Influence of Work-Family Conflict and Perceived Social Support on Marital Satisfaction of Individuals with Dual-Career Family in Oyo, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in partnership between the both authors. Author STA designed the study, managed literature searches, wrote the protocol, managed the data collection, performed statistical analysis and wrote the first and the final drafts of the manuscript. Author NAO provided the impetus for carrying out the study, peruse and edited the first draft as well as refining the arguments. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study examined the influence of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Perceived Social Support (PSS) on marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family.
Study Design: The study adopted a correlational research approach
Place and Duration of Study: The study took place at the Department of Educational Psychology, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria, between May and August, 2012.
Methodology: Participants in the study include one hundred and fifty-eight married individuals who were dual-earners selected through a purposive random sampling technique in Oyo area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Three research instruments were employed to elicit response from the participants namely: Index of Marital Satisfaction; Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and Work-Family Conflict Scale. Three research questions were raised. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple regression models were used for analysis of data generated.

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Results: The outcomes of the study revealed that the two predictor variables jointly accounted for about 25% of the total variation ($F_{(2,155)}$ = 25.170; R=.495; R^2=.245; Adj. R^2=.235; *P*<0.001). Also, the two independent variables contributed independently to the prediction of marital satisfaction: Work-family conflict (β=-.468; t=-.690, P<0.001). Perceived social support (β=.195, t=2.787, *P*=0.006). While the relationship between WFC and Marital Satisfaction was negative, the relationship was positive for PSS and Marital Satisfaction.

Conclusion: The two independent variables examined in this study are potent enough to influence marital satisfaction. The study therefore concluded that marital satisfaction can increase when work-family strain is properly managed and individuals in dual-career relationship receive the needed social supports from expected individuals.

1. INTRODUCTION

In developing nations like Nigeria where considerable number of people are believed to be living below the poverty line, the need for married couples to both engage in the world of work in order to augment their meager income is justified. Although, there is scarcity of statistics of married couples who are dual-earners in Nigeria, observation and experience suggest that almost every family engage in dual-career. Even in the developed society, available evidence revealed that there is high prevalence of dual-career couples among the work force. For instance, United States, Bureau of Labour Statistics [1] indicated that women account for 47% of the U. S. labour force. As early as 1998, the number of U.S. couples who were dual-careers was estimated to be about 60%. In a related statistics, Parker and Arthur [2] reported that 60% of U. K. households comprise dual-career couples while 40% of all U. S. workers are involved in dual-career partnerships. Explaining factors that might be responsible for this, Schnurman-Crook [3] stressed that "regardless of economic necessity, more people who are attaining higher education in order to achieve certain career status seem to pair with likeminded partners who possess similar aspirations and goals" (pg. 18).

Dual-career family is defined by Rapoport and Rapoport [4] as constituting a specific population of partners who both derive satisfaction from participation in the full-time pursuit of career and family. However, as good as both partners in marriage involving in dual-career seems to be to the sustainability of family and life satisfaction, available evidence suggests that men and women with multiple roles experience role overload and role conflict [5], and that balancing the demands of work and family responsibilities contributes to increased stress and taxed coping resources in the marital relationship [2]. This is because dual-career couples are always faced with what is regarded by Galinsky [6] as "time famine" a situation in which couples in dual-career relationship lack enough time which is essential to meeting the demands of work as well as sustaining an intimate marital relationship, building life together and solving problems that affect marital interaction [7]. This is what is called role strain. Role strain occurs when there are too many competing demands on an individual based on available resources and time [8]. Hence, participating in one role is made more difficult by the participation in the other role. It is in the light of this that Senge [9] observed that tension is bound to occur within a family when individuals feel pressured to be successful at both work and family.

Researchers investigating challenges confronting dual-career couples as a result of role strain indicated that role strain have multiple negative consequences on dual-career couples which include burnout, lower job satisfaction and life satisfaction, higher turnover intention, greater general psychological strain, illness, depression, and marital distress [10-13]. Other negative effects identified by researchers include inadequate performance in family roles, and poor marital adjustment [14-16]. For instance, the study of Norrell & Norrell [17] revealed that role strain was a significant contributor to marital distress between members of dual-career couples. Also, Campbell and Snow [18] found that higher levels of role strain were associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction. Seeing that problems faced by dual-career families are numerous, the focus of this research is on marital satisfaction.

The concept marital satisfaction or quality is defined by Rowe [19] as the amount of contentment that a couple feels about their relationship. In his own perspective, Voydanoff [20] defined marital satisfaction as an individual's affective appraisal of the overall quality of the marital relationship. Also Akanbi [21], viewed marital satisfaction as an extent to which partners in marriage have a sense of accomplishment or fulfillment of mutual needs, goals and expectation in marriage. From this definition, it can be inferred that satisfaction is the goal of every marriage.

However, the need to conduct more research on marital satisfaction could not be unconnected with the rate at which marital instability is increasing, coupled with violence that goes along with it. Although, marital stability does not necessarily suggest marital happiness, it is often certain that marital instability alludes to marital dissatisfaction. Hence, marital satisfaction has been suggested to have implication on the state of health and life satisfaction of the affected individuals [22], predicts violence used by intimate partners [23] and the degree of depression they pass through [24]. Additionally, Fisman and Meyers [25] observed that marital satisfaction does not only affect the two partners in marital relationship but also is a direct relationship with the children's psychological distress. They equally noted that lower marital satisfaction results in lowered parental involvement which will heighten the children's psychological distress.

Based on the observed aftereffect of marital satisfaction in people's life, researchers, in their attempts to improve the marital quality of couples, have built their search light on several factors which underpin marital satisfaction. These include: gender role quality [18], financial status [26], sexual dysfunction [27], children [28] and a host of others. However, this study is interested in the influence of work-family strain and perceived social support in predicting marital quality of dual-career individuals.

Work-family conflict is conceptualized by Greenhaus and Beutell [29] as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressure from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. In an attempt to explain the nature of work-family conflict, Greenhaus, and Beutell [29] gave three types of work and family conflict. According to these authors, the conflicts include, time-based, strain-based and behaviour based conflicts. Time-based conflict occurs when job and family responsibilities compete for the individual's time. Strain based conflict is experienced when strain or fatigue in one role affects the performance in the other while behaviour based conflict, on the other hand, happens when specific behaviors needed in one role are incompatible with behavioral expectations in another role.

Attempts to explain why people have role conflict of work and family have led to formulation of theories. However, this study is anchored on two theories: scarcity and conservation of resources theories. "Scarcity theory" opines that humans have a fixed amount of energy and

time that has to be distributed over the various roles someone fulfils. It is assumed that every role takes up time and energy, so that the participation in one role will have a negative effect on the participation in the other role [30]. In the view of conservation of resources, people struggle to protect and build resources such as objects (e.g. money, house), conditions (e.g. quality of one's roles, external support), energies (time and level of energy) and personal characteristics (e.g. beliefs like a positive outlook). Psychological stress occurs when these resources are lost or threatened [14]. Therefore, work-family conflict is hypothesized as the consequence of resources being lost in the process of juggling both work and family roles [31,14].

Going by the definition ascribed to work-family conflict, it could be deduced that work-family conflict has impact on both work and family relationship. This is because work can interfere with family (a situation where demands of work make it difficult to perform family responsibilities) and family can interfere with work (a situation in which family demands limit the performance of work duties). However, European Commission [32] observed that individuals typically report more work interference with family than family interference with work. Explaining the probable reason for this, Gutek, Searle and Klepa [33] opined that it may be the result of employee's evaluation which are coloured by expectations concerning the characteristics of a good employee. According to Gutek et al. [33], a good employee is not expected to think about family matters at work and thus allow them to disturb his or her work. However, a good employee may think about work matters at home and thus allow them to interfere with his or her family life.

As regard the relationship between work-family strain and marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family, available research evidence revealed that marital satisfaction decreases when role strain (e.g. work-family conflict) is present in the relationship (34). Also, Hughes, Galinsky and Morris [35] found a correlation between work-home interference and marital quality. More negative job characteristics resulted in more negative work–home interference, which in turn lowered the marital quality of the individuals. In addition, Milkie and Peltola [36] found that those who experienced marital happiness experience more success in balancing family and work. In his work, Bodenmann, Ledermann and Bradbury [37] also found that external stress created more stress within the marriage relationship which in turn associated with lowered relationship functioning and marital satisfaction.

Despite a considerable evidence of research on relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction, there seems to be incongruent results in this relationship. For instance, some studies found that the outcome varies across sex [38-40], other studies revealed discrepancy in such relationship based on occupational status. For occupational status, Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian [41] found that no significant relationship existed between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction among the teachers they investigated. These conflicting research findings opened more gaps for conducting more research on relationship between work-family strain and marital satisfaction.

Social support was defined by Cobb [42] as information that leads an individual to believe that he or she is cared for and loved, valued and a member of network of mutual obligation. In what seems to be the explanation of how social support works, Pierce [43] explained that receiving support is a conscious act that requires the individual perceived that potentially supportive behaviour had been provided by a network member. Social support is believed to have a protective function in stress reduction. In relation to marital satisfaction, some researchers have supported the notion that social supports play a critical role within marital

relationship [44,45,46]. Also, Perrewe and Hochwarter [13] found that social supports (especially spousal support) decrease the negative effect of role strain.

Regardless of the research support for positive relationship between marital satisfaction and spousal support, some studies revealed that the relationship is dependent upon the source of such supports. In the light of this, Thoits [47] opined that support is more effective when it is offered by someone who had similar values and characteristics or faced similar stressful experiences. Therefore, spousal support has been found to be more effective than other sources of support [48]. Also, Julien and Markman [44] noted that social support within a marriage is more strongly related with marital satisfaction for younger and middle age wives than husbands.

This study examined the influence of work-family conflict and perceived social support in predicting marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family. The following research questions would serve as guide to the study:

(1) What is the joint effect of Work-Family Conflict (WFC), and Perceived Social Support (PSS) to the prediction of martial satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family?
(2) What is the linear contribution of each independent variable (WFC and PSS) to the prediction of marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family?
(3) What pattern of relationship exists between predictor variables (WFC and PSS) and marital satisfaction of individuals with dual career family?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The design adopted for the study was Correlational research design. This is essential as the study did not involve manipulation of the independent variables. Also, the method gives room for collection of information from large sample size and testing relationship between variables.

2.2 Participants

Participants involved in this study include one hundred and fifty-eight married individuals with dual-career family randomly selected from Oyo town in Oyo State, Nigeria, through a process of purposive random sampling technique. The demographic analysis of the respondents showed that sixty-three (39.9%) were employees from private establishment while ninety-five (60.1%) were civil and public servants. One hundred and one (63.9%) were female while 57 (36.1%) were male participants. 89(56.3%) and 69 (43.7%) were Christians and Muslims respectively. The age of participants ranges from 20 years or younger to 51 years or older. A further breakdown revealed that 4 (2.5%), 29 (18.4%), 68 (43%), 52 (32.9%), and 5 (3.2%) of the respondents were between ages 20 years and below, 21-30 years, 31-40years, 41 – 50years and 51 years and above respectively. Their mean age was 38.6.

2.3 Measures

Three major instruments were used for eliciting response from the respondents. They are:

* Index of Marital Satisfaction (Dependent Variable)
* Multidimensional scale of perceived social support (Independent variable)
* Work-Family conflict scale (Independent variable)

2.3.1 Index of Marital Satisfaction (INS)

The Index of Marital Satisfaction (INS) developed by Hudson [49] was used as a measure of marital satisfaction. The instrument contained 25 items in which participants were asked to rate the degree of satisfaction they have in their marital relationship using 7-point Scale format ranging from 1 (Rarely or none of the time) to 7 (most or all of the time). The reliability co-efficient of the instrument for this study using Cronbach alpha is 0.88.

2.3.2 Multidimensional scale of perceived social support

The measure of perceived social support was the Multidimensional Scale of Social Support developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley [50]. The scale was designed to measure three major areas relating to the source of social support: Family, friends and significant others with four items measuring each of the domains making a total of 12 items. The items were also rated on a seven-point scale format which ranged from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the instrument for the present study is 0.91.

2.3.3 Work-family conflict scale

Work-family Conflict Scale was developed by Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian [51] to measure time and strain based components of conflict. The 10-item scale contained five items measuring family-to-work conflict and five items measuring work-to-family conflict. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each item on a 7-point scale which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The internal consistency of the scale using Cronbach alpha is 0.82.

2.4 Procedure

The research instruments were distributed with the help of two research proctors, who were trained purposely for the administration of research instruments; who within one week administered the instrument to the participants at their various places of work. Out of the two hundred copies of the questionnaire sent out, one hundred and fifty-eight participants indicated evidence of dual-career family. Twenty-seven did not match dual-career family while the rest copies of the research instruments were either not returned or not properly filled. The researchers had 79% success of the questionnaire administration.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using both Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression analysis procedure.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Table one summarizes the relationship between work-family conflict, perceived social support and marital satisfaction. The result showed that there is significant relationship between the dependent variable (Marital Satisfaction) and the independent variables (Work-Family Conflict and Perceived Social Support). The result also indicated an inverse relationship between marital satisfaction and work-family conflict, whereas the relationship between perceived social support and marital satisfaction is positive.

Table 1. The correlation matrix of the relationship between work-family conflict, perceived social support and marital satisfaction

Variables	X	S.D	1	2	3
Marital Satisfaction	55.13	20.75	1		
Work-Family Conflict	40.08	10.84	- .455[**]	1	
Social Support	37.53	8.12	.165[*]	.064	1

**-Significant at 0.01 level; *-Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 revealed that the composite contribution of the independent variables (work-family conflict) to the prediction of marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family was significant ($f_{(2,155)}$=25.170; R=.495; R^2=.245; Adj. R^2=.235; P<0.001). The result indicated that the variables jointly accounted for about 25% of the variance while other variables outside the jurisdiction of this study accounted for the rest 75%.

Table 2. Summary of regression of joint effect of independent variables on marital satisfaction model summary

Model	R	R. Square	Adjusted R. square	Std Error of the estimate
1	.495[a]	.245	.235	18.14261

ANOVA

	Sum or Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	16569.315	2	8284.658	25.170	.000
Residual	51018.893	155	329.154		
Total	6788.209	157			

Table 3 revealed the independent contribution of each predictor variable to the prediction of marital satisfaction and their level of significance. It showed that the two predictor variables significantly contributed independently to the prediction of marital satisfaction: Work-family conflict (β=-.468; t=-.690*, P*<0.001); Perceived social support (β=.195, t=2.787, *P*=0.006). In relation to the magnitude of contribution, work-family conflict contributes more than perceived social support to the prediction of marital satisfaction.

Table 3. Linear Contribution of Predictor Variables to Marital Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Co-efficient		
	B	Std. Err.	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	72.856	8.484		8.588	.000
Work-Family Conflict	-.895	.134	-.468	-0.690	.000
Perceived Social Support	.498	.179	.195	2.787	.006

3.2 Discussion

The present study aimed at examining the joint and relative contributions of the predictor variables (Work-family conflict and perceived social support) to the prediction of marital satisfaction and by extension determine the pattern of relationship between the independent variables and marital satisfaction. Going by the outcomes of the study, there is a clear suggestion that the composite contribution of the two independent variables (work-family conflict and perceived social support) on the marital satisfaction was significant. This is because, the findings showed a contribution of about 25% of the total variance to the prediction. The significant result could not have been due to chance. Inference could, therefore, be made that while determining the variables which underpin marital satisfaction, the influence of the combination of work-family conflict and perceived social support could not be overlooked.

Based on the linear contribution of work-family conflict to the prediction of marital satisfaction, the significant relationship is in line with the earlier findings of Hughes, Galinsky and Morris [6], Millkie and Peltola [36], who found a significant relationship between work-home interference and marital quality. It, however, contradicts the finding of Netemeyer et al [41] who found that work-family conflict was not related to marital satisfaction among teachers. The significant relationship observed in this study should not be astonishing as combining work and family responsibilities together consumes a lot of energy, time and resources, hence, the experience of stress and strain; the aggression of which is transferred into the family system. This is supported by past researchers that married individuals who are consumed by the stress from their job have possibility of showing anger and withdrawal [51]. These disruptive behaviours have potency of influencing the quality of marital relationship.

One other notable discovery of this study is the inverse relationship between work-family conflict in such a way that as work-family conflict increases, the marital satisfaction decreases. This is in agreement with the assertion of King [34] that marital satisfaction decreases when role strain is present in the relationship. Also, when couple decreases role strain, martial satisfaction increases [52].

Significant relationship was also established between perceived social support and marital satisfaction in the present study. The finding also concurred with the study of Julien and Markman [44], Acitelli & Autonucci [46] Pasch, Bradbury & Davila [45] who found that there is significant relationship between social support and marital interaction. Adducing reasons for this relationship, Cutrona [53] opined that social support (especially spousal support) in stressful time have the potency of preventing emotional withdrawal and isolation, depression, and damaging behaviour, escalation of conflict and increase emotional intimacy in the relationship. These perceived dividends of social support could have accounted for the

positive relationship between social support and marital satisfaction, as observed in this study.

3.3 Implications of the Study

The outcomes of this study, in no doubt, have implications for clinical practitioners, employers of labour and policy makers to show emphatic hands towards meeting the needs of dual-career couples. This is because individuals in dual-career family who are consumed with multiple role strain of work and family are often faced with the challenges of choosing between work and family. This indicates that dual-career couples are liable to face consequences associated with marital dissatisfaction.

Consequent upon this, mental health professionals and counseling psychologists in their attempts to improve the life and marital satisfaction of dual-career individuals should consider the variables examined in this study as they have potency to influence the marital satisfaction or otherwise of the individuals. Also, efforts should be made towards developing therapies that can reduce the strain experienced as a result of engaging in the world of work and world of marriage.

The study also underscores the need for employers of labour and the policy makers to formulate family friendly policies for their employees. Policies that will make employees participate in their work and have opportunity to take care of their families should be formulated. For example, establishment of day care centers in each establishment whereby nursing mothers can take care of and visit their children during work hour should be put in place.

Also, the implication of the present study to individual members in marriage relationship is the need to support their partners in most of the home affairs. The issue of attributing a particular household chore to a particular sex may create more strain to the stress experienced by members in relation to work-family conflict. Since social support has been found to have a positive relationship to marital satisfaction, it is believed that showing supportive hands toward one's partner will enhance the quality of one's marriage.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion that could be drawn from the outcomes of this study is that both work-family conflict and social support have significant composite and linear contributions towards the prediction of marital satisfaction. However, while the relationship between work-family conflict and marital satisfaction is negative, it is positive for social support and marital satisfaction of individuals with dual-career family. It could, therefore, be concluded that marital satisfaction can increase when work-family strain is properly managed and individuals in dual-career relationship received the needed social supports from expected individuals.

CONSENT

All authors declare that 'written informed consent was obtained from the participants for publication of this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

All authors hereby declare that this study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria and has therefore been performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 declaration of Helsinki.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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