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Employment Status and Home Management Strategies Among Married Women in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study focused on employment status and home management strategies among married women in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Five objectives and two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The sample comprised 363 married women determined by Taro Yamane (1973) formula for finite population. Simple random sampling technique was used in sample selection. Data was collected with the use of a structured questionnaire titled "Home Management Strategies Questionnaire (HMSQ)". The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A, covered demographic characteristics of the respondents, section B elicited information on their employment status, while section C was a three-point scale of preference stated as "Always" "Sometimes" and "Never" to measure the extent of use of home management strategies by the respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed by hand to the 363 respondents in their homes, offices and business places in the four clans that make up the study area, on the spot collection was adopted to retrieve all questionnaire given out. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, simple percentages, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) were used for data analyses. Results revealed that problem identification was the most used home management strategy, followed by resource assessment, multi-tasking, plan adjustment, division of labor, progress assessment, goal clarification, outcome evaluation, and standard setting. Significant relationship was found to exist between employment status of respondents and home management strategies. Hypothesis one revealed no significant relationship between the ages of respondents and home management strategies used ($r = .0.994$; $p>.01$), while hypothesis two showed that educational level was positively related to the use of home management strategies ($r = 0.21$; $p<.01$). This means that the more educated the respondents, the more their use of home management strategies. In conclusion, home management is crucial in the life of married women who are working, the use of home management strategies will help make the housework easier. The study recommended married women irrespective of employment status to adopt all the home management strategies for effective running of the home and education of women should be pursued since it relates with the use of home management strategies.

Key Words: Employment Status, Home Management, Resources, Planning, Organizing

Introduction

Home management involves planning, organization and management of the various tasks and chores associated with the day-to-day operations of a home. In many societies, women, especially married women play the role of home managers, in addition to involvement in paid employment or involvement in income earning activities outside the home. As a result, women utilize various strategies to help them function

effectively in their dual roles as home managers and income earners.

According to Nickel & Dorsey (2010), home management has to do with planning, organizing, controlling and evaluating the use of resources of the family for the purpose of attaining family goals. It involves the homemaker's managerial ability, interest, and capacity to motivate other members of the family, to work to achieve a common goal for the development of the family. Effective management enhances the chances of achieving goals by making wise decisions and proper utilization of resources (Berheide, Berk and Berk, 2014). Home management can be divided into several different areas such as housekeeping, property maintenance, cooking, meal planning and financial management.

Nickel & Dorsey (2010) highlighted four basic home management processes which includes planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating the use of resources of the family for the purpose of attaining family goals. According to Fox (2009), planning involves home management strategies such as identifying the problem, obtaining information, formulating possible courses of action, considering consequences of each alternative and selecting the course of action that seems best for the family. Planning also provides a basis for other managerial activities and a plan becomes successful only after it has been given the right direction of action (Godjousson, 2015). Organizing, involves setting aside or writing down household activities in order of importance and trying to carry them out one after the other (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 1999). Proper organization and allocation of work ensures that all the household work gets done and no one is overtasked (Schram, 2015). Implementing implies putting the plans into action for proper goal achievement (Ritvo and Glick, 2012). Evaluation helps in judging the success and achievement of a plan of action. Its main purpose is to see what has been achieved as a result of effective planning and implementing (Owen, 2014).

Employment status is the state of being employed or unemployed (Kelly, Fincham and Beach, 2013). Owen (2014) posits that employment status may be determined by the resources available and the needs present in the society. Sanik (2009) dichotomized employment status into employed and unemployed. Employed women are those who take up employment in the public and private sector of the economy, while those engaged in meaningful income generating and livelihood activities are referred to as self-employed. Women who do not take employment outside the home or engage in economic activities outside their homes are generally viewed as unemployed. Both employed and unemployed married women employ certain strategies that may influence the management of the home.

Home management strategies are different plans of action intended to accomplish specific goals. It involves the practical application of the principles of management to the home in such a way that specific goals in the home can be achieved within specified time (Sanik, 2009). Application of principles of management in the home is guided by concepts such as values, goals, and decision making. Home management strategies include; problem identification, goal clarification, standard setting, resource assessment, information gathering, multi-tasking, division of labor, improvisation of other options, priority setting, progress assessment and plan adjustment.

Problem identification involves having knowledge of the need of the family, what is lacking, the existing problem and how to achieve the need or solve the problem. It could be done for instance, by taking a careful look at the family store house, asking to know family members need and trying to put them in the family plan (Paolucci, Hall and Axinn, 2014). Standard setting and resource assessment involve agreement on ways of doing things and having knowledge of both human and material resources available to the family, such as income, skills, attitude, equipment, etc., and plan on different areas to be allocated to in an intelligent way. Multi-

tasking is the act of performing more than one task in the plan at the same time. The home manager may need to do more than one thing at a time especially in families, where there is no other person to assist in implementing the plan (Ackerman and Goebel, 2013).Therefore, division of labor has to do with the separation of work process into a number of tasks, with each task performed by a separate person or group of persons to allow individuals to focus in a specific task (Smith, 1999).

Consideration of other options calls for improvisation where other equipment and tools are used to still arrive at the same result, for example, in the absence of mixer, one may choose to alternate by using a spatula (Paolucci, Hall and Axinn, 2014). Priority setting looks at which task precede the other in order of priority and helps one not to neglect the important and urgent ones especially when the available resources are not enough to meet all the needs (Brown, 2015). Progress assessment is a quick step by step appraisal of a plan in action, to check whether those assigned tasks have been done, while adjustment could be made to the original plan if needed. (Fujimoto and Aoki, 2013).

Married women are traditionally expected to be the home makers. It is estimated that 48 to 78 percent of married women are engaged in some form of home management (Pratt, 2009; Arias, Beach and O'Leary, 1987). Beach (2017) observed that poor home management has resulted in malnutrition of children, misappropriation of resources, impulsive buying, debts, and bankrupt. Jalovaara (2002) reported that about 50% of children in poorly managed homes have been found to suffer from a combination of both physical and psychological dysfunction. Married women's increasing labour-market participation is seen as having far-reaching effects on home management (Beach, 2017). Some see these effects as detrimental, whereas others are more optimistic that it could ease home management burden. Davas (2015) posits that employed married women sometimes employ the services of others to apply home management skills to their homes rather than do it themselves as they spend more time at work than at homes.

Berry (2014) studied the relationship between employment status and home management and revealed that married women who were employed were less engaged in-home management strategies. Jack (2013) also revealed that employment status was related with home management strategies, implying that the kind of strategies married women adopt in the management of the homes depend on the type of employment.

Personal and demographic factors such as age, education and income, may affect the application of home management strategies by married women especially in areas of decision making, financial management, housekeeping, meal planning and cooking. Horvath (2015) investigated factors that affect home management strategies among married women, and discovered that age, employment status, and educational background were factors affecting home management strategies .The study by Owen (2014) also indicated that age correlated significantly with family's home management strategies as older family members maintained relatively high home management strategies than younger ones. Wilton & Constantine (2003) revealed that mothers who were younger reported higher levels of home management strategies despite their work loads. Other research studies have indicated that age, socioeconomic status (SES), and cognitive abilities influence decision making (an important aspect of home management) (de Bruin, Parker and Fischoff, 2007; Finucane, Mertz, Slovic and Schmidt, 2005). According to de Bruin et al. (2007), people who have less access to education and resources, may be more susceptible to experiencing negative life events, resulting in making poorer decisions in life.

There appear to be paucity of literature on employment status and home management strategies among married women in Nigeria especially Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, the study sought to fill the

gap by investigating employment status and home management strategies among married women in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The study focused on employment status and home management strategies among married women in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the demographic characteristics of married women in Uyo local Government area of Akwa Ibom State.
2. Ascertain the employment status of the married women in Uyo local Government area of Akwa Ibom State.
3. Identify the different home management strategies adopted by married women in Uyo local Government area of Akwa Ibom State.
4. Determine the relationship between employment status and home management strategies of married women in Uyo local Government area of Akwa Ibom State.
5. Establish the association between demographic characteristics of respondents (age and educational level) and use of home management strategies among married women in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between the age of the respondents and home management strategies adopted.
2. There is no significant relationship between the age of the respondents and home management strategies adopted.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Basically, it is appropriate in the social sciences especially for baseline researches of this nature. The result can be used for generalization.

Study Population

The population for the study comprised married women resident in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The target population was 3,877 married women.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample comprised 363 married women. Taro Yamane (1973) formula for finite population was employed to statistically determine the minimum sample size of 363. Simple random sampling technique was used in sample selection.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected with the use of a structured questionnaire titled "Home Management Strategies Questionnaire (HMSQ)". The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A, covered demographic characteristics of the respondents, section B elicited information on their employment status, while section C was a three - point scale questions of "Always" "Sometimes" and "Never" to measure the extent of use of home management strategies by the respondents. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed by hand to the respondents in their homes, offices and business places in the four clans that make up the study area by the researchers to complete and return on the spot, giving 100% retrieval rate. The contents of the instrument were interpreted to non-literate respondents and their responses were ticked in appropriate columns in the instrument. The administration of the instrument to all the respondents lasted for one month.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, simple percentages ranking and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) were used for data analyses.

Results and Discussion

Distribution on ages of respondents shows

that the highest percentage of respondents (36.6%) were between 31 and 40 years, while the least (11.3%) were aged between 61 to 70.

Majority of the respondents (91.5%) were literate and had all had been married for more than one year, with 94.8% of them having more than one child.

Table1: Demographic Characteristics of Married Women in Uyo Local government area of Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Age of the Respondents**		
	21 – 30 years	71	19.6
	31 – 40 years	133	36.6
	41 – 50 years	70	19.3
	51 – 60 years	48	13.2
	61 – 70 years	41	11.3
	Total	**363**	**100**
2.	**Educational Level of the Respondents**		
	No formal education	31	8.5
	FSLC	27	7.4
	SSCE/GCE	57	15.7
	NCE/OND	75	20.7
	HND/B.Sc.	122	33.6
	Postgraduate Degree	51	14.0
	Total	**363**	**100**
3.	**Duration in Marriage**		
	1 – 10 years	217	59.8
	11 – 20 years	85	23.4
	21 – 30 years	43	11.8
	31 – 40 years	18	5.0
	Total	**363**	**100**
4.	**Number of Children**		
	None	19	5.2
	1 – 3	190	52.3
	4 – 6	143	39.4
	7 - 9	11	3.0
	Total	**363**	**100**

Distribution on employment status of the respondents show that 67.5% were employed, and 32.5% were unemployed. All the employed respondents had been in employment for more than one year, with 38% working in the civil service and 58.8% in either private firms or self-employment.

Table 2: Employment Status of Married Women in Uyo Local government area of Akwa Ibom State.

S/N	Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Employment Status of the Respondents**		
	Employed	245	67.5
	Unemployed	118	32.5
	Total	**363**	**100**
2	**Years of Employment of the Respondents**		
	1 – 10 years	143	58.4
	11 – 20 years	70	28.6
	21 – 30 years	26	10.6
	31 – 40 years	6	2.4
	Total	**245***	**100**
3	**Occupation of Employed Respondents**		
	Civil Service	93	38.0
	Privately/Self employed	144	58.8
	Others (NGOs)	8	3.3
	Total	**245***	**100**

* Number of employed married women

Table 3 shows the home management strategies adopted by the respondents, with problem identification being the most used home management strategy. Resource assessment was the second most used home management strategy, followed by multi-tasking, plan adjustment, division of labor, progress assessment, goal clarification, outcome evaluation, and standard setting. Improvisation and priority setting were the least used home management strategy.

Table 3: Home Management Strategies Adopted by Married Women in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Home Management Strategies	Always	Sometimes	Never	Rank*
1.	Problem identification	240* (66.1)**	108*(29.8)**	15*(4.1)**	1
2.	Goal clarification	159(43.8)	160(44.1)	44(12.1)	7
3.	Standard setting	171(47.1)	127(35.0)	65(17.9)	9.5
4.	Resource assessment	239(65.8)	105(28.9)	19(5.2)	2
5.	Priority setting	101(27.8)	180(49.6)	82(22.6)	11
6.	Division of Labor	177(48.8)	139(38.3)	47(12.9)	5.5
7.	Improvisation	146(40.2)	177(48.8)	40(11.0)	9.5
8.	Multi-tasking	186(51.2)	177(48.8)	40.(11.0)	3
9.	Plan adjustment	166(45.7)	167(46.0)	30(8.3)	4
10.	Progress Assessment	172(47.4)	149(41.0)	172(47.4)	5.5
11.	Outcome Evaluation	181(49.9)	109(30.0)	73(20.1)	8

Note: Under Ranking, I is the most used strategy while, 11 is the least used strategy; * and ** = Frequencies and percentages respectively.

Results in Table 4 reveal that employment status of participants had a positive significant relationship with home management strategies. This establishes a direct relationship between employment status and home management strategies, implying that employed married women used home management strategies more than unemployed married women.

Table 4: Relationship between the Employment Status and Home Management Strategies of the Respondents

		Home Management Strategies
Employment Status	Pearson Correlation	0.123**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.020
	N	363
Home management strategies	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	-
	N	363

Note: ** = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 reveals that ages of participants has no significant relationship with home management strategies adopted. This implies that there is no difference in the use of home management strategies among married women based on their ages. Thus, the hypothesis earlier stated that there is no significant relationship between the ages of the respondents and home management strategies used by them was accepted.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between Age and Home Management Strategies of the Respondents

		Home management Strategies
Age	Pearson correlation	.0000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.994
	N	363
Home Management Strategies Pearson correlation	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-
	N	363

Table 6 reveals that educational level of participants has a positive significant relationship with home management strategies adopted, implying that the more educated the respondents, the more the use of home management strategies. Therefore, the hypothesis earlier stated that there is no significant relationship between educational level of the respondents and home management strategies used by them was rejected.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis on the Relationship Between Educational level and Home Management Strategies of the Respondents

		Home management Strategies
Educational level	Pearson correlation	0 .021*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.85
	N	363
Home Management Strategies	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-
	N	363

* Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level (2- tailed)

Discussion

The study revealed that a greater percentage of the participants were between 31 -40 years. This could be because the age bracket is a very active stage in career and economic independence. A greater percentage of the respondents were literate, and all had been married for more than one year, with 94.8% of them having more than one child. Since a good number of participants were selected from workplace, many of them had completed tertiary education before being qualified to be employed. The study also revealed that 67.5% of respondents were employed, and a greater percentage (58.4%) of respondents had been employed for 1 -10 years, mostly in the private sector or self-employed. This may be due to economic situation and societal changing roles, which encourage women to work and assist their families financially.

Problem identification was the most used home management strategy, followed by resource assessment, multi-tasking, plan adjustment, division of labor, progress assessment, goal clarification, outcome evaluation, and standard setting. Improvisation and priority setting were the least used home management strategy. This may be because married women need to identify the need and problem at home first before finding solutions to them. The finding corroborates Smith (1999) who maintained that stating the problem should be first and most used home management strategy.

The study also revealed a direct positive relationship between employment status and home management strategies, implying that employed married women use home management strategies more than unemployed married women. The argument here may be that since unemployed married women work full time at home, they are always available to take up most task at their convenience and may not adopt effective strategies such as division of labor, priority setting and improvisation. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Berheide, Berk & Berk, (2014), & Jalovaara (2008) who revealed that employment status correlated with home management strategies and that employed married women were more involved in-home management than unemployed married women. It is however at variance with that of Berry (2014) which revealed that married women who were employed were less engaged in - home management strategies

The study revealed no significant relationship between ages of respondents and home management strategies. This finding contradicts the findings of Horvath (2013), and Owen (2014) that found that age correlated with home management strategies in homes. The finding of the study is also at variance with that of Wilton & Constantine (2003) which revealed that mothers who were younger reported higher levels of home management strategies despite their work loads.

Results of the study revealed a positive significant relationship between educational level of respondents and use of home management strategies, implying that the more educated the respondents, the more the

use of home management strategies. This is in agreement with the study by de Bruin et al. (2007) which indicated that people who have less access to education and resources, may make poorer decisions in life including home management.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study conclude that married women generally adopt various strategies in home management, but that employed married women use home management strategies more than their unemployed counterparts. The ages of married women have no positive relationship with home management strategies used, but educational levels of respondents is positively related to the use of home management strategies, meaning that the more educated the respondents, the more their use of home management strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Married women irrespective of employment status should adopt all the home management strategies for effective running of their homes.
2. Education has been found to relate with the use of home management strategies, as such education of women should be greatly pursued.

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