Social Factors Affecting Work–Life Balance of Married Female Employees in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State

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Abstract
This study examines the social factors affecting work–life balance among married female employees at Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it considers domestic and childcare responsibilities, spousal and family support, and sociocultural expectations. A descriptive cross-sectional survey is proposed, with a purposive sample of 150 married female employees and an analytical illustration based on 134 completed questionnaires (89.3%). Data are summarised using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, while Pearson's chi-square statistic is used to assess associations at the 0.05 significance level. The descriptive findings suggest that domestic workload, limited family assistance and gendered social expectations are relevant to work–life balance. The illustrative contingency tables indicate statistically significant associations between each factor and work–life balance. The study concludes that professional and family obligations need to be considered together with household arrangements and cultural expectations. Recommended measures include supportive scheduling, childcare provision, equitable household responsibility-sharing and family-responsive institutional policies. The results are explicitly and are not evidence of actual conditions among Niger Delta University staff.

Keywords: *Work–life Balance; Married Female Employees; Domestic Responsibilities; Spousal Support; Sociocultural Expectations; Niger Delta University.*

1. Introduction

Work–life balance is an important concern in contemporary organisational research because employees must reconcile the time, energy and psychological resources required for paid work with commitments outside employment. Although formal work can improve economic well-being, security and career development, it may also create demands that overlap with domestic activities, childcare and community participation. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) explained that work–family conflict arises when pressures from participation in work and family roles become mutually incompatible. Their classification of time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflict provides a useful foundation for studying employees who maintain multiple responsibilities.

Work–life balance is especially relevant to married female employees because participation in paid employment does not necessarily lead to a commensurate redistribution of household labour. In numerous families, women remain closely associated with caregiving, meal preparation, household administration and family welfare. The resulting combination of occupational and family expectations can place substantial pressure on the time and energy available for rest,

professional development and personal well-being. This does not mean that marriage or parenthood necessarily produces work–life imbalance; rather, difficulties emerge when role demands exceed the resources available to manage them.

The university workplace provides a distinctive environment for examining these pressures. Academic employees undertake teaching, student supervision, assessment, research, publications and service commitments. Some duties extend beyond formal working hours. Non-academic employees perform administrative, managerial, technical and operational tasks essential to institutional functioning, often under deadline and attendance requirements. Although work schedules and autonomy vary across these categories, employees in both groups may be required to respond to workplace and household obligations within limited time frames.

At Niger Delta University, situated in Amassoma, Bayelsa State, married female employees work within academic and administrative systems while also participating in family and wider community life. Their circumstances provide a useful context for examining how social conditions relate to the capacity to balance professional responsibilities with household activities. However, neither the proportion of married women affected by imbalance nor the relative relevance of different social pressures should be assumed without appropriate empirical evidence.

Domestic and childcare duties constitute the first central factor considered in this article. Responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, supervising school activities, attending to children's health and assisting dependent relatives may continue before and after the formal working day. Where responsibilities are concentrated on one household member, the accumulated workload may limit recovery and increase strain. Ademuyiwa et al. (2022) associated work–family conflict among female higher-education employees in Nigeria with stress and mental fatigue, underscoring the relevance of such competing obligations.

The second factor is support from spouses and other family members. Support can take the form of direct assistance with domestic duties, shared childcare, financial cooperation, emotional encouragement or dependable help during emergencies. Effective assistance may reduce competing demands and support occupational participation. Conversely, unreliable or insufficient assistance can increase pressure on employees who must independently coordinate work and family activities. This consideration is compatible with Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory, which treats time, energy and supportive relationships as resources important for coping with demands. The third factor concerns sociocultural expectations. Beliefs about appropriate roles for married women may shape the distribution of household activities and influence decisions about career development, travel and participation in professional events. In a study of Nigerian female academics, Akanji et al. (2023) examined how gendered household expectations and care responsibilities intersected with employment. Such expectations may be restrictive when they are inflexible, but social networks and family traditions can also offer valuable childcare and emotional support. Their influence is therefore best studied empirically rather than presumed to be uniformly negative. A multidimensional approach is needed because domestic responsibilities, available support and social expectations can reinforce one another. Cultural understandings of household roles may affect whether spouses share duties; inadequate support may increase the strain created by domestic responsibilities; and workplace flexibility may determine how successfully employees negotiate the boundaries between these domains. Clark (2000) proposed work/family border theory as a way of understanding the management of transitions between work and family, including the role of people who influence those boundaries.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Women's increasing participation in university employment has not necessarily eliminated the expectation that married women should undertake major domestic and childcare responsibilities. As employees meet teaching, administrative and operational targets, they may also face substantial demands from parenting, household management and extended-family relationships. When these obligations overlap, work–life imbalance may affect personal rest, emotional well-being and professional development. However, these difficulties are not identical across employees and must be examined in relation to specific household and institutional contexts.

Existing studies in Nigeria have investigated work–family conflict, social support and gender expectations among professional women (Ademuyiwa et al., 2022; Akanji et al., 2023). Their findings cannot automatically establish the nature or extent of the problem among married female employees at Niger Delta University. Institution-specific evidence is needed to determine whether domestic workload, family support and sociocultural expectations are associated with work–life balance. This study provides a clear research and statistical framework for addressing that evidence gap.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective is to examine social factors associated with work–life balance among married female employees in Niger Delta University. Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. Examine the relationship between domestic and childcare responsibilities and work–life balance.
ii. Determine the relationship between spousal and family support and work–life balance.
iii. Assess the relationship between sociocultural expectations and work–life balance.

1.3 Research Questions

i. What relationship exists between domestic and childcare responsibilities and work–life balance?
ii. How is spousal and family support related to work–life balance?
iii. What relationship exists between sociocultural expectations and work–life balance?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between domestic and childcare responsibilities and work–life balance.
H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between spousal and family support and work–life balance.
H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between sociocultural expectations and work–life balance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualising Work–Life Balance

Work–life balance is a dynamic assessment of whether work responsibilities and non-work activities coexist in a manageable and satisfactory manner. Balance does not necessarily involve assigning equal numbers of hours to each domain. Instead, it concerns whether individuals can meet meaningful professional and personal responsibilities without persistent and overwhelming conflict. Relevant indicators may include perceived schedule compatibility, sufficient rest, family satisfaction, personal time and the capacity to participate in work-related development.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) differentiated time-based conflict, which occurs when commitment to one role constrains time for another; strain-based conflict, when pressures in one domain

undermine effectiveness in another; and behaviour-based conflict, when expected conduct is incompatible across roles. These categories are especially useful for a university-based study because demands may differ across teaching, research, administration and domestic activities.

Clark (2000) emphasised that work and family are separated by boundaries that may be more or less flexible and permeable. Employees negotiate these boundaries through personal choices and interactions with people who influence their work and family domains. A household with cooperative responsibility-sharing and an institution with predictable schedules may provide conditions more conducive to balancing roles than environments where expectations are inflexible. Work–life balance should not be equated solely with an absence of workplace problems. Employees may achieve satisfactory job performance while sacrificing sleep, leisure and personal well-being. For this reason, an assessment of balance requires direct attention to individuals' subjective experiences and the quality of the relationships between their professional and family responsibilities.

2.2 Domestic and Childcare Responsibilities

Domestic responsibilities include meal preparation, cleaning, shopping, home administration and care coordination. Childcare involves supervision, education, health needs and emotional support. These activities contribute to household well-being, but substantial and unequally distributed obligations can reduce time available for rest and professional commitments. The amount of strain depends on family composition, the ages of children, access to support and the degree of flexibility in employment. A married female employee may undertake childcare and household tasks before arriving at work, then resume them after the working day. Such a schedule may leave little discretionary time for scholarly writing, professional training, administrative preparation or recreation. The same activities can therefore generate both time-based and strain-based work–family conflict. Where an employee must respond to children's needs during working hours, childcare responsibilities may directly disrupt workplace routines.

Ademuyiwa et al. (2022) examined work–family conflict among female employees in Nigerian higher institutions and described experiences of stress and psychological fatigue. These findings suggest that domestic demands merit investigation alongside occupational conditions. Nevertheless, the effects of domestic responsibility should not be generalised without consideration of household resources: paid childcare, shared spousal duties and assistance from relatives can change the practical burden associated with a similar family structure. Domestic work can also affect career opportunities beyond regular employment duties. Academic publishing, further study, conferences and professional certification require additional planning and uninterrupted time. Employees who undertake disproportionate household responsibilities may have fewer opportunities to engage in these activities. The relationship between household burden and professional development is therefore an important consideration in understanding work–life balance.

2.3 Spousal and Family Support

Spousal and family support comprise practical, emotional and sometimes financial assistance that enables employees to manage competing responsibilities. Practical assistance may involve preparing meals, supervising children, performing household chores or caring for relatives. Emotional assistance includes reassurance, respect for professional ambitions and understanding during demanding occupational periods. Financial assistance may make dependable childcare or domestic support more accessible. Hobfoll (1989) argued that people seek to obtain, protect and

maintain valued resources. Within the context of married female employment, supportive household relationships may conserve time, energy and emotional capacity. When support is insufficient, employees may experience greater resource depletion as they move between occupational and household activities. This theoretical perspective suggests that household cooperation may moderate the pressures associated with extensive responsibilities.

Allen (2001) found that supportive environments are relevant to employees' work–family experiences. Although that research focused on organisational perceptions, its central insight reinforces the broader importance of support systems. In the household, assistance must be sufficiently reliable to manage recurring responsibilities rather than being available only for occasional emergencies. It is also important to distinguish actual support received from respondents' beliefs that support would be useful. A questionnaire asking whether spousal assistance improves balance measures attitudes toward support, whereas a question about the frequency or adequacy of received assistance measures practical support conditions. The proposed research therefore includes separate measures for perceived support benefits and overall support adequacy.

2.4 Sociocultural Expectations

Sociocultural expectations consist of values and practices through which communities define desirable conduct within marriage, parenting and family relationships. Expectations concerning women's responsibility for household management may operate alongside their formal employment obligations. Where domestic tasks are regarded as primarily female obligations, participation in paid work may not reduce the tasks women are expected to perform at home.

Akanji et al. (2023) examined the work–life experiences of married Nigerian female academics with children and highlighted the interaction between household obligations and gendered expectations. Such expectations may influence whether employees can travel for training, attend late meetings or devote additional time to scholarship. Pressure may also arise from extended-family and social obligations, particularly when participation is expected irrespective of work commitments. Culture should not be treated as uniform or inherently harmful. Extended-family systems may also provide childcare, financial assistance and companionship, allowing women to participate more effectively in paid employment. The relevant issue is whether expectations permit negotiation and equitable distribution of responsibilities. Inflexible norms may reduce autonomy, whereas mutually supportive practices may enable balance. The empirical question is therefore whether respondents reporting higher levels of sociocultural pressure also report greater work–life imbalance. This relationship can be evaluated using carefully worded items concerning gender-role expectations, family priorities and obligations outside the immediate household.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study principally adopts role conflict theory, supported by work/family border theory and conservation of resources theory. Role conflict theory explains how multiple roles generate competing expectations. For married female employees, occupational demands may overlap with spouse, parenting and domestic roles. The theory provides a basis for predicting an association between domestic workload and perceived work–life imbalance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work/family border theory explains how individuals negotiate boundaries between employment and home and why the flexibility of these boundaries' matters. When working arrangements permit reasonable accommodation and household members collaborate, the movement between work and

family activities may be easier to manage. In contrast, rigid expectations may increase conflict (Clark, 2000).

Conservation of resources theory emphasises the importance of time, energy, emotional stability and support. Heavy domestic obligations may reduce these resources, while spousal and family assistance may preserve or replenish them. Thus, the three theories jointly justify the study's choice of domestic burdens, available family support and sociocultural pressure as explanatory factors (Hobfoll, 1989).

2.6 Empirical Review and Research Gap

Ademuyiwa et al. (2022) investigated work–family conflict among female employees in Nigerian higher institutions and identified notable pressures associated with competing responsibilities. The study draws attention to consequences such as stress and fatigue and the role of childcare and informal assistance. Its relevance to the present research is the focus on women in higher education, although findings from other institutions cannot be assumed to hold at Niger Delta University. Akanji et al. (2023) investigated work–life balance among married female academics in Nigeria, focusing on work and family experiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their qualitative approach illuminated how patriarchal expectations, domestic activities and parenting needs interacted. The research provides a strong justification for including sociocultural expectations but does not eliminate the need for quantitative work in another institutional setting.

Allen (2001) studied the relationship between perceptions of supportive workplace environments and work–family outcomes, showing why contextual support is important. Clark (2000), meanwhile, contributed a framework that recognises the management of boundaries between work and family. Together these works indicate that work–life balance is not merely a problem of personal time management. The present study addresses a contextual and analytical gap by bringing together domestic responsibilities, spousal and family assistance and sociocultural expectations in one proposed survey among married female academic and non-academic employees at Niger Delta University. Its descriptive and chi-square analysis provides a preliminary framework; an actual survey would be required to establish reliable institution-specific findings.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to examine the social factors affecting the work–life balance of married female employees at Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of information on respondents' experiences, domestic responsibilities, family support and sociocultural expectations at a particular point in time. The target population comprised married female academic and non-academic employees of the university who combined professional responsibilities with marital and household obligations.

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 150 married female employees from academic and non-academic departments of Niger Delta University. Respondents were selected based on their marital status, employment status and willingness to participate in the study. The technique was considered appropriate because it enabled the selection of participants with relevant experiences concerning work–life balance. For the analysis, 150 questionnaires were considered administered, while 134 were treated as properly completed and retrieved, representing an 89.3% response rate. The remaining 16 questionnaires, representing 10.7%, were classified as unreturned or unusable. Consequently, the analysis was based on 134 responses.

The study utilised a structured questionnaire titled Social Factors and Work–Life Balance Questionnaire (SFWLBQ), which covered demographic characteristics, domestic and childcare responsibilities, spousal and family support, sociocultural expectations and work–life balance. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was designed for expert validation and reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, although these procedures were not conducted for the analysis. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, with a criterion mean of 3.00 for interpreting responses. Pearson's chi-square test was used to examine the three hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The analytical framework required consistent classification of work–life balance across the three tests and adequate expected cell frequencies. Ethical considerations included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and protection of respondents' personal information. Since data were used, the results represented an illustrative statistical analysis rather than verified field observations.

4. Results and Analysis

All results in this section are and are provided solely to demonstrate the intended statistical presentation.

Table 1: Questionnaire distribution and retrieval

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	150	100.0
Retrieved and usable	134	89.3
Unreturned or unusable	16	10.7

Source: Survey Data, 2026..

The model assumes that 134 of 150 questionnaires were retrieved and usable, corresponding to an 89.3% retrieval rate. This would be adequate for the planned descriptive and contingency analyses, but response rate alone would not eliminate purposive-sampling selection bias. The figure is an assumed analytical input, not an observed retrieval outcome.

Table 2: Respondent characteristics (; n = 134)

Variable/category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age: 25–34	32	23.9
Age: 35–44	56	41.8
Age: 45–54	34	25.4
Age: 55+	12	9.0
Academic staff	58	43.3
Non-academic staff	76	56.7
Children: None	12	9.0
Children: 1–2	45	33.6
Children: 3–4	57	42.5
Children: 5+	20	14.9
Service: <5 years	26	19.4
Service: 5–10 years	43	32.1
Service: 11–15 years	38	28.4
Service: >15 years	27	20.1

Source: Survey Data, 2026..

The demographic profile has its largest age group at 35–44 years (41.8%). Non-academic staff account for 56.7% and academic staff for 43.3%. Nearly half of the illustrative respondents report three or more children, providing a relevant setting for examining caregiving responsibilities. However, neither parental status nor age alone can establish the intensity of childcare burdens, which also depends on support arrangements and children's ages.

4.1 Research Question One: Domestic and Childcare Responsibilities

Table 3: Domestic and childcare responsibilities (n = 134)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Household duties reduce rest time	54	46	18	10	6	3.99	1.12
Childcare interferes with work schedule	47	51	20	10	6	3.92	1.10
Domestic duties cause exhaustion	50	48	19	10	7	3.93	1.13
Household duties limit development	46	49	21	11	7	3.87	1.14
Grand mean						3.93	

Source: Survey Data, 2026..

The mean scores exceed the 3.00 criterion across all four statements. The highest mean, 3.99, concerns household duties reducing time available for rest, followed by the exhaustion item at 3.93. Childcare-related schedule interference and restrictions on professional development also receive substantial average agreement. Taken together, the grand mean of 3.93 indicates that the sample illustration is structured around a strong perception of domestic pressure. These patterns reflect the mechanisms described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), particularly time-based and strain-based conflict. They are broadly compatible with the concerns raised by Ademuyiwa et al. (2022), although the numbers cannot be treated as corroborating evidence from Niger Delta University.

4.2 Research Question Two: Spousal and Family Support

Table 4: Spousal and family support (n = 134)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Spousal help improves balance	51	47	18	11	7	3.93	1.15
Spousal encouragement reduces stress	48	49	20	10	7	3.90	1.13
Relatives assist with childcare	43	50	22	12	7	3.82	1.14
Lack of assistance hinders work	49	46	19	12	8	3.87	1.18
Grand mean						3.88	

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

The pattern indicates average agreement that support from spouses and relatives is useful for maintaining work–life balance. Spousal assistance with household duties produces the highest mean of 3.93; emotional encouragement follows at 3.90. The grand mean of 3.88 suggests a broadly favourable perception of support. Importantly, these are attitudes toward the value of assistance rather than direct measurements of how often respondents actually receive support. The later chi-square illustration accordingly distinguishes inadequate from adequate support as a separate categorical classification. The interpretation is consistent with the emphasis on social resources in Hobfoll's (1989) framework.

4.3 Research Question Three: Sociocultural Expectations

Table 5: Sociocultural expectations (; n = 134)

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Traditional gender roles add domestic duties	47	48	20	11	8	3.86	1.16
Motherhood and marriage pressure	44	46	23	13	8	3.78	1.18
Extended-family duties conflict with work	42	45	25	13	9	3.73	1.20
Cultural household roles affect balance	46	45	23	12	8	3.81	1.18
Grand mean						3.80	

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

All four means exceed the criterion value. The highest is associated with expectations that women continue to carry domestic responsibilities despite employment (3.86). The grand mean of 3.80 suggests that cultural expectations can be perceived as relevant to role compatibility. At the same time, social obligations may generate positive relationships and practical assistance, so the analytical focus should be on restrictive or unequal expectations, not on culture as an inherently adverse influence. This interpretation is compatible with research on married Nigerian female academics by Akanji et al. (2023).

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

For transparency, the following contingency tables are constructed illustrations, not observed field cross-tabulations. Pearson chi-square values are calculated from displayed frequencies; all expected frequencies are above five.

4.4.1 Hypothesis 1: Domestic and childcare burden

Table 7: Domestic and childcare burden and work–life balance ()

Category	Imbalanced	Balanced	Total
High burden	65	18	83
Low burden	17	34	51
Total	82	52	134

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

Table 8: Chi-square test for Hypothesis 1

Statistic	Value
Pearson χ^2	26.914
Degrees of freedom	1
p-value	< .001
Significance level	0.05
Decision	Reject $H_0$1

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

The table shows that 65 of 83 respondents in the high burden category are classified as experiencing work–life imbalance, compared with 17 of 51 in the low burden category. Pearson's $\chi^2 = 26.914$ (df = 1), with a p-value below the 0.05 threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in this hypothetical dataset. The pattern indicates a statistical association, not a demonstrated causal relationship or an actual finding about Niger Delta University employees.

4.4.2 Hypothesis 2: Spousal and family support

Table 9: Spousal and family support and work–life balance ()

Category	Imbalanced	Balanced	Total
Inadequate support	62	17	79
Adequate support	20	35	55
Total	82	52	134

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

Table 10: Chi-square test for Hypothesis 2

Statistic	Value
Pearson χ^2	24.221
Degrees of freedom	1
p-value	< .001
Significance level	0.05
Decision	Reject H_o2

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

The table shows that 62 of 79 respondents in the inadequate support category are classified as experiencing work–life imbalance, compared with 20 of 55 in the adequate support category. Pearson's $\chi^2 = 24.221$ (df = 1), with a p-value below the 0.05 threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in this hypothetical dataset. The pattern indicates a statistical association, not a demonstrated causal relationship or an actual finding about Niger Delta University employees.

4.4.3 Hypothesis 3: Sociocultural pressure

Table 11: Sociocultural pressure and work–life balance ()

Category	Imbalanced	Balanced	Total
High pressure	60	16	76
Low pressure	22	36	58
Total	82	52	134

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

Table 12: Chi-square test for Hypothesis 3

Statistic	Value
Pearson χ^2	23.305
Degrees of freedom	1
p-value	< .001
Significance level	0.05
Decision	Reject H_o3

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

The table shows that 60 of 76 respondents in the high-pressure category are classified as experiencing work–life imbalance, compared with 22 of 58 in the low-pressure category. Pearson's $\chi^2 = 23.305$ (df = 1), with a p-value below the 0.05 threshold. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected in this hypothetical dataset. The pattern indicates a statistical association, not a demonstrated causal relationship or an actual finding about Niger Delta University employees.

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Tests

Table 12: Summary of consistent chi-square tests

Factor	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision
Domestic and childcare burden	26.914	1	< .001	Reject H_0
Spousal and family support	24.221	1	< .001	Reject H_0
Sociocultural pressure	23.305	1	< .001	Reject H_0

Source: Survey Data, 2026.

All three tests are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Because the same 134 hypothetical respondents and the same 82/52 work–life outcome classification are retained across the three tables, their marginal totals are consistent. Chi-square magnitudes should not automatically be interpreted as the relative strength of causal influence. A verified study should report effect sizes and, where appropriate, employ multivariable analyses to account for possible confounding.

5. Discussion of Findings

The first objective addressed domestic and childcare responsibilities. Both the illustrative descriptive item responses and the cross-tabulation depict greater work–life imbalance among employees with heavier domestic burdens. This is compatible with role conflict theory, particularly the idea that domestic obligations can absorb time and generate strain that interfere with occupational commitments (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Ademuyiwa et al. (2022) similarly identified adverse experiences among female higher-education employees managing competing roles. The theoretical implication is that domestic duties should be treated as substantive resource demands rather than invisible activities occurring outside the workplace.

The second objective focused on support from spouses and family members. The descriptive table indicates strong appreciation of practical assistance and emotional encouragement. The corresponding cross-tabulation associates inadequate support with a higher proportion of imbalanced respondents. This relationship is conceptually compatible with conservation of resources theory, which recognises that interpersonal assistance may preserve time and emotional energy (Hobfoll, 1989). Assistance can be practical, such as collecting children from school, or emotional, such as affirming a partner's legitimate professional obligations. Both forms may affect how women experience work–family pressures.

The third objective concerned sociocultural expectations. The findings suggest that rigidly gendered expectations may coincide with difficulty maintaining work–life balance. This argument aligns with research by Akanji et al. (2023), who documented the interaction of social norms, domestic responsibilities and employment among Nigerian female academics. However, cultural life is not reducible to pressure: family systems and community networks can provide substantial practical support. The key distinction is whether particular expectations are flexible, reciprocal and compatible with employees' occupational commitments.

An important cross-cutting point is that the three social factors may interact. Norms about the domestic duties of wives can determine how responsibilities are divided; patterns of responsibility-sharing can then affect whether family support is adequate; and the degree of support can condition the impact of childcare obligations on work–life experiences. A future study might therefore examine mediation or moderation as well as simple bivariate relationships. Employment category, number and age of children, length of service and household income are also relevant to interpretation.

Institutional responses should recognise this interaction. Flexible scheduling may be beneficial, but it cannot fully resolve difficulties where an employee faces inflexible household expectations.

Likewise, greater household cooperation may be insufficient if university schedules are unpredictable or childcare facilities are inaccessible. Work–life balance is therefore best conceptualised as a shared social and organisational concern rather than exclusively as a test of individual time-management ability.

The methodological limitation is decisive: these associations come from data and are not empirical evidence from Niger Delta University. An actual survey may reveal weaker, stronger or nonsignificant relationships. A scientifically defensible final article must report what respondents actually said, use a consistently coded dataset and distinguish statistical association from causal explanation.

6. Conclusion

This study developed an empirical research framework for examining the social factors associated with work–life balance among married female employees at Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The analysis focused on domestic and childcare responsibilities, spousal and family support, and sociocultural expectations. Using descriptive responses and internally consistent contingency tables representing 134 usable questionnaires from a proposed purposive sample of 150, the article illustrated how the objectives, questions and hypotheses can be translated into statistical analyses. The results demonstrate, as a methodological illustration rather than an observed institutional conclusion, that greater domestic burden, inadequate household support and stronger sociocultural pressure can be associated with work–life imbalance. An effective approach to work–life balance should recognise that occupational demands interact with household arrangements, social resources and established expectations. The proposed relationships must be tested using genuine field responses before conclusions are made about married female employees at Niger Delta University.

7. Recommendations

i. University management should evaluate feasible family-responsive working arrangements, including predictable schedules and suitable leave provisions.

ii. Access to affordable and dependable childcare should be examined, including campus services or childcare partnerships.

iii. Family-life programmes should encourage equitable sharing of household and caregiving responsibilities between spouses.

iv. Awareness initiatives should challenge rigid gender-role expectations that place disproportionate demands on employed women.

v. Employee assistance and counselling services should address work–family stress confidentially and without stigma.

8. Contribution to Knowledge and Limitations

Conceptually, the study brings together three social variables that may influence married women's work–life experiences. Methodologically, it provides a model for constructing questionnaire sections, descriptive summaries and chi-square analyses around clearly aligned hypotheses. Contextually, it identifies a specific university setting in which these relationships merit investigation. The proposed purposive sampling procedure limits representativeness, self-reported questionnaire data are vulnerable to recall and desirability biases, and cross-sectional analysis cannot establish causality. The central limitation is that all numerical findings are. The material

should therefore be used as a planning and drafting resource and not be presented as an account of actual completed fieldwork.

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