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Strategies of Achieving Work-Life Balance Among Married Female Journalists of Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo

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Abstract

In order to reconcile their demanding professional and family commitments, married female journalists frequently confront particular difficulties. The strategies married female journalists use to strike a work-life balance, the effects of such strategies on the mechanisms to aid them overcome the challenges are examined in this study. This research uses in-depth interview, to examine the coping strategies, networks of support, and self-care routines these women employ to manage the demands of their careers and personal lives. The results show that they synergize with their colleagues to meet up, they also have to work ahead of time. It was also revealed that excessive demands and responsibilities lead to conflict leading to increased stress and anxiety due to conflicting demands and responsibilities. The study used Role Conflict Theory which proposes that individuals experience conflict when trying to fulfill multiple roles (e.g., work, family, personal), leading to stress, anxiety, and decreased performance. The theory holds that, excessive demands and responsibilities lead to conflict and that incompatible demands and expectations from different roles also lead to conflict. The study recommends that media stations should recognize and reward hardworking married female Journalists, implement gender sensitive policies like parental leave, childcare. Married Female Journalists should employ maids to relief them of domestic

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duties; and stations should provide creches for married Female Journalists to take care of their babies. The study contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between work and family life among married female journalists, providing insights for promoting their well-being and career sustainability.

Keywords: Strategies, Work-Life, Balance, Married Female Journalists, TSBS Jalingo

INTRODUCTION

It is a popular saying that "what a man can do, a woman can do better". This statement over the years have motivated women across the globe to participate in several sectors of public service, of which journalism profession is not an exception. Inherent with stress and time consumption, journalism is equally practice by female gender who are mostly considered as weaker vessels. These female genders equally have roles to play at their various homes more than their male counterparts, yet they practice journalism.

To start with, history has shown that the first foundation of Journalists came in 1883 in England, and that the American Newspaper Guild was organized in 1933; an institute meant to function as both trade union and a professional organization. Journalism like other profession today was not once held in esteem or regards. It was often thought to be practice of those who will avoid real work. Over time, Journalists began to be organized as a way of gaining recognition for their craft. There is no doubt that the profession of this industry has grown immensely since the days of yellow journalism.

Bresslauer (2022), hints that historically, journalism was seen as male profession because of the tasking nature of the profession. This is evident in the salutation phrase of Journalists as "Gentlemen of the Press". It remained a man's job for years. The rigors associated with news gathering and processing, working odd hours and the hazards associated with journalism profession further compounded matters for women to ordinarily consider getting involved.

However, the perceptions of women as mere objects of pleasure and domestic workers have changed over time. Chambers et al (2004), opined that the role of a woman which was said to be in the kitchen has begun to take a new dimension in the face of the society's economic downturn that gave rise to the need for women to support their husbands.

Consequently, they began to see the need to assume different positions as their male counterparts in all disciplines not to compete with men, but to encourage women to take up various areas of study including journalism.

Moreover, the increasing global agitation for gender equality and empowerment in all sectors led to changes in gender role in journalism practice as more women-oriented stories started appearing in Nigeria Newspapers of the early 50's. With the establishment of the Nigerian Daily Times, when lively feature articles began to appear with boxed title-heads. Women in the 1950's were restricted mainly to domestic issues. Sometimes, they had to write under pseudonyms to hide their identity mainly because of the prevailing social and cultural milieu of that period. Ani (2004), recalls that women constitute the group at the bottom of the ladder in respect to employment, training and status in society. And the sad part is that women accepted this notion almost as a God-given role but women later launched an invasion into areas of broadcast and print journalism, once regarded as men's preserves.

To buttress this point Gray & Hessell (2014), add that with the changing times women are now agitating for not just inclusion but for equal representation in different capacities as professionals in journalism. The early efforts of women pioneer journalists in Nigeria to carve a niche for themselves, provide a platform for more women to be accepted/respected by their male counterparts as well as a progressive rise in the numerical and leadership representation of women in the

Similarly, Nigerian print/broadcast media led to the establishment of Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) in 1990. It has become a universal ideal that women should have an equitable access to and control of all the sensitive sectors of human endeavors, including the mass media.

Notwithstanding, the challenges of taking both domestic and professional obligations have been a problem to married Female Journalists. In African culture, a married woman is responsible to cook for the family, take care of the children and perform other obligations at home. Gargi and Ashok (2021), note that research has shown that the work of Female Journalists task is as difficult as that of Nurses. Because they are working hard to balance personal and professional matters. Journalism is a 247 job and Female Journalists may have to work even at night and on holidays. In that case, how could they balance up their professional and domestic responsibility. It is against this problem that this research is set

to ascertain the plights and coping strategies of Female Journalists in discharging professional and domestic duties with particular reference to Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo.

Research Problem

A major gap identified for this study is the conflict between work and family life that has real consequences and significantly affects the quality of family life and career attainment of married Female Journalists. Fapohunda (2014), notes that the consequences for women may include serious constraints on career choices, limited opportunity for career advancement and success in their work roles and the need to choose between two clear opposites; an active and satisfying career or marriage and children.

The traditional society believed public life was strictly male affairs while women are restricted to child bearing, upbringing of the children, cooking and cleaning the environment. (Sanusi & Adelabu, 2015). Initially, the traditional society perceptions of women as mere objects of sexual pleasure and lack of opportunities for women in most institutions, organizations to either work or acquire education like their male counterparts, has impeded women's career progression (Agbaje, (2020) & Nwafor, 2013).

More so, life of married Female Journalists is more challenging than that of their male counterparts. There is unequal work status, gender-based discrimination in duty and so on. It is in the light of the above problems, that it became imperative to carry out a study to assess the work-life balance of married Female Journalists in Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the research questions thus:

i. What are the strategies of achieving work-life balance among married Female Journalists of Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo?
ii. What are the effects of achieving work-life balance on the married Female Journalists of Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo?
iii. What are the mechanisms that could be employed to aid the achievement of work-life balance among married Female Journalists of Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo?

Literature Review

Work-life balance is the state of equilibrium where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. can be defined as an individual's ability to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities. Walk-Life Balance is generally associated with equilibrium between the amount of time and effort devoted to work and personal activities, in order to maintain an overall harmony in life. (Clarke et al., 2004)

Delery and Doty (2006), assert that competing and multi-faced demands between work and home tasks have received greater significance in recent years, due mainly to demographic and workplace changes like greater numbers of women in the workforce (dual-career couples), transformation in family structures, a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture, the rise of the 24 per 7 society, and technological advancements. Arising from these, organizations are under more demands to create diverse types of practices to assist employees' attempts at accomplishing work related and personal obligations.

Omar (2010), notes that in recent years, the term 'Walk-Life Balance' has replaced 'work-family balance'. Walk-Life Balance is the proper prioritizing between career and ambition on one hand, compared with family, leisure and spiritual development on the other. From the very beginning, it is important to understand that Walk-Life Balance does not mean to devote an equal amount of time to paid work and non-paid roles; it is a satisfactory level of involvement or fit between the multiple roles in a person's life.

With a satisfactory work-life balance, employers can reap a range of benefits. Productivity is higher, absenteeism is lower, and physical and mental health improves with a higher commitment and motivation to work. Personal relationships can also benefit from achieving this balance.

Challenges Confronting Female Journalists in Journalism Practice.

Nigerian women in the media industry at various cadres be it managerial or employee levels increasingly encounter a lot of challenges which discourages a lot of them. Initially, journalism was seen as a male dominated profession, women who venture into the profession were confronted with myriad of challenges ranging from religious and cultural limitations that made the notion of inequality a natural concept existing between the male and female genders (Lachover, 2005).

However, the path of women's entry into journalism was not a steady one as women struggled to survive in the industry despite many obstacles.

Gender discrimination is an inhibiting factor to the development of the journalism profession. In Nigeria, the representation of women in media has been the center of attention in recent times in media studies. (Oyinade, Daramola and Lamidi, 2013). Some of these studies, however, investigated how women are seen by those who set the media agenda because the way women are treated can be traced to the issue of subordination of women by those who hold the control of mass media. Thus, in Nigeria and some parts of the world, the profession is mostly dominated by male. Williams (2015), observes that women who remain in the industry have to fight for recognition, respect, equal opportunity and credibility. However, the abuse and harassment are not limited to a certain period in their career but start from when these women apply for job positions in the industry and continue as they move up in their job positions as journalists. Some other challenges are violence of a sexual nature and threat against their families, lack of prospects like their male colleagues in addition to unfriendly maternity conditions and marriage. Most female journalists are single mothers; this is not because they do not want to keep their marriage but because of spouses who lack understanding of what journalism entails. Anyanwu (2017).

However, in a war and insurgent country, women are exposed to greater risks where attacks to lives and properties are imminent. Stories that involve night club happenings, late night meetings by politicians or government officials, drug related issues, sexual reports, among others, are seen not to be within the 'jurisdiction' of a woman journalist duty since tradition and religion forbid such areas for them. Journalism is considered a dangerous job for women especially in a violent, hostile, corrupt environment and most especially for reporters who expose injustice in violent, environment and war zones (Ronderos, 2012).

Review of Empirical Studies.

Tinuke Fapohunda (2014), conducted a study on the topic: **"***A Comparative Study of Work-Family Balance of Female Journalists and Nurses"* The study adopted survey method and questionnaires were designed to collect data associated with work-family balance concerns using several work-family balance options and constructs from literature. The study found out that more of the Female Journalists 110(74.8%) than female nurses 96(53.9%) experience stress and stress related illnesses owing to their inability to balance work and

personal lives suitably. Because the female journalists find themselves in a male dominated profession, they experience greater pressure to work hard to prove themselves in the workplace. This study used quantitative method with questionnaire for data collection. While the current study is a qualitative research which will use in depth interview to collect data. The above study considered female journalists and nurses with make the results somehow binding on the two groups of professions; this becomes necessary to conduct another research on a specific profession and which the current study seeks to addressed.

Gargi Chaudhary and Ashok Kumar in (2021), conducted a research on *"Study of Work-Life Balance of Women Journalists in Print Media Industry"***.** The study was a surveyed all female Journalists working in various news outlets in Western Uttar Pradesh. The overall finding of the study proves that Female Journalists are facing so much difficulty in balancing their work and life. The gap that exist in this study is that the study focused on the print media, leaving broadcast media. It also does not capture coping strategies female journalists employ in order to strike a balance in work-life which is one of the objectives of the study at hand.

*"Assessing the Challenges Confronting Female Journalists in Plateau State, Nigeria***"** is a study conducted by Desmond Onyemechi Okocha & Blessing Arsun Dapoet in (2022). This study adopted quantitative research approach. The research design for this study was survey method. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The population of the study are 92 registered NUJ Women/Female Journalists practicing in Plateau State. The study utilized a total census/enumeration method, because the total number of the registered female journalists are 92. The study found out that Women Journalists face myriads of challenges, including sexual advances, assignment to dry beats, gender insensitive policies, family responsibilities, job security, as well as cultural and religious limitations. Methodological and geographical location remain the key gap here.

Dwifatma (2021), conducted a study on *"Barriers to Career Advancement of Female Journalists in Indonesia"*. The study maps the proportion of Female and Male Journalists in ten Indonesian Mass Media organizations, the research applied quantitative and qualitative method involving 10 media(n=811) at both managerial and reporter levels and focused group discussion with 14 Female Editors was carried out. Results show that at the managerial level there are 64% Male and 36% Female Journalists. The study identified three factors that hinder the career of Female Journalists as a double burden (career and household),

mental barriers and 'masculine' office politics. The main weakness of this study is that the researcher did not find out the temporal coping strategy to managing the said challenges faced by Female Journalists, which the current study seeks to address. At side that the above research was carried out in Indonesia while the current study is being done in Nigeria, Taraba state precisely.

Theoretical Frame Work.

Role Conflict Theory.

Robert Kahn and his colleagues in (1964), introduced the concept of role conflict, highlighting its impact on organizational behavior. Later, Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn (1978), further developed the theory, emphasizing the importance of understanding role conflict in organizational settings. Role conflict occurs when there are incompatible demands placed upon a person relating to their job or position. People experience role conflict when they find themselves pulled in various directions as they try to respond to the many statuses they hold.

Role Conflict Theory, also known as Inter-Role Conflict, proposes that individuals experience conflict when trying to fulfill multiple roles (e.g., work, family, personal), leading to stress, anxiety, and decreased performance. (Kahn et al., 1964). The theory holds that, excessive demands and responsibilities lead to conflict and that incompatible demands and expectations from different roles also lead to conflict. These conflicts, create increased stress and anxiety due to conflicting demands and responsibilities; as well as reduced performance and productivity due to divided attention and energy.

Role conflict describes a conflict between or among the roles corresponding to two or more statuses fulfilled by one individual. We experience role conflict when we find ourselves pulled in various directions as we try to respond to the many statuses we hold.

For instance, the role of a parent might conflict with the role of a professional. As a working parent, you may find yourself torn between meeting a work deadline and attending your child's school event. These opposing expectations from different roles can create stress and lead to role conflict.

By understanding Role Conflict Theory, individuals and organizations can take steps to mitigate role conflict, reduce stress and anxiety, and improve overall well-being and performance.

METHODS

The study a is qualitative one which collected data from population through in-depth interview. The researcher adopted qualitative research approach because the research considered married Female Journalists' work-life balance which has to do with the practicing married Female Journalists working in Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo. The researcher employed census method to take all the population who are just twelve (12) to participate in the research. Krejcie and Morgan (1970), note that the census method is useful when the population size is small or when it is essential to include everybody in the study. They maintained that census method provides a high level of accuracy and reliability since every individual in the population is included. The researcher and interview guide were the instruments for data collection after which the data are and analyzed and presented in form of narration.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The strategies of achieving work-life balance among married Female Journalists of TSBS Jalingo.

From the findings, all the respondents 100% (12) revealed that the strategy they employ in managing this is synergy. You synergize with your colleagues because journalism is not a one-man affair. Another one is we have to work ahead of time to manage these challenges. You have to wake up early, plan your work and do them accordingly, in order to meet the needs of your family and your children that are going to school. Also, you must not be the sleeping, lazy and weak type. You have to create time for both, you cannot abandon one for another. You have to do extra work as strategy for you to meet up, the stress involved is a serious problem. This finding validates the role conflict theory which assumes that individuals experience conflict when trying to fulfill multiple roles (e.g., work, family, personal), leading to stress, anxiety, and decreased performance. Also, Priyanka et al (2021), asserts that women media professionals face several problems in their lives due to work overtime schedules and travel issues.

The effects of achieving work-life balance on the married Female Journalists of TSBS Jalingo.

From the data collected, all the respondents 100% (12) revealed that "the effect is in our homes because we don't really have time to take care of our homes. Another effect is that it stresses us up, we would not be able to give our best in work place and at home too. We try to cope at the detriment of our health. Also, in several occasions it has affected us in our beats especially if our children are sick, we are either missing out in the beat or come late". Another respondent said, "it has affected my relationship with my husband. I come back from work late and so, I cannot deliver all my home duties. I don't have help I am all by myself, really difficult. Even today I resume work late I have to come and beg". It is the home that suffers, one of the respondents said. […]. It also affects us mentally because one has to be mentally balanced for one to perform optimally.

It was discovered that the effect is more on their (married Female Journalists) homes because they don't really have time to take care of their homes. Another effect is stress. They try to cope at the detriment of their health. In several occasions it has affected them in their beats especially when their children are sick, they are either missing out in the beat or come late". Another respondent said, "it has affected my relationship with my husband. I come back from work late and so, I cannot deliver all my home duties. I don't have help I am all by myself, really difficult. Even today I resume work late I have to come and beg".

The findings align with the role conflict theory which holds that, excessive demands and responsibilities lead to conflict and that incompatible demands and expectations from different roles also lead to conflict. These conflicts, create increased stress and anxiety due to conflicting demands and responsibilities.

More so, the findings support that of Oyinade, Daramola & Lamidi, (2013) assertion that women Journalists are treated as inferior workers by those who control media outfits, traditional culture sees journalism profession as mainly male profession while women who remain in the industry have to fight for recognition, respect, equal opportunity and credibility.

The mechanisms to aid the achievement of work-life balance among married Female Journalists of TSBS Jalingo.

From the findings, the respondents identified provision of conducive working environment (providing creches for their babies) will aid them perform optimally. Another respondent

revealed that the station can help them overcome the challenge of work life balance by allowing married women Journalists in the station take roles they can be able to handle. Women should be placed in a beat that they can cope. This corroborate with Bresslauer (2022), who asserts that women journalists should demand for posting to other beats apart from health, education, beauty or fashion beats. The respondents also revealed that the organization should improve on their welfare as this will boost their morale to commit more to work.

The station should provide transportation for staff members especially the women. There should be vehicles to convey staff home who on evening shifts, news casters, editors and duty continuity announcers. This is because there are instances where we usually cover late events, functions and conferences that has to do with our beat, which we just have to be there to cover the story. So, in this regard, if there are no vehicle to convey us home, we run into trouble and risks while try to get back home. [Respondent 3].

The findings agree with that of the Committee to Protect Journalists (2019), which unveils that female Journalists may face safety concerns when reporting in dangerous or hostile environments, particularly when they are not provided with safety tips, training, equipment, mobility or supports.

CONCLUSION

Globally, dual-career employees especially women are confronted by the dilemma of work-life conflict. The study unveils that synergize with colleagues, aids in achieving work-life balance because journalism is not a one-man affair. working ahead of time is also one of the coping strategies. Media Organizations must assist employees especially married women Journalists to improve and maintain good work-life balance. Work life balance has the potential to significantly increase employee morale, decrease absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge. In contemporary global marketplace, where organizations seek to reduce costs, the onus is on the human resource professionals to recognize the crucial concerns of work-life balance and defend work-life agendas. Irrespective of the category of employees (single mothers, employees who value their personal time or dual-career couples) work life balance offers a win-win situation for both employers and employees.

Recommendations

The need for married Female Journalists in TSBS to maintain work-life balance is crucial for the productivity of the Media station and for their health. It is on this note that the researcher recommends the following;

1. The media station should recognize and reward hardworking married female Journalists, they should develop and implement gender sensitive policies parental leave, childcare support and protection from gender-based harassment.
2. Media stations should allow two to three days off, maternity leave and medical leave to married Female Journalists without losing payment. However, married Female Journalists should employ maid or take their relatives to stay with them in order to relief them with some of the domestic duties.
3. Finally, the researcher recommends that the station should provide creches for married Female Journalists so that they could easily take care of their babies otherwise, it will amount to backing them leading to their attention being divided.

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