

Work-Family Role Conflicts among Women in Executive Management Positions in the Nigerian banking industry.

*Nwakaego B. Eleje

Department of Sociology, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author's Email: nwakaeleje@yahoo.co.uk; nwakaeleje@gmail.com

Abstract

Women are massively gaining entry into various professions in the public sphere, yet the delineation of life into “public” and “private” continues to consign women within the private realm. Organisation’s policies and processes are, however, structured in surreptitious disregard of women’s ascribed gender roles. This creates conflicts for women, who seek to build and advance in their careers in the public world of work, especially in attainment of leadership positions. Women in the banking industry in Nigeria are confronted with this barrier, especially as family friendly programmes, at the disposal of working women in western developed countries seem to be generally lacking in the Nigerian context. The study is a qualitative research conducted on women in executive management positions in banks in Lagos, South West Nigeria on how they managed and resolved these conflicts in building their careers. The study sought two key objectives; how women who attained executive management positions in the Nigerian banking industry structured their work and family responsibilities and the resources that they leveraged on to manage their domestic sector, in the ways that they were able to build successful careers in the banking industry in Nigeria. The study findings indicate that the women executives re-defined and harmonized the societally ascribed gender roles and their career goals and merged these two seemingly conflicting roles in ways that they became practically compatible. They then went on to source and obtain spousal and family supports in managing their harmonized roles and the domestic sector as well as leveraging in outsourcing some aspects of childcare and domestic chores to paid domestic staff. This enabled them to achieve a work-family interface that earned them career success in the banking industry in Nigeria.

Keywords: Re-definition of roles, spousal and family support, outsourcing, private and public sphere, Executive management, gender roles.

Introduction

Women in all societies are accounting for a substantial segment in paid wage labour and salaried jobs as much as men and are equally gaining entry into previously male dominated professions (UNHLP, 2016). However, the literature suggests that women in all parts of the world face glass ceiling barriers which impede their career advancement in many professions. The barriers that militate against women’s career in the banking industry include organisational related barriers (Acker 1994/2006;

Burke & Major, 2014; Metcalf and Rolfe, 2009; Metz, 2003; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; Okpara, 2006; Becks, 2011, Olagunju, 2014; Afande, 2015) and socio-cultural barriers, relating largely to the traditional gender role expectations which generate conflicts between women's work and family responsibilities (Hannagan; 2005; Tai & Sims, 2005; Kirai & Kobia, 2012). These barriers are majorly responsible for the difficulty women encounter in attaining executive management positions in the banking institutions. Thus the achievement of gender parity in top executive management in banks is still a far cry.

Even as few women negotiate and overcome these barriers and build successful careers in the world of work, including attainment of executive management positions, the double burden syndrome still stares them in the face in the domestic sphere. This is because of society's perception of childcare and domestic chores as the primary responsibility of women, no matter the level of successes they attain in their careers. This burdens women to move into a "second shift" at home at the end of a hectic day in the formal work sector.

In addition, the continued delineation of life into "private" and "public" still consigns women within the private realm, even though working women straddle the two realms. This conceptual "house-wifization" of women which relegates them to the private sphere is poignantly responsible for the paucity of family friendly policies and programmes which could enable working women to harmonise and balance their conflicting roles in the two realms (Mies, 1986).

Despite these odds, some women in the banking industry in Nigeria, have stayed on and successfully built their careers and attained executive management positions in the various banks in the country. This study is focused on ascertaining how these women managed the proverbial conflicts between women's work and family roles in building their careers. The research questions addressed in the study included the following:

1. How do women who attained executive management positions in the Nigerian banking industry structure their work and family responsibilities in resolving their work and family role conflicts?
2. What resources do women who attained executive management positions in

the banking industry in Nigeria leverage on to resolve their work-family role conflicts?

Study Objectives

The study objectives are as stated below;

- To ascertain how women who attained executive management positions in the Nigerian banking industry structure their work and family responsibilities in resolving the tensions created by their conflicting work and family roles.
- To unearth the resources that the women executives leverage on to manage their domestic sector in the ways that it earned them career success in the banking industry in Nigeria.

Role Theory and Women's Career Advancement:

Women have over time experienced role conflicts from the moment they began to enter into paid work force, in the sense that they straddle the public and private sphere which inundate them with conflicting roles. These conflicts emanate from society's postured roles for women based on their gender, which prescript; "behaviour stemming from normative expectations associated with women's position in the social system as wives and mothers (Allen & van de Vliert, 1984a). However, organisations' prescription of work roles in the public sphere postures a surreptitious and deliberate un-mindfulness of women's traditional gender roles, (see Mies, 1986 on delineation of private and public life and women's consignment into the private sphere).

Organisations make a full demand of performance of organisational assigned roles, based on which performance is appraised, and career success is adjudged. Thus women in paid labour have over time been burdened with fulfilling two or more incompatible roles and expectations. This inadvertently generates the conflicts that women experience between work and family roles. Research has established that this accounts majorly for the gender barriers that women contend with in the workplace and equally accounts for women's inability to achieve sustainable careers or attainment of leadership positions in the public world of work.

Research also shows that both organisations and government efforts through family friendly programmes to alleviate the effects of these conflicts on women's career

development have only achieved minimal levels of success (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; KPMG 2014; Schumpeter, 2014). The result is that work-family role conflicts have continued to be a perennial problem that women contend with in the course of career advancement in the public world of work. How an individual woman resolves this tension, is thus instrumental to the level of career success she achieves in her chosen profession.

Review of Literature:

Dual career couples is becoming a prevalent feature in most Nigerian households. Studies indicate that women in the Nigerian work setting, in addition to their responsibility of satisfying the ascribed cultural role of child and family-care, are also participating in the public sphere of paid work (Okurame, 2003; Onyeonuru, 2005). Work-family role conflicts have been ascertained as mostly responsible for women's inability to advance in their careers and attain executive management positions in organisations worldwide (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Carlson, Kacmar & Stepina, 1995 cited in Mordi et al., 2010). Specifically, the banking industry is touted to harbour unique barriers, which limit women's career advancement in the industry, including, the organisational structure and culture prevalent in the profession. The organisational structure of banking reflects men's dominance of high level decision making positions, where they churn out policies and processes that create a male dominant work culture in the profession.

Banking work is structured in variants that prove intolerable to women's lifestyles, like the pressurised nature of work, including stressful targets, monotonous tasks, and long hours of work (Metcalf & Rolfe, 2009). Women in the banking industry in Nigeria affirm that the work culture as obtainable in the profession tends to be intolerable to women's lifestyle and motherhood, because of the long work hours, and the pervasiveness of presenteeism over productivity. Also prevalent in banking profession is a "macho work culture" which is un-accommodating to family friendly policies and programmes even in societies where these are made available to women in the industry. These create difficulties for women in combining family and work responsibilities (Hakim, 2006; Eleje & Wale-Oshinowo, 2017).

Faced with these myriads of challenges, Hirschman (1970) reiterates that women in organisations have resorted to three generic strategies to contend with the power dynamics of underrepresentation in leadership ranks; “exit”, “loyalty” (to the men on top), or “choice”. For many women in the banking industry, “exit” seems the most plausible option necessitated by the conflicting work and family roles (Olagunju, 2014; Eleje & Oshinowo).

Options that Women and Organisations Employ in Mitigating Women’s Work-Family Role Conflicts:

Working women explore a two dimensional approach in mitigating the conflicts generated by work and family roles on their careers. These are advanced from structural and agentic levels. The structural levels have been championed mostly by the Western developed world, where governmental and organisational supports are generally made available to working women for child care and women’s other gender roles. These are aimed at creating enabling environment for women to function effectively in the work place and to also achieve work-life balance.

Harker (1995) affirms that banks in the UK employ progressive family friendly practices to enhance gender equality, as there exist extensive provision of maternity leaves, career break schemes and nursery places for women in the industry. On the contrary, these structural initiatives are generally lacking or half-heartedly implemented in Nigeria (Adewumi & Adenugba, 2010; Ajayi et al; 2015). Many banks in Nigeria are for instance reported to not only deny women full term maternity leaves but operate a “get pregnant, get fired” policy (Okpara, 2006).

Agentic Initiatives that Women Deploy to Mitigate Work-Family Role Conflicts

Career development for women is becoming highly individuated, especially in constructing and accepting full responsibility for their own well-being and self-care in career development, particularly in the area of crafting a felicitous work–family balance (Rottenberg, 2013). Studies suggest that women in leadership positions in the Nigerian banking industry equally toe this line, as they seem to be lethargic in fighting for the amelioration of the common challenges that women face in the industry, even when they are in positions to do so (Eleje-Oshinowo, 2017).

The implication is that women are mostly responsible for managing their conflicting roles in pursuing their careers in the public sphere. Literature suggests that women deploy a number of agentically contrived strategies in managing their work-family roles. These include role re-definition, family support, and outsourcing.

Role Re-Definitions:

Frone (2003) argues that many women leaders in the bid to enlist alternative means of fulfilling their competing demands, engage in a process of redefining the structural and personal roles, which organisations and the society impose on women. Women in leadership are espoused to achieve this by engaging in an individual redefinition of their own norms of being a good mother and a leader, by making these roles more compatible than they were under the norms prescribed by the larger society. This entails their setting clear goals and priorities as pertaining to their family and work roles (Cheung & Halpern, 2010).

Hewlett and Luce (2006) also reiterated that women in this calibre, whom they brand as “the dually successful top women leaders” employ strategies that blend these two seemingly divergent lives into one, while keeping their role identities distinct. The argument is that such women seek and harness the resources that are available within their own social contexts. They employ context influenced strategies to stabilise their domestic sphere for the purpose of career advancement, mostly in non-conflictual but complementary ways (Cheung & Halpern, 2010).

Women also leverage on the outsourcing of household tasks and childcare to hired domestic helps, especially in ways that they prove meaningful and helpful to them in their career quests (Cheung & Halpern). Murniati (2012) in a study on the career advancement of women senior academic administrators in Indonesia, reported that a high dependency on domestic workers is a unique characteristic of middle class families in non-western cultures and this has been found to be one of the coping strategies that women employ in managing family and work responsibilities in the course of career pursuits.

Most studies on women’s work-family role conflicts have focused on the western developed world and South East Asia (Luke, 1998a, 1998b; Murniati, 2012). Other

studies on strategies that women leverage on to overcome glass ceiling barriers and attain executive management positions in the workplace have overly focused on such career capitals like cultural and social capital (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Steyrer, Maier & Herman, 2004; Silva & Edwards 2004; Duberly & Cohen; 2010). These studies are again overly focused on the western world and other professions, like women in academics.

Studies on women in leadership positions in Nigeria and other African countries, particularly women in the banking profession are generally miniscule. This study becomes important as the banking profession with all the socio-cultural and organisational barriers, which impede women's career in the profession in Nigeria, seem to lack extensive research, especially research focused on the strategies that women can deploy to cope and resolve their work-family role conflicts. This study builds on existing knowledge by using qualitative techniques to explore the earlier stated study objectives.

Research Methods:

The study focused on women in executive management positions in banks in Lagos, South West Nigeria. Nine (9) banks were randomly selected out of the nineteen private sector banks operating in Nigeria at the time the study was conducted. In the selected nine (9) banks, women in executive management positions were identified by the help of key informants. However, the workload of the women made it difficult to gain access to them for interviews. In that bid, only the women who volunteered and created the time for interviews were interviewed. The first set of participants were identified via the assistance of key informants. Subsequently, the snowball sampling technique was used to identify and interview other participants. A total of ten (10) women in executive management positions in these banks were interviewed.

Face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants mostly in their offices and other locations convenient for them. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews. Participants were also assured of confidentiality, anonymity and the leave of voluntary withdrawal at any time during the interview, if they so desired. The interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the participants and recorded

interviews were transcribed verbatim by the author. The transcribed interviews were inputted into the Nvivo qualitative software with some of the emergent themes from the participants serving as part of the initial codes, as earlier explained by (Charmaz, 2006). These codes helped the author to preserve the meanings from participants' views and actions in the analytic process. The codes were further refined with a set of inductively generated codes. Pseudonyms are used by the author to represent the participants in the analysis. This was to preserve participants' identity and to ensure confidentiality.

Profile of the Participants

The women executives interviewed in this study comprises three (3) top executives of Deputy Managing Director and Executive Director positions. Others were five (5) middle cadre executives in Deputy General Manager and General Manager positions, and two lower executives in the position of Assistant General Manager. Participants' career span in the banking industry in Nigeria averaged a 24 year period, with seven (7) of the participants spending the major part of their careers in marketing and sales and three in operations banking. Seven of the participants are married, two are divorced single mothers, while one is a widow. All these women executives have children, who are now mostly in their teenage years and early twenties. Two (2) out of the married women executives are grandmothers. Their husbands are also successful professionals, with some engaged in their own high-profile business ventures and others in various professions. All the participants acquired a minimal level of Masters Degrees in their tertiary educations, as well as professional certificates in accounting, banking and other professional programmes with which they honed their skills in the profession.

Results

The study explored how women who have successfully built careers in the banking industry in Nigeria, managed their conflicting work and family roles, and advanced their careers and attained executive management positions in the various banks in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the women in the study deployed a number of strategies in managing their multiple roles. These findings are discussed under three

themes, Re-definition of roles, family and spousal support and outsourcing.

Re-definition of Roles

This section examines how participants interrogated the structural and personal roles, which are imposed on women by reason of their gender both in the society and the banking industry in Nigeria. This is especially as these factors are known to reproduce barriers that generate conflicts for women in their career quests in the public world of work. Participants were asked how they handled these aspects in their working lives in a patriarchal Nigerian society known to be regimental and judgemental on how women perform their ascribed gender roles. This is more pertinent in Africa, where women “venerate” motherhood and would not subordinate the role of being a good mother who personally cares for her children, under the quest for career.

Participants reported that they engaged in a paradigm shift from the traditional dispositions remarkable of African societal norms and the assumed African women’s stoic disposition to acquiescing to them. Rather, participants redefined these norms and the gender ascribed roles in ways that they became aligned and compatible with their lives as mothers, wives and aspirational career women in the banking profession in Nigeria.

Firstly, all the participants unequivocally stated that their families, especially their children are of top priority to them and that they will not subordinate their children’s well-being to their career quests. They also related that they recognise the intense demands of their jobs on them, especially operating in a highly competitive and pressurising work environment that marks the banking profession in Nigeria. Having taken all these into considerations, participants said that they decisively engaged in a mental and practicable re-definition of their conflicting roles, especially in how they can make them compatible. They then went on to harness every resource they can access, accumulate and leverage on to resolve these contending roles. This involved drawing resources from their networks of supports, including family support structures and outsourcing.

Secondly, the participants stated that they adopted a single life style of integrating family and work roles as much as they could possibly do, while keeping their role

identities distinct. Critical skills that participants said that they brought in to achieve this is their ability to multi-task and their organisational skills. For example, participants noted that much as they worked long hours in a highly pressurised work environment, they also managed to leave work for family related needs. They made efforts to attend to the needs of their family, especially their children, like attending school events, and creating opportunities to spend quality time with their family. In all these, however, they did not let their work tasks to slide, as they made extensive efforts to cover up for time taken off work to attend to family needs.

In this regard, their focus was on performance and outcome, which can run counter to the banking work culture that hinges on presenteeism. Thus, when situations require of them, they would put a hold on work and carry out necessary family related responsibilities. To fully succeed in this, participants would sometimes make a demand on their organisations to undertake such family responsibilities, and they attested that they were usually obliged. They reiterated that their organisations' cooperation with them in this respect, stems from their track record of commitment to their jobs and their organisations. They maintained that they have built up goodwill and trust with their institutions, because they would never let their work lag behind.

Participants further reiterated that meeting both family and work obligations are also appropriately planned and organised. It involves their integrating and elevating domestic roles to the same level as work roles and placing them practically on the same pedestal. To successfully do this, participants will diarise both work and family related tasks into their daily and weekly work schedules. In this regard they said that they would carry their superiors, colleagues and even staff along. This brought a transformation in their domestic sphere, giving it a status of a full departmental unit in their official workspace.

Detailed, structured planning and organising also go into participants' carrying out of domestic tasks like re-stocking their homes with needed household supplies. This is to ensure that they do not suddenly run out of stocks and to ensure that their family does not suffer should they be on out of location assignment. To effectively do this, most of the participants built up a network of vendors who they use and who their domestic staff can equally reach should they be out of town. Participant 'G' related the detailed structures and mode of operations which, she maintained had worked effectively for

her over the years, in achieving a seamless interface between her domestic roles and work roles. She stated:

I know what is stocked in my freezer. I know what is going down and I know what needs to be stocked up. I have built associations with vendors. Without any kobo in my hand, I could enter Iddo market and stock up my car. I have an association with those Mallams. When I am not in the country and we go low on stock, I could send my driver to go and meet my Mallam at Iddo, and he will fill up the house with household things and groceries without a kobo. And I can actually transfer from wherever I am. The same thing in Sura fish market, I do go there.

(Participant 'G' is a 47 years old Executive, married with three children).

She maintains that these structures are very vital not only for the home to run smoothly but also to reduce the pressures of running the home as well as carrying out her job demands.

Thus, participants are able to re-define and re-align their expected roles from both work and the domestic sector in the ways that suited them and was helpful to them in achieving a work-family interface. Most importantly, it did not have to fit into the societal and organisational specified roles and how these are to be performed and achieved. It was more of a personalised and harmonised strategy that they contrived and this achieved successes for them. This affirms Cheung and Halpern's (2010) study findings that women in leadership positions redefine their own norms for being a good mother and a leader, making these roles more compatible than they were under the norms prescribed by the larger society.

Family and Spousal Support

In order to effectively execute and achieve their redefined career goals and domestic roles, these women executives drew from their network of family relationships. Family support as explicated from the study findings includes support structures generated and received by the participants from family members, including their spouses and female members in their family network. The women executives confirm that these supports heralded as the biggest factor instrumental to their career success, without which their careers either would not have taken off or would have been truncated.

Spousal Support

All the participants reiterated that spousal support is the most critical factor in the life of a woman who wants to build a successful career, in the patriarchal Nigerian society, without which, such women will be frustrated and in most cases, would give up their careers. For the divorced participants, part of the challenges they had in their marriages, was in not getting the needed support from their spouses in relation to their careers and they related that their priority was to build a successful career in the banking profession. They thus made that choice of career over marriage.

However, all the seven (7) married participants in the study, and the widow too, confirmed that they received huge unquantifiable supports from their husbands and this was the foundation on which their career success was built. These spousal supports came in various dimensions and forms. It signified as a synergy between the participants and their spouses, especially in their spouse's buying into their career goals and visions.

Participants related that their husbands encouraged them and motivated them to go for the bigger picture in their careers, especially when some of the women tended to de-select themselves from taking up higher responsibilities in their banks. Their spouses also gave them immense support in standing in for the children when the women could not personally attend to the needs of their children. Spousal support also came in the direction of accepting the domestic support structures, like in the outsourcing of aspects concerning child-care and domestic chores, to enable the home to run smoothly.

A vital outcome of the spousal support is that it enabled the participants to keep broadening their career horizons. They seek and grasp career enhancing opportunities that come their way and would neither give up such opportunities because of family obligations except if by their own volition and not because their husbands coerced them to do so or set limits for them.

Some reasons emerged from the findings that galvanized the huge supports that participants received from their husbands. As gathered from the conversations that the author had with the women, some of these reasons encompasses attitudinal, social and economic attributes. One crucial factor in this regard is the choice of life partners as made by the participants. The women stated that they were deliberate in their choice of life partners, as they accepted men who they knew from the inception of their relationships, will be supportive of them in their career aspirations. This resonates with Sandberg (2013) views that the choice of a life partner is the single most important career decision that a woman makes, as this proves critical to women's career advancement in the world of work and that research has shown that it is difficult for any woman to advance in her career without this crucial support.

Secondly, the women seem to be married to men who are from similar socio-economic backgrounds like them. Participants noted that their mothers-in law also built successful careers in different profession and businesses. So, their husbands were brought up with the same concept of women achieving as much as men in their careers. Thus, while these men live in the traditional Nigerian society, they seem to endorse egalitarian values towards women. Values, which are not inclined to the hierarchical patriarchal norms of marriage in this context and therefore they do not feel threatened by the reversed normative roles that put their wives in the limelight or on a higher status.

However, the findings indicate that the spousal support as offered to the participants are contrived in ways that such support does not compromise the men's own careers and liberties. Research suggests that most African men do not do domestic chores or childcare. Equally, couples in Africa are yet to negotiate these two aspects of gender roles in the ways western egalitarian societies have done (see Mbilini, 1992; Makombe

& Geroy, 2008; Russell, 1983). A context specific kind of support, seem to be what participants received from their spouses. In this regard, the role of childcare and domestic chores in the strict sense of the word still resides with the women. The difference is that their spouses are agreeable to the alternative structures put in place by the participants to carry out these roles in their homes, in such a way that both their wives and they can thrive successfully in what they do.

Moreover, participants attested that their husbands are also professionals, who are doing well in their various professions and businesses. So, their wives' successes does not threaten their egos. They could therefore accommodate and accept their wives' successes and not feel intimidated and so they did not go out of their way to stop or frustrate their wives, but rather offered them their full supports.

Also significant in the spousal support for the participants is the economic undercurrents in these supports. These executive women earn very good remunerations in addition to all the glamour attached to their positions. The banking industry is a very well-paying sector in Nigeria. So, the women's earnings possibly generates some financial reprieve for the men, which frees them from some levels of financial demands from their wives. In addition, what these executive women earn also contribute to their families' level of affluence and comforts. Participant 'C's response suggested that her husband makes the sacrifices of supporting her hectic work life, because what she earns also frees him from financial demands from her. She stated:

... I told somebody that's its more expensive to be a working woman than to be a house wife. Because in our own setting, the Yoruba setting, once you work, well, the man too is, *shebi* (*since*) everybody is working. You too, you won't go and be asking for food money. I mean, how does that fall into the structure? You are earning your salary, and you are not paying for anything? So, the least you can do, is don't bother asking for chop money in the morning or after work. ... So, there will at least be compensation for all that stay away from home.

(Participant 'C' is a 58 year old Executive, married with 4 children).

The ethnic connotation in this response possibly merit further exploration in the future in a more widened research.

Finally, the women on their part said that they reciprocate the supports they receive from their husbands both in deeds and dispositions. The strategies adopted by the

participants in this regard are two pronged, directly to their husbands and in managing relationship with their husband's extended family. Firstly, the participants do not regard the supports as given to them by their husbands in their career quests as rights per se, but rather perceive them as gestures that should be deeply appreciated by them. So, the participants do all they have to do to reciprocate the gestures by lavishing affections, respect and care on their husbands. This of course contributed to the stability that they achieved in the domestic front.

When the Women Hold the Fort

Participants echoed and re-echoed that one of the huge supports that they received in managing their conflicting work and family roles came from their mothers and other female relatives in their nuclear and extended families. This particularly was more evident in managing the tensions between the women's multiple roles, especially in managing the domestic sector. They thus sought and co-opted this critical support from the female folks in their lives. Their mothers portended as their first line of guard in managing and achieving this interface, and where their mothers are unavoidably not there, their mothers in-law, sisters and any other trusted female from the extended family is carefully chosen to step into this role for them.

Significant in the study in this respect, is the fact that none of these participants ran their domestic sector, especially in the caring for their children, without the presence of a trusted female relative in their homes, even where they have nannies in their employ. These female members of the family stood in for them and ensured that their family responsibilities are adequately undertaken in such a way that the participants have stability between their family and work responsibilities. This is a key defining factor in how the participants overcame the hegemonic work culture in the profession which ordinarily is intolerable to motherhood.

All the participants attested that the stability which their mother's presence offered to them in those crucial times was the pedestal upon which they stood to take on their jobs and effectively perform at work. This is because they had rest of minds that their

children at the early years and homes were in good and safe hands.

Another interesting finding in this regard is the cordial relationship that most of the participants have with their mothers-in law, a relationship which is usually acrimonious in our societal context. But these participants have invaluable support from their mothers-in law and other female members from their husband's families in advancing their careers.

When the participants were asked what could have informed such unique support from their mothers- in law, two significant reasons came up. One was that their mothers-in law also built successful careers in various professions and thus have the understanding that a woman can build a career as well as build her home. So, they could not have frustrated their daughters-in law from building careers, but rather supported them where they needed their help.

Equally suggestive from the findings is the fact that these executive women reciprocated the kind gestures from their in-laws and showed their mothers-in law respect and love. They also showed love and took care of their younger in-laws living in their homes by either educating them or offering them any assistance when they needed it. Participant 'A' said that when her husband's brother died, she adopted his only son and brought him up with her own two kids. This she said won her in-laws over, to love and respect her.

These findings confirm earlier work by Luke (1998a) that women in communal non-western societies do not perceive their responsibilities as primary care providers and household carers as major career constraining factors because of the additional support they receive from their spouses, extended family members, and domestic servants. The presented findings also agree with Murniati's (2012) positing that family is key in women's efforts to manage the tensions that exist between their professional and domestic roles, and that support from the closest individuals in their lives are important in balancing women's multiple roles for career success. This is what the women executives in the study did, as they developed and nurtured family relationship that signified a win-win situation for all involved. The participants thus generated a huge cache of domestic resources, which contributed to their achieving a work-family interface that enhanced their career advancements.

Outsourcing

Working mothers, over time developed the strategy of outsourcing some aspects of their family responsibilities to paid non-relatives. This provides them a means of freeing themselves from domesticity, in order to pursue careers in the public world of work. To this end, all the participants indicated that they outsource as much of childcare and domestic chores to domestic staff, appropriately recruited from reliable sources.

The participants surmised that they recruited various categories of domestic workers to carry out designated functions in their homes. For example, most of the participants related that they have in employment in their homes, nannies and house helps to take care of the children. Cooks and housekeepers are additionally employed to take care of household chores, while security men and drivers are also employed for their professional services as well as other assigned duties.

These staff are carefully selected and trained to meet the purposes for which they are employed and also to understand the women's values and key in to them. They are then appropriately equipped with the necessary gadgets they need to work, especially in the areas of on-time-real-time communications between them and their madams.

Of noteworthy here is that the domestic staff are not left alone in the women's homes. They are appropriately supervised and monitored by the participants' family members living with them. Their mothers, mothers-in law, and all other family members living with the participants are involved in these aspects. This further takes off them the burden of on-the-spot checks and assessments of their domestic staff. These family members give them the necessary feedbacks on what is going on in their homes and therefore pose as their trusted allies.

The managing of their domestic workers also includes instituting adequate remuneration packages for the staff to motivate them, and earn their loyalty and commitment to their jobs. This reduces high incidents of staff turn-over among their domestic staff. All the participants attested that they have long staying domestic staff and hardly experience the high turnover associated with this calibre of workers in the Nigeria setting.

These findings as presented corroborate with other study outcomes by Nelson and Burke (2000) and Blair-Loy (2003) on women's coping mechanisms in domestic management for career pursuits. The study findings affirm that women in executive management positions enjoy high purchasing power, which enable them to pay for child care and domestic duties. Thus, positing that socio-economic class also act as enabling factors to women to break free of domestic and social constraints to pursue careers.

Conclusion

The study findings signifies that the participants showcase a balanced perspective of their expected roles from both the society and the workplace. In re-defining their roles, they appropriated what works positively for them from culture, and melded it with the broader prospects of their career goals and thus developed vital support structures which impacted positively on their careers and lives. These essentially guaranteed them the successes that they achieved.

The findings further indicate that the participants like typical African women value their marriages, and that their marriages did not portend as barriers against their careers. Rather, marriage became a key decisive factor, which contributed immensely to their career successes. This is because they have strong supports from their spouses, mothers and other significant women in their family networks.

The participants thus appropriated family networks and outsourcing and managed these resources in seamless ways that elevated work and domestic roles to the same or near same pedestal. This shows that when work and family roles are integrated, the two could enhance each other and give women something higher than work-life balance. This is because this enabled the women to consolidate the gains they make from integrating two supposedly opposing roles in ways that they are no longer conflictual but complementary to each other.

The participants achieved executive management statuses in the Nigerian environment where family friendly policies are lacking at both the governmental and industry contexts. This is because the participants on their own developed vital support structures and adopted domestic sphere management styles that afforded them the needed structures to effectively manage their multiple roles. This enabled them to function effectively at work and to achieve executive management statuses in the banking industry in Nigeria.

They did not therefore unduly suffer the perennial conflicts, which exist between women's work and family roles. The author's contention is that in the absence of government and organisational family friendly support structures for working women in Nigeria to balance their work and family lives, the strategies that the study participants deployed in achieving work-family interface and which gave them career success can be equated as a career capital and can be branded as domestic capital.

However, this does not discountenance the need for government and banking organisations in Nigeria to embark on family friendly support schemes, which can enhance women's management of their multiple roles in their career quests. This will pave the way for gender equity in the industry in Nigeria. The economic development of a nation can only be achieved when all hands are not only on deck, but are given equal opportunities to perform.

References

- Acker, J. (1994). The Gender regime of Swedish banks. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 10, 117-30.
- Acker, J. (2006). Inequality regimes: Gender, class and race in Organisations. *Gender & Society*, 20(4), 441-64.
- Adewumi, F. & Adenugba, A. (2010). The state of workers' rights in Nigeria: An examination of the Banking, Oil and Gas, and Telecommunication sectors. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Abuja Nigeria, Pamadex Global limited.
- Afande, F.O. (2015). Factors affecting women career advancement in the banking industry in Kenya (A Case of Kenya commercial bank branches in Nairobi County, Kenya). *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research*. 9, 69-95.
- Ajayi, F., Ojo, S. & Mordi, C. (2015). Work-family balance and coping strategies among Women: Evidence from commercial banks in Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(2), 152-161.
- Allen, V. L., van de Vliert, E. 1984a. A role theoretical perspective on transitional processes. See Allen & van de Vliert 1984b, pp. 3-18.
- Becks, B. (2011). Closing the gap: Women and work. *The Economist*. November, 2011.
- Bilimoria, D, Joy, S. & Liang, X. (2008). Breaking barriers and creating inclusiveness: Lessons of organizational transformation to advance women faculty in academic science and engineering. *Human Resource Management*, 47 (3), 423-441.
- Blair-Loy, M. (2003). *Competing devotions: Career and family among women financial executives*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burke, R. J., & Major, D. A. (2014). *Gender in organizations: Are men allies or adversaries to women's career advancement*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cheung, F.M. & Halpern, D.F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), 182-193.
- Duberley, J. & Cohen, L. (2010). Gendering career capital: An investigation of scientific careers. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 76, 187-197
- Eleje, N.B. & Wale-Oshinowo, B. A. (2017). Work culture as a driver for gender equality in the Nigerian banking sector. *UNILAG Journal of Business*, 3(2), 44-68.
- Frone, M. R. (2003). Work-family balance. In Quick, C. J., & Tetrick, E. L. (Eds.) (pp.143-162). *Handbook of occupational health psychology*. Washington DC, American Psychological Association.
- Hakim, C. (2006). Women, careers, and work-life preferences. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 34(3), 279-293.
- Hannagan, T. (2005). *Management: Concepts and practices*. (4th Ed.) Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.

- Harker, L. (1995), 'Towards the family-friendly employer, in Shaw, J. & Perrons, D. (Eds), *Making gender work: Managing equal opportunities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hewlett, S. A., & Luce, C. B. (2006). Extreme jobs: The dangerous allure of the 70 hour work week. *Harvard Business Review*, 84, 49–59.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Ibru, C. (2009). Cultural Challenges and the Woman CEO. *McKinsey Quarterly*. Retrieved March 5th, 2019: From http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/organization/cultural_challenges_and_the_woman_ceo_an_interview_with_nigerias_cecilia_ibru.
- Jacobs, B. (2013). Unbound by Theory and Naming: Survival Feminism and the Women of the South African Victoria Mxenge Housing and Development Association. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law, & Justice*, 19 (1/2), 18-78.
- Kirai, M.N & Kobia, M. (2012). Effects of Social Cultural Beliefs on Women Career Progression in Kenya's civil service. *International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics*, 1 (6), 214-219.
- KPMG. (2014). *Cracking the code*. Retrieved March 5th, 2019, From: www.kpmg.com/uk/crackingthecode.
- Luke, C. (1998a). Cultural politics and women in Singapore higher education management. *Gender and Education*, 10, 245-264.
- Luke, C. (1998b). I got to where I am by my own strength: Women in Hong Kong higher education management. *Education Journal*, 26, 31–58.
- Makombe, F.T.& Geroy, G. (2008). Seeking culturally attentive career advancement strategies for women: Perspectives from Zimbabwean women. *Advancing Women in Leadership Online Journal*. Retrieved 15th March, 2019, from: <http://www.advancingwomen.com>.
- Metcalf, H., & Rolfe, H. (2009). Research Report: 17, Employment and earnings in the finance sector: A gender analysis. Retrieved, March, 5th, 2019 from: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/download__finance_gender_analysis_research.pdf
- Mayrhofer, W., Meyer, M., Steyrer, J., Maier, J., & Herman, A., (2004). Thick descriptions of career habitus: Agency and structure in career fields. In Paper presented to EGOS Colloquium Ljubljana, Slovenia, July 4th–6th.
- Metz, I. (2003). Individual, interpersonal and organisational links to women's advancement in management in banks. *Women in Management Review*, 18(5), 236-251.
- Mies, M. (1986). *Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the International Division of labour*. London: Zed.
- Mordi, C. Simpson, R., Singh, S., & Okafor, C. (2010). The Role of cultural values in understanding the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Nigeria. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25 (1), 5-21.

- Murniati, C.T. (2012). *Career advancement of women senior academic administrators in Indonesia: Supports and challenges*. PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis, University of Iowa, 2012. Retrieved March 20th, 2019, From: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/3358>.
- Nelson, D. L., & Burke, R. J. (2000). Women executives: Health, stress, and success. *Academy of Management Executive*, 14, 107-121.
- Okpara, O.J. (2006). Gender and the relationship between perceived fairness in pay, Promotion, and job satisfaction in a Sub-Saharan African economy. *Women in Management Review*, 21 (3), 224 – 240.
- Okurame, D.E. (2003). Influence of psychosocial factors and the mediatory role of informal mentoring on career outcomes of first-line bank managers in Nigeria. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Olagunju, F. (2014). Meet bizwatch's top 10 women in banking. Retrieved: May 4th, 2019, From: <http://bizwatchnigeria.ng/meet-bizwatches-top-10-women-banking/>.
- Onyeonoru, I.P. (2005). *Industrial Sociology: An African Perspective*. Ibadan Nigeria: Samlad Printers.
- Ragins, B.R. & Sundstrom, E. (1989) Gender and power in organisations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 105(6), 51–88.
- Rottenberg, C. (2013). The Rise of neoliberal feminism. *Cultural Studies*, Retrieved January 20th, 2019 from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcus20>.
- Russell, G. (1983). *The changing role of fathers?* St. Lucia, Queensland: University Of Queensland Press.
- Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. (1st Ed). New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Schumpeter, (2014). A Nordic mystery: In the world's most female friendly workplaces, executive suites are still male-dominated. The Economist Newspaper Limited: London, November 2014.
- Silva, E., & Edwards, R. (2004). Operationalizing Bourdieu on capitals: A discussion on the construction of the object. In ESRC Research Methods Programme working paper. Retrieved from May,20,2015:<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods/publications/documents/WP7.pdf>
- Singh, V., & Vinnicombe, S. (2004). Why so few women directors in top UK boardrooms? : Evidence and theoretical explanations. *Corporate Governance*, 12(4), 479-489.
- Tai, A. & Sims, R. L. (2005). The perception of the glass ceiling in high technology companies. *Journal of Leadership and Organization Studies*. Fall issue.