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Patriarchal Hegemony: Investigating the Impact of Patriarchy on Women's Work-Life Balance — [Source link](#)

[Toyin Ajibade Adisa](#), [Issa Abdulraheem](#), [Sulu Babaita Isiaka](#)

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Patriarchal Hegemony: Investigating the Impact of Patriarchy on Women's Work-Life Balance

Abstract

Purpose – Research on the impact of patriarchy and patriarchal norms on women's work-life balance is scarce. A typical patriarchal society, such as Nigeria, tends to be organised based on gender, and the construct is embedded in the culture. This study investigates the impact of patriarchy on women's work-life balance in a non-western context: Nigeria.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The authors adopt a qualitative research approach to enhance their insight into the issue of patriarchy and women's work-life balance. Data for the study was collected over a four-month period, utilising semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection.

Findings – The findings of the thematic analysis reveal the impact of patriarchy on women's work-life balance in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Nigeria. Women's aspirations to achieve work-life balance in this part of the world are often frustrated by patriarchal norms, which are deeply ingrained in the culture. The findings of this study reveal that male dominance of and excessive subordination of females, domestic and gender-based division of labour, and higher patriarchal proclivities among men are the ingredients of a patriarchal society. These issues make the achievement of work-life balance difficult for women.

Research Limitations/Implications – The extent to which the findings of this research can be generalised is constrained by the limited sample size and the selected research context.

Practical Implications – The insights gleaned from this research suggest that there are still major challenges for women in the global south, specifically Nigeria, in terms of achieving work-life balance due to the prevalent patriarchy and patriarchal norms in the society. Strong patriarchal norms and proclivity negatively affect women's work-life balance and in turn may impact employee productivity, organisational effectiveness, employee performance, and employee punctuality at work. However, an Australian 'Champion of Change' initiative may be adopted to ease the patriarchal proclivity and help women to achieve work-life balance.

Originality/Value – This article provides valuable insights by bringing patriarchy into the discussion of work-life balance. This issue has been hitherto rare in the literature. It therefore enriches the literature on work-life balance from a patriarchal perspective.

Keywords: Work-life balance, women, patriarchy, patriarchal norms, culture, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria epitomises a typical patriarchal African society in which a system of social stratification and gender differentiation enable men to dominate women in all spheres of life. Patriarchal hegemony or what Connell (2005, p. 830) referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity' has a huge impact on social hierarchy and women's activities, specifically in the global south. Through the lens of patriarchy, this article uses semi-structured interviews with women who are engaged in full-time work and who also have private life commitments (including domestic and care responsibilities) to investigate women's work-life balance (WLB) in an extremely patriarchal society, Nigeria. This article contributes to the contemporary debate on women, work, nonwork obligations, and the issue of WLB and gender (Sorensen, 2017).

One of the most striking phenomena of the 21st century has been the increase in women's participation in the labour market (Cortes, 2018). Researchers have noted that the stereotypes of male breadwinners and female homemakers are fast disappearing, with women now contributing as much as men to the family purse (Zuo and Tang, 2000; Trappe et al., 2015). This requires women to combine and balance their work and nonwork obligations.

This situation often leads more women to experience a high level of role overload and caregiving strain (Duxbury and Higgins, 2008). Furthermore, research has indicated that women often experience less spousal support than their male counterparts (De Klerk and Mostert, 2010). Therefore, helping women to achieve a satisfactory balance between their work and personal life has become paramount for human resources management (HRM) (Beham et al., 2012).

Although WLB is important to both men and women (Emslie et al., 2004; Doble and Supriya, 2010), economically active women tend to need it more than their male counterparts due to their familial and care responsibilities for children and other

elderly dependents (Bardoel et al., 1999). This explains why some researchers have argued that gender is central to WLB (Sullivan and Lewis, 2001; Pillinger, 2002). However, in Nigeria's extremely patriarchal context, where women constitute almost half of the country's population, research on the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB is rare. Patriarchy is hugely entrenched in Nigerian society in terms of norms, values, and customs that separating it from life and culture is unthinkable for many people (Makama, 2013).

This article aims to fill this research gap by investigating the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB in Nigeria. Nigerian society has patriarchal features that are typical of most societies in the global south. Women are therefore typically viewed and often treated as less than equal to men, with a common saying that the role of women lies in the kitchen (see Makama, 2013).

In this regard, this article and the empirical study on which it is based make two contributions. Firstly, it positions patriarchy as a key barrier to the achievement of WLB for women. Secondly, it contributes to the literature on WLB by enhancing our understanding of the impact of patriarchy and patriarchal norms on women's WLB, specifically in the non-western context. In pursuing these objectives, it draws on the everyday experiences of women who are employed full-time and who also have other private life commitments in Nigeria.

The article starts with an overview of the issues of WLB and gender, followed by a discussion of patriarchy as a theoretical lens for the study. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology employed in the study, along with an analysis of the findings thereof. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings and an outline of the implications and agenda for future research.

WLB in Context

The concept of WLB is derived from role theory (Kahn et al., 1964), which provides that the different roles that individuals undertake in their lives are incompatible and can conflict with each other (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). As a result, individuals are confronted with the challenges of balancing their work and private life roles (Feeney and Stritch, 2017). Such challenges are often more acute for women than men, as they have many familial responsibilities (Matos, 2015). The need for flexibility to accommodate these roles has given rise to the concept of WLB. WLB is both a social construct and a discourse. It tends to be defined either as an individual experience or aspiration, or it is used as an adjective to describe workplace policies or practices that purport to enhance employees' work experiences (Lewis and Beauregard, 2018).

In defining WLB, Grzywacz and Carlson (2007, p. 458) highlighted the 'accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains'. However, achieving a balance between the competing demands of work and nonwork is central to all the definitions of WLB.

There have been many initiatives designed to help employees reconcile their competing work and nonwork demands. While some debates have concentrated on equal opportunity and family-friendly policies, some have focused on greater flexibility (MacInnes, 2008; Smithson and Stokoe, 2005). Some researchers have positioned WLB as a matter of individual choice and responsibility to prioritise and organise schedules.

Others have argued that structural, cultural, and practical constraints determine individuals' sense of entitlement and capability to achieve WLB (Caproni, 2004; Lewis et al., 2007; Hobson, 2014). For some commentators and theoreticians, WLB and the flexible working that accompanies it can be understood as being connected to neo-liberalism and its attempt to restore its lost power, such as individual freedom,

freedom of choice, and flexibility (Harvey, 2005; Marinescu, 2017). Neoliberalism mean 'capturing the ideas of individual freedom and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state, capitalist class interests could hope to protect and even restore their position' (Harvey, 2005, p. 142). Furthermore, Harvey (2005, p. 53) argued that 'the virtuous claims for flexible specialisation in labour process and for flex-time arrangements could become part of the neoliberal rhetoric that could be persuasive to individual labourers...Greater freedom and liberty of action in the labour market could be touted as a virtue for capital and labour alike'.

However, Warhurst et al. (2008) identified three major shortcomings in the debate of WLB. The first relates to a persistent mismatch between employer aims for WLB and employee experiences. The second is connected to the purported difference between 'work' and 'life'. Donkin (2010, p. 14) have argued that this difference is a 'ghastly and meaningless neologism' that seeks to separate the inseparable domains of 'work' and 'life'. A related assumption to this is 'balance' and the allocation of equal time and energy to the domains of work and life (Ranjan and Prasad, 2013), neglecting the 'perceptual experience of time and the subjective meanings people assign to it' (Thompson and Bunderson, 2007, p.17).

It is a false dichotomy to posit that the word 'balance' means allocating equal amounts of energy and time to work related and nonwork-related duties (Osoian et al., 2009; Ranjan and Prasad, 2013). What 'balance' in the context of WLB means is allowing employees some degree of flexibility and control over when, where, and how they do their daily work (Kesting and Harris, 2009). The third relates to assumptions that work negatively affects employees' nonwork lives and that the word 'life' revolves only around family or childcare.

Although the majority of the WLB research has been undertaken and focused on western context (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Lewis et al., 2007; Herman and Lewis,

2012). However, researchers from Africa, specifically Nigeria have also brought to the fore issues concerning WLB in non-western context. For example, Adisa et al. (2016) identified huge work pressure, poor infrastructural facilities, and a lack of suitable and practicable work-family balance policies as the main causes of work-life conflict among female medical practitioners in Nigeria. Furthermore, Adisa et al. (2017a) argued that the financial respite and improved standard of living associated with being involved in dual earning relationships (i.e. dual earning couples) are partly responsible for the increase in the number of dual-earner families in Nigeria. Similarly, in the South African context, Whitehead and Kotze (2003) argued that WLB is a life-process with a cyclical nature and is an important tool for achieving personal growth. Meanwhile, Asiedu-Appiah et al. (2013) found that Ghanaian women felt a more profound need for WLB in order to be productive. Their study revealed that women with healthy WLB tend to be more productive than their counterparts who find it difficult to harmonise the competing demands of their work and nonwork lives. Consequently, there seems to be a paucity of research about the challenges and impact of patriarchy on women's WLB, specifically in the non-western context, where patriarchy is highly prevalent. This study brings to the fore the issue of patriarchy, which is prevalent in Africa, to the debate of WLB, using Nigeria as the research focus. This will enhance our understanding of the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a social and ideological construct which considers men as superior to women (Rawat, 2014). Walby (1990) describes patriarchy as a social system in which men hold authority over women, children, and property. Patriarchy encourages male leadership, male domination, and male power. It is a system in which women are subject to economic dependence, violence, domestication, and the peripherals of decision-making. It imposes structures that categorise some types of work as 'men's work' and some as 'women's work' (Reardon, 1996).

Generally, gender inequality, sexism, and male domination, inter alia, are characteristics of a patriarchal society (Smith, 1990; Sugarman and Frankel, 1996). Consequently, these characteristics have hugely impacted various institutions, including marriage and family (Makama, 2013). Patriarchy implies that authority is vested in the male as head of the family. This means that he oversees the ownership and earnings of the household, and that he controls the household's preferences for work, leisure, and the overall affairs of the family (Heath and Ciscel, 1998). However, different cultures give different degrees of significance to such issues (Ebert, 1988). For example, the patriarchal structure of the Arab and Palestinian societies are stronger in terms of male domination over women (see Haj-Yahia, 2003, 2005).

A patriarchal society recognises male dominance and superiority over females. This may well be the reason why Sultana (2011) described patriarchy as the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. Patriarchal ideologists often exaggerate the biological differences between men and women, often claiming that men have the masculine, dominant, and therefore superior roles and that women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. This ideology is so powerful that 'men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress' (Sultana, 2011, p. 3). Such men are able to do this through various institutions, such as the academy, church, and in the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's weaknesses and subordination to men (Millett, 1977, p. 35).

Patriarchal systems and institutions are 'man-made' (Brownmiller, 1976; Firestone, 1974). The patriarchal construct is real, and it is embedded in cultures. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. In some societies, culture and religion have imposed certain responsibilities on women regardless of their employment status and career.

In African culture, for example, women, regardless of their status and professions, are responsible for domestic responsibilities such as household chores, bearing and raising children, doing the laundry, cooking, etc. The domestic role of women in African culture is fundamental to the sustainability of marriage. Women play the traditional roles that are recognised by their society as well as other economic and social roles.

Harriden (2012) pointed out that women are not confined to domestic roles; rather, they can seek positions of public authority. However, women face many challenges in their attempts to achieve WLB. They are expected to perform certain roles arising from the religious and cultural obligations that are associated with their gender. This gives rise to conflict between a woman's work and her traditional role in the family.

This may be the reason why work-life conflict is very common among women, with their careers pulling them in one direction and their family obligations pulling in the other (Adisa et al., 2016). It may therefore be argued that the work-life imbalance experienced by women is a result of the conflict between their traditional roles in their families and their career. In other words, women often experience great difficulties when the competing roles of work and nonwork domains clash (Sumra and Schillaci, 2015).

Therefore, striking a balance between these two spheres of life has been a major challenge for women, especially those with household responsibilities (Wheatley, 2012). Women's efforts to maintain a balance between their work and nonwork obligations are often thwarted by male supremacy, which is the basis of gender hierarchy in the contemporary society (Antonoff and Brown, 2015; Learner 1989). In other words, patriarchy imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society, which strengthen the power relations between men and women (Rawat, 2014).

Methodology

As this study was inductive in nature, a qualitative in-depth approach was adopted (following Cassell and Symon, 1994; Mason, 2002). The research sought to investigate the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB in Nigeria. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured format, which sought to explore the participants' experiences of how patriarchal norms impact their WLB. This research approach is appropriate for this study as it is concerned with life as it is lived, activities as they unfold, and situations as they occur in the activities in the participants' day-to-day lives (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected by means of in-depth semi-structured interviews with women who are engaged in full-time work and who also have private life commitments, including domestic and care responsibilities. The study has been designed to be open-ended in order to allow unexpected themes to emerge. The participants of this qualitative study were women working in banks in the city of Lagos, Nigeria.

Participants were sought by means of emails through the existing contacts of the researchers. Out of the 62 emails that were sent to the potential participants, 41 signified their intentions to participate in the study, and 32 eventually participated in it. All of the participants fulfilled the purposeful sampling criteria (Patton, 2002). Firstly, the participants were required to be engaged in full-time employment. Secondly, they were required to either be married or living with their partners. Thirdly, the participants were also required to have private life commitments, including familial and care responsibilities.

The participants held positions at all levels of the banks' hierarchy (15 in various management positions; 17 in junior positions), and the sample was comprised solely

of women. The participants were aged between 22 and 40 years old and reported an average of six years of work experience. It is important to note that the **average age** for employment in most of the new generation banks in Nigeria is 25 (Lucas, 2015). This may be the reason why all the participants were under the age of 40. The data collection started in February 2018 and ended in June 2018. The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were based on the literature review and aims of the study.

The participants were asked open-ended questions about the impact of patriarchy on their WLB: (a) what is the impact of patriarchy on your WLB? (b) how does patriarchy facilitate or hinder your achievement of WLB? These questions were not strictly adhered to, because we recognised that new questions might emerge during the conversation (Myers, 2009). In this way, the participants were able to share their experiences and express themselves well, even providing examples of scenarios they had experienced. The interviews were based on two key areas (Bacharach et al., 2000): (1) the participants' background, knowledge, work, and private life contexts and (2) descriptions of individual cases as life stories.

The participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. Each participant signed a non-disclosure agreement when requested. Anonymity was used to protect the participants. The interviews took place at the participants' location of choice and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. Five participants declined to give permission for their interviews to be audio-recorded. In these cases, detailed notes were taken by the researchers to ensure that nothing from the interview was missed.

Data Analysis

A data-driven thematic analysis, as recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008), was applied in order to capture the impact of patriarchy on the participants' WLB. Thematic analysis involves encoding qualitative information by using explicit codes (Boyatzis, 1998). The themes and patterns identified in the information can either be

manifest (directly observable) or latent (categorising issues underlying the phenomena) (Boyatzis, 1998).

After a narrative summary of the interviews had been drafted, open coding (the identification of key points and objectives) was applied (Boeije, 2005). We then grouped the first set of codes into categories according to the common codes. We did not impose coding categories a priori; rather, we remained open to insights by allowing the categories to emerge from the data in order to avoid missing important themes. The categories were then marked with different colours in order to facilitate analysis of the data, and a thematic map was drawn. The main categories were further fine-tuned by frequent comparisons until a representative overview was achieved.

We were meticulous with the data analysis and reached full agreement on the four themes that emerged from the data. For the purpose of enhancing reliability, the three researchers independently and differently coded the data. The inter-rater reliability was around 86 per cent. **Before the findings are presented, it is essential to mention that while the findings of this study are not generalisable, it is possible that they are relevant to similar research contexts, especially Africa. This is because the qualitative methodology detailed the participants' unique experiences of WLB and patriarchy in the global south, which may be different to the reality of what is obtainable in the global north.**

Findings

The findings of the thematic analysis reveal the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB in Nigeria. Women's aspirations to achieve WLB are often frustrated by: (a) the male dominance and excessive subordination of females, (b) domestic and gender-based division of labour, and (c) higher patriarchal proclivities among men. All of these factors are deeply ingrained in the Nigerian culture.

Male Dominance and Excessive Subordination of Females

Patriarchy systemically and traditionally underrates the social conditions of women's lives in Nigerian society. It forces the authority of men on women, such that women require the acquiescence, to a large extent, of men to be able to achieve WLB. The two quotes below are remarkable illustrations of this theme:

Nigerian society is, traditionally, extremely patriarchal. A woman needs to ask her husband/partner/father for permission in order to attend to activities that will help her to achieve WLB. For example, going to the gym, attending social functions, and attending church services on Wednesday and on Sunday are my own nonwork activities; and, of course, there are also the traditional domestic duties. However, I cannot attend to any of these activities without my husband's approval. He stopped my attendance at the gym a long time ago (Participant A, 32 years old).

Another participant commented on how her husband and indeed most of the Nigerian men unilaterally engage in making decisions without recourse to their partners/wives' opinions, and the culture supports them. She commented:

The truth of the matter is that in the Nigerian madly patriarchal society, a man takes it all in terms of decision-making, even if that decision entirely concerns you as a woman. For example, I am really not a religious person, but I love attending parties...whenever I am able to attend parties, I feel really good, energised, and I feel that my work and nonwork lives are balanced. But my husband has stopped me from attending parties since 2016, and you know the culture supports him – whatever he says stands. So, it's all about my work and going home to resume my domestic duties...no life, really (Participant Z, 29 years old).

The situation is extreme for participant B, who seeks her husband's permission even on work-related matters. She said:

I practically cannot do anything without my husband's permission. Even some issues that are work-related still require his permission. For example, the company I worked for opened another branch in

Ibadan last year, and I was meant to go and oversee the new branch, but my husband did not approve of it. I was going to start exercising along with a neighbour every evening. Again, he won't sanction that, either. No woman in this Nigerian patriarchal society, where women are subservient to men, can hope to achieve WLB or anything else without the approval of her husband/partner/father (Participant B, 40, years old).

These findings indicate a well-established (historically rooted, ideologically admitted, psychologically internalised) state of male domination. Such systemic undervaluation of the female gender consigns women's WLB to the mercy of their husbands, partners, or fathers. This is a sufficiently effective system of a dominant gender order ingrained in a well-established patriarchy.

Domestic and Gender-Based Division of Labour

Typically, in Nigerian society, domestic duties are divided according to gender – it is exclusively the women's duty to look after the home, including any care responsibilities therein. For example, a participant commented:

A woman is responsible for looking after the home. This includes cooking, doing the laundry for her husband and her children, caring for the elderly (if there are any elderly people around), and looking after the children's welfare and education. In fact, I combine all of these with my full-time job. Achieving WLB with these huge commitments is almost impossible (Participant K, 31 years old).

While women are expected to discharge their familial responsibilities promptly and without any excuse, there is no such expectation from men, which makes achieving WLB easier for men than women. The mindset of Nigerians on the role distribution in the family is clear. Domestic duties are traditionally perceived as women's duties, and challenging this age-long belief will upset an established cultural status quo. Another participant explained:

I have three little children, and I am responsible for their upkeep as well as that of their father. I cook and attend to every single domestic

duty as dictated by the Nigerian culture. My husband does not participate in the domestic duties...traditionally, he is not expected to do that. These patriarchal norms negatively affect my achievement of a desired WLB (Participant T, 38 years old).

Men are effectively immune from participating in domestic duties, which burdens women with a lot of work in addition to their daily paid job. The account of participant Z evidences this fact:

Yes! A woman does everything at home. The man is the head of the family, and he is not expected to do domestic duties. So, how can I achieve WLB when I do all the domestic work alone? The fact is that except in the case that a man steps in to help his wife or partner with some of the domestic chores (which rarely happens in Nigeria because the culture does not permit it), achieving WLB for women, especially women in full-time employment, will ever remain an illusion (Participant X, 24 years old).

Participants commented on hiring domestic helpers to assist in discharging some of these traditional duties. However, the husband still decides and approves when she can get domestic helpers. Furthermore, even with domestic helpers, certain duties cannot be assigned to domestic helpers. Participant R commented:

Combining my paid work and non-work commitments is just too herculean for me. So, my husband approved my getting a house help. However, I still organise and coordinate the tasks, and my husband will not allow the house help to cook his meal...so, I still do that, because traditionally, that is my duty (Participant R, 33 years old).

The division of domestic duties according to gender is an essential part of the patriarchal norms in Nigerian society. The many domestic responsibilities shouldered by women, most of the time alongside their paid work, make achieving WLB difficult. It is also worth noting that three of the participants also share the belief that domestic duties are for women and not for men. For example participant Q commented:

I believe that domestic duties, including caregiving duties to the children and the elderly, cooking, doing the laundry, and others, are

a woman's duties...I can't imagine my husband cooking or doing the laundry. I think it's not good...or maybe I should say it is culturally unheard of in this part of the world (Participant Q).

Women who share this believe seem to systematically subscribe to the social, gender, and domestic stratification of duties and responsibilities, which often affect women's WLB.

Higher Patriarchal Proclivities among Men

'Patriarchal proclivity' refers to the predispositions of men to dominate women. The participants commented on the highly patriarchal behaviour among men as a huge barrier to achieving WLB. Typically, the Nigerian men are inclined to dominate their wives/partners, thus giving women and femininity a peripheral role and thereby subjugating them. One participant commented:

The Nigerian men's mindset has been conditioned in such a way that the majority of them believe that they own their wives/partners as their own property. Achieving WLB with this kind of mindset is difficult. It is like aiming to be successful in a master-slave setting. Achieving WLB requires some freedom, which is practically absent with this mindset (Participant G, 22 years old).

One participant described men as a critical success factor for women in terms of achieving WLB:

Nigerian men are extremely patriarchal, which make women's WLB difficult. For example, the patriarchal system has affected my career progression and it has also affected my nonwork activities. Basically, men are a critical success factor for women in terms of achieving WLB, because he makes the decisions, and whatever he says stands. These decisions include whether a woman may take part in activities that will help her to achieve WLB or not (Participant L, 37 years old).

In only one case, a participant commented on the liberal mindset of her partner, leading to her achievement of the desired WLB:

Seriously, he is like one in a million because his supportiveness (in terms of helping me with domestic work) is really unlike Nigerian men. I enjoy a very good WLB because my partner assists me in everything I do at home. In fact, we share the domestic duties. This allows me time for my career and other non-work activities such as attending church, attending social functions, and other stuff I always like to do. Traditionally, men are not like that in this part of the world (Participant U, 36 years old).

The strongly patriarchal mindset among Nigerian men does not only pose huge difficulties for women in terms of achieving WLB, but also portrays women as passive recipients of gender inequality. At the intersection of work and non-work obligations, while men focus more on their work duties and do almost nothing at home in terms of domestic work, women participate fully and actively in both aspects of life.

Discussion and Conclusions

This article has examined the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB in Nigeria. The article found that hegemonic masculinity, which is prevalent in Nigerian society, poses huge challenges to women's ability to achieve WLB. At its core, the research suggests that patriarchy and patriarchal norms are deeply ingrained in Nigerian society and have a debilitating effect on women's WLB. Patriarchy systemically withholds women's freedom to freely engage in some nonwork life activities, which constitutes a seeming act of domination of men over women.

The findings reveal the dominant system and ideology of patriarchy that underpin the emblematic subordination of the female gender to the male under the guise of the overused mantra 'the man is the head of the house'. This phenomenon depicts the reality of WLB among women in the patriarchal Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Nigeria. The subordination and male dominance of females are excessive, such that women require men's permission for almost every aspect of their lives. For example, the findings reveal that women require the consent of their husbands/partners to

participate in some nonwork life activities, which has a huge impact on their ability to achieve WLB.

Many participants reported that their spouses have stopped them from attending to some nonwork activities, which has negatively affected their WLB. However, they have had to comply with their spouse's will, as the culture demands. This phenomenon systemically undervalues the female gender and consigns women's WLB to the discretion and mercy of their husbands/partners. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society is based on a set of social relations which enable men to discriminate against and ultimately dominate women (Makama, 2013; Stacey, 1993).

Furthermore, this study has highlighted the domestic and gender-based division of labour as one of the ingredients of patriarchy, which makes the achievement of WLB difficult for women. Nigerian culture divides domestic duties according to gender. Women are traditionally expected to look after the home, including any care responsibilities therein. This is an ideological tool of patriarchy, which makes the achievement of WLB difficult, particularly for working women. The mindset of Nigerians, especially men, concerning role distribution in the family is gender-biased. Challenging this longstanding belief and tradition will upset an established cultural status quo. In fact, Adisa et al. (2014) argued that women who neglect their primary responsibilities (home/familial duties) for their career prospects could potentially face domestic conflicts and the possibility of societal sanctions.

Basically, patriarchy is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of gender, and it sets the parameters for women's inequalities, placing constraints on the roles and activities of women (Makama, 2013; Salaam, 2003). It is interesting to note that some participants also share the belief that domestic duties are meant for women and not for men. This belief can be attributed to the age-long patriarchal culture that is prevalent in Africa, specifically Nigeria.

However, the impact of the division of domestic duties according to gender on women's WLB is nevertheless detrimental. Additionally, the strongly patriarchal mindset among Nigerian men is a huge obstacle precluding women's achievement of WLB. Typically, Nigerian men are inclined to dominate their wives/partners, thus assigning women and femininity a peripheral role and thereby subjugating them. This poses huge difficulties for women in terms of achieving WLB and portrays them as passive recipients of gender inequality.

There is a strong patriarchal proclivity among Nigerian men, and there is little sign of a change in attitude. The strong patriarchal proclivity not only affects Nigerian women's WLB, but also affects other aspect of their lives, including their choice of occupation. This article thus indicates that women's WLB and patriarchy are interrelated in the sense that patriarchy has a huge impact on women's WLB.

This article, basically, suggests that women could enjoy good WLB in an environment in which patriarchal proclivity is low or at least moderate. Conversely, women's WLB will suffer where patriarchal proclivity is strong. The article thus argues that in a patriarchal society with intact and well-observed patriarchal norms, women's WLB may never come to fruition. Patriarchy has not been given sufficient consideration in the contemporary WLB debates, thus making the contributions of this article timely and essential.

Implications and Agenda for Future Research

This research makes an important contribution to the literature on women and WLB in that it expands the theoretical understanding of the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB. The findings suggest that women's WLB suffers in highly patriarchal environment. Furthermore, the insights from this research also suggest important implications for organisations, practitioners, and policymakers regarding the lingering impact of patriarchy on women's WLB. It may be argued that the issue of patriarchy primarily affects familial relations and domestic affairs. However,

researchers have argued that a lack of WLB often results in absenteeism from work and a lack of productivity, which negatively impact employee performance and organisational effectiveness (Antai et al., 2015; Cole and Kreiner, 1992).

To this end, organisations should develop initiatives that will help working women achieve WLB in order to enhance their effectiveness at work. For example, organisations could introduce an on-site crèche for nursing mothers and/or introduce family-friendly policies, such as extended maternity leave, family leave, parental leave, and flexible work arrangements, all of which are emancipatory initiatives through which employees can achieve WLB (see Visser and Williams, 2006). This will ease the excruciating effect of patriarchy on women's WLB.

Furthermore, policymakers should launch awareness programmes to sensitise the public to the need to ease these extreme patriarchal norms, which will help women achieve WLB. Policymakers may choose to adopt the Australian 'Champion of Change' strategy. This strategy involves men of power and influence campaigning for gender equality in Australian organisations and communities. Adoption of such an initiative could minimise the gender inequality that is perpetuated by the patriarchal norms and beliefs in Nigerian society. In so doing, women will achieve WLB, which will have a positive impact on employee productivity, employee performance, and organisational effectiveness.

It is hoped that this study will stimulate future research on the position and view of men regarding the division of domestic duties in societies such as Nigeria, where gender or 'gendering' is mostly perceived as 'women's issue' which negatively impacts women's WLB. **While this study is timely in highlighting the complexity of a little understood context of WLB and patriarchy, the extent to which the findings of this research can be generalised is constrained by the research's limited sample size, scope, and research context, Nigeria. Therefore, future research could expand on this current study in Nigeria and other African countries, for further insight into**

patriarchal hegemony and women's WLB in the global north. Future research could also use a quantitative approach to test the relationship between patriarchy, gender norms, and WLB. Such a study might, if comparative, be more readily generalisable across multiple contexts.

Furthermore, a multi-country comparative study would shed further light on the impact of patriarchy on women's WLB, taking into consideration different cultural contexts. Lastly, it would be beneficial if future research could study the perspectives of Nigerian men in relation to sharing domestic duties with their wives/partners with the aim of achieving WLB.

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