

A Comparative Analysis of Marital Child Care Obligations of Women Working In Public and Private Sector Organizations in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the effect hours women spend at work have on the quality of child care among working women in the public and private sector organizations in Imo State, Nigeria. This study is anchored on the Rational Choice Theory. The quantitative data for this study were collected from 524 respondents selected from two privately and two publicly owned organizations in Imo State while the qualitative data were from 8 key informants interviewed. The objective of this study is to examine whether the hours spent at work by women working in private or public sector can affect the quality of child care. The quantitative data were analyzed using a combination of percentage, Correlation Coefficient, Chi-square, Cross-tabulation, Mean and Standard Deviation, and one-way ANOVA while the qualitative data were analysed thematically in content form. The hypothesis revealed that, the longer time a woman spends at work, the less time she spends with her children. Thus, hours women spend at work significantly influence the quality of child care that lack of adequate attention, satisfaction and frequent absence of the woman can contribute to the increasing cases of social vices, like truancy, gambling, indiscipline, etc. The study suggests that the government and private organizations should formulate labour policies that will enable women spend ample time in the offices and with the children to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness both in her work place and in their marital obligations.*

Keywords: *Marital obligations, Childcare obligations, Working women, Public and Private sectors, Work hours, Nigeria.*

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I. Introduction

A critical issue deserving considerable attention in recent family discourse is the involvement of women in paid labour and the fulfillment of their marital obligations of childcare. The rush of married women into the workforce runs against traditional thinking that women must choose between family and career. Some scholars such as Wilson (2006) condemned working mothers as selfish, unnatural and even dangerous to their children and society. Wilson went further to note that the increasing rise in juvenile delinquency could be attributed to absence of women and mothers' stay away from the home. Many of these mothers are young and they spend more time at work developing their careers, to the detriment of giving adequate time and attention to their children.

In a typical African cultural setting, the man is the head and the sole provider for sustenance of the family. The woman, on the other hand, is expected to mind the home front and take care of the children. She is not expected to take up paid employment that will detach/distance her away from the domestic chores of a housewife. She is, however, expected to provide informal education and subsequently prepare the child for formal education.

The family, as a foremost agent of socialization, both in traditional and modern society, has a major function in child rearing and up-bringing. In the work of Bell and Robert (2009), the family has remained the primary agent for the initial socialization of the young for a significant period of time after birth. As a result of this, women play a significant role in shaping the attitude, values and beliefs of the children. Since housework is still considered the woman's domain, working women in paid employment shoulder additional responsibility at the work place as well as in their domestic front. Unexpected sickness of children is a calamity that can be difficult to handle. Consequently, there is often the urgent need to use and avail themselves of unpaid leave and unexpected absence from work. Even in double-income families, it is still the woman who is expected to take care of a sick child. Stress loads can be quite high amongst working mothers and these may often reflect in their relationships at home. She is stressed to be at work on time, to send her child to school and to meet all the

children's deadlines on time including food and dress, and she is also pressed for time to look after her home simultaneously.

Education and civilization have enabled women to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their life circumstances. In the emerging complex social scenario, a woman has a vital role to play in the sector (private/public) where she works and which may affect the expected obligations of taking quality care of her children by giving the necessary and required attention. This study tends to draw a clear picture by analytically comparing the interactive effect of marital obligations of child care of working women (in paid labour) in public and private sector organizations, bearing in mind, the job demands/requirements, in-terms of hours at work and the quality of childcare.

Austin-Egole, Wokoma, and Iheriohanma (2014), observed that in Nigeria, there is the absence of some home devices that make home chores easy such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, blenders, pressure cookers, mixers etc, in some homes, thereby subjecting the working women to another stress after the daily office work. To married women in paid labour, it means double role and this might lead to role conflict. The authors above observed the near absence of work-life balance and the need for attention to be given to contemporary labour dynamics. Most work organizations lack certain social facilities such as day care centres and comfort zones for nursing mothers. The implication of these is that they have to combine the obligation of the home with that of paid labour effectively so as to satisfy the demands of both roles and reduce the rate of marital breakdown and family disorganization.

Female working employees in private and public organizations seem to have different work culture and work environment based on their job duties and requirements. In comparison to this, the private sector jobs seem to be more demanding as far as performance is concerned. The working environment and factors like job security, salary, leave and responsibilities, job protection and several other factors are at different intensity for private and public sector working females. This study centres on whether the involvement of women in paid labour affect the marital obligations among those working in the private and public sectors. It also investigates which sector allows working women ample opportunity for a quality care for their children?

1.1 The Challenging Statement of the Problem

The increasing rate of social ills such as illegal gambling, hard drug abuse, petty theft, disrespect, indiscipline, abscondment, promiscuity among the youth, especially truancy and so many other social vices, may be as a result of changes in the internal dynamics and organization of family life. This could be as a result of the involvement of women in paid labour, who now spend most of their time at work, leaving their children at the mercy and care of house helps, maids or surrogate institutions, that who may end up cultivating wrong values in the children. This implies that the regular absence or inadequate time, especially on the side of the mothers to their children, tends to have some negative effects on their children, in relation to their psychological, physical and social development resulting to the increasing rate of some of these social vices.

Indeed, some of the most significant contemporary phenomena of women involvement in paid labour (both private and public sectors) are characterized with long work hours, working away from office or official engagements out of office, weekend work and overtime that can make working hours longer and more tedious resulting to pressure on the working women and lack of adequate care for their children. In many societies of the world, especially African societies, home care is considered the traditional role of women, where they are expected to judiciously carry out this role devoid of any distraction. The need for women to take up paid labour became even more prominent with educational advancement that enhanced their social status and market value. To married women in paid labour, it may mean double role and a factor of stress: working to support the family while trying to stabilize finances. This may lead to role conflict and also affect the quality of time and care needed for each duty such as role ambiguity and conflict; poor relationships with family, co-workers and supervisors; poor quality time and care for their children; heavy workload demands; job stress; depression; among others.

Although, there have been several researches in this regard, such as Aminu (2010), Anyaoha (2010), Lawanson (2008) among others, but most of them tended to examine only the extent women's involvement in paid labour has greatly impacted on the stability of the family. Thus, this research feels differently about these researches because they tended to scratch the surface of the real issues of women involvement in paid labour and the effects on their marital obligations. There is therefore, the need to go beyond this by engaging in a comparative analysis of the involvement of women in paid labour in the public and private sector organizations by using correlation coefficient, chi-square, cross-tabulation, and one-way ANOVA to investigate the variables under study, especially in their child care marital obligations.

1.2 Research Question

The study seeks to provide answer to the following question:

To what extent can the impact of hours at work by women working in the private sector on one hand and public sector on the other, compare on their child care obligation?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to comparatively determine the impact of time spent at work (paid labour) on marital obligation of child care of women working in public or private sectors. This can be ascertained with the following specific objective:

To comparatively examine the extent the hours spent at work by working women in the private sector on one hand and public sector on the other, can affect the quality of their child care obligation.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated for this study:

There is a significant relationship between hours women spend at work and the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector on one hand and women working in public sector on the other.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is both theoretical and practical.

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance This study will add to the body of knowledge on industrial sociology, family studies, work related gender issues, sociology of the family, child psychology, juvenile studies, etc in the society. It will serve as a spring-board for further research in paid labour and marital issues that confront contemporary women in Nigeria and Imo State in particular. It will also expose some labour issues, the effect of social dynamics of women income on hours spent at work and the quality of childcare, how women in paid labour cope with their responsibilities of marital obligations, labour dynamics and work-life balance issues with particular reference to establishment of day care centres at workplaces, as well as pointing out the very sector (private or public) that is more affected with regards to the marital obligations of women on child care.

1.5.2 Practical Significance This study provides the management of organizations and social welfare officers, a valuable reference on family matters/issues and a dictionary to reflect upon the career-mother-child rearing conflicts, the issues associated with other role conflicts and how they can be managed effectively and efficiently. It is hoped that this study will provide information for working mothers, to reflect upon various factors that will help them in achieving their goals and aspirations as careerists as well as training their children. In so doing, they can investigate the possibility of introducing these factors to their families, which may consequently lead to enhancing their performance at the workplace and satisfaction in their home in the area of child-care. To policy makers, this study will facilitate the formulation of industrial relations policies that will encourage the women to effectively participate in paid labour, as well as allow them the opportunity to carry out their home responsibilities.

II. Some Contemporary Issues in Literature on Marital Obligations of Women in Paid Labor

2.1 Women Participation in Paid Labour

The view on a woman's role in paid labour has changed significantly throughout time. Historically, the society believed a woman's place was in her home, caring for her husband and children, as opposed to the workplace. Valued feminine traits such as a meek nature and submissiveness were feared to be lost if women entered the formal workforce. The earliest cases of women working outside the home dated back before the Industrial Revolution. Women commonly assisted their husbands with maintaining the family or acted as a business partner, although they often received no pay. If they were paid for their work, women earned less than their male counterparts (Astin, 1984).

Motherhood confers upon a woman the responsibility of raising a child. This process also changes the way in which she is perceived in the society and at her workplace. It can necessitate her to take more than available leave options, and job security can be at risk. Significant social and personal adjustments are necessary to cope with such a situation. A working mother, especially one who has the good fortune to be able to balance her home and work, enjoys the stimulation that a job or career provides. She develops the ability of raising a useful member of the society and at the same time gains financial independence. Along with motherhood, work adds to the completeness of being a woman (Wilson, 2006).

Iheriohanma (2002), observed that in the Nigerian society, it is indeed traditional or cultural for a man to have an uxorial right over the wife's domestic and sexual services. The woman has the responsibility of taking care of the house and children, and attending to matters such as cooking, cleaning and washing. In other

words, the obligations and the work of women are rights of the men. Her ecstatic nature and quintessence qualify her for these natural chores. Marriage and family disqualify women from jobs that require a lot of concentration, physical presence and commitment. These are distractions outside the home. True to life, a woman is sometimes compelled to discontinue her career to rear children. Her house wife and motherly status usually influenced her choice of career in domestic activities but not in activities concerning the entire society at large.

Women earned roughly two-thirds less the income of their male counterparts. This discrepancy in income was partially attributed to the disparity between traditionally male and traditionally female occupations. For example, women are less likely to be employed in science or engineering jobs, as these are considered traditionally male occupations. However, females who are employed in these jobs earn roughly 20% less than their male counterparts (Graham & Smith, 2005). Factors narrowing women into traditional role occupations included social and familial influences, a lack of awareness regarding non-traditional options, an unwelcoming environment in many male-dominated fields, discrimination within career fields, high turnover rates for women, and less seniority in given occupations.

Women's engagement in the formal sector in Nigeria was given a boost by the demise of colonialism and the subsequent accelerated efforts at national development. Anugwom (2009) posited that until the late 1960's women were virtually not seen in the formal sector of the Nigerian economy. As a result, it was the atmosphere of general industrial development and urban growth that led to the change in orientation towards women as people who could also be meaningfully used in the economic process and development of the society. Anugwom, further stated that the involvement of women in formal employment became possible through the possession of skills and education by the women. Thus, until women in Nigeria became serious human resources with all manner of qualifications, just like their male counterparts, they were not considered to be contributors to the economic system.

One-third of mothers return to work within three months of giving birth, and two-thirds return within six months. Mothers who are not employed are more likely to initiate breastfeeding than those who are employed full time. At six months after delivery, full-time employment has a significant effect on breastfeeding. Much less of the employed mothers continue breastfeeding as compared to the mothers employed part time or unemployed mothers. Thus, maternity and child care leave provisions are essential for every working mother. It enables her to nurture the young child efficiently and thus decreases morbidity. The durations of the absence are varied and can depend on so many factors that it may be difficult to fix a uniform period for maternity leave. It may be a function of social circumstance as much as a regional preference. Recently in this 2018, Nigeria increased the maternity leave for working mothers from three (3) to four(4) months. A working mother from a joint-income family may need much less leave than a single mother, or a woman from a nuclear family and with no child support systems in the family. Often provisions of child care in the office itself in the form of a nursery helps the mother resume work more seamlessly (Ryan, Zhou & Arensberg, 2006).

2.2 Conventional Marital Obligations of Women

One of the most important relationships between a man and a woman is marriage. It involves emotional and legal commitment that is quite important in any adult life. Moreover, selecting a partner and entering into a marital contract is considered both a maturational milestone and a personal achievement. There is no doubt that the choice of a marital partner is one of the most important decisions one makes in his / her lifetime. People marry for many reasons such as love, happiness, companionship, help-mate, and the desire to have children, physical attraction, or desire to escape from an unhappy situation. Marriage is a commitment with love and responsibility for peace, happiness and development of strong family relationships. The peace, happiness and strong relationship, for some scholars, seem to be affected by women involvement in paid labour.

Adekola (2010) avers that a woman is expected to raise children, to provide emotional support for her husband, nurturing, emotional, sentimental, idealistic and intuitive. She is expected to hold the supportive and subservient positions. She is not expected to perform any energy requiring job but do subjects that require verbal aptitude like secretarial jobs because she is assumed to be weak, small and timid. Women are expected to contribute positively to the economy of the family. Adekola went further to stress that "Even if a woman does not go out to work, she is at home processing food for sale or she is on the farm harvesting farm products". Food crop production is the traditional role of women in Nigeria. In the eastern part of Nigeria, while men plant yams, women plant cocoyam, cassava, maize, pepper, vegetable (spinach onion), and fruit vegetables (okro, garden egg, melon). To most people in Nigeria, womanhood fundamentally means motherhood and the female child is appreciated only for her bride wealth and ability to bear children.

Career and child training are the two most important aspects in working mothers' lives and, contrary to the initial belief that they are distinct parts of life, these domains are closely related (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007). A significant amount of researches have concluded that working mothers face career-child rearing conflict (Ajiboye, 2008). Career-child rearing conflict is primarily caused by excessive work demands

and predicts negative family outcomes in children, whereas family-work conflict is primarily determined by family demands and predicts negative work outcomes (Adebola, 2005). Important to this study is how career affects child rearing practices among working mothers in Nigeria. Mothers who return to work immediately after their baby is born are assumed to risk causing serious damage to the child's prospects in later life. Such children are more likely to do worse at school, become unemployed, isolated and suffer mental stress than youngsters whose mothers stayed at home to bring them up.

Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga (2002), in concordance with the position of Parasuraman, Simmers and Meon (2001), state that the establishment and maintenance of family relationships and home keeping activity can be affected by the involvement of the women in paid labour. For them, certain types and patterns of work are more likely to have detrimental effects on their home keeping obligation. They are all of the view that higher paid and professional-type jobs may demand long work hours due to workplace culture or to meet specific goals, deadline pressure, travel (either frequent short-term or long-term commuting), relocation through transfer or for career progression and women involved in these will find it difficult to carry out home keeping obligations.

2.3 Hours Women Spend at Work and Child Care

When one is faced with two or more sets of demands, expectations and performances at the same time, there exists role conflict. These expectations and performances cannot be realistic and may be difficult to be achieved, especially when each of the tasks is of a high expectation. Considering the demands of work place and time requirements, the children may not be given an adequate/quality time or attention.

The issues on how many hours a week should women be in or away from their homes, and how their responsibilities of full time employment interact with their homework have been empirically studied by some scholars like Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) who tried to determine the level which paid employment affect women home keeping obligations. They are of the opinion that women who are in marketing/sales department of an organization experience slightly higher work-family conflict than state employees. This could possibly be because there are not steady hours in retail sales than in state jobs. State jobs have a lot more stability than retail; steady hours are always a plus and will allow one to have a set time for home keeping. With sales employment, the set time can vary from day to day making family conflict situations higher.

Care, attention and love are usually in great demands by the child. Women are expected to supply these in the quality necessary for child's social, spiritual, and mental nourishment. This becomes a problem when the child lacks the attention and love needed from his/her parents. This may result to negative emotions difficult to deal with. According to Ugwulebo (2011), presence, attention and care from her parents stabilize the emotions of the child. This implies that failure and frustrations often mean less when a child knows the parents love her. The presence of the mother with her child makes it easier for the mothers to know the kind of peers their children mingle with.

Madu (2012), states that liberation and education have given women more chances to delegate most of their responsibilities of child caring to other agencies or persons. They can now employ, on individual bases, nannies, surrogate mothers or institutions, house boys/house girls to look after their young children while they are at work or have traveled outside the country. The absence of women from the home at the growth period of children has its own problem. Madu further stated that children tend to grow up to be out of control and parents become careless and irresponsible towards the control and care of their children. Children owe no one any obligation or even respect in a situation the peer group directs their actions most of the time. Most parents even become strangers to their children, because they probably only see their children in the morning and late at night as a result of their engagements in paid employment, business, etc. Women's employment in the formal sector has a great role on the proper rearing of today's children (Nwokorie, 2018).

On the demand of working mothers and its impact on child development, Nezhad (2013) maintains that it is enormous and tasking. Working mothers are forced to reduce their income activities or make child care arrangements. This, Nezhad argued is unsatisfactory in terms of the children's health, affection and psychosocial development. Mothers have a lot to do in the area of proper child care and development. The result of this is that children grow up to exhibit various forms of nonchalant behaviours that are highly detrimental to the society.

Child's Right Act (CRA) 2003 in Nigeria was created by Olusegun Obasanjo's administration to provide and protect the rights of a Nigerian child, as well as specifying the duties and obligations of government, parents, and other authorities, organizations and bodies. That every child is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly, no child shall be:

- Subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse, neglect, or maltreatment;
- Subjected to torture, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Subjected to attacks upon his honour or reputation; or

- Held in slavery or servitude, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian or authority having the care of the child.

Jacobs and Gerson (2001) argue that jobs that require very long hours are not family friendly. Long hours restrict the hours that mothers can spend with their children, which may have an impact on the emotional and intellectual development of a child. Accordingly, gender equity is undermined by long hours of work because it is women who are most likely to give up their careers for the sake of their children. Women who remain in paid work are required to make trade-offs between work and the time and energy devoted to domestic labour.

The increased number of women in the labour force has made possible an egalitarian distribution of household tasks and growth in the use of non-parental childcare (Esping-Andersen, 2002; Boca, 2006). Government subsidized childcare programmes (in the form of pre- and post-school programmes) and the help of informal arrangements (such as grandparents and professional child-minders) have enabled women to increasingly participate in paid employment. Nicodemo and Waldmann (2009) opine that women involvement in paid labour does not negatively affect their childcare obligation in the family. They argue that organizations have in place family flexibilities such as leave, maternity care, lunch breaks, sick leave and tea times, all in a bid to enable women cope with the demands of marital life.

Hedges (2012), posits that lack of adequate care for children of the working mothers is not only a serious obstacle to employment of women but it is also a matter of social concern as the welfare of the child is at stake. Even when the helpers, relatives, baby sitters, grannies etc. are present, the attention of the mother is still highly needed. The absence of mothers at home obstructs the adequate care for children. This means that some wrong values can be inculcated into the children by the house helps/maids as a result of inadequate care and attention resulting from the involvement of women in paid labour.

As a consequence of the above, working class women or employed women have a shorter time for nursing their children than those who are not employed. Children of employed mothers in paid labour have little time to enjoy or stay with their mothers in the morning before they go to work, later in the evening and throughout the night. It is important to note that child birth and care are of greatest importance to women and child development. A woman without children in African culture especially is pitied by her friends and is often threatened with divorce as a result of childlessness. Of course, child rearing can be said to be the most important function of the family as it involves the upbringing of the child to adapt to the mode of behaviour acceptable for his or her age and sex and membership in the family. The personality and development of the child is basically influenced by the family background (Jaja and Ifeancha, 1998)

The opinion of some scholars reviewed above indicated that there is a direct influence of women's involvement in paid labour on marital life. Though, considering the various home technology that make home chores easy, child care system, and family flexibilities that exist at work places to enable married women cope with home obligations, one wonders whether women involvement in paid labour actually exerts strain on their marital obligation. To ascertain the impact of time women spend at work on their marital obligation of child care, the views of scholars reviewed above did not establish a consensus on the hours women spend at work and the quality of child care. In the next section, discussion will centre on women and wage differentials in public and private sector organizations.

2.4 Women and Wage Differentials in Public and Private Sector Organizations

There is a large volume of literature that analyzed the public and private sectors' wage gap. Most of these studies conclude that there exists a significant pay differential in both sectors. Comparing working in the public sector and private sector is not a straightforward task, and a number of different results can be derived depending on the methodology that is used to study their differences. There seems to be some differences between private sector and public sector based on variety of different jobs and types of people, hours at work, skill level of the employees, age, occupational differences, work requirements and qualifications. However, few studies have examined the effect of paid labour on the marital obligations of childcare of women working in the public and private sectors on comparative basis.

Smith (2013) in Bender & Heywood (2015) did a pioneering empirical research to examine the major methods of comparability between the public and the private sectors. The main thrust of the study was to standardize for known earning components determining the pay package of a particular worker along the dimensions of education, training, experience, job location and other job-related attributes. Then, the average earning differentials between public and private sector employees were compared to determine pay disparity between the two sectors.

Though women play multiple roles effectively both at family and at work place, it has both positive and negative effects on their personal life. It also links with their health and future. Nowadays, women in paid labour both in private and public sectors are facing many challenges which lead to stress, both mentally and physically. Mentally, they are facing stress and anxiety etc., while physically, they are facing loss of appetite,

insomnia, over-indulgence and back pains. The findings revealed that private employees experience more occupational stress than government employees (Ramanathan, Mohan, and Rajendra, 2014).

An occupational stress is any force that pushes a psychological or physical factor behind its range of stability, producing a strain within the individuals. Occupational stress is increasingly recognized as a cause of serious personal injury for women in both the workplace and personal life. Female workers respond to different types of pressure in different ways based on the sector they work for. The interface between work and family life is the key source of occupational stress (Parker and Arthur, 2004).

To Ichino and Riphahn (2004) and Engellandt and Riphahn (2005), the difference in the degree of job security in both sectors is higher, suggesting that the number of workers who are diligent in performing their activities varies according to the sector. For these authors, the results indicate that the lower the risk of job loss the lower the worker's effort. The worker's behaviour is consistent with the hypothesis of the agency theory, which argues that the employees and the principal (employers) have different attitudes towards risk; therefore each worker will adopt the strategy that maximizes his long-term benefits. Employees compare themselves to other employees both within and outside their organization. If the ratio of an employee's outcomes to inputs is perceived as less than the ratio of outcomes to inputs for others, the employee may feel under-rewarded.

Despite their increasing numbers, women have tended to enter the workforce in lower- status, lower-paying jobs, and remain clustered in a limited number of conventional careers (Tinklin, Croxford, Ducklin, & Frame, 2015). Low-paying traditionally female careers, including administrative support, sales, service, nursing, teaching, social work, and clerical jobs, reflected society's persistent attitudes regarding stereotypical occupational roles for males and females (Watson, Quatman, & Elder, 2012). This is because women's career choices were restricted, their earnings lagged behind their male counterparts with comparable education and experience. Income earnings have been found to increase with educational level and years employed (Day & Newburger, 2012).

2.5 Empirical Review

A number of empirical studies have demonstrated that paid labour affects marital obligations of women both in private and public sectors. Some factors like age, tenure, salary, job type, job level, and work environment have been discussed to have effect on the marital obligations of women. Several studies have recorded a lot on the effect of paid labour on the marital obligations of women, like Anyaoha and Onyema (2015) and Alvarez and Miles (2006). However, little empirical attention has been given in comparing and contrasting paid labour and marital obligations of those women who are public-sector and private-sector employees in terms of the number of hours spent at work and their efficiency in child care.

In the study by Anyaoha and Onyema (2015) on hours women spend at work and the quality of child care, it was found out that the number of hours women spend at work affect their children, thereby undermining their childcare obligation. They stressed that time is a critical aspect of paid labour and family life. Wives need enough time at home to take care of their children and at work place. They also need to put enough hours so as to achieve the objectives of the organization.

Alvarez and Miles' (2006) study on 'Husbands Housework Time: Does Wives Paid Employment Make a Difference?' found out that women who sometimes earn high income have problem adjusting to normal family life. In their study on the impact of wives' employment on the family, they discovered that wives' huge income has resulted in power tussle between some women and their husbands. In situations where the man does not bring home enough, the wife tends to arrogate more powers of decision making. They maintain that women huge income guarantees negative attitude, divorce and independence in marriages. The economic approach argues that different income arrangements in marriage change the financial costs and benefits of marriage and divorce. The cultural approach argues that different income arrangements in marriage have different meanings to couples depending on their value orientations and their normative expectations. For them, a given income arrangement in marriage can have a certain financial benefit but this advantage can be counteracted by the normative disapproval that husbands and wives have of such an arrangement.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on "Rational Choice theory". This is because the theory seems to give a clearer explanation that women educational advancement and empowerment have created the awareness of their social status and economic value in the economy and development of a nation. According to Charles (2005), this theory was propagated by James Coleman who developed this framework for understanding social and economic behaviour of humans. The basic tenet of this theory is the assumption that complex social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed. Individuals are seen as motivated by the wants or goals that express their 'preferences'. They act within specific, given constraints and on the basis of the information that they have about the conditions under which they are acting.

People behave as they do because they believe that performing their chosen actions has more benefits than costs. Many women have discovered that they could be useful outside their traditional role as home keepers, and have decided to combine the traditional role with the paid labour, since their involvement in paid labour has more benefits to them than their marital obligations. Their choice may also be informed that, by their educational attainment, they are armed on better accommodating the traditional home obligations and engagement in paid employment. The rationale behind the choice of paid labour is also informed by the fact that most homes are highly dependent on the income generated by the man as the breadwinner, which may not be adequate and sufficient for the effective running of the family. To ameliorate this, women thought it wise to combine the role of home keeping and participation in paid labour to make-up for what the man brings home. In other words, women took decisions to participate in paid labour by comparing the costs and benefits of different courses of action (staying at home and picking up a paid labour).

III. Materials and Methods

3.1 Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of this study is Imo State Nigeria, while the thematic scope is on a comparative analysis on whether women who are working in the private sector are more affected than women working in the private sector in their child care obligations; bearing in mind the hours they spend at work. This research will lean on the daily work demands of these women employees in the private and public sector organizations and their family engagement on daily basis too.

3.2 Research Area

This study was conducted in two (2) organizations from the private sector and two (2) organizations from the public sector in Imo state namely: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources (public sector organizations); and Nigeria Breweries Awo-Omama and the 4 United Bank for Africa (UBA) branches in Owerri (private sector organizations). The choice is premised on the assumption that information relating to the variables under study will easily be elicited from them. The choice of these two (2) Ministries out of thirteen (13) Ministries in the state was as a result of similarity in the nature, mode of operation and their work duration, and the fact that more women work in these ministries; while the choice of UBA and Consolidated Breweries from the private sector was because of their similarities, in-terms of job demand, operations and services, and hours spent at work. Also the reason for choosing the four (4) branches of UBA in Owerri and Consolidated Breweries was as a result of the number of women employees in the organizations.

Imo State is located in the southeast region of Nigeria with Owerri as its capital and largest city. It is one of the seven states created by the Federal Military government on February 3, 1976 during the Muritala Muhammed's regime. The area known as Imo State today was part of the defunct East Central State which was one of the twelve states initially created by the Federal Military government (General Yakubu Gowon's regime) in 1967. Imo is one of the 36 states of Nigeria and lies in the South East Zone of Nigeria. Owerri is its capital and largest city. Its other major cities are Orlu and Okigwe.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted a survey and descriptive research design. The survey design is adopted so that the characteristics of the sample elements and the variables under study can be captured from the investigation. The rationale for this methodological position is that it will provide an appropriate framework for the collection of data for the development of an in-depth understanding of the research focus. The descriptive research design allowed the respondents to express how they feel about the topic under study through an in-depth interview and filling of the questionnaire. This study was concerned with finding, describing and interpreting, through a comparative analysis, the relationships that exist between the involvement of women in paid labour in both public and private sectors and fulfillment of their marital obligations of child care.

3.4 Population and Sample Size

Women in the Nigerian public and private sectors are the specific target population, but the study concentrated only on married women, because of some critical variables involved in the study which include hours spent at work, child care and general family care among others. The population of this study comprised of all married women working in purposively selected organizations from the public and private sectors. The selected organizations are: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources; Nigeria Breweries Awo-Omama, and the 4 United Bank for Africa (UBA) branches in Owerri. There are seven hundred and four (704) female employees in the aforementioned organizations, while the target population (married women) is five hundred and forty four (544) (See Table 1 below).

Table 1: The Population (Sample Distribution) of the Selected Organizations

Organizations/ Units	Total female workers	Total married female workers	Total number of copies of Questionnaire returned	Sum Total number used
Consolidated Brewery (private sector)	132	107	106	
The 4 branches of United Bank for African (UBA) in Owerri (private sector)	97	57	56	
Total for private sector	229	164	162	162
Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (public sector)	247	194	186	
Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources (public sector)	228	186	176	
Total for public sector	475	380	362	362
Ground Total for both sectors	+704	544	524	524

Field study, 2017 and Administration Units of the various Organizations.

Table 1 above shows that a total number of seven hundred and four (704) females are working in the selected organizations. Out of the total of four hundred and seventy five (475) females working in the public sector, three hundred and eighty (380) females are married, while out of two hundred and twenty nine (229) females working in the private sector, one hundred and sixty four (164) female employees are married. The study made use of a total population survey (census) of five hundred and forty-four (544) consisting of three hundred and eighty (380) public sector women workers and one hundred and sixty-four (164) private sector women workers, making the sample size to be five hundred and forty four (544) respondents. However, five hundred and twenty four (524) copies of the questionnaire were returned.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The four organizations were purposively selected to represent other sector organizations in Imo state. The choice of these two (2) Ministries out of thirteen (13) Ministries in the state was as a result of similarity in the nature, mode of operation and their work duration as a bureaucratic environment; while the choice of UBA and Consolidated Breweries from the private sector was because of their similarities, in-terms of job demand, operations and services, and hours spent at work. Another reason for choosing the organizations was as a result of the number of women employees in the organization. This study is a total census survey since the sample size of five hundred and forty-four (544) was not too large enough to apply sampling. Hence, only the married females (who are not directors or managers in their organizations) from the selected organizations were used for this study. The reason is to elicit the requisite information for the study.

3.6 Instruments and Methods of Data Collection

For the quantitative data, the study made use of copies of questionnaire as the research instrument. Interview was used to collect the qualitative data.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A 21-item structured questionnaire was designed for this research. The questionnaire was divided into two (2) sections. Section A comprised of questions about personal / bio-data information. This section captured questions meant to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This part of the questionnaire covered such items as: age, educational qualification, years in marriage, length of service, number of hours spent at work, work days in a week, number of children, childcare assistance, job position and income per month.

The second section of the questionnaire (**Section B**) contained close-ended questions, using 4-point Likert scale method in order to limit respondents to available options and to ensure uniformity of responses.

Data for the study were collected with the aid of carefully designed and structured questionnaire. The copies of the questionnaire for the study were administered to the respondents at their various locations within 2 weeks with the aid of four (4) trained research assistants. The field assistants were trained by the researchers on what is required of them to do in administering and collecting copies of the questionnaire from the target population.

3.6.2 Interview Schedule

A Key Informant interview (KII) was conducted among eight (8) respondents who were purposively selected and interviewed. These comprised of 4 married male and 4 married female staff / respondents who are directors/branch managers from the selected organizations. Those interviewed were not part of the questionnaire

respondents. This was used to elicit further information that the questionnaire could not provide about their life experiences. The Key Informant Interview (KII) was also used to collaborate or otherwise the information from the questionnaire. In each of the selected organizations, one married man and one married woman were interviewed to get more insight on some salient points based on the topic under study. The inclusion of males is to have their views as the heads of the families on the involvement of the women who are wives and the fulfillment of women’s marital obligations. The data elicited were transcribed and analyzed thematically in line with the research objective.

3.7 Reliability and Validity of the Instruments

To ensure that the items included in the structured questionnaire measure the objective of the study, the items in the questionnaire were drawn in relation to the objective and hypothesis generated from the variables under study. Before using the instruments the question items developed were given to experts in research and statistics, and measurement and evaluation for screening who carefully vetted the items.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics include frequency tables, bar chart, correlation coefficient, chi-square, cross-tabulation, Mean and Standard Deviation, and one-way ANOVA. Each copy of the questionnaire was coded and a scoring sheet provided where all responses were scored. In analyzing the collected data for hypothesis, correlation coefficient, chi-square, cross-tabulation, Mean and Standard Deviation, and one-way ANOVA were used. The choice of these statistical tools is sequel to the nature of the dependent and independent variables under study. The qualitative data (interview results) were also thematically analysed in content form and accordingly, in relation to the objective of the study and by relating the reports/data to the findings from the quantitative data.

IV. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Hours Spent Daily at Work

No of Hours Spent	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
5-6 Hours	81	15.5	15.5
7-8 Hours	321	61.3	76.8
9 and Above	122	23.3	100.0
Total	524	100.0	

The result in Table 2 above, shows that majority of the respondents (61.3%) work up to 7-8 hours per day, those working for 9 hours and above constitute 23.3%, while the respondents working for 5-6 hours constitute 15.5%.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation on Hours Women Spend at Work/ Day by Sector

			Sector		Total
			Private	Public	
Hours Women Spend at Work per Day	5-6 Hours	Count	13	68	81
		% of Total	2.5%	13.0%	15.5%
	7- 8 Hours	Count	48	273	321
		% of Total	9.2%	52.1%	61.3%
	9 and Above	Count	101	21	122
		% of Total	19.3%	4.0%	23.3%
Total		Count	162	362	524
		% of Total	30.9%	69.1%	100.0%

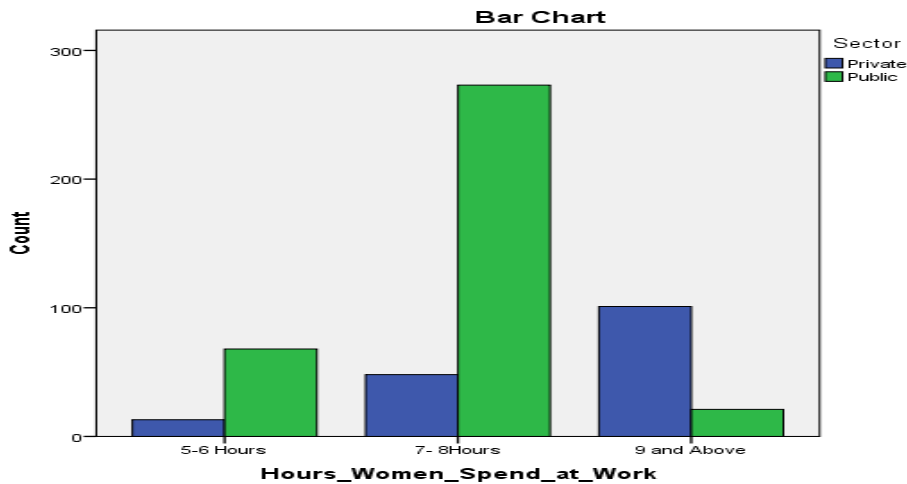


Figure 1: Cross Tabulation on Hours Spent Daily at Work by Sector

The result in the cross tabulation from Table3 and Fig 1 above, shows that the majority of respondents working in the private sector work for 9-hours and above daily, consisting of 19.3%, while majority of the respondents in the public sector work between 7-8 hours. This implies that workers in the private sector spend more time at work than those working in the public sector. This may be the reason why we have more number of women working in the public sector than in the private sector.

4.1 TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a significant relationship between hours women spend and the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector on one hand and women working in the public sector on the other.

H0: There is no significant relationship between hours women spend and the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector on one hand and women working in the public sector on the other.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviations for Number of Hours Women Spend at Work and Child Care Obligation

Hours Women Spend at Work	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
5-6 Hours	34.00	5.02	81
7- 8Hours	27.43	8.07	321
9 and Above	18.90	9.48	122
Total	26.46	9.34	524

The mean in table 4 above shows that women working 5 – 6 hours daily scored higher on child care obligations (M = 34.00) than those working 7 – 8 hours (M = 27.43) and those working 9 hours and above (M = 18.90) respectively.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Summary Table for Number of Hours Women Spend at Work and Child Care Obligation

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hours Spent	11878.607	2	5939.304	91.719	.000 ^{Sig}
Error	33737.630	521	64.756		
Total	412536.000	524			

Note: ^{Sig} = significant,

As shown from the result of a one-way Analysis of Variance obtained in Table 5 above, the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between hours women spend and the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector on one hand and women working in the public sector on the other hand was accepted [$F(2, 521) = 91.72, p = .000$] at the 95% confidence interval. Further discussion on the comparative analysis of which sector is more affected between women working in the private sector and the women working in the public sector is presented below.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of Hours Women Spend at Work and Childcare by Sector

Sector	Hours			Childcare Obligation			Total
				Inadequate	Adequate		
Private	Hours Women Spend at Work (Private Sector)	5-6 hours	Count	0	13	13	
			% of Total	0.0%	8.0%	8.0%	
		7- 8 hours	Count	25	23	48	
			% of Total	15.4%	14.2%	29.6%	
		9 and above	Count	78	23	101	
			% of Total	48.1%	14.2%	62.3%	
	Total		Count	103	59	162	
			% of Total	62.3%	37.7%	100.0%	
Public	Hours Women Spend Work (Public Sector)	5-6 hours	Count	3	65	68	
			% of Total	0.8%	18.0%	18.8%	
		7- 8 hours	Count	146	127	273	
			% of Total	40.3%	35.1%	75.4%	
		9 and above	Count	16	5	21	
			% of Total	4.4%	1.4%	5.8%	
	Total		Count	165	197	362	
			% of Total	45.6%	54.4%	100.0%	
Total	Hours women Spend at Work (Both Sectors)	5-6 hours	Count	3	78	81	
			% of Total	0.6%	14.9%	15.5%	
		7- 8 hours	Count	171	150	321	
			% of Total	32.6%	28.6%	61.3%	
		9 and above	Count	94	28	122	
			% of Total	17.9%	5.3%	23.3%	
	Total		Count	268	256	524	
			% of Total	51.1%	48.9%	100.0%	

The table 6 above shows that women who are in the private sector spend more time at work than the women working in the public sector, hence indicating higher rate of inadequacy on quality of child care than those women working in the public sector. The above also shows that the longer time a women spends at work, the less time she has to attend to her marital obligation of child care.

Comparatively, the independent sample t-test analysis of the differences between the hours women spend at work and the marital obligation of childcare based on work sector (public or private) as presented in tables 4 and 5 above shows that women working in the private sector ($M=2.54, SD=.64$) spend significantly more time at work than those in the public sector [$M=1.87, SD=.48; t(522) = 13.32, p<.05$]. Also, the result shows that women working in the private sector ($M=23.06, SD=10.96$) scored significantly higher in variation in terms of time spent at work as well as scoring lower in child care obligation than their counterparts working in the public sector [$M=27.98, SD=8.08; t(522) = -5.74, p<.05$], who spent relatively same time/hours at work.

The qualitative data gotten from the interviewee are also in accordance with the quantitative data. Majority of the respondents agreed that the longer hours a woman spends at work affect the quality of child care. One of the respondents/interviewees, who is a female director in Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural

Resources, said that:

The hours those in the private sector spend at work are longer than those in the public sector and therefore affect the quality of care for their children than those in the public sector (female Director,43 years old, Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources).

Another interviewee who is a female manager in UBA, went further to say that:

I notice that my children always feel happier and more excited when ever I feed them myself or whenever I am on leave or during public holidays, and spend time with them (Female Manager,36 years UBA).

Another female manager working in the bank said that:

I earn a lot of money from my job that helps in taking care of the needs of my children, my children still complain how much they miss my presence and attention (Female Manager, UBA, 36 years of age).

A female director, said:

I was not able to do the six (6) months exclusive breastfeeding as prescribed by my doctor, due to my involvement in paid labour, thereby denying my baby the required and supposed quality attention (Female

Director, 43 years old, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology). While another male director rather opined that:

My wife is a ban manager. She brings in much money to the family. She loves and respects me but I am worried about the time she spends outside the home because of her work engagements (Male Director, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 43 years old).

In Summary, the result implies that hours women spend at work significantly affect their marital obligations of childcare. However, the finding shows that working in the public sector affords women and more time to fulfil their child care obligations than their counterparts in the private sector.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the time women spend at work significantly influences/affects their marital obligations of quality childcare. The result of a one-way Analysis of Variance obtained in Table 5 above, shows that the hours women spent at work significantly affect the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector more than the women working in the public sector. The only hypothesis of this study which states that: "There is a significant relationship between hours women spend at work and the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector on one hand and women working in the public sector on the other" was therefore accepted [$F(1, 521) = 91.72, p = .000$] at the 95% confidence interval.

The independent sample t-test analysis of the differences between the number of hours women spend at work and the marital obligation of childcare based on work sector (public or private) shows that women working in the private sector ($M=2.54, SD=.64$) spend significantly more time at work than those in the public sector [$M=1.87, SD=.48; t(522) = 13.32, p<.05$]. The result also shows that women working in the private sector ($M=23.06, SD=10.96$) scored significantly lower in child care obligation than their counterparts working in the public sector [$M=27.98, SD=8.08; t(522) = -5.74, p<.05$].

In summary, the finding shows that the time women spend at work significantly affect their marital obligations of child care. This implies that the more time a women spends at work, the less time she will spend on her marital obligations of child care. Comparatively, working in public sector affords women more time to fulfill child care obligations than their counterparts in the private sector. The response from the interview schedule on the qualitative data showed that majority of the respondents agreed that the longer hours they spend at work, the less quality of care and attention. This response is irrespective of the resources the woman brings to complement the husband's income. Majority of the respondents involved in this study support the findings of this hypothesis, which is in line with the opinion of Buelens and Van (2007) that public sector workers reported significantly less working hours and showed to be less unconditionally committed to work compared to private sector employees. They stressed that the public sector working women spend most of their time at home with their children, unlike the private sector women who significantly spend most of their time at work.

On the hours women spend at work and the quality of child care, this study upholds the finding of Anyaoha and Onyema (2015) that the number of hours women spend at work affects their children, thereby undermining their childcare obligations. The study stresses that time is a critical aspect of paid labour and family life. Wives need enough time at home to take care of their children, and at work place, they also need to put enough hours so as to achieve both their objectives and those of the organization. This exposes them to a lot of stress, leading to role conflict. However, irrespective of the negative effects, women rationalize their choice of entry into paid employment. This finding therefore upholds the choice of rational choice theory for this study. The findings of this study are supportive of the study by Crouter and Manke (1994) on "the changing American workplace", when they found evidence that long hours are disruptive of family life. Their study observed that half of full-time workers were concerned about having too little time with their families. About 25 per cent of the workers did not believe it was possible for a good care for children as well as get ahead in their current job. Those mostly concerned about too little time with family were professionals (67 per cent), those working in large companies are 56 per cent, and those with small children are 61 per cent.

The finding of this study shows that the more time a woman spends at home, the more quality time she spends with her children. The result of this research proved that the hours women spend at work significantly affect the quality of child care obligation of women working in the private sector more than the women working in the public sector. This is in line with the rational choice theory, which explains the involvement of women in paid labour to achieve their needs and choice of their action in involvement in paid labour, which may however, not be justified on the psychological need of their children, especially for women employees in the private sector organizations. The continued absence of the women from the home implicates their rational choice and venture into paid employment. This analysis is irrespective of freedom of choice and human rights. However, the qualitative and quantitative data/responses could be analysed from the typical African value system and institutional structures of stereotypes in socialization, occupation and specialization. This is not without prejudice to the contemporary work value and women upsurge into professionalism and in private sector work organizations.

V. Summary

The basic thrust of this study was to comparatively ascertain the impact of paid labour (hours spent at work) on marital child care obligations of women working in the private sector or public sector, in Imo State. It was aimed at comparatively determining whether married women working in the public sector or private sector were able to effectively discharge their marital obligations of childcare despite the time they spend at work. To achieve the purpose of this study, one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Literature related to the variables was reviewed. This helped in identifying the scope already covered by previous scholars on the subject matter, which served as a guide to the present study.

A four point Likert type questionnaire was developed and validated for this study to elicit information from the respondents from four purposively selected private and public sector organizations. The reliability estimate of the questionnaire was subjected to face validation by experts in research and statistics, measurement and evaluation. A survey research was adopted using the purposive sampling techniques and total census. This research design was considered most appropriate because it allowed the researchers to make inference and generalization of the population by selecting and studying the sample chosen for the study as well as using only the married women from the selected organizations. A total of five hundred and twenty four (524) copies of the questionnaire were returned out of five hundred and forty-four (544) issued out, while eight (8) persons selected across the four (4) purposively selected private and public sector organizations were interviewed for the study. Simple percentage was used to present the respondents' responses to the variables, while t-test, Chi-square (χ^2) and ANOVA statistical tools were employed to test the hypothesis under study. This statistical analysis was used because of the nature of the hypothesis formulated and variables involved in the study. The result of the analysis revealed that though the involvement of women in paid labour affects the marital obligations of women in both public and private sectors, it affects the women working in the private sector more than it affects the women working in the public sector.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has shown that hours women spend at work affect the quality of their child care, especially those women working in the private sector. Thus, the views of some scholars that paid labour has tremendous implications on the marital obligations of women was not just and only a manifestation of the attitude and belief of the male dominated society that the major role of women is in the home and not outside in the labour market. Women are naturally endowed with special skilled characteristics and penchant for love, care and nurture of children for the society. Involvement of women in paid employment takes women away from their children. This affects mother-child ties and affiliation and can explain the level of vices in both the contemporary family and society at large.

VII. Recommendations

- There is the need for vast improvement on some organizational policies and inclusion of the variety of women's needs in the workforce so as to give women the required time to attend to their marital obligations of childcare. Work-life-balance and flexibility policies are encouraged in this study.
- The government and private sector organizations should formulate labour policies especially in the area of work flexibility that will enable women spend less time in the offices and more time with the children to enhance the psychological and emotional bonding and development of their children. This is more especially, for those working in the private sector who leave early in the morning and come back later in the evening.
- The maternity leave granted nursing mothers should be extended to 5-6 months from the usual 3 months, to enable the nursing mothers spend adequate time with their babies, especially to enhance this new trend of exclusive breast feeding.
- This study recognizes the role of culture and tradition and it calls for the elimination of gender role stereotyping in Nigeria.

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