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CULTURAL COLLISIONS: BALANCING FAMILY VALUES WITH REMOTE WORK BOUNDARIES IN NIGERIA

Samuel Alaba Omopintemi¹

somopintemi@gmail.com

University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Aboluwaji Daniel Ayinmoro²

boluwajidaniel@ymail.com

University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Remote work has changed the face of professional life around the world, but the conflict between this practice and established family values in non-Western cultures has not been studied thoroughly. This paper explores the cultural tensions that arise when remote work practices are confronted with Nigerian family values, particularly among professionals in Oyo State. A qualitative, exploratory study design was used, which involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 30 remote-working employees at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan. Thematic analysis was applied to the data according to the Braun and Clarke (2006) model, based on the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000). Results show that there are four major themes including continuous border permeability due to family intrusions; deep-rooted cultural commitments and societal demands that transcend professional boundaries; role asymmetries that disproportionately place women on home duty; and technological stress due to unreliable electricity and internet systems. The paper concludes that remote work sustainability in Nigeria requires culturally aware human resource practices, infrastructure-specific investment, and gender-sensitive interventions because the issue of work-family boundary management is not only an individual problem but also a structural and organisational issue.

Keywords: Culture, collisions, family, values, remote work, Nigeria, Oyo State.

INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years, remote work has become one of the most significant changes in the organisation of labour in the world, which fundamentally changes the relationship of people with their employers, their families, and their communities (Choudhury, Foroughi and Larson, 2020; Messenger and Gschwind, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). In North America, Europe, and Asia, flexible work arrangements that are digitally enabled have been linked to increased autonomy, enhanced productivity, and work satisfaction (Allen, Golden and Shockley, 2015; Bloom et al., 2015). This shift was made drastic by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced millions of employees in various industries to work at home overnight, and made remote work a staple of modern employment culture (Nwagwu, 2020; Adisa, Gbadamosi & Osabutey, 2021). Nevertheless, as much as the advantages and disadvantages of the remote working have been well documented in the scholarship of industrialised countries, much less has been done to explain how the transition is taking place in non-Western cultures, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where the realities of cultural values, household arrangements, and infrastructures are vastly different than the ones that most current frameworks are based on.

Nigeria presents one of the most informative examples of studying how the concept of remote work collides with cultural norms. This social structure is collectivist with extended family ties, mutual dependence and household as a common social and economic unit (Okonkwo, 2011; Hofstede, 2001). In contrast to the individualistic orientations that most of the scholarship on remote work in the West is based upon, Nigerian households are generally multi-generational, with high expectations that all members are available, contribute to care giving, and are actively involved in family and community activities (Adebayo and Onyemelukwe, 2019). Once the professionals start working at home, these ingrained expectations come into direct conflict with the demands of remote work, that is, the ability to concentrate without interruptions, professional accessibility, and the preservation of clear boundaries between work and personal life (Choudhury, Foroughi & Larson, 2020; Edeh and Okafor, 2021).

The available literature on remote work in Africa and Nigerian context, in general, has either been inclined to concentrate on infrastructural issues like unstable electricity supply and poor internet connectivity (Nwagwu, 2020), or on the general organisational performance like employee satisfaction and productivity (Oludayo et al., 2018). Although such contributions are useful, they fail to sufficiently explain the cultural aspect of work-family conflict in Nigerian families. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), work-family conflict refers to a type of inter-role conflict where the work and family demands cannot coexist. The cultural belief that the physical presence at home means that one is available to do household and communal duties enhances this conflict in Nigeria (Edeh and Okafor, 2021; Akinola, 2022). It is especially acute due to the gendered nature of this burden: women in Nigerian families are disproportionately supposed to take care of children, cook, and take care of the elderly, irrespective of their professional activities, which results in a double bind that men, though not quite free of cultural pressures, experience not as acutely (Adisa, Abdulraheem and Isiaka, 2019; Ojo, 2021) These unresolved yet nagging tensions are what this paper calls cultural collisions, instances when contemporary working practices shatter family traditions that are intergenerational.

This theoretical basis of the study relies on the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) which conceptualises work and family as two different worlds that are divided by borders of different permeability. Remote work is intrinsically a way of undermining these boundaries by blurring the spatial and temporal distinction between work and home. The Nigerian scenario is no exception, with culturally constructed laws of accessibility, kinship solidarity and communal obligation serving as other agents of boundary erosion and thus boundary management is a particularly difficult task. This theory offers an analytical prism through which to interpret how ambiguous work-family boundaries create role conflict, emotional distress, and the necessity of individual coping mechanisms, and at the same time indicates the organisational and policy-level intervention that is needed to make remote work sustainable in culturally particular environments (Kossek et al., 2012; Edeh and Okafor, 2021).

It is against this background that the study investigated how practitioners in Oyo State can deal with the competing demands of remote work and traditional family roles, to determine the coping mechanisms they use, and to explain what organisations and policymakers can do to facilitate effective boundary management. The study was carried out at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Ibadan, one of the most prominent international research organisations that embraced flexible and remote working, which offered a clear and applicable context to examine these dynamics among educated professionals. The study will be based on qualitative research with 30 participants and will add to the increasing literature on the topic of work-life integration in developing economies, remote work in non-Western societies, and the cultural aspects of digital labour.

Literature Review

The relationship between remote work and work-family balance has received increasing attention, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. In advanced economies, a large body of literature reports that teleworking blurs the spatial and temporal boundaries that normally separate the work and family domains, and thus exacerbates work-family conflict (Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2012; Adisa, Antonacopoulou, Beauregard, Dickmann, & Adekoya, 2022). Teleworking, despite providing flexibility and independence, also blurs the boundaries between work and family life, making it difficult for workers to disengage from work (Eddleston & Mulki, 2017). These issues are not consistent across cultures; they are significantly influenced by the sociocultural environment in which employees operate.

In Nigeria, the challenges of remote work have been increasingly acknowledged. Olanipekun, Sokefun, and Akinlabi (2021) studied remote work and work-life balance among employees in the Nigerian banking sector and discovered that remote work has a profound impact on work-life balance, with family obligations extending beyond the nuclear family to include extended family, friends and religious associates. Likewise, Mordi, Ajonbadi, Adekoya, and Oruh (2023) investigated the practices of locational flexibility in Nigeria's higher education system, finding

that flexible and remote work is still largely environmentally driven and limited by infrastructural and cultural factors. Epie (2023) also noted that boundary maintenance in the Nigerian workplace is confounded by institutional pressures and by the patriarchal collectivist nature of the Nigerian culture, which creates significant childcare responsibilities for workers (particularly women), regardless of their working status.

These findings resonate with research on work-life integration in developing economies more generally. Researchers have argued that the prevailing work-life balance approaches, which are based on Western, individualist cultures, are not well aligned with collectivist cultures in Africa and Asia, where family responsibilities are more dispersed and the boundaries between work and home life are more blurred (Beauregard & Adisa, 2021; Jaga & Ollier-Malaterre, 2022). In Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, the lack of formal policies for remote work and limited institutional support means that boundary management is largely an individualised endeavour, with employees having to navigate these tensions without organisational support (Gbajumo-Sheriff, Sogunro, Elegbede, & Udobi-Owoloja, 2021). This is significant for highly educated professionals in global research institutions like the IITA, who are working at the crossroads of global and local culture.

Coping and organisational support have been shown to be key moderating factors. Kossek, Kalliath, and Kalliath (2012) found that individual boundary management profiles mediate the effect of work-family boundary conditions on employee wellbeing; and George, Atwater, Maneethai, and Madera (2022) found that specific organisational support, such as flexible policies and managerial responsiveness, enhances the productivity and wellbeing of remote workers. In Nigeria, however, Adisa et al. (2022) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic's shift to remote work compounded boundary issues, with increased role conflict and decreased psychological detachment among employees. The existing literature reveals an important gap: there is little qualitative research on how professionals in Nigerian international research organisations reconcile the demands of a global culture of work and a local culture of family, making this study timely and important.

Work-Family Border Theory

The main theoretical framework of this investigation is the Work-Family Border Theory developed by Clark (2000). The theory suggests that people are everyday border-crossers who travel between the work and family realms, each of which is ruled by a different logic, culture, and expectations. Domains have borders that are different in two dimensions: permeability (how much elements of one domain can intrude on the other) and flexibility (how much the definition of borders can be manipulated to suit the circumstances). The Nigerian remote work setting is such that the physical dispersion of the domain separation by working at home maximises the permeability, whereas the collectivist cultural norms minimise the flexibility that the workers have to impose professional boundaries. This two-fold process - structural permeability and cultural constraint - is the theoretical essence of what this paper has termed as cultural collisions. Kossek et al. (2012) build on this framework by showing that individual boundary management profiles mediate the association between work-family boundary conditions and employee wellbeing, which highlights the importance of organisational support in developing productive boundary behaviour.

Work-Family Border Theory is relevant to this study because it highlights the influence of culture on the way workers manage the boundaries between their work and family lives. In the case of Oyo State and in particular the IITA workers are part of an organisation that adheres to international standards of professionalism while living in a Yoruba (and more generally Nigerian) cultural context that places high demands on individuals to be available, hospitable, and committed to extended family relations. The theory's emphasis on permeability explains why working from home does not simply transport the boundaries that exist in the workplace to the home; rather, it blurs the spatial cues that once marked the transition from the family domain to the work domain, making professionals vulnerable to constant interruption by home-based

actors who don't recognise - or are not inclined to accept - the invisible boundaries that remote workers must now negotiate (Clark, 2000; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000).

In addition, the theory's notion of flexibility - the extent to which workers are able or permitted to reshape the boundaries and timing of a domain - speaks to the structural context of IITA workers. Unlike their counterparts in high-autonomy knowledge work environments in the Global North, remote professionals in Nigeria often grapple with inadequate electricity, shared living arrangements, and gendered domestic roles that limit their capacity to transform their living environment into a plausible work environment (Beauregard & Adisa, 2021; Mordi et al., 2023). In this way, the work-family border is structurally permeable but culturally inflexible, which sets the stage for what this study calls cultural collisions: instances of tension in which the global norms of digital work culture collide with local demands of collective family culture. As such, this study uses Work-Family Border Theory as an analytical framework to pinpoint not just whether there is conflict, but why it takes the particular shape it does in Oyo State, and how practitioners respond to it.

METHODOLOGY

Design.

This research was a qualitative study based on an interpretivist epistemological stance, which assumes that social realities are created based on the lived experiences and interpretations of people (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This strategy is suitable to explore the multifaceted cultural and social processes that influence the experience of remote working of Nigerian professionals, especially since the interplay between remote work and Nigerian family values is a relatively new field of research. The interpretive approach allowed the study to focus on participant meaning-making and contextual sensitivity rather than on the production of generalisable statistical patterns.

Study Setting

The research was undertaken in the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. IITA was chosen due to its status as one of the limited institutions based in Nigeria that officially implemented remote and hybrid working practices before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes its staff a good and informative population to study work-family boundary management. The establishment is involved in various areas of work, such as agricultural research, administration, and field operations, which offer occupational diversity to the participants.

Sampling Strategy and Participant Profile

The study adopted purposive sampling to select 30 remote-working professionals with at least six months of experience working at home, which is enough to have a meaningful reflection on work-family tensions (Palinkas et al., 2015). In order to systematize the gendered experiences, the sample consisted of 15 males and 15 females. Family situations were also diversified, including those who are single, those who are married without children, and those who are married with children - a variation that is necessary in the context of determining the impact of caregiving responsibilities on the management of boundaries. Purposive recruitment was supplemented with snowball sampling in those departments where direct access was not found to be easy.

Table 1 provides the profiles of participants in pseudonym to maintain anonymity. The participants were aged between 28 and 54 years old, worked as a research officer up to a programme manager, and had worked remotely between six months and three years.

Table 1: Summary Profile of Research Participants

Code	Gender	Age	Family Status	Role	Remote Exp.
FM01	Female	34	Married, 2 children	Programme Manager	2 years
FM02	Female	29	Single	Research Officer	1 year
FM03	Female	38	Married, 3 children	Administrative Staff	18 months
FM04	Female	42	Married, 1 child	Field Coordinator	3 years
FM05	Female	31	Married, no children	Research Officer	8 months
FM06	Female	45	Single	Programme Manager	2.5 years
FM07	Female	36	Married, 2 children	Administrative Staff	14 months
FM08	Female	28	Single	Research Officer	6 months
FM09	Female	47	Married, 1 child	Field Coordinator	2 years
FM10	Female	33	Married, no children	Research Officer	1 year
FM11	Female	39	Married, 3 children	Programme Manager	18 months
FM12	Female	52	Married, 4 children	Administrative Staff	3 years
FM13	Female	30	Single	Research Officer	7 months
FM14	Female	44	Married, 2 children	Field Coordinator	2 years
FM15	Female	37	Married, 1 child	Research Officer	1.5 years
ML01	Male	41	Married, 2 children	Programme Manager	2 years
ML02	Male	35	Single	Research Officer	10 months
ML03	Male	48	Married, 3 children	Field Coordinator	3 years
ML04	Male	32	Married, no children	Administrative Staff	1 year
ML05	Male	54	Married, 4 children	Programme Manager	3 years
ML06	Male	40	Married, 2 children	Research Officer	18 months
ML07	Male	29	Single	Research Officer	6 months
ML08	Male	43	Married, 1 child	Field Coordinator	2 years
ML09	Male	36	Married, no	Research Officer	1 year

Code	Gender	Age	Family Status	Role	Remote Exp.
			children		
ML10	Male	50	Married, 3 children	Programme Manager	2.5 years
ML11	Male	38	Married, 2 children	Administrative Staff	14 months
ML12	Male	33	Single	Research Officer	8 months
ML13	Male	46	Married, 1 child	Field Coordinator	2 years
ML14	Male	31	Married, no children	Research Officer	9 months
ML15	Male	44	Married, 2 children	Administrative Staff	18 months

Note: FM = Female participant; ML = Male participant. All names are pseudonyms assigned to protect confidentiality.

Data Collection

The data were gathered in a period of twelve weeks using two supplementary measures. All 30 participants were interviewed semi-structured using a pre-developed guide that included: daily work-family routines; boundary intrusion experiences; cultural and community demands; gendered expectations; technology-related issues; and individual and organisational coping strategies. The guide was consistent but provided the participants with the opportunity to expand on the issues that were peculiar to their situations (Bryman, 2016). The interviews took 45 to 60 minutes. Three focus group discussions (FGDs), each consisting of eight to ten respondents representing various occupational groups, were also held to provide group reflection and to create a discussion on common experiences. The interviews and FGDs were held both online (Zoom, Google Meet) and face-to-face. All the sessions were recorded on audio with informed consent and transcribed verbatim.

Ethical Considerations

The management of IITA provided ethical clearance before the data collection in line with institutional procedures. All participants were informed of their right to withdraw without consequence, were assured of the voluntary nature of their participation and gave written informed consent. The above pseudonym coding system was used to anonymise transcripts, which were stored in password-protected digital folders accessible to the research team only. The research followed the principles of Declaration of Helsinki regarding research involving human subjects.

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) in six phases was used to analyse data: (1) familiarisation with the data through repeated reading; (2) initial coding; (3) coding grouping into candidate themes; (4) reviewing themes in terms of internal coherence and distinctiveness; (5) defining and naming final themes; and (6) generating a structured report of findings. Coding is a combination of deductive factors, which are structured by Border Theory constructs of permeability, flexibility, and cultural obligation, and inductive codes, which arise naturally out of narratives (e.g., spousal support, interruptions in the extended family, digital fatigue). Intercoder reliability was determined to enhance credibility by coding a subset of transcripts by two independent researchers; any disagreements were resolved through discussion. Reflexive memos reported positionality of the researcher. Triangulation was done by comparing the results of individual interviews and FGDs.

The four themes along with their sub-themes and codes and examples of quotations made by participants are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Thematic Summary of Findings

Theme	Key Sub-Themes / Codes	Illustrative Quote
1. Border Permeability & Family Intrusions	Child interruptions; elder care demands; absence of dedicated workspace; continuous family availability expectations	<i>"Interruptions during critical tasks... were frequent and unavoidable" (FM03)</i>
2. Cultural Obligations & Collective Expectations	Financial obligations to extended family; ceremonial attendance; generational gap in understanding remote work	<i>"In Nigerian culture, one does not close the door to family, even metaphorically" (ML04)</i>
3. Gendered Role Asymmetries	Double-shift burden on women; unequal domestic labour distribution; invisible performance disadvantage; employer unawareness	<i>"Managing two simultaneous full-time roles" (FM01)</i>
4. Technological Strain & Digital Fatigue	Unreliable electricity; internet instability; personal data/generator costs; eye strain; chronic exhaustion	<i>"Spending a substantial portion of the working day trying to establish a stable connection" (ML15)</i>

RESULTS

Theme 1: Family Intrusions and Border Permeability.

The results were always consistent that remote work increased the boundary permeability of both professional and domestic life. Respondents referred to working at home as one that blurred the conspicuous identifiers of work and family time, as family members were accustomed to the physical presence in the home to indicate that they were available to do household chores or to socialize.

In one of the focus group discussions, several respondents commented on how this ambiguity was especially hard to overcome in younger children. FM03 noted that having regular work schedules was compromised by the failure of her children to grasp the idea of working hours when one of the parents was still physically present in the house, and that she often had to work significantly longer hours to make up the time. ML07 confirmed this experience, noting that his children frequently entered his workspace when he was on a client call, which caused professional embarrassment as well as personal disruption.

FM09, who had a parent of her own whom she was taking care of on top of her work, explained the challenge of the boundary in a different way. She had a physical and medical needy parent that frequently disrupted her work hours, and it was impossible to maintain any kind of predictable professional routine. She described the dealing with these conflicting commitments as a perpetual negotiation that had placed her at a perpetual disadvantage on both sides.

The members of the FGDs also observed that the physical structure of the Nigerian households aggravated the issue. Few of them had a separate room to shut themselves off as a workroom; most of them worked in common rooms like dining rooms or sitting rooms, in which the distinction between a work area and a family area was purely symbolic and not spatial. FM12 observed that despite her giving signals to family members that she was in a meeting, the family members still interrupted since they construed such signals to mean temporary and not absolute.

These experiences are what Work-Family Border Theory refers to as high boundary permeability - a state where family domain norms, behaviours and expectations are frequently invaded by the work domain (Clark, 2000). This permeability is not only structural but is culturally approved in the Nigerian collectivist setting: the concept of an adult member of the family refusing to participate in household demands due to work is not a socially accepted concept but tends to be viewed as an aberrant behaviour.

Theme 2: Cultural Requirements and Group Expectations.

In addition to direct intrusions into the home, the participants reported a larger network of culturally defined commitments that constantly conflicted with their professional duties. Such requirements were based on the collectivist social system of Nigeria and included the need to support extended family, participate in family rituals and the need to be emotionally and advisorily available to family members all the time.

FM07 explained the uncompromising character of domestic demands: even when she had an impending work deadline, she was supposed to cook dinner or to go to family events and her unwillingness was not seen as a professional requirement but as disrespect. She stressed that in her family, work was seen as a way of sustaining the family and thus could not be a justifiable priority over the immediate family needs.

In the case of male participants, the cultural pressure was not the same but equally restricting. The eldest son of a big extended family, ML11, explained how the home-based working system led to relatives believing that they could always be contacted, and any lack of access during working hours was a sign of irresponsibility. He was regularly called upon to pay school fees, hospital bills as well as family disagreements and he felt that refusing to intervene would forever destroy his reputation in the family. He referred to the ensuing guilt and distraction as a major hindrance to professional focus.

The participants in the FGDs jointly came up with a cultural logic whereby the assertion of boundaries seemed socially expensive. ML04 noted that the culture of Nigerians does not allow them to close their doors to family even symbolically without being socially punished. FM08 further stated that it was especially challenging to explain the concept of working hours to the older relatives since the older generation had no reference point of remote work and still believed that being at home meant leisure. ML02 observed that this generation gap made working at home professionally, in the long term, very challenging without seeming to disown family values.

Theme 3: Gendered Role Asymmetries.

One of the most apparent and recurring results of both individual interviews and FGDs was the unequal load on the participants of the female gender. Women with children who were married said that working remotely had successfully combined their professional tasks with an endless cycle of household chores, and neither the organisation nor the family recognised the doubled workload.

FM01 explained her real-life experience as having two full-time jobs daily: both doing professional deliverables and taking care of a child, cooking, managing household workers, and taking care of visiting family members. She observed that her husband, who also worked at home, was not held to similar household expectations and any effort to redistribute domestic labour was confused or resisted by both her husband and extended family.

FM05 outlined the emotional fatigue of being able to maintain the standard of professional performance and bear the entire burden of domestic management. She noted that her organisation used outputs and attendance at meetings as measures of performance, neither of which took into consideration the fact that she often had to work late into the night to cover the day time disruptions.

Male subjects admitted the asymmetry of the gendering. In the FGD, ML06 observed that men felt pressure on their part to provide culturally, and to solve family problems, but the physical and logistical load of domestic labour was so normalised that most men had not actively

challenged it until they took part in the study. FM10 further contributed that since employers were unaware of these gendered realities, female remote workers were being expected to perform to the same standards as other workers who did not have the same domestic pressures on them - an invisible structural disadvantage that was neither recognised nor dealt with in her organisation.

Theme 4: Technological Strain and Digital Fatigue.

As a compounding and ubiquitous source of stress, infrastructural constraints added technological frustration to the already mentioned cultural and gendered pressures. The most disruptive barrier was found to be unreliable electricity supply, with the participants citing frequent power outages that disrupted virtual meetings, corrupted work in progress, and forced them to use costly generator fuel or personal mobile data.

ML15 wrote of his working day where he spent a large part of his time merely attempting to get a stable internet connection, and that by the time he got one, after being interrupted numerous times, he would be mentally drained, which hampered the quality of work that would be done later. FM14 explained the same tendency and added that her employer had never recognized or compensated the financial cost of data purchases and generator fuel, both of which were major individual costs.

Some of the respondents in the FGDs reported that digital fatigue was a unique and debilitating experience. ML09 clarified that the long screen time, which was required due to the necessity to compensate the lost time caused by infrastructure failures, resulted in a long-term effect of eye strain, headaches, and lack of concentration. FM13 further explained that technology-related stress, cultural demands, and household duties resulted in a cumulative stress that was hard to overcome during weekends since family demands remained unchanged.

Another psychological aspect of infrastructure stress was also mentioned by participants: the fear of not knowing when the next power outage would take place or when an important meeting would be interrupted destabilized the feeling of professional reliability that remote workers wanted to convey to coworkers and supervisors, which was not reflected in previous literature on infrastructure (Nwagwu, 2020; Edeh and Okafor, 2021).

DISCUSSION

The results of this research shed some light on how the cultural context of collectivism in Nigeria contributes to and exacerbates the work-family conflicts that remote working conditions bring. The four themes combined are an image of remote work as a set up that, in the Nigerian context, does not merely transfer professional labour to the home, but imposes it into a social space that is culturally regulated and has its own profoundly embedded norms, expectations, and hierarchies.

The continuation of border permeability reported in this research is quite consistent with the postulations of the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) which argues that once the physical and temporal boundaries between the work and family domains are erased, the boundaries between the two become highly permeable and prone to the cultural logics of the domestic space. The family sphere in the Nigerian setting is dominated by collectivist rules that provide no valid independent existence to the individual who is not a member of the family. The consequence - as the participants repeatedly explained - is that the home cannot be reconstructed as a workspace merely by individual will; the household itself does not submit to this redefinition. These results build upon the research of Kossek et al. (2012), who reveal that blurred work-family boundaries are linked to increased stress and lower productivity, by indicating that in Nigeria the cause of boundary erosion is not only the architecture of remote working but also the cultural power of the family unit.

The theme of cultural obligations provides a facet of work-family conflict that is not well represented by the current Western-centric models. The classical model by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) focuses on conflicting time and energy needs yet it fails to explain the morally

approved nature of family responsibilities in collectivist societies. According to Hofstede (2001), collectivist cultures place the group as a normative requirement, and those individuals who put personal interests above the interests of the group face a risk of social disapproval. This paper shows how this dynamic works in practice: when participants tried to establish professional boundaries, they were not only inconvenienced but they were also seen as disloyal or culturally deviant. This ethical aspect of conflict is a major stressor that cannot be effectively dealt with through individual coping mechanisms, and Adebayo and Onyemelukwe (2019) also mention it in their examination of family demands and employee performance in Nigeria.

The gendered asymmetry recorded in Theme 3 aligns with a significant amount of Nigerian and African literature that describes the unequal distribution of household and caregiving roles as a structural inequality that persists (Ojo, 2021; Adisa et al., 2019). The current findings contribute to specificity regarding how remote work contributes to this inequality in practice. Female respondents spoke of some sort of a double shift that is invisible: a professional work performed during regular working hours, and then a domestic work that is squeezed into evenings and weekends. The lack of organisational recognition of this burden meant that the female workers were evaluated by the same productivity standards as other employees that did not have similar domestic responsibilities - a de facto performance disadvantage that was structural in nature but felt like personal failure. This result has a direct implication on the design and operationalisation of performance management systems by organisations that involve remote workers.

Lastly, the cultural analysis is related to the material conditions of remote work in Nigeria through the theme of technological strain. Previous studies by Nwagwu (2020) and Edeh and Okafor (2021) cite inadequate digital infrastructure as a consistent hindrance to successful remote work in sub-Saharan Africa. The current paper adds a description of the interaction of infrastructure failures and cultural and gendered forces to form compounding stressors. The participants did not feel power outages as isolated technical inconveniences but rather as events that ate up the already limited productive time that was already cut out of domestic commitments and pushed them to work deep into the evening and further intensified the abacus of fatigue and role conflict. Financial implications of infrastructure workarounds, including generator fuel and personal data, were also an unrecognised type of organisational cost-shifting to employees, a result that has direct implications on the design of remote work policy.

All these findings together argue in favor of the thesis that remote work cannot be imported to the Nigerian workplaces without substantial cultural and structural adjustments. Work-family boundary management in Nigeria is not a major issue of individual competence but a structural and organisational issue that requires culturally responsive policies. This paper, therefore, proposes a contextualised expansion of Work-Family Border Theory - one that includes the collectivism moral economy of obligation, the gendered space of domestic labour, and the infrastructural conditions of successful remote work.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that remote work in Nigeria cannot be properly interpreted within the frameworks that were created in Western and individualist environments. The experiences of the professionals at IITA in Ibadan demonstrate that working at home in Nigeria is done in the cultural and infrastructural context that essentially redefines the essence of work-family boundary management. The permeability of the borders is not merely a structural effect of eliminating the commute to the office, but rather a product and reproduction of collectivist cultural ideals that place the home in the domain of the family and make individual withdrawal of family commitments costly socially and morally. This is made more difficult by gendered expectations, which burden most of the domestic labour with women, and unreliable electricity and internet infrastructure, which introduces a level of material stress that undermines the productive benefits that remote work promises to provide.

The theoretical value of this work is that it contextualises the Work-Family Border Theory in a collectivist, infrastructurally constrained framework. The results indicate that the notion of border permeability should be expanded to consider the structural peculiarities of remote work setups

and the cultural power that regulates domestic space and the gendered power dynamics that define the bearer of the price of blurred boundaries. To the Nigerian remote workers, boundary management is not a personal issue of adjustment, but a structural and organisational issue that needs to be addressed at the level of employer policy, investing in national infrastructure, and a larger cultural discourse concerning the allocation of domestic tasks.

The research has its drawbacks. The sample was selected in one research institution in Ibadan and hence the results indicate the experiences of a comparatively educated, officially employed professional group. Future studies need to expand this query to informal labourers, small and medium enterprise workers and those in other geopolitical areas of Nigeria to determine whether the dynamics recorded herein apply to other socioeconomic and cultural settings. Longitudinal designs may also shed some light on the dynamics of work-family boundaries by showing the way they change as remote employment becomes increasingly institutionalised in the Nigerian setting. The generalisability and cross-national comparability of these findings would also be enhanced by the addition of mixed-methods extensions that include quantitative measures of the extent of boundary permeability, work-family conflict, and wellbeing.

Recommendations

Based on the results, the following recommendations are provided to organisations that hire remote workers in Nigeria and to policymakers who are interested in the sustainability of the digital work arrangements.

To begin with, the organisations must come up with culturally aware remote working policies that clearly recognise the collectivist family responsibilities of the Nigerian workers. Instead of giving strict schedules that are based on the western office standards, employers ought to provide flexible working conditions where employees can balance care giving and community duties without being punished on their status at work.

Second, organisations are advised to implement the systems of output-based performance measurement, which will assess the employees based on what they deliver, not the number of hours they spend online. This is fairer in a workplace where infrastructure breakdowns and family commitments cause unexpected demands on employee time, and lessens the unfair burden on female employees who bear the larger portion of domestic burden.

Third, the employers are supposed to officially acknowledge the infrastructure expenses incurred by the remote employees by subsidising their internet data and additional power, or by reimbursing their staff on the expenses that are recorded. The existing system of transferring these expenses silently to the workers adds to the financial and psychological stress of working remotely.

Fourth, organisations ought to invest in gender-sensitive support programmes, such as managerial training to identify and respond to the disproportionate domestic burden of female employees, and employee wellness programmes that offer access to counselling and peer support to employees who have to juggle multiple conflicting role demands.

Fifth, on the national level, long-term investment in digital infrastructure, such as access to reliable electricity and broadband access, is necessary to mitigate the structural disadvantages that Nigerian remote workers have in comparison to their peers in more well-equipped settings.

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