

Work Pattern, Organizational Support and Job Tenure as Determinants of job Commitment among Working Mothers in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the influence of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure on job commitment of working mothers in Ogun State, Nigeria. Three null hypothesis guided the study. Research design of the ex-post facto type was employed. One hundred and eighty employed mothers were drawn from both public and private organizations in Ogun State through simple random sampling technique. The organizational support scale by Thompson and Lyness (1999) and job commitment scale by Farrell & Rusbult (1981) were used to obtain information from the respondents. Work pattern and job tenure were measured from the demographics. Multiple regression analysis and Pearson r were used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings reveal a combined contribution of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure to working mothers job commitment; a significant individual contribution of organizational support and job tenure but a non-significant contribution of work pattern to working mothers' job commitment. Lastly, there are significant positive relationships between organizational support and job commitment, work pattern and job tenure, organizational support and job tenure, work pattern and organizational support but a non-significant positive relationship between job tenure and job commitment as well as a non-significant negative relationship between work pattern and job commitment. The study recommends that management should effectively implement those policies made by government that support working mothers and implement staff policies that will reduce turnover rates thereby elongating staff tenures and enhancing job commitment.*

Key Words: *Work Pattern, Organizational Support, Job Tenure, Job Commitment, Working Mothers*

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I. Introduction

Organizations today are not able to achieve maximum efficiency and productivity especially today that it has become a common practice that both couples have to work in order to earn income for their livelihood. Working mothers in paid employment today are struggling to juggle the competing demands arising from work and family responsibilities and as a result are receiving complaints from employers and superiors about their job commitment. In most organizations today, many managers may be reluctant to employ mothers since it is often assumed that they may be absent and late to work most of the time as a result of their family and child care duties.

In Nigeria, the total population of females aged between 25 and 54 is 26,699,432 of the entire population (Nigeria Demographic Profile, 2013). This age range represents the active workforce among female population and according to the National Population Commission (2004) 50% of women participate in the labour force. It is pertinent to recall that several policies were made by the Federal Government in the past to better the working conditions of these working mothers to accommodate their family responsibilities in order to improve their commitment. Some of these policies include the decision of the Federal Government in 2010 in conjunction with UNICEF to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies exclusively while at work. The Nigeria Labour Act made provision for a break of one hour during which a worker can take time off to rest or to attend to child care needs. The Sick Leave Policy under the Nigeria Labour Act also requires a worker who is sick to be paid wages up to 12 weeks within one year as long as medical report is provided. This same Act prohibits women from working on night shifts except for nurses and those at top management. The Act permits a pregnant woman to stop work during six weeks before confinement, this is with pay; and permits half an hour break twice a day during working hours for nursing mothers with children below one year. In 2009, the Federal Government in compliance with the International Labour Organization, shifted maternity leave from 12 weeks to 16 weeks with full pay irrespective of the work status of the woman, number of babies delivered and marital status. Despite these efforts, working mothers' commitment to their jobs in public organizations, including

public universities in Nigeria, according to Ugwu (2010) have remained poor due to the inadequacy of some needed facilities, non-implementation of the existing policies by some university management. Unfortunately, these mothers still struggle to be committed to their jobs and at the same time trying to handle the unending demands of a young child as well as other family responsibilities without receiving enough support from their organizations. It is therefore possible that the non-implementation of these policies up-to-date has negatively affected the performance and commitment of some working mothers. Observation show that some mothers with young children in trying to find where to keep their children immediately following resumption from maternity leave may come late to work, sneak out to breastfeed and may go home earlier than the normal closing time. Non-implementation of these policies also may lead to lack of concentration at work.

Every employer expects its workers to be committed. Employees that are committed to their jobs give their companies crucial competitive advantages in addition to lower employee turnover (Allen, 2003; Vance, 2006). Committed employees are more likely to take pride in organizational membership, believe in the goals and values of the organization and therefore exhibit higher levels of performance and productivity (Yew, 2010). Highly committed employees perform better than less committed ones because they are true assets of the organization (Ahmad, Nadeem & Hamad, 2014). In organizations, the activity of every employee is guided by rules and regulations of the organization which they are expected to comply with. Workers are expected to arrive to work on time; stay till closing time and not allowed to take extended breaks or unauthorized leave of absences. Working mothers are not exempted from this rule and to the employer, compliance to these rules show commitment. Unfortunately, as a result of the dual roles of being a mother and a worker, commitment to these rules is not always possible. According to Chuks (2013) and Ejike (2013), women in paid employment face additional tasks and duties that are tiring as well and are consistently pushed into juggling both ends in order of priority.

Commitment means dedication, loyalty, devotion, adherence, responsibility, tie, duty and obligation (The Free Dictionary, 2010). Job commitment is “how much of you that is invested in your work” (Omeonu 2010). Workplace Fairness Report (2010) opines that job commitment is an employee’s level of attachment to some aspect of work. However, the focus of employees’ commitment to work may vary because employees may be committed to their professions, their work, unions, as well as to their organizations (Nwibere&Olu-Daniels, 2014) and the basis of a worker’s commitment can improve the prediction of employees’ intentions and behaviours (Becker, Randal &Riegel, 1995; Nwachukwu, 2007). Commitment is demonstrated when a line of activity is pursued despite obstacles to that activity (Scholl, 2008; Tolentino, 2013).

Job commitment can predict some in role behaviours like attendance, remaining or quitting the job (Rusbutt&Farell, 1983). According to Robbins (2001) commitment to the job can predict absenteeism, tardiness, quality of work, turnover and job performance. Committed employees will not voluntarily miss work (Williams & Anderson, 1999) and they can offer assistance to do work that is not part of their job description (Marks, Murray, Willig, Evans, Woodall &Skykes, 2006). It is therefore clear that, people who are committed to their work always have a strong sense of duty and obligation towards their work and also place intrinsic values on their job as a central life interest (Gupta, 2011). Hence, mothers who are committed to work are expected to be less affected in their work behaviours by external constraints. Lamberton& Minor (1995) strongly assert that a person has to show up at work for performance to have real value. This means that commitment requires participation. Regrettably, this has not always been the case with most working mothers because of their dual roles. Kirrane& Buckley (2004) observe that multiple roles may have a negative impact on an individual’s wellbeing as well as commitment to their jobs while Casio (2005) submit that dual career families have problems managing work and family responsibilities. As a result of these dual roles of being a worker and a mother at the same time, the job may suffer. Some resume late, close early or even abandon their duty posts in order to attend to family needs (Mensah, 2011).

Chusmir (1982) has discovered that working mothers are sick more often than men mostly because mothers hardly get enough sleep due to child care demands and sleep deficits make them susceptible to infectious illnesses, as well as automobile or workplace accidents. Bielby&Bielby (1984) therefore, assume that contemporary women have weak and unstable commitments to the work role while Moen (1986) attribute this weak commitment to women’s traditional responsibilities to family and home demands. In addition, the studies of Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright (2000) show that lower commitment to the job is higher among working mothers who on the average miss 17 days of work every year due to children’s care needs which perhaps is one of the reasons why working mothers come late to work, leave early, or miss work on short notice. Also as women and mothers with young children join the workforce in great numbers, Levitan&Belous (2010) report that working women with young children lose a minimum of one hour per week or 50 hours per year from their work hours on childcare issues while some working mothers even quit their job when they could no longer handle the care-giving responsibilities in addition to their work.

In essence, even the best performing employees are not valuable if they miss work frequently. Poor job commitment is revealed when employees stay in the organization but they minimize their work time by being

absent or coming late to work. It is true that the attributes, skills and abilities of individuals are the raw materials that enable them to perform ((Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2000). These raw materials are transformed into objective results through employees' behaviour. It is true that employees can exhibit behaviours only if they have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities but there are situational constraints within the performance system that may negate this. An employee may have the necessary skills and yet not exhibiting the necessary behavior because of constraints within the work environment that often prevents employees from performing like no provision of child care centers, elder care support, and marital care (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright, 2000). This can lead to psychological withdrawal at the work place.

Nazarey (2001) therefore, opine that work activities itself can be a source of job commitment when they are self-rewarding and represent the expressions of that individual's ego or central values. That means that work itself can be a determinant of mother's job commitment. However, several reasons account for poor job commitment among mothers. One is that the duties of working mothers are enormous. As a wife, a working woman is expected to be her husband's friend, companion and lover and she is expected to know about what is best for her children regarding their health, schooling and emotional well-being. Consequently, if a mother wants to meet these and other demands completely, she may become distracted, over worked and exhausted. This happens to most working mothers in different fields. There are conflicts between motherhood and professional advancement because even on the home front, most married working mothers; even those whose husbands advocate for equality, still find themselves doing most of the housework and care responsibilities all alone (Frey, 2010).

Moen (1986) observe that labour force behaviours of working mothers may vary at different stages of their life course. He opines that employed mothers of preschoolers emerge as the group most likely to show discrepancies between labour force behaviour and psychological commitment to the work role. This meant that young women who have not yet begun child bearing and those who have grown up children may be better committed to their jobs. Based on the above, commitment to work may be difficult unless an employee's role as a family member is also considered particularly when this role conflicts with work activities. Burud&Tumolo (2004) comment that working mothers experiencing conflict between their work and family responsibilities are three times likely to consider quitting their jobs compared to those who are not experiencing conflict and when employees leave, productivity is affected from the time the worker decides to leave until a replacement is found. Consequently, Kirrane& Buckley (2004) affirm that even though working mothers with infants and children below the age of three are the fastest growing segment of today's labour force, balancing the dual demands of responsibilities at the workplace and family could still be overwhelming. More so, many working mothers particularly those whose jobs give them little control over their work time (example, food service, factory, assembly-line workers, sales workers etc) easily get stressed and are more likely to quarrel with co-workers and family members (Frey, 2010). Mensah (2011) has noticed that at the work place no consideration is given to the fact that reproduction is the 'mothers work' of being pregnant and giving birth despite the fact that about 50% of women who are employed during pregnancy return to work when their children are three months old. Hence, there is conflict between paid work and family responsibility such as a working mother breastfeeding a baby (Mensah, 2011)

Women may be committed to their jobs through the same process as men but Chusmir (1982), Barzilah (2010) and Hammer (2003) identify work-family role conflict as one of the variables that limit women's commitment. One of the causes of this conflict is the fact that most working mothers lack access to child care facilities during work hours. Cascio (2005) submit that only about 25% of large employers actually provide on-site or near-sit child care programs, even though the demands for such services are high. Poduval&Poduval (2009) therefore, opine that shouldering dual responsibilities may actually decrease productivity at the work place coupled with the absence of satisfactory organizational support in form of child care facility which may likely affect mothers' work behaviour. Aryee, Chu, Kim &Ryu (2013) opine that an organization's decision to staff its own child care facility has the advantage of reducing absenteeism and enhancing productivity. Consequently, Finn (2013) argue that maximum cooperation and commitment from working mothers will be realized if in addition to day care services; sick-child care center is also provided which may help solve employee major problems leading to a decrease in absenteeism.

In organizations today, managers place great importance in the issue of job commitment of the employees (Yew, 2010) yet employers fail to admit that every working mother who decides to breastfeed and return to work will need a degree of flexibility in order to breastfeed/pump during the workday. They also fail to realize that the needs of these mothers will also vary and have to be addressed on an individual basis (United States Breastfeeding Commission Report, 2011).

The question now is, how can a working mother cope with the responsibility of work, child care and other family responsibilities? Most working mothers have young children and may need to breastfeed them exclusively to ensure development of the child from birth till six months after which other foods can be introduced. Exclusive breastfeeding requires that the infant receive breast milk alone excluding anything else

apart from drops, syrups in form of vitamins, minerals and medicines. The World Health Organization (2006) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, after which other nutritionally adequate and safe complimentary foods will be introduced alongside breastfeeding which continues till two years of age or beyond. Exclusive breastfeeding is part of National Policy on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Nigeria which is aimed at ensuring optimal growth, protection and development of the Nigerian child from birth to 5 years of life (Federal Ministry of Health, 2005). According to this policy, all Nigerian mothers whether working or non-working is encouraged to breastfeed their children exclusively for the first six months of life.

To achieve optimum health for the baby and mother, organizational support is important in form of maternity leave provisions. They are necessary for a working woman to effectively complete the transition from pregnancy to motherhood. Premature termination or too short a maternity leave may have undesirable consequences in form of poor job performance and low level of job satisfaction. Organizational support is viewed by Allen (2001) as global perceptions about the extent to which an organization is supportive of employee's work-family balance. Organizational related work support embraces family friendly policies and supportive organizational culture which is necessary to enable working mothers adjust and get committed to their jobs. They help employees to achieve work life balance as well as increased employee commitment, decreased absenteeism, decreased turnover and increased employee performance (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Organizational support include every support received from the employer as policies or programs developed to help accommodate the needs of employees in form of flexibility in work schedules, on-site child care, family leave, maternity leave provisions, lactation room and other breastfeeding support and child care support (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). Mothers who lack support from their employers are not able to combine child care with full time work and so some leave their roles as employees. Furthermore, Linn (2014) stresses that when adequate care and attention is provided to children, in the absence of their mothers at day care centers near their working places, the performance of mothers at work improves.

The increasing proportion of employees with family responsibilities suggest that workers, especially working women might need more family-friendly benefits or policies to help them handle their family demands beyond their paid work (Hon, 2002). The goal of such policies is to alleviate the negative effect of juggling the demands of work and family life in order to improve commitment. In Nigeria today, even though the government has put in place some of these policies, the effectiveness depends on a supportive organizational culture. Bernard & Major (2000) mentions that employees may not have access to such policies if their organizations are not supportive.

Work pattern refers to techniques and schemes developed to manage different patterns of working which include, shift working, flextime, annual hour arrangements, telecommuting, part-time or temporary work (Owen & Cox, 1988). Work pattern, when made flexible, could be beneficial both to the management and employees as it calls for work-life balance and therefore helps in attracting and retaining staff. Flexibility in work pattern would be beneficial to the success of working mothers as both employees and home makers. For working mothers with young children, full time work may have adverse effects on mother-child interaction causing insecure attachments on children (Shore & Shore, 1995). Long hours of full time work are one of the reasons for lack of concentration at work, feeling of guilt and workplace accidents among working mothers (Baxter & Gray, 2011; Work Report, 2010).

To be committed, working mothers need adaptations to their working time in form of flex time, permanent part-time positions, compressed work week, shift work and telecommuting (Workplace Fairness Report, 2011). When such adaptations are not available, mothers' job commitment is likely to be affected negatively resulting to high level of absenteeism and the tendency of seeking alternative employment.

Job tenure is likely to affect a mother's commitment to her job. Job tenure describes the number of years a worker has put into her job and the experience acquired. The Cambridge Dictionary defines job tenure as "the length of time an employee has worked for her employer." Gupta (2011) opines that job tenure is positively related with affective commitment. Therefore employees with low affective commitment will choose to leave their jobs while employees with high affective commitment will stay for longer periods on their job. Therefore, working mothers with more experience on the job may be better committed to their jobs since it is possible that they have identified a method of balancing work and family which suits them than mothers who just joined the workforce and who have little experience as employees.

Regardless the fact that many researchers have worked on both the dependent variable (Job commitment) and independent variables (organizational support, work pattern and job tenure) extensively, yet there is little research carried out in the combination of organization support, job tenure and job commitment with work pattern. Work pattern is an area that only few researchers have worked on. This study will therefore contribute to more knowledge in this area. This study therefore investigated the influence of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure on working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South West Nigeria.

1.1 Objective of the Study

Generally, this study sets out to establish the contribution of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure to the working mothers' job commitment in public Universities in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. To determine the combined and relative contributions of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure on working mothers' job commitment.
2. To determine the interrelationship among work pattern, organizational support, job tenure and job commitment of working mothers.

1.2 Hypotheses

1. There is no significant combined contribution of work pattern, organizational Support and job tenure on working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South-West Nigeria.
2. There is no significant individual contribution of work pattern, organizational Support and job tenure on working mother's job commitment in public universities in South-West Nigeria.
3. There is no significant interrelationship among work pattern, organizational support, job tenure and working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

II. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This work adopted the descriptive design of the *Ex-post Facto* type because the researcher did not manipulate variables, but observed and described the effect of already existing independent variables (work pattern, organizational support and job tenure) on the dependent variable (Job commitment).

2.2 Population

One hundred and eighty (180) working mothers aged between 18 – 64 years in public and private organizations in Ogun State, Nigeria who participated in the study were selected through simple random sampling technique.

2.3 Instrumentation

2.3.1 Job Commitment Questionnaire

The scale developed by Farrell & Rusbult in 1981 to measure commitment was adopted for this study. It has 24 items with 9 options, example: "how long would you like to stay at this job?" 1 = short period of time and 9 = long period of time. The authors reported a high reliability index, 0.88, 0.92, 0.92 and 0.93 on four different occasions.

2.3.2 Organizational support Questionnaire (OSQ)

To measure Organizational Support, the researcher adopted a 20-item scale developed by Thompson and Lyness (1999). The scale assess respondent' perceptions of the overall extent to which their organizations facilitates worker's ability to use some components of work family culture like managerial support, negative consequences associated with devoting time to family responsibilities and organizational time demands. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each item reflects the features of their organizations by using a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Negative items were reversed and scored and responses summed across 20 items. High scores reflect supportive organization, example, in this organization, employees can easily balance their work and family lives. The authors reported a coefficient alpha of .92.

2.4 Method of Data Analysis

The SPSS was used to analyze the data generated from the questionnaires. Multiple regression analysis and Pearson's r was employed to test the hypothesis at 0.05% significance level.

III. Result

3.1 Hypothesis One

Ho1: There is no significant combined contribution of work pattern, organizational support, and job tenure to working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 1: Model Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Combined Contribution of Work Pattern, Organizational Support, and Job Tenure to Working Mothers' Job Commitment

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2247.403	3	749.134	59.140	.000 ^b
Residual	2482.752	196	12.667		
Total	4730.155	199			

Model Summary: R = .689; R² = .475; R²_(Adj) = .467; Std. Error = 3.55909

a. Dependent Variable: Job Commitment

Table 1 revealed significant results ($F_{(3,196)} = 59.140, p < .05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that there is a significant combined contribution of work pattern, organizational support, and job tenure to working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South-West, Nigeria. Table 1 further revealed that work pattern, organizational support, and job tenure contributed 46.7% of the variance in job commitment ($R^2_{(Adj)} = .467$).

3.2 Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant individual contribution of work pattern, organizational support, and job tenure to working mothers' job commitment in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 2: Coefficients of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Individual Contribution of Work Pattern, Organizational Support, and Job Tenure to Working Mothers' Job Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.097	1.237		8.973	.000
	Work Pattern	-.075	.123	-.040	-.614	.540
	Job Tenure	-1.134	.390	-.212	-2.909	.004
	Organizational Support	.299	.023	.761	12.776	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Commitment

Table 2 revealed both significant and non-significant results, leading to the rejection of a part of the null hypothesis and a non-rejection of another part of it. Specifically, there is a significant individual contribution of organizational support ($\beta = .761, t = 12.776, p < .05$) and job tenure ($\beta = -.212, t = 2.909, p < .05$) to working mothers' job commitment but a non-significant contribution of work pattern ($\beta = -.040, t = .614, p > .05$) to job commitment.

3.3 Hypothesis Three

Ho3: There are no significant relationships among work pattern, organizational support, job tenure, and job commitment among working mothers in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 3: Relationships among Work Pattern, Organizational Support, Job Tenure, and Job Commitment

	Work Pattern	Organizational Support	Job Tenure	Job Commitment
Work Pattern	1.000	.149*	.587*	-.050
Organizational Support		1.000	.470*	.656*
Job Tenure			1.000	.123
Job Commitment				1.000

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 revealed both significant and non-significant results in the form of bivariate relationships among the variables of the study. Specifically, in order of strength, there were significant and positive relationships between organizational support and job commitment ($r = .656, p < .05$), work pattern and job tenure ($r = .587, p < .05$), organizational support and job tenure ($r = .470, p < .05$), and work pattern and organizational support ($r = .149, p < .05$). However, there was a non-significant and positive relationship between job tenure and job commitment ($r = .123, p > .05$) and a non-significant negative relationship between work pattern and job commitment ($r = -.050, p > .05$).

IV. Discussions

This study which is carried out to determine the influence of work pattern, organizational support and job tenure on working mothers' job commitment in Ogun State, Nigeria revealed a significant combined contribution of work pattern, organizational support, and job tenure on working mothers' job commitment; a significant individual contribution of organizational support and job tenure to working mothers' job commitment but a non-significant contribution of work pattern to their job commitment and lastly a significant and positive relationships between organizational support and job commitment, work pattern and job tenure, organizational support and job tenure, and work pattern and organizational support. Surprisingly, there was a non-significant and positive relationship between job tenure and job commitment and a non-significant negative relationship between work pattern and job commitment of working mothers in public universities in South-West, Nigeria.

These findings have important implication for working mothers. Hence working part time or full time, shift work, temporary or permanent work can influence the level of commitment of working mothers. Choo,Desa and Asaari (2016) in their research discovered that flexibility in work pattern is positively and significantly related to commitment. Also, the level of support that working mothers receive from management can also affect commitment. Job tenure which reflect the number of years spent in the organization can determine job commitment. Earlier, Wright and Bonett (2002) found a significant effect of long tenure on commitment and job performance and went further to prove that employees come to organizations with various needs, expectations and desires and when the organization supports them by meeting these needs, they are then able to willingly invest their skills and abilities towards achieving the set goals of the organization and commitment is achieved while the reverse also applies.

The outcome of hypothesis two is that there is a significant individual contribution of organizational support and job tenure to working mothers' job commitment but a non-significant contribution of work pattern to their job commitment. This implies that while organizational support and job tenure influenced job commitment, work pattern did not. The implication of this is that despite being on part time, full time or shift work, working mothers need support of their organizations and longer job tenures to become adjusted to the job and further enhancing commitment. This present study agrees with studies of Yew (2010) and Ntube and Samuel (2014) who found that longer tenure assist employees find jobs that match their needs since in the early years of women's career, married working women bear children and have family care responsibilities which interrupt their job commitment while working mothers who have spent more number of years on their jobs are more likely to experience less work-family conflict and may be better committed since it is likely that they have identified means and strategies for coping with their dual roles. Harris et al (2002) also supports that when organizations meet the needs and expectations of employees, commitment come naturally.

V. Conclusion And Recommendation

The outcome of this research reveal that organizational support and job tenure are important contributors to working mothers' job commitment. Therefore, those policies made by the Government to improve the job commitment of working mothers in the past should be effectively implemented by management of both public and private organizations to reduce work-family conflict and enhance the job commitment of working mothers. The findings of this study have implications for government, human resources personnel and supervisors on the need to improve staff policies that will reduce turnover rates thereby elongating staff *tenures* since longer tenures on the job equip employees with the necessary skills to become more committed.

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