

*Original Research Article*

# **Socio- cultural issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria: An appraisal of women holding administrative positions**

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## **Abstract**

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It is shocking to learn that over 28% of working families living in the various communities in Nigeria are struggling to pay for basic life expenses. These families are the –working poor, and they make up the majority of the workforce. Despite differences in gender, race, income, or geographic origin, most families in the these communities are working towards the same goals: preserving healthy relationships; raising their children; maintaining a quality standard of living; coping with major medical illnesses; adapting to the needs of aging parents; and keeping their families safe. Unfortunately, low-income families have fewer –family assets to defend against crises when they occur. This study identified several challenges faced by most Nigerian families listing coping formats that can be adopted to streamline and alleviate these challenges for a healthy living standard. The study also appraised challenges women in administrative positions face both at work and among families. A survey was conducted, employing stratified randomly sampling technique to select 250 women from South East geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses formulated. Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics and 5-point likert scale was implored to analyze the ratings. A t-test at 0.5 level of significance was employed to analyze the identified issues and challenges facing families and women in administrative positions respectively. The result showed that women holding administrative positions are faced with so many socio cultural issues and challenges. It was recommended that there should be policy on the improving of the social well-being of families especially women on executive positions who are bread winners.

**Keywords:** Administrative Positions, Gender, Issues, Socio-Cultural, Women

## **INTRODUCTION**

The lives of Nigerian women differ greatly from those of western women. Nigerian women traditionally played a more significant role in the society than the western women before the middle of the twentieth century. Traditional society expected women to be significant wage earners in the family via laboring in farming, fishing, herding, and commerce (pottery, cloth-making and craft

work) alongside Nigerian men. Women traditionally had the right to profit from their work, although they usually served as a contribution to the family income. This economic freedom was much different from western societies, where women had to fight for the right to work. These traditions still survive in modern Nigeria, however, a good percentage of Nigerian men do not value the

economic contributions of their wives. They do not view the woman's job and household work as especially taxing (Qualls 2014). Kulik (2002) pointed that the social and cultural changes have altered the fathers traditional families roles, This anthology examines differences in culture, class nationality and custodial status of fathers in families, thus making the men to join the workforce as to meet the needs of family rather than staying at home attending to children and the household chores all in the name of gender issues of women folk.

Whiteman and Loken (2006) stressed that the continuity move of women into paid work has generated a great deal of change in families, work place and community support for families yet the families basic needs are not properly met (Warsiglo 1995). These had brought about some contemporary issues facing the families especially of those families of women that hold administrative positions in the workforce. Some of these issues are

- 1) Changes in family function and well being.
- 2) Poor social and economic participation for those families
- 3) Inequity child and family safety and
- 4) Poor services to support families

These issues were raised because women's income is spent mostly on housekeeping expenses (Cherlin, 2002), and Susan, Jaime and Bun (2012) suggested these were based on sociocultural issues facing the contemporary families.

Sanderson (2010) emphasized that sociocultural pattern describes people's behavior and mental processes as shown by their social or cultural characteristics such as race, gender and nationality. It is a theory used in various fields such as psychology. It is used to describe awareness of circumstances surrounding individuals and how their behaviors are affected specifically by their surrounding social and cultural factors. It is very significant and applies to every sector of one's daily lives. There are still significant gaps between women and men in terms of their involvement in family life, the task they perform and the responsibilities they take, yet both women and men express a desire for greater things in the family. It is evident in terms of attitudes, beliefs, social and culture. The problem cannot simply be conceptualized in terms of women wanting to share more equality and men are reluctant to do so. The challenge men face is to develop policies and practices based on a presumption of shared responsibilities between men and women and a presumption that there are potential benefits for men and women as well and for families and community if there is greater gender equality in responsibilities and pleasures of family life, thus sharing the pleasures and pains of family life (Gelzer, 1991).

It was based on the above that Blau and Ehrenberg (2000) emphasized that women especially young mothers who are working as administrative officers are

faced with the challenges of balancing motherhood with career track employment and having children resulting substantially in traumatic stages for women (Marsiglio,1995)

Consequently, as married women in Nigeria commonly pursue careers outside the home, concerns about their ability to achieve equal footing with men without sacrificing the needs of their families has being a problem in policy makers and economists alike in the country (Boundless, 2014, Yan & Han 2009). On this note, the researchers tried to examine the Socio-cultural issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria: A Gendered Appraisal of Women Holding Administrative Positions.

### **Statement of Problem**

Nigeria as a developing country is a nation where many families are suffering because gender disparities have positioned a lot of women as breadwinners because they are working outside home for a paid job as administrative officers. Not only that these women are low-income earners but that the little, they are paid are spent on housekeeping and basic needs of the family, the women are striving to cope with achieving the goals of the families, caring for the aging parents, raising the children, presenting healthy relationship with the spouse and maintain a quality standard of livelihood. Most often, these needs are not met because of poor family assets and income but because gender has always been an issue in the sociocultural pattern in Nigeria. Women owe the responsibility of attending to children and household chores in the family rather than engaging in an official job into the family. From the woman it was based on those that the researcher tried to see the challenges to alleviate these problems so as to improve family standard of living and to cope of gender issue in families of Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the study**

The general objective of the study is to examine sociocultural issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria. A gendered appraisal of women holding administrative positions and specifically to:-

- 1) Identify the issues facing contemporary families in South East Nigeria
- 2) Enumerate the challenges facing women in administrative positions in South East Nigeria
- 3) Outline the strategies that could be adopted to alleviate these challenges among families in South East Nigeria.

### **Significance of the study**

The result of the study will help the policy makers, the

government and Non-governmental organizations, households and individuals in identifying issues and challenges facing contemporary families. The study would also provide basis for identifying strategies to be adopted in managing family issues especially for women holding administrative positions.

### Scope of the Study

The study covered all the five states in South East geopolitical zone. The states are Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states.

### Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:-

- 1) What are the issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria.
- 2) What are the socio cultural challenges facing families of women holding administrative position in South East Nigeria?
- 3) What are the strategies to alleviate the challenges and socio cultural issues facing women holding administrative positions in contemporary families?

### Hypotheses

Based on the above research questions, three hypotheses were formulated as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference among issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria

H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the issues and the challenges of women holding administrative positions in work places.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference among strategies to alleviate the challenges and socio cultural issues facing women holding administrative positions in contemporary families

## METHOD

### Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey design.

### Population

The population of this study comprised five states in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The five states are Abia with 17 local government areas, Anambra 21 local government areas, Ebonyi 13 local government areas, Enugu 17 local government areas, Imo 27 local

government areas, making it a total of 95 local government areas with several communities which the number is not known but could be estimated as 500 communities with about over ten thousand (10,000) families which are made up of semi-literate and literate women.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

The samples of the study consisted of five local government areas from each of the 5 states randomly selected, giving a total of 25 LGA. Each LGA was classified into five strata giving a total of 125 strata, from which two households with women in administrative positions by means of focus group/purposive sampling were identified. A total of 250 women were therefore selected as the sample for the study. The women were working mothers in both Government and Non Government establishment holding administrative positions.

### Instrumentation

The instrument for the study was a questionnaire and interview designed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into three sections (A –C). Section A sought background information about the subjects; section B sought information on family issues while section C dealt with challenges facing women in administrative positions and on the strategies of alleviating the challenges.

The respondents were required to indicate their opinion on each item based on 5 point like scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) Undecided (UN) the values are  $5+4+3+2+1=15=15/5=2.5$

### Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis employed in the study was frequency and mean deviation for research question 1, 2 and 3. However, it test was used to test the hypothesis. All decisions were taken at 0.50 and above.

## RESULTS

Table 1 above showed that all the items scored above 2.50 which mean that all of the items are the issues facing the families in south East Nigeria.

Table 2 above indicates that all the items agreed to the challenges facing women in administrative positions because the entire items had a mean score above 2.50.

Table 3 Showed that the entire item except item no3 disagreed on having a mean score below 2.50 which

**Table 1.** Mean rating of the respondents on the issues facing families in South East Nigeria

S/N:	Socio Cultural Issues	N	X	Decision
1	Family well being are not met due to gender	250	3.1	Agreed
2	Inadequate provision for child safety	250	2.9	Agreed
3	Poor health services to support the family	250	3.8	Agreed
4	Poor economic status due to gender	250	2.7	Agreed
5	Low level of academic standard	250	3.2	Agreed

**Table 2.** Mean rating of the respondents on the socio cultural challenges facing women in administrative positions.

S/N	Challenges	NO	X	Decision
1	Poor available income as a result of independent spending at home and on extended relations	250	2.9	Agreed
2	Difficulty in paying basic life expenses due single hand financing of economic needs	250	3.2	Agreed
3	Adapting to the needs of aging parents independently	250	2.60	Agreed
4	Raising children independently	250	2.59	Agreed
5	Non healthy relationship with spouse	250	3.1	Agreed

**Table 3.** Mean rating of the respondents on the strategies to alleviate the challenges faced by the families

S/N	Strategies For Alleviating Challenges	No	X	Decision
1	Improvedpatience on the side of women in administrative positions to accommodate home stresses from spouse	250	3.8	Agreed
2	Avoidance of over stretching job tenure	250	3.7	Agreed
3	Giving them loan to acquire assets that could generate money	250	1.3	Agreed
4	Provision of extra allowance on family up keep salary cadre of such women	250	4.0	Agreed
5	Encouraging them on instruments for coping with family politics	250	2.9	Agreed

**Table 4.** T- Test analysis of the mean rating on family issues and socio cultural perceptions on women holding administrative positions.

Appraised Gendered Factors	N	X	SD	DF	t.cal	Remark
Family issues on women breadwinners	250	2.60	0.51	498	1.98	Accepted
Socio cultural perceptions as big boss on women holding administrative positions	250	2.70	0.49			

revealed that they could do any other thing but not to accept loan from work place.

Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of the respondents on family issues and socio cultural perceptions on women holding administrative positions. The implication is that women who are bread winners are classified to have family issues which could vary from one family to another. Similarly, the respondents also rated that women in administrative positions are perceived as big boss therefore classified. These becomes part the challenges such women will face in the contemporary society.

## DISCUSSION

The finding from the study revealed that women holding administrative position are faced with so many socio cultural issues and challenges. This was because all the items in table 1and 2 were in agreement with the issues facing the contemporary families this was in line with (Warsiglo1995).Also table 2, 3 and 4 also showed that all the items agreed respectively aligning with the argument of Boundless (2014) and Yan and Han (2009).

## CONCLUSION

The study addressed the socio cultural issues facing contemporary families in Nigeria, a gendered appraisal of women holding administrative positions. The study concluded that the issues and challenges facing the contemporary families confirmed that women in the workforce are the working poor due to poor salaries and spending much on basic life needs. The study also concluded that the socio cultural perception on such women are stereotyped and that these issues and challenges could be alleviated through some policies and interventions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore recommended that:

Men should strive to assist women in purchasing major basic family needs rather than leaving them for the women alone. The culture is dynamic therefore the society should begin to legally and culturally accept women in these positions and stop all forms of salient discrimination. There is urgent need for social security for working class women holding administrative positions within households.

The establishment, in which the women work with, should endeavor to improve on their wages and create opportunities for sponsored vacations.

There should be policy on the improvement of the social well-being of families especially women on executive positions who are bread winners.

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