

# Strategies for Performing Home Management Role Expectations of Two Earner Families in Delta State

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## Abstract

The study examined the strategies for performing home management role expectations of two earner families in Delta State of Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of all working class husbands and wives in the area of study. A total of 300 samples were drawn from the target population. Out of the 300 questionnaires administered, 264 were returned upon which the analysis was based. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The t-test at 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis. Results reveal that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of working class husbands and wives on their strategies and possible solutions used in the performance of their home management role expectations. The study recommended based on findings that two earner families need to work cooperatively to improve family living standard.

**Key Words:** Home management, role expectations, earner families.

## Introduction

There has been a growing research interest on two - earner family experience. The increase in this strand of research is largely due to changes in the workforce composition as more women are now combining work and family domestic roles. Moreover, expansion of education, modernization of the economy and society along with legal changes has played a contributory factor in women's involvement in full time employment. Many of the study on the working class family have been established in the developed countries. (Adams, King & Kings, 1996; Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Hennessy & Lent, 2007; Cohen & Kirchmeyer, 2005). Nevertheless, a number of empirical studies have also been conducted in the developing countries including Nigeria. (Azis & Chang, 2013; Panda, 2011; Adekola, 2010).

New access to economic resources has clearly altered the balance of power within the family. White and Rogers (2000), report that the average American family is a two-earner family and that women now spend a reasonable degree of their lifetime in active paid employment. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) completed a comprehensive review of extant working family conflict research which identified three different types of working family problems to include time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. Also, Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz (2006), in their work, highlighted several variables that are related to the level of two earner families problems to include the size of family, the age of children, the number of hours worked outside the home, the level of control one has over one's work hours, and how flexible or inflexible work hours affect the experience of work/family.

It must be pointed out that vast majority of the previous studies addressing working class family role management have explored either good side of two earner couples and family enrichment or the negative effect of two earner couples and the attendant problems.

This present study aims to fill these gaps in the working family experience by combining the strategies used by two earner couples in performing their home management role expectations with possible ways of enhancing the techniques adopted by the family in finding solutions to the highlighted problems.

## Statement of the Problem

In recent years as economic pressures on families have increased, family members have taken to extra work in order to meet up with the financial needs of family. Most wives in Nigeria today increasingly share the income provider role in the family. There is also increased pressure on husbands to share a larger proportion of parenting and household responsibilities. In Delta State, the number of married females in the labour force continues to increase. Roles of marital partners are significantly altered. Couples ought to evolve workable strategies for coping with the chance. It is therefore necessary to identify the strategies adopted by couples for performing home management role expectations of two earner families.

## Research Questions

1. What strategies do two earner couples employ in performing their home management role expectations?

2. What are the difficulties encountered by two earner couples in carrying out their home management role expectations?
3. What are the solutions to the problems encountered in the performance of their home management role expectations?

### **Research Objectives**

In line with the research questions, the objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Determine the strategies adopted by two earner family in performing their home management role expectations.
- (ii) Ascertain the difficulties experienced by working families in carrying out their home management role expectations.
- (iii) Highlight the possible solutions to the problems encountered in the performance of home management role expectations.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of husbands and wives on the strategies used in the performance of their home management role expectations.
2. There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of two earner families on possible solutions to the problems encountered in their home management role expectations.

### **Literature Review**

Working family experience has become one of the contemporary issues in the general field of home economics. According to Okeke (2009), home economics is a broad field of study that is primarily concerned with the improvement of the welfare of the individuals and families. It is an interdisciplinary field of study which helps families and individuals to understand and adapt to the effects of social, economic, cultural and technological changes.

From the perspective of the western nations, the major factors that determine marital adjustment of the two earner family consist of the nature of work, commitment to work and family role expectation. It is not a question of whether a woman should or should not work. However, in the less advanced societies, there is the question of whether a woman should work especially if she is married and has children and should work outside the home. In view of this, according to Aghajanian(1988) working roles are more in strain with familial roles hence more husband – wife conflict.

Panda (2011) found that working couples (especially women) face difficulties in performing their familial roles. Often, there is conflicting demands which normally necessitate adjustment in both family and work. Aryee & Luk (1996), explore issues pertaining to role conflicts between the two-earner couples related to childcare, domestic work, role conflict, main reasons for stress, and their opinions about stress that was caused due to workload and whether they get time to finish tasks assigned at office every day. Their study also discusses questions related to conflict with colleagues, working hours, time spent with family after working hours, family responsibilities, domestic workload, factors responsible for higher level of strain, and how the working couples manage strain and stressful situations, conflicts between multiple roles.

Noor (1995) examines the motivational levels of professionals and decisions to seek employment, implications of dual roles, problems and the conflicts they face, due to dual role situations among women engaged in full time continuous employment in professional and non-professional jobs. The impact of their economic status on domestic division of labor and marital satisfaction are assessed and strategies are outlined by which working women strike to preserve a balance and adjust with their roles.

For the Nigeria women, combining the domestic work and their career poses a huge challenge as there are limited work arrangements available to them. The women employees do the same work hours as their male counterpart thus making them to experience overload and conflict in trying to balance their responsibilities in the work and family domains (Ngo, 1992). However, working women when compared with the non-working counterpart in general have reported higher level of life satisfaction (Stoner, Hartman & Arora, 2006). Adekola (2010) in his work entitled interferences between work and family among male and female executives in Nigeria asserts that the continuing entry of women into managerial positions has led to concerns about work-family conflict.

### Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design and data were drawn from primary sources. The data were elicited from working class husbands and wives. Three hundred (300) respondents were randomly chosen from the three senatorial districts of Delta State, Nigeria. However, only 264 were retrieved representing eighty eight percent response rate.

The instrument used for the study was designed based on the purpose of the study. The questionnaire consisted of two sessions. Section 1 seeks to collect the bio-data of each respondent while Section 2 seeks for the opinion of the respondents on the issue of strategies for performing home management role expectation of working couples, difficulties encountered and ways of enhancement.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The statistical tool for each of the research questions in the analysis of data was the mean. The responses in Question One was assigned values as follows:

Always (A) - 3 points

Sometimes (S) - 2 points

Never (N) - 1 point

Mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 2

Responses in research questions Two & Three were assigned values as follow:

Strongly Agree (SA) - 5 points

Agree (A) - 4 points

Disagree (D) - 3 points

Strongly Disagree (SD) - 2 points\

Undecided (U) - 1 point

Mean score ( $\bar{x}$ ) = 3.5

### Results

Table 1: Responses on strategies used by two earner couples in performing their home management role expectations

S/N	Strategies	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		
		$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	Grand $\bar{x}$
1.	Using of time plan	2.70	3.86	3.28
2.	Preparing properly for a given task	3.02	3.37	3.20
3.	Plana to do related job at a time to avoid confusion	3.86	2.72	2.79
4.	Using house help	2.53	3.06	2.79
5.	Using labour saving devices	2.51	3.43	2.97
6.	Setting priorities and doing the most important thing first	4.06	3.47	3.76
7.	Sharing responsibility among the family members	2.68	4.12	3.40
8.	Avoid delaying activities	3.14	2.68	2.91
9.	Doing things myself (preparation of food)	2.52	4.51	3.51
10	Using convenience foods	2.54	3.02	2.78

Source: Amedu Fieldwork, 2013

$\bar{x}_1$  = mean responses of husbands  
 $\bar{x}_2$  = mean responses of wives.  
 Grand  $\bar{x}$  = mean responses of spouses (husband and wives).

Table 1 shows that all the ten strategies stated were used by husband and wives in performing their home management role expectations. Based on the grand mean, the ten items were considered as the strategies adopted by spouses in performing their home management role expectations.

Table 2: Responses on the problems encountered by two earner couples in carrying out their home management role expectations.

S/N	Problems	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		
		$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	Grand $\bar{x}$
1.	Feeling exhausted after work and so finds it difficult to perform family roles.	3.76	3.87	3.82
2.	Domestic task may become a source of conflict as a result of couples devotion to employment.	3.76	3.66	3.71
3.	Husband participation in household task may produce guilt base on cultural standard.	3.91	3.50	3.71
4.	Household task might not be adequately performed.	3.59	3.87	3.73
5.	Time is limited to coordinate the responsibility of career and home management related activities.	3.37	3.88	3.63
6.	Transfer create problem for the family.	3.79	4.13	3.96
7.	Multiple roles performed by couples cause them strain and stress.	3.45	4.13	3.29
8.	Most children of working parents are left in the hands of house help.	3.67	3.90	3.78
9.	Lack of time to carry out their parenting activities.	3.18	3.96	3.58
10	Working couples do not have time to perform their roles as husband and wives.	3.27	3.76	3.52

Source: Amedu Fieldwork, 2013

Table 2 shows that husbands disagreed with wives on item numbers 5, 7, 9 and 10 which was agreed by wives. Based on the grand mean, all the items was agreed upon as problems encountered by two earner couples in carrying out their home management role expectations.

Table 3: Responses on possible ways of enhancing the techniques adopted by couples in performing their home management role expectations

S/N	Solutions	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )		
		$\bar{x}_1$	$\bar{x}_2$	Grand $\bar{x}$
1.	Set up enough affordable and standard child day-care centres for working couples.	4.92	5.00	4.96
2.	Make policies on maternity and paternity leave.	4.16	3.86	4.01
3.	Agree on marital roles	4.35	3.76	4.06
4.	Have small families.	4.24	4.39	4.32
5.	Employ house help.	1.59	1.47	1.53
6.	Share with families such activities as shopping, school run.	3.87	3.22	3.55
7.	Plan and organise their time.	4.73	4.92	4.83
8.	Redistribute house work and child care more evenly.	2.51	4.92	3.72
9.	Husband should assume more domestic and family care.	3.61	3.84	3.71
10	Family members to liberate their mind from the traditional view that home management is the task of the woman alone.	4.13	3.90	4.02

Source: Amedu Fieldwork, 2013

Table 3 shows that the respondents (husband and wives) disagree on item 5 which obtained a mean of 1.53, husbands also disagree with item 7 which was agreed by wives and wives also disagreed with item 6 which was agreed upon by husband. Based on the grand mean, nine items were seen as possible ways through which the problems encountered by two earner couples can be removed. Item 5 was disagreed upon.

### Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses earlier stated in this study are hereby tested using the t-test.

Hypothesis 1:

There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of husbands and wives on the strategies used in the performance of their home management role expectations.

Table 4: t-test result of two groups on the mean response on the strategies adopted in the performance of their home management role expectations.

Subjects	No. of Variable	Mean	Sum of Square	Table-t	Df	Calculated t
Husbands	10	4.11	38264.52	1.96	262	0.02
Wives		4.66	39507.66			

Source: Amedu Fieldwork, 2013

Table 4 shows that table t is higher than the calculated t, the hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean response of husbands and wives in the strategies used in the performance of home management role expectations.

Hypothesis Two:

There will be no significant difference between the mean responses of two earner families on possible solutions to the problems encountered in their home management role expectations.

Table 5: t-test result of husbands and wives on the mean responses on the possible solutions to the problems encountered in the performance of home management role expectations.

Subjects	No. of Variable	Mean	Sum of Square	Table-t	Df	Calculated t
Husbands	10	2.55	11726.63	1.96	262	0.01
Wives		2.73	1115733.82			

Source: Amedu Fieldwork, 2013

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean response of husbands and wives on the possible solutions to the problems encountered in the performance of their home management role expectations.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The aim of this study was to investigate strategies employed by two earner families in performing their home management role expectations. The finding from the analysis of responses from the respondents showed that working couples were conscious of planning and organising their schedules, setting priorities, sharing responsibility among family members and using house help.

The findings on research question two showed that two earner families encountered many difficulties in carrying out their home management role expectations. Some of these include feeling exhausted after work and so find it difficult to perform their family roles, lack of time to carry out their parenting activities, multiple roles lead to strain and stress. The findings obtained from research question three indicated that the two groups of respondents disagreed on item five as the possible solutions to problems encountered by two earner couples in their home management role expectations. This may be attributed to the fact that house help may require extra finance and also as intruder to family privacy.

The result of the null hypotheses one and two shows that there was no significant difference between the mean response of husbands and wives on strategies and possible solutions in the performance of their home management role expectations.

### **Conclusion**

The study has shown the strategies used by couples of two earner families in performing their home management role expectations and highlighted the problems and possible solutions to these problems. Since the wife's earnings helps to supplement that of the husband thereby improving the living standard of their families and communities, it becomes necessary to seek ways for removing the problems and strengthening couples of two earner families for effectiveness on their family roles and paid employment. The solutions identified in this study need implementation for family growth and national development.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the above findings, it is recommended that husbands and wives work collectively in supporting the needs of the family to improve family living standard. It is also suggested that government and private institutions should give working couples effective support by setting up enough, affordable and standard child day-care centres.

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APPENDIX A  
(Sample questionnaire)

SECTION A  
BIO-DATA

INSTRUCTION: TICK AS APPROPRIATE,  
NB: You can tick more than one in section A as applicable.

1. Qualification ( ) OND/NCE ( ) HND/B.SC. ( ) MBA/MPA/M.SC ( ) PhD ( ) ACA/ACCA
2. Marriage status ( ) Husband ( ) Wife ( )
3. Family size ( ) 1 -3  
( ) 4 – 6  
( ) 7 - 10  
( ) 11 and above.
4. Occupation  
( ) Teaching  
( ) Nursing  
( ) Civil Service  
( ) Management/Administration  
( ) Business(Self Employed)

**SECTION B**

Question 1. Please indicate the strategies used in performing home management role expectations.

S/N	Strategies	OPTIONS		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	Using of time plan			
2.	Preparing properly for a given task			
3.	Plana to do related job at a time to avoid confusion			
4.	Using house help			
5.	Using labour saving devices			
6.	Setting priorities and doing the most important thing first			
7.	Sharing responsibility among the family members			
8.	Avoid delaying activities			
9.	Doing things myself (preparation of food)			
10	Using convenience foods			

Question 2: Below is a list of problems encountered by two earner couples in carrying out home management role expectations. Rate the problem by ticking in the box of your choice.

S/N	Problems	OPTIONS				
		SA	A	D	SD	U
1.	Feeling exhausted after work and so finds it difficult to perform family roles.					
2.	Domestic task may become a source of conflict as a result of couples devotion to employment.					
3.	Husband participation in household task may produce guilt base on cultural standard.					
4.	Household task might not be adequately performed.					
5.	Time is limited to coordinate the responsibility of career and home management related activities.					
6.	Transfer create problem for the family.					
7.	Multiple roles performed by couples cause them strain and stress.					
8.	Most children of working parents are left in the hands of house help.					
9.	Lack of time to carry out their parenting activities.					
10	Working couples do not have time to perform their roles as husband and wives.					

Question 3: Possible ways of enhancing the techniques adopted by couples in performing their home management role expectations.

S/N	Solutions	OPTION				
		SA	A	D	SD	U
1.	Set up enough affordable and standard child day-care centres for working couples.					
2.	Make policies on maternity and paternity leave.					
3.	Agree on marital roles					
4.	Have small families.					
5.	Employ house help.					
6.	Share with families such activities as shopping, school run.					
7.	Plan and organise their time.					
8.	Redistribute house work and child care more evenly.					
9.	Husband should assume more domestic and family care.					
10	Family members to liberate their mind from the traditional view that home management is the task of the woman alone.					

KEY: SA = STRONGLY AGREE

A = AGREE

D = DISAGREE

SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE

U = UNDECIDED

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