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Overcoming work/ family challenges among female health workers in selected public healthcare institutions due to addictional behaviour

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Abstract

In the early years, the place of women in the family was restricted to home keeping, child rearing, child caring, and carrying out various home responsibilities. That period perpetually constrained womenfolk from neither actively participating in the labor force nor working outside the home. In the event of time, sensitization and gender equality gave room for womenfolk to be vibrant partakers in the workforce. Many women then work outside the home while combining work roles and familial roles. Despite this development, women are still expected to traditionally and culturally perform their familial roles while combining them with their work roles. These expectations from men counterparts have brought various challenges for women to deal with. Surprisingly, in the face of these challenges, womenfolk had adopted different ways and strategies to cope with them. It was on this note the study examines the strategies employed in overcoming work and family roles challenges among married female health workers in some selected public healthcare institutions. 193 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and analyzed from the respondents through simple random sampling. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed in the study. It was discovered that married female workers in public health institutions were faced with work and family challenges such as inadequate equipment, insufficient time, stress, fatigue, finance, child-rearing, and the absence of domestic help. It was, however, discovered that by overcoming the challenges, the respondents have resulted in creating good plans, keeping children busy, employing the use of home appliances and equipment among others.

Keywords: Work roles; Family roles; Health workers; Female work

Introduction and statement of problem

The family has been seen as one of the vital social institutions [1] that makes society function. It has served on many occasions in addressing, and accommodating members' daily needs. It helps to dictate responsibilities, and roles to members at any given time and period. This is to admit that a person in the family has some responsibilities or roles to play. Over the years, scholars had presented different opinions on issues relating to family irrespective of societies, classes, ethnicities, and historical backgrounds. One of such salient issues that have emerged in recent times is the daunting family challenges that members' have to deal with on frequent occasions, especially married women with children and wives at home while engaging in an occupation [1].

It has been widely assumed or believed that women are expected to take care of the home affairs in terms of home chores, and proper upbringing of younger ones [2]. The majority of womenfolk who have engaged themselves with occupations outside their homes are expected to balance such roles with family roles- which are regarded as primary responsibilities. The author affirmed that in the time past, the place of women in the family is designed to take care of home duties which they also accepted as their call. In the submission made by author [3], the biological composition of women has defined them as mothers and child-rearers. The author gave an insight that in Nigeria, a woman in the family is recognized as a wife who must devote her time to the reproduction of children. However, events in recent years have taken another dimension as women had ventured into other responsibilities such as engaging themselves in employment outside their homes to support and sustain their families financially [4].

Author said that in the last century, more women with children engaged in employment outside their home duties. This reason has put pressure on some women who engage themselves in occupations outside their homes while fulfilling family or domestic responsibilities. Even though, the author asserted that women were entitled to profit from their work, it often resulted in pressures and challenges [5].

While womenfolk are involved in different activities outside their homes, many issues that are related to their assumed primary family duties and responsibilities have surfaced. Pressures have mounted on some of the women in coping with family responsibilities in terms of time, workload, and stress as a result of rearing and nurturing younger ones before paying attention to other social roles. The author indicated in their study that pressures mount on women when the number and age of their children were examined [6]. Author revealed that women's differentials in jobs did not exclude them from experiencing time pressure at home. Author agreed with that women who were engaged in employment face stiff challenges when it comes to their commitment to home duties, and outside jobs. The author stated that time pressure has become synonymous with modern societies, especially in families with children as against families with no children [7]. Author submitted that there was no argument about women doing more home duties than their male counterparts, which has resulted in many of them experiencing more time pressure. These submissions have corroborated the earlier assertion by authors. Also roles taken in different ways have affected the lives of many women. Modern times and female agitation for involvement in the labor force have attracted more pressure on womenfolk at home and in workplaces. Womenfolk, for instance, are seen working as healthcare givers in healthcare institutions that demand more time and workload. So, creating time

for other activities becomes difficult or even stressful. In this vein, the study considered how women who work as female health workers were able to overcome work-family challenges in their routines. Female health workers are classified as women that work within and provide care, and treatment services for patients in healthcare institutions either private or public [8]. The study posed the following questions among several other questions: what are the various challenges encountered at home and work, and what are the measures taken to overcome these challenges?.

Statement of objectives

Work-family roles have played a lot of challenges for female health workers that require sociological investigation. Hence, the following objectives of the study were based on:

• To identify and investigate some challenges facing female health workers that have to combine home duties and work careers.

• To examine the overcoming strategies employed by these workers to have a balanced work-family considering their various places of domicile and their workplaces.

• To also examine the notions of work-family among health workers.

• To fill and expand the knowledge of work-family balance beyond two categories of health workers such as doctors and nurses. Hence other categories of health workers like Pharmacists, Dentists, Physiotherapists, and Health Records Personnel, were also accommodated in the study.

Theoretical framework

The study focused on the theoretical framework for the study. It discusses the relevance of the theory adopted for the study. In the discourse of overcoming work/family challenges among married female health workers, a theory was employed to address the underlying issues. These theories are two-dimensional approaches that deal with the negative and positive effects of work-family roles among women in our society [9]. The relevance of these theories is aimed at explaining the overcoming of family responsibilities and challenges among married female health workers in the selected areas. It also dwells on the perspective that family roles should not always be seen in negative ways on how women engage in labor while fulfilling domestic duties. But it must be viewed as having positive effects on the overall well-being of women in their families and at workplaces (Figure 1).

Role conflict theory

Role conflict is one of the theoretical concepts that rose from the study of role theory. In many instances, scholars and researchers had looked into the issue of role conflict as an unavoidable stance among family members as they carry out their responsibilities at the home front and in the workplace. The author affirmed that role conflict was originally conceptualized in the works. They submitted that role conflict is an incompatibility between competing demands within a role. It was supported in the works [10]. The author in their work; on emerging role conflict among female faculty members in Institutes, asserted that role conflict is the struggle in different roles. They further submitted that conflicts in roles arise basically due to several reasons but in general, it is the desire to attain success in life the challenges which act as a pressure on one's dream and demand conflict with each other. Also agreed that role conflict occurs when people are confronted with incompatible role expectations in the various social statuses they occupy. The author also
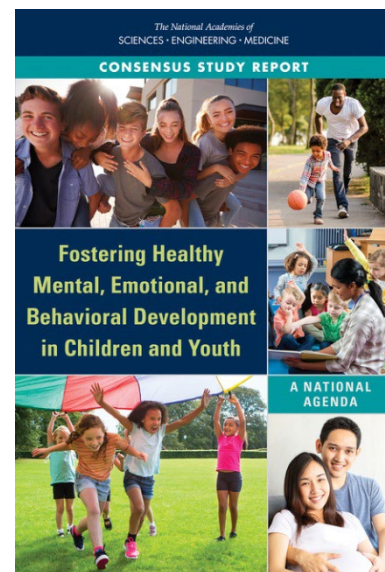

Figure 1: Healthcare institutions due to addictional behaviour.

affirmed that role conflict is an inappropriate relationship between competing responsibilities [11]. In other words, role conflict is an inappropriate role demand an individual in a particular social status or position must meet to respond to internal and external expectations from the concerned members. The relevance of role conflict theory in this study beamed a light that there are challenges in carrying out work roles as well as family responsibilities such that both are in perpetual conflict [12]. The adoption of role conflict theory states that when there are incompatible demands placed upon a person occupying a social status, such that, compliance with such or both demands would be difficult. So, when a woman is pulled in various directions of meeting multiple roles, conflict is likely to occur in carrying out those roles [13].

Proponents of role conflicts according to author are; first, there are divergent expectations that cannot be fulfilled by rejecting any of the options. Second, in carrying out one's responsibilities, requests received from the senders are incompatible. And lastly, multiple roles often come together. These principles exemplify that in a family where a woman performs different roles: wife, mother, rearing of children, will experience conflict fulfilling these roles because of divergent expectations from members [14]. Society has instituted a norm where a woman is expected to perform multiple roles and any attempt to reject any of these roles would send negative interpretations to members. Secondly, a woman because of the economic status of the family would not care to take up a job outside the home. In a situation where she is allowed to work, she is also expected to brace up with domestic duties. In such a situation, the conflict will likely occur because her family roles must not be suffered at the expense of her job. Hence, juggling between work and family roles runs in conflict with each other [15]. The author posited that historically, women have played diverse roles such as wives, homemakers, as well as mothers in charge of the operation of their homes. A woman in this respect is expected to discharge and carry out her family responsibilities because such roles are ascribed status she must adhere to. Because roles differ, they run in conflict with one another [16]. This sometimes causes tension, stress, and psychological and emotional trauma to women in such situations [3].

Additionally, family roles become difficult to perform in certain circumstances. The author, added that in social challenges of expansion and development, women have deviated from traditional roles to

seek education, occupation, and remunerated work to establish some degree of economic security in the home, even affirmed that Nigerian women contribute 70% of the agricultural workforce. The involvement of women in work outside their primary responsibilities at home has further exposed them to stress, time constraint, domestic violence, and energy loss as a result of all these roles [17].

Work-family roles have been multiple roles for women in the health sector. Female health workers are also prone to role conflict because of the challenges encountered in balancing work and family roles. This is discovered whereby a female health worker would want to keep up with family roles and work duties. The challenges could come as a result of work shifts, night work duties, attending to patients, and meeting family obligations after work. All these challenges count on their well-being and health. Role conflict in respect of the work/family would result in time constraints, stress, health issues, and psycho-emotional trauma to women.

The incompatibility between demands in roles further made scholars develop role strain theory to advance the study of multiple roles of an individual. Scholars projected that role strain occurs as a result of unsatisfying demands placed on individuals in social status or occupying a position. It is believed that conflicts do not just occur in roles but because of an undesirable role, an individual occupies. Such roles make them struggle for survival.

Role enhancement theory

Role enhancement theory was developed in contrast with role strain theory because multiple roles are believed to enhance the well-being of an individual. The author asserted that role enhancement theory focuses on particular circumstances where multiple roles can enhance people's well-being. The authors affirmed that proponents of this theory in support that multiple roles have the potential to increase a person's well-being when these roles provide privileges, status security, and new sources of and additional sources of ego gratification and support. The proponents further suggest that through these processes, multiple roles can provide buffers that have the potential to reduce the likelihood of strain [18].

Role enhancement is also termed role enrichment. It refers to a situation in which roles held by a person are compatible and enacting one role has beneficial spillover effects on the enactment of the other role. In this regard, the enhancement or enrichment of one role by these women in the health sector may improve the performance in another role. Participation in one role is made easier or better by participation in the other role.

The relevance of this theory to the study established that while female health workers fully participate in home responsibilities, it enhances their well-being and good performance to engage in formal employment (hospitals). The author opined that they (women) play vital roles in the maintenance of our families investing as much as 90% of their income in the families compared to 35% for men. The author identified that women worked to supplement the family income, self-support, and be part of the national force. The importance of role enhancement in multiple role engagement was presented by author [19]. It submitted that a corollary of this perspective was that too few roles may be detrimental to mental well-being. Women who are not employed outside the home may experience stress from isolation, have fewer outlets for the release of tension, and be less satisfied with their lives. In general, that demands of multiple roles tend to be offset by the support received in the long run. Positive effects in performing multiple roles enhanced self-esteem, identity strengthening, informal support networks, and improved access to material and social resources [20].

It could as well be conceived that female health workers enhance their well-being by working to care for and contribute to their family's income statuses. This is made possible when they are seen fully engaged in formal employment that positively spills over to their family roles. The privileges that come as a result of such role enhancement could be counted on family support, stress and tension, material and social resources accessibility, and job satisfaction [21].

Overview opinion of the theories

The two theories employed in the study have presented divergent views on overcoming the work/family challenges among female health workers who were married in public healthcare institutions. These theories made us understand that work roles and family roles are two different experiential roles that have an impact either positively or negatively on women in our society. Their presentation elucidates that they are roles that cannot be underestimated [22].

What was presented by role conflict theory, unveiled us the opportunity to know that there is a perpetual conflict between two competing and demanding roles. And such cases are seen in work and family roles. These roles are so important for a better economic and social well-being of a person to the extent that they run in conflict with each other. Unfortunately, in the case of this study, someone cannot adequately prefer a role to the detriment of another. Role conflict theory believed that because these two roles are important and must work with each other, one of these roles would always want to dominate the other for survival. By doing so, these roles run in conflict with one another. In the case of this study, role conflict theory is justified to an extent that work- family roles are an unavoidable challenge for women (female health workers) in our society. The challenge comes as a result of combining these two roles [23].

Women are faced with multiple roles that range from work responsibilities and family obligations that make them encounter various challenges keeping these roles. So, role conflict theory is relevant for explanation in this study. However, the theory fails to tell us any existing or possible measures that would give us a way out of the various challenges of work-family roles. The flaws in this theory gave way to another theory in explaining work-family roles and the challenges [4].

Differently from the above theory as elucidated, role enhancement theory came with a message that combining multiple roles in the case of work-family responsibilities enhances individual well-being. Role enhancement theory is believed to be relevant in this article in the sense that positive strategies act as a coping measure to challenges that accompany work-family roles. The theory believed that the privileges and sources of social support on the home front could have a positive impact on women. The involvement in one role enriches women to better engage in other roles. Although challenges at home could be identified as a shortfall in different roles and responsibilities, the beneficial outcome of engaging in one role is a spillover effect on the other. For instance, a female health worker that engages in home responsibilities will be eager to take up job roles that enhance her well-being and performance.

Summarily, role enhancement theory believes that acting in one role enhances and creates an enabling benefit in the other role. The theory did not tell us the extent to which involvement in one role could lead to the other. Also, it fails to recognize that not all roles could enhance one another. Some roles are demanding and discouraging to

engage in. Despite its shortcomings, role enhancement theory is still applicable to the study. These theories put together are believed to have explained their viewpoints on the study under investigation.

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