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Balancing the Psychological Impacts of Career and Parenting among Female Lecturers in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra and Enugu States

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Abstract: This study explores the psychological impacts of balancing career and parenting responsibilities among female lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu States, Nigeria. The research investigates the stressors that female lecturers face while managing their academic roles and parenting duties, and examines the support provided by tertiary institutions in mitigating these challenges. The study used a descriptive survey approach. The research covered various government-owned institutions, including Nnamdi Azikiwe University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and others. Data were collected from 2,297 female lecturers using a validated 4-point Likert scale questionnaire. Analysis involved descriptive statistics and Welch's ANOVA due to violations of normality and homogeneity of variances. Ethical considerations included obtaining consent from institutional leaders and addressing socio-cultural biases. The findings reveal that female lecturers experience significant psychological distress, including stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout, due to the dual demands of work and family. Key stressors include long working hours, family responsibilities, childcare challenges, and social expectations of perfect performance. Furthermore, the study identifies the role of tertiary institutions in alleviating these stressors, such as offering flexible work schedules, childcare services, and mentorship programs. Despite these efforts, the study suggests that more comprehensive policies and support systems are needed to improve the work-life balance of female lecturers. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing institutional support to foster better psychological well-being among female academics.

Keywords: Psychological impacts, career, parenting, female, lecturers, tertiary institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Balancing career and parenting among female lecturers in tertiary institutions presents unique challenges and dynamics. These professionals often face demanding academic responsibilities, including teaching, research, administrative duties, and student mentoring (Zhou et al, 2024). The expectation to publish regularly and contribute to their field adds pressure, making time management crucial. Parenting responsibilities, particularly for those with young children, require significant time and emotional investment, including childcare, educational activities, and household management

(Soparkar, 2023). The dual roles of parenting and maintaining a demanding academic career can lead to significant stress and burnout among female lecturers.

Both career and parenting demand significant time, energy, and commitment, often requiring individuals to juggle responsibilities and priorities to achieve balance and success in both areas. Career refers to an individual's progression through a series of jobs, roles, and professional experiences over a lifetime (Liang et al, 2022). It encompasses the development of skills, knowledge, and expertise in a particular field, often driven by personal ambition, economic needs, and professional aspirations. Careers are marked by milestones such as promotions, achievements, and contributions to one's field, and they require continuous learning, adaptation, and commitment (Isola et al, 2021). The concept of a career involves long-term planning and goal-setting, with individuals often navigating challenges, opportunities, and transitions in pursuit of professional growth and fulfillment.

On the other hand, parenting involves the process of raising and nurturing children from infancy to adulthood. It includes providing for the child's physical, emotional, educational, and social needs, creating a supportive and loving environment, and imparting values and life skills (Okpokiri, 2021). Parenting is a multifaceted role that requires patience, understanding, and adaptability, as each child's needs and circumstances are unique. Effective parenting aims to foster the child's overall development, ensuring their health, safety, emotional well-being, and intellectual growth (Chineyemba, 2023). It involves a balance of discipline, support, and encouragement to help children become responsible, independent, and well-adjusted individuals.

According to Agwogie and Kliewer (2024), the high expectations and time demands in academia, combined with the responsibilities of parenting, often result in heightened levels of stress and psychological impacts. Psychological impacts refer to the effects that various experiences, environments, or situations have on an individual's mental and emotional well-being (Ro et al, 2023). These impacts can manifest as changes in mood, behavior, cognition, and overall mental health. Positive psychological impacts might include increased happiness, self-esteem, and motivation. Negative psychological impacts can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and other mental health issues. These effects can result from a wide range of factors, including work-related stress, personal relationships, life transitions, and traumatic events, influencing how individuals think, feel, and behave in their daily lives (Adejgbagbe et al, 2024). Female lecturers are frequently expected to excel in teaching, research, and service roles, which require long hours and emotional investment. This stress is compounded by the expectation of high productivity and continuous professional development in the academic field (Ileuma & Fakorede, 2023).

Additionally, the academic environment often lacks flexibility, making it difficult for female lecturers to balance their work and family responsibilities effectively. The pressure to secure tenure and promotions can further exacerbate stress levels, as these milestones often require significant time and effort. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, can result from prolonged exposure to these stressors (Adetimirin, 2019). The chronic stress and burnout experienced by female lecturers can lead to decreased job satisfaction, lower productivity, work-life conflict and a higher likelihood of leaving the academic profession (Redondo-Flórez et al, 2020).

Work-life conflict is a critical issue, where the demands of work and family roles are incompatible, causing tension and strain (Pasamar et al, 2020). For female lecturers, this conflict is pronounced due to the need to fulfill professional duties while managing parenting responsibilities. This dual burden can lead to role overload, where the cumulative demands of work and family exceed the individual's capacity to meet them. Research indicates that this conflict can lead to reduced job satisfaction and increased psychological distress (Rahimi et al, 2024). Female lecturers often find themselves having to choose between career advancement and family responsibilities, a decision that can lead to feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

Furthermore, the lack of flexibility in academic scheduling, such as rigid class times and mandatory meetings, can exacerbate work-life conflict. The spillover effect, where stress and strain from one role affect performance and satisfaction in another role, is a common experience for female lecturers (Mayya et al, 2021). This ongoing tension can lead to chronic stress, negatively impacting mental and physical health. Moreover, work-life conflict can affect personal relationships, leading to strained interactions with family members, mental health concerns and a decreased sense of support and well-being (Dominguez & Diez, 2022).

The pressures of balancing career and parenting can adversely affect mental health. Female lecturers often experience anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy as they strive to meet the expectations of both roles (Weinlander, 2020). The high demands of academia, combined with the emotional and physical demands of parenting, can lead to chronic stress and burnout. The lack of institutional support and flexible work arrangements exacerbates these mental health concerns (Rawal, 2023). Additionally, the pressure to perform well in both domains can lead to a fear of failure and perfectionism, further contributing to mental health issues.

Female lecturers may also experience isolation and a lack of social support, which are significant risk factors for depression and anxiety. The stigma associated with seeking mental health support in academic settings can deter individuals from accessing necessary resources, exacerbating their mental health issues (Shreffler et al, 2019). Moreover, the constant juggling of multiple roles can lead to sleep deprivation and poor self-care, further deteriorating mental health. These mental health concerns can have long-term implications, affecting personal well-being, job performance, and career progression (Mansour & Zayed, 2024). Addressing these mental health issues is crucial for the well-being and retention of female lecturers in academia.

The urgency of studying the balance between career and parenting among female lecturers in Anambra and Enugu States lies in addressing the significant psychological strain these women face. Research indicates that work-life imbalance can lead to severe stress, burnout, and diminished job satisfaction (Khamisa et al, 2016). Female lecturers often juggle demanding academic roles with family responsibilities, exacerbating mental health issues (Khamisa et al, 2015). In regions like Anambra and Enugu, limited institutional support further compounds these challenges, making it critical to understand and address these impacts to improve well-being, job performance, and retention.

The study is justified by several significant problems and gaps in the current academic and social landscape. Firstly, female lecturers in these Nigerian states face a unique set of challenges that intersect their professional and personal lives. The demands of academia, including teaching, research, and administrative duties, are rigorous and time-consuming. Simultaneously, the responsibilities of parenting, particularly for those with young children, require substantial emotional and time commitments. This dual role often leads to conflicting demands, causing stress and potentially compromising both their professional achievements and personal well-being.

A critical problem lies in the lack of adequate institutional support tailored to the needs of female lecturers who are also parents. Nigerian tertiary institutions, including those in Anambra and Enugu States, frequently lack policies such as flexible working hours, on-campus childcare facilities, and family-friendly leave options. Without these supports, female lecturers may struggle to manage their dual responsibilities effectively, leading to increased stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction with their careers.

Furthermore, the psychological impacts of these challenges are profound. Research indicates that work-life imbalance contributes significantly to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion among academics. In the context of Nigerian society, which places traditional gender roles and expectations on women, the pressure to fulfil both professional ambitions and familial duties can be particularly taxing.

The existing literature on work-life balance in academia often overlooks the specific experiences of female lecturers in Nigerian contexts, particularly in Anambra and Enugu

States. Most studies are conducted in Western settings or generalize broader gender issues, failing to capture the nuanced socio-cultural and institutional factors that influence the experiences of these women. Moreover, there is a notable lack of empirical research that examines the intersectionality of career and parenting among female lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Localized studies are essential for understanding the unique challenges faced by these educators, informing the development of targeted interventions and policies that promote their psychological well-being and professional advancement.

This project intends to address these gaps through empirical research to provide valuable insights into the specific stressors, coping mechanisms, and support needs of female lecturers balancing career and parenting responsibilities in Anambra and Enugu States. Ultimately, the findings can inform the formulation of evidence-based policies and practices that support a more equitable and supportive academic environment, facilitating the retention and career progression of female educators in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Work-life balance is a multifaceted concept that has gained significant attention in recent decades, particularly as the boundaries between work and personal life have become increasingly blurred. This balance is essential for maintaining overall well-being and satisfaction in both domains. Chen et al, (2022) defines work-life balance as the equilibrium where individuals effectively manage the demands of both their work and personal lives. The literature reveals that achieving this balance is crucial for reducing stress and enhancing mental health, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction (Ruppanner et al, 2019).

Gender plays a critical role in how individuals experience work-life balance. Research consistently shows that men and women face different challenges and societal expectations in balancing career and parenting responsibilities. Women often bear a disproportionate share of domestic duties and childcare, which can exacerbate the struggle to achieve work-life balance (Moreira et al, 2019). According to a study by Nkoala, S. (2024), women report higher levels of stress and guilt related to balancing work and family, largely due to traditional gender roles and expectations. Conversely, men, though increasingly involved in parenting, still face societal pressures to prioritize their careers over family life (Bender et al, 2022). This can lead to internal conflicts and stress as they navigate their dual roles. Despite these challenges, some studies suggest that men might experience less work-family conflict compared to women, as they often have more support in their professional roles (Hahm, 2021).

Balancing career and parenting responsibilities can lead to significant stress and burnout. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, is a common consequence of chronic work-life imbalance (Chase-Lansdale et al, 2019). This is particularly prevalent among working parents who struggle to meet the demands of their jobs while also fulfilling their parenting roles. The stress associated with balancing these roles can stem from several sources, including time constraints, role overload, and the lack of support systems. For instance, a study by Duxbury and Higgins (2017) highlights that job demands and lack of resources contribute significantly to burnout among working parents. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, with many parents facing increased work demands and limited childcare options, leading to heightened levels of stress and burnout (Nelson et al, 2014).

The struggle to balance work and parenting responsibilities can have profound implications for mental health. Working parents are at an increased risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues due to the constant pressure to meet the demands of both domains (Zhou et al, 2024). The dual pressures of work and home responsibilities can create a sense of being overwhelmed, leading to chronic stress and its associated mental health impacts. Research by Soparkar (2023) indicates that work-family conflict is strongly correlated with negative mental health outcomes. The persistent tension between work and family roles can lead to feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and

decreased mental well-being. Moreover, the lack of sufficient recovery time between work and parenting tasks can prevent parents from adequately managing stress, further exacerbating mental health issues (Liang et al, 2022).

Balancing career and parenting responsibilities can also significantly impact an individual's self-esteem and identity. For many parents, particularly mothers, their sense of identity is closely tied to their ability to successfully manage both career and family roles. When they perceive themselves as failing in either domain, it can lead to a decrease in self-esteem and a negative self-concept (Isola et al, 2021). Fathers, on the other hand, might experience conflicts in their identity as they navigate the expectations of being both a provider and an involved parent. This dual expectation can lead to role strain and negatively affect their self-esteem (Okpokiri, 2021). Furthermore, the societal expectation for fathers to prioritize their careers can hinder their ability to fully engage in parenting, leading to feelings of inadequacy and a diminished sense of self-worth.

METHODS

The study utilized a descriptive survey approach, which was justified as it provided a snapshot of current conditions and perceptions, facilitating the identification of patterns and relationships between career demands and parenting responsibilities. The study focused on female lecturers from tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu States, located in South Eastern Nigeria. Several government-owned tertiary institutions from these states were involved. In Anambra State, the institutions included Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU) in Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) in Uli, Federal Polytechnic in Oko, and Nwafor Orizu College of Education in Nsugbe. In Enugu State, the institutions covered were the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), and Enugu Polytechnic. These institutions collectively provided a diverse range of academic and professional environments relevant to the study. The study's population encompassed all female lecturers from colleges of education, universities, and polytechnics across both states, with a total of 2,297 respondents participating.

To address the research questions, data were collected using a validated questionnaire titled the "Scale for Balancing Psychological Impacts of Career and Parenting" (SBPICP), developed by the researcher and structured in a 4-point Likert scale format. The reliability of the questionnaire was established at 0.91 using Cronbach's alpha before deployment. The data collection process was facilitated by six research assistants who were postgraduate students, supported by two lecturers from each participating institution, all of whom were briefed on the administration procedures.

The data analysis involved several steps to explore the research questions. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, were calculated for key variables such as academic rank/position and number of children. These measures provided an overview of the distribution of responses across these categories. Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, which revealed significant deviations from normality for all groups, as indicated by p-values less than 0.05. This suggested that the data was not normally distributed across different academic ranks or number-of-children categories. To test the assumption of homogeneity of variances, Levene's Test was performed. Results showed significant differences in variances for some variables, such as primary stressors and roles of tertiary institutions, indicating violations of the assumption of equal variances. Given the violations of both normality and homogeneity of variances, Welch's ANOVA was chosen for hypothesis testing. This method accounts for unequal variances and non-normal distributions, offering more accurate results in this case.

The researcher prioritized ethical considerations by obtaining consent from Vice-Chancellors/College Provosts and Polytechnic Rectors of the participating tertiary

institutions. Special attention was given to address potential socio-cultural biases or issues that may emerge during the research process. This approach ensures that the study upholds ethical standards while fostering a respectful and inclusive environment for all participants involved in exploring the impacts of balancing career and parenting among female lecturers in Anambra and Enugu States.

RESULTS

Table 1. *Distribution of Academic Ranks/Positions*

Academic Rank/Position	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lecturer II	120	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%
Lecturer I	411	17.9%	17.9%	23.1%
Senior Lecturer	1196	52.1%	52.1%	75.2%
Associate Professor	570	24.8%	24.8%	100.0%
Total	2297	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1 presents the distribution of academic ranks/positions. Lecturer II constitutes the smallest proportion with a frequency of (120), accounting for (5.2%). Lecturer I follows with (411), representing (17.9%). Senior Lecturers dominate, having the highest frequency of (1196) and contributing (52.1%). Associate Professors make up (570) or (24.8%). The cumulative percent shows Lecturer II (5.2%), Lecturer I (23.1%), Senior Lecturer (75.2%), and Associate Professor (100%). The total frequency is (2297), representing all academic ranks.

Table 2. *Distribution of Number of Children*

Number of Children	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	90	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%
1-3	1637	71.3%	71.3%	75.2%
4-6	220	9.6%	9.6%	84.8%
7-9	350	15.2%	15.2%	100.0%
Total	2297	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2 shows the distribution of the number of children among respondents. A majority, (1637) individuals, have 1-3 children, representing (71.3%). Those with 4-6 children account for (220) or (9.6%), while respondents with 7-9 children total (350), making up (15.2%). A small group, (90) respondents, reported having no children, representing (3.9%). The cumulative percentage indicates that 75.2% have up to 3 children, and 100% includes all categories. The total frequency is (2297).

Research Question 1: How does balancing career and parenting responsibilities affect the psychological well-being of female lecturers?

Table 3. *Psychological Impact of Balancing Career and Parenting (Research Question 1)*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Balancing career and parenting increases stress, reducing psychological well-being.	2.46	1.309	-.012	.051	-1.740	.102
Female lecturers feel emotionally exhausted from managing career and parenting.	2.63	1.256	-.154	.051	-1.625	.102

Career and parenting pressures cause anxiety, burnout, and stress.	2.41	1.041	-.082	.051	-1.227	.102
Time constraints from both roles negatively impact psychological well-being.	2.92	.697	.108	.051	-.941	.102
Female lecturers feel overwhelmed, fatigued by balancing career and parenting.	2.61	1.114	-.010	.051	-1.383	.102
Career-parenting roles cause conflict, negatively affecting psychological well-being.	2.75	1.041	-.128	.051	-1.266	.102
Career and parenting pressures cause anxiety, burnout, and stress.	2.55	.970	-.234	.051	-.938	.102
Time constraints from both roles negatively impact psychological well-being.	2.92	.697	.108	.051	-.941	.102

Valid N (listwise)

Table 3 presents the psychological impact of balancing career and parenting. The mean scores range from (2.41) to (2.92), indicating moderate agreement. "Time constraints from both roles negatively impact psychological well-being" has the highest mean (2.92) with a low standard deviation (.697), showing minimal variability. "Career and parenting pressures cause anxiety, burnout, and stress" has the lowest mean (2.41). Skewness values range between (-.234) and (.108), suggesting slight symmetry. Kurtosis values range from (-1.740) to (-.938), indicating flat distributions.

Research Question 2: What are the primary stressors that impact the work-life balance of female lecturers?

Table 4. *Stressors Impacting Work-Life Balance (Research Question 2)*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Kurtosis	Std. Error	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Long working hours create stress for lecturers.	2.98	.976	-1.004	.051	.106	.102
Family responsibilities add significant stress for female lecturers.	3.05	.501	.097	.051	.939	.102
Childcare options are major stressors.	3.38	.485	.504	.051	-1.747	.102
Social expectations of perfect performance increase stress for female lecturers.	3.28	.635	-.309	.051	-.685	.102
Family needs conflict with academic responsibilities, causing work-life stress.	2.89	.755	-1.421	.051	2.102	.102
Gendered caregiving expectations contribute to stress for female lecturers.	2.78	.834	-.926	.051	.395	.102

Balancing career and parenting increases stress, reducing psychological well-being.	2.59	1.266	-.200	.051	-1.626	.102
Female lecturers feel emotionally exhausted from managing career and parenting.	2.85	1.180	-.428	.051	-1.363	.102

Valid N (listwise)

Table 4 highlights stressors impacting work-life balance. *Childcare options* had the highest mean (3.38) with low variability (.485), indicating it as a major stressor. *Family responsibilities* (3.05) and *social expectations* (3.28) also show significant stress with low standard deviations (.501, .635). *Family needs conflicting with academic responsibilities* (2.89) and *gendered caregiving expectations* (2.78) exhibit notable stress. Skewness values range from (-1.421) to (.504), while kurtosis varies between (-1.747) and (2.102), indicating differing distribution shapes.

Research Question 3: What are the roles of tertiary institutions in mitigating psychological stress for female lecturers?

Table 5. *Role of Tertiary Institutions in Stress Mitigation (Research Question 3)*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Institutions offer flexible schedules to reduce stress for female lecturers.	2.95	1.067	-.879	.051	-.463	.102
Childcare services or subsidies ease parenting stress for female lecturers.	2.70	.983	-.798	.051	-.513	.102
Mentorship programs help manage career-parenting challenges for female lecturers.	2.70	.983	-.798	.051	-.513	.102
Inclusive cultures support female lecturers balancing family roles with work.	2.32	1.112	-.165	.051	-1.555	.102
Counseling services provide psychological support for work-life balance management.	2.66	.864	-.509	.051	-.372	.102
Stress programs help lecturers balance responsibilities.	2.92	.610	.041	.051	-.342	.102
Balancing career and parenting increases stress, reducing psychological well-being.	2.59	1.266	-.200	.051	-1.626	.102
Female lecturers feel emotionally exhausted from managing career and parenting.	2.85	1.180	-.428	.051	-1.363	.102

Valid N (listwise)

Table 5 explores the role of tertiary institutions in stress mitigation. *Institutions offering flexible schedules* has the highest mean (2.95), indicating moderate effectiveness, with a standard deviation of (1.067). *Childcare services* and *mentorship programs* share a mean of (2.70) and identical skewness (-.798), showing some consistency. *Inclusive cultures* has the lowest mean (2.32), suggesting limited support. Skewness values range from (-.879) to (.041), while kurtosis ranges from (-1.626) to (-.342), reflecting generally flat distributions.

Table 6. Tests of Normality for Research Variables based on Academic Rank/Position

	Academic Rank/Position	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Balancing career and parenting responsibilities	Lecturer II	.195	120	.000	.865	120	.000
	Lecturer I	.144	411	.000	.940	411	.000
	Senior Lecturer	.135	1196	.000	.929	1196	.000
	Associate Professor	.223	570	.000	.859	570	.000
Primary stressors that impact the work-life balance	Lecturer II	.209	120	.000	.880	120	.000
	Lecturer I	.173	411	.000	.911	411	.000
	Senior Lecturer	.156	1196	.000	.897	1196	.000
	Associate Professor	.141	570	.000	.931	570	.000
Roles of tertiary institutions	Lecturer II	.156	120	.000	.872	120	.000
	Lecturer I	.153	411	.000	.885	411	.000
	Senior Lecturer	.184	1196	.000	.880	1196	.000
	Associate Professor	.234	570	.000	.763	570	.000

The results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests as shown in Table 6, indicate that all groups (across different academic ranks) show significant deviations from normality, with p-values of 0.000 for each test in all categories (Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, Primary stressors, and Roles of tertiary institutions). Since the p-values are less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis that the data is normally distributed for all academic ranks. Given this, Welch's ANOVA would be more appropriate for hypothesis testing to compare groups in this dataset.

Table 7. Test of Homogeneity of Variance based on Academic Rank/Position

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Balancing career and parenting responsibilities	Based on Mean	5.213	3	2293	.001
	Based on Median	4.684	3	2293	.003
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.684	3	2220.582	.003
	Based on trimmed mean	5.098	3	2293	.002
Primary stressors that impact the work-life balance	Based on Mean	12.640	3	2293	.000
	Based on Median	7.970	3	2293	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	7.970	3	2278.623	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	12.706	3	2293	.000
Roles of tertiary institutions	Based on Mean	13.298	3	2293	.000
	Based on Median	7.087	3	2293	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	7.087	3	2091.210	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	11.162	3	2293	.000

As shown in Table 7, the Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance examines whether the variances across different groups are equal. For Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, all tests (based on mean, median, and trimmed mean) show significant differences in variances (p-values of 0.001, 0.003, and 0.002, respectively), indicating unequal variances across groups. Similarly, for Primary stressors impacting work-life balance, all tests also show significant differences (p-values of 0.000), suggesting significant variance heterogeneity. For Roles of tertiary institutions, all tests (mean, median, and trimmed mean) indicate significant differences in variances (p-values ranging from 0.000 to 0.003). This suggests that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is violated, and appropriate adjustments should be made by conducting Welch's ANOVA.

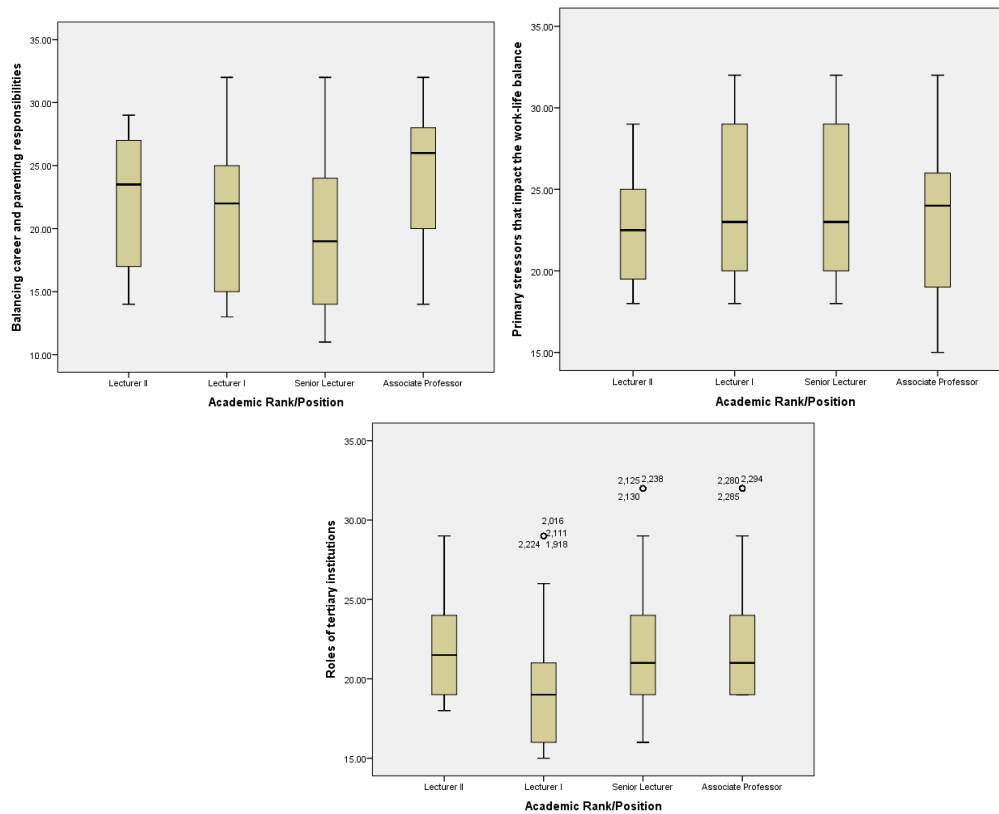


Figure 1. Evaluation of Balancing career and parenting responsibilities

The boxplot in Figure 1 shows the roles of tertiary institutions across academic ranks. Lecturer II and Lecturer I have lower medians around (20), while Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor show slightly higher medians (above 20). Outliers exist for Lecturer I (2,016, 2,111) and Senior Lecturer (2,130), as well as Associate Professor (2,280, 2,294). Overall, variability increases slightly for higher academic positions. The distributions are skewed with noticeable differences among ranks.

Table 8. Tests of Normality for Research Variables based on Number of Children

	Number of Children	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Balancing career and parenting responsibilities	None	.222	90	.000	.833	90	.000
	1-3	.121	1637	.000	.941	1637	.000
	4-6	.275	220	.000	.791	220	.000
Primary stressors that impact the	7-9	.190	350	.000	.885	350	.000
	None	.203	90	.000	.886	90	.000
	1-3	.158	1637	.000	.907	1637	.000
	4-6	.192	220	.000	.886	220	.000

work-life balance	7-9	.178	350	.000	.913	350	.000
Roles of tertiary institutions	None	.187	90	.000	.838	90	.000
	1-3	.165	1637	.000	.912	1637	.000
	4-6	.298	220	.000	.729	220	.000
	7-9	.243	350	.000	.769	350	.000

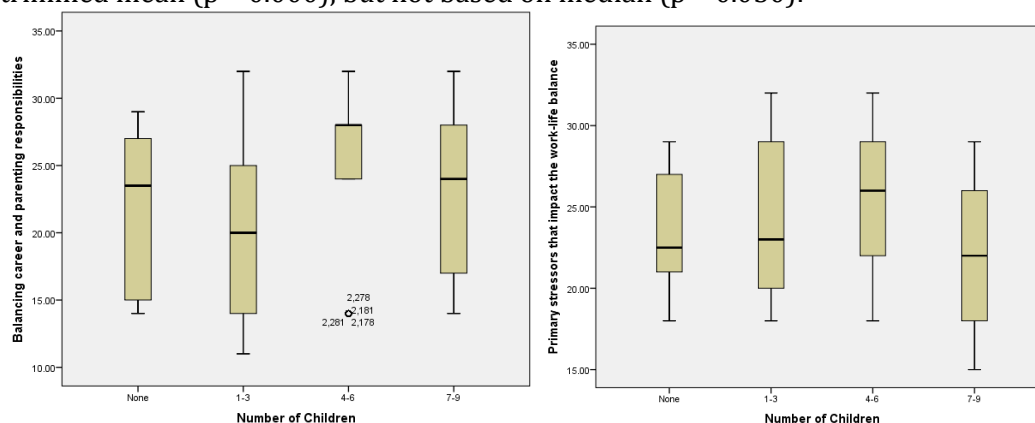
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests in Table 8, shows significant deviations from normality for all groups, indicated by p-values of 0.000 across all categories (Number of Children, Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, Primary stressors, and Roles of tertiary institutions). This suggests that the data for all number-of-children groups (None, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9) is not normally distributed. Since the assumption of normality is violated, Welch's ANOVA would be more appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Table 9. Test of Homogeneity of Variance based on Number of Children

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Balancing career and parenting responsibilities	Based on Mean	1.424	3	2293	.234
	Based on Median	3.333	3	2293	.019
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	3.333	3	1947.451	.019
	Based on trimmed mean	1.438	3	2293	.230
Primary stressors that impact the work-life balance	Based on Mean	4.921	3	2293	.002
	Based on Median	4.913	3	2293	.002
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	4.913	3	2209.080	.002
	Based on trimmed mean	4.968	3	2293	.002
Roles of tertiary institutions	Based on Mean	8.891	3	2293	.000
	Based on Median	2.991	3	2293	.030
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.991	3	2165.277	.030
	Based on trimmed mean	7.295	3	2293	.000

The Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variance assesses whether the variances across groups are equal as shown in Table 9. For Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, the tests based on mean ($p = 0.234$) and trimmed mean ($p = 0.230$) indicate no significant variance differences, while the median-based test ($p = 0.019$) suggests significant differences. For Primary stressors impacting work-life balance, all tests show significant differences in variances ($p = 0.002$). Similarly, for Roles of tertiary institutions, variance differences are significant in the tests based on mean ($p = 0.000$) and trimmed mean ($p = 0.000$), but not based on median ($p = 0.030$).



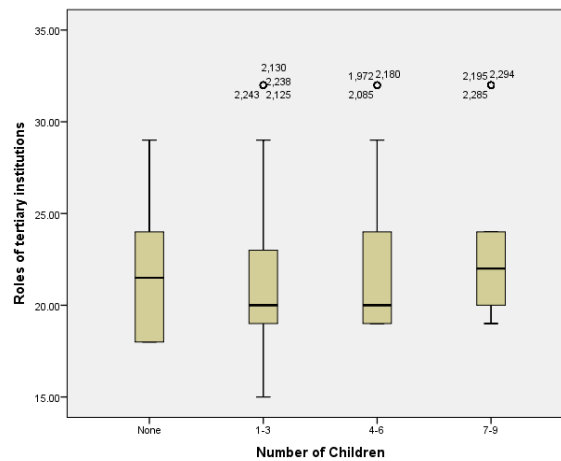


Figure 2. Evaluation of Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, Primary stressors that impact the work-life balance, Roles of tertiary institutions variables across different numbers of children

The boxplot as shown in Figure 2 reveals how Balancing career and parenting responsibilities, Primary stressors that impact the work-life balance, Roles of tertiary institutions varies with the number of children. Individuals without children show moderate variability, with scores concentrated around the middle range. Those with 1–3 children exhibit a wider spread, suggesting greater inconsistency in balancing these responsibilities. For individuals with 4–6 children, the scores are more consistent and clustered at higher levels, indicating a stable but demanding balance. Similarly, families with 7–9 children show similar trends but include a few outliers, reflecting extreme cases.

Hypotheses one: There is no significant difference in the psychological well-being of female lecturers balancing career and parenting responsibilities based on their academic rank/position and number of children.

Table 10. Welch’s ANOVA for Psychological Well-Being Based on Academic Rank/Position and Number of Children

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Rank/Position	Between Groups	596.391	19	31.389	82.939	.000
	Within Groups	861.752	2277	.378		
	Total	1458.144	2296			
Number of Children	Between Groups	428.537	19	22.555	52.322	.000
	Within Groups	981.550	2277	.431		
	Total	1410.087	2296			

Table 10 shows Welch’s ANOVA results for psychological well-being based on academic rank/position and number of children. For *academic rank/position*, the F-value is (82.939) with a significance level of (.000), and for *number of children*, the F-value is (52.322) with a significance level of (.000). Since the p-values are less than (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant difference in the psychological well-being of female lecturers balancing career and parenting based on their academic rank/position and number of children.

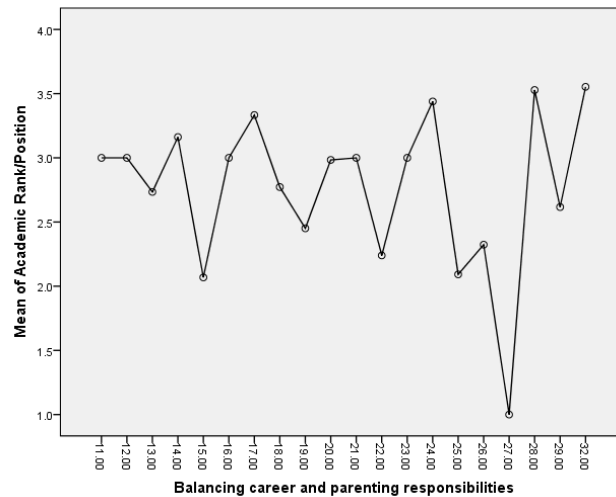


Figure 3. Mean of Academic Rank/Position by balancing career and parenting responsibilities.

The graph as shown in Figure 3 depicts variations in the mean academic rank/position (ranging from 1.0 to 4.0) across balancing scores. Peaks occur at balancing scores (4.00, 16.00, 24.00, 28.00, 30.00) where means rise above 3.5. Lowest ranks are observed at scores (15.00, 27.00) where values drop near 1.0–2.0, suggesting significant variability in academic rank relative to career and parenting balance.

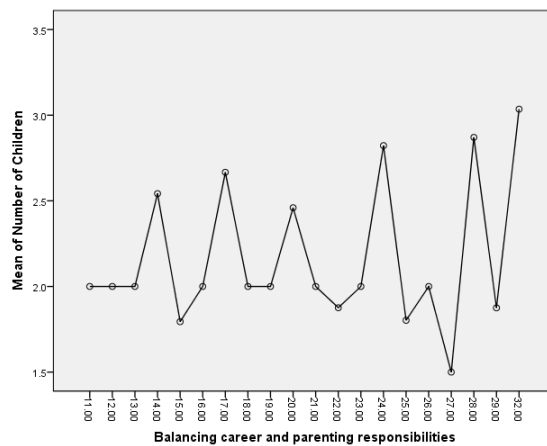


Figure 4. Mean number of children by balancing career and parenting responsibilities.

Figure 4 shows fluctuations in the mean number of children (ranging from 1.5 to 3.5) as individuals balance career and parenting responsibilities. Notable peaks appear at balancing scores (16.00, 24.00, 28.00, 30.00) where the mean rises above 3. The lowest means (below 2) occur at scores like (15.00, 27.00). The trend highlights variability in family size across these scores.

Hypotheses two: There is no significant difference in the primary stressors affecting work-life balance for female lecturers based on their academic rank/position and number of children.

Table 11. Welch's ANOVA for Primary Stressors Affecting Work-Life Balance Based on Academic Rank/Position and Number of Children

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic	Between Groups	330.544	13	25.426	51.480	.000

Rank/Position	Within Groups	1127.600	2283	.494		
	Total	1458.144	2296			
Number of Children	Between Groups	393.468	13	30.267	67.969	.000
	Within Groups	1016.619	2283	.445		
	Total	1410.087	2296			

Table 11 presents Welch's ANOVA results for primary stressors affecting work-life balance. For *academic rank/position*, the F-value is (51.480) with a significance level of (.000), and for *number of children*, the F-value is (67.969) with a significance level of (.000). Since the p-values are less than (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies a significant difference in the primary stressors affecting work-life balance for female lecturers based on their academic rank/position and number of children.

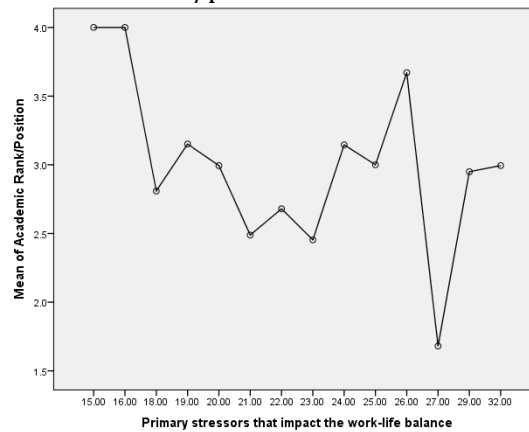


Figure 5. Mean Academic Rank/Position by Primary Stressors Impacting Work-Life Balance

The figure 5 depicts the mean academic rank/position of female lecturers in relation to primary stressors affecting work-life balance. The mean academic rank ranges from 1.5 to 4.0. A peak is seen at stressor 15 (mean = 4.0), indicating senior lecturers experience this stressor the most. A sharp drop occurs at stressor 16 (mean = 2.0), and the lowest mean is at stressor 27 (mean = 1.5). Variations highlight how stressors impact lecturers at different ranks differently.

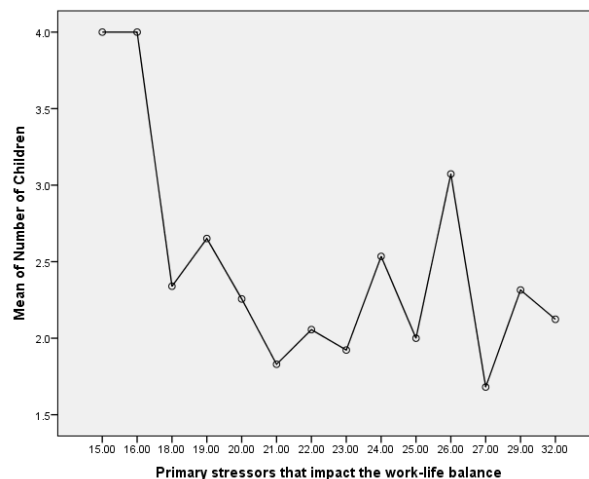


Figure 6. Mean Number of Children by Primary Stressors Impacting Work-Life Balance

The figure 6 illustrates the relationship between primary stressors affecting work-life balance and the mean number of children among female lecturers. The mean ranges from 1.5 to 4.0. A peak is observed at stressor 15 (mean = 4.0), followed by a sharp decline at stressor 16 (mean = 2.0). The lowest mean is at stressor 22 (mean = 1.5). This

variability suggests that stressors influence lecturers differently, potentially based on family size.

Hypotheses three: There is no significant difference in the perceived role of tertiary institutions in mitigating psychological stress for female lecturers based on their academic rank/position and number of children.

Table 12. Welch's ANOVA for Perceived Role of Tertiary Institutions in Mitigating Psychological Stress Based on Academic Rank/Position and Number of Children

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Academic Rank/Position	Between Groups	372.329	11	33.848	71.230	.000
	Within Groups	1085.815	2285	.475		
	Total	1458.144	2296			
Number of Children	Between Groups	275.876	11	25.080	50.526	.000
	Within Groups	1134.212	2285	.496		
	Total	1410.087	2296			

Table 12 presents Welch's ANOVA results for the perceived role of tertiary institutions in mitigating psychological stress. For *academic rank/position*, the F-value is (71.230) with a significance level of (.000), and for *number of children*, the F-value is (50.526) with a significance level of (.000). Since the p-values are less than (.05), the null hypothesis is **rejected**. This indicates a significant difference in the perceived role of tertiary institutions in mitigating psychological stress based on academic rank/position and number of children.

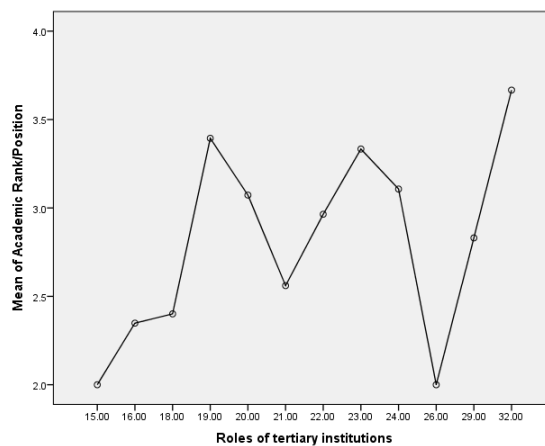


Figure 7. Relationship Between the Roles of Tertiary Institutions and Mean Academic Rank/Position

The figure 7 shows the relationship between the roles of tertiary institutions and the mean academic rank/position of female lecturers. The mean rank varies from 2.0 to 3.9. A peak occurs at role 19 (mean = 3.9) and role 32 (mean = 3.9), while a sharp dip is observed at role 26 (mean = 2.0). The variability suggests that perceptions of institutional roles differ significantly across academic ranks.

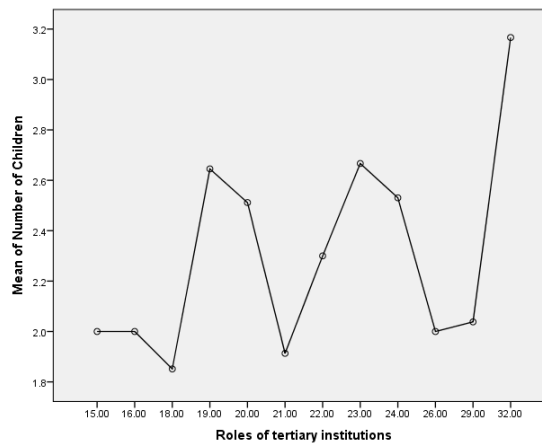


Figure 8. Relationship Between the Roles of Tertiary Institutions and Mean Number of Children

Figure 8 illustrates the fluctuating relationship between the roles of tertiary institutions and the mean number of children among female lecturers. The mean ranges from 1.8 to 3.2. Peaks are observed at roles 19 (mean = 2.6) and 32 (mean = 3.2), while declines occur at roles 18 (mean = 1.8) and 24 (mean = 1.9). The variability suggests differing perceptions of institutional support based on the number of children female lecturers have.

DISCUSSION

The findings from research question 1 reveal that balancing career and parenting responsibilities significantly impacts the psychological well-being of female lecturers, manifesting in stress, anxiety, burnout, and emotional exhaustion. This aligns with Soparkar, (2023), who reported that female academics experience severe stress due to managing professional roles and family duties, leading to fatigue and reduced productivity. Similarly, Weinlander (2020) found that time constraints associated with dual roles exacerbate emotional exhaustion, negatively affecting overall psychological well-being. In contrast, Ruppanner et al (2019) argued that institutional support systems, such as flexible schedules and mentorship programs, can mitigate the adverse effects of career-parenting conflicts, promoting psychological balance. However, in a related study, Ro et al (2023) observed that when such support systems are absent, the pressure from career and parenting responsibilities leads to increased anxiety, burnout, and role conflict. These findings emphasize that female lecturers, especially those with multiple family roles, face overwhelming time demands that detrimentally affect their well-being. While some scholars highlight institutional interventions as a potential remedy, others focus on the persistent challenges caused by dual responsibilities, underscoring the need for effective policies to alleviate psychological stress among female academics.

From research question 2, The findings suggest that several stressors significantly impact the work-life balance of female lecturers, including long working hours, family responsibilities, childcare options, and social expectations of perfect performance. Additionally, family needs conflict with academic duties, and gendered caregiving expectations further contribute to stress. Female lecturers also experience emotional exhaustion from balancing career and parenting, which diminishes their psychological well-being. In contrast, Okpokiri (2021) emphasized that while long working hours and childcare options are critical stressors, the social pressure for perfect performance often exacerbates stress, particularly in academia. This aligns with the finding that social expectations of perfect performance increase stress for female lecturers. This finding agreed with Nelson et al (2014), who identified that gendered caregiving expectations are major stressors for female lecturers, further straining their ability to balance family and work. Similarly, Mayya et al (2021) noted that family responsibilities were often reported

as significant stressors, causing conflicts between academic duties and family needs. However, in a related study, Khamisa et al (2016) found that while these stressors were acknowledged, the lack of institutional support programs increased the stress levels female lecturers experienced, as they lacked adequate resources to manage their dual roles effectively.

The findings from research question 3, suggest that tertiary institutions play a significant role in mitigating psychological stress for female lecturers by offering flexible schedules, childcare services, mentorship programs, and counseling services. These interventions are designed to ease the pressures of balancing career and parenting responsibilities. Additionally, stress programs have been reported to help female lecturers manage their dual roles effectively. In contrast, Isola et al (2021) found that while mentorship programs were beneficial, many institutions lack comprehensive childcare facilities, leading to increased stress among female lecturers. This is in agreement with the finding that childcare services or subsidies ease parenting stress, as reported in Table 5. This finding agreed with Hahm (2021), who highlighted that flexible schedules and inclusive cultures in tertiary institutions helped female lecturers manage work-life balance more effectively. However, in a related study, Chen et al (2022) argued that despite these interventions, the lack of targeted psychological support services often leaves female lecturers without adequate tools to manage stress, particularly in the absence of a supportive work environment. Furthermore, Bender et al (2022) stressed that while stress management programs are in place, their impact is often diminished due to insufficient institutional commitment and the lack of comprehensive frameworks. This aligns with the need for better institutional involvement in alleviating stress.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has highlighted the significant psychological impacts that balancing career and parenting responsibilities have on female lecturers in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Enugu States. The findings indicate that female lecturers experience considerable stress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout due to the dual pressures of managing academic responsibilities and parenting roles. Time constraints, family needs, and gendered caregiving expectations further exacerbate their psychological well-being. However, tertiary institutions play a crucial role in mitigating these challenges through flexible schedules, childcare services, mentorship programs, and counseling services. Despite these efforts, it is evident that more institutional support is needed to alleviate the stressors that female lecturers face in balancing their professional and personal lives. The study calls for enhanced policies and practices that promote work-life balance, inclusivity, and stress management to improve the psychological well-being of female lecturers. Such interventions are essential to fostering a supportive environment that allows female lecturers to thrive both academically and personally, contributing to their overall productivity and well-being.

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