

Original Research Article

The effect of balancing work obligation and family responsibilities among female medical practitioners in Jos metropolis

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Abstract

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The study investigated the effect of balancing work obligation and family responsibilities among female medical practitioners in Jos metropolis, Jos south LGA of Plateau state. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 784 with sample of 157 selected using simple random sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire was constructed and used for data collection. The data was statistically analyzed using t-test and mean statistics. The hypothesis was statistically tested at significant level of 0.05. The result revealed that medical mothers' absence had a great effect in performance of house hold chores; the result also stated some strategies such as flexible jobs, use of house help and day care centers. It was recommended that the government should organize talks on dangers of working and neglecting the family.

Keywords: Daycare, household, Obligation, practitioner, responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

Historically, women have played diverse roles such as house wives, homemakers as well as mother's in-charge of the operations of their homes. In the past, the women's position was restricted to the home and she accepted her place (home) and modeled her life accordingly (Perimuter and Hall, 2005). Women, by biological constitution have been recognized as mothers and nurtures of children. They plan and cook meals and also take care of the house, thus they occupy a central position in determining the quality of life of the households and the community (Titilayo, 2000). Traditionally, women were regarded as child bearers whose activities were usually limited to the home. As home makers, their responsibilities prevented their active involvement in work outside the home. This situation makes father (husband) the family chief providers.

However with social challenges of expansion and development, women have deviated from their traditional roles to seek education, occupation and remunerated

work to establish some degree of economic security in the home (Osia, 2005). The number of women now taking employment outside the home has increased rapidly.

A number of studies have identified reasons why women worked. Lucas (2004) identified that women worked to supplement family income, self support and be part of the nation force. Uche (2000) stated that women worked to escape boredom and to satisfy professional goals.

Many women in developing countries including Nigeria engaged in paid work for their family and for the community. Many household businesses also depended on the labour of women. This paid works by women generated some form of output which contributed to the family's welfare by producing wages and income. Balancing work and family responsibilities therefore, is a challenge for many families today. Keeping these areas in balance will help reduce stress and have a healthy

family life, good work relationship, which results to a sense of satisfaction by the home maker (Oklahoma, 2005).

Statement of problem

The female, whether in developed or developing countries are known to naturally play numerous roles. She is the wife, mother, housekeeper and caretaker. In addition to all these demands, many females are professionals in various fields and hence engage in employments outside the home. This changing lifestyle has also brought about many challenges to households and the society at large. These changes in family living have both negative and positive effects on the family and the society. Working women are faced with having to balance work obligations with family responsibilities. Some literature in the back ground of this work has shown that women need an average of seven days in a month for personal or family obligation compared to one day for men. This level of absence affects the perception of women's dedication to their jobs. Women have the same working schedule and working condition like men but the family responsibilities which they carry out makes it difficult for them to have a balance. There is therefore the need to determine the effect of balancing work obligation and family responsibilities among female medical practitioners.

Purpose of the study

The major purpose for this study was to investigate the effect of balancing work obligation and family responsibilities among female medical practitioners in Jos metropolis. Specifically, the study determines:

1. The reason why female medical practitioners work,
2. The effect of mother's absence on home activities,
3. The extent to which medical profession has affected married women performance in family relationship and
4. The strategies that can be use to have balance of work and family responsibilities.

Research question

The study sort answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons female medical practitioners work outside the home
2. What is the effect of mother's absence on home activities
3. To what extend does medical profession affect married women's performance in family relationship

4. What are the strategies that can be used in balancing work obligation and family responsibilities

Hypothesis

One hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of respondents on the views on mother's absence from home activities.

METHODOLOGY

Area of the study

The study was a survey which used qualitative technique to generate data. The area of the study was Jos South LGA of Plateau State. It consists of 20 wards and is located in the Northern Senatorial zone of Plateau State.

Population for the study

The population for this study comprised of all married female medical practitioners in Jos South LGA of Plateau State. The total population was 784 (Plateau State Ministry of Health Head Quarters Jos, 2013).

Sample and sampling technique

For the purpose of this study, a simple random sampling technique was used. 'Hat' drawn method was adopted in the selection of sample from the target population of 784. 20% of the target population was used in selecting samples which gives 157 married female medical practitioners in Jos South LGA of Plateau State.

Instruments for data collection

The instruments used for data collection for this study was a self designed questionnaires based on the purposes and research questions. The respondents were restricted to a set of possible responses. These were rated using nominal and interval scaling system. According to Ekeh (2003), the classification permits consistency in scouring and does not give any indication of the superiority magnitude or preference of one item to the other.

Data collection and analysis

The researchers with the help of two trained research assistants administered and retrieved the 157 copies of

Table 1. Mean responses on reasons why female medical practitioners work:

S/N	Reasons why female medical practitioners work	Agree		Disagree		Mean	S.D
		F	%	F	%		
1	To make use of professional training	50	71	20	29	3.3288	1.0175
2	To complement husband's income and family financial needs	57	81	13	19	3.6000	0.8235
3	Female have equal right to that of husband to work	49	70	21	30	3.1000	1.1312

Table 2. Means scores of mother's absence on home activities

S/No	Response of mothers absence on home activities	Response Categories				Mean (X̄)	S. D
		Agree		Disagree			
		F	%	F	%		
1.	It is advisable for wife to fulfill their sexual roles to their husbands	143	98	7	2	3.2657	0.5029
2.	Communication is very vital to any stable wife-husband relationship at home	143	98	7	2	3.2429	0.4857
3.	Decision making is a role of both husband and wife	140	98	8	2	3.1829	0.4423
4.	How regular do you spend time with your children	Often		Sometimes		2.8314	0.5841
		F	%	F	%		
		139	77	80	23		
5.	How often do you have conversation and storytelling with your children	150	53	166	47	2.4829	0.6966

the questionnaires. The completed copies of the questionnaires were collected and analyzed using percentages, frequency, and mean scores while the hypothesis was tested using paired sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Reasons why female medical practitioners work

Table 1 shows that the highest mean response of 3.6 and 57 representing 80% believed that female medical practitioners work outside home in order to complement husband's income to support family financial needs and 50 representing 71% agreed that work is to make use of educational and professional training also, 49 representing 81% with the mean of 3.4 are of the opinion that female have equal right to work just like men do.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents numbering 143 representing 98% with the highest mean response of 3.3 were of the opinion that wives should fulfill their sexual roles to their husband while the same number of respondents with the second highest mean response of 3.2 were of the view that communication was very vital to husband wife relationship.

Table 3 reveals the mean responses of the extent which married female medical professions have affected

performance in family relationship. The highest mean response of 91% and mean of 1.8 disagree of doing house hold chores alone also 90% with mean of 1.9 perform house chores with the help of house helps. 90% with mean of 2.0 disagree that children are left alone in the house while on call and 80% representing 2.8 agreed that husbands stay with the children while on call.

In table 4, according to the respondent's rating, the best strategies to be used to have balance between work obligation and family responsibilities is that married women should only be engaged in flexible, stress free and timely jobs this was according to 100 of the respondents representing 97%, but 12 3% respondents disagreed this gave the highest mean response of 3.4 and standard deviation of 0.6.

Equally, short distance to work and mobility can also help women cope with work and family responsibilities as expressed by 110 (97%) of the respondents while 10 respondents representing 3% disagreed, with the second highest mean response of 3.4 and standard deviation of 0.7.

Employing house-helps or engaging relatives to help with some domestic activities were the opinions of respondents, representing 115 (94%) agreed while 22 that are 6% disagreed to this strategy, with mean of 3.4.

The response to whether married women are meant to stay home and be involved in domestic work and family responsibilities; 33 9% agreed with the statement and 97

Table 3. Mean scores on the extent to which medical professionals has affected married women performance in family relationship

S/No	Extent to which medical profession has affected married women performances	Response Categories				Mean (X̄)	S. D
		Agree		Disagree			
		F	%	F	%		
1.	My children are left alone at home while on call	7	10	63	90	2.0000	.4504
2.	My husband take care of the children while on call	56	80	14	20	2.8000	.4028
3.	I spend quality time with my children	7	10	63	90	2.1000	.3021
4.	I do my home chores alone	6	9	64	91	1.8143	.5721
5.	I share house hold activities with my spouse	59	85	11	15	2.9286	.4911
6.	House help assist house hold chores	7	10	63	90	1.9000	.7707

Table 4. Level of response on the strategies to have a balance work obligation and family responsibilities

S/NO	Response to strategies that can be used to have balance between Work, obligation and family responsibilities	Response categories				Mean (X̄)	S.D (□)
		Agreed		Disagreed			
		F	%	F	%		
1.	Married women should only be engaged in flexible, stress free & timely jobs	100	97	12	3	3.4400	0.6202
2.	Short distance to work place & mobility can help women cope with work/family responsibilities	110	97	10	3	3.4029	0.5567
3.	Employing house helps or engaging relatives to help with some domestic activities	115	94	22	6	3.4029	0.6603
4.	Married women are meant to stay at home and be involved in domestic work & family responsibilities only	33	9	97	91	1.8488	0.6400

Table 5. Paired sample t-test statistics on differences between respondent's views on mother's absence at home and the performance of home activities.

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	DF	T Calculated	T Vertical	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mothers absences	350	10.3200	2.3049				
Performance of home activities	350	12.4000	.8957	349	15.32	1.96	.000

representing 91% disagreed with the statement with score of 1.8 with standard deviation 0.6.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean response on the view of mother's absence on home activities. The paired sample t-test result on hypothesis was presented in table 5 below.

DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

The result reveals that married female doctors have different reasons why they practice. Some are of the opinion that work is to fulfill professional training and also to support the family's financial need. These findings agree with that of Uche (2000) who stated that women work to escape boredom and to satisfy professional goals. A number of effect were noticed to affect mother's absence on home activities such includes fulfilling sexual

responsibilities, spending quality time with children, involving in house hold chores. This finding is also in line with that of Blustein (1994) who said, some homes have been broken because women have not been able to meet up with their house hold responsibilities.

The study also revealed that the medical profession affected married women's performance in family relationship, the medical personnel believes women who worked outside their home did not have adequate time to spend with their children. This opinion was supported by Baxter (2009) who opined that children are often neglected by working women in search for financial gains.

From the study, certain strategies to balance work obligations were suggested which includes: female medical practitioners involving in flexible stress free and timely jobs. In addition to that, house helps should be employed to assist with a labour saving device to ease house hold chores. This finding is in line with the view of Magid (2005), who outlined certain strategies to cope with work obligation. This includes identification of support systems, that is, recognizing people who can help example; in a day care, husband or wife's relative.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study, the following conclusions were made: Most children whose parents are medical personnel lack bonding and attachment as they are left in the hands of nannies, day care centers and house helps. It could be concluded from the result that irrespective of the medical profession by women, certain strategies, such as flexible stress free jobs, part time jobs, mobility to work places and the use of house help and day care centers with the help of husbands support will be very helpful to female medical practitioners in Jos South LGA of Plateau State.

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the finding of this study, the researchers made the following recommendation:

1. Spouse should be encouraged to participate in home responsibilities to assist the female have a balance and also to avoid stress by female workers.

2. The ministry of women affaires from the national down to the local level should organize workshops, seminar or talks on the dangers of neglecting family especially growing children.

3. Female medical practitioners should engage themselves in stress free and flexible medical jobs to allow them have quality time with their families.

4. Career women should engage trusted in reliable house help preferable relatives to help in family responsibilities and with the use of labour saving device to aid house hold job.

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