

FACTORS INFLUENCING JOB PERFORMANCES OF MARRIED SECRETARIES IN EDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF OSUN STATE

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Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the job performances of married secretaries in governmental organisations in Ede Local Government Areas in Osun State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all the married male and female confidential secretaries working in all the government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. Due to the small number of subjects, all the 49 married confidential secretaries (13 married male and 36 married female) were used for the study. A four point Likert scale questionnaire made up of 30 items was used to elicit data for the study. t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that work-family conflict and positive work environment had no influence on the job performances of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas and that gender or sex role had influence on the job performance of married male and female secretaries in Ede Local Government Areas. It was recommended that the government should contribute to work-life balance initiatives by educating employees and families on how to cope with the conflict and those employers should create positive work environment for the secretaries in order to boost their morale in the office for them to perform efficiently and effectively on their jobs.

Key words: *Job performance, married*

Introduction

Having a job has always been a crucial factor in Nigerian society as individuals are identified by their occupations. A person's job reveals his/her personality, and it influences the nature of interactions he/she has with people. It largely determines the individual's social status, affiliation, economic status and self-concept. Job therefore, offers a lot of benefits to organizations, individuals and society at large. After securing a job, the way an individual performs his/her job is very important to both himself/herself and the organization as a whole.

Job performance is an accomplishment of assigned duties in accordance with organizational guidelines subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of available resources (Ekore and Attah, 2007). It reflects how well the individual is fulfilling the requirements of the job. Effective job performance has positive effects on both an organization and its employees. For the organization, it is a means by which it ensures productivity, economic growth and survival. Similarly, effective job performance provides employees with economic gains, security, social status,

medical benefits and recreational and educational opportunities (Yahaya, 2008).

Both male and female including married ones are engaged as secretaries in government offices in Ede North and South Local Government Areas of Osun State. A secretary is an assistant to the executive, possessing mastery of office skills and ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision; he/she displays initiative, exercises judgement and makes decisions within his/her scope of authority. The duties of an effective secretary go far beyond taking notes at high speeds and producing letters that are readable and mailable but include all activities carried out to assist the executive. These are accomplished when the secretary handles most of the routine duties, coupled with the ability to work without supervision in accordance with the laid down procedures. It is also the responsibility of the secretary to arrange meetings, compile minutes and reports, exercise control over subordinates, keep simple and correct records of accounts and of consumable stock; prepare the boss' itinerary, and make travel arrangements for him.

The environment in which secretaries work in Ede Local Government Areas of Osun State is not different from the environment in which secretaries work in other Local Government Areas of Osun States and Nigeria as a whole. It should be noted that the scope of this work is governmental organisations, and the government guarantees the safety of environment which makes work conducive for all levels of workers. In recent times the establishment of schools, medical centres/clinics and day care in various government secretariats, local government offices, and other government organizations seem to be the order of the day such that married

females can keep their babies within the environment and yet concentrate on their main work in the office. Various government memoranda and civil service rules stimulate a conducive working environment.

The physical environment of any secretary is so important to the development and productivity of the organization. In some organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, secretaries are provided with good physical environment, like indoor air quality, ergonomic furniture, lighting, and machines. At the same time, most organizations create a positive work environment for the secretaries in such a way that secretaries are trusted with facts and figures, manage the subordinates under them, and they are sent for training when necessary.

Despite the fact that both married male and female secretaries have the same working environment, there are slight differences in their working conditions. Firstly, pregnant women go on maternity leave while there is no similar leave for the married men. Secondly, nursing mothers are allowed to close at 2pm in order to take care of their babies while married men have no opportunity of closing before 4.00pm.

Some factors are likely to affect the performance of married male and female in the workplace. Work environment is an important factor that can affect the performance of secretaries. State Service Authority (2009) identified the characteristics of a positive work environment as: a high degree of trust and respect between all levels of staff; a warm and friendly climate in which colleagues feel valued, and have a strong sense of loyalty to the organization; high quality leadership and management; open discussion that leads to resolution of conflicts; a measure of self-determination

over how work is undertaken; a culture where diversity is respected and valued; a lack of exclusive 'clubs' and cliques; opportunities for personal development and career progression; a high level of creativity and job satisfaction arising from teamwork and cooperation. Vicki (2006) stated that it is the quality of the employee's workplace environment that determines the impacts on their level of performance. When secretaries are recognized and appreciated, when their superior is approachable and at the same time when physical environment is conducive such as enough lighting, cross ventilation and necessary machines and equipment, these will make secretaries to be more productive at work.

Most parents are faced with competing urgencies; as they need to perform the role of mother/father and their professional roles. Married male and female secretaries in Ede Local Government Areas are not exempted from work/family conflict; since they need to perform the role of mother/father and their professional roles. Ajisafe, (2008) noted that work-to-family conflict occurs when the domain of work interferes with the family demands and vice versa for work-family conflict. Also, Greenhaus (2008) opined that work family conflict occurs when participation in the work role and the family role is incompatible in some respect. Married secretaries have a lot of responsibilities to perform in the office since they assist the boss and at the same time, perform other responsibilities at home.

Sex-role identity cannot be overlooked in relation to the performance of married male and female in an organization. Sex-role identity is a unique aspect of an individual's identity. Traditionally, it is believed that men should have a masculine sex-role identity, and women should have a feminine sex-role identity

(Chang, 2009). Stet, and Burke (2006) reported that an individual's sex-role identity influences his/her job performance. A woman with her greater adaptability is likely to have more successful experiences, which in turn would lead to high job performance; likewise, a man with his leadership skill is likely to be more productive on the job. In Nigeria, most especially in Yoruba land, a married man (the father) is the head of the family which is a leading position. This may likely makes it difficult for married male secretaries in Ede Local Government Areas to act as assistants. It is easier for them to act as leaders and to take risks, which are parts of the masculine identity. At the same time a married female is used to assisting the husband at home and tolerating the husband, children and the in-laws; these may likely be parts of the feminine attributes that enable married female secretaries to be more productive in the workplace.

In the light of the foregoing, there is need to compare the factors influencing job performance of married male and female secretaries with a view to determining which gender performs more effectively and efficiently.

Married secretaries always bother about the ability to discharge their domestic responsibilities. The fear of failure to make adequate provisions for their domestic needs creates some emotional stresses in them. This feeling seems to trail them wherever they go, including the workplace. Such a situation often causes lack of concentration resulting in reduced work output and increased error rates.

Secretarial position is prone to insult, harsh treatment, and impolite approaches from the boss, colleagues, visitors and customers. As a result of sex-role identity, married male secretaries find it

difficult to tolerate insults and harsh/impolite treatment from other people because of superiority complex, which is one of the masculine traits. On the other hand, married female secretaries find it difficult to make decisions easily since they do not make decision alone at home. As a result of lack of tolerance and superiority complex on the part of married male secretaries; and the inability to make decisions quickly and lack of leadership ability on the part of married female secretaries, they could be hindered to perform effectively on the job. Therefore, sex-role identity which is the extent to which a woman behaves in feminine ways or a man in masculine ways negatively affects the job performance of married male and female secretaries.

A positive work environment is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy for everyone concerned, that is, the executives, employees and customers. It is disheartening however, that many executives do not create positive work environment for their secretaries despite the fact that the secretaries are the life wire of the organization. Such executives tend to make the office a prison yard for their secretaries. Lack of conducive work environment affects the morale of secretaries and it leads to negativity of job performance. Secretaries (either married male or female) who work in an unfriendly environment will not perform their best.

Having said this, the factors which influence male and female

secretaries' job performance are difficult to come by. Consequently, the concern of the researcher is to establish those factors which influence job performance of married male and female secretaries in

government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the factors which tend to influence the job performance of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- Establish whether work-family conflicts influence the performance of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas.
- Confirm whether positive work environment influences the performance of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas.
- Ascertain whether gender role influences the performance of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of work/family conflict on their job performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of positive work environment on their job performance.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of gender role on their job performance.

Method

Survey research design was adopted in this study and the population comprised all the married male and female confidential secretaries working in all the government organisations in Ede North and Ede South Local Government Areas, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. Due to the small number of subjects, all the 49 married confidential secretaries (13 married male and 36 married female) were used for the study. A 30 items questionnaire titled 'Factors Influencing Job Performance of Married Male and Female Secretaries (IJPMMFS)' was developed to elicit data for the study. The subjects responded to the statements on a four point Likert scale. To ensure face and content validity, three experts in

Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation validated the instrument. Their suggestions resulted in the final instrument. The split-half method was adopted for the reliability test, while the Spearman Brown's formula was applied to correlate the two parts resulting in a reliability coefficient 0.83. The questionnaires that were distributed by the researchers generated the data analyzed. Of the 49 questionnaires distributed 36 were returned. This gave a percentage return of 80.

t-test was used to test the hypotheses; t-test values was computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of work/family conflict on their job performance.

Table 1: t-test analysis of the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of work/family conflict on their job performance

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
scores	Equal variances assumed	1.326	.258	1.635	34	.111	.963	.589	-.234 2.160
	Equal variances not assumed			1.898	18.509	.073	.963	.507	-.101 2.027

Source: Field Work

Table 1 revealed that, the significant value of .258 is greater than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of work/family conflict on their job performance. Hence, the Null hypothesis is retained or accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of positive work environment on their job performance.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of positive work environment on their job performance.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variances assumed	.067	.797	.982	34	.333	.593	.604	-.634	1.819
SCORES Equal variances not assumed			.995	14.078	.336	.593	.595	-.684	1.869

Source: Field Work

Table 2 confirmed that the significant value of .797 is greater than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of positive work environment on their job performance. Hence, the Null hypothesis is retained or accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organizations in Ede Local Government Areas, on the influence of gender role on their job performance.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of gender/sex role on their job performance

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
SCORE									
Equal variances assumed	10.328	.003	-4.119	34	.000	-4.111	.998	-6.140	-2.083
Equal variances not assumed			-6.496	33.860	.000	-4.111	.633	-5.397	-2.825

Source: Field Work

Table 3 revealed that the significant value of .003 is lesser than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean scores of married male and female secretaries in government organisations in Ede Local Government Areas on the influence of gender or sex role on their job performance. Hence, the Null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Finding on null hypothesis one (H_{01}) established that there was no significant difference between married male and female secretaries on the influence of work/family conflict on their job performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was significant or accepted because the significant value of .258 is greater than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. In other words, married male and female secretaries did not differ significantly in their job performance. This finding contrasts with the study of Dexbury and Higgins (2001) which found that work and family systems are highly interlinked and that negative conditions at work spill over into the home environment. This

contrast may have been due to the different environments at which the research was conducted, differences in respondents' family size, the nature of the work or duties performed by the respondents. This finding also supports Cha's study (2001), which reported that married employees work performance was very high despite role conflicts caused by taking roles in both the work place and the family. The reason for this may be due to the fact that female secretaries used to combine home responsibilities with other responsibilities elsewhere and they did not see it as a burden since they are used to it. On the other hand, married male secretaries find it easy to combine both work and family responsibilities together since they are likely to have fewer responsibilities to perform at home. Since, married male and female secretaries are able to combine work and family responsibilities together; their job performance would almost be the same.

The finding on null hypothesis two (H_{02}) showed that there was no significant difference between married male and female secretaries on the influence of positive work environment on their job

performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significance difference was significant or not rejected because the significant value of .797 is greater than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. This means that married male and female secretaries did not differ significantly in their job performance on the influence of positive work environment. The finding is in agreement with the study of Vischer (2007) who found that positive physical environment affects the performance of employees positively while, negative physical environment affects the performance of the employees negatively. Since, married male and female secretaries are provided with the same work environment, their job performance would be the same.

Null hypothesis three (H_{03}) revealed that married male and female secretaries differ significantly in their mean score on the influence of gender or sex role on their job performance. The significant value of .003 is lesser than the acceptable alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore not significant or accepted. The finding on the influence of gender or sex role on the job performance of married male and female secretaries revealed that married male and female secretaries have distinct attributes that may likely assist each of them to perform excellently well on the job. This finding is contrary to the finding of Yahaya (2008) who found that gender had no significant influence on respondent's job performance; that is, women were as able as men if given similar exposure.

Conclusion

Evidences from the findings and discussion of this study revealed that work-family conflict and positive work environment had no influence on the job performance of married male and female

secretaries in governmental organisations in Ede North and South Local Government Areas. It was also revealed in the study that gender or sex role had influence on the job performance of married male and female secretaries in Ede North and South Local Government Areas. The study confirmed that when married male and female secretaries are provided with the same factors their job performance would almost be the same.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were proffered.

- 1 The boss/employer should create positive work environment for the secretary in order to increase their morale in the office for them to perform effectively and efficiently on the job.
- 2 Married secretaries should share the responsibilities at home within family members in order to reduce stress or work-family conflict.
- 3 Married secretaries should endeavour to exhibit all the traits that will assist them to perform effectively on the job.
- 4 The government should contribute to work-life balance initiatives by: funding research in the area, disseminating relevant information to key stakeholders, developing and offering appropriate educational programmes that illustrate the bottom line impact of imbalance and educating employees and families on how to cope with conflict.

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