

# Work-family Conflict and Spiritual Wellbeing of Professional Married Women in Port-Harcourt

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## Abstract

This study was conducted with a sample of professional married women ( $N = 76$ ) who were residents of Port Harcourt, employed a cross-sectional research design, and used Spearman's rho correlations to test for relations between work-family conflict and spiritual well-being. The results, revealing a moderately significant relationship between work-family conflict and spiritual well-being ( $r = -.44$ ;  $p < .01$ ), support the claim that collectivistic cultures experience lower levels of work-family conflict and underscore the need for further research. This study's unique contribution lies in its focus on professional married women, who are associated with high levels of spirituality and tend to experience relief from work-family conflict. By implication, the findings highlight the importance of more research to explore the relationship between work-family conflict and spiritual well-being in different cultural contexts, thereby emphasizing the urgency and importance of the topic in psychology and the potential for future studies.

**Keywords:** Work-family conflict, Spirituality, Well-being, Spiritual Wellbeing

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## 1. Introduction

Harmonizing the essential life roles of work and family is critical to an employee's well-being and work performance. However, the primary and social demands of the family, such as marriage, parenting, and quality family relationships, have required more time and energy from workers (Voydanoff, 2005). To improve the well-being of their families, workers must also respond to demands from the workplace. Zaman and Rigadh (2014) suggest that the prime reasons workers experience conflicts between work and family roles include excessive workload, incompetent management, and work culture. Adegoke (2016) reported on Quartz Africa how frustrated income earners were compelled to search for alternative revenue sources such as transport services and petty trading to fulfill their family obligations because most Nigerian states had defaulted in payment of salaries. Zaman and Rigadh (2014) are of the position that whether work processes become so pressurizing that workers go beyond their domain to achieve work-related goals or family proves to be more demanding, there is a need for the contemporary worker to harmonize work and family roles. As such, researchers are identifying factors that may reduce the pressure experienced by workers (Senécal et al., 2001). They offer the idea of segmentation as a valuable tool for balancing work and family roles but, conversely, pay less attention to the need to harmonize both domains.

Segmentation proposes pursuing a trade-off between work and family, as fulfilling one role requires forfeiting the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Studies on segmentation have been carried out mainly in developed countries, examining the effects of working long hours for individuals, families, and organizations (Ng et al., 2007). These studies provide valuable insights into balancing work and family roles and have helped thousands of Nigerians strive to earn a living through alternative income sources at the expense of family responsibilities. However, segmentation remains challenged in proffering practical solutions to this conflict, especially in today's workplace, where structural unemployment is evident due to digitalization that has given room for flexible work time and place (Moen & Yu, 2000).

Arguably, statisticians claim that the actual unemployment rate in Nigeria as of the fourth quarter of 2015 was as high as 34%, and some fear it may have increased since then (Adegoke, 2016). Consequently, many Nigerians searching for improved quality of life and better job opportunities leave their families and migrate beyond the country's shores. In 2016, the available report shows that over 10,000 Nigerians lost their lives trying to migrate to Europe in search of better opportunities to make wealth (Opaluwa, 2016). Reports like this indicate that work roles (or the desire to make money) can wholly or partially invade an individual's family time beyond its domain until its desires are satisfied. Furthermore, Adegoke (2016) reported on Quartz Africa how job scarcity in Nigeria

forced individuals to remain on jobs even when the working conditions conflicted and encroached on family roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This scenario is called work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Research findings show that employees who abdicate family roles due to work pressure experience more work-family conflicts (WFCs) (Senécal et al., 2001). WFC is associated with adverse outcomes like moodiness, depressive states, emotional exhaustion, increased levels of illness, injury, and use of prescription drugs that adversely affect workers' productivity and members of their families (Zaman & Riyadh, 2014). Being a National voice – Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Former President of Nigeria), in his view, expressed the need for a conflict-free society and has received support from Migration experts who stress the expediency of Nigerians in rethinking possible ways to contribute to national development (Opaluwa, 2016). Today, people seek spiritual solutions to problems like WFC (Adegoke, 2016). Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) define spirituality as central to integrating a worker's work process with his or her complete self through a transcendence experience. Kalu (2016) reported the increasing appeal for innovative programs that give meaning to life, like those facilitated by the Paramount Ruler of Odukpani, which nurtures families' spiritual well-being (SWB) in pursuing national development. Such spiritual awakening for national development has forced researchers to move away from the segmentation model in search of spiritual frameworks. Spiritual frameworks provide possible insights and support for harmonizing an individual's work and family roles so that work roles integrate with family roles with little or no conflicts. This is anchored in the fact that spirituality can achieve positive outcomes in the workplace, such as organizational effectiveness, organizational citizenship behavior, and affective commitment (Tepper, 2003). Furthermore, experienced psychiatrists continually emphasize SWB as essential in producing healthy workers (Kalu, 2016). Considering this background, the study examines the relationship between spiritual well-being and work-family conflict among resident married female professionals in Port-Harcourt.

### 1.1 Work-Family Conflict

Evidence shows that without the support of family members, supportive organizational cultures, and family-friendly policies, work can be stressful to professionals who contract their skills outside their homes and also to those who incorporate their work with domestic responsibilities (Sabil & Marican, 2011). Aside from professionals, others who experience WFC include parents with big family sizes, a large number of children, family quarrels and little spouse support, dependent care issues, and a working spouse (Poulose & Sudarsan, 2014). This kind of stress depicts a kind of WFC that causes problems for families, resulting in unhealthy behaviors, job dissatisfaction, burnout, turnover, psychological distress, and marital dissatisfaction (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Frone et al., 1992). Aside from associative-related causes of work-family incompatibility, research also suggests the influence of diverse demographic makeup such as age, experience, marital status, income, type of family, and number of dependents as potential causes of WFC (Thriveni & Rama, 2012). Whether WFC is caused by associative relation or demographic makeup, its relevance is not just limited to the field of work organizational psychology but also of broad interest to management due to its effects on labor productivity and its associated financial implications on an organization's bottom line.

Studies such as those by Frone et al. (1992) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) continue to advance our understanding of work and family conflict. Most studies in this area focused mainly on well-educated professional white adults from North American and European countries with similar cultural values and economic circumstances. Their results highlight the need to resolve WFC for an individual's well-being and to enhance organizational effectiveness.

The presence of WFC has received theoretical backing from the following theories. First, the Role Theory opines that WFC is a tension between work and family roles known as the inter-role conflict. Second, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory explains WFC on the assumption that individuals seek to secure, renew, and improve their resource capabilities; therefore, in situations where they cannot do so, they would find themselves under tension, struggling to allocate the remaining resource they have at their disposal efficiently. Finally, the Scarcity Hypothesis suggests that inherent work or family life demands deplete personal resources such as time and energy, leaving a person with insufficient resources to attend activities in both domains (Goode, 1960). These theories, supported by empirical findings, suggest that individuals have limited resources of time and energy to spread evenly between work and family domains. Consequently, either work or family will suffer depending on the preference of the worker (Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Jacobshagen et al., 2005). Studies prove that WFC has a variety of physical and mental health outcomes, such as somatic symptoms, obesity, and high blood pressure (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Studies also show that the reduction of WFC increases organizational commitment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), job satisfaction (Frone et al., 1992), and life and relationship satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1989). In a nutshell, reducing WFC may indicate increased well-being. I propose that collectivistic cultures like Nigerian culture may experience lower levels of WFC because

work and family are integrated into each other. Thus, achieving one (e.g., work) enables the fulfillment of the other (e.g., family) due to spiritual well-being. Hence, this research seeks to explore the association between WFC and SWB.

### 1. Materials and Methods

A convenience sample of married female professionals (N = 76) in Port-Harcourt voluntarily participated in the study. The sample was associated with an adult age M = 41.91 (SD = 7.70), work tenure M = 18.99 (SD = 8.56), and working hours M = 8.25 (SD = 1.72). Spearman's rho correlation was performed to test the hypothesis below.

H<sub>1</sub>: Work-Family Conflict is significantly associated with Spiritual Wellbeing

The study's variables were evaluated through a cross-sectional observational design using a self-report Likert scale. Spiritual well-being was measured through a 10-item instrument derived from the Spiritual Index of Well-being (SIWB) developed by Daaleman & Frey (2004). The Spiritual well-being instrument was structured on a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree) and found reliable ( $\alpha=.87$ ). Furthermore, work-family conflict was measured through a 6-item instrument derived from the Work-family conflict scale developed by Carlson et al., (2000). The instrument used in measuring Work-family conflict was structured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) and found reliable ( $\alpha=.76$ ).

### 2. Results and Discussion

The sample of married professional women was numerically associated with high levels of spiritual well-being (M = 4.19; SD = .61) and low levels of Work-family conflict (M = 2.26; SD = .72). The Spearman's rho data analysis as shown in Table 2 revealed a moderate negative significant association between work-family conflict and Spiritual wellbeing ( $r = -.442$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Hence, the study's hypothesis was supported based on the study findings. The current study was limited in the following ways: First, the Sample was biased through non-probability sampling. Second, the Non-normality of the dataset makes it practically impossible to generalize beyond the sample population. Despite these limitations, the study found that professional married women in Port-Harcourt experience lower levels of work-family conflict and are moderately associated with higher levels of spirituality. This proposition has been supported by previous research claims that collectivistic cultures experience lower levels of work-family conflict (Grzywacz et al., 2007).

Table 11. Normality Test

	<i>W</i>	<i>Sig</i>	Skew	Kurtosis
Spiritual Wellbeing	.94	.001	-.70	.06
Work-Family Conflict	.98	.274	.26	.15

Spearman's rho correlation test for normality (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965).

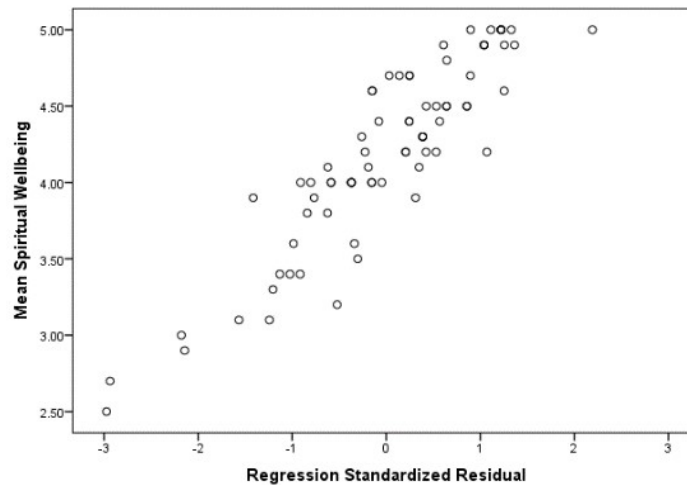


Figure 2. The Scatter Plot for Work-family Conflict and Spiritual Wellbeing Illustrating the satisfied homoscedasticity of the variables (McCulloch, 1985).

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1
Spiritual Wellbeing	4.19	.61	-
Work-Family Conflict	2.36	.72	-.442**

\*\* $p < .01$

\* $p < .05$

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