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**WORK, FAMILY AND FEMALE CAREER DEVELOPMENT
IN THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE (NPF)**

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Abstract

This research explores the work family challenges faced by women in the Nigeria Police Force and the effects on their career development. Female officers in Zone 7 (Abuja, Kaduna State and Niger State) of the NPF were purposively selected for the study because of the location of the Nigeria Force Headquarters in the Zone. Force headquarters is where policewomen on the top ranks of the Police like the Assistant Inspector General (AIG) and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) can only be found. Qualitative methods were used to generate data. Twelve (12) respondents were randomly selected for in depth interview (IDI) using stratified random technique. This technique was used because of the different ranks of the respondents. Key Informant Information (KII) interview was also conducted with four (4) key officers found in the Zone from the rank of

Commissioner of Police (CP) to DIG. Data generated were analysed through open content analysis. Results revealed that policewomen are facing work-family conflict in their profession and the conflict adversely affects their career development in the NPF. Thus, the study recommends an introduction of part-time policing in addition to maternity leave to officers of child bearing age. This would help to reduce the effect of childcare responsibility on duties and on the career development of policewomen in the NPF.

INTRODUCTION

Work and family tensions had always been one of the focal discourses in virtually all workplaces that included both sexes and in most instances, the tensions affect women than men. The tensions are most times attributed to the various interplays that exist between saddling the responsibilities of both family and work roles and demands that compel the women especially, to forgo one for the other. According to Thomas & Ganster (1995), research of this nature would indicate that the tension between the two conflicting roles (family and work) results to stress and strain. Even in the United States, researchers have identified work-family tensions (Frone, 2003) as one of the major stressors in workplaces responsible for the gradual reduction in the psychological (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000) and physical wellbeing (Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1997) of employees across genders. To cope with the stressors, the requirement most times is to strike balance between the pressures of family roles and work demands.

However, several researchers have attributed the effects of balancing family and work roles to depression (Noor, 2002) work dissatisfaction (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and being one of the possible determinants of work absenteeism and mobility of labour (Allen et al., 2000; Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003). By and large, it should be noted that the challenges faced in workplaces are not only confined to the non-policing professions. The definition given by Kahn et al. (1964) does not exempt the police institution as he describes work family conflict as

a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family spheres are mutually incompatible; an indication that all participation in work roles are made more difficult by virtue of participation in family roles and vice versa. Thus, to augment previous researches on work-family contentions, this research deems it befitting to explore the effects of work-family challenges on the career advancements of female officers in the NPF.

Women in Nigeria Police Force are confronted with different challenges which emerged from work family conflict. This conflict is of keen interest to many researchers particularly in the field of policing. Studies in Nigeria on factors affecting the career development of women in the force specifically in the Police neglect the effect of work family conflict on the career development of the policewomen especially when they are mothers. Policewomen like women in any other formal organisations are faced with a unique stress produced by work-family conflict. Policewomen experience challenges because of the social expectations that inevitably come to play between the police work and the childcare at home. This work-family conflict produces a particular stress which impact on woman. In patriarchal societies like Nigeria, women are responsible for most of the domestic work at home, this home demand, therefore, conflict with work demand of the police woman to live up to the demand of 'real policing'. Women, more than men, are most likely to experience work-family conflict.

Few studies have described different challenges faced by women in the Police Force, especially when they are mothers. Studies in Nigeria on factors affecting the career development of women specifically in the Police Force neglect the effect of work family interaction on the career advancement of the women. As a result, the research looked at the effect of work-family conflict on women career development in the Nigeria Police Force with its central focus on the challenges faced by policewomen particularly during childcare and how the challenges affect their career development. Thus, this paper is sectioned to capture and establish work family

challenges faced by women in the NPF; to determine the reciprocal effect(s) of childcare responsibilities on the career development of policewomen in the NPF; and to explore the coping strategies adopted by the police mothers to improve on their career development in the NPF

Managing work and home life is another barrier to women career development, particularly for women in the Police Force. Women, more than men, are most likely to experience work-family conflict. In Australia, Lynch & Tuckey (2004) found that child and family responsibilities have a greater effect on women than on men in policing. In addition, Adams (2001) found that women in senior management positions experience a greater degree of conflict in balancing work and family life than did their male colleagues. In any organisation, women in senior ranks are more likely to agree that their work spills over their marital relationship, parent-childcare and relationship, leisure time and household tasks. Though, policing as a profession in Nigeria is not culturally defined for women because of the demand of motherhood.

Accordingly, McCarthy (2013) argues that the professional relegations of women police are sustained by a widespread cultural belief that operational police work is not compatible with the demands of motherhood. In the same vein, Dick & Hyde (2006) argue that women are expected to be homemakers and to be better at the interpersonal rather than technical aspects of police work. Thus, paid parental leave was a major innovation introduced into public sectors that has been extended to fathers as well as mothers. This has allowed policewomen to retain employment and return to work to continue their career in addition to childcare responsibilities. Part-time or 'flexible' employment has been a further innovation, generally aimed at mothers but accessible to all police employees, along with childcare advisory or support services. This involves the establishment of women police units that work largely with women and children. Cultural acceptance of women police through this work can open the doors to gradual integration into mainstream policing.

But in Australia, there are indications that many policewomen who take up the option of maternity leave often choose not to return to work (Prenzler et al., 2010).

Heidensohn (1992) opines that police work and motherhood are not easily reconcilable. Childcare responsibility was the major factor of policewomen transition from full to part-time working which indicates a decline in organisational and career commitment (Daly, 1997; MacDermid et al., 2001; Smithson, 2005). Similarly, Nentwich & Hoyer (2013) argued that the reduced organisational presence of the policewomen as result of the part-time may lead to marginalisation. Bailey (2002) studies on the experiences of professional women who were on maternity leave found that for some women, the maternity leave during pregnancy affect their career development. Rabe-Hemp (2011) reveals that female officers experience unique challenges that are detrimental to their development at work place in comparison to male officers; these challenges are directly attributable to how their status as mothers fit within the organisation and cultural contexts of policing.

Theoretical framework:

The study was guided by feminism, specifically contemporary liberal feminism. In an attempt to improve the condition and experience of women in the society to achieve gender equality, contemporary liberal feminism expanded the scope of feminism with the introduction of the concept of gender as a way of understanding all the socially constructed features built around the idea of sex identity. However, contemporary liberal feminism's explanation of gender inequality revolves around the interaction of four factors: the social construction of gender, the gendered division of labour, the doctrine and practice of public and private spheres, and patriarchal ideology. The sexual division of labour in modern societies divides production in terms of both gender and spheres, denoted as public and private. While men are given privileged access to the public sphere women are given the primary responsibility of keeping the home (private sphere). Thus, involvement of few women in public sphere is one

achievement of the women's movement and of liberal feminism. Women believe they can demand for the assistant of men to work in the private sphere (Ferree, Lorber, and Hess, 1999; Lorber, 1994; Martin, 2004; Risman, 2004). Furthermore, Risman (2004) argues that the two spheres constantly interact in the lives of women (more than they do for men: that is work-family conflict) and both spheres are still shaped by patriarchal ideology (Davis & Miller, 1997).

On one hand, women find their experience within the public sphere of education, work, politics, and public space still limited by the practices of discrimination, marginalisation, and harassment (Gardner, 1995; Hagan & Kay, 1995; Reskin & Padovic, 1994; Ridgeway, 1997). On the other hand, in the private sphere, they find themselves in a time bind as they return home from paid employment to what Arlie Hochschild (1997) and Lynch & Turkey (2004) called a second shift of home and childcare infused by an ideology of intensive mothering. This work home conflict strongly affect job commitment and career development of women in any organisation. To reduce the effect of private sphere or family responsibilities on women, liberal feminism demands for equality in marriage.

Another basic assumption in the liberal feminist analysis of gender inequality is the problem of achieving equality in marriage. This theme was given its classic formulation in Barnard's study. According to Barnard (1960/1982), the major issue in gender inequality is the problem of achieving equality in marriage. She argues that marriage empowers the role of husband with authority, freedom and indeed the obligation to move beyond the domestic setting and mandates that wives be dependent, self emptying and centered essentially on the domestic household activities. Hence, liberal feminists argue for cultural and structural change through family, religion, mass media and law to improve on the situation of women in the society since their situation resulted from the patriarchal culture of the society not biological.

Research Methods

The study was a survey targeted at only the female officers in Zone 7 (Abuja, Kaduna and Niger states) of the Nigeria Police Force. This Zone was purposively selected because the Nigeria Force Headquarters is located in the Zone. Qualitative methods involving both Key Informant Information (KII) and In-depth Interview (IDI) were used for data generation. Twelve (12) respondents were randomly selected from the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) to Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) for in depth interview (IDI) using stratified random technique. This technique was used because of the different ranks of the respondents. Key Informant Information (KII) interview was also conducted with four (4) key officers found in the Zone from the rank of Commissioner of Police (CP) to DIG. Data generated were analysed through open content analysis.

Findings and Discussions

Conflict between police work and family responsibilities

The excerpt below indicates that the work majority of the policewomen do in the NPF spread over their family responsibilities. As a policewoman reported, there is no work that women would do that would not intersect with their family responsibilities. This female officer at the top management rank in the Force Headquarters argues:

my work and the family functions intersect with each other. But the most important thing is that you need to have God. You need an understanding husband because there is no way that you cannot bring back home, the stressed of the office. He would be able to know that mummy is stress up, don't disturb her. Most especially if your husband is older than you, he would be more mature and understand you better and if he loves what you're doing he would be able to advice you on certain

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issues so that you don't get stress over nothing (KII/Female/Abuja/2016).

She stretches further on the support she had from her family that made her who she is in the NPF today. Every member of the family understood her, most especially the husband and virtually everybody contributed to her success. She reports:

In my situation, my husband taught my children how to cook, both male and female and before I get back home, my children had already cooked for me. Early enough the children will wake up, my husband will cook for me; there is no man or woman when it comes to domestic work in my house. May be it is because I and my husband grew up together in the US and schooled together. In fact, my children will tell me that my husband cooks better than me. The most important thing is that we have an open communication relationship. The relationship was open to a fault, people taught there is something but no! No marriage without its obstacles. It was difficult for me when he was out of job. But having God goes a long way. Virtually all the family contributed to mummy becoming the most senior female officer in the NPF (KII/Female/Force Headquarters/Abuja/2016).

Obviously, both functions conflict with each other. The success of the policewomen depends largely on the kind of relationship they are able to establish. The level of the relationship also determines the level of supports they get from the family, most especially how understanding and supportive is the husband. From the information above, a woman needs to be hard working, supported by the entire family, including prayers and little or no distraction from the family to develop like her male colleagues in the police force. Similarly,

Risman (2004) argued that both public (work) and private (family responsibility) spheres constantly interact in the lives of women more than they do for men and the both spheres are still shaped by patriarchal ideology (Davis & Miller, 1997). In the private sphere, women find themselves in a time bind as they return home from paid employment to what Arlie Hochschild (1997) and Lynch & Tuckey (2004) called a second shift of home and childcare infused by an ideology of intensive mothering. This work home conflict strongly affect job commitment and career development of women in any organisation.

Police work and childcare responsibilities

Childcare conflicts with the responsibilities of women as police officers. A senior female officer in a KII reports that her duties as policewoman conflict with the childcare. Most times when she goes for incident duty, the children won't sleep even with their father beside them, and this affects the performance of the children academically because they go to the class the following day to sleep. She further argues:

Back in days when I was in Lagos that I have to do night duties we call it incident duties. If I do this duty during the weekdays, my son will be the first person to welcome me. Not until we started receiving warning and alert that he sleeps in the class he does not sleep at night. In a month you found out that he sleeps two times in the class. When we find out, we discovered that they were the days I went on incident duties at night. I had to complain to my superior the challenges I was having, in fact, the then CP of Lagos State now passed a circular that women should be allow to do their incident duties during the weekend (KII/Female/Force Headquarters/Abuja/2016).

By demonstrating the importance of communication in conflict resolutions, she says, "*So ability to communicate was what helped*

me. If we can communicate, men would understand where we are coming from because we have home to keep and work to do"
(KII/Female/Police Headquarters/Abuja/2016)

She also advised the women on the right decision to take when it comes to building their homes and making a career generally. She says women should build the family they want before asking for posting and that their first priority should be the lives of their children. This agrees with the argument of Dick and Hyde (2006), those women are expected to be homemakers and to be better at the interpersonal rather than technical aspects of the profession. The respondent further argues:

build your family, after building your family then, you can work anywhere. But when you ask for posting like the men where you can get money, then you say you have children, how do you take care of them? When I was the admin officer as DSP and SP at 'Panti' in Lagos, I sat there for many years, that was where I had my two children. In police, nobody wants to work in admin but I was there. After the children had grown up, then I say to myself that I can move around. Most of the time, women, we cause our problem, if you're calm, nobody disturbs you, but if you're wild like the men, you pay for it. Allow the men to do what they know best and you as a lady channel yourself to a best direction. After making my home, I tell them I am equal to the task, not until I was posted to Taraba, Ondo as CP, and then back to Abuja posted out and come back as AIG and later DIG
(KII/Female/Force Headquarters/Abuja/2016).

Based on this exert, work of policewomen spread over their family functions. Specifically, it conflicts with the domestic duties and the upbringing (childcare) of the children at home. Thus, the conflict

affects the career development of the policewomen more than the police culture does. On this basis, policewomen find it difficult to compete with their male counterparts despite the fact that promotion process favours every officer (male or female) except those few ones, who because of the nature of the relationships they established with their families as well as the level of understanding that exist within the family, compete favourably with the male colleagues. More importantly, a woman whose husband does not like the job may find her family or domestic functions very often conflicting with her job because of the lack of support from the husband; such a woman may find it very difficult to compete favourably with the male officers, thereby affecting the rate at which she develops.

During the interview, respondents reported how often family responsibilities conflict with their work as police officers and the effect on their career development. Thus, the conflict prevents policewomen from competing favourably with the male officers. These findings agree with the findings of Lynch & Tuckey (2004) in Australia. They found that child and family responsibilities have a greater impact on women than on men in policing. Adams (2001) found that women in senior management positions experience a greater degree of conflict in balancing work and family life than did their male colleagues. He argues further that women in senior ranks are more likely to agree that their work spills over into their marital relationship, parent – child relationship, leisure time and household tasks. Similarly, McCarthy (2013) argues that the professional relegations of policewomen are sustained by a widespread cultural belief that operational police work is not compatible with the demand of motherhood.

Effect of work-family conflict on career development of policewomen

The conflict between work-family responsibilities of the policewomen affect both their performance career development. As mothers and wives, it became very difficult to develop because only few can balance and adequately manage the conflict to build a career

in the Nigeria Police Force. This result further reveals why few women are found in the top management ranks of the NPF. Against this backdrop, work-family conflict adversely affects the career development of women in the NPF.

This findings reaffirm the previous studies on situation of policewomen in the Australian Police regarding the effect of work-family conflict on their career development. As reported by Charlesworth et al. (2009), Prenzler et al. (2010), Prenzler & Sinclair (2013), work-family challenge has been the major barrier for women development in the Australian Police. The pressures on women work interactively in complex ways, and one feature of contemporary feminist theory is it attempts to understand the challenge. Women's ability to compete in career and profession is hindered by the demands of the private sphere (the family function). The essentially patriarchal demands of the public sphere for face time and total commitment intensify the stress of home commitments by shrinking women's resources of time and energy, which, in turn, increase the demands on them for crisis management at home. The ideological link of women to the private sphere activities of caregiving, emotion management, and the maintenance of routine and order translates into women being expected to do this additional work in the public sphere and being frequently tracked into under remunerated jobs in which these womanly skills are commoditised and marketed (Harris, 1996; Hochschild, 1997; Edin and Lein, 1997; Shelton, 2000; Williams, 2000; McDowell, 2004). The patriarchal patterning of work and home puts the single mother, the woman trying to maintain home and children without the help of the male wage earner, at a tremendous economic risk and is one factor in the increasing feminisation of poverty. The woman typically earns less than a man in most cases; the relationship of the single woman parent to any job is made both insecure and less negotiable because of the nature of her home responsibilities (Waldfogel, 1997; Adkins, 1995; Pierce, 1995; Harris, 1996; Hays, 2003).

Need for part-time policing in the NPF

In countries like Australia, part-time policing was introduced to reduce the effect of work-family conflict on the career development of policewomen of child bearing age. There is nothing like part-time policing in the NPF for women of child bearing age. Rather, a maternity leave for pregnant women when they are about to deliver. In fact, none of the female officers has ever heard of part-time policing in the NPF. Thus, for the policewomen to be able to build their families at the same time compete with their male colleagues successfully, almost all the women agreed with the introduction of part-time policing particularly for women of child-bearing age to cater for their babies and come back after some time as suggested by the respondents.

This finding shows that women in Australian Police Force enjoy more career opportunity/development than women in the NPF because of the part-time policing or 'flexible employment' as called in the Australian Police which was an innovation aimed at mothers but accessible to all police employees along with childcare support services. This provision in addition to the maternity leave helps increase the career development of policewomen in policing in Australia by giving them time to cater for the children to prevent childcare conflicting with their police duties (Boni et. al, 2001; Charlesworth et. al., 2009; Prenzler et al., 2010). Similarly, an officer on SP rank responded that:

We have women who have opted out of the job because they cannot cope after their child birth despite the available maternity leave. To me it is till due to laziness. So if part-time policing is introduced, it would help in retaining such women in service (IDI/Female/Niger/2016).

Conclusions

The work majority of women do in the Nigeria Police Force spread over their family relationship/demand. Similarly, there is conflict between family and police duties, most especially at the top

management ranks. The female officers need support from their husband by understanding the nature of their job and to accommodate them when they bring back home the stress of the office. This result is plausible with the argument of Liberal feminism that both family functions and the demand of the public functions constantly interact in the lives of women more than they do for men (Davis & Miller, 1997 and Risman, 2004). Specifically, childcare responsibilities are the most conflicting duties because women are expected to be homemakers (Dick & Hyde 2006) as mothers and wives and these have great effects on their career development (Lynch & Tuckey 2004; McCarthy, 2013; Connell, 1987). Most of the policewomen unable to balance this conflict, consequently, could not build a career in the NPF.

Recommendations

For women to build career in the NPF, the following include the measures that must be taken:

Policewomen should be encouraged by the people around them and their families especially by their husbands.

To reduce the effect of private sphere on the career development of the policewomen, there is the need for equality in marriage where both men and women would take equal responsibility at home.

The policewomen need an open communication with their superiors so as to address issue that may be interacting with their duties, as well, their career development.

Part-time policing need to be introduced to encourage women of childbearing age to return to their job after maternity leaves. Part-time policing if introduced would reduce the effects of work-family conflict on the career development of policewomen in the NPF.

Policewomen should put in more efforts because they have additional challenges that are different from that of men. A woman has family roles which are different from that of the police duties.

Policewomen have homes to build (they are expected to be home makers) and work to do, so they should try as much as possible to balance the two.

Since policewomen are also needed in the service, the NPF should establish a day care for nursing mothers in the headquarters and various divisions of the police force in the state nationwide and recruitment to this day care should be done by the Police Force

Generally, part-time policing should be introduced in the NPF for policewomen in order to encourage and increase the number of women in policing.

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