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## **Women Participation in Labour Force and the Social Implication on Child Care and Development:**

(Women in Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government in Ogun State, Nigeria, Under Study).

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### **ABSTRACT**

*With one hundred (N=100) working mothers conveniently sampled from Ado-Odo/Ota local government area of Ogun State, in Nigeria, this study examined the women participation in labour force and the consequential effects on child care and developments. The study discovered that working mothers agreed that their participation in labour force has denied their children parental bonding (70%), given them no chance to control their children's behaviours (62%), denied them the opportunity to give sound religious and moral values to their children (62%); in- capacitated them from properly socializing their children (60%), have overall negative effects on child care and development (95%) and finally, they were of the opinion that their children would receive better care if they did not have to work (60%).*

*The study recommended that the government should legislate to regulate the hours that working mothers may spend at work and the distance their work places should be, away from home. It is also recommended that government should establish community care for the children of working mothers and also regulate, through adequate legislation, the operation of day-care homes and the service of the nannies throughout the country. The study encouraged the social researchers to investigate the comparative study analyses of the deviant behaviours among the children of the working mothers and the non-working mothers.*

**Key words:** Labour Force; Women; Children; Child Care and Development; Socialization.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Before colonial masters came into Nigeria, various traditional societies were able to maintain, control and perpetuate their members by socializing them to take up different roles in their societies. Normally, in these societies, the division of labour was clearly spelt out by age and sex. In these societies, men were principally, the bread winners of the family while women only complemented their families by different domestic roles.

However, with the coming of colonial era, complemented by the introduction of western education, a great revolution has changed the face of Nigerian society. Hence, women in Nigeria now work outside their domestic settings and earn their own money. Unfortunately, this has removed them far away from their traditional roles of intensive child care and the socialization roles they are supposed to play in their children's lives.

A critical look at the women's involvement in the labour force shows that there are some abuses which are being perpetrated against children. These physical abuses, psychological abuses and neglect of the needs of the children by their working mothers are now the order of the day.

This research, therefore, investigated some fundamental issues on the consequential effects of the women's participation in labour force on the child care and socialization.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A general knowledge of labour force in present day Nigeria shows that more and more women are moving into the labour force, especially the highly educated ones among them, who are becoming more committed to works and even when they get married, they remain committed to their careers.

Several reasons have been provided by different authors as the possible explanations for women entering into labour force. According to Mayor (1970), women seek jobs in order to earn income to solve their financial problems and to escape boredom at home. Davies (1975) argues that women prefer going out to work than being shut in the flat during the day. The reason for this is that modern electronics and computerization have made the job of managing the home easier than before. Hence, there is no much work to do at home in the present modern homes, especially when the children have gone to school.

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Education and the desire of the women to care for their children are the cogent reasons why women are engaging in paid employment. The wages earned by the women at work provided opportunities for better housings, medical cares, and luxurious holidays and very importantly, the extension of children education, all which cannot be achieved when women remained as house wives (Ilori, 1982). Kapour (1984), in his study, discovered that 18 percent of the married women were working because of interest in their professions or job careers and to achieve positions and statuses for themselves. Hence, women may not work because of gross economic needs or when their relatives or husbands forced them to take up gainful employment. The desire to be economically independent and to have an individual status of their own and to satisfy their intellectual needs for creative work, recognition and fame are the factors which make the women take up gainful employment (Kapour, 1984).

Chaffe (1972) opined that a growing number of women valued jobs they were doing for the job's sakes and for the personal rewards they brought. Many women liked their jobs because the jobs gave them the opportunity to be with other people and receive recognition for their works. Ogunlade (1990) observed that urban values, arising from education and increasing level of needs among women, have all together influenced the increasing involvement in paid labour force. Finally, the increasing acceptance of single parenthood in our society has also meant that single mothers have to work in order to cater for the family (Abali, 1995).

Researchers have focused on the mother-child relationship and the question of what effects are on the children whose mothers work outside the home. Ogunlade (1990) argues that the lack of adequate care for the children of working mothers is a social concern as the welfare of children is at stake. According to Ogunlade (1990), there exists a role conflict among the working mothers, as mothers and as workers in paid employment. Finally, Hoffman (1979) argued that infants need reciprocal interaction, verbal stimulation, visual expenses and reward contingencies. The infants of the working mothers may be denied all these.

### **METHODOLOGY APPLIED**

Survey research was carried out in this study. It entails the collection of information from individuals through their responses to questions (Shutt, 2004). Quantitative method was used in this research work. Quantitative research believes in the positivist approach to social science. Under quantitative method, language of variables and hypothesis is spoken.

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Quantitative method emphasizes on measurement of variables and testing of hypothesis (Neuman, 2003).

Non- probability sampling design was employed to select the respondents who took part in the study. A convenience sampling method under non-probability sampling design was used to select the participants. A convenience sample is a group of elements (often people) that are readily accessible to and therefore convenient for the researcher (Adler and Clark, 1999). The research setting: Ado /Odo Ota Local Government, in Ogun State, Nigeria was also sampled using the same convenience sampling method.

For the research instrument, questionnaire was used. Questionnaire is a survey instrument containing the questions in a self administered survey (Schutt, 2004). For the process of data analysis, percentage method was employed in the analysis of the data gathered from the administered questionnaires. The hypothesis that was tested was done using chi-square test.

This hypothesis was tested in the study:

HO = Women's Participation in the Labour Force Has No Negative Effect on Child.

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The analysis and the interpretation of the data were based on 100 women that were conveniently sampled from Igbesa, Sango-Otta, Ado-Odo and some villages in Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government in Ogun State, Nigeria. As expected, all the participants were women.

For the age distribution, 17% of the participants were between 18-25 years, 30% were between 26 – 32 years, 32% were between 33 – 39 years, 21% were 40 years above.

The educational qualifications of the respondents show that 15% had primary school certificates, 36% had secondary school certificates and the remained 49% had post secondary school (tertiary institutions) certificates. Education is very important as a factor which encourages women emancipation and involvement in paid employment according to Ilori (1982).

The marital status was another variable that was considered. The data analyses show that 56% of the respondents were married, 12% were widows, 18% were divorcees and 14% were separated from their husbands. The available researches show that married women go into

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labour force to earn money to solve their financial problems and escape boredom (Mayor, 1977), single parents, according to Abali (1995), entered into labour force to cater for their families as well. Widows and divorcees also entered into labour force to earn money that would assist them to take care of their fatherless children and abandoned children in the family.

In the area of employment, 17% of the participants were employed by the government, 23% were self employed, 43% were employed by private organizations and 17% were not fully employed.

The researcher asked the respondents the reasons why they engaged in working. 22% were working to earn their daily living, 36% were working mainly to support their families' needs, 15% were working to improve their standard of living and finally 27% were working for job satisfaction.

There are some fundamental issues raised in this research work pertaining to women's participation in labour force and the effects on their children. Parental bonding was one of fundamental issues considered. 70% of the participants confirmed that as a result of their involvement in paid employment, they did not have a strong parental bonding with their children. 30% said they did have a strong parental bonding. Control over the behaviours of the children was another fundamental issue considered. 62% of the respondents said they did not have time to control the behaviours of their children as a result of being in paid employment. The remaining 38% said they did have control over the behaviours of their children.

Religious norms and social values were also considered. 62% of the respondents confirmed that being involved in paid employment does not allow them to give full and adequate religious norms and social values to their children. 38% were able to do this adequately.

Proper socialization was also looked into. 60% of the participants were unable to socialize their children properly because their paid jobs would not give them enough quality time to socialize their children. However, 40% were able to socialize their children properly.

60% of the respondents were of the opinion that their children would receive better care if they do not have to work. The remained 40% of the respondents held differed opinion on this.

Finally, 95% of the respondents confirmed that women participation in labour force has overall negative effects on child care and development. The remaining 5% were of the opinion that it has no negative effects.

### **HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

The hypothesis testing was done, using chi-square test. The below was the hypothesis tested in this study:

HO = Women’s Participation in the Labour Force Has No Negative Effect on Child Care.

H1 = Women’s Participation in the Labour Force Has Negative Effect on Child Care.

The Chi-square analysis and calculation were derived from this table:

Women Participation in Labour Force has negative effects on child care and development	Observed Frequency	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square Calculated
				Chi-square (a) = 154.940
Yes	92	33.3	58.7	Df=2
No	5	33.3	-28.3	Asymp.
Missing	3	33.3	-30.3	Sig = .000
Total	100			

Source: Research survey 2013.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

E

$$X^2 = 154.940 \text{ (calculated value)}$$

Level of significance = 0.05

Degree of Freedom (Df) = 2

The tabulated value is = 5.9991

The calculated values = 154.940 is greater than tabulated value = 5.991



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Therefore, the H0 hypothesis (null hypothesis) is rejected and the H1 (alternative hypothesis) is accepted. We can conclude, therefore, that women participation in labour force has negative effect on child care and development.

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

A critical examination of the study shows that the involvement of women in labour force has made it practically difficult for the women to have a strong parental bonding with their children. 70% affirmed with this fundamental problem. Parental bonding is very crucial for the healthy social development of every child. When there is no mother-child bonding, the children may be denied the motherly affection, love and protection.

It has been discovered in this study that women have no chance to control and monitor their children's behaviours because they were usually away from home as a result of their engagement in paid employment. When parents have no chance of controlling and monitoring their children's behaviours, such children may go wayward and become deviants in the society. Most of the working mothers also confirmed that they do not have time to give full and adequate religious norms and social values to their children. Indoctrination of religious and social values would assist the children to behave very well and conform to the rules and regulations of the society. It would equally help them to have a good social interaction with other people in the society. Hence, when parents (especially mothers) were unable to give religious and moral instructions to their children, such children would be at the peril of deviant and criminal behaviours in the society.

It was also discovered in this study that most working mothers were unable, to properly socialize their children. This is one of the painful prices they have to pay for engaging in labour force and move far away from their homes. Women are considered to be the first teachers of children throughout the world. The first person a child would recognize is the mother because of the bonding between a mother and her child. Mothers are usually considered as the best teachers and perhaps, this is the reason why teaching profession is dominated by women.

The study also confirmed that children would receive better care when their mothers are not working than when such mothers were engaged in paid employment. Mothers that are not

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working would have total attention paid on their children care and development than mothers that are working. Care and attention can only be given adequately to the children when mothers are much around their children. This is quite impossible for the working mothers.

Finally, our hypothesis confirmed that there is going to be overall negative effect on child care and development as a result of the women participation in labour force.

We can conclude, therefore, that women involvement in paid employment would consequently affect the child upbringing in our society. Care and attention may not be given to the children and this may affect them negatively in the society.

The study, therefore, gives the following recommendations:

- (1) The hours during which women are involved in labour force should be legislatively regulated to give enough time for them to be at home to perform their roles as mothers at home.
- (2) There should be a legislation that would regulate the distance between the places of work and the homes of the working mothers. Women should not be allowed to work very far away from their homes.
- (3) Government should make provision for the community care for the children of women that are engaged in labour force in Nigeria. Community care would fill the gaps left behind by the working mothers in the care and development of the children. The other alternative cares i.e. Day-care homes and nanny homes must be regulated by the government. When this is done such Day-care homes and Nanny homes would perform up to the standard to really cater for the children of the working mothers.
- (4) Finally, this study recommends further study on the comparative deviant behaviours analyses between the children of working mothers and non – working mothers.



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