

Women Librarians and their Time Management Practices

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Abstract

Purpose: *the study investigated how woman librarians in Nigeria manage their time to satisfy the dual roles they perform as wage-earners and home managers*

Design/methodology/approach: *- the survey research method that adopted the use of questionnaire as the instrument for data collection was used in conducting the study. A sample of sixty-one woman librarians constituting 100% of the total population was sampled to generate data for the study.*

Findings: *- the research findings revealed that these women spend averagely eight hours on wage-earning activities and required at least nine hours for effective performance of house-hold chores. Myriad of problems confront these women, their employers and family members in the course of satisfying the dual roles they perform.*

Practical implications:- *the women librarians aware of the time demanded by both the house-hold and wage-earning activities will through effective planning, judicious use of saved time and energy, be more productive both at home and place of work.*

Originality/value: *- A fundamental study that challenges women librarians to be conscious of time management practices and be more proactive in the discharge of their duties so as to reduce to the barest minimum, areas of conflict both at home and in the office.*

Keywords: *- women librarians, time management, wage-earners, home managers, labour –saving devices, work simplification techniques.*

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

“Time is an intangible resource which is available in a limited, though unspecified amount to everyone for use throughout one’s life span”, Pausch (2007). “Time is the scarcest resource of the manager, if it’s not managed nothing else can be managed”, Drucker (2008). It is a constant in one’s life. Each person has his or her own life span and timing may be a partial determinant of this duration. People throughout the world have equal amount of time daily. Each day everyone has a total of 24 hours. Time therefore forms the framework in which various activities takes place. Time management is a set of principles, practices, skills, tools and systems working together to help get more value out of time with the aim of improving the quality of life. Time management refers to the development of processes and tools that increase efficiency and productivity.

Management of time involves the use of time in such a way as to conserve it for the purpose of meeting the needs and wants of women

librarians and even other employed women. These women librarians as public servants are paid to work for the public. They therefore face the challenge of using available resources for the purpose they consider important. These resources not only include money, time, energy and material things but also knowledge, interest, ability and skills in interacting with their family members and other people outside their homes. Therefore for time management to be effective, time must be apportioned to various activities. This involves the listing of the day’s activities with the amount of time required for each activity. Most women librarians and indeed other working mothers are really fighting a lost battle to jumble the more than one thousand tasks demanded by jobs, children, home, husbands, friends and family, Klein (2007). The woman librarian is vitally interested in the distribution of time spent in consumption activities, as well as in management of time, for strictly productive activities/ventures. Time management deals with planning and prioritizing where one takes time to

think and to consult align work with what matters most and to determine priority before urgency. For scheduling, one negotiates and manages realistic deadlines, uses available scheduling tools to best effect, structures in adequate time for all stages of work which is revised and reviewed often. And in organizing, one keeps an updated “to do” list in priority order and use technology wisely. One should not delegate where you can eliminate but delegating appropriately, gradually and strategically. Always make informed decisions, use common sense and communicate effectively and clearly, limits should be recognized. One has to be honest, vocal, and polite but direct. Time management in the more implies scheduling of time for necessary work in the house such as food preparation, serving, cleaning, laundering; children to be trained and supervised, the interest and activities of other adults in the family must also be shared. Time for social activities and other obligations must enter into the concept of time management of the woman. The woman librarian who is also a homemaker will not let the interests listed above unbalance her living in terms of health and personal development. There must be time for rest, sleep, recreation and hospitality together with sufficient leisure that will help keep her emotionally stable and intellectually alert.

There must also be a balance between office work and house work. The woman librarian should therefore recognize the fact that time limitation exists. There should be expected time limit for doing things whether they are routine, appointed, and creative or leisure activities. Efficiency in performance and effectiveness of action are often judged by the time used. Industrialization with sophisticated modern house-hold equipment has reduced the time spent on household work by these women, more so when the economy and civilization have changed the status of most women in the society. Women nowadays function effectively in the world like men despite their role as home managers.

The situation above has increased the responsibilities of women librarians in and outside the homes. As employed women, they are expected to perform some household activities and at the same time perform other activities outside the homes to earn wages. In order to meet the demands of the activities involved in the dual roles played by these

women, effective time management becomes very essential. Since effective management of time by the woman librarian poses a lot of socio-personal problems, appropriate methods are needed within the context of personal programmes to learn more about oneself and how to put such understanding into effect in relation to more clearly perceived realistically defined goals so that at the end, the woman becomes a happier and a more productive member of the society.

Statement of the Problem

In a developing country like Nigeria where women librarians are home makers and labour-saving equipment are hardly available, women are still expected to efficiently perform their dual roles as home managers and wage earners. In Nnamdi Azikwe Library, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State, these women work on strict schedules, performing these dual roles which are important for the survival of the individual members of the family. And since performance of these activities is very tasking, it makes the family life more complicated and uncomfortable. In order to minimize or eliminate problems emanating from the performance of the household and wage-earning activities, it is important that they develop the ability to management time judiciously. A search of the literature shows that no previous study has been conducted on librarian’s time management particularly in Nigeria. There is no doubt that a gap exists in our knowledge of female librarian’s time management practices. It therefore becomes necessary to examine the time management practices of women librarians considering the dual roles they perform.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are;

1. To determine the amount of time spent on wage-earning activities by women librarians in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
2. To identify the amount of time spent on the performance of house-hold activities.
3. To identify labour – saving equipment and other work simplification techniques used by these working class women.
4. To identify the problems confronting these women in their time management practices, their implications and how to solve them.

Research Questions

1. What amount of time is spent on wage – earning activities by women librarians in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library?
2. What is the order of performance of household activities by the women librarians?
3. What are the time and labour – saving equipment and other work simplification techniques used by these employed women?
4. What are the problems confronting women librarians as a result of the dual roles they perform as home – managers and wage earners?

Review of Related Literature

Most of the literature reviewed explored the concept of time management, factors affecting the pattern of time used and work simplification techniques. Time management is the ability to manage time effectively. Efficient management of time can help minimize expenditure of labour and time in running a home thereby spending less time for a greater output of work. A well-planned schedule for easy execution of duties within the time limit is a pre-requisite for effective time management. Time does not change with the events that are placed within it but represents a succession of events.

Wikr (2002) in his study on time budget revealed that the never-ending character of women's work is still a reality for whereas women rise early enough and retire late, men are allowed to chat with family, friends, play cards, read and rest. Daily plans are sometimes difficult to follow since unplanned and unexpected interruptions and demands arises which affect the time and work of a homemaker. Women have problems relating to time given to household tasks. This manifested in increasing disharmony and growing participation in domestic activities of husbands of these working housewives. Most women librarians work out of necessity. Some work so that the family can enjoy niceties. The problem is that the time crunch is killing women physically and emotionally, Klein (2007). The way time is perceived and used either stresses or rejuvenates these women (Yusupova, 2008).

Therefore for effective time management one must have a plan. There must also be consistency between the long term vision and

what is done now, Agu (2004). After a time plan is made, it must be implemented i.e. initiated and carried out to completion. George (2002) opined that this is achievable if we guard against these time-robbers namely procrastination, poor planning and scheduling, poor delegation, poor use of telephones, mismanagement of priorities and poring over junk mail and newspapers. All home makers have high and low activity days, time when they accomplish a lot and time when they have little to show for the twenty – four hours (Anyakoha 2001). According to Hoffman (2000) factors that influence the apportioning of responsibilities are many namely, the number of members in the family, the ages and occupation of each member, size and location of the house, income level, labour saving devices available. Cowles (2001) outlined three factors affecting women's allocation of time between home, child rearing and their economic activities. The factors are

- (a) Ability of other members to undertake child care activities especially during early period of child development
- (b) Ability to obtain or purchase surrogate care
- (c) Compatibility of her particular occupation with child care. Time spent on all household work is related to the family characteristic activities, standards, values and micro habitat. An unmarried woman will spend less time on household work because she does not have children or husband she caters for. Men spend less time than women in household work and families with smaller number of children spend less time than families with large number of children.

The concept of work simplification involves the use of consciously seeking of the simplest, easiest and quickest method of work with focus on resources of time as one of the major resources of family life. Estes P. (2009), there is a greater chance of household appliances making domestic work more convenient when a woman is working from an affluent home. Cowles (2001) described work simplification not as an end in itself but a tool which enables a family to conserve time and energy so that they will be available for other purposes which are more satisfying. Work simplification is a means of making life easier for working women through the use of labour- saving devices. It uses the

technique of planning for future effective use of time.

Research Method

This study used the survey method, employing the use of questionnaire as the main instrument of data collection. The questionnaire items were designed based on information gathered from the review of related literature by the researcher. A total of sixty-one women librarians in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library, University of Nigeria were involved in the study. (Source – Nominal role of staff,)

In analyzing the data collected for the study, the researcher made use of mean, percentages and ranking order. A four-point rating scale was also used for the analysis as outlined below:

Very often [VO] Strongly Agree [SA] = 4

Often [O] Agree [A] = 3

Seldom [S] Disagree [D] = 2

Never [N] Strongly Disagree [SD] = 1

The sample mean (which is weighted mean) was calculated on each scaling item by multiplying the frequency of response under such response category with the weighted mean or value and dividing the sum of the values obtained by the

number of respondents who gave response to that item i.e.

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Xf}{n}$$

Where \bar{x} = mean

\sum = sum of

X = weighted mark or value

f = frequency of response under each category

n = number of respondents.

Key for interpretation of the mean,

Very often [VO] = 3.50 – 4.00 = Performed daily

Often [O] = 2.50 – 3.49 = performed weekly

Seldom [S] = 1.50 – 2.49 = performed monthly

Never [N] = 0.50 – 1.49 = never performed.

Results and Discussions

The results of this study and the discussion of these results are reported along the line of the research questions.

Research Question 1

What amount of time is spent on wage-earning activities by women librarians in Nnamdi Azikiwe Library?

Table 1: Amount of Time Spent on Wage earning Activities.

Response	Frequency	%	Rank
< 8 hours	0	0	3 rd
8 hours	49	80.33	1 st
> 8 hours	12	19.67	2 nd

(N = 61)

Results obtained from table 1 indicates that women librarians spent at least 8 hours daily on wage earning activities since they officially resume work at 8.00 am and close at 4.00pm. Those who spend more than 8 hours do so to satisfy the demands of extra duties that needed

to be accomplished. Since these librarians spend averagely 8 hours on wage-earning activities, the amount of time left to perform household activities remains grossly inadequate and calls for effective management of time to solve this problem.

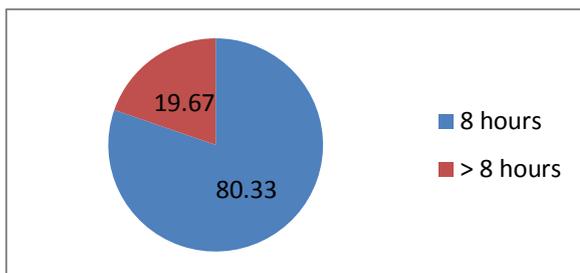


Fig 1 – time spent on wage –earning activities

Research Question 2

What is the order of performance of these house- hold activities?

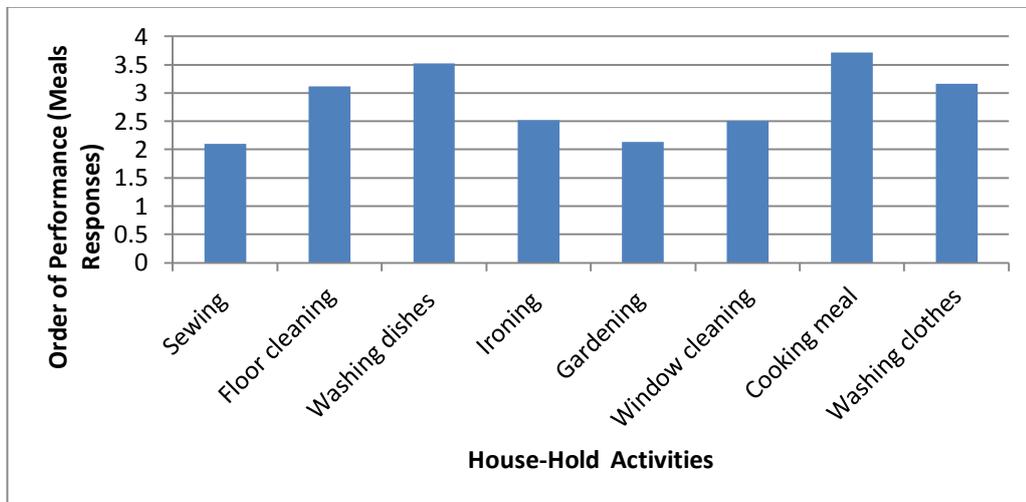
Table 2: Order of Performance of Major House-Hold Activities

Major household activities	Responses				Mean	Rank
	VO	O	S	N		
Sewing	0	11	45	5	2.10	8 th
Floor cleaning	19	30	12	0	3.12	4 th
Washing dishes	27	19	13	2	3.52	2 nd
Ironing	1	31	28	1	2.52	5 th
Gardening	5	15	24	17	2.13	7 th
Window cleaning	7	22	28	4	2.51	6 th
Cooking meal	47	11	3	0	3.72	1 st
Washing clothes	23	26	11	1	3.16	3 rd

(N = 61)

Cooking of meals and washing of dishes ranked 1st and 2nd respectively and this shows that women librarians perform these household activities at least once daily. Washing of clothes, floor cleaning, ironing and window cleaning in order of ranking indicate that these women perform these household activities at least once

every week. Gardening and sewing were seldomly performed by these women partly due to lack of adequate time, land for cultivation, non-availability of sewing machines or total dependence on seamstress, tailors or making purchases of readymade dresses from the market. This is graphically represented below:



Research Question 3a

What are the time and labour-saving devices used according to their order of ranking?

Rank Order of Labour and Time-Saving Equipments

Labour/Time saving equipments	Responses				Mean	Rank
	SA	A	D	SD		
Gas cooker	40	20	1	0	3.64	2 nd
Vacuum cleaner	12	27	20	2	2.80	9 th
Deep freezer	35	22	3	1	3.49	5 th
Refrigerator	41	19	1	0	3.66	1 st
Micro wave	31	27	2	1	3.44	6 th
Electric cooker	33	9	18	1	3.21	8 th
Kerosene stove	35	25	1	0	3.56	4 th
Grinder	36	24	1	0	3.57	3 rd
Washing machine	1	12	20	28	1.77	10 th
Blender	20	39	2	0	3.30	7 th
Food mixer	1	10	23	27	1.75	11 th

(N=61)

Results obtained yielded evidence that refrigerator, kerosene stove, deep freezer,

manual grinder, microwave and blender as time and labour-saving devices are accepted and evidently used to simplify the performance of

household activities by these women. Proper usage of these household equipment leads to conservation of time, energy and material. This does not only make the performance simple, easy, quick but also eliminates the monotony of repetitive daily tasks and the drudgery involved. Librarians who also complain of stress, fatigue

and other ailments after the day's activities will find the usage of the household equipment very valuable in meeting the demands of household activities and still have time for relaxation and other activities that will help them enjoy a fuller life.

Fig 3a: Rank Order of Labour and Time-Saving Equipment

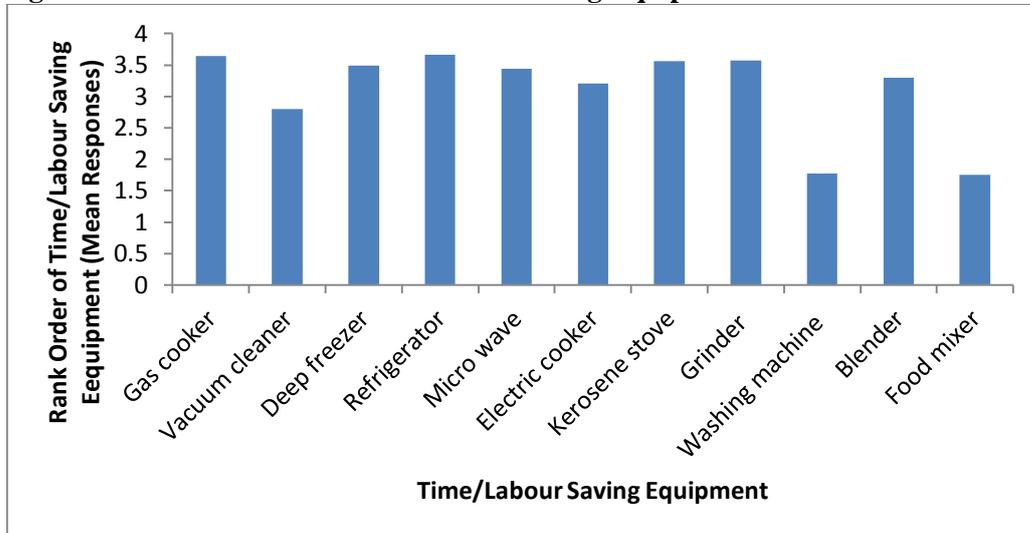


Fig 3a reveals the rank order of labour and time-saving equipment. It reveals that refrigerator emerged as the topmost labour-saving equipment. It was followed by gas cooker then grinder. The least is food mixer. The results obtained yielded evidence that refrigerator, kerosene stove, deep freezer, manual grinder, microwave and blender as time and labour-saving devices are accepted and evidently used to simplify the performance of household activities by these women. Proper usage of these

household equipment leads to conservation of time, energy and material. This does not only make the performance simple, easy, quick but also eliminates the monotony of repetitive daily tasks and the drudgery involved. Librarians who also complain of stress, fatigue and other ailments after the day's activities will find the usage of the household equipment very valuable in meeting the demands of household activities and still have time for relaxation and other activities that will help them enjoy a fuller life.

Table 3b: Work Simplification Techniques & Strategies in Ranking Order.

Work simplification techniques	Responses				Mean	Rank
	SA	A	D	SD		
Having labour-saving equipment like cooker, fridge, grinder helps in saving time.	51	10	0	0	38.8	1 st
Making shopping list and taking inventory before going to the market will save time and money.	44	13	1	3	3.61	2 nd
Household activities can be made easier by keeping things conveniently	37	23	0	1	3.57	4 th
Buying convenience food in super market will help to save time.	32	20	8	1	3.36	5 th
Having time-table for daily household work will help save time.	31	19	7	4	3.26	6 th
Having a place for everything and arranging things orderly saves time.	36	24	1	0	3.58	3 rd

(N = 61)

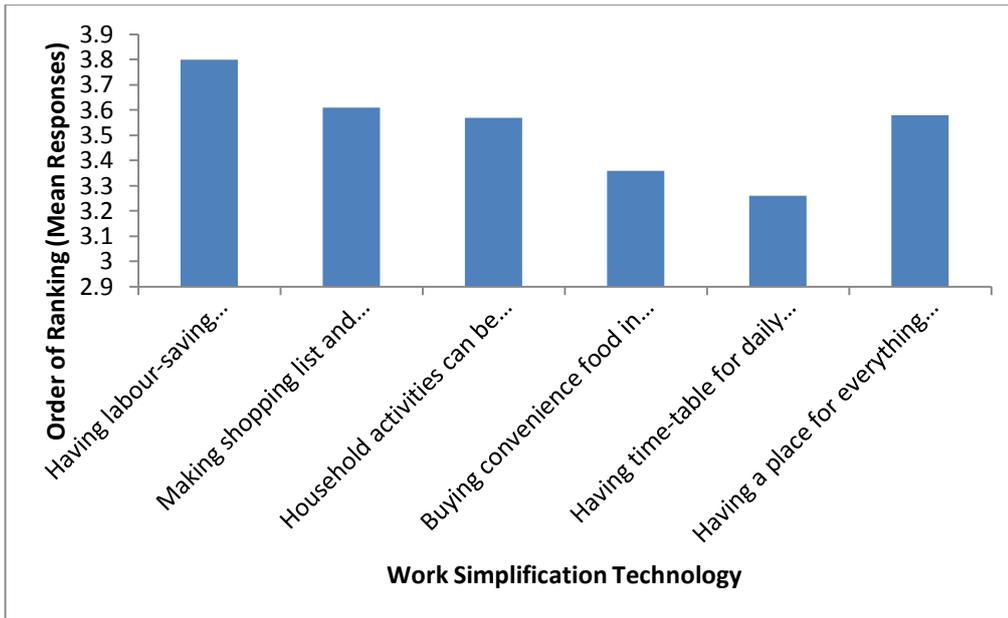


Fig 3b: Work Simplification Techniques and Strategies in Ranking Order

Work simplification techniques are acceptable in the conservation of time, energy and materials required in carrying out routine tasks at home. This technique is not an end in itself but a tool that enables employed women to conserve time

and energy for other purposes which are more satisfying. It involves studying and planning the work, finding out what part to do first or even to be omitted to make life easier for these women

Research Question 4

What are the likely problems confronting women librarians in their official work?

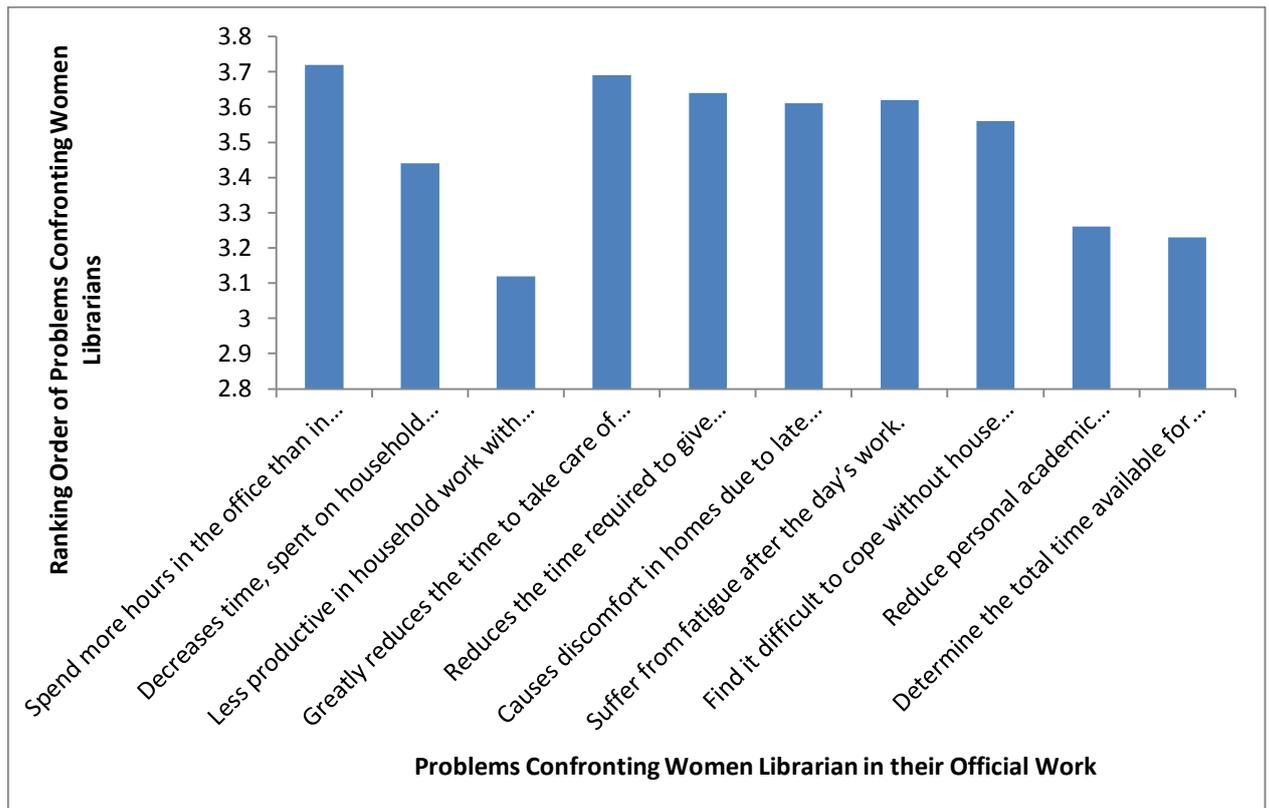
Table 4

Likely Problems Confronting Women Librarians in their Official Work

	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Rank
Spend more hours in the office than in work at home and leisure.	46	15	0	0	3.72	1 st
Decreases time, spent on household activities as their responsibilities increase	29	30	2	0	3.44	7 th
Less productive in household work with high employment status	26	18	15	2	3.12	10 th
Greatly reduces the time to take care of children especially pre-school and school aged children in getting them ready for school.	46	12	2	1	3.69	2 nd
Reduces the time required to give enough attention to husbands and children at home.	41	18	2	0	3.64	3 rd
Causes discomfort in homes due to late retiring to bed and waking early.	39	20	2	0	3.61	5 th
Suffer from fatigue after the day's work.	46	9	0	6	3.62	4 th
Find it difficult to cope without house help service	38	20	2	1	3.56	6 th
Reduce personal academic achievement/publication due to long hours of work.	30	24	0	7	3.26	8 th
Determine the total time available for work at home.	29	21	7	4	3.23	9 th

(N = 61)

Ranking Order of Likely Problems Confronting Women Librarians in their Official Work



Problems confronting women librarians in their official work

The data presented in fig. 4 reveals that the respondents were confronted by all the problems listed and the ranking order of the problems is as stated below:

- 1st – they spend more hours in the office than in work at home
- 2nd – time to take care of children is greatly reduced.
- 3rd – time to give attention to husband and other family members is greatly reduced.
- 4th – they suffer from fatigue after the day’s activities.
- 5th – they have discomfort in their homes due to late retiring to bed and waking up early in the morning.
- 6th – find it difficult to cope without the services of house-helpers.
- 7th – have insufficient rest each day.
- 8th – time for house-hold activities generally decreased.
- 9th – finds it difficult to take care of self.
- 10th –be less productive in house-hold work.

Women in employment strive to contribute financially, morally, physically and emotionally to the family’s welfare. The more they contribute, the more they are respected or regarded in the family. The consequence of this is that the women over-stretch themselves and even neglect their own welfare and health to acquire the sobriquet “sweet mother or good wife”. Demands of employment and activities at home hardly give them enough time to listen to radios, watch television or attend workshops, seminars and other such gatherings where matters that affect their lives are discussed. These women librarians are also less productive in their homes since they spend more hours in the office than at home. Adequate attention is not given to their children and husbands and this has always been a potential area of rift in the home.

Furthermore, these women in their quest to satisfy the demands of their homes and places of work retire late to bed and have insufficient sleep, rest and suffer from fatigue and are under one form of stress or the other.

Conclusion

From the foregoing it is evident that women librarians spend averagely eight hours on wage earning activities. They cook meals and wash

dishes at least once daily and perform the other household tasks at least once weekly. These women use time and labour-saving equipment to save time and also to simplify the performance of their household activities. They are confronted with myriad of problems as a result of trying to meet up with both the demands of employment and household activities and require at least nine hours for household activities.

They equally use saved time to give adequate attention to their husbands, children, taking care of themselves to help sustain their husband's interest in them, playing games, entertaining and visiting friends as well as relaxing and having leisure.

Implication of the Study

This study has made a number of interesting revelations with far reaching implications for women librarians, their employers, family members and the nation. These women knowing the time demanded by both the household and wage-earning activities will through effective plans be more productive both at home and in their place of work. The identification of labour-saving equipment and other work simplification techniques used by these women to save time and energy usually wasted in performing household activities, efforts will be geared for them to make judicious use of the saved time for other productive ventures.

Since it was revealed in the study that women librarian do not give enough attention to their husbands and other family members due to the roles they perform, necessary measures should be taken in order to prevent conflict and also to encourage their husbands and other family members to participate in household activities to make for peaceful co-existence in their homes. Employed women because of time constraints imposed on them by the roles they perform find it difficult to give enough attention to themselves e.g. not having enough exercise to keep trim, not caring for their body and not dieting correctly and most often have everything done haphazardly. It then becomes imperative to impress it upon these women that with effective time management, they can equally look attractive for the confidence which comes from a neat and pleasant appearance cannot be over-emphasized. Doing a little more to make them retain their youthfulness, having trimmed shapes and not carrying excess weight around will make them look best and this will help to sustain their

husband's interest in them to avoid losing them to more attractive competitors.

The study came up with the revelation that a lot of problems confront these women in trying to satisfy their employers. It then behooves on the employer of labour to plan work schedule to minimize or eliminate areas of rift between them.

Recommendations

The following recommendations if implemented will help mitigate the suffering women librarians undergo in order to satisfy the dual roles they perform.

1. Women librarians should be encouraged to take up employment closer home or be given accommodation very near to their places of work.
2. Husbands and other family members should be encouraged to participate in carrying out household activities.
3. Feasibility studies to assess the implication, cost and possibility of procuring the time and labour-saving equipment or granting of loans for the purchase, should be undertaken by employers of these women in view of the escalating and prohibitive cost of these equipment.
4. Women commission and other women organizations should embark on awareness campaign to help sway public opinion in support of formulating policies by the government that will help reduce time spent on wage-earning activities by employed women from 8 to 6 hours; increasing maternity leave from 3-6 months to help breast feed and wean the new born children properly and starting of work at 8.30 am in order to give adequate time for preparing and taking children to school.
5. Workshops, seminars, talks etc. should serve as fora to proffer solutions to the socio-personal problems that confront these women in the discharge of their duties as home managers and wage-earners to help alleviate their sufferings.

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