

Influence of Job Demand and Employment Status on Marital Conflict and Marital Satisfaction among Women in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict and marital satisfaction among married women in Ekiti state, Nigeria. 400 married women whose age ranged between 25 and 60 years participated in the study. They were selected using random and purposive sampling techniques. Three research instruments were used to generate data from the participants namely Perceived Work Demand Scale, Marital Satisfaction Scale and Kansas Marital Conflict Scale. Data were analyzed with the use of 2x2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), One-way Analysis of Variance and Pearson product moment correlation. Results of this study showed that there was no significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict. Similarly, there was no significant influence of job demand on marital satisfaction. However, there was a significant influence of employment status on marital satisfaction. Year of marriage has no significant influence on marital conflict while no significant relationship exists between marital conflict and marital satisfaction. Therefore, the findings of this study indicated that job demand does not have significant influence on both marital conflict and marital satisfaction but employment status has significant influence on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Job demand, Employment status, Marital conflict, Marital satisfaction, Working mothers.

1. Introduction

Work is of primary importance to mankind and it has been a motivator physically, ethically and ideologically. Work has given human being a sense of mastery over nature and it has been a tremendous feeling of self fulfillment. It is any expenditure of energy that produces services and products of value to other people. Particular values and functions of work are specific to time and place (Omolayo 2005). Thibaut and Kelly (1989) defined work as a weapon with which common man could achieve not only wealth but also happiness. Work is a task or activity which is performed at any given place and time, which is set towards the attainment of goal or goals in which reward is given (Omolayo 2005). It is an activity that produces something of value to other people.

Work is regarded as a means of supporting the family in the society (Hofsted, 1980). Family is the basic unit of life. It is the fundamental unit of society referred to as the building block of any society. Oakley (1984) defines family as a set of people related by blood, marriage or some other agreed upon relationship or adoption who shares the primary responsibility or reproduction and caring for members of the society. The family is a central institution in all human societies, although it may take different forms.

The family is a vital unit in social organization and social control as well as an important institution in the process of socialization. Aluko (2002) acknowledge that the family is central to the existence of any society.

Women have started joining the labor force as a result of economic, social, political, religious consideration, change in value, mutual agreement between couples, and technological changes and developments that have affected all aspects of human endeavors. The demand for jobs in production and service organizations that accompanied industrialization afforded women the opportunity to move and participate in formal employment and other forms of paid labor outside the home in order to sustain their families. The right to equal education for all has been a powerful tool in raising the status of women, with education women interest has increasingly stretched beyond home (Akanji, 1996). Today most African women are in search of gainful employment outside the home such as of teaching, nursing, banking, insurance, engineering, medicine, law and other professions occupying positions of higher status and greater responsibilities in what was traditionally regarded as male occupations. The new status that has been assumed by many working mothers today now brings considerable changes on their family setting. Some women have become breadwinners of their families, a position exclusively reserved for men in the past. The duties expected of mothers are now being transferred to secondary agents like nursery schools, grandmothers, daycare centers, housemaids and the likes. Married women entering the labor force today face a challenge their ancestors seldom encountered, which is how to reconcile the conflicting demand of family and work (Awosika, 1986). An employed married woman is subjected to continuous and relentless demand on her resources. At the same time, her family is also an institution that makes persistent demand on energy and resources.

An unprecedented rise in the employment of married women has far reaching economic effect with increased opportunities for women in Nigeria (Akinawo & Adetula, 2008). The fact that many women are holding high powered corporate positions or are self-employed requires ongoing commitment and availability on their part. Their dual roles as mothers and executives require coping capacity skill balancing to ensure that the needs of all those who depends on them are met, and they are still able to meet their own needs (Koos & McLelland, 2009). Markus (1990) found that working mothers contributed immensely to the well-being of their families. He revealed that women employment enhance greater family prestige of stability because of the reputation attached to or derived from working women. Women are entering the work force at an increasing rate (Fullerton, 1999) and they are found both in private and public sectors. The private sector consists of large industrial and commercial establishments while the public sector includes government ministries and establishments (Aluko, 2002). Women are found to be many in the federal and state civil service, the teaching and health service (Fapounda, 1985; Awosika, 1986). As the entry of women into the labor market and paid employment has soared, their overall employment rates have moved closer to those that were previously characteristic of men. (Akanji, 1996).

In a comprehensive survey of women and men's attitude towards the division of labor in the family in industrial societies, findings consistently point to the fact that financial need remains an important motivator for mothers to take up paid work, and that many still support a gendered division of labor where men are primary earners and women are secondary earners or homemakers (Markus, 1990). The passive role of women in rewarding economic activities is gradually being eroded by the globalization ideology. Women are seen to be taken centre stage in profitable ventures such as private businesses and formal career of all kinds. Today, there are more women than ever before in paid and self-employment (Akinawo & Adetula, 2008). This is particularly so in a period of economic recession and political instability resulting in high cost of living, inflation, reduction in quality of life, changes in consumption pattern, among others. These factors are capable of threatening family survival and marital satisfaction.

The domains of work and family emerge as a distinct field of research based on play between work and family, with particular emphasis on the short and long term consequence of work for the quality and the development of family members (Perry-Jenkins, Reppeti & Crouter, 2000). In a comprehensive review, Near, Rice and Hunt (1980) examined the relationship between the domain of work and non-work. From the review, they drew two broad conclusions. Firstly, work domain structures (e.g. job characteristics, work schedules, and role strain) influence behavior, attitude and affective states in non-work situations (e.g. family, community). Secondly, extra-work situations influence behavior, attitude and effectiveness state on the job. Although men and women have similar motivation for working, their status and location in the labor force are very different. In any well-established organization, individuals work under a varieties of contracts or rights which can describe the employment status of the workers. Working arrangement might be described in one or more of these terms, namely, Part-time, Fixed-time, Contractor, Consultant casual, Zero hours, Shift schedule, Seasonal agency, Office holder, and Volunteer. Employed married women need to be prepared, be able to structure their time and accommodate many dimensions in coping with ramification of the work-home role conflict (Hartman & Stoner, 1990). Perry-Jenkins et al (2000) defined employment status as someone in employment either as an employee or working on his/her own account (self employed). This study categorized employment status of women into 4 groups namely; those working in public sector, private sector, self-employment, and unemployment. Yang, Chen, Chol and Zou (2000) defined work demand as pressures arising from excessive workloads and typical workplace time such as busy jobs and deadlines. Boyer, Maertz, Carl, Pearson and Keough (2003) defined it as global perception of the level and intensity of responsibility within the work domain.

Marital conflict, though inevitable between husband and wife, often results into battle as a result of clashes or state of sharp disagreement between ideas, interests or purposes. Marital conflict could result in several types of violence (Fincham, 2006). Sexual, physical and psychological violence are injurious to human existence. They all have some social, economic, political and psychological implications on our co-existence. Women suffer marital conflicts much higher than men (Fincham, 2006).

Marital satisfaction simply means marital contentment. Satisfaction is when the desire, intimacy and perceived need of a partner in a relationship are actualized. It is a state of contentment and pleasure with the absence of problem and complaint. According to Fincham (2006), there are many factors that contribute to a happy marriage because there does not seem to be one magic factor that guarantees marital bliss. These factors include effective communication, interaction, gender roles, conflict management, problem solving and intimate play. Marital satisfaction is the general happiness and pleasure between couples. It is the good feeling of marriage. Kaplan and Meddix (2002) stated that marital satisfaction is an individual experience in marriage. Therefore, it can only be evaluated by each person in response to the degree of marital pleasure. Robinson, Flower and Carrol (2001) carried out a survey using intimate partners including married couple of all ages. They noted that those who felt their relationship such as engagement and marriage, the cost of separation and the social dislocation that come with it do continued to endure the dissatisfying or broken relationship hoping that it will become more mutually rewarding. In a study carried out by Rusbult (1980) using college students, it was found that stronger predictors of satisfaction were rewards and costs. This is because most satisfied people reported many rewards and few costs.

It was observed from the research of J. Kim and C. Kim (2001) on work-family conflicts of woman entrepreneurs in Singapore that time pressure is measured by the numbers of hours that are worked and by schedule flexibility. This refers to ability to alter one's work schedule to meet both work and non-work pursuit including family. They found that long hours of work and work schedule inflexibility leads to high work-family conflict.

Koos and McLelland (2009) reported that married women who are self-employed and career women indicated the need to be organized and to ensure that their activities and responsibilities are planned. Substantial time commitment to one's role, as experienced by the participants, may conflict with the requirements of another role. White (1995) suggested that work and family need not conflict but that the multiple roles may offer unique psychological benefits. These benefits fulfilled different needs for mothers. What appeared important according to White (1995) was quality of role involvement rather than role occupancy. Barling (1990) stated that employed mothers have less time to recreate and interact with their family which leads them to compensate by establishing specific time for interaction with their children. However, there was no strong empirical evidence to show that the mother-child bond is negatively affected when a mother engages in full-time employment (Barling, 1990).

Apter (1985) argues that career mothers exhibit the super-women syndrome. They nurture and support both husband and children, and give everything because of the need to feel that they are doing their best. Weber (1999) showed that when working mothers were asked what well-being meant to them, most referred to feeling of happiness, winning and absence of guilt. Hoffnung (1992) stated that the value that relates positively to a woman's satisfaction is the extent of control that she has in managing and implementing her life. Hoffnung called this strategic planning which entails an individual looking towards the future with hope of shaping it and doing all things possible to achieve his/her vision. This implies perceiving options and making choices. He further stated that most career women displayed the quality of strategic planning through preparation for careers, planning of a family and planning of daily and weekly schedule to meet the needs of their work and families.

The coping effectiveness of working mothers may depend on the nature of the stressors. Aneshensel and Pearlin (1987) refer to stressor as any set or condition that threatened the well-being of people. A report by Ferri and Smith (1996) indicated that more mothers were involved in work outside home. Baruch and Barnett (1986) found that the conflict between work and family roles influence the amount of stress working women experienced rather than the time devoted to each role. They further reported that working women experience stress when they had difficulties in managing the boundaries between different life roles. Thus, conflict will be experienced when time pressures were incompatible with the demands of other roles. D. Campbell, K. Campbell and Kennard (1994) reported that occupational commitment was significantly lower for women with children than for women without children. They found that marriage alone did not impact on work commitment and that this happens only when children were introduced into the family. They further revealed that the stress of managing multiple roles was greater when work and family responsibility were both demanding. Koos and McLelland (2009) found that employed mothers experience greater stress and strain than homemakers (unemployed women).

Marital satisfaction and satisfaction at work are positively related to one another, both cross-sectional and overtime (Roger & May, 2003) while marital satisfaction appeared to be a predictor of subsequent job satisfaction than the other way round (Heller & Watson, 2005). Therefore, marital and job satisfaction appears to be related both in long and short term. Reppeti and Oskamp (1997) posited that women greater work schedule fit was related to increase marital role quality. Karambayya and Reily (1992) reported a negative relationship between work involvement and marital satisfaction for both men and women in dual career relationships, indicating that those individuals who reported being more involved in their career were also less satisfied with their marriage.

The rate of divorce and separation are alarming. More marriages are experiencing problems which later lead to separation or divorce. Is this a result of job demand on the part of the married women? Could the employment status of the married women responsible for this problem?

Therefore, the objectives of this study include, examining the influence that job demand and employment status has on marital conflict and marital satisfaction of married women, knowing the relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction, and finding out whether year of marriage will influence marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

2. Hypotheses

- 1) There will be a significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict.
- 2) There will be a significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital satisfaction.
- 3) There will be a significant influence of year of marriage on marital conflict and marital satisfaction.
- 4) There will be a significant relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Participants

The research participants in the study comprised of four hundred (400) married women which include one hundred (100) married women working in private sector, one hundred and twenty (120) married women working in public sector, one hundred (100) married women that are self-employed and eighty (80) unemployed married women. The participants were drawn from the three Senatorial districts in Ekiti State namely Ekiti Central, Ekiti North and Ekiti South. They were within the age range of 25 and 60 with a mean age of 43. The places of work of the employed married women are government ministries, parastatals and agencies, private organizations and establishments all in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

3.2 Sampling Methods

The multi-stage random sampling technique was used. Ekiti state is divided into three (3) Senatorial districts namely Ekiti Central, Ekiti North and Ekiti South. One local government was selected from each senatorial district. The local governments selected are Ado local government (Ekiti Central), Ikole local government (Ekiti North) and Ikere local government (Ekiti South). Purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants.

3.3 Research Instruments

Three standardized psychological instruments were used to generate data for this study. They are:

- (1) Perceived Work Demand Scale (PWDS) developed by Boyer, Maertz, Carl, Pearson and Keough (2003). It is a five-item scale which is designed to measure what workers perceived as their experience in their place of work. The cronbach co-efficient alpha for the five-item scale was .89 (Boyer et al, 2003).
- (2) The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) developed by Haynes, Flody, Lemsky and Rogers (1992). It is a six-point scale that measure marital satisfaction. The cronbach co-efficient alpha for the 24 items scale was .96 for both men and women (Haynes, et al, 1992).
- (3) The Kansas Marital Conflict Scale (KMCS) developed by Eggerman, Moxley and Schumm (1985). The 22-item inventory was designed to measure women's feelings and perception about their marriages and their husband's action and reaction. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the instrument was .82

3.4 Statistical Analysis

2x2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. One-way Analysis of Variance was used to test hypothesis three while Pearson product moment correlation was used to analyze hypothesis 4.

4. Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be a significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict. This was tested using 2x2 ANOVA. The result is presented in the table below.

Table 1: The mean scores of research participants on job demand and employment status as they affect marital conflict.

	Variables	N	Mean	D
Organizations	Public	120	63.3	0.17
	Private	100	65.23	8.46
Employment status	Self employed	100	57.90	.96
	Unemployed	80	60.09	.33
Job demand	High status	146	62.46	0.24
	Low status	174	61.89	0.44

Table 2: 2 x 2 ANOVA summary tables showing the effect of job demand and employment status on marital conflict.

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	P
Job demand	50.71	1	50.71	.112	>.05
Employment status	1850.36	2	925.18	2.06	>.05
Job demand & employment status	772.17	2	386.09	.86	>.05
Error	177351.49	393	451.28		
Total	181355.44	393			

From Table 2, results shows that there is no significant influence of job demand on marital conflict, $F(1,393) = .112, p > .05$. The result also revealed that there is no significant influence of employment status on marital conflict, $F(1,393) = 2.06, p > .05$. This shows that both job demand and employment status does not have any influence on marital conflict.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be a significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital satisfaction. The 2x2 analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. Table 3 below shows the result.

Table 3: The mean scores of research participants on job demand and employment status as they affect marital satisfaction.

	Variable	N	Mean	SD
Organizations	Public	120	102.30	22.25
	Private	100	112.38	21.53
Employment status	Self employed	100	113.73	18.73
	Unemployed	80	106.45	20.35
Job demand.	High status	146	105.19	22.61
	Low status	174	112.23	20.15

Table 4: 2 x 2 ANOVA summary tables showing the effect of job demand and employment status on marital satisfaction.

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	P
Job demand	1276.23	1	1276.22	.36	.05
Employment status	6013.99	2	3006.99	.93	.05
Job demand & Employment status	612.39	2	306.19	81	.05
Error	149102.88	393	379.39		
Total	172619.75	399			

Table 4 revealed that there is a significant influence of employment status on marital satisfaction, $F(2,399) = 7.93$, $p < .05$. This in effect indicates that employment status is a determinant of marital satisfaction. Result also showed that there is no significant influence of job demand on marital satisfaction, $F(2,399) = 3.36$, $p > .05$. This means that job demand does not affect marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 states that there will be a significant influence of year of marriage on marital conflict and marital satisfaction. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the hypothesis.

Table 5: One-way ANOVA table showing effect of marriage on marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

Variable	SS	f	S	F	p
Marital conflict X Year of marriage	2970.23	4	742.56		
Within group	178385.21	395	451.61	.64	.05
Total	181353.44	399			
Marital satisfaction X Year of marriage	1249.68	4	312.42		
Within group	171370.07	395	433.85	72	.05
Total	172619.75	399			

From Table 5, there is no significant influence of year of marriage on marital conflict, $F(4,399) = 1.64$, $p > .05$ and marital satisfaction, $F(4,399) = 72$, $p > .05$. This means length of marriage does not influence marital conflict.

Hypothesis 4 states that there will be a significant relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction. This hypothesis was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. The result is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation table showing the relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r	
Marital conflict	400	61.74	21.32	398	-0.33	.05
Marital satisfaction	400	111.83	20.79			

Result from Table 6 revealed that there is no significant relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction, $r = -0.33$, $df = 398$, $p > .05$. This shows that marital conflict and marital satisfaction does not have any correlation.

5. Discussion

The present study investigated the influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict and satisfaction among women in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Result of this study shows that there is no significant influence of job demand and employment status on marital conflict. This result does not agree with the findings of Hughes, Galinsky and Morris (1992) who reported that characteristics of one employment outside the home have been shown to affect functioning in the home. Also, the findings of Boyer, Maertz, Carl, Pearson and Keough (2003) that work demand have significant effect on family did not support the present study. Likewise, the study of Baruch and Barnet (1986) that work-family conflict existed when the time devoted to a job makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of the family did not support the finding of this study.

However, the result of this study supports the finding of White (1995) who reported that work and family need not conflict but that the simple roles may offer unique psychological benefits. The finding of this study also supports Hoffnung (1992) finding that most career women display the quality of strategic planning through preparation for their career, the planning of a family and the planning of daily and weekly schedules to meet the needs of their work and families. The plausible explanation of this finding is that Ekiti state is not an industrialized state but a civil service state where majority of its work force are working in government establishments with schedule flexibility. Societal adjustment such as child care, fast food chains and house cleaning service alleviate some work-family pressure. Moreso, Ekiti women understood the traditional family value. After marriage, they are in contact with the elderly married women who counsel them on the need and ways to achieve marital satisfaction. In addition, the women have to make ends meet in order to cater for their immediate and extended families.

Most of them indicated that they felt disorganized and experience lack of balance when there was no structured and planned approach to their motherly responsibilities. Inversely, when they were organized, they felt a sense of happiness and contentment thereby experiencing less pressure. The finding also shows that job demand does not have significant influence on marital satisfaction. This could be due to the fact that the job demand of married women in Ekiti state does not involve much traveling which can affect marriage negatively. It was discovered in this study that many of the married women who are working have not being transferred out of the senatorial district where they work because of their family. This is because the frequency of work-related travel had a weak direct relationship with marital satisfaction. This supports the findings of Roehling and Bottman (2002) and Edward and Rothbard (2000).

The conflict between work and family does not exist until one domain affects the other. A woman that brings her work home (spill-over) after a day's job will experience marital satisfaction in as much as the spill-over does not affect family activities. However, there is a significant influence of employment status on marital satisfaction. The plausible explanation for this is that, majority of workers in Ekiti State are civil servants. Workers in health sector do involve in shifting schedule which allow them to have more time for family and children and other recreational activities. Those in public sector have time period of 8 hours daily to spend at workplace and those in private sector and self-employed can structure their time. This supports the findings of Hartman and Stoner (1990), and Koos and McLelland (2009).

Findings in this study also revealed that there is no significant influence of year of marriage on marital conflict and marital satisfaction. This result does not support the findings of Jose and Alfon (2007) who found significant difference between marital satisfaction of young married women and older married women. But the result supports the findings of Coser (1974) who reported that marital satisfaction was generally not related to wife age.

The plausible explanation of this finding is that young married women learn from the older married women the tenets of marriage that brings about marital satisfaction.

Findings also revealed that there is no relationship between marital conflict and marital satisfaction. This implies that individuals constantly weigh their reward against their cost in interpersonal relationship. Where rewards outweigh costs, the individual feels satisfied but where costs outweigh rewards, individual become dissatisfied and may re-evaluate or leave the relationship. This supports the findings of Allen, Herst, Bruck and Sutton (2000).

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are made.

- 1 Job demand and employment status have no significant influence on marital conflict.
- 2 Job demand has no significant influence on marital satisfaction.
- 3 Employment status has significant influence on marital satisfaction.
- 4 Year of marriage does not have significant influence on marital conflict.
- 5 No significant relationship exists between marital conflict and marital satisfaction.

7. Limitations

- i. One local government was selected from each of the three Senatorial districts in Ekiti state. This may not be adequate to represent the population.
- ii. The influence that job demand and employment status has on marital conflict and marital satisfaction of women working in private and public sectors was not compared.
- iii. The level of job demand (high and low) as it influence the marital conflict and satisfaction of women in private and public sectors were not compared.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

1. There is the need for working married women to be effective in planning and structuring of their responsibilities and events. This will enable them to spend quality time with their husbands and children.
2. Opting for part-time work can be a strategy that women can use to deal with both work and family demands.
3. There is the need for employers of labor both in the public and private sectors to provide a good and conducive working environment that will make women more comfortable at working place.
4. Married women should be allowed to close earlier while daycare facilities should be provided within the premises of the organization for easy access by breastfeeding mothers to their children.
5. Government and policy makers should formulate policies that will improve work–family relationship.

For example in Nigeria, one of the policies of government was that women should breastfeed their children for a minimum period of six months, but government only approves three months maternity leave for the breastfeeding working mothers.

The question is how will the working mother have enough time to breastfeed their babies according to government policy? Therefore, the three months maternity leave for the working mothers should be increase to a minimum of six months.

9. Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the support and cooperation of all the research participants from the three Senatorial districts of Ekiti state in Nigeria. Worthy of appreciation too are the research assistants used to collect the research instruments from the participants. We appreciate and cherish you all.

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