

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK RELATED STRESS AND MARITAL
ADJUSTMENT OF WORKING CLASS WOMEN IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This article dealt with relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria. Correlational survey research design was used for the study. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 5,083 working class women from various ministries, parastatals and other work places. A sample of 370 respondents was drawn using Yamane formula for calculating sample size. Instrument for data collection was a 67 item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The researchers administered the instruments personally through hand to hand method with the help of research assistants. Means and standard deviation as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. The results showed that there was low correlation between work related stress and marital adjustment. It was also found that there is significant relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State. The study recommended among others that working class women should if possible check, know and avoid all work related stressors in their work places.

Key Words: Stress, marital, adjustment, women working class.

1. Introduction

Status of women in the society has been changing fast due to multiple factors such as, increased level of education, urbanization, awareness of right, and industrialization. Social changes have also improved the status of women such that many women in our society are now educated spouses or parents. These spouses or parents are involved in the performance of multiple roles that may demand marital adjustment in order to cope with the challenges in marriage. These roles are interdependent in terms of time, energy and commitment required for their adequate performance. Given the new set of roles, and family structure, educated working class women have to adapt to this challenging task with confidence (Pearlin, Schooler, 1990). This has necessitated structural changes in the family setting. It therefore results in role strain for the women, which ultimately leads to their decreased mental balance, and introduces a source of pressure in the family mechanisms of balance.

The Nigerian society expects all working class women to perform their marital roles despite their jobs at their places of work. It is agreeable that this multiple roles in two working environments make women to face a lot of problems. These problems include depression, marital stress to mention but a few. These problems could be hindrances for spouse to give proper attention to their homes and their marital life as well as reducing their efficiencies at places of work. As expressed by Vaghela, (2014), the employments of working class women not only affect their personality but also their family relationship and are also liable to face crisis of marital adjustment.

Work related stress is stress caused or made worse by work. It simply refers to when a person perceives the work environment in such a way that his or her reaction involves feelings of an inability to cope. As observed by Cox, Paley, Burchinal and Payne, (1999), work related stress occur when an individual perceives an imbalance between the demands placed on them on one hand, and their ability to cope on the other. It often occurs in institution characterized by low level

of control and support. As observed by Quick and Quick in James (2011), poor working conditions, work overload, role conflict and ambiguity, unsatisfactory career development and emphatic work hours are sources of occupational stress.

One may ask how stress at work transfers to relationships at home. Ben-Ari and Lavee (2013), found that within the body of knowledge pertaining to the emotional transmission of stress, two types of stress have been identified: spillover stress and crossover stress. Spillover stress is a process in which stress in one domain for example work, is experienced in another domain for example home. Crossover is the stress experienced by one spouse but lead to stress experienced by the other. Similarly, Dunenci in Ben-Ari and Lavee (2013) asserted that there is consistent evidence of spillover effect of work-related stress to mood at home.

Marital adjustment refers to the ability of couples to become satisfied, happy and achieve success in a number of specific tasks in marriage. Such adjustment include agreement on tasks and priorities of each task relative to one another (Siegrist, 1990). It also include agreement on flexibility as each spouse is allowed to play his or her role as regards socio-economic background, emotional stability in marriage, sexual adjustment, changes in value system and communication. The author further maintains that marital adjustment suggests that roles are specific functions, which the holder of the status is expected to perform. Applying these roles to marriage relationships means that there are two statuses involved; that is, status of the husband and that of the wife so that there are specific expectations in terms of behaviour from the two. Marital adjustment then occurs when each spouse enacts his or her role effectively to the satisfaction of the other (Hasrold, 2004).

As women's investment in the employment market increases, they have become less specialized in the domestic arena, and more economically independent. This according to Oppenheimer, (1997) led to a decline in their desirability of staying married and this situation worsens more with increase in their earnings and material resources, as it reduces the need for

dependence on husband's breadwinning services for their sustenance (marital mal-adjustment). However, Vaghela (2014) stated that married working class women have better positive relationship with others and personal growth as well as they can create a healthy atmosphere for their marital adjustment. According to the author, working class women who are highly educated can assess their household problems and solve them with ease.

This article is set to find out if there is any relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the Nigerian traditional society, women are expected to stay at home and do house work. However, education has brought revolutionary changes among women. More and more women prefer to be engaged in some kind of employment so that they can contribute financially to their family. As women leave the company of their husbands contrary to what operated in the olden days for employment outside their homes, there seems to be conflicts arising from the demands and expectations of marriage and employment. These conflicts may not be unconnected with the occupational stress experienced by married working class women as they have to perform several roles as employees which make them unable to spend time for other personal life roles for example in the home. These researchers therefore want to examine the relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State Nigeria.

3. Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State?

4. Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State.

5. Research Design

The design used for this study is correlational survey research design. Correlational survey design is appropriate for this study because it seeks to establish the nature of relationship that exist between two or more variables. Here it seeks to establish the relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women.

6. Population of the Study

The population consisted of 5,083 educated working class women in Benue State, Nigeria. These women work in various ministries, parastatals, military and paramilitary formations as well the banking sector.

7. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 370 educated married working class women was drawn using Yamane (1967) formula for calculating sample size. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study.

8. Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged "Educational status of working class women and marital adjustment questionnaire (ESWCWMAQ). The instrument contained 67 items and is divided into ten sections A-J.

9. Method of Data Collection

The researchers administered the instrument personally through hand to hand method with the help of research assistants from sampled areas under study. The researchers retrieved the

instruments from the respondents immediately after they finished filling their responses and the data taken for analysis.

10. Method of Data Analysis

Mean, and standard deviations as well as pearson product moment correlation were used to answer the research question. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

11. Results

Research Question

What is the relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Work Related Stress and the Marital Adjustment

	Mean	Std Deviation	N	R
Work stress	3.07	.71	370	-.95**
Marital Adjustment	2.33	.51	370	

Table 1 shows that the mean and standard deviation for work stress were 3.07 and 0.71 while that of marital adjustment were 2.33 and .51. The value of $r = 0.95$. This means that adjustment between partners is very low. In other words, marital adjustment is very low with women who experience stress at work.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Work Related Stress and Marital Adjustment of Working Class Women

	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Work related stress	-.95**	.000
Marital Adjustment		

Table 2 above shows that r calculated value = 0.95, p (sig. = .000) $\alpha = .05$. Since $p < .05$, the hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment is therefore rejected. The implication is that there is significant relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of educated working class women in Benue State Nigeria.

12. Discussion

The finding with respect to the research question and hypothesis above revealed in tables 1 and 2 that there is a relationship between work related stress and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State. This is in agreement with Ben-Avi and Lavee (2003) who found that within the body of knowledge pertaining to the emotional transmission of stress, two types of stress have been identified; spillover stress and crossover stress. Spillover stress according to the authors is a process in which stress in one domain for example work is experienced in another domain for example home. Crossover is the stress experienced by one spouse leads to stress experienced by the other.

Similarly, Dumere; in Ben-Ari and Lavee (2013) asserted that there is consistent evidence of spillover effect of work related stress to mood at home. However, this finding is in disagreement with Vaghela (2014) who stated that married working class women have better positive relationship with others and personal growth as well as they can create a healthy atmosphere for their marital adjustment.

13. Conclusion

This study concludes that work related stress can lead to instability in the family as its spillover and crossover effects can be experienced by both the working class woman and other members of her family. This can result in role strain for the women, which ultimately leads to their decreased mental balance and introduce a source of pressure in the family mechanisms of balance. Something therefore needs to be done to address this issue.

14. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Working class women in Benue State should if possible check, know and avoid all work related stressors in their work places. This of course will help in reducing the amount of stress they experience in their work places and subsequently leading to marital adjustment.
2. Working class women who find it difficult in experiencing marital adjustment due to work related stress should seek the assistance of guidance counsellors. Individual and family counselling may help in improving the relationship between the career woman, her spouse and other family members.

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