researchers found that nearly one-third of the effect of work-related stress was attributable to health behaviors, especially a low level of physical activity, poor diet, and metabolic syndrome.

Kinnunen and Mauno (1996, 1998) found that work-to-family conflict was more prevalent than family-to-work conflict, and both were negatively related to family well-being. In this case family well-being was defined by a cluster of variables

including marital satisfaction and communication, parenting and childrearing restrictions, and parent and child behavior and psychological well-being. This finding has also been supported by researchers like Brewer and McMahan -Landers(2003) Who reported the existence of family/work conflict as additive stress which jointly affects the role incumbent. Family/work conflict has been found to negatively affect family satisfaction and also affect job satisfaction. Work events are considered of greater importance and emotional disturbance than home work events and are associated with greater increases in symptoms (Lindorff, 2000). Stress and burnout are also associated with a range of psychological symptoms.

Anger and depression are the most common psychological manifestations; among stressed and burned out workers, anger was reported by 62% in a study, the study confirms the spillover theory, of Brofenbrenner, (1999).and previous researchers supported this findings, the reciprocal influence of family and work. Spillover from work to family has been found in a variety of studies with a variety of consequences. (Perry- Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000).; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002; Stoeva, Chiu, & Greenhaus, 2002) found relationships between family well-being and employees' work environment, work concerns, and time commitments. Similarly, organizational policies, wages, and demands have been found to influence employees' families (Glass & Estes, 1997; Warren & Johnson, 1995). A second form of spillover-from family to work -was proposed by Voydanoff (1990) to create a circular or reciprocal process between work and family life. In studies of the influence of families on the work life of individuals, family well-being predicts individuals' behavior in the workplace (Barnett, 1994; Cooksey, Menaghan, & Jekielek, 1997

## **SUGGESTIONS**

Going by the findings from the study that self employment has advantage over paid employment for women with children, the author therefore recommends the following, effective time management, cognitive reappraisal of domestic activities and effective utilization of available spousal support. This therefore means that women should be given family support especially spousal emotional support which has been linked to positive outcomes for spouses in stressful conditions. (Lida, Seidman, Shrout,Fujita and Bolger, 2008) and help reduce daily stresses. Reduction of catastrophizing thoughts. This involves the laying of less values on the role they play ,e.g. if I meet the house scattered it will be very bad for you all. These catastrophizing condition has been identified to cause great distress and can lead people to be fatalistic behaviour, which in turn increases the level of distress and is hazardous to health and behaviour.

Time Management. The first step of time management is determining what activities are worth one's time and what activities are not, to manage time one must first decide what activities are important , this involves deciding what one's goals and values are The recommendations of time management expert fall into four categories namely prioritizing, scheduling, self rewards, and breaking task into smaller chunks.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study investigated family /work conflict among mothers with children below 10 years old, the role of self employment . It identified family/ work conflict as a cognitive stress that can manifest as physiological and physical stress which is more common in employed women than self employed and finally suggested tittle management, effective role behaviour , reduction of catastrophizing thoughts as solutions to the dual conflict in the two main domains of life. The study found that home care is stressful for women with children and that both the working class and non-working class reported evidence of stress..

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