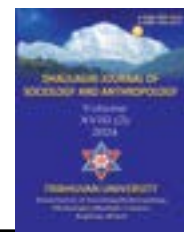


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# Interrogation of Female Bread-Winning, Parenting and Childcare among Market Women in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria

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## Article Info

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## Abstract

The global rise in female breadwinning has led to changes within the family structure, especially in terms of household chores and childcare. In Nigeria, striking a balance between childcare and work career is a big difficulty for female bread winners, and also puts a strain on them. This study, therefore, investigated female breadwinning, parenting and childcare among market women in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional research design. The Role strain theory guided the study. Study locations were the three major markets largely populated by women in the Ibadan metropolis. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to generate data from female breadwinners using a structured questionnaire administered to 903 respondents and ten in-depth interview methods. The study revealed that the male role in the family is gradually being taken over by women especially when such women are the breadwinners in the families. Also, the study indicated that children of female breadwinners among market women in the Ibadan metropolis spend more time with their mothers in the marketplace, regardless of whether the father is available or not. Despite this, younger children of the household rarely enjoy intimacy with their mothers as these breadwinners stay away from the home for more than ten hours daily. There was a statistically significant relationship between categories of women sampled in the markets and their relationship with children ( $\chi^2 = 425.791$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), implying that there is a lower likelihood that female breadwinners would have cordial relationships with their children when compared to their non-breadwinning counterparts. Female breadwinners are encouraged to pay more attention to the cordial relationship with their children so as to protect the stability of their marriage and society.

*Keywords:* childcare, female breadwinners, market women, parenting, Ibadan Metropolis

## Introduction

Societies across the globe are witnessing increased gender equality in both formal and informal sectors of all economies. The goal of gender equality is to uphold and encourage each person's dignity, right to self-determination, and right to be distinct from others (Omolawal & Adeniyi, 2024). This situation has contributed a premium on women's involvement in economic development and their

subsequent emergence as breadwinners in their families. The rise in female breadwinners has led to changes within the family structure especially in terms of household chores and childcare. Glynn (2019) reported that mothers who are the primary breadwinners are more likely to see an increase in childcare responsibilities in comparison to fathers who are breadwinners. Akanle & Nwaobiola (2020) also revealed that female breadwinners are not expected to relinquish their domestic roles which include childcare to others in the family. Similarly, Rao (2019)



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opined that female breadwinners in the United States of America spend more time doing housework and childcare than their partners and male counterparts who are married and working as well. Wang (2019) equally asserted that working fathers spend less time in household work and childcare activities compared to working women. These are indications that women are expected to combine household care, more specifically childcare, and paid work, irrespective of the difficulty in performing these functions together.

According to Barnett & Hyde (2001), having multiple roles can both be beneficial and harmful in terms of mental, physical and relationship health for both men and women. However, one negative impact of role reversal in relation to female breadwinning as identified by Meisenbach (2010) is that breadwinning women experience resentment when they are away from their children on business or pursuing their careers. Chesley & Flood (2017) also noted that socio-cultural factors, government and organizational policies continue to perpetuate traditional gender norms within the family. This is done via various state and organizational policies supporting male breadwinner/female carer family by having a gender gap that favors men; low cultural support for working-class mothers or fathers who decided to be a stay-at-home caregiver; and limiting support accessibility to childcare support, depending on who carries out childcare activities in the home. Wang (2019) equally asserted that women especially married women are more likely to accept socio-cultural gender norms than men. An indication of this is that married women who are female breadwinners are less likely to relinquish childcare responsibilities because of these norms.

These socio-cultural factors have also influenced perceptions of the effects of female breadwinning on childcare responsibilities. A survey conducted by Pew Research Centre (2013) revealed that while childcare is the mothers' responsibility, female breadwinners may find it difficult to carry out childcare responsibilities and that breadwinning will make marriage difficult. In the same vein, the study also revealed that children will be properly cared for if the mother becomes a stay-at-home wife to take care of the children.

Nonetheless, recent studies are showing indication that male partners are increasingly interested in participating in domestic duties which include childcare responsibilities by either sharing (Glynn, 2019; Wang, 2019) or taking responsibility for large chunks (Chesley & Flood, 2017; Wang, 2019). However, this varies for either dual breadwinning couples, women who are the main or primary breadwinner and female breadwinners with sit-at-home male partners. Wang (2019) revealed that while 41% of the female breadwinners in her study perform more breadwinning roles, 17% also revealed that their husbands perform more household chores, while 41% agreed they share household chores, including childcare responsibilities with their male spouses. Chesley and Flood

(2017) revealed a growing trend of fathers who partake in childcare activities in America, showing a prevalence rate of 57% in dual couples, 5% of men acting as stay-at-home father to take care of children and about 23% of men having wives who are the primary breadwinners.

However, in recognizing this emerging difficulty, many female breadwinners find it difficult to successfully play their domestic roles as the main caregiver and pursue a successful career in the workplace. Emsile & Hunt (2009) supported this assertion by arguing that women, especially married women, would find it problematic to combine work and family lives. These challenges are exacerbated by lack of support from their male partners who instead feel emasculated by the fact their wives earn the main income in the family. (Rao, 2019; Sweet. & Meiksins (2010) found that when women are the primary earners, they tend to experience higher levels of stress and lower levels of satisfaction with their family lives. This can lead to less time and energy spent on parenting and childcare (Wang, 2019). This perhaps could be one of the reasons for the persistence of the gender wage gap and career ceiling for many women despite massive gains in gender equality in the last two decades globally. As women continue to navigate their ways around these conundrums, these difficulties will affect their roles as caregivers as they will find it difficult to take care of children. In other words, in trying to place more attention on their business activities, there is every tendency that parenting, and childcare will suffer at the family level; it will also create a strain on such women.

It is against the foregoing that this study was designed to investigate the effects of female breadwinning on parenting and childcare among market women in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. To achieve this general objective, the following specific objectives were designed: to investigate who plays a greater role in helping children with their schoolwork, who helps children after school hours and the general relationship with children.

### **The Contexts of Female Breadwinning and Parenting**

The concept of breadwinning is based on the idea that a family member who earns any or higher income supports the family financially. According to the Longman Dictionary (2020), breadwinner refers to any member of the family who works outside the home and earns income to support the other family members. In other words, the family depends on the income of this member in order to cater to the family's needs. While other members may work and earn income, their earnings are either to meet other personal needs or to augment the earnings of the main breadwinner. Breadwinning was derived from the word "Bread", which serves as a slang for money and winning from the word 'win'. Therefore, breadwinning is the duty of parents or adult members of the households to work and earn income in order to provide for the family's financial or monetary needs.

The rise in female breadwinners has led to changes within the family structure, more especially in terms of household chores and childcare. Nevertheless, Glynn (2019) reported that mothers who are the primary breadwinners are more likely to see an increase in childcare responsibilities in comparison to fathers who are breadwinners. Akanle and Nwaobiola (2020) also revealed from their findings that women who are female breadwinners are not expected to relinquish their domestic roles which include childcare to others in the family. Rao (2019) also revealed that female breadwinners in the USA spend more time doing housework and childcare than their partners and male counterparts who are married and working as well. Wang (2019) equally asserted that working fathers spend less time in household work and childcare activities compared to working women. These are indications that women are expected to combine household care, more specifically childcare and paid work, irrespective of the difficulty in performing these functions together.

In relation to childcare and family demands, after-school parental duty is one major source of struggle working mothers contend with. When women are saddled with the demands of work and family, involvement in one role will make participation in other functions very difficult. In fact, Sibert (2011) opined that a woman cannot successfully play her role of wife and mother while maintaining a high-powered career at the same time. It has also been argued by Emsile and Hunt (2009) that having an organized work and family life is difficult for women generally but even more problematic for married women. Consequently, Chesley et al. (2017) posited that female breadwinners are often forced to place more importance on their employment tasks than on their parenting roles.

In recognizing this difficulty, Sibert (2011) asserted that many female breadwinners find it difficult to successfully play their domestic roles as the main caregiver and pursue a successful career in the workplace. Emsile and Hunt (2009) also supported this assertion by opining that women, especially married women, would find it problematic combining work and family lives. These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of support from their male partners who instead feel emasculated by the fact their wives earn the main income in the family (Rao, 2019; Sweet & Meiksins (2010) found that when women are the primary earners, they tend to experience higher levels of stress and lower levels of satisfaction with their family lives. This can lead to less time and energy spent on parenting and childcare, (Wang, 2019). This perhaps could be one of the reasons for the persistence of the gender wage gap and career ceiling from many women despite massive gains in gender equality in the last two decades globally. As women continue to navigate their ways around these difficulties, these difficulties will affect women's roles as caregivers as they will find it difficult to take of children. Performing all of these roles subsequently create strain for women (Rao, 2017).

Undoubtedly, market women who are also their family's breadwinners face several challenges. As women negotiate roles between career and family, the social climate and political system in place do not adequately promote or support women in the workplace; rather, they place women in traditional roles, which gives them challenges (Immyxai, & Takahashi, 2011). This can have a negative effect on the women's role as a caregiver to the children, as they have to work most of the time with little or no time to spend raising the children and doing basic things for them like assisting with homework and other caregiving roles, especially in their growing years. These can affect the women's ability to cope with their roles, thereby putting further strain on them.

Jurczyk et-al. (2019) asserted that as equal opportunity principles are being promoted in the public and governance, this is having reverberating effects within the family structure leading to challenging of traditional gender norms within the households. Gender roles are becoming fluid as female breadwinners are demanding spousal active involvement in childcare and household care activities by acting as "gatekeepers". They also noted that government agencies in the western countries are creating structures for early childhood care thereby lessening the burden of childcare on female breadwinners while at the same time providing employment for women.

However, it should be stated that while this is common among men with lower incomes than their spouses, it is not a common phenomenon, especially in less developed societies like Nigeria where men are still challenging these changing gender roles. Incidentally, in Nigeria, many female breadwinners are skeptical about accepting these emerging gender roles and are afraid of challenging the prevailing traditional gender stereotypes within the household. Meisenbach (2010) revealed that many female breadwinners who still accept the traditional gender roles, with a feeling of "guilt of emasculating" or "shaming" their male spouses by taking up breadwinning, would insist on taking up childcare responsibilities. This is irrespective of the strain this brings to them in balancing work and family life. Hochschild, and Machung (2003) refer to this as the "second shift", where women after paid work- which is the "first shift" would still insist on taking a larger share of housework and childcare. Wang (2019) noted that this perhaps is the reason why many married female breadwinners feel overworked and are having less familial satisfaction in comparison with other women who are sit-at-home wives. This has implications for their health, parenting and family stability.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Role Strain theory was adopted in order to elaborate the research design and the study objectives in grounding the study in a firm theoretical construct. Role strain theory proposes that human behavior is guided by expectations held not just by individuals but also by other people. The

expectations correspond to the roles individuals perform or enact in their daily lives. Individuals generally have and manage many roles. The man traditionally plays multiple roles of father, husband, care provider, rule maker and main income earner as the main breadwinner. The mother on the other hand is expected to complement the roles of the father by performing the functions of caregiver, mother, rule enforcer and emotional support for other members of the house (Blom & Hewitt, 2020; Adenugba, Excel, & Dagunduro, 2019), while the children are expected to be obedient, respectful and follow orders. Performing these roles with the expectations attached may result in role confusion for the individual. This is a situation where an individual has trouble determining which role he should assume, while role conflict exists where an individual encounters tensions as a result of incompatible roles. Role strain refers to the difficulty in fulfilling role obligations. Unlike role conflict where tension is felt between two competing roles, tension in roles strain comes from just one role. There is a role strain in fulfilling obligations of self-health maintenance.

Furthermore, the role strain theory suggests that when a person plays roles contrary to their expected roles, there is a conflict of roles which leads to strain. Therefore, when a woman whose traditional role is that of a mother and caregiver experiences role-change that makes her the breadwinner, there is a strain as a result of pressure on her to carry out her roles successfully. By implication, breadwinning roles by women lead to role conflict between the traditional role of the husband as the financial provider and that of the breadwinning woman. Roles are not just a blueprint to guide behavior, they also outline the goals to pursue, chores to be done and how these goals and chores are to be carried out. Role strain can therefore, arise when a career impacts on other aspects of one's life, leading to deviant behavior on the part of the individual experiencing the strain, and when it affects statuses, it results in status strain.

### **Research Methods**

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design with a methodological triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The essence of using a triangulation of methods was to use the argument and strength of one method to support the weakness of the other to enhance the robustness of the findings (Omolawal, 2023). The study location was Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State. Ibadan metropolis was selected because it is a metropolitan city with a high concentration of markets and people from diverse ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds. Ibadan enjoys heavy commercial activities due to its population and the number of local and international markets like Bola Ige international market, Bodija market and Agbeni markets. The choice of Ibadan was also based on the female trader population and

merchandise, with anecdotal evidence of the prevalence of Female Breadwinners among market women.

The study's target population was mainly market women in the three selected main markets (Bola Ige, Bodija and Agbeni). The population included women who had trading stalls in the selected markets, who were married or co-habiting with their partners. Also, some spouses of female breadwinners among the participants were incorporated. The sample size was selected using Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula which was calculated on the sample frame of the registered traders in each of the chosen markets. This enabled the researcher to select a total of 903 (292 from Bola Ige, Bodija 322 and Agbeni 289) female breadwinners. The study utilized a multi-stage sampling technique which involved a purposive selection of Ibadan Metropolis based on a high concentration of female traders in the city. This stage was followed by the purposive selection of Bola Ige, Bodija and Agbeni markets based on their strategic locations, types of merchandize and high concentration of female in them. In stage three, the stratified sampling method was used to select market segments in the markets, and finally, a simple random technique was used to select respondents for the quantitative aspect while snowballing was used to select the participants for the qualitative segment of the study.

Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire while qualitative data was collected using ten (10) In-depth interviews (IDI). The results of the quantitative data are represented in frequency distribution tables and percentages, charts, using a binary logistic regression model to analyze the predictors of female breadwinners' relationship with children in the household. Also, Chi square was used to test for the relationship between relevant variables. Content-analysis was used for the qualitative data and presented in content narrative format. Owing to the sensitive nature of the research and the involvement of human subjects, ethical permission (AD 13/479/2037A) was sought and obtained before the commencement of data collection, from the Oyo State Ministry of Health Ethical Committee. The conduct of the field work adhered strictly to the international ethical standard for social research by ensuring voluntariness through informed consent; participants were not exposed to any form of harm during the data collection.

### **Results**

#### **Socio-Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

The respondents' age was  $42.6 \pm 8.9$  years while the vast majority of them were 40 years old and above. This implies that most of the respondents in the study locations were older than 18 years. Regarding the relationship status of the respondents, more than half of them (76.5%) were married, while other categories of relationship status included cohabiting with partners (11.0%) and single

parenting (12.5%). Also, the majority (71.8%) lived with their spouses while a few (28.2%) indicated that they were not living with their spouses. Further analysis of the socio-demographic variables revealed that more than half of the respondents (64.7%) claimed their spouses had no other wife and children while more than a quarter of the respondents (35.3%) signified that their spouses had other wives and children other than theirs at the time of the study. This implies that polygamy is in practice among the study population.

The age of the respondents at marriage was also presented. It was revealed that more than half of the respondents (60.9%) were married between the ages of 21 and 25 years, one-fifth of them indicated that they got married between the ages of 26 and 30 years, while one-tenth signified that they got married at the age 20 years and below. This means that most of the respondents were married at younger ages compared to those who got married later. The majority of the respondents (57.4%) had their first birth when they were between 21 and 25 years, which suggested that they were more likely to have a higher number of children than those who had their first birth at later ages. Also, while only 10.7% said they had no formal education, majority of the respondents (49.1%) had secondary education.

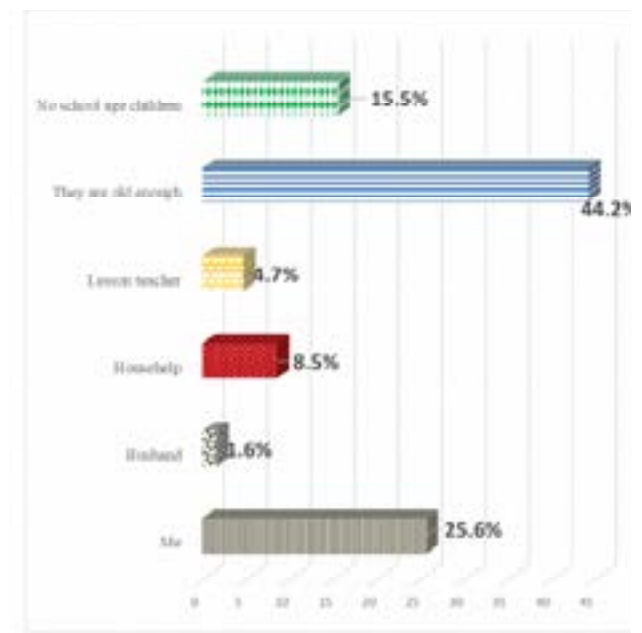
**Effects of Female Breadwinning on Parenting And Childcare**

This segment of the analysis examines the effects or consequences of female breadwinning on parenthood and childcare. Exploring the effects of FBWs on children is an important element in the understanding of the quality of children raised by female breadwinners.

**(i): Helping children with schoolwork**

To examine the effects of female breadwinning on the children, the respondents were asked who helps the children with the homework brought from their respective schools.

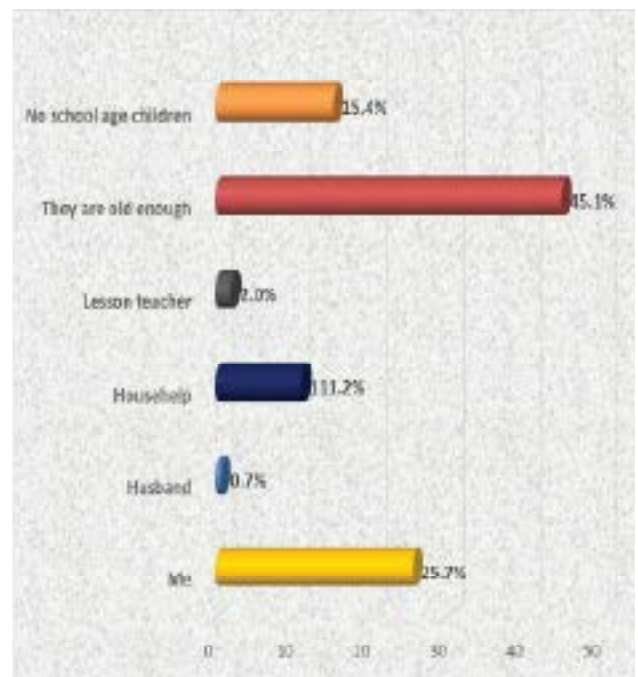
Figure 1 above reports that the highest proportion of the respondents indicated that their children were old enough (44.2%) to take care of their homework, followed by 25.6% of the respondents who claimed that they helped the children themselves as indicated by ‘Myself’, while 15.5% of them signified that they had no school-age children. Other respondents also reported that the children were usually helped by their house help (8.5%), lesson teachers (4.7%), and their husbands (1.6%). This result points to the fact that apart from those who indicated that their children were old enough to do their homework, about one-quarter of the respondents assisted their children to do their homework.



**Figure 1**  
*Bar Chart on distribution on aspects of childcare provided*

**(ii): Helping children after school hours.**

Due to the busy schedules of the market women and female breadwinners in particular relative to their business engagements, the care of the children from the perspective of who takes care of them after school was also investigated. Figure 2 presents the results.



**Figure 2**  
*Bar Chart on distribution on childcare after school hours.*

From this figure, it was shown that a large proportion of the respondents revealed that their children were old enough (45.1%) to take care of themselves after school, while 25.7% of the respondents indicated that they took care of the children after school by themselves. While some of the respondents showed that they had no school-age children (15.4%) in the household, others stated that their house-help (11.2%), lesson teachers (2.0%), and their husbands (0.7%) took care of the children after school. Be that as it may, there seems to be a higher proportion of the respondents who took care of their children after school compared to those who indicated that their house help, lesson teacher and their husbands did.

### (iii): General Relationship with the children

This section investigated the commitment of FBW to the constructs of parenting and childcare.

**Table 2**  
*Distribution of respondents by commitment to the constructs of childcare*

S/N	Parenting and childcare	Frequency (n=903)	Percentage (%)
1	Responsible for taking young children to school daily	615	67.9
2	Have time to discuss things with children	468	51.8
3	Have time to discipline children when the need arises	435	48.2
4	Have fun with children once in a while	536	59.4
5	Know children's teachers by name	432	47.8
6	Know children's friends by name	614	68.0
7	Attend religious functions with children together	397	44.0
8	Have more time with children outside school than your husband	704	78.0
9	Have all children who are of school age living together with mother	435	48.2
10	Ever had issues to resolve with any of child and teachers at school	438	48.5
11	Children stay with mother after school hours	548	60.7
12	Children help mother with business in any form	635	70.3

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by their relationship with their children which was measured in 12-item question categories. The table revealed that the majority of the respondents had more time with their children outside school than their husbands (78.0%), followed by those who said their children helped them with business in any form (70.3%). Some indicated that they knew their children's friends by name (68.0%) and were responsible for taking their young children to school daily (67.9%). Others signified that their children stayed with them after school (60.7%), that they had fun with their children once in a while (59.2%), and that they had time to discuss things with their children (51.8%), among others. This implies that while the majority are more likely to have close relationships with their children even though they engaged in business activities, others could not.

In determining the specific predictors of female breadwinners' relationship with their children or more or less termed the magnitude of care, the table above presents the summary of predictors of female breadwinners' relationship with children in the family/household using a logistic regression model. The table indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the nature of the goods sold by the female breadwinners and their commitment to childcare/relationship while it was found that those who sold in Agbeni market were 4.4 times more likely to maintain cordial relationship with their children than those in Bodija market. This simply suggests that the degree of cordial relationship between female breadwinners and childcare or relationship could be determined by market location.

Similarly, while it was observed that there was no statistically significant relationship between the age of female breadwinners and childcare (or relationship), it was discovered that those who were single parent-mother were 58.5% less likely to have cordial relationship with their children as compared to those who were married. This implies that those market women who are married are more likely to care for their children than those who are single parent-mothers. This could be attributed to the fact that their husbands provide support for the care of the children while those who are single parent-mothers might not have that support.

Conversely, while it was found that there was no statistically significant relationship between the number of children born, level of education, religious affiliation, ethnicity and an average income of female breadwinners and relationship with their children, those whose husbands or partners were unemployed were 76.7% less likely to have a cordial relationship with their children than those whose husbands or partners were in farming. This also means that the unemployment status of the husband is a strong predictor of how female breadwinners would relate with their children.

Using Chi Square Test, the effects of the engagement of market women in childcare, measured by their relationships with their children was determined. This was achieved

**Table 3**

*Predictors of female breadwinners' relationship with children in the family/household using binary logistic regression model*

Predictor variables/ socio-demographic characteristics	Commitment to childcare/relationship			Odds Ratio (OR) [95% CI]
	N	Slightly Cordial	Highly Cordial	
<b>Nature of goods sold</b>				
Food seasonings (RC)	43	4.0%	5.3%	1.000
Vegetables/pepper	71	8.6%	7.7%	1.197 [.481 – 2.978]
Meat/fish	55	9.6%	4.5%	.631 [.245 – 1.625]
Food stuff	122	21.6%	9.8%	.609 [.265 – 1.401]
Clothing materials	265	33.9%	28.1%	.754 [.238 – 2.387]
Provisions	245	9.6%	37.2%	1.190 [.412 – 3.432]
Food wears	29	2.7%	3.6%	.706 [.188 – 2.642]
Others	52	10.0%	3.8%	.467 [.173 – 1.262]
<b>Market Location</b>				
Bodija (RC)	322	51.8%	27.5%	1.000
Gbagi	292	37.0%	30.0%	2.084 [.884 – 4.933]
Agbeni	289	11.2%	42.5%	4.417** [2.077 – 9.392]
<b>Age group</b>				
Less than 20 (RC)	4	0.3%	0.5%	1.000
20 – 24	15	2.7%	1.2%	.377 [.019 – 7.380]
25 – 29	51	5.3%	5.8%	1.325 [.078 – 22.484]
30 – 34	97	8.3%	12.0%	1.294 [.080 – 21.028]
35 – 39	157	14.0%	19.2%	1.076 [.068 – 17.029]
40 and above	577	69.4%	61.3%	.669 [.043 – 10.516]
<b>Relationship status</b>				
Married (RC)	681	66.2%	81.6%	1.000
Cohabiting with partner	98	14.2%	9.4%	.712 [.412 – 1.232]
Single parent-mother	111	19.6%	8.9%	.415** [.255 – 1.522]
<b>Number of children</b>				
0 – 2 children (RC)	257	28.4%	28.5%	1.000
3 – 4 children	527	50.8%	62.2%	1.435 [.905 – 2.274]
5+ children	119	20.8%	9.3%	.801 [.422 – 1.522]
<b>Level of education</b>				
No formal education (RC)	96	14.6%	8.8%	1.000
Primary	196	28.2%	18.7%	.805 [.441 – 1.469]
Secondary	439	40.5%	53.5%	1.160 [.643 – 2.093]
Tertiary	163	16.6%	19.1%	.860 [.419 – 1.765]
<b>Religious affiliation</b>				
Christianity (RC)	407	49.2%	43.1%	1.000
Islam	488	49.5%	56.5%	1.247 [.878 – 1.770]
ATR	6	1.3%	0.3%	.958 [.089 – 10.298]
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Yoruba (RC)	814	93.0%	89.6%	1.000
Igbo	78	6.6%	9.7%	1.772 [.921 – 3.410]
Hausa	1	0.0%	0.2%	-
Other ethnic groups	4	0.3%	0.5%	.595 [.043 – 8.172]

Predictor variables/ socio-demographic characteristics	Commitment to childcare/relationship			Odds Ratio (OR) [95% CI]
	N	Slightly Cordial	Highly Cordial	
<b>Average Income</b>				
Less than N20000 (RC)	102	12.4%	11.1%	1.000
N20001 – N40000	307	32.2%	36.0%	1.181 [.664 – 2.099]
N40001 – N60000	269	28.9%	31.2%	1.130 [.614 – 2.099]
N60001 – N80000	72	8.7%	7.8%	.750 [.330 – 1.702]
N80001 – N100000	92	12.1%	9.6%	.800 .361 – 1.774]
N100001 and above	42	5.7%	4.3%	.943 [.355 – 2.502]
<b>Partners employment status</b>				
Farming (RC)	33	3.1%	4.1%	1.000
Civil service	150	10.9%	20.3%	.922 [.339 – 2.510]
Public service	78	8.8%	9.0%	.682 [.242 – 1.920]
Driving	118	21.1%	9.7%	.386 [.143 – 1.037]
Trading	250	26.2%	29.8%	.686 [.265 – 1.779]
Artisan	88	4.1%	13.1%	.995 [.302 – 3.272]
Unemployed	33	6.8%	2.2%	.233* [.069 - .788]
Others	68	19.0%	11.7%	.519 [.191 – 1.406]

*Significant P<0.01\*\* or 0.05\**

**Table 4**

*Relationship between categories of market women and their children in the household*

Categories of market women	Relationship with children		Total (%)
	Slightly Cordial (%)	Highly Cordial (%)	
Non-breadwinning females	0 (0.0%)	422 (100.0%)	422 (100.0%)
Female breadwinners	303 (66.2%)	155 (33.8%)	458 (100.0%)
Total	303 (34.4%)	577 (65.6%)	880 (100.0%)

Chi Square = 425.791  
Continuity Correction = 422.866  
Likelihood Ratio = 546.962  
Fisher's Exact Test (Exact Sig. 2 -sided = .000), (Exact Sig. 1 - sided = .000)  
Linear-by-linear = 425.307  
DF = 1  
Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = .000  
Number of valid cases = 880

<sup>a</sup> 0 cell (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 145.30

<sup>b</sup>Computed only for a 2x2 table

Significant at P<0.05

through the re-categorization of the 12-item measures of childcare and the mother relationship with the child as highlighted in Table 4.

Thus, Table 4 presents the summary of the results of the relationship between categories of market women by their relationship with children – slightly cordial {0 – 5 scores} and highly cordial {6 – 12 scores} as detailed in the methodology section. Also using the row percentages, it was revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between categories of women sampled in the markets and their relationship with children at  $\chi^2 = 425.791$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . This could be interpreted as revealing that those who were female breadwinners were less likely

to have a highly a cordial relationship with their children than those in the non-breadwinning category. For example, only 33.8% of the female breadwinners had a highly cordial relationship with their children, while all of the non-breadwinning females had a highly cordial relationship with their children. This implies there is a lower likelihood that female breadwinners would have cordial relationships with their children compared to their non-breadwinning counterparts.

### Discussion

The study revealed that the more the successes recorded by female breadwinners in their businesses, the more the



needs of the children in the household were adequately met by their breadwinning mother. However, younger children of the household rarely enjoy intimacy with their mothers as these breadwinners stay away from the home for more than 10 hours daily. This finding is supported by the findings in [Li and Guo \(2023\)](#) which shows that mother's limited time with her children may affect her role as a mother as well as children's well-being. However, some study participants submitted that despite not spending adequate time at home, their children are always around in the market. Similarly, the female breadwinners had always attended their children's school functions, despite busy market schedules, as the father figures never really attend to not just the financial needs but the academic needs of their children.

Generally, female breadwinning comes with huge responsibilities with overarching impacts, and parenthood is one status that co-exist with being a breadwinner. Female breadwinning played a significant influence on the children of the household. The study maintained that children of female breadwinning households were positively affected by the breadwinning roles of their mothers. Specifically, women in breadwinning roles emphasised that their children learned business acumen from them as those children reportedly supported their breadwinning mothers in the market.

Having a more in-depth understanding of the childcare by female breadwinners is also essential. Most participants submitted that they were more responsible than their spouses in caring for children, despite their busy schedules. As they expressed themselves when asked who helps the children with their homework: one of them explained:

When my children were younger, I watched them do their homework in the market and I even helped sometimes because things were better than this then. But now they are older and are in higher institutions. My children are older and more matured now, so they take care of themselves.

**(IDI/Female Breadwinners/56 years old/Agbeni Market)**

Another participant also added that:

My children stay back in school to do their homework before they come here and sometimes, I help them here. But we see the children in the market doing their homework by themselves... They understand how busy their mothers are. It's really not easy, but as busy as we are, some of us still make out time to help these children because their fathers are not very helpful and some of them can't even read or write.

**(IDI/Grocery seller/female breadwinner/Agbeni/45 years Old)**

As this participant explained, it was the husband's

daughter who helped the children with their homework:

My husband's daughter stays with the children most times. She takes care of them and even disciplines them if they do something bad. She's a really nice person, like my own biological daughter.

**(IDI/grocery Seller breadwinner/Agbeni/32 years Old)**

In the opinion of a male participant, it was their mother that helped them with their homework because they stayed with her. In his submission:

Right now, I have two very young children from my second wife, but they stay with their mother after school. My other wife too, her children stayed with her when they were younger. I am not educated; I can't help with homework.

**(IDI/Spouse of female breadwinner/ Bodija/Welder/60 years Old)**

The dyadic relationship that exists between an individual and the family is socially and economically valued in terms of cost and benefits. Female breadwinners react differently in term of shared intimacy to their immediate family as compared to their extended families. While some female breadwinners believe their businesses affected their children negatively, some agreed there were positive aspects of raising their children while doing business in the market. For instance, when participants in the qualitative interviews conducted were asked to highlight the effects of their business activities on their children, some believed that it would be of great benefit for the upkeep of the children, while others added that it may still impact negatively on their future. One participant opined:

My business affected my children a little because I wanted them all to go to higher institution but two of them refused to go because of the business, until I stopped them from coming here totally. Now, my children can hardly persevere and read like they should, and they keep getting poor grades because they have been influenced by the market environment and the little money they make here.

**[IDI/Ankara seller breadwinner/Gbagi/51 years Old/2020]**

Also of this opinion is another female breadwinner who argued that:

Raising children in this environment is not the best for the mother and the children, unless you don't care as a mother. Look at young children coming here from school or staying here to help their parents when they should be in school. Some of them are just there without anybody watching over them. They get exposed to so many things; some even start stealing small change here

and there. We see children getting pregnant, dropping out of school every day. My own children, only one of them, out of three is here with me because I just want her to know about the business, the rest are not even going to school in Ibadan because I don't want them to be coming here every day after school. I have no one but God, I can't afford the exposure here.

**[IDI/Foodstuff seller breadwinner/Bodija market/46 years Old/2020]**

Although, findings showed that the roles of mothers being played by the female breadwinners who were into buying and selling also affected their businesses, they felt they must fulfill their obligation of motherhood to their children, despite the difficulty of doing so. Participants reported that they provided all the needs of their children and would do more especially to enhance a greater future for their children. The educational needs of the children from primary to tertiary, and if need be, sponsorship to study abroad, were deemed important by many of the rich female breadwinners. However, the average breadwinners always strive to enroll, sponsor their children to school, and cater to these children after school hours. Furthermore, the female breadwinners also provided other needs like clothing and payment of hospital bills for their children. Some of the female breadwinners admitted that their husbands also contributed to the welfare of the children in the household but that the contribution was rather small and not regular.

Generally, female breadwinners submitted that they were often responsible for the discipline of their children, regardless of their tight schedules. The market life was also observed to be capable of influencing children negatively since the children were often there. Therefore, these breadwinners ensured that their children were placed under thorough monitoring and care to prevent unfortunate situations like unwanted pregnancy.

In the view of a female breadwinner in one of the market locations:

My children grew up with an irresponsible father and a busy mother. Only one of them went to a higher institution, but I have always loved education. Though my last born promised to go to university, my first daughter got pregnant here in this market. It's not my plan for them at all.

**[IDI/Grocery seller breadwinner/Agbeni/45 years Old/2020]**

Understanding whether female breadwinners had enough time with their children due to their engagements in business activities is another critical aspect of raising quality children. In this regard, participants were questioned whether they spent enough time with their children. Most participants agreed that they had enough time with their

children since they always came back to meet them in the market, while others felt that the time they had with their children was not enough. In the explanation of one participant:

I spend time with them but I'm also very busy. So sometimes they are here but I can't spend the time with them because I'm just struggling to get buyers, to make sales and get money. We don't wait for customers to walk in because they may never walk in. What we do is go out there and drag customers to our store. Though we have people who also help us bring customers, we still need to be up and doing and not just wait for customers. The children are mostly on their own; they can watch TV if there is light, but I only use this generator when I have customers because the light will make the clothes more attractive to the buyers.

**[IDI/Fabrics seller/ female breadwinner/Gbagi/39 years Old/2020]**

From the perspective of another participant however, coming to the market is a good way to bond with your children and monitor them. According to her:

I don't think it's wrong or bad for the children. I grew up helping my mother in this market, I went to a university, and I fell back on the business. We used to talk a lot and I shared so many things with her while also learning from her. Her apprentices used to steal from her back then, but when they realized I was serious with the business, they respected themselves, they became more careful around me and that reduced the stealing. Though I think the children are equally exposed to some vices, but it depends on who your mother or father is and how serious they are about discipline. My children are there in that corner; they dare not go outside.

**[IDI/Female Breadwinners/Gbagi Market/2020]**

Exploring the effects of the businesses of the female breadwinners on children is an important element in understanding the quality of children they raise. However, the male participants in the qualitative interviews also had different opinions when asked about the effects of their business activities on their children. While some believed that it would be of great benefit for the upkeep of the children, others added that it may still impact negatively on their future. As one participant opined:

The truth is; it has affected them but not negatively. My second daughter is in this market; she's educated, married and doing well. Her mother and I opened a store for her when she couldn't get a job after graduation. She learnt a lot from her mother in the market. Even

the eldest one is doing supermarket business in Lagos. They learnt from their mother and me.

#### **[IDI/Spouse of Female Breadwinners/Agbeni Market/55/2020]**

While another participant thought otherwise. According to him:

My wife's business affected my children a little because I wanted them all to go to higher institution but two of them refused to go because of the business. They are still in the market doing nothing; they have refused to go to school, and they are not even learning their mother's trade. They were exposed to money at a young age and my wife used to go to Lagos a lot then to buy goods.

#### **[IDI/Spouse of Female Breadwinners/Gbagi Market/2020]**

Studies have consistently shown that change in traditionally assigned roles of wives and mothers to providers lead to change in traditionally assigned roles of wives and mothers to providers leads to a change in the relationship between couples as well as the relationship with their children (Bankole & Adeyeri, 2014). It was, therefore, observed in this present study that most participants lamented the limited time they had to care for their children. Many of the female breadwinners do not have enough time for the welfare of their children due to career or business pursuits to meet the needs of the households. For example, only a few of the female breadwinners who still have school-age children had enough time to assist the children in doing their homework and seeing to their welfare, especially after school hours. While most of the female breadwinners found it regrettably uncomfortable engaging their children in business activities after school hours as they claimed their support in executing their daily business activities, others regretted the limited time they had for their children's care due to daily business engagements. However, this finding corroborates Meisenbach's (2010) findings that female breadwinners do experience the feelings of guilt and resentment when they are away from their children on business or pursuing their careers. This supports the strain theory adopted for the study.

Strikingly, it was found that most breadwinning market women delegate their caregiver's responsibilities to relatives, neighbors or friends and, most times, to their spouses due to their busy schedules in the market. Take for instance, it was observed that many of their children were often left under the care of housemaids, lesson teachers and their husbands after school, which could be dangerous considering the prevalence of child abuse. This is also an indication of not having quality time for childcare by the FBW. Despite this, findings indicate that there are significant variations between socio-demographic

characteristics of female breadwinners and having enough time with their children's welfare. For example, the location of their market, age group of FBW, relationship status, age at first birth, and average income influence having enough time with their children. This suggests that even though the pressure of business affects their ability to spend quality time with their children, adjusting their socio-demographic characteristics could go a long way at mitigating the negative consequences of FBW on the children. This finding also supports Sibert (2011) who observed that a woman cannot successfully play the role of wife and mother while maintaining a high-powered career at the same time. Indeed, focusing more on the business without balancing career responsibilities and children's welfare may be devastating in the future.

### **Conclusion**

This study focused on female breadwinning (FBW) and family relations among market women in Ibadan Metropolis. This research has revealed the fundamentals of FBW practice. Although it seems contradictory to the existing patriarchal culture, the socio-economic realities of the societies have made FBW inevitably practicable, while serving the purpose of cushioning the effects of women and family poverty. It promotes family financial stability and survival while also alleviating women's poverty. However, the practice of FBW is not free from conflict in the family as it negates the patriarchal norms of men's headship in the society and family. In this regard, it was observed that FBW degenerates into a clash of societal expectations and role strains as a result of multiple role relationships and performance in the family. In view of the findings from this research, the following recommendations have been suggested for policymakers and stakeholders in gender issues in pursuit of Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The study recommends that Government at all levels should ensure an effective implementation of gender policies as this will also have a positive effect on the stability and sustainability of the female breadwinner's families. The paper also recommends the need for strong advocacy and strict policy implementation on child education and child's rights by various stakeholders such as the various market associations, market leaders and market women. This will help female breadwinners whose children grow up in the market due to their mothers' busy schedule.

### **Declarations**

#### **Ethics Approval**

Ethics approval was obtained from Oyo State Ministry of Health Ethics Committee (No.: AD 13/479/2037A)

#### **Availability of Data and Materials**

The data will be made available on request.

**Competing Interests**

There is no competing interest with any individual or agency.


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