



Female-dominated informal labour sector and family (in) stability: The interface between reproduction and production

Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi, Emmanuel Amoo, Oni Samuel, Adeola Oyeyemi & Gbadebo Adejumo |

To cite this article: Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi, Emmanuel Amoo, Oni Samuel, Adeola Oyeyemi & Gbadebo Adejumo | (2020) Female-dominated informal labour sector and family (in) stability: The interface between reproduction and production, Cogent Arts & Humanities, 7:1, 1788878, DOI: [10.1080/23311983.2020.1788878](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1788878)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1788878>



© 2020 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.



Published online: 16 Jul 2020.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 799



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



Citing articles: 2 [View citing articles](#)



Received: 20 December 2019
Accepted: 25 June 2020

*Corresponding author: Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi, Department of Economics and Demographic Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
E-mail: fadeke.owolabi@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Reviewing editor:
Lincoln Geraghty, School of Media and Performing Arts, University of Portsmouth, UK

Additional information is available at the end of the article

CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Female-dominated informal labour sector and family (in) stability: The interface between reproduction and production

Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi^{1*}, Emmanuel Amoo², Oni Samuel¹, Adeola Oyeyemi¹ and Gbadebo Adejumo³

Abstract: The achievement gender equality and the empowerment of all women (SDG-5) could be slow considering the African traditional cultural expectation of women on exclusive home management, and reproduction, in the face of chagrin economic drive for family income augmentation. The study examined the nexus between women's role in managing the family, their traditional role of reproduction and expected procreative activities. The research adopted a qualitative research approach with in-depth interviews to obtain data from women entrepreneurs in the informal labour sector in a purposively selected local Adire textile industry in Abeokuta, Nigeria. A snowballing approach was adopted in the selection of the 9 participants that voluntarily agree to participate in the interview. Data were analysed through content analysis and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the involvement of women in the Adire textile have no negative effects on their families, rather, it has enhanced stability. Respondents have been able to supplement finances at home, the practices

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Owolabi Fadeke Esther is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria. She has a wide range of research in Development Studies.

Samuel Oni is a senior lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Nigeria. His scholastic interests are governance, legislature, e-governance and conflicts studies.

Emmanuel O. Amoo is a Senior Lecturer in Covenant University, Nigeria, and PhD holder in Demography and Social Statistics. His research areas are men's reproductive health, gender health education/promotion, adolescence and sexology, family demography and population studies.

Adeola I. Oyeyemi is a doctoral student of Public Administration in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Covenant University; with research interest in Health Policy, Governance and Health Administration.

Adejumo Gbadebo Olubunmi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, Covenant University. He studied Psychology and Criminology and has published in both fields.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Gender roles in African societies have been influenced by patriarchy to confine women to be homemaker and men as the provider of family need. Recent economic meltdowns, high cost of living and economic hardship have bought some alterations to the hitherto designed roles, with women also assuming economic roles. Despite the gendered stereotype, women's involvement in *adire* making in the Nigerian informal sector provides them with income that helps them supplement the finances of their spouses. The study found that despite family responsibilities, women's economic activities in the informal sector had positive impacts on family stability. This research, therefore, stresses the need for the adoption and enforcement of policies and legislations that will empower women in the informal sector to enhance both the quality and quantity of their production, thus strengthening them to enhance their family stability and societal stability in extension.

that are so much cherished by their husbands. Since the textile is a local though popular small industry, and the trade knowledge has been oral ‘parents-to-children knowledge transference’, government could intervene for a formal restructuring. Also, policy that could encourage mutual husband-and-wife participation in home chores and other family responsibilities rather than traditional exclusive delegation to women. This could prevent avoidable negative health consequences for women.

Subjects: Gender Studies - Soc Sci; Gender & Development; Political Economy

Keywords: Adire; economic empowerment; family in(stability); gender; informal labour sector; Nigeria; women

1. Introduction

Contemporary studies in demography, economics, and gender analysis have for sometimes acknowledged that gender roles and modifications or alterations in family patterns are intertwined. There are various strands of discourse on gender roles and family stability; however, the prevalent argument is that the traditional female caregiver and male breadwinner societies, that is, gender-role specialization, intensifies couples’ reciprocal reliance on each other and thereby upholds family stability (Vidal & Lersch, 2019). In past, it was perceived and argued that women’s economic dependence on their spouses was imperative for family stability as it enforces their acceptance of their husband’s control. Furthermore, male roles were meant to curb women’s extremes and entrench their household decision-making power. In line with this thought, the study by Schuler et al. (2018) posits that women’s economic empowerment reduced their dependence on men and has become a threat to family stability and thus could engender divorce risks. Similarly, family instability is documented as a predictors for increasing proportions of dual-earner couples, where both women and men are engaged in labour market work (Duvander, Johansson & SSI Inspectorate, 2020). Oláh et al. (2014) avow that in modern times, ideational changes such as the need for self-actualization, the spread and rise individualism and the aspiration for paid work are the foundational component of family formation, influencing their fragility. A broad body of research including those by Upadhyay and Karasek (2012) demonstrates that women’s empowerment is related to reproductive outcomes, such as contraceptive use, low fertility and increasing birth intervals and general family stability (Amoo, 2020). Thus, the involvement of couples in market production affects the quality of family life (Storenga et al., 2013). On the other hand, another strand of argument explains that the full participation and partnership of both women and men are required for reproductive and productive life including sharing financial responsibilities in the household for family stability (Khanom, 2013).

Despite the analyses and arguments that women’s economic empowerment or increasing proportions of dual-earner couples negatively affect family stability, the women empowerment has been intensified in the last few decades. There has been a steady rise in awareness for the need to empower women through economic, social and political equity, increasing access to fundamental human rights as well as formal and informal education. This is hinged on the fact that empowerment and family stability could be crucial for the attainment of sustainable development goals, especially the SDG-5 (Amoo et al., 2018; Robinson, 2015). The empowerment of girls and women as well as the achievement of gender equality as stated in the SDG-5 addresses essential elements of women’s rights needed for societal stability. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the family as an essential component of social protection and family stability both in the developed and developing worlds (United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Some piece of evidence show that the informal sector has become the main source of employment for the labour market globally and is vital to incomes and wellbeing of the operators (mostly

the women). In Africa, it accounts for 85.8% of all employment or 71.9% excluding agriculture (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). More explicitly, in more than 80% of sub-Saharan African countries, women are more exposed to informal employment (UN Women, 2017). It is needful to state that women are the larger fraction of the workers in the informal sector in developing countries (Nguyen, 2015). The informal economy involves economic activities embark upon by organizations and individuals, that are not subject to full government bureaucratic regulatory framework. Informal sector are all businesses that are not registered by the states but produce at least some of their goods and services for sale, family use or barter, including all smallholder farmers who live just above subsistence levels (Cling et al, 2011; Action Aid International, 2018). The productivity and earnings of the informal sector are low. Women's dominance in the informal sector is attributable to inadequate access to property, education, capital, public services, social protection and infrastructure, skill deficit, gender-based discrimination and occupational segmentation in the labour market (Hearle et al., 2019).

The informal sector contributes to 60% of Nigeria's entire economy (Chima, 2018). Women's participation in Nigeria's labour force can be holistically discussed from three perspectives. Firstly, many women are engaged in agriculture which is the mainstay of most of the economies in Africa. Secondly, women participate in the formal sector which is also known as the "organized" sector or the "modern" sector. The last is their involvement in the informal sector. According to Akintoye (2006), the informal sector in Nigeria denotes "economic activities in all sectors of the economy that are operated outside the purview of government regulation. This sector may be invisible, irregular, parallel, non-structured, backyard, underground, subterranean, unobserved or residual". In Nigeria, informal economic activities encompass a range of small-scale and largely self-employment activities. This makes the measurement of the activities in Nigeria's informal sector difficult to measure. Nonetheless, they are dynamic, retail and subsistence in nature but significantly contribute to the general growth of the society and contribute to both household and personal income (Amoo, Ola-David, Olurinola, Fadayomi, 2016). They entail the use of traditional methods of production and involves traditional occupations such as transport, retail trade, repair services, cloth dying (*adire* making), restaurant, etc. (Akintoye, 2006). Due to family responsibility, cultural and social responsibilities and lack of skills amongst other reasons, women engage in petty trading and set up their enterprises such as become self-employed to earn income in the informal sector.

The structural functionalism theory provides the theoretical basis for this study. The major contributors to the development of this theory are Robert Merton and Herbert Spencer. According to the theory, the society is an interconnected and complex system working together to promote stability and solidarity. It emphasizes the relationship between various social institutions that make up the society such as education, economy, etc. Each social structure has consequences on the society. Gender inequality offers a significant illustration. From these theoretical perspectives, women being socially subordinate to men allows for the smooth running of the society because everyone knows his or her respective position in the societal hierarchy. This means that social structures such as gender stratification, the family and the society will function smoothly because it gives shape to lives and expected functions. Additionally, the theory describes how family roles are performed to foster positive outcomes for spouses and enhance family stability. It supports the theoretical explanations between gender roles and family stability that have emerged with the intensifying rate of union stability amongst parents and sexual partners (Duvander et al., n.d.). In other words, who does what in families is the function of structural processes that are embedded in the society (O. Amoo et al., 2018; E. O. Amoo et al., 2017). Women have often considered to be good wives and mothers when they take good care of their husbands and children as well as take care of their homes. On the other hand, men take up the instrumental roles of the leadership of their families especially when they provide financially for the family (Amoo, 2020).

Gender relations and related attitudes and values are becoming fluid and changing dynamically and as such, blurring the boundaries between work and family life (Oláh et al., 2014). Now, there are new patterns and trends in gender roles especially as related to expanding women's role to include economic provision for the family. This also include the alteration of males' roles to involve family responsibilities such as caring for the children and other involvements in the home front to aid family sustenance and stability. It becomes imperative to study the effects of role alterations on family stability (Murry et al., 2013). In Nigeria, limited studies are exploring how the activities of women in the informal sector affect family stability. The significance of this study lies in the need to investigate the impacts of women's participation in Nigeria's informal labour sector on their family stability. This study is worth investigating as it contributes to Nigeria's efforts in the path of the realization of the United Nations SDG-5 which seeks to promote gender equality through women and girls empowerment. Precisely, the study examines how the activities of women involved in the *adire fabric* production in Abeokuta metropolis of Ogun State, located in South-West Nigeria affect family stability.

2. Methods

The research adopted a qualitative research approach through in-depth interview to obtain data from women in the informal labour sector. Out of several types and forms of informal activities such as street trading, fruit vendors, poultry farming and food crop farming (Amoo, et al., 2016), one of the few documented organised informal businesses, *Adire* (local fabrics) situated in the manufacturing was selected (Awajobi et al., 2014). Only known local textile industries popularly called *Adire* which is situated within Abeokuta-South Local government area of Ogun State, Nigeria was selected. Due to the focus of the study, the researchers recruited females *adire* entrepreneurs as participants for the study. The *Adire* textile industry is a conglomerate of individual entrepreneurs, mostly women in the age range 25 years and above and concentrated in a single location. The length of the time for the interviews with the women varied. It ranged between 30 minutes and one hour. Only nine in-depth interviews were conducted. Participants were selected with the snowballing approach where an identified subject or respondent gives the researcher the identity of another subject, who in turn provides the name of another respondent and the respondents keep referring others. This method has been extensively used in several other studies (Amoo et al., 2018; Amoo et al., 2017; Ahmed, 2009). The sampling technique helps to overcome the challenge related to sampling obscured population and takes advantage of social networks of the identified network. Additionally, the sampling technique adopted offered the opportunity to generalise from the sample being studied. Similarly, the use of convenient sampling allowed participants with similar or related criteria to be selected.

In harmony with the philosophies and values of qualitative research, the homogenous and abstemiously small sample size was preferred or ideal for the study to avert the loss of important information during the analysis of data (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Before the interview sessions, the informed consents of the study participants were obtained. Thus, none of the respondents was forced into providing information. The respondents were at liberty to opt-out of the discussion at any time they deemed fit. Personal details of the respondents such as addresses, names and telephone numbers were not obtained; therefore, the need to obtain ethical approval for the study was not necessary. Eligibility criteria for participation in the in-depth interview comprised that they were women and earning income from their *adire* business.

2.1. Socio-demographics

Nine women in the age range of 25 years and above participated in the in-depth interview. Only 44.4% of the respondents were between ages 25 and 34 while 55.6% (5 respondents) were 35 years and above (Table 1). More than half of these women have education up to secondary and above, while only two have no formal education but could communicate in pidgin English, a diluted version of the English language commonly spoken in Nigeria. More specifically, 22.2% of the respondents had no formal education, 11.1% had primary education while respondents that had secondary and post-secondary

education were of an equal percentage of 33.3% each (Table 1). The majority of the participants (66.7%) have been in the business for over 25 years, 11.1% of the respondents have been into the business for between 11 and 19 years while 22.2% had been in it for less than 10 years. Religious wise, 6 (66.6%) out of the women interviewed were of the Islam faith while only 3 (33.3%) practised Christianity (Table 1). Only 11.1% of the women belonged to the widowed and separated category, (11.1%) living separately, and 7 (77.8%) had an intact family and living with their spouses. Seven out of the nine women have children though the family size ranges from 1 to 6 children per family (Table 1).

Table 1. Selected demographic variables among women in the informal sector of “Adire” making in Abeokuta, Nigeria

Selected demographic variables	N	Percent (%)
Age group		
25–34 years	4	44.4
35 years & above	5	55.6
Total	9	100
Years of working experience		
Less than 10 years	2	22.2
11–19 years	1	11.1
25 years & above	6	66.7
Total	9	100
Marital status		
Never married	1	11.1
Married	7	77.8
Separated/widowed	1	11.1
Total	9	100
Education level		
No formal education	2	22.2
Primary	1	22.1
Secondary	3	33.3
Post-secondary	3	33.3
Total	9	100
Religion affiliation		
Christianity	3	33.3
Islam	6	66.6
Total	9	100
Source: Fieldwork, 2019		

2.2. Data analysis procedures

The interview focused on lifestyle issues concerning work and family life balance, coping strategies between both highly time and energy demanding roles of production and reproduction. Mostly questions were translated in local dialect to ensure adequate comprehension of questions. The in-depth interview approach used gave opportunities to ask further probing questions for explanations and more detailed answers. In addition to the recording, notes were taken on the responses of the participants. This is done to ensure that nothing is missed out should the recoding instrument develop

fault. Equally, comments and reports of group members were put into consideration before the next interview and form additional inputs in the analysis (Amoo et al, 2017; O. Amoo et al., 2018).

2.3. Credibility and transferability

As it relates to qualitative research methods, the credibility, trustworthiness, transferability, and even the generalization of outcomes and results are essential concepts. In ensuring the credibility of this study, notes were taken, and afterwards, the researchers reflected on the issues raised. Furthermore, in ensuring the transferability of the result, the researchers placed the data within extant literature and made extrapolations on different techniques in which the data from this study could be applied to the society at large specifically as it relates to women's reproductive activities in the informal economic sector affect family stability or instability. Additionally, to ensure the validity and integrity of the data used for this research participant's interview was used. To ensure accuracy and a seeming confirmation of responses, responses written down were read out to the interviewee at the end of each interview.

3. Results

3.1. Emerging themes

The prevailing research objective was to examine the nexus between women's role in managing the family, their traditional role of reproduction and productive activities. In this study, several themes emerged. The dominant ones are family perspectives and the "adire" profession, the influence of work on family responsibilities, changing gender roles, ancestral transference of economic skills, and strategies for work-life balance.

3.1.1. Ancestral transference of economic skills/inheritance of economic skills

The women appreciated the necessity of being skilled in a handy work, especially as being thought by their parents. Some of the responses from the respondents revealed that the skill for *adire* making was inherited from their parents and has been passed from one generation of their family lineage to another. It became apparent that economic shift and social trends made these skills passed down by the word of mouth and informal practical classes to be very handy. An excerpt from a respondent is stated thus:

Adire making is a job that is passed on from one generation of woman to the next. This comes with the skills, and sequences of the job that accompanies the transference. It is simply an inherited job **(Woman aged, 25–34)**.

3.1.2. Family perspectives and "adire" profession

Another fundamental theme worthy of being noted in this study is the perception of the family members of the respondents about the *adire* making profession. The participants commented on how their husbands and other family members perceived their profession. Several responses indicated that their husbands were in support of their line of trade and business choices. Some excerpts show that:

I have had no objection from any quarters including my husband because my *adire* trade or profession is to earn income **(Woman, Aged 35 and above)**.

My husband supports my trade because he knows the entire family is going to benefit from my joining the industry **(Woman Aged, 25 to 34)**.

This could imply that the economic benefits to the family members (from the *adire* trade) made the respondents have some levels of support from their family to engage in the trade.

3.1.3. *Changing gender roles*

Gender roles are the assigning of specific roles to the various sexes by the society. As procreator and perhaps caregivers, there are various roles women perform in their home. They are mostly in the forms of house chores such as cooking meals for the household, house cleaning (e.g., mopping, laundry), and washing dishes amongst others. However, data from the respondents of this study show that there are alterations in these traditionally historical men-women responsibilities. Specifically, the understanding and realisation of the positive financial contributions of women to family survival influence the perception and acceptance of women's activities in the *adire* profession. For instance, an excerpt is stated below:

Over the years, my husband rarely complains about my economic activities that relate to *adire* making because he is aware of my financial contributions and supports to the family. Thus, joining the industry has never been a bone of contention in my home, rather, it has been advantageous to our family survival **(Woman, Aged 35 and above)**.

Additionally, other groups of respondents indicated that marriage should not be an excuse for women to not work. They believe that the family expenses especially the demand from children would warrant both "hands" (husband and wife) to look outside for finance to sustain the family. Below are some excerpts:

Surviving in Nigeria is so hard now that leaving all the family responsibilities to a single individual is very suicidal because their thoughts and burdens could bring about high blood pressure **(Woman, Aged 35 and above)**.

Although I am not married, I intend to support my home with proceeds from my business in the future **(Woman, aged 25–34)**

It was very unfortunate to know that the adjustment of gender roles was more from the women towards embracing and sharing the financial responsibilities of the men. This did not in any way induce a corresponding change or adjustment of roles from the men in terms of assisting their wives to do house chores such as cooking even though their women were burdened or stressed from having to combine family responsibilities with business as all the respondents alluded with this. Supporting excerpts are stated thus:

My husband does not help me with handling house chores even though I assist him financially **(Woman, Aged 35 and above)**.

3.1.4. *Our culture does not permit men to do house chores. So my husband does not (Woman Aged, 25 to 34)*

Although my husband tries to identify with the stress of being up and doing in terms of combining home responsibilities with my *adire* making, however, there is a clear cut line of responsibilities which he does not cross to doing what women should do in the home **(Woman Aged, 25 to 34 years)**.

3.1.5. *The influence of work on family responsibilities*

Questions were asked on whether the engagement with "*adire*" production has ever affected or conflicted with women's responsibilities as housewives (pre-occupation with caring for her family, managing household affairs, and doing house chores). Notwithstanding that the domestic chores are to be fulfilled by women irrespective of the nature of their jobs in the office or her place of

work, the majority of the respondents affirmed that these traditional household chores are not impairing with their search for means of livelihood. Some of the opinions of the participants about time, work, and home management are that managing work and the home becomes easy with time, though it may be difficult for newly wedded wives. A more specific excerpt by a woman aged 35 years and above, supporting this stance about the interface and influence between work and family responsibility is that “works do not have a negative effect when it comes to taking care of the home front.”

3.1.6. Strategies for work-life balance

The understanding from the responses revolved around the fact that time is like a commodity or currency of life that is given to everyone not withstanding the age, kind of job done, and regardless of working in the public or private sector. The respondents commented that no one has enough of time. Being aware of the cumbersomeness of managing client, marriage, spouses, family members, and business, respondents mentioned that the major strategy that gave them success in the business and home engagements in terms of work-life balance is time and self-management. It was remarked that what is needed in the home care, such as cooking meal for husband and children, are chores done in the morning before going to work. Also, grown-up children help with some domestic chores. More importantly, to the women, the informal nature of their jobs could afford them the ability to close from work early so as to get home on time for the domestic chores. According to one of the respondents,

It is just to know how to manage your time. It is about waking up early to do the needful (i.e., prepare meals, clean and dress the children). It is about setting a working timetable in such a way that fits attending to your 'morning duties' and be readily at home to 'fix the dinner'. Hence, it is very conducive and meets the contribution and independence that today's women are experiencing in the maintenance of work-life balance (Woman, aged 35 years and above).

Not one of them complained of not balancing work and life together with dual-roles they are playing as homemakers and workers. They seemed to be happy with their jobs due to seemingly contributions they make to the family especially in terms of finance in terms.

4. Discussion

The study provided insight into the mechanism of balancing the roles of production and reproduction among women. Very importantly, it addressed the issues of women empowerment as contained in SDG 5. Interfacing between these two roles—production and reproduction among women is necessitated by the cultural underlining belief and increasing economic meltdown in Nigeria (Oláh et al., 2014; Park, 2011). The distinct nature of this study is the focus on a single informal *Adire* industry in Nigeria, rather than studies on multiplicity of industries that could obscure individualistic suggestions to uplift a single trade. Each trade is peculiar and general approach may not be suitable for all. Such general approach often rely on general assumptions that may not be relevant to others. This study is important especially in the search for cross-cutting approaches to achieve societal stability since women who are the custodian of the family are more than ever before required in the productive roles. The fact that the study touched on balancing the roles of production and reproduction for women is fundamental to the achievement of the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG-5) for the female gender especially in a country with a high level of poverty like Nigeria.

The study found that there is an alteration of gender roles in the Nigerian society which hitherto has restricted women work to homefront. However, the alteration of gender roles has tilted to women than their men's folk. This has been due to the economic hardship and the quest not to lose their spouses to poor family economic conditions. Women provided financial supports to their

husbands while there was no equal reciprocal assistance from husbands to their wives in terms of relieving them of stress arising from the combination of business and home activities. This supports the findings of Rao (2019), Forste and Fox (2012), and Bianchi et al (2000). This submission also supported the position of Kramer (2016) that gender stereotypes are as strong today as they were 30 years ago, with study participants saying men avoid traditionally female roles, such as child care and housework.

The overriding understanding from the result of this study shows that the stereotype age-long perspective that women place is in the kitchen has changed. However, notwithstanding that the society still revolves around men, women are now an essential force of the economy. Their dual roles has not hindered their economic potentials of women in the informal sector, especially in cloth making *Adire* industry. While we did not measure their monetary implications for the national economy, there is no doubt that this *Adire* cloth making industry could worth some substantial percentage of the Gross National Income. This study, therefore, submits that not only do gender roles hinder the potentials of women in Nigeria, it also hinders the potentials and economic growth of the country. This is in line with the findings of Irvine (2008) and Panella (2016).

It was also observed that women are very strong vessels rather than the social stigma of painting women as weaker vessels to their male counterparts. This was expressed in the lope-sidedness of rendering assistance and cooperative implementation or discharge of family responsibilities. The tilting of roles from the traditional dichotomy of men as the provider and women as a caregiver to incorporate women as financial supporters did not alter or necessitate an adjustment in men supporting women in their designed caregiving role. This means that even though women began to have more responsibilities as induced by country's economic conditions, their responsibilities in the home front did not reduce. Thus, women are good at multitasking. Therefore, this study supports the stance of Szameitat et al. (2015). Contrarily, Hirnstein et al (2019) argue that there is no sex difference in the multi-tasking paradigm.

While there is no single model of gender role across the world and including Africa and Nigeria specifically, cultural diversities present diverse male and female roles. There was an interface between socially constructed gender roles and the prevalent role adjustments within family structures. Attitudes towards both gender roles and sexuality have been changing. As such, the study brings to light the changing dimensions of these historical constructed social, cultural, and economic dilemmas that have been instigated by underdevelopment, unemployment, rise in the cost of living, and economic hardships. Rather than being caregivers, women are also providers due to the disturbing economic situations in the country. Therefore, this study supports the findings of Oláh et al. (2014). This observation arose from the support family members including spouses provide for their wives which arose from the understanding of the and earning of additional income which goes a long way in helping to care for the family and meeting needs. Some women stated that with the *Adire* income, they can pay their children's school fees, financed marriages, enabled further training of individual family members, family matters, and even the husband is a benefiter of the profession.

Conflicts are inevitable in human life and existence and are a necessary part of life. One of the reasons for the near-absolute absence of conflicts between the management of economic activities and home responsibilities is years of experience through which they learnt to manage themselves, their time, and their activities. More than half of the respondents indicated that work-related activities and family responsibility could be managed well especially as time passes by, management of the homes and works become easier.

Furthermore, there was an appreciation of the transference of skills from one generation to another. This supports the efficacy of oral tradition and inherited knowledge which paid off in

strengthening family survival. There was an appreciation of inherited knowledge. Oral sources play essential roles in the reconstruction of history (Dibia & Nwosu, 2014). Oral tradition which is the information passed down through the generations by word of mouth that is not written down. This includes historical and cultural traditions, literature, and law. Like oral tradition, one of the strategies through which some of the women learn the *adire* making skills is through the transference from one generation to another through words of mouth and teachings. Oral tradition knowledge transfer that the women experienced could be adjudged effective considering the solace of the operators in the job for family survival. As it is a way of transmitting general cultural issues from one generation to another. Therefore, some levels of attention could be paid to oral tradition that is almost not being appreciated any more.

The major contribution of this study as against others that investigated the multiple roles of women in the society (Breen & Cooke, 2005; Murry et al., 2013) is situating the inquiry on the productive and the reproductive roles of women against the stability or instability of the family. This study submitted that irrespective of the encumbered roles of productive and reproductive roles of women in the informal sectors of the economy, it by no means destabilised the family. Rather than instability, the economic empowerment of women engenders the stability of the family.

The overall results indicated that the involvement of women in the local *Adire* textile industry in Abeokuta Nigeria could not be linked to family instability. This, therefore, supports the need for Nigeria to drive the pursuit of women's economic empowerment as contained in SDG-5. It is implicit from the study that without women involvement in the productive sectors of the society, the standard of living for most families might be deplorable given the present socio-economic situation in the country. It is equally understood that women involved in the textile industry is a form of job creation/opportunities for women (especially the young women). Fundamentally, the economic empowerment of the women in this textile industry is fulfilling the attainment of SDG5 which focuses on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

5. Limitation of the study

This study is limited to the in-depth interviewing of women in the *Adire* textile industry in Abeokuta Southwest Nigeria. It does not cover the their spouses which would have provided a balanced analysis on the issue of family stability or instability. However, it has shed light on family stability or instability from the women perspective.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The study conclude that despite the traditional assigned roles of homemakers for women, the highlight from this study has shown a change in this paradigm. There is also seemingly impression that the oral transference of knowledge is effective considering the ability of the operators to practice what was taught orally by their parents. The *Adire* textile industry could be seen as a positive contributor to the family economy and that women involved are effectively balancing their home-front roles with their outside economic activities. In the light of this, this paper recommends that owing to the positive comments on the benefits of the family from women's involvement in this informal sector, government could transform the knowledge transference in this trade to classroom knowledge acquisition and utilize such for empowering girls and women both in school and colleges. Lastly, in line with the pursuit of SDG-5, the Nigerian government should adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation that could encourage mutual husband and wife participation in home chores management and family responsibilities rather than exclusive delegation to women. This could prevent avoidable negative health consequences for women.

Acknowledgements

The authors appreciate the Covenant University Centre for Research, Innovation and Development (CUCRID), for funding the publication of this research.

Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details

Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi¹
E-mail: fadeke.owolabi@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
Emmanuel Amoo²
E-mail: Emma.amoo@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
Oni Samuel¹
Adeola Oyeyemi¹
Gbadebo Adejumo³
E-mail: Gbadebo.adejumo@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
¹ Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.
² Demography and Social Statistics, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.
³ Department of Psychology, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Female-dominated informal labour sector and family (in) stability: The interface between reproduction and production, Fadeke Esther Olu-Owolabi, Emmanuel Amoo, Oni Samuel, Adeola Oyeyemi & Gbadebo Adejumo, *Cogent Arts & Humanities* (2020), 7: 1788878.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2009). *Methods in sample surveys*. <https://ocw.jhsph.edu/courses/statmethodsfor样的surveys>
- Akintoye, I. R. (2006). Enhancing the performance of the informal sector for the economic development of Nigeria: A case study of Lagos State. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 100–112. <http://socialscienceuniuyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/vol-5-page-100-112-Enhancing-the-Performance-of-the-Informal-Sector-for-the-Economic-Devt-of-Nigeria-A-Case-Study-of-Lagos-State.pdf>
- Amoo, E. (2020). *Family formation in Africa: Trends in age at marriage, union types, patterns and determinants*. Chapter 6. In C. Odimegwu (Ed.), *Family demography and post-2015 development agenda in Africa* (99–125). Springer. ISBN: 978-3-030-14886-7.
- Amoo, E., Oni, G., Ajayi, M., Idowu, A., Fadayomi, T., & Omideyi, A. (2017). Are men's reproductive health problems and sexual behavior predictors of welfare? *American Journal of Men's Health*, 11(3), 487–497. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988315598832>
- Amoo, E. O., Omideyi, K., Fadayomi, T., Ajayi, M., Oni, A., & Idowu, E. (2017). Male reproductive health challenges: Appraisal of wives' coping strategies. *Reproductive Health*, 14(1), 90. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-017-0341-2>
- Amoo, O., Olawole-Isaac, A., Okorie, N., Ajayi, M., Adekola, P., Amana, T., & Olu-Owolabi, F. (2018). Spousal desertion and coping strategies among women with cervical cancer in Nigeria: A schematic framework for wellbeing. *Etude De La Population Africaine (Africa Population Studies)*, 32(1), 4012–4021. <https://aps.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/1172>
- Awojobi, O., Ayakpat, J., & Adisa, O. (2014). Rebased Nigerian gross domestic product: The role of the informal sector in the development of the Nigerian economy. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2(7), 301–316. <https://www.ijern.com/journal/July-2014/25.pdf>
- Bianchi, S. M., Milkie, M. A., Sayer, L. C., & Robinson, J. P. (2000). Is anyone doing the housework? Trends in the gender division of household labor. *Social Forces*, 79(1), 191–228. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2675569>
- Breen, R., & Cooke, L. P. (2005). The persistence of the gendered division of domestic labour. *European Sociological Review*, 21(1), 43–57. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jci003>
- Brocki, J., & Wearden, A. (2006). A critical evaluation of the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 21(1), 87–108. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14768320500230185>
- Chima, O. (2018). *FG urged to develop informal sector*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2018/08/16/fg-urged-to-develop-informal-sector/>
- Cling, J. P., Razafindrakoto, M., & Roubaud, F. (2011, December) *The informal economy in Vietnam*. ILO.
- Dibia, J., & Nwosu, E. (2014). Oral tradition and historical reconstruction in Igbo Land, South-East Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)*, 9(1), 89–98. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijdmr/article/view/104391>
- Duvander, A., Lappegard, T., & Johansson, M. (n.d.). *Gender roles and family stability: The influence of a more active father's role on divorce risk in the Nordic countries*. https://iussp.org/sites/default/files/event_call_for_papers/IUSSP%20Extended%20abstract%20divorce.pdf
- Emmanuel O, A., Oluyomi A, O., Oluranti, O. I., & T.O, F.. (2016). Female Youth in Street Trading: Implications for Sexual Harassment in HIV/AIDS Risky Environment. *Journal of South African Business Research*, 2016(2016),1-12. <http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/6514/#.Xv210I-SnIU>
- Forste, R., & Fox, K. (2012). Household labor, gender roles, and family satisfaction: A cross-national comparison. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 43(5), 613–631. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.43.5.613>
- Hearle, C., Baden, S., & Kalsi, K. (2019, September). Promoting economic empowerment for women in the informal economy WOW helpdesk guidance no. 1 final draft.
- Hirnstien, M., Larøi, F., & Laloyaux, J. (2019). No sex difference in an everyday multitasking paradigm. *Psychological Research*, 83(2), 286–296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-018-1045-0>
- Irvine, C. (2008) *Hobbies and careers 'are inherited'*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/2705364/Hobbies-and-careers-are-inherited.html>
- Khanom, A. (2013). *The impact of women's empowerment on family life: A sociological study*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Kramer, J. (2016). *Sigh: Millennials still believe in Hirnstientired gender stereotypes*. <https://www.glamour.com/story/gender-stereotypes-millennials>
- Murry, V., Mayberry, S., & Berkel, C. (2013). Gender and family relations. In G. W. Peterson & K. R. Bush (Eds.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (pp. 401–422). Springer Science+Business Media.
- Nguyen, L. (2015). Education and women in the informal sector: A cross-country analysis. *Undergraduate Economic Review*, 12(1), 1–22. article 2. <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu>

- [edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1330&context=uer](https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1330&context=uer)
- Oláh, L., Richter, R., & Kotowska, I. E. (2014). State-of-the-art report. The new roles of men and women and implications for families and societies families and societies working paper series.
- Panella, A. (2016). *Gender roles: Hindering the potential of women in Africa*. <https://borgenproject.org/potential-of-women-in-africa/>
- Park, K. (2011). Economic crisis, women's changing economic roles, and their implications for women's status in North Korea. *The Pacific Review*, 24(2), 159–177. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2011.566349>
- Peprah, V., Buor, D., Forkuor, D., & Sánchez-Moral, S. (2019). Characteristics of informal sector activities and challenges faced by women in Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1656383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1656383>
- Rao, A. H. (2019). *Even breadwinning wives don't get equality at home*. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/05/breadwinning-wives-gender-inequality/589237/>
- Robinson, M. (2015). *Why gender equality is key to sustainable development*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/03/why-gender-equality-is-integral-to-sustainable-development/>
- Schuler, S., Lenzi, R., Badal, S., & Nazneen, S. (2018, January). Men's perspectives on women's empowerment and intimate partner violence in rural Bangladesh. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 20(1), 113–127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2017.1332391>
- Storenga, K., Akoumb, M., & Murray, S. F. (2013). 'This year I will not put her to work': The production/reproduction nexus in Burkina Faso. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 20(1), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2012.692360>
- Szameitat, A., Hamaida, Y., Tulley, R. S., Saylik, R., & Otermans, P. (2015). Women are better than men: Public beliefs on gender differences and other aspects in multitasking. *PLoS One*, 10(10), e0140371. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0140371>
- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. (1948). <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- Upadhyay, U., & Karasek, D. (2012). Women's empowerment and ideal family size: An examination of DHS empowerment measures in sub-Saharan Africa. *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 38(2), 78–89. <https://doi.org/10.1363/3807812>
- Vidal, S., & Lersch, P. (2019). Changes in gender role attitudes following couples' residential relocations "spatial mobility, family dynamics and gender relations. *Demographic Research*, 40(39), 1111–1152. <https://doi.org/10.4054/DemRes.2019.40.39>



© 2020 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format.

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



Cogent Arts & Humanities (ISSN:) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com

