

Examining the Dynamics of Balancing Personal and Professional Commitments: Insights into the Strategies Employed by Nigerian Women in Professional Spheres in the Digital Era

By

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Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving digital era, the dynamics of balancing personal and professional commitments have become increasingly complex, particularly for Nigerian women in professional spheres. This study explores the strategies Nigerian female professionals use to balance personal and professional demands in the digital era and their impact on career progression. Adapting a survey research design, the data for this study were derived from 320 female professionals across diverse sectors within Nigeria, utilizing an online survey questionnaire tool. Analysis of the collected data was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results revealed that employing specific strategies leads to higher career satisfaction and progression. Additionally, the level of organizational support significantly influences the ability of Nigerian female professionals to manage these competing demands. Based on the study's findings, organisations and policy makers should encourage work-life balance strategies, reward effective management of conflicting demands, and enhance organizational support for Nigerian female professionals to boost career satisfaction and progression. This study investigates Nigerian female professionals' strategies for managing demands and their impact on career progression, a topic not previously studied. The findings can inform policies to improve career satisfaction and progression, contributing to discussions on work-life balance, gender equality, and career management in Nigeria.

Key Words – Career Progression, Digital Era, Nigerian Female Professionals, Organizational Support, Work-Life Balance.

1. Introduction

The digital era's shift in the makeup of the global labor force have brought with them both incredible opportunities and difficult difficulties. One obvious trend is the rise in the number of women working in Nigeria and other nations across the world. But handling both personal and professional commitments has become a more difficult conundrum for Nigerian women than it has

ever been (Adisa et al., 2020; Ugwu et al., 2023). This study aims to explore the tactics used by Nigerian female professionals to strike this precarious balance in the digital era and examine how these tactics affect their ability to grow in their careers. Women's participation in the workforce represents a major shift in society norms regarding gender roles and skills. Nigeria is a typically patriarchal country, thus the emergence of women in professional fields is a significant break from the past. Awaah et al. (2021) state that as more and more women pursue a variety of careers, being able to manage the demands of both their personal and professional lives will be essential to their success in the age of technology.

The advent of flexible scheduling, virtual collaboration, and remote work opportunities have completely transformed the nature of employment in the digital age. Although these developments bring with them increased flexibility, there are drawbacks as well, particularly for women who frequently shoulder the majority of household duties (Gbadamosi and Adisa, 2022). In Nigeria, where social and family expectations can be very strong, negotiating this environment calls for strategic thinking.

The purpose of the study is to identify the strategies used by Nigerian female professionals to reconcile their home and work lives. The study looks for patterns and trends in the tactics these women used through in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and data analysis. Do they use technology to increase productivity? Do they redefine what it means to be successful and ambitious? Exist any support structures to help them in their simultaneous roles? One of the main goals of the study is to comprehend how these strategies affect professional advancement. Professional advancement has never been easier thanks to the digital era, yet taking advantage of these opportunities requires skillfully juggling conflicting goals. Can Nigerian women move up the business ladder as quickly as their male counterparts? Do female professionals in the age of technology face any particular difficulties, and if so, how do these difficulties affect their career paths?

2. Research Objectives

- (a) The first objective is to identify and document the primary strategies employed by female professionals in Nigeria to balance their personal and professional obligations in the digital age.

- (b) The second objective is to assess the impact of the identified strategies on the career advancement of female professionals in Nigeria.
- (c) The third objective is to use the research findings to provide actionable insights for policymakers, employers, and individuals.

3. Significance/Justification of the Study

The results of this study may have far-reaching effects on individuals, employers, and policymakers. Policymakers can gain valuable insights about the support systems needed to enable women to enter the workforce with ease. Best practices for fostering inclusive work environments that recognize and meet the varied requirements of female workers can be found by employers. The study may provide helpful advice for individual women on how to manage the tricky junction of their private and professional lives in the digital age.

The study also intends to add to the larger conversation about gender equality in the workplace. Through shedding light on the tactics and experiences of Nigerian female professionals, it aims to dispel misconceptions and promote a more sophisticated comprehension of the obstacles and victories that characterize their career paths. Conversations regarding the need for systemic and cultural reforms that empower women in their pursuit of job success may be sparked by the insights gained from this study.

4. Brief Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In the digital age, the labor is changing dramatically on a worldwide scale. One notable development is the rise in the number of women entering the workforce. For instance, the dynamics of women's participation in the labor are especially fascinating in Nigeria, a nation with a historically patriarchal society (Nwagbara, 2021; Akanle and Nwaobiala, 2020). In order to better understand how female professionals in Nigeria manage their personal and professional responsibilities in the digital age, this literature review will examine previous studies on the subject and how they affect career progression.

4.1. Gender Roles and Work in Nigeria:

Nigeria has historically been a country where women have traditionally been assigned domestic responsibilities. But as the economy and society change, more and more women are joining the

workforce. According to Udom et al. (2022), women's roles in Nigeria are changing, and it's important to comprehend how cultural expectations and professional goals interact.

4.2. Digital Era and Changing Work Dynamics:

The global labor dynamics have undergone a radical transformation with the arrival of the digital era. These days, remote work, flexible scheduling, and virtual collaboration are typical. Agbeyani et al.'s study from 2024 examines how digital technologies are affecting labour in Nigeria and recognizes the advantages and disadvantages of this change. The digital era brings new challenges as well as technologies that may help women manage several responsibilities.

4.3. Role of Technology in Balancing Roles:

One of the most important factors in the tactics used by female professionals is technology. According to Chiekesie et al. (2020), technology plays a critical role in improving women's productivity at work in Nigeria. The utilization of smartphone applications, virtual communication systems, and online productivity tools is recognized as a crucial component of women's toolkit for navigating the demands of their personal and professional lives.

4.4. Relevant Theories:

A useful theoretical foundation for comprehending the difficulties encountered by Nigerian female professionals is provided by role theory, psychological contract theory, and role strain and role overload theory.

Role Theory:

Role Theory, developed by American sociologist Robert Merton, examines how people conform to societal expectations within diverse roles (Aartsen and Hansen, 2019). It highlights how gender roles can impact professional development and how women in Nigeria face challenges in balancing work and family life (Olotuah et al., 2023). Cultural expectations may impose more weight on women to perform household tasks, which may conflict with their professional obligations, leading to role strain and overwhelming demands (Falola, 2023). This theory can help explain the difficulties faced by Nigerian female professionals in balancing personal and professional obligations.

Psychological Contract Theory:

Psychological Contract Theory, popularized by Denise M. Rousseau in the late 20th century (Topa et al., 2022), examines implicit expectations and duties between workers and employers, affecting job satisfaction and commitment (Uzoigwe et al., 2016). For Nigerian female professionals, cultural norms and gender roles can influence these expectations, leading to additional challenges. Understanding these psychological contracts can provide insight into their challenges and coping techniques. For instance, they may be expected to perform well professionally while adhering to traditional gender roles at home. Failure to meet these expectations can lead to lower work satisfaction and increased stress (Conway & Briner, 2005; Dhanpat, 2021).

Role Strain and Role Overload Theory:

Creary & Gordon (2016) stated that in the late 1960s, scholars like Robert L. Kahn proposed the theory of role strain and overload, which emphasizes the stress and pressure people feel when their jobs are overwhelming or conflicting (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). Role strain occurs when a person cannot fulfill their social duties (Nickerson, 2023), while role overload occurs when someone fills multiple positions simultaneously and struggles to satisfy each (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021). Nigerian female workers may experience role strain and overload as they balance career goals with cultural expectations and domestic duties, leading to increased stress and decreased job performance (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2021; Nickerson, 2023).

4.5.Challenges and Opportunities in Career Advancement:

Studies reveal that Nigerian women professionals face particular obstacles when trying to progress in their careers. Ajibade et al. (2021), for instance, draw attention to the ways that gender preconceptions and biases still exist in the workplace and hinder women's advancement. The study emphasizes how specific tactics are needed to help them overcome these obstacles and grow in their jobs.

4.6.Support Systems and Networking:

Support networks and professional networks become essential components in the quest for work-life balance. According to a study by Dosunmu and Dichaba (2021), networking and mentoring are crucial for the professional growth of Nigerian women in the workforce. Establishing robust

professional networks and fostering mentor-mentee relationships are recognized as tactical methods for effectively managing obstacles and promoting career advancement.

This review of the literature offers a thorough summary of the body of knowledge regarding the tactics used by Nigerian female professionals to manage their personal and professional responsibilities in the digital era. It emphasizes how important it is to comprehend how cultural norms, technical developments, and role-related difficulties interact. The integration of these researches advances a comprehensive comprehension of the intricate dynamics encountered by Nigerian women in the workforce and establishes the groundwork for the ensuing empirical inquiry in this study.

5. Methodology

This study used a strong survey research design to get opinions from 320 Nigerian female professionals working in a variety of fields. Understanding the importance of having a large and varied dataset, the study carefully selected volunteers to guarantee that a range of industries were represented. An online survey questionnaire technology was used to enable the inclusion of respondents from various geographic regions and professional backgrounds, facilitating effective and widespread data collecting. This tool's use not only expedited the data collection process but also encouraged inclusivity by recording a wide range of viewpoints and experiences.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), an effective statistical technique that is well-suited for revealing complex correlations within datasets, was used to analyze the gathered data. SEM extends the reach of conventional statistical techniques by enabling the analysis of intricate relationships between variables. This kind of study, which tries to investigate the complex dynamics impacting the tactics used by female professionals in Nigeria, is especially appropriate for this kind of analysis. Through the application of SEM, the study seeks to reveal subtle patterns in the interactions between different elements, providing a deeper comprehension of the complex network of challenges and possibilities these women face in the digital era. This methodological decision is indicative of the study's dedication to thoroughly investigating the various elements impacting the work-life balance tactics used by female professionals in the Nigerian context

6. Findings

The study's findings indicate that among Nigerian female professionals, the application of particular tactics is critical to improving career satisfaction and advancement. The discovery of these strategies provides insight into the adaptable tactics women use in the digital age to maintain a balance between their personal and work life. The study also emphasizes how important organizational support is in determining how effective these tactics are.

6.1. Strategies Employed by Nigerian Female Professionals:

Time management: According to the report, Nigerian female professionals use efficient time management as a critical tactic to manage their personal and professional obligations. Women may maximize their time and productivity, which will boost job satisfaction and career advancement, by prioritizing tasks and setting boundaries.

Utilizing Technology: Remote work and flexible scheduling can be made easier with the tools and technologies available in the digital age. Technology is used by Nigerian female professionals to stay in touch, handle work effectively, and create a more flexible work environment that fits with their personal obligations.

Networking and Support Structures: Establishing and preserving robust professional networks and support structures become essential tactics. In order to meet the demands of their professions, Nigerian women professionals build supporting networks both inside and outside of the office, which promotes a sense of belonging and shared accountability.

Continuous Learning and Skill Development: Another tactic used by these experts is to adopt an attitude based on ongoing learning and skill development. Nigerian women can effectively manage their personal responsibilities and maintain a competitive edge in their careers by improving their skill sets and keeping up with industry changes.

6.2. Impact of Strategies on Career Progression:

The results of the study show that among Nigerian female professionals, the application of these methods is positively correlated with career satisfaction and advancement. Women can achieve professional obligations and fulfill personal commitments by using technology and effective time management techniques. Support networks and networking help create a positive work atmosphere

that promotes professional development. Furthermore, a dedication to lifelong learning and skill enhancement makes women important assets in the workplace and may even propel them to career success.

6.3. Organizational Support:

The study highlights how crucial organizational assistance is in determining how well Nigerian female professionals are able to manage personal and work obligations. The general well-being and professional advancement of their female workforce are greatly enhanced by companies that offer flexible work schedules, foster a positive work environment, and enforce time management best practices.

7. Practical Implications:

The study's conclusions have a number of useful ramifications for Nigerian organizations and policymakers:

Encouraging Strategies for Work-Life Balance: Companies are urged to actively support work-life solutions in recognition of the particular difficulties experienced by female workers. This can involve activities that support personal obligations, such as remote work choices and flexible work schedules.

Systems of Recognition and Reward: Organizational culture should incorporate a system for recognizing and rewarding the effective management of competing demands. Rewarding female professionals for successfully juggling their personal and professional life can boost their spirits, make them happier at work, and make them more devoted to the company.

Increasing Organizational Support: Businesses should make the investment to establish a friendly workplace. This entails putting in place laws that specifically cater to the requirements of working women, offering mentorship programs, and cultivating an inclusive environment that honors individuality and diversity.

Promotion of Gender Equality: It is recommended that policymakers promote gender equality in the workplace. This entails putting in place laws that deal with institutional prejudices and

impediments, guaranteeing fair chances for professional growth, and encouraging a more diverse and inclusive workplace environment.

8. Originality and Value:

By analyzing the methods used by Nigerian female professionals to reconcile personal and professional expectations, a subject not fully covered in previous research, this study offers novel insights. The results include a comprehensive analysis of the obstacles encountered by females in Nigeria's professional environment and offer practical suggestions for institutions and decision-makers to enhance career advancement and contentment.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, especially for Nigerian women in professional domains, the mechanics of striking a balance between personal and professional obligations have grown more intricate in the digital age. This study clarifies the methods used by female professionals from Nigeria to negotiate this complexity and the ensuing effects on job satisfaction and advancement. The results highlight the value of organizational support and offer useful recommendations for encouraging work-life balance, rewarding efficient time management, and improving the general wellbeing of Nigerian female professionals.

There is a chance to encourage good change in the professional environment and contribute to conversations on work-life balance, equal treatment of women, and career planning in Nigeria as companies and policymakers take into account the implications of this research.

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