FEELING OF REDUCED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT: STRAIN-BASED WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT AS A CORRELATE

Ejike A.O.

Department of Psychology
Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.
E-mail: aejyke@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This study investigated strain-based work-family conflict as correlate of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among married female teachers with children. A total of 304 female secondary school teachers between the ages of 26 to 54 years (M= 40.37 and SD =4.09) with educational qualifications ranging from National Certification of Education to Masters of Education Degree were drawn from 24 Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern part of Nigeria using criterion sampling technique. A 6-item strain-based work interference with family and 4-item strain-based family interference with work scales drawn from Okonkwo (2011) 32-item Work-Family Conflict Scale, and 8-item feeling of reduced personal accomplishment scale drawn from Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item Burnout Inventory were administered. Correlational design was used. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used as statistical test for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between strain-based work interference with family and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment, r (302) = 0.18, p <.01. Also, a significant positive relationship between family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment, r (302) = 0.14, p <.01.*

Keywords: **Feeling of Reduced Personal Accomplishment, Strain, Work-family Conflict**

Biographical Note: Ejike A. Okonkwo has had wholesome training in the area at some of the best universities in Nigeria and has crowned the training with years of research, teaching and practice. He studied General Psychology and Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Enugu State University of Science and Technology and the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, where he obtained B.Sc., M.S.C and Ph.D respectively.

Dr. Ejike Okonkwo teaches Industrial/Organizational Psychology with special bias for Work-Family Conflict in the Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the number of women juggling work and family responsibilities began to increase. Prior to this, the society clearly defined the roles of men and women. In Nigeria, gender roles were strictly defined in a way that men engaged in paid work while women

remained at home shouldering family responsibilities. Today, Nigerian women like other women in other parts of the world irrespective of their preserve which is taking care of family responsibilities engage in paid work. However, despite the participation and strides made by Nigerian women in the workplace, the division of labor still falls along pretty traditional lines which leave them with the primary responsibilities of overseeing household works. Women, irrespective of their involvement in paid work, have been found to bear primary responsibilities of home care and childcare (Lero, 1992).

In a bid to balance these work and family responsibilities, these women are caught between the cross role demands of work and family responsibilities. The cross role demands many a time precipitate work interference with family and family interference with work. These interferences have always resulted in work-family conflict. The conflict occurs when the employees especially women extend their efforts to satisfy their work demands at the expense of their family demands and vice versa (Cole, 2004). Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Flippo, 2005).

According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible or incongruous in some respect, whereby participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other. This definition holds that work-family conflict is both bidirectional (work interference with family/ family interference with work) and multidimensional (time, strain and behavior-based) and the multidimensional nature occurs in each direction. A significant volume of research suggests that work interference with family and family interference with work are related but distinct constructs (Ajiboye, 2008).

Work interference with family occurs when participation in work responsibilities makes it difficult for an employee to carry out family responsibilities (e.g. cooking, washing, child care e.t.c). Work interference with family is primarily determined by excessive work demands and predicts negative work outcomes (Adebola, 2005). It has been observed that job- related variables have strong bearing on work interference with family. For instance, career salience, that is, the psychological identification with work role may lead to a higher level of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This shows that when a woman's career identity grows, she will become more ego involved in that work role and exhibits higher levels of motivation. This, in turn may increase time commitment to that work role and produces strain that may interfere with her family responsibilities. As a result, role pressures and inter-role conflict emerge.

Similarly, family interference with work occurs when participation in family responsibilities makes it difficult for an employee especially a woman to meet work responsibilities. Family- related variables have significant impact on family interference with work. As noted by Adebola (2005), family interference with work is primarily

determined by family demands and predicts negative family outcomes. The foremost family-related variables that interferes with work behaviour expectations is the number of children at home (Pleck, 1980). Given that child care responsibilities normally rest on women, working wives with more children are likely to experience greater family interference with work (Voyarndoff, 1980). Moreover, having young children at home is consistently related to role strain and time shortage for women (Voyandoff & Kelly, 1984).

Owing to the traditional sex-role ideology in Nigeria, women are socialized to have a stronger orientation to and greater involvement in the family than men. Therefore, for working mothers, strain-based work-family conflict may occur more frequently as a result of dual commitments to employment and to the family. Strain-based work- family conflict is a situation in which strain symptoms such as stress, pressure, tension and fatigue experienced within one role intrude into the other and affect one's performance in that role (Carlson, Kacmar & Williams, 2000). In the case of work-family conflict, the two roles are incompatible in the sense that the strain and stress generated by one role make it difficult to comply with the demands of the other. Thus, strain- based work-family conflict can be present in both work interference with family and family interference with work.

Interestingly, married working women in Nigeria, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, find it challenging to balance work role and family role. And participation in the two roles precipitates role strain which often results in a variety of negative consequences in both the workplace and the family (Frone, Rusell & Cooper, 1992). To this end, the attention of the researcher was drawn to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment is an aspect of burnout which is characterized by a decline in one's feeling of accomplishment and successful achievement (Leiter & Maslach 1988). Individuals in this phase of burnout view themselves negatively in both their ability to perform their jobs and their ability to have positive personal interactions. Such people trivialize the thing that they are successful at and no longer feel they are able to make difference through their personal interaction (Maslach & leiter, 1997). Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment like other phases of burnout is prevalent particularly in the human services professions (e.g. teaching, nursing, banking etc.) where clients impose constant demands (Duxbuy & Higgins 1998). Given the fact that teaching responsibilities (e.g. preparing lesson notes, marking exam scripts, reading etc.) which are typical of human services professions extend beyond the work setting to the family setting, strain is likely to occur. This extension of work responsibilities to home requires them to divide between work and family responsibilities the time which would have been strictly reserved for family responsibilities. Consequently, sharing this limited time between work and family responsibilities at home will likely result in role pressures, hence strain-based work-family conflict. Invariably a vicious cycle emerges whereby strain is transferred back to the workplace. Thus, inefficiency and ineffectiveness will likely rear their heads resulting in a negative outcome like feeling of

reduced personal accomplishment. Therefore this study was interested in strain-based work-family conflict as correlate of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment in married female teachers with children.

First, it was hypothesized that strain-based work interference with family will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Second, strain-based family interference with work will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

METHOD
Participants
Participants were 304 female secondary school teachers between the age of 26 to 54 years (M= 40. 37, SD= 4.09) and with educational qualifications ranging from National Certificate of Education to Master's of Education Degree. They were drawn from 24 State Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State in the South-eastern part of Nigeria using criterion sampling technique. To this end, the female teachers selected for this study met certain criteria which included spending at least one year as teachers in their respective schools, married, living with their husbands, had children (at least one) and living with their children (at least one). Widows and divorcees were not included to avoid confounding of the results.

Instrument
Three instruments were used which included demographic information, 6-item strain-based work interference with family and 4-item strain-based family interference with work scales drawn from Okonkwo (2011) 32-item Work-Family Conflict Scale, and 8-item feeling of reduced personal accomplishment scale drawn from Maslach and Jackson (1986) 22-item Burnout Inventory.

Demographic information included age, educational qualification, rank, years of experience as a teacher, name of school, marital status, number of children, ages of children starting from the youngest to the oldest. The item loadings of the 6-item strain-based work interference with family scale ranged from 0.53 to 0.85 and were considered acceptable for validation of the instrument since Mitchel and Jolley (2004) noted that item loading of 0.30 is good and 0.70 very high. These 6 items yielded split- half reliability of 0.76 and was accepted as a good index of internal consistency since Mitchel and Jolley (2004) noted that an index of 0.70 (and preferably above 0.80) is needed to say that a measure is internally consistent.

The item loadings of the 4-item strain-based family interference with work scale ranged from 0.55 to 0.76 and they yielded split-half reliability of 0.87. The 6-item work interference with family scale and the 4-item family interference with work scale were in Likert form and had direct scoring for all the items. Therefore, a response of strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree= 2 and strongly disagree = 1. Split-half reliability coefficient of 0.95 was reported for the 8-item feeling of reduced personal

accomplishment scale. The 8 items had reversed scoring. Therefore, a response of a few times a year = 6, many times a year =5, a few times every month = 4, many times every month = 3, a few times every week = 2 and everyday =1.

Procedure

Stage one, the researcher wrote officially to the Ministry of Education, Enugu State, Nigeria requesting for the number of State Government Secondary Schools within Enugu, the capital city of Enugu State and permission to use a sample of the female teachers in the schools as participants for the study. The requested information and permission were granted within two weeks of the application.

Stage two, the researcher equipped with the requested information (e.g. 24 state secondary schools and their locations) and permission, visited the principals of the schools in their schools respectively. The principals serving as research assistants enabled the researcher to go through the files of these teacher and identified those teachers who met certain criteria which include spending at least one year in the schools, married with children (at least a child of one year per teacher), living with their husbands, living with their children (at least one child per teacher). However, divorces and widows were not included.

Stage three, considering the number (N= 356) of the identified female teachers who possessed these criteria and volunteered to participate in the study, the researcher selected all (N =356) for the study. 356 copies of the questionnaire (measuring demographic variables, strain-based work interference with family, strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment) were given to the principals who administered them to the identified female teachers in their respective schools. The participants were instructed to take the questionnaire home, study it carefully, complete it and return to the principals within one week. This was the procedure in each of the 24 schools.

Stage four; the researcher went back to the schools at the end of the exercise in each school to collect the returned copies of the questionnaire from the principals. Of the 356 copies of the questionnaire administered, 3O4 (85.39%) copies were properly completed and returned while 43 were returned but not properly completed and 9 were not returned. Therefore, the 3O4 copies properly completed and returned were used for analyses and testing of the hypotheses.

Design/Statistics

Correlational design was used. This enabled the researcher to administer simultaneously the measures of strain-based work interference with family, strain-based family interference with work dimensions of work-family conflict and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used as statistical test for data analyses and subsequently testing the hypotheses. This enabled the

researcher to study simultaneously the degree and direction of the relationships between strain-based work interference with family, strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

RESULTS

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient table showing the relationship between strain-based work interference with family and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

Variances	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares & Cross Products	Covariance	DF	r	p
Strain-based WIF	10.90	4.17	5262.234	17.367			
Feeling of Reduced Personal Accomplishment	21.23	11.83	2681.773	8.851	302	0.18	<.01

Result as shown in table 1 indicated a significant positive relationship between strain-based work interference with family and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment, r (3O2) = O.18, p <.O1. In other words, the higher the score on strain-based work interference with family, the higher the score on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Similarly, the lower the score on strain-based work interference with family, the lower the score on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that strain-based work interference with family will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment was disconfirmed and rejected.

Table 2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing the relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

Variances	Mean	SD	Sum of Squares & Cross Products	Covariance	DF	r	p
Strain-based FIW	8.07	7.62	17621.549	58.157			
Feeling of Reduced Personal Accomplishment	21.14	11.70	3849.961	12.706	302	0.14	<.05

Result as shown in table 2 indicated a significant positive relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment, r (3O2) = O.14, p <.O5. In other words, the higher the score on strain-based family interference with work, the higher the score on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Similarly, the lower the score on strain-based family interference with work, the lower the score on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Thus, the second hypothesis which stated that strain-based family interference with work will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment was disconfirmed and rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicated that the first hypothesis which stated that strain-based work interference with family will not be related to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment was disconfirmed and rejected. In contrast to the hypothesis, the findings showed a positive association between strain-based work interference with family and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Considering this positive relationship, higher the scores on strain-based work interference with family related to higher scores on feeling of reduced personal accomplishment and vice versa. Among these female teachers, increase in their experience of strain emanating from their work responsibilities interfering with their family responsibilities was related to increase in their experience of decline in feeling of competence and successful achievement. Similarly, decrease in their experience of strain emanating from their participation in work responsibilities interfering with their family responsibilities was related to decrease in their experience of decline in feeling of competence and successful achievement.

In line with previous study by Grandey and Cropanzano (1998) which observed a positive relationship between work role stress and work interference with family, the finding of this present study equally demonstrated the spill over of stress emanating from participation in work responsibilities into family responsibilities. Moreover, the result of this present study is in congruence with Sonnentag (2001) study which observed that employees who engaged in work-related activities during their evening off-hours reported higher strain before going to sleep. This in part explains the experiences of these female teachers who served as participants in this present study. Following this, as teachers' work responsibilities (e.g. reading, preparing lesson notes, marking exam scripts etc) usually extend beyond the work setting into the home setting, it was likely that work responsibilities interfered with family responsibilities thereby creating strain which was linked to decline in their feeling of competence and successful achievement in their jobs. In addition, this positive relationship observed in this present study supports Burke (1988) and Greenhaus (1988) observation that work interference with family influences a variety of outcomes including burnout (e.g. feeling of reduced personal accomplishment).

However, the prediction of feeling of reduced personal accomplishment by strain- based work-family conflict in this present study which supports earlier findings could be explained in the light of the poor remuneration of labor in Nigeria which often leaves workers with inadequate financial resources.

This poor remuneration is common in female employees. In support of this, Eya (2002) noted that in spite of inroads into participation in the male dominated labor made by women, there is still a concentration of women in the traditional female dominated jobs that are low paying. In Nigeria, a high percentage of women are found in teaching profession which is one of the least paying professions in Nigeria. It is common adage in Nigeria that reward of teachers is in heaven. It is important to note that in Enugu, South-eastern part of Nigeria where the participants for this study were drawn from, the state

government as of the time of this research was carried out had not implemented the approved enhanced salary package for Nigerian teachers. Invariably, this scenario amidst other factors show that the workplace in Nigeria especially that of the teachers does not provide adequate financial resources for women to build other resources necessary for personal growth and accomplishment. For instance, if teachers are well remunerated in Nigeria, they will have enough financial resources to go for further studies, hire house helps needed for domestic responsibilities, provide for the needs of numerous extended family members that provide social support e.t.c. This without doubt will enable positive spillover from work to family thereby minimizing work interference with family. Obviously, this condition will help these women develop high sense competence and successful achievement.

Moreover, the Nigerian work setting especially that of teachers is devoid of adequate infrastructures. For instance, dilapidated classrooms, inadequate teaching aids (e.g. board, chalk, stationeries etc) and manpower are common phenomena in Nigeria schools. These poor conditions make teaching quite challenging and drain the resources of these teachers which result in strain. These amidst other conditions could have accounted for the strain-based work interference with family been associated with feeling of reduced personal accomplishment,

In accordance with earlier finding which indicated positive relationship between family role stress and family interference with work (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1998), this present study in contrast to the second hypothesis indicated a positive relationship between strain-based family interference with work and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Among these women (teachers), the positive relationship demonstrated that an increase in their experience of strain emanating from discharging their domestic responsibilities interfering with their work responsibilities was linked to an increase in their feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. And a decrease in their strain-based family interference with work was linked to a decrease in their feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement.

This finding is in line with Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) finding which noted that parents experienced higher family interference with work than non-parents. And in line with this present study, Pleck (1985) noted that women are primarily responsible for the household responsibilities (e.g. child care) which result in family role stress. This primary responsibility of taking care of family often lead to family demands interfering with work demands for women. As the family responsibilities interfere with work responsibilities, these women struggle to balance the two roles. This struggle often creates chronic pressure (strain) which likely leads to feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. In support of this consistency between the present finding and the previous in other culture, it is obvious that running of one's home is the woman's responsibilities even though she may employ house helps to do the cooking, washing or cleaning the house (Gannon, 2004). Moreover, there is no regulation of domestic workforce in

Nigeria. This makes the readily available domestic helpers children and adults who are untrained. Considering these circumstances, Nigerian working women despite their work responsibilities still participate deeply in domestic chores. This deep participation to an extent might have led to family responsibilities interfering with work responsibilities. And because this usually goes on for a long time unabated, these women easily slide into feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement. In addition, the burden of multiple roles emanating from the combination of work and family responsibilities depletes psychological and financial resources required for personal growth and accomplishment. It is important to note that in Africa especially Nigeria characterized by extended family system, although extended family members provide social support, it involves additional burden with heavy demands which depletes the resource of these women.

However, in the light of these findings, it was concluded that combination of work and family responsibilities made it difficult for this category of women (e.g. Female teachers) to balance their work and family lives, and thus, the conflict between work and family responsibilities resulting in strain been positively linked to feeling of reduced personal accomplishment.

Implications of the Findings
In accord with previous studies, this present study has shown that work-family conflict is a bidirectional construct involving work interference with family and family interference with work. Following this, it is important to know that combining work and family especially among mothers is likely to result in work responsibilities interfering with family responsibilities and vice versa.

Considering the traditional gender-role ideology in Nigeria which saddles women with more domestic responsibilities than men, the findings of this study have shown that combining such demands with work demands especially that which extends beyond the work setting into family (e.g. teaching) created strain. And this strain which was found to exist in both work interference with family and family interference with work resulted in negative outcome like feeling of decline in competence and successful achievement.

These findings without doubt have lent support to the ongoing researches which support family-friendly organization. To this end, family friendly organization should develop policies that will provide among other things job flexibility and autonomy which will enable women have enough time for domestic chores. Also, such policies can make provisions for supportive practices (e.g. on site day care/ schools) which will reduce the domestic burdens of women. These family-friendly policies by organizations could serve as interventions which will help this category of women achieve work-family balance thereby enhancing their well–being and productivity.

The positive relationship between the two dimensions of work- family conflict (work interference with family and family interference with work) and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment has implications for policies made by Nigerian Union of Teachers, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women Affairs and the world at large. To this end, policies to cushion strain emanating from combination of work and family responsibilities by women especially teachers should be part of the efforts to enhance the welfare of teachers and other female employees.

This positive relationship has far reaching theoretical and practical implications for Industrial Psychologists and Ministry of Labour and Productivity. Drawing on the these findings, they would learn that feeling of reduced personal accomplishment been linked to strain emanating from work-family conflict could lead to reduced job commitment, involvement, performance and job satisfaction resulting in remarkable decline in productivity of labor in Nigeria and the world at large. Therefore, they should devise intervention programmes to check this trend.

Moreover, this association between strain-based work-family conflict and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment among this category of women could have implications for the competence of women in the family setting especially in the area of child rearing and marital satisfaction.

REFERENCES

Adelola, H.E (2005). Emotional Expression at Workplace: Implications for Work-Family Role Ambiguities. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 32 (21)*, 102-115.

Ajiboye, S.O. (2008). Analysis of Causal Factors of Work-Family Role Conflict Among Male and Female Workers. *Journal of Sociological Studies, 4 (2)*, 93- 104.

Burke, R.J (1988). Some Antecedents and Consequences of Work-Family Conflict. In E.B. Goldsmith (Ed.) Work and Family. *Theory, Research and Applications, 3 (4)*, 287-302.

Carlson, D.S, Kacmar, K.M & Williams, L.J (2000). Construction and Initial Validation of Multidimensional Measures of Work-Family Conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 56 (2)*, 289-296.

Coker, A.O (1999). *Assessment of Burnout Syndrome in Doctors and Nurses.* Unpublished M.Sc. Research Project, Department of Psychology, University of Lagos.

Cole, D.W (2004). Social Reflection on Women Playing Dual Roles: An Assessment of Women in Leadership Positions. *Journal of Gender Studies, 7(2)*, 126 - 132.

Duxbuy, L. & Higgins, C. (1998). *Work–life Balance in Saskatchewan*: Realities and Challenges. Saskatoon: Government of Saskatchewan.

Eya, R.N. (2002). *Human Growth and Development*. University of Nigeria Press Limited.

Flippo, M.B. (2005). Approaches to Work-family Role Conflict in Organizations. *Journal of Sociological Studies*, 10 (2), 48-59.

Frone, M.R, Russel, M. and Cooper, M.L. (1992). Antecedents and Outcomes of the Work–Family Conflict: Testing a Model of the Work-Family Interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 7*, 65-78.

Gannon, M.J (2004). *Understanding Global Cultures*. Metaphorical Journeys Through Clusters of Nations and Continents (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Grandey, A.A and Cropanzono, R. (1998). The Conservation of Resources Theory Applied to Work–family Conflict and Strain. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54*, 350 - 370.

Greenhaus, J.H & Beutell, N.J. (1985). Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles. *Academy of Management Review, 10*, 76-88.

Greenhaus, J.H. (1988). The Intersection of Work and Family Roles: Individual, Interpersonal and Organization Issues. Individual, Interpersonal and Organizational Issues. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 3*, 23-44.

Herman, J.B and Gyllstrom, K.K (1977). Working Men and Women: Inter and Intra Role Work-Family Conflict. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 1*, 319-333.

Maslach, C. and Leiter, M.P. (1997). *The Truth About Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What To Do About It*. San Francisco Bass Publishers.

Maslach, C. and Jackson, S. (1986). The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual (2nd Ed). Palo Alto. Consulting Psychologist Press.

Mitchell, M.L and Jolley, J.M (2004). Manipulating Variables: Reliability and Validity. Research Design Explained 5th Edition (PP, 104 & 536).

Okonkwo, E. A. (2011).*Work-Family Conflict as Predictor of Burnout Among Mothers in Human Service Profession*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Department of Psychology, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Nigeria.

Pleck, J.H (1980), Conflict between work and family life. *Monthly Labor Review, 103*, 29-32.

Sonnentag, C. (2001). Work Recovery Activities, and Individual Well-Being: A Diary Study. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 6 (3)*, 196 - 210.

Voyandoff, P. (1988). Work Role Characteristics, Family Structure Demands, and Work/ Family Conflict. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 50*, 749 - 761.

Voyandoff, P & Kelly, R.F. (1984) Determinants of Work- Related Family Problems Among Employed Parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 46*, 881-892.