

DUAL CAREER SPOUSES' PERCEPTION OF WORK AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This study investigates dual career spouses' perception of Work and Family involvement in Rivers State, Nigeria. The variables in this investigation are: Role overload, Role cycling, and Normative delimas. The research method used for this study was the descriptive survey. The population of the study covered 2,500 dual career spouses in River State. The sample population for this study consisted of 250 dual spouses. Simple random sampling technique was utilized in drawing the sample. The instrument used for this study is the "Dual Career Spouses Role Assessment Scale" (DCSRAS), with a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Three null hypotheses were tested through t-test statistics at 0.05 level of confidence. The findings revealed that: (1) There was significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role overload. (2) There was significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling. (3) There was significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on normative delimas. Counselling implications were recommended.

Introduction

The concept of dual-career family was first introduced to the literature by Rapoport and Rapoport (1969). The concept has developed fast and being practiced in several countries in the world today. The practice of dual career family is found not only in developed countries, but in underdeveloped and developing countries (Parkerad Arthur 2004; Catalyst 1998). That is, dual career families' concerns are not only felt by spouses of the families but organizations where they work, counselors and other allied professionals who intervene in resolving intentional or unintentional crises among members of dual career families (Fider, C.O.; Fox, C.A. & Wilson, C.M. 2014; American Psychological Association, 2006; Hester and Dickerson, 1984). What is dual career family? Several definitions have been advanced by researchers in the areas of dual career. Hester and Dickerson (1984) defined it as two individuals in a committed relationship having work related careers and managing a family together. Neault and Pickerell (2005) viewed dual career family as two couples with professional careers, juggling work and family

responsibilities. While, Sekaran (1986) defined dual career families as when both spouses are gainfully employed in professional or non professional jobs, working outside of the home.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) described some of the delimas that dual career families are passing through in the event of their committed relationship at home and workplaces. This review include role overload, role cycling, and normative delimas. Bradely, etal (2011) defined gender as social category of masculinity or feminity, with construct and enactment guided by culture. These individuals frequently base on how they behave socially, and how they backup their behaviours, on gender attributes.

Role Overload in Dual Career Families

Bradley et.al (2011) posited that role overload occurs when expectations associated with multiple roles surpass an individual's time and energy and ability to carry out the role effectively. Spouses in dual career families have to attend two major life roles. That is, doing their prescribed jobs at the work place and managing the home. Logically, since both spouses work outside the home, it will be assumed that they have to share the responsibility for home chores, child care and other related activities to keep the house management going.

But, in the traditional family, the husband is perceived to work and earn a living to provide for the wife and children. The wife is expected to be the primary care giver for the husband and children (Ajidahun, 2015; and Eremie, 2014). In Nigeria, the tradition upheld that the man as husband of the wife and head of the family is not expected to do house chores, rather than providing financial support for the family. That is, women are expected to do most of the house work, while the husband may do the helping. Nevertheless, this traditional view has shifted to equal participation in most cultures (Matlinm, 2004; Okonkwo, 2012; & Bird, 2006). Oyekanmi (2005) indicated that while mothers of all social classes experience more difficulty balancing work and family roles, professional couples have more control than nonprofessional couples over how these roles can be balanced.

Role Cycling in Dual Career Families

Unger (1979) explained that gender role is made of nonphysiological components of sex such as, behaviours, expectations, and socialized roles defined by a given society as masculine, feminine, or androgynous. In similar vein, Sanguiliano (1978) indicated that the presentation of ideas of self-identity is one of the basic differences between the developmental sequences of men and women. Men appear to have clearly defined masculine roles as prescribed by society; whereas, women appear to depend on not firmly fixed feminine roles and support system.

Then, what is role cycling among dual career families? Husband and wife, who are dual career family, need to make balancing decisions about the ideal time to start a family, how many children to have, and spacing issues. Nevertheless, if the woman wants to make plans for career progress in terms of upward mobility on career ladder before considering childbearing, it could interfere with her childbearing. In other words, age is not on the side of women, when it comes to childbearing. In most cases her career progress gives way for childbearing (Hester & Dickerson, 1984).

Normative Delimas

Sekaran (1986) describes normative delimas or environmental sactions as attitudes formed by significant others in the society about how spouses suppose to manage work and family life. Even though, attitudes may be changing still society in general does not agree with some personal life style of nontraditional families, such as, decision to have children or not. Society sometimes frowns at such plans with alarm of bitterness. In other words, extended family

members will opt for nontraditional families to have children; the wife is expected to bear children immediately after completion of marriage rites. The society expects the woman not to put her work before her socialized services of child bearing and taking care of daily family activities.

Also, society frowns against the husband if he puts his domestic family activities before his work. In Nigerian society, such a husband is called “woman wrapper”, “House husband”, meaning that he has lost his manliness. The socialized stereotype for men is to give financial support for the family. These are some of the delimas most dual career families go through in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

The literature reviewed so far indicated that most of the challenges experienced by spouses of dual career families are a function of the problems they face daily at work and family life management at home front. Researchers will be better equipped to understand what goes on in the dynamics of socialization between dual career families. If researchers can understand the perception of the spouses regarding such delimas as, role overload, role cycling, and normative issues, career counselling modalities could be developed to address the various delimas. More specially, little or no research has been conducted in determining the perception of dual career families in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Based on the above background the researchers deem it necessary to investigate the challenges of dual career families in Rivers State, Nigeria with implications for career counselling. Therefore, below is the purpose of the study.

The Purpose of the Study

- 1 To investigate the perception of dual career spouses on role overload
- 2 To investigate the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling
- 3 To investigate the perception of dual career spouses on normative issues

Research Questions

- 1 What is the perception of dual career spouses on role overload?
- 2 What is the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling?
- 3 What is the perception of dual career spouses on normative issues?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study.

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role overload.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on normative issues.

Methodology

Research Design

The research method used for this study was the descriptive survey. The population of the study covered 2,500 dual career spouses in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample population for this

study consisted of 250 spouses. Simple random sampling technique was utilized in drawing the sample.

The instrument used for this study was on likert scale. It was a 4-point interval scale; strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire for the study is entitled “Dual Career Spouses Role Assessment Scale” (DCSRAS). The instrument was subjected to content and face validity by experts in Measurement and Evaluation in Education. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by the Alpha Reliability Coefficient Procedures. An internal consistency reliability of .75 was reached.

The questionnaire was distributed to all participants by hand. Two hundred and fifty questionnaire were collected after completion in person. The t-test statistics was utilized to test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role overload.

Table 1: The t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of perception of dual career spouses on role overload.

variables	Respondents	N	Mean	std	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec
Role overload delimas	Male(Spouses)	125	20.14	4.30	248	0.05	8.60	1.96	sig.
	Female(Spouses)	125	35.60	7.10					

* = Significant

P<0.05: df248

The data in table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of the perception of dual career spouses on role over load was 8.60, while the critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 248 at 0.05 confidence level. Mean score of male(spouses) = 20.14; female(spouses) = 35.60, respectively. Female spouses mean scores were higher than the male spouses. Therefore, the null hypothesis was reported significant, which translated that there was a significant difference between the male and female spouses perception on role overload.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling.

Table 2: The t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of perception of dual career spouses on role cycling.

variables	Respondents	N	Mean	std	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec
Role cycling delimas	Male(Spouses)	125	20.30	4.37	125	0.05	6.30	1.96	sig.
	Female(Spouses)	125	36.55	7.05					

* = Significant

P<0.05: df248

The data in table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of the perception of dual career spouses on role cycling was 6.30, while the critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 248 at 0.05 confidence level. Mean scores of male spouses = 20.30; female spouses = 36.55, respectively. Female spouses mean scores were higher than the male spouses. Therefore, the null hypothesis

was reported significant, which indicated that there was a significant difference between the male and female spouses perception on role cycling.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the perception of dual career spouses on normative issues.

Table 3: The t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of perception of dual career spouses on normative issues.

variables	Respondents	N	Mean	std	Df	P	t-cal	t-crit	Dec
Normative issues	Male(Spouses)	125	20.12	4.30	248	0.05	6.12	1.96	sig.
	Female(Spouses)	125	36.45	7.00					

* = Significant

P<0.05: df248

The data in table 3 revealed that the calculated t-value of the perception of dual career spouses on normative issues was 6.12, while the critical value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 248 at 0.05 confidence level. Mean scores of male spouses = 20.12; female spouses = 36.45, respectively. Female spouses mean scores were higher than male spouses. Therefore, the null hypothesis was reported significant, which indicated that there was a significant difference between the male and female perception on normative issues.

Discussion

The result in table 1 indicates that there is significant difference between the perception of male and female dual career spouses on role overload. Findings revealed some challenges arising from coping with two careers and taking care of family responsibilities. In Nigeria context, the husband's input to domestic work is improving, but remains very low compared to the wives responsibilities, as both couples juggling for work and taking care of domestic responsibilities. The results of this investigation are in line with (Pillinger, 2002; Okonkwo, 2012; Jacobs and Gerson, 2004).

The result in table 2 shows that there is significant difference between the perception of role cycling burden among male and female spouses. The female spouses mean scores were higher than the male spouses. Mean scores of male spouses = 20.30, while the female spouses = 36.55, meaning that female spouses experienced greater burden on role cycling, such as making balancing decisions about the ideal time to start a family, how many children to have, and spacing childbearing. It was further revealed that if the female spouses make plans for career progress in terms of upward mobility on their career ladder before considering childbearing, it interferes with their childbearing. It is evident that age is not on the side of the woman. These findings are in line with (Hester and Dickerson, 1984; and Okonkwo, 2012).

The results in table 3 shows that there is significant difference between the perception of normative issues among male and female spouses. Mean scores of male = 20.12, while female = 36.45, meaning that female spouses subordinated their work roles to their family roles. If the female spouses refused to do that, society considered them to be bad mothers. The society frowns against the husband if he puts his domestic family activities before his work role. In Nigerian society such a husband is called "woman wrapper", "House Husband", meaning that he has lost his manliness in the society. The socialized stereotype for men is to give financial support for the family.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers have formulated several conclusions. They are as follows:

- 1 The examination of the t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of male and female dual career spouses on role overload, there was significant difference in male and female spouses' perception.
- 2 The examination of the t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of male and female dual career spouses on role cycling, there was significant difference in dual career spouses' perception.
- 3 The examination of the t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of male and female dual career spouses on normative issues, there was significant difference in dual career spouses' perception.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of this investigation has implications for counselling. Counselling should be targeted towards the following: Dual career spouses' perception in role overload, role cycling, and normative issues. Counsellors should be able to use directive and non directive counselling modalities to resolve some role conflicting issues and goal balancing concerns facing the dual career families in Nigeria.

Counsellors should counsel dual career families in group sessions emphasizing existential view of freedom and responsibilities to maintain roles and goals balancing in their work places and home activities. Also, family members should be taught how to be aware of what they are experiencing and doing. Through this awareness they can gain self understanding on the areas that they can change collectively. Counselors should encourage family members to maintain growth promoting climate in which individuals could move forward and become what they desire of becoming at work and home. That is, there should be unconditional positive regard in their socialization. There should be attitude of "if you are okay, I am okay".

Counselors should be able to assist family members to understand to change their irrational beliefs that they have acquired and are now maintained by self indoctrination. Members should be taught to dispute their irrational beliefs about role overload, role cycling, and normative or environmental issues. Finally, counselors should teach family members to formulate and carry out plans to change their socialized stereotypes. That is, family members should learn how to establish rapport based on care and respect.

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