

Appraisal of Role Conflict on Quality of Work Life
and Turnover Intention among Corporate Women
Workforce

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Abstract

There is an upsurge of women in workforce especially in African countries, such as Nigeria. Women play multiple mutually incompatible roles within and outside the workplace. This study examines the influence of role conflict on quality of work life and turnover intention among working women across various corporate organizations, 265 women were purposively selected in a descriptive and cross-sectional survey for this study. Data is collected by utilizing structured psychological scales which are role conflict scale, work-related quality of life scale and turnover intention scale. Pearson correlation and t-test for independent tests are used as statistical tools for data analyses. On this basis, we found significant relationship between family-work conflict and quality work life; family-work conflict and turnover intention; work-family conflict and turnover intention. Age is also a determinant of turnover intention among working women. The findings have implication for low retention rates of corporate women workforce resulting in a brain drain of required corporate and managerial talents. Recommendations are in line with Sustainable Development Goals of gender equality and women empowerment.

Keywords: Role conflict, quality of work life, turnover intention, working women

I. Introduction

In the last four decades, quality of work life received much research focus (Davis, 1975). Quality of work life holds that individuals are the most vital resources in any organization; in that they are capable of making critical important decisions on behalf of their organizations. Quality of work life covers general well-being, work-home interface, working conditions, stress at work, job-career satisfaction, and control at work of workforce (Van Laar, Edwards & Easton, 2007). Employee activities at work may impact his or her social, health, psychological and economic condition. Women are inclusive of the workplace scenarios because they form part of the work force.

Role conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible and bi-directional in some respect. Conflict among roles may begin or occur because of the pressure put on an individual by two imposing and incompatible demands competing against each other sometimes due to human desire to reach success. These competing demands are work-family conflict, and family-work conflict (Raymond & Fitz, 2004). Work-family conflict occurs when experiences at work like extensive, irregular and inflexible work hours, work overload, job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions,

unsupportive supervisor or organization interfere with family life. Family-work conflict occurs when demands in the family interfere with work life like responsibility for children, elderly care, extended family, interpersonal conflict within the family unit and unsupportive family members (Greenhaus & Beutel, 1985).

The image of the ideal worker rather than the real worker persists and causes work-family conflict by demanding too much of working parent. In modern time women rights absolve the woman to share most of the same rights as men. Contemporary mothers are expected to have the career capacity of a man and the domestic grace modeled after the ideal mother/wife of the mid twentieth century. It could be taxing to bridging the gap between the home and work because the work-family conflict may lead to poor execution of family obligations. By and large, striving to adjust one's home and work responsibilities may encourage employee negative behaviour towards one's organization (Raymond & Fitz, 2004). Individual's diverse obligations may result in turnover intention. Turnover intention refers to a conscious and deliberate willingness to leave the organization. Women propose idea of quitting the job someday; particularly when the work environment is not favorable enough to face family obligations.

There is changing demographics of women workforce. Globally woman's participation in the labour market remained steady in about two decades from 1999- 2000 hovering around 52% of the workforce (World Bank, 2015). In order to reconcile tradition with modernity, increasing number of women are entering and graduating from school, tertiary institution and professional schools. The products of these schools also join the work force. In Nigeria 48% of workforce consist of female participation from ages 15years and above (ILO, 2012; ADB, 2012) according to World Bank (2015). Women in workforce in Nigeria are increasing as well. In spite of changes in women participation and number in the workforce, women are likely to bear more responsibilities in the home.

Women multiple roles as wives, mothers and employees are stressful. Most women probably join workforce to augment family income and meet increasing financial needs at the home front. Research further shows that a woman has to put in extra effort to cope with housework and work outside the home, most especially when the husband is not really helpful in this regard. The demand of family life of women especially in Africa interferes not only with achieving success in their career but could be a source of family disappointment and trouble. African tradition makes the burden of women in taking care of their families huge as a consequence of male dominated (patriarchal) society

(Chovwen & Olapegba, 2007; Nwagbara & Akanji 2012).

In today's contemporary workplace with gender pay gap, gender harassment, discrimination (Akinbobola, 2012); glass ceiling (Chovwen & Investor, 2009) coupled with inability to meet the demands of their spouses, extended family and social obligations may lead to conflicting roles. In an environment where there is high level of competitive pressures stemming largely from efforts to deliver quality service, the weight of this on employees are enormous (Karatape, 2010; Lourel, Ford, & Gamassou 2009). The dynamic nature and high pressures in the workplace is putting increasing pressures on working women.

Intention to quit one's job may not come overnight; it is the aftermath of years or months of inner struggles. The intention to quit the organization is identified with really leaving the organization based on the theory of planned behaviour (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975). Fishbein and Azjen (1975) postulates consistency between favourable attitude towards leaving, leading to intention to leave and eventually to the action, which is quitting the job. The spillover theory proposed by Staines (1980) explains role conflict from the perspective of work and family interconnection. The reciprocal effects of multiple roles can be positive or negative in nature. It can be negative when work results in fatigue and

distress in the workplace and this may affect the way and manner, an individual interact at home that is in the family. When the effect is positive, such as work satisfaction, it leads to positive feelings and interactions in the family (Williams & Alliger 1994).

Previous studies suggest that role conflict faced by women is due to their multiple responsibilities (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-family conflict is linked to quality worklife (Md-Sidin, Sambasinvan & Ismail, 2010; Singh-Kang & Deepak, 2014). Role conflict is responsible for higher employee's turnover intentions (Noor & Maad, 2008). Work-family conflict had been identified as some variables that drive employees to leave their workplace (Alimalki, Fitzgerald & Clark, 2012; Khan, Nazir, Kazmi, Khalid, Kiyani, & Shahzad, 2014). Also, family-work conflict has relationship with turnover intentions (Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012). Saraji and Dargahi (2006) clarify quality of work life as vital for organizations to draw in and hold employees.

As indicated by Marta, Singhapakdi, Lee, Sirgy, Koonmee and Virakul (2013), employees who have great work life have a tendency to report high levels of identifiable proof with their organizations and lower turnover intention. Family-friendly jobs (Belwal, & Belwal, 2014), flexible working conditions (Porter & Ayman, 2010), self-

governance, communication between management and employees (Mosadeghrad, Ferlie & Rosenberg, 2011; Mosadeghrad, 2013) bring about enhanced quality of work life, and lower turnover intention. Organizations will most likely not be able to condone some outcomes that arise as a result of conflicting role responsibilities. Many women on the other hand would not have quality work life; such women may likely live with the intention to quit the job.

Research on role conflict and quality of work life of women is yet to receive adequate attention in developing and underdeveloped countries. The present study is set out to breach this gap in knowledge by appraising role conflict in relation to quality of work life and turnover intention among working women.

The present study tested the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant relationship between work-family conflict and quality of work life among working women.

Hypothesis 2: There will be significant relationship between family-work conflict and quality of work life among working women.

Hypothesis 3: There will be significant relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention among working women.

Hypothesis 4: There will be significant relationship between family-work conflict and turnover intention among working women.

Hypothesis 5: Married working women will manifest significantly higher level of turnover intention than unmarried working women.

Hypothesis 6: Younger working women will manifest significantly higher level of turnover intention than older working women.

II. Methodology

2. 1. Research Design

The research adopted cross-sectional descriptive survey design. It aims at describing and understanding the influence of role conflict on the quality of work life and turnover intention among working women in corporate organizations.

2.2 Participants

A sample of 265 working women is purposively drawn from 12 corporate organizations in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. The participants include married and unmarried women across different age groups.

2. 3 Research Instrument

Role conflict is measured by adapted version of role conflict scale from Hyun Jung Choi and Young Tae Kim (1989). The original instrument consists six dimensions which are work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), work to family

facilitation, family to work facilitation, job satisfaction and job performance. For this study two dimensions work-family conflict, family-work conflict are utilized. The scale is a 5-point Likert type ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree through (3) undecided to (5) Strongly Agree. Low score on the instrument indicates non-acceptance or strongly disagreement while high score is an indication of acceptance or strongly agreement. Work-Family Conflict describes the extent to which work interferes with home life and the authors report a reliability of .90 (Cronbach alpha) while reliability of .85 (Cronbach alpha) was obtained in this study. Family-Work Conflict describes the extent to which family interferes with work-related activities and the authors report reliability of .86 (Cronbach alpha) while reliability of .72 (Cronbach alpha) was obtained in this study. The relevance of the scale for Nigerian population has been demonstrated by Karatepe & Magaji (2008).

The work-related quality of life scale is designed by Van Laar, Edwards and Easton (2007). This scale measures general well-being, work-home interface, working conditions, stress at work, job-career satisfaction, and control at work of workforce. The scale consists of 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) to (5) indicating level of disagreement and agreement respectively. The scoring was such that a low score indicate non-

agreement of the item, while a higher score indicate agreement. The author reported a reliability of .91 (Cronbach Alpha) while .76 was observed in this present study.

Turnover intention was measured by turnover intention scale constructed by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh, (1979). This scale is also 5-point in Likert format type ranging from (1) extremely disagree to (5) extremely agree. The scoring was such that the higher the score, the higher the intention to quit. Internal consistency coefficient of .78 was reported by the author while a reliability coefficient of .75 (Cronbach alpha) was obtained in this study.

2. 4 Procedure

The instruments, as a battery was administered on the participants in their work setting, after their informed consent. The response rate was 66.3% in other words only 265 of the 400 instruments were duly filled and analysed.

2. 5 Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency count and simple percentage table were used for the descriptive statistics while Pearson correlation and independent t-test were adopted in testing the hypotheses.

2. 6 Ethical Consideration

After due permission from the organization, the informed consent of the participants was equally sought. Absolute confidentiality of information was assured.

III. Results and Discussion

3. 1 Result

3. 1. 1. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants.

The participants are 265 working women purposively selected from various corporate organizations. Their age ranged from 18-59 with a mean of 41.69 years. In this research 59.60% of participants are below the age of 40years, while 40.40% are age forty and above. The marital status of the participants is highlighted with the married having a majority of 78.50% and 21.50% as unmarried.

3. 1. 2 Correlation between work-family conflict and quality of work life

Table 2 (see Appendix 2) reveals that there is no relationship between work-family conflict and quality of work life $r_{xy}(265) = -0.08$, $p > .05$. This finding does not support hypothesis 1 which predicts that there will be a significant relationship between

work-family conflict and quality work life among the working women. Hence, this hypothesis is rejected.

3. 1. 3 Correlation between family-work conflict and quality of work life

A significant negative correlation between family-work conflict and quality of work life was observed $r_{xy}(265) = -0.10$, $p < .05$. This finding presented in table 2 (see Appendix 2) supports hypothesis 2 which predicts that there will be a significant relationship between family-work conflict and quality of work life among working women. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

3. 1. 4 Correlation between work-family conflict and turnover intention

Table 3 (see Appendix 3) shows there is significant positive relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intention among women working $r_{xy}(265) = 0.33$, $p < .05$. The findings support Hypothesis 3 which predicts that there will be a significant correlation between family to work conflict and quality of work life among working women. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted

3. 1. 5 Correlation between family to work conflict and turnover intention

A significant positive relationship between family-work conflict and turnover intention was observed

$r_{xy}(265) = 0.16$, $p < .05$. The findings presented in Table 3 (see Appendix 3) supports Hypothesis 4 which predicts that there will be significant relationship between family to work conflict and turnover intention among working women. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

3. 1. 6 Influence of marital status on turnover intention

The unmarried participants obtained a slightly higher mean score of ($\bar{x}=3.51$) than the married participants ($\bar{x}=3.34$). The observed difference in their mean score was however not found to be significant $t(263) = 1.36$, $p > 0.05$. This finding presented in Table 4 (see Appendix 4) does not support the hypothesis which predicts a significant manifestation of higher level of turnover intention by married working women than unmarried working women. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

3.1. 7 Influence of age on turnover intention

The younger participants with 18-39 years obtained a slightly higher mean score of ($\bar{x}=3.60$) than the than older participants with ages 40-59 years ($\bar{x}=3.04$). The observed difference in their mean score was significant $t(263) = 5.61$, $p < 0.05$. This finding presented in Table 4 (see Appendix 4) support the hypothesis which predicts a significant manifestation of higher level of turnover intention

by younger working women than older working women. Hence the hypothesis is accepted.

3.2 Discussion

The findings in hypothesis 1 show that there was no relationship between work-family conflict and quality of work life. This implies that work to family conflict does not interfere with quality of work life of working women in organizations. The findings in hypothesis 2 reveal that family-work conflict has interference with quality of work life. If there is tension in the family that will sooner or later affect the quality of work life of an employee. African society practice extended family system. However, with industrialisation nuclear families emerge and exist in geographical isolations (Meyerhoff, (2012). Women are regarded as primary caretakers of the family irrespective of status in secular work; the woman is still the lord of the hearth stone. Extended family responsibility and care are huge; the working woman needs to oblige her duties to them as well as to her immediate family members, coupled with playing her roles at work. Conflict ensues and quality of work life is jeopardised.

The findings in hypothesis 3 indicate that work-family conflict has a positive relationship with turnover intention. These findings support Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012; Gradulf et.

al., 2005; Khan, Nazir, Kazmi, Khalid, Kiyani, & Shahzad, 2014) that is if work family conflict increases the employees turnover intention will also increases. The conflict between work and family roles leads to majority of women nursing the intention to quit organization. Level of salary, higher status of education, discrimination, hostility, work design and job content may contribute to reasons while women intent to leave their organization. Work-family conflict inhibits women career progression (Chowwen, 2007). The feeling of glass ceiling make women decide to leave the corporate workforce, resulting in a brain drain of required corporate and managerial talent.

The findings in Hypothesis 4 show that that there is significant positive relationship between family-work conflict and turnover intention. These findings corroborate Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Ghayyur & Jamal, 2012) that when conflict builds up between family and work, intention to leave work also mounts up. Conflict will therefore continue to exist, as women fulfil their obligations in the family and workplace. The extended family members make discussion together but the onus is on patriarch often the oldest male member, to lays down rules and arbitrates disputes. Nevertheless the patriarch still has oversight functions on most members in diaspora. Career choices make a woman leave her work when the patriarch arbitrate that the career involve long period of absence from her primary

responsibility the family, she will be pressurised to choose between that work and her family; thus she eventually opt for a less time consuming work which gives more time consideration for the family. The head of the extended family may not be her spouse, they may be separated by distance yet his authority is binding on her. Fertility decisions make women leave their work as well. There is the belief that stress of the work interferes with fertility of the women. Women with fertility challenges are coerced to quit such work to give a chance for childbearing. In African, fertility and childbearing is paramount to the extended family.

The findings of hypothesis 5 reveal that there is no significance of marital status of participants on turnover intention. Marital status (Almalki et al, 2012) and demographic variables (Glissmeyer Bishop & Fass 2007) have no significant relationships with intention to quit the organization. The findings of hypothesis 6 indicate that younger women (below 40 years) significantly manifest higher turnover intention than older women. This finding does not corroborate (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) that there is increased turnover intention across all generational groups. Persons below 40 years tally with generation Y persons born between 1976 – 1995 (Harris, 2005; Ivancevich 2010). Generation Y also called Millennials or echo boomers include women who are entering the workforce and they prefer work life balance therefore organisations

need to accommodate these women, retain current women workforce and attract potential women workforce as older women workforce will retire soon.

IV. Conclusion and Implications

There are significant relationship between family-work conflict and quality work life; family-work conflict and turnover intention; work-family conflict and turnover intention. Younger working women manifested significantly higher level of turnover intention than older working women. The implication for high turnover intention are higher recruitment, higher absenteeism and lower retention rates of working women, which lead to brain drain of required corporate and managerial talents. Government interventions are required in assisting with policies that concentrates on women welfare and comfort line with Millennium/Sustainable Development Goals (MDG/SDG) of gender equality and women empowerment. Furthermore, organizations acknowledge the changing demographic profile of the working women.

1. Organizations could help female employees accomplish work life balance by permitting them utilize adaptable or flexible working timings, job sharing, virtual organization and telecommuting for better quality work life.

2. Management should encourage women participation at all levels; especially at decision-making exercises for job retention.
3. Job should be designed in such a way that gives meaning and opportunity for career growth and development for retention of women workforce.
4. Increased period of maternity leave to 6 months in order to reduce job turnover.

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Appendix 1

Table 1 Distribution of Participants by Demographic Characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-39	158	59.60
	40-59	107	40.40
	Total	265	100.0
Marital status	Married	208	78.50
	Unmarried	57	21.50
	Total	265	100.0

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis Summary showing the relationship between work-family conflict and family-work conflict on quality of work life

Variable	N	r	p
WFC Quality Work Life	265	-.08	> .05
FWC Quality Work Life	265	-.10	< .05

WFC = work-family conflict; FWC = family-work conflict

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis Summary showing the relationship between work-family conflict and family-work conflict on turnover intention

Variable	N	r	p
WFC Turnover Intention	265	0.33	< .05
FWC Turnover Intention	265	0.16	< .05

WFC = work-family conflict; FWC = family-work conflict

Table 4: Independent t-test showing the influence of marital status and age on turnover intention

Variable		N	Mean	SD	t	p
Marital Status	Married	208	3.34	0.87	1.36	> .05
Marital Status	Unmarried	57	3.51	0.76		
Age	Younger 18-39	158	3.60	0.80	5.61	< .05
Age	Older 40-59	107	3.04	0.81		