

Extraversion, Multiple Role Strains and Social Support as Correlates of Coping in Widowhood

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ABSTRACT The study investigated the psychosocial correlates of coping with bidirectional strains imposed by work and family role conflicts among the widowed. Six hypotheses were tested using data generated from an 82-item questionnaire administered to 70 widowed subjects. They were selected from 13 different occupations and reside at Lagos, Calabar and Ibadan, some major cities in Nigeria. The results showed that employee family friendly policies, like supervisor support and flexible work schedules are germane to coping with Multiple Role Strains. Specifically, high levels of work-family conflict, but low supervisor support did not increase intention to quit. The use of religious coping strategies showed strong potentials for promoting better coping and adjustment for the widowed. However, contrary to past research evidence, Catholics used more religious coping strategies and consequently coped better than non-Catholics. The utility of personality variable particularly, extraversion did not predict better coping like social support, which showed a consistently high beta weight when assessed independently, and co-jointly, with other variable like extraversion and multiple role strain. However, the three variable significantly predicted coping co-jointly. Much as generalization may be constrained by the sample size and inadequate representation of other religious groups like Buddhist, Moslems, etc. and people of other ethnic origin, findings of this research has implication of Human Resources practice, therapy and religious counseling. Further research can focus on the types of social support and the different forms of religious coping strategies that are more effective in promoting coping and adjustment in widowhood.