

WORK LIFE BALANCE AND ROLE CONFLICT OF CAREER WOMEN IN EKITI STATE CIVIL SERVICE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined work life balance and role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict; work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict; and work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. The population for this study consisted of all career women in Ekiti State civil service in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 100 career women drawn from Ekiti State civil service. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. A self-designed research instrument tagged Work Life and Conflict Questionnaire (WLCQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The face and content validity of the instruments were determined by experts of Adult Education and Test and Measurements. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method which yielded a co-efficient value of 0.76. The responses obtained were analyzed using inferential statistics of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that that work life balance is related to management of role conflict, management of work-to-family conflict of career, and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that organizations should help or provide facilities required like flexible working time arrangements, care of children and family members, paid leave, insurance schemes, crèche facilities, and maternity leaves more than six months.*

KEYWORDS: work life balance, role conflict, career women, civil service

INTRODUCTION

Family and work are the two most important domains for many adults. When conflicts between these two domains occur, there are potentially adverse effects for individuals, families and organisations. Although men increasingly express interest in a more balanced commitment to their work role, it appears that women experience the highest levels of conflict between work and family, since women are still expected to perform the bulk of family and household tasks and responsibilities. Work may be defined as various activities carried out by human beings for varying purposes. The concept of work has gained momentum in the last few years with increasing research work in industry and education. Work may be defined as various activities carried out by human beings for various purposes (Burke, 2011).

The term "work / life balance" could be defined as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. This term was coined in 1986, although its usage in everyday language was sporadic for a number of years. Work/life balance initiatives are a global phenomenon. Nancy (2003) stated that women, who work, carry a double load as

an employee and housewife. They are super mums playing varied roles and reconciling between tradition and modernity. Women in lower to middle socioeconomic status seek income opportunities and those in the upper middle class pursue a career for professional ambitions. Women with higher education have more interest in independence, are career-oriented and interested in quickly moving up the organizational ladder. The key challenge for career women is managing both their traditional roles as housewives and their career.

Career women frequently express a concern of being inadequately prepared to lead such interventions and feel challenge to take on such a role'. In most of the available literature, the problems faced by women are mainly restricted to technical problems hindering business efforts or motivation and stress-related issues (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005). Role conflict actually is the difference or gap between the role assigned to the employees and their actual performance. Secondly the ambiguity of which task to do according to the priority at one time among the two conflicting tasks is the role conflict (Nancy, 2003). Role conflict is majorly caused by the absence of some factors named as congruence, consistency and differentiation. The role conflict, that is sometimes called the role stress related to the work environment, is caused when the job to be done, the task to be accomplished, and the duty to be assigned to the employees are not clearly defined, described and specified. The role conflict will bring about the job dissatisfaction among the employees and this dissatisfied trait will be the most dangerous for the organizations and for the employees as well, (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005). Work life balance is not that each and every hour of working life of employees should be scheduled and defined. Rather, it is the appropriate and flexible balance between the activities of an employees' working life so that the employees should be able to focus on the organizational, daily life and the family time activities according to preference and thus offer the best productivity at every job they do. Further, if the employees of an organization have not or are not provided with a proper time schedule, work breakdown structure and the flexibility, then greater are the chances of lower performance by employees leading to least job satisfaction and the higher turnover rate.

The variables that affect the work life balance of women most are the demographic variables including age, income and family size. Because the work life balance will have to be mostly shaped on the basis of these variables in future, it is the responsibility of the organization that it should keep the demographic status of women at focus and design the job specifications and the work timings according to that because the most valuable asset to be invested upon are the employees. The disadvantages of imbalanced work life appear in the form of least motivation, psychological disorders, stresses and the family conflicts, thus disturbing whole life of employees (Lee and Rwigema, 2005).

Work life balance, which is sometimes also called the work family conflict, is the result of different stressors that lead to job dissatisfaction (Lee and Rwigema, 2005). And in order to root out the work family conflict, these stressors must be identified and got rid. One of the most vital factors determining the success of organizations are the work life policies and are defined as the base intensity indicators of an organization. Preferring work over family and thus family over work may lead to the physical and mental imbalance in employees. Providing balanced time to each activity according to demand and preference will go in the favour of employees and the organization as well (Thompson, Andreassi, & Protas, 2005). For women, conflict between work and family has two directions which are work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Work-to-family conflict occurs when experiences at work interfere

with family life, like prolonging abnormal, or fixed work hours, work overload and other forms of job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, unsupportive supervisor or organization. Family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences in the family interfere with work life like presence of young children, primary responsibility for children, elders' care responsibilities, interpersonal conflict within the family unit, unsupportive family members.

It is important for us to manage and balance the expectations of family and work which does affect individuals especially women. At time it can affect oneself in balancing the role expectations of work and home and the conflicts surrounding both. Work-life conflict can have unfavourable results on families and workplaces causing anxiety and depression, poor job performance and absenteeism (Schmidt, 2011). It is on this note that this research study examined work life balance and role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined work life balance and role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict; work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict; and work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.
2. There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.
3. There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. The population for this study consisted of all career women in Ekiti State civil service in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of 100 career women drawn from Ekiti State civil service. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. An instrument tagged Work Life and Conflict Questionnaire (WLCQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. *Section A* of the WLCQ sought for demographic information about the respondents while *Section B* consisted of 20 items to elicit information on work life balance, management of role conflict, management of work-to-family conflict and management of family-to-work conflict. Likert 4 point rating scale was used for both instruments as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

The instruments for the study were validated by experts in the area of Tests and Measurement and Adult Education. The experts determined its face and content to ensure the appropriateness of the instruments in measuring what they are supposed to measure. The reliability of WLCQ was determined through the test-retest method outside the sampled area.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics formula was used to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.76 for WLCQ.

The researcher personally visited the sampled respondents to administer the instrument. The data collected through the instruments were analyzed using inferential statistics. All hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Table 1: Relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab
Work Life Balance	100	14.26	1.74	0.691*	0.195
Management of Role Conflict	100	15.82	1.69		

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal (0.691) is greater than r-table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Hence, work life balance is positively and highly related to management of role conflict of career women.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Table 2: Relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab
Work Life Balance	100	14.26	1.74	0.508*	0.195
Management of Work-to-Family Conflict	100	13.68	1.41		

*P<0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal (0.508) is greater than r-table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Hence, work life balance is positively and moderately related to management of work-to-family conflict of career women.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Table 3: Relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab
Work Life Balance	100	14.26	1.74	0.611*	0.195
Management of Family-to-Work Conflict	100	16.04	1.58		

*P<0.05

Table 3 showed that the r-cal (0.611) is greater than r-table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. Hence, work life balance is positively and moderately related to management of family-to-work conflict of career women.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed a significant relationship between work life balance and management of role conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. This implies that the higher the work-life balance, the better the management of role conflict among women in Ekiti State civil service. This finding is in consonance with findings of Nancy (2003) and Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan (2005) who found out that a significant relationship existed between work life balance and management of role conflict of career women.

The study also revealed a significant relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. This result is consistent with previous findings of other scholars such as Carlson & Kacmar (2000) and Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan (2005) who all found a positive relationship between work life balance and management of work-to-family conflict of career women. The result indicated that women who balance work/life situations will manage effectively conflict of work-to-family.

It was further revealed that there is significant relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service. The researcher is of the view that when that women who balance work and life will manage effectively conflict that could emanate from family-to-work. This finding supports the contention of Carlson & Kacmar (2000) and Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan (2005) who substantiated a significant relationship between work life balance and management of family-to-work conflict of career women.

CONCLUSION

Women are increasing in professionally trained career and in organizations. This study has explored some of the issues at work and home and how women have combined their careers with family life. The findings of the study are actual responses of the women and it was concluded that work life balance is related to management of role conflict, management of work-to-family conflict of career, and management of family-to-work conflict of career women in Ekiti State civil service.

Recommendations

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

- 1) Women should combine work and family life with the help of 'mother' or 'mother in law' and also giving birth to children only after settling in a job.
- 2) Men should always assist their wives at home and not leaving all home responsibilities to women
- 3) Organizations should have the ability to look after women employees and measure what their requirements and work on it.
- 4) Organizations should help or provide facilities required like flexible working time arrangements, care of children and family members, paid leave, insurance schemes, crèche facilities, and maternity leaves more than six months.

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