

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS
IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Mary Owusu Obimpeh hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research work except for the references made to other people's work that has been duly acknowledged.

This work has neither in part nor wholly been presented for another degree in this or any other University. I take full responsibility for any shortcomings that may arise out of this work.

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CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that this thesis was supervised in accordance with procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Arkaifie who sacrificed to look after my daughter to enable me to pursue this course. Indeed words cannot express my gratitude towards this herculean task you took for my sake. I say God richly bless you, for without this unflinching and wonderful support, pursuing this programme would have totally been impossible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GAUA	-	Ghana Association of University Administrators
GLSS4	-	Ghana Living Standards Survey 4
HRM	-	Human Resource Management
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MGCSP	-	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
PNDC	-	Provisional National Defence Council
UCC	-	University of Cape Coast
UDS	-	University for Development Studies
UENR	-	University of Energy and Natural Resources
UEW	-	University of Education, Winneba
UG	-	University of Ghana
UHAS	-	University of Health and Allied Sciences
UMAT	-	University of Mines and Technology
UPSA	-	University of Professional Studies
WLB	-	Work-life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a major concern for people and institutions concerned about the quality of working life relative to the broader quality of life. The study sought to investigate sources, effects and the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The study adopted the qualitative research design. The study population comprised female administrators in three public universities, representatives of human resource departments in the selected public universities, Executives of women caucuses in the universities, National Executives of GAUA, and representatives from MGCSP and Social Welfare Department. A total of 74 respondents were sampled for the study. Purposive sampling was used to sample the institutional representatives, whereas snowball sampling was used to select the female administrators. Interview and focus group discussion guides were used as instruments for collecting data for the study. Narrative analysis was used to analyse the data. The study found that socio-cultural factors such as marriage, family stage, and reproductive processes were cardinal sources of competing for work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The universities had instituted some policies and strategies to ensure work-life balance for workers in Ghana, some of which were leave policies, welfare policies, educational policies, and accommodation policies. However, the study found that the policies were too general and less suited for the peculiar needs of female administrators. Strategies adopted by the female administrators in public universities in Ghana to ensure work-life balance included engaging the support of family members, and hiring nannies to support the performance of home duties. It was, however, found that having support from family members was the most effective strategy to achieve work-life balance. Poor background checks and lack of a national

policy to regulate the services of nannies made it less effective and uncomfortable for female administrators to use them to attain work-life balance. Since most of the approaches were less effective in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities, many of the female administrators experienced work-life imbalances. The female administrators of public universities in Ghana experienced many negative effects of work-life imbalance relationships. Some of the undesirable effects of work-life imbalance were slowing down of career progression, deterioration in health, marital separation and divorce, and reduction in job performance. The study recommends that the Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with the MGCSP should embark on a vigorous sensitisation program on cultural reorientation to encourage husbands to understand the need to support their wives at home. The MGCSP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should incorporate crèche schools in the formal education system. Also, the MGCSP in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare should enact a policy to regulate the services of nannies in the country.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The burden of progressively challenging work culture is one of the most persistent challenges employees have to contend with as there are technological advancement and growing business competition. Workers spend more than the normal eight hours required for a day's work due to improved technology. Thornthwaite (2004) reported that workers perform their jobs corresponding to an extra month each year in the twenty-first century compared to the twentieth century. According to Saad (2008), the result of increased working hours is having an enormous effect on the everyday life of a huge number of people, creating work-life imbalances and stressful lifestyles for employees both at the workplace and at home. However, Gregory and Milner (2009) argued that demanding job situations and work-life imbalance are pieces of a multifaceted problem. This was because any imbalances in the work-life relationship have rippling effects on the quality of role performance in both domains, which also has socio-cultural and economic implications on workers (Mudrak, Zabrodska, Kveton, Jelinek, Blatny, Solcova & Machovcova, 2018). Buddhapriya (2009) suggested that organizations in their attempt to address job distribution can offer employees who encounter imbalance with a better balance. The need for the public sector to address workload is identified as a major cause of work-life imbalances. Budhwar and Varma (2010), therefore, posited that the real benefits of providing a milieu that supports work-life balance need to be communicated successfully.

Work-life balance is a major concern for people and institutions concerned about the quality of working life in relation to the broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). The aim

is to offer good quality of life to a worker while maintaining the productivity levels of the worker at the workplace. According to Moore (2007), a balanced work-life score offers an organisation with a creative employee, while the disparity in the work-life balance brings about depressed staff (Sandhya, Choudary, Kumar & Vijaya, 2011). Thus, the whole idea of work-life balance is centered on the different critical roles of workers as both economic and social beings (Greenhaus & Powel, 2012). The employee, at the center of the concept of work-life balance, is perceived as an economic resource at the workplace, and as a social resource to family and community development.

As a result, the interplay between the economic and social roles of an employee always generates imbalance, where the dominance of the functionality of one role over the other affects the overall performance of the individual in both ends. This is because the inter-role stressors from work and life domains are considered to be mutually dissenting (Lewis, Gambles & Rapoport, 2007). Whereas employers demand the maximum concentration, innovativeness and experience from individuals as employees within a defined time period, families and communities require the attention, care and guidance of these same individuals who are parents and relatives at certain time periods. According to Hughes and Bozionelos (2007), work-life conflict or imbalance is generated when the demands from one segment extend to the other or when the individual is unable to effectively play the roles at both ends to his or her satisfaction.

At the beginning of the industrial revolution, business organisations considered work and life as independent domains. Employers and business managers expected

employees to place the interests of organisations ahead of their own. This was due to the perception that employees were able to perform their personal and family roles and functions through the financial resources and economic empowerment generated from their workplaces. Gray and Tudball (2003) reported that organisations at that time reacted that, organizations are mostly unconcerned to what affects employees outside the office; workers activities in the office is the concern of employers. However, with time, such attitudes are changing, and organisations are increasingly accepting the impact that work-life relationships have on employees' performance and other organisational development goals.

In most organisations and in the public sector, the challenge of work-life balance is increasingly gaining the attention of many employers and employees (Brough, Holt, Bauld, Biggs & Ryan, 2008). According to Saad, (2008), increased globalisation and business competition have compelled public sector professionals to find ways of impacting positively the bottom line of their organizations, boost the morale of workers, retain workers, and be abreast with current organizational trends. Nonetheless, in societies where there are conflicting everyday jobs and obligations, work-life balance has become a major issue in the workplace. Thus, people find it challenging to manage a balance between the pressures of the workplace and their duties as home-makers (Gash, Merterns & Gordo, 2012).

The rising work-life imbalance has partly been attributed to the changes in the socio-demographic characteristics of employees in terms of the growing participation of females in the workforce and aging of the working populace (Poelmans & Caligiuri, 2008). The growing number of females participating in organizations has resulted in

the rise in dual-income households, putting an added burden on individuals to cope with work and life issues (Gash, Merterns & Gordo, 2012). According to Fleetwood (2007), the steadily increased involvement of females in the workforce has rendered the situation where the male used to be the sole breadwinner obsolete. The increased participation of females at the job front has changed their natural or traditional role as home managers to enable males to concentrate fully and be engaged by their employers (Crooker, Smith & Tabak, 2002). Greenhaus and Powel (2012) asserted that the changing traditional role of women and the creation of dual-income households have created work-life pressures on employees as their time, commitment and attention are divided between work and family lives.

Kossek, Lewis, and Hammer (2010) also posited that scientific advancements are affecting people's hopes and needs from the organization leading to the creation of imbalances. New technologies enable people to work with precision and execute job tasks irrespective of location and time, thus allowing for more intrusion of the work domain with the life domain and possibly causing stress among individuals (Aryee, Srinivas & Tan, 2005). According to Breugh and Frye (2007), homeworking is a work-life practice that has grown significantly in the last decade largely due to the technology that makes it possible for workers to perform their jobs from home during and outside business hours. Working from the house outside working hours creates pressure on employees as part of the time to attend to personal, family and community issues are taken. As a result, Greenhaus and Powel (2012) argued that the increased numbers of homeworkers resulting from technological advancement are a major cause of work-life imbalance for employees.

The work-life works of literature have acknowledged 170 different life domains that are significant in achieving work-life balance; a few of the top domains comprise work, fiscal resources, holiday, place of abode, family, acquaintance, social participation and wellbeing (Warren, 2004). With the growing burden to balance these multiple life domains, there has been a rise in complaints of high burnout by employees (Lewis et al., 2007). Work-life balance concerns tend to affect a person's identity, well-being and how well he or she can function (Cinamon & Rich, 2010). However, McDonald and Hite (2008) reported that the attainment of high educational laurels among younger employees make them negotiate their conditions of service and demand more flexibility to enable them to accomplish their work-life balance needs.

Kossek et al. (2010) posited that work-life a contemporary managerial issue has become a challenging factor of not only the young corporate worker who has begun family life but also the young and middle-aged parents who need to provide constant attention to their children who are fast-growing students or young adults. According to Poelmans and Caligiuri (2008), acclimatising to an approach where emotional intelligence becomes the principal factor would help achieve equilibrium of work-life management. In practice, work-life balance includes altering work patterns so that everyone, irrespective of gender, race, age, can find a tempo to help them combine work and other duties and aspirations (Brough et al., 2008).

However, work-life balance concerns appear to affect certain groups of people more than others. For example, those who work beyond the normal 8 hours, those whose job tasks spills into the home due to technology, those in shift work, low incomes,

those juggling parenting and salaried workers, and those with cultural responsibilities outside the family and paid work (Gash et al., 2012). Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) also indicated that employees who have to play another role of children, spouse or parents are not able to manage their roles effectively. Parents whose children are below 18 years old and have jobs often have more challenging family responsibilities than workers with adult children or who have no children (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield, 2005). As a result, Gregory and Milner (2009) suggested that the existence of family support policies is very crucial for workers with younger children because they have both childcare tasks and work demands.

Working parents encounter challenges in attempting to balance employment tasks with domestic and childcare duties (Families and Work Institute, 2004). In the case of working parents who have an incapacitated child, the challenges are greater. Work-life imbalances have been found to be associated with psychological issues, for example, depression (Emslie, Hunt, & Macintyre, 2004). Observing the day-to-day lives of many employees, Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) identified time and stress as the two main concerns that must be addressed to achieve work-life balance. Thus, effective management of these two variables at a workplace is considered as the basis for a perfect work-life balance. Buddhapriya (2009) suggested that the human resource section of every organisation must assist workers to maintain a work-life balance. This, according to Gregory and Milner (2009), could be done by enacting work-life balance as a human resource policy.

According to Thornthwaite (2004), an increasing number of business organisations are currently operating based on the notion that personal life and work life complement each other. This helps workers to balance their job lives with their

personal life and results in positive effects for the worker and the organisation (Sandhya et al., 2011). Thus, the concept of work-life has been abstracted from the job satisfaction level of an employee, which is an extrinsic factor of job satisfaction and performance. Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) described work-life balance as the term used to describe those practices at the workplace that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of employees in achieving a balance between the demands of their family life and work lives. Moore (2007) also posited that work-life balance is the phenomenon of striking an ideal balance between the professional lives of individuals and their personal lives with all of their respective associations.

To minimise workers' work-life imbalance concerns, organisations have resorted to policies like flexible time, on-site day-care, and other strategies to ensure that performing one's family duties do not interfere with one's job (Buddhapriya, 2009). According to Haar and Roche (2010), such policies and programmes can help in alleviating problems in coping with multiple roles, thus improving employee's quality of life. However, Cinamon and Rich (2010) argued that the success of such policies and programmes may largely depend on the front line supervisors. In other words, an empathetic supervisor can build up an employee's confidence, provide valuable resources, be understanding, flexible and support the employee to establish and maintain a balance between working and life demands. Purcell and Hurchinson (2007) noted that administrative leadership was one of the most essential factors, explaining employees' positive psychological contracts, work fulfillment and loyalty to clients, colleagues, and superiors while addressing personal and family demands and responsibilities.

Work-life imbalance is a subtle issue in many business organisations and households in Africa. This comes from the background that women are traditionally responsible for managing the home by performing house chores and attending to the needs of children. However, the steady increase of female engagement at the work front has not been commensurate with the level of consciousness and efforts by actors and institutions to adjust the traditional roles and responsibilities to enable women to effectively balance their work and life demands (Hegtvedt, Clay-Warner & Ferrigno, 2006). The action is further compounded by the absence of national and organisational policies in work-life balance in many countries and institutions across the African continent (Akinyele, 2010).

In addition, the large informal sector of the economies in Africa does not permit workers to effectively engage their employers and managers to enact policies, structures, and systems to ensure work-life balance. The results are that employers pretend to be unaware of the work-life imbalances created through the human resource practice systems; governments are reluctant to challenge the status quo through laws and policies, while employees struggle to meet their work and life concerns. According to Aryee et al. (2005), the poor regulated human resource management system in most African countries has created work-life imbalances in many households and families. The situation is getting more alarming as many women get empowered through the education system and economic opportunities to actively engage themselves in the professional work front.

Mordi, Simpson, Singh, and Okafor (2010) posited that professional women are the highest disadvantaged in Africa as they struggle to achieve both their career

development goals and perform their traditional roles as well. According to Akinyele (2010), the situation is worse among young women professionals in Africa in double income earners households and with children below the age of five years. This is because the socio-cultural system in Africa is structured in such a way that men are to focus on their jobs to provide the financial needs and welfare of the households, whereas women, irrespective of their economic contributions to their households, are responsible for all kitchen activities and managing the home. These roles combined with the active feminine roles in the reproduction process and childbearing bring a lot of stress on professional women in Africa. In other words, the dual roles and responsibilities of professional women in Africa cause significant delays in their career development (Adusah-Karikari, 2008). According to Anyidoho and Manuh (2010), the traditional roles and expectations of women in Africa make them less competitive in the professional working environment.

However, Mordi et al. (2010) indicated that the traditional or extended family setup in Africa provides some relief support to professional women and double income earner households to enable them to achieve their career development goals. Thus, extended family members such as mothers, siblings, in-laws, nephews and nieces among others mostly step-in to support the professional women's household by taking care of their children and performing house chores to enable the women to concentrate on their working career to climb to higher positions. According to Akinyele (2010), the social support system in Africa provides an opportunity for women to actualise their full potentials at the workplace and sometimes enable them to surpass their male counterparts to occupy higher job positions. In other words, the family and societal support enable women to concentrate fully on their job roles and functions to

contribute immensely on their jobs. Nonetheless, professional women without such family support find it extremely difficult to maintain a balance between their working life and family life.

The study of work-life balance among women in Ghana has become very crucial, as the proportion of the female workforce has increased (Aryee et al., 2005). Thus, as more females get into the labour market, the emphasis has shifted from 'women oriented toward homemaking versus careers' to 'traditional versus non-traditional careers' and finding professional patterns of women (Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010). This change reflects that career expectations of females have shifted in Ghana. The state of work-life balance among women in Ghana is not significantly different from most other African countries. This is because the country does not have a clear and comprehensive binding policy to address the special needs of female working professionals. As a result, each institution has different human resource policies regulating the balance between the natural or traditional roles of females and their working life. This has created chaos among industries with respect to policies and programmes to help ensure work-life balance, especially for female workers.

The common human resource policies among business organisations and industries are the automatic qualification for a three month leave with pay following child delivery for female workers to enable them take care of their babies, annual leave with pay for workers to de-stress and refresh-up for work duties, and sick leave for some number of days in a year. Other initiatives adopted by business organisations to ensure work-life balance among female workers include training; social benefits such

as scholarships for wards and family health insurance schemes; and economic benefits such as bonuses and allowances for the extra time engaged by employers.

However, Adusah-Karikari (2008) emphasised that the lack of a national labour policy on work-life balance and weak labour unions has resulted in the non-uniform application of work-life balance programmes and policies across businesses and industries. According to Abubakari (2013), the majority of female workers go to work during weekends when they are supposed to make time for their families and help socialise the children into responsible adulthood. Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) reported that the increased number of broken homes or collapsed marriages in Ghana is largely as a result of the inability of couples to establish and maintain a balance between their working and personal or family lives. Such imbalances often create tension and conflicts in marriages which eventually lead to their collapse with other serious implications on professional women. The high work-life imbalance among female workers in Ghana is compounded by the expensive but poorly managed crèche schools to take care of their children as well as huge differences in school and working hours (Abubakari, 2013).

Working in a public university is one of the critical sectors of the Ghanaian economy as the universities are perceived to be places where people are trained to occupy managerial positions in the society. They also provide empirical research findings to support public policies, including the effective integration of women into administrative positions. As a result, the public universities are expected to be a citadel, where fair human resource management policies and practices should be implemented to ensure work-life balance of employees, and most especially women

taking into consideration their reproductive functioning and traditional roles in the society.

Ghana, currently, has nine public universities and eight technical universities. The focus of the study is on the public universities, comprising University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast (UCC), University of Education Winneba (UEW), University of Development Studies (UDS), University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR), University of Health and Allied Science, (UHAS), University of Mines and Technology (UMAT), and University of Professional Studies (UPSA). However, the study purposively focused on UG, KNUST, and UCC. This was based on the universities being in existence for over 50 years and the presence of women caucuses, who influence human resource management policies and practices to ensure work-life balance among female workers. These universities were perceived to have had enough experience in human resource management and work-life balance through the gender perspective.

University workers in Ghana could be organised into teaching and non-teaching staff. The teaching staff comprises lecturers, research fellows, and research assistants, whereas the non-teaching staff includes administrators, technical staff and other auxiliary workers. Whereas the teaching staff are more independent, autonomous and flexible in deciding the times to fix their academic duties to enable them to perform other duties expected of them, the administrative staff are considered as supporting staff responsible for managing and supervising the daily activities in the universities with little flexibility in their lines of operation. The focus of the study was on the

female administrative staff. Thus, the study was aimed at investigating how the females were able to rise through the promotional rungs in administrative positions and how they are coping with the position demands in the midst of their reproductive and traditional functions in the society.

1.1 Statement of the problem

While Public sector Human Resource management organisations demand from employees more flexibility which requires long hours and higher mobility to meet increasing competition, employees demand flexibility from organisations in terms of schedule and location in order to better accommodate their life needs (Thornthwaite, 2004). Buddhapriya (2009) indicated that the disagreements on terms of schedule and location between employers and employees form the foundation for work-life imbalances. In addition, the advancement in technology over business processes has significantly changed flexibility in the execution of job tasks (Gray & Tudball, 2003). According to Hughes and Bozionelos (2007), the advancement in technology has led to the expansion of homeworking and extension of working activities to the home. Poelmans and Caligiuri (2008) argued that homeworking creates a lot of conflicts due to the clash between working times and personal or family times.

However, homeworking is gradually taking a critical stage in the working environment with serious consequences on work-life balance. Even though many business organisations compensate workers on the extra hours of work they perform from their homes, Fleetwood (2007) posited that the negative long-term repercussions work-life imbalances create on personal and family lives are always underestimated and underemphasised. Increasing homeworking through technological advancement is also in parallel to changes in the socio-demographics of employees, and cultural roles

and responsibilities of women (Cinamon & Rich, 2010). Thus, the formal education system, improved nutrition, and health increased gender activism, as well as expansion in economic systems, have enabled young adults and women to be engaged in economic activities. The situation has drifted the attention and diluted the functionality of womanhood from reproduction and home management to partners in socio-economic development (Abubakari, 2013).

According to Cinamon and Rich (2010), the official acceptance of women engagement in corporate activities automatically created imbalances between working and family lives. Haar and Roche (2010), therefore, suggested that both employers and female employees should institute measures, strategies, and policies to help establish and maintain a work-life balance. Some working parents may benefit from the availability of ‘family-friendly policies’ such as on-site childcare, work-schedule flexibility, supervisory support, maternity leave, and paternity leave (Berg, Kalleberg & Appelbaum, 2003; Keene & Quadagno, 2004). However, whether these work-life initiatives can successfully satisfy the needs of both the employee and the organisation is a question that remains unanswered (Poelmans & Caligiuri, 2008). This is because the benefits of ‘family-friendly policies’ are limited to a minority of workers since the availability of such benefits varies widely among employers (Barnett, Del Campo, Del Campo & Steiner, 2003; Evans, 2002). The Family and Work Institute (2005) reported that mothers in dual-earner working households find it difficult to balance work demands and childcare responsibilities and are more likely than their childless counterparts to leave the workforce involuntarily.

The situation is very critical in Ghana with the presence of a dual societal system i.e. modern and traditional societies. The modern society believes in the engagement of

women in economic activities, whereas the traditional society perceives womanhood, more as imagery of reproduction (Cinamon & Rich, 2010). The dual system puts many professional women in a fix where they are expected to combine their working roles and responsibilities with their traditional duties. In other words, employers expect same levels of innovativeness, creativity, and dedication from women as they demand from males, while at the same time the society expects high levels of commitments from women towards their traditional and cultural roles at the same time. This situation has created work-life imbalances in many households in Ghana. Whereas many employers pretend not to have noticed such difficulties with female workers, the society has also been silent on finding appropriate and comprehensive measures to address work-life imbalances associated with women.

The job roles of female administrators in public universities are such that they are less flexible and expected to remain at post throughout the working hours to be responding to routine and immediate or emergency needs of their departments and sections. However, those with children are expected to pick their wards from school within the non-flexible working hours. Those with children under the age of five years would have to improvise strategies of having the children engaged or taken care of by others, while they concentrate on their job roles. The situation subjects female administrators to strain and stress and affect their performance in both work and life domains. Nonetheless, there has not been any empirical work to investigate the impact of such unfavourable work-life situations on female administrators in public universities in Ghana as well as the effectiveness of the strategies adopted to ensure that they meet the demands from both work and life domains. This study sought to ascertain how female administrators in public universities were coping with the situation to balance their work-life roles and responsibilities to rise through the rungs of their profession.

1.2 Research objectives

The general objective of the study was to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The specific research objectives were as follows:

1. Investigate the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana.
2. Analyse the effects of work-life imbalance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana.
3. Examine the effects of the policies and strategies established by the Universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana.
4. Assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance.

1.3 Research questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
2. What are the effects of work-life imbalance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
3. What are the effects of the policies and strategies that have been established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana?

4. How effective are the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance?

1.4 Significance of the study

Work-life balance is of major concern to individuals, employers, the market, the state and society in general. The upcoming workforce and consumer market are reliant on females bearing and parents nurturing children. As a result, any attempt to investigate the appropriate measures to ensure a balance concerning the working life and personal or family life of employees is a step to safeguard the integrity of the future workforce. The study was imperative because of the changing trends in the demographics of employees in Ghana. Thus, the shift from the male being the sole breadwinner of the family to the situation where both parents engage in paid employment has made it extremely difficult to bring up children, while the job environment continues to be perceived as one for males. The study aimed at finding possible ways to incorporate the traditional and cultural roles and responsibilities of women into the formal working system to inform human resource management practices and policies.

Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) reported that work-life imbalance is the key cause of the frequent marriage breakdown in the country. This comes from the background of increasing women engagement in professional work with divided attention over their traditional roles in society. The study, therefore, aimed at exploring effective ways to ensure work-life balance in dual-income earner households or female-headed households that could enable them to advance in their professional career, while maintaining peace, discipline, and stability at home. It is expected that addressing

issues related to work-life balance through policies and structures would help stem the frequent breakdown of marriages in Ghana.

The findings of the study are expected to inform policymakers, public sector human resource managers, employers, traditional leaders, marriage partners, and civil society groups on their roles as well as the need to ensure work-life balance among female workers in the country. Further, the findings of the study will enrich the literature on work-life balance among female workers and form the basis for future studies in the subject area.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The focus of the study was on public universities in Ghana. Public universities were selected because they were considered to be the point of social change where their human resource management policies and practices combine traditional and modern values to create a unique working environment for employees. Female administrators in public universities were the focus of analysis for the study. The study wanted to understand how the female administrators are coping with their dual roles of work demands and personal or family demands. The study purposively sampled three public universities; UG, KNUST, and UCC based on their long years of existence and the presence of women caucuses to influence human resource management practices and policies. It was also because these universities largely dictate the pace in human resource management policies and practices in public universities in Ghana.

The other public universities strive to be at par with the three oldest universities. As a result, the three selected public universities represent the ultimate in terms of practices to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana. The contextual focus was on work-life balance. It is the connection between time and space of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour markets. Thus, work-life balance is being aware of different demands on time and energy saving one's ability to make choices in the allocation of time and energy knowing what values to apply.

1.6 Definition of terms

1. Administrative staff: Workers responsible for providing secretariat duties and managing the daily activities in terms of logistics provision, correspondence, and inter-sectoral collaborations to ensure the smooth running of the universities.
2. Work-life demands: Activities that demand an individual's attention and actions or efforts as a result of his or her professional duties or traditional and societal responsibilities.
3. Work-life balance: It is defined by Saad (2008) as a satisfactory level of involvement or fitness between the multiple roles in a person's life. Greenhaus and Powel (2012) also defined work-life balance as people's ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life. According to Kossek and Lautsch (2012), work-life balance constitutes the demarcation of equal or equitable time between the demands from work and life domains of an individual. However, in the

context of this study, work-life balance is defined as the extent to which an individual's effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are compatible with the individual's life role priorities at a given point in time.

1.8 Organisation of the study

The study was organised into six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study. The chapter provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. It also presents the significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and definition of terms.

The second chapter presents the literature review. The chapter reviewed both empirical and theoretical literature related to work-life balance. It included the concept of work-life balance, influencing elements in work-life balance as well as personal characteristics that contribute to issues related to work-life balance. In addition, methods used to manage work-life imbalances, and outcomes of work-life balance were considered. The chapter also reviewed the literature on theories underpinning work-life balance, work-life balance policies, and work-life balance and social and economic costs as well as the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology used. The chapter explains the research paradigm underlying the study, the research design and the unit of analysis. The chapter also elaborates on the research instruments used for the study and the ethical issues considered by the study.

The fourth chapter presented the results of the study. The chapter was organised under the objectives of the study which were; sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities, policies and strategies established by the Universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, and effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance. The chapter was further organised under themes and sub-themes based on the responses from the data collection exercise.

Chapter five was on the discussion of the results. The chapter was also organised based on the objectives which were; the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities, effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities, policies and strategies established by the Universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, and effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance.

Chapter six summarises the key findings of the study. It also draws conclusions and addresses the major contributions of the study. In addition, recommendations and suggestions for further studies are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on theoretical, conceptual and empirical works related to work-life balance. Some of the issues captured under the chapter were theoretical framework explaining work-life balance, the concept of work-life balance, personal features that contribute to concerns with work-life balance, factors influencing work-life balance, methods used to manage work-life imbalance, work-life balance outcomes, and work-life balance policies.

2.1 Theoretical framework

There are several theories that explain work-life balance. This study, however, adopted role scarcity theory, work-life border theory, and decision-making theory to explain work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Role scarcity theory was used to explain the multiple roles of professional women within the socio-cultural setting of Ghana, where much is expected of them from the family. Work-life border theory describes the creation of clear and distinct boundaries between workplace activities and family life in terms of time, attention and the expected deliverables as well as the conflicts that arise when one segment permeates the boundary of the other. The decision-making theory proposes that individuals make work-life decisions in the course of their lives and this affects their work and personal life domains.

2.1.1 Role scarcity theory

The role scarcity theory on work-life balance was propounded by Goode in 1960. It centers on the key belief that work and non-work domains are distinctive and separate. The theory focused on the relationship between work and non-work domains, how individuals behave in each domain and the associated outcomes of the work-life interface, such as stress and well-being (Carlson & Frone, 2003). According to Byron (2005), role scarcity theory states that based on a person's social identity or situation, he or she can put up different forms of behaviour. Two contrasting perspectives, scarcity, and expansion, have been used to study the involvement of individuals in multiple roles.

Role scarcity theory advocates that individuals have multiple roles, and each role brings demands and expectations that may conflict with each other. As individuals have limited resources, such as time and energy (Goode, 1960), involvement in multiple roles suggests competition for the scarce resources to meet the role demands, which results in conflict (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). A study by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) incorporated the literature on imbalance between the work role and family role (excluding the 'leisure' role) and proposed a model with three sources of conflict: time (time dedicated to one role makes it challenging to meet the requirements of another role), strain (strain from involvement in one role makes it difficult to engage in another role) and behaviour (behaviours required in one role make it tough to meet the requirements of another role).

Extending the theoretical model, Greenhaus and Powell (2012) established a model to explain antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict by explicitly differentiating

work to family conflict (i.e., work interfering with family) from family to work conflict (i.e., family interfering with work). In other words, work-life conflict is bi-directional. In other words, work can interfere with or spill over into life (for example, taking work-related calls while having dinner with friends) and life can interfere or spill over into with work (for example, leaving the office early to pick children from school or attend to sick relative). Spector, Cooper, Poelmans, Allen, O'Driscoll, Sanchez and Lu (2004) posited that work-life interferences are inevitable as work-life demands are flexible and require the attention of individuals at both expected and unexpected times. Byron (2005) suggested that the most critical element in the role scarcity theory is the strategy to manage the conflicts that arise from such interferences in work-life demands.

A review by Carlson and Frone (2003) on work-life interferences found a higher prevalence of work-to-life conflict than life-to-work, implying that life 'boundaries' are more permeable than work 'boundaries'. In other words, employees may recognise they have more flexibility in meeting the requirements of the family role than the work role and, therefore, are more likely to feel work meddling with life than the other way round. This was largely attributed to the strict application of rules on rewards and punishment system on working demands, which are mostly absent from life demands. Carlson and Frone (2003), therefore, considered work and life as distinct constructs. Nonetheless, the asymmetrical permeability of work and life boundaries does not mean that the effects of work-to-life conflict on workers' attitudes and behaviour are greater than the impact of life-to-work conflict.

Carlson and Frone (2003) proposed a new conceptual model of work-life conflict and recognised two types of interference between the work domain and the family

domain: internal and external interference. External interference is generated by a source external to the individual (for example, a doctor's appointment that causes an employee to leave work earlier). Internal interference is generated by self-inflicted demands (for example, getting obsessed with a sick child that hinders performance at work). According to Byron (2005), the antecedents of work-life role conflict are multiple and can be generated in the work domain (e.g., working hours or work responsibilities) and life domain (e.g., caregiving responsibilities). Antecedents of work-life conflict could also be related to an individual's personal or dispositional factors such as gender (Fu & Shaffer, 2001) or personality (Spector et al., 2004).

Relating the theory to work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana shows that such women have distinct activities in work and life domains which need to be balanced to avoid conflicts. Whereas more commitment is expected of them from their job front in terms of dedication to work, punctuality, regularity and hard work, much is expected of them from the family domain to take care of their children coupled with the socio-cultural roles towards the family. Bowes and Poelmans (2005) identified three variables: time, resources and energy as the factors which limited the effectiveness of the dual roles of women in work and non-work domains. However, a fourth element, space could also affect the effective execution of the dual roles from distinct domains. This is because people's workplaces may be far away from their homes and as a result, will be limited by distance to perform certain functions expected of them. The above factors may not permit female administrators to perform their dual roles effectively. As a result, Chang (2008) suggested that clear and distinct boundaries should be established between the two domains to help ensure a balanced work-life relationship.

Nonetheless, such demarcations to ensure work-life balance is explained by the work-life border theory by Clark (2000).

The theory further suggests that the performance of the roles in one domain may deprive the individual or female administrators in public universities the opportunity to perform the roles or attend to the demands in the other domain. This is because some of the demands from both domains are time-bound which suggests that any time the role demands conflict, one has to forgo one and attend to the other. The implication is that anytime there is a conflict of roles between job and family demands for female administrators in public universities, they have to forgo one and attend to the other. In addition, energy or strain is an important element in analysing the role scarcity theory among female administrators in public universities. The implication is those female administrators in public universities may not have enough energy to perform the roles from both domains effectively. This is because the demands from both domains are energy sapping and as a result, one may not have the energy to effectively perform the roles of the other. This could create work-life conflict as the inability to perform the roles in the other domain could create deficiencies that would affect the quality of performance from both domains. The behaviour of female administrators in public universities in terms of which of the domains they give much priority to is, very imperative as it shows where the pressure is maximum. The behaviour element in the theory also shows the strategies adopted by female administrators to help maintain a balance between the work and life domains based on the available resources and opportunities.

2.1.2 Work-life border theory

According to Charles and Harris (2007), a key premise of work-life research is the idea that work and life are separate. Work-life border theory by Clark (2000) addresses the integration and making less distinct borders in work and family life and contend that the management of work and family boundaries must be understood to study the work-life interface (Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas, 2005). The theory is based on the idea that work and private life are not detached, rather interdependent domains with 'flexible' and 'permeable' boundaries. Flexibility is defined as the degree to which the boundaries, in terms of space and time, are pliable, while permeability is the degree to which psychological concerns from another role can intrude into the role in which one is currently engaged (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). Both flexibility and permeability of work and life boundaries can help reduce one's work-life conflict by, for example, allowing him/her to arrive late to the office in order to accommodate a doctor's appointment. Flexible and permeable boundaries may also increase work-life conflict as they may generate confusion in an individual as to which role he/she should be engaged in at a particular point in time.

Work-life border theory addresses the ways in which people and organisations could actively manage the borders between work and non-work roles (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) and the cost of specific strategies for boundary management (Charles & Harris, 2007). Work-life border theory posits that there is a range from integration to separation of work and life roles (Ashforth et al., 2000), where integration refers to the blurring, and segmentation refers to the separation of those boundaries. For example, the boundaries between the work role and the home (or non-work) role may be more blurred for a homemaker than for an employee working in a traditional

office setting. A homeworker may then choose to segment or separate the work role from the home role by having a physical space at home solely dedicated to working.

As employees seek to manage multiple work and life roles, boundary management literature has examined employees' preferences for integration and segmentation in relation to the management of work and life roles (Matthews, Barnes-Farrell, & Bulger, 2010). Integrators are those individuals who prefer to integrate the work and life domains, while segmentors prefer to keep them separate with strong boundaries. Boundary management literature has examined the tactics individuals use to resolve conflicts between work and life and boundary violations (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). Kreiner et al. (2009: p704) defines border violations as 'behaviours, that causes a gap in the preferred work-home boundary'. Kossek and Michel (2010) explored the boundary of work strategies (social, temporal, physical, and communicative) that individuals can use to achieve the desired integration or segmentation of work and life boundaries and, thus, emphasised the active role individuals can play in reducing work-life conflict.

Another stream of boundary management research has highlighted the importance of fit amongst employees' preferences for segmentation or integration and the organisational policies (Rothbard et al., 2005). Rothbard et al. (2005) studied the fit between individuals' preferences for segmentation and their access to strategies that enable boundary management. They found that the desire of an individual for segmentation moderates the relationship between access to segmenting (e.g., flextime) or integrating (e.g., onsite childcare) policies and job attitudes (organisational commitment and job satisfaction). For example, people who wanted segmentation

reported being less committed to their organisation and less satisfied with their jobs when they had more access to integrating policies.

Work-life border theory is pertinent to a range of flexible working options that are commonly implemented in organisations to help employees manage competing demands from work and personal life, such as flexible hours, job sharing, and homeworking (Matthews et al., 2010). These options may increase the employees' perception of control in creating their ideal degree of segmentation or integration (Kossek & Michel, 2010); homeworking, in particular, offers high levels of autonomy over task scheduling. At the same time, homeworking may lead to a blurring of the boundaries between work and private life and increase work-life conflict (Rantanen et al., 2011). According to Poelmans and Caligiuri (2008), work-life border theory expands role theory and puts emphasis on an individual's agency in managing the boundaries between work and life.

In relating work-life border theory to the study topic, it explains the need for female administrators in public universities to draw boundaries between the work domain and non-work domain, and adopt strategies to manage the interferences. It also shows that institutions could also support women with special policies to help manage their work-life conflicts effectively. In other words, the implementation of certain welfare policies by public universities could help improve the flexibility for female administrators to effectively meet the demands of the two domains. In addition, the formalisation of certain structures and systems in the country such as the hiring of nannies could help enable females with busy working schedules to have the demands from the family domains supported and addressed. These policies are important because it has been observed that demands from work and life domains are not

mutually exclusive but rather permeable. As a result, there is a need for some flexibility for female administrators to be able to adjust their work-life imbalances to satisfy the demands from the two domains. However, the advancement in technology and upscale use of internet facilities makes life domains more permeable with workplace activities. As a result, Greenhaus and Powel (2012) recommended that critical decisions have to be taken as to how and when to split one's activities between work and life domains. Thus, the decision-making framework in the work-life literature takes into account an individual's active role in managing his/her work-life interface. The next theory explains the decision-making process critical for ensuring work-life balance.

2.1.3 Decision-process theory

Poelmans (2005) propounded the decision-process theory, which suggests that individuals come up with work-life decisions in the course of their lives and this affects their work and private life spheres. Following the decision-process theory and concentrating on the interdependence of roles in decision-making, researchers have observed the process in which private life factors impact on work-related decisions and came up with a framework to explain these relationships (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012).

Powell and Greenhaus (2012) highlighted that previous researchers have not scrutinized how the impact of family conditions on work-related decisions may differ by life stage, signifying a gap in the work-life literature. Their assumption was that this effect would be stronger among workers when they are about to start childbearing (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012) most people may not sacrifice work to benefit their family

domain. Greenhaus and Powell (2012) suggested that the particular life stage an individual is can affect the work-life decision he or she makes and this will impact the work-life interface. The decision-making process complements the standpoint that stresses on the environment influencing the work-life interface by showing how employees can impact their environment.

Relating this theory to the study topic indicates that critical factors influence the decision processes of female administrators in public universities. Thus, differences in the life stage of female administrators could result in different work-life conflicts, decision making outcomes and strategies to balance work-life interferences. Accordingly, organisational policies for ensuring work-life balance among female employees should consider life stages as an essential element and make provision for women in the various life stages. In other words, the decisions taking by female administrators to address their work-life conflicts are critically influenced by a number of factors, including life stages, and the availability of resources and opportunities. Organisational welfare policies present the needed opportunities for female administrators to take some critical decisions about the mode of balancing the demands from work and life domains without compromising on the quality of services delivered from each of them.

2.2 Conceptual framework of factors influencing work-life balance among female administrators

This section presents the conceptual framework for the study. It explains how women could effectively manage their work-life roles and demands. Figure 1, sought to incorporate the uniqueness of the socio-cultural setting of Ghana and its influence on

the demands and expectations on women, and its rippling effects on work-life balance. It deviates a bit from the advanced system, where formal structures and systems exist to support professional women to ensure effective work-life balance. Figure 1 shows that work and life roles and activities are iterative in a continuum as stated by the work-life border theory, where each one influences the other. Work demands are largely shaped by the public sector human resource management policies detailing out the expected roles and responsibilities of employees in an organisation. The role scarcity theory explains that individuals may not have the time and energy to effectively perform their roles from both work and life domains and as such, require some human resource management policies to promote flexibility and permeability of roles to enable people to meet the demands from the two domains.

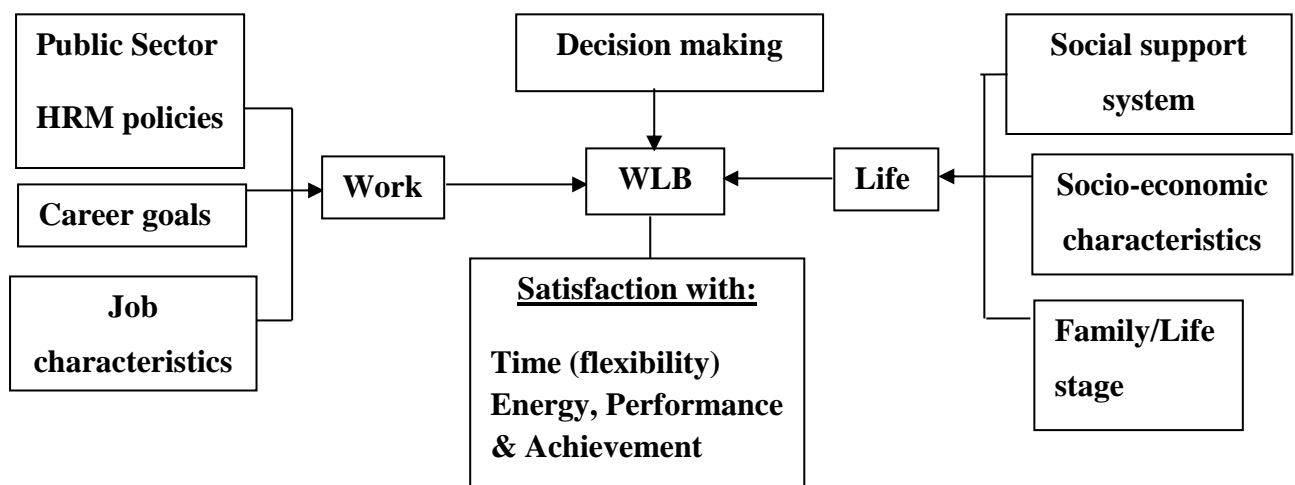


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for managing work-life balance among female administrators

Source: Author's construct (2017)

Such policies define the number of leave days available to workers in a year, the number of maternal leave days for women and other flexible working conditions to

enable workers to balance their working roles with family activities. However, McCarthy et al. (2010) reported that the utilisation of work-life balance policies by workers is partly influenced by their perceptions and career development goals. Employees who perceive organisational work-life balance policies as compatible with their career development goals adopt them and vice versa as described by the theory of decision-making process that organisational policies influence people decisions about the approaches to adopt to ensure a balance between their work and life demands.

Another element that influences the working environment of the worker is the job characteristics. Job characteristics include the operational approach of an organisation and operational structures. The operational approach considers the performance target system: i.e. whether performance is measured per the time one spends at work or operational targets. Time targets mostly compel workers to overstay at their workplaces to demonstrate their commitments to their superiors, thereby creating an imbalance with their family demands. In addition, operational targets could compel workers to work at home, which disrupts the boundary between working time and family time as well as influence one's expected roles in the family.

Operational structures, as part of job characteristics, examine working characteristics where some employees could step in for others when they are absent without any serious disruptions in operational processes. It also shows the supervisory roles in helping workers to manage their work and family demands to avoid conflicts. These elements (Public sector HRM policies, career goals, and job characteristics) largely define the working environment of workers.

On the other hand, life or family environment in relation to maintaining work-life balance is largely influenced by the available social support systems, socio-economic characteristics and life stages of workers (Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). The social support system refers to the availability of family support (spouse and relatives) to help perform some of the expected functions, house help or hired labour, and availability and accessibility (distance and affordability) to the education system (creche, pre-school and other levels) to enable workers to concentrate on their job roles.

According to McElwain et al. (2005), socioeconomic characteristics of workers that influence their work-life relationships include gender, age, income levels, social class, job positions, marital status, and level of education. These elements influence work-life balance because they all come with different roles and expectations in family life as well as present various levels of resources to enable workers to meet demands from both work and life domains. Life stage refers to the complex association between age, number of children, marital status, ages of children, and career development plan. Thus, the attention and quality of time expected of workers in various life stages are different, which could explain the behaviour in work-life balance.

Work-life balance is an interplay of managing the demands from both the working and life environments. This involves a decision-making process to draw borders between work and life domains in terms of the strategies to manage them, time spent, energies exerted and achievements from them. Thus, work-life balance is measured in terms of the satisfaction an individual derives from his or her management of the two domains with respect to the flexibility, amount and quality of time used to perform the

expected functions, as well as the satisfaction with the performance or achievements from both domains.

Satisfaction with time and energy spent on both domains emanates from the role scarcity theory where workers abilities to meet demands from both domains are limited by time and energy. Work-life balance is, therefore, expected to be achieved when a supportive working environment through HRM policies, compatibility with career goals and favourable job characteristics coupled with a supportive life or family environment through the effective management of social support system, and roles expected of their socio-economic background and family/life stages, and within a carefully thought through procedure to manage time and energy to achieve desirable performances from both domains. The framework shows that an individual's decisions and choices between working factors and life elements play a major role or intermediary in achieving work-life balance.

2.2 Concept of work-life balance

Work-life balance, largely, is defined by Kossek and Lautsch (2012) as an agreeable level of participation or fitness between the multiple roles in a person's life. Even though definitions and explanations differ, work-life balance is mostly linked with stability or maintaining a general balance in life (Shobha, 2015). The study of work-life balance concerns an individual's capability to manage concurrently the multi-faceted roles in life. This shows that work-life balance is subjective and pertains to the perceptions of the individuals involved, in terms of how comfortable they feel in performing their multiple roles divided between work and life domains. Even though work-life balance has conventionally been presumed to involve devoting same

amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, the notion has however been perceived now as very complex and has been advanced to include other components, including:

- i. Time balance: involves the amount of time given to work and non-work roles;
- ii. Involvement balance: refers to the level of commitment to, work and non-work roles; and
- iii. Satisfaction balance or the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

Shobha (2015) emphasised that the model of work-life balance, with time, involvement and satisfaction components, brings about a more inclusive focus. For instance, someone who works three weeks in a month and devotes the remaining days in the month to his or her family may not be balanced with respect to time (i.e. equal measures of work and life), however, may be equally dedicated to the work and non-work roles and at the same time be very satisfied with the level of involvement in both work and family roles. An individual who works 58 hours a week might be considered as not having work-life balance in terms of time. Nevertheless, the individual who works only a few hours a week would also experience imbalance in terms of time, however, may be satisfied with more involvement in paid work. On another wavelength, someone who works 35 hours a week might not enjoy his or her job and may use the rest of the time pursuing favourite past times. Such a person may be time-balanced but unbalanced in terms of involvement and satisfaction. The implication of the above examples is that the assessment of work-life balance needs to be considered from different viewpoints.

The concept of work-life balance involves how individuals perform their job roles and personal duties in a manner that there is no overlap. (Estes & Michael, 2005; Konrad & Mangel, 2000). As it is a broad area of study, therefore, research work has been conducted to investigate the concept under different lenses, including information systems, gender-based study paradigms (Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004), business management (Konrad & Mangel, 2000), psychology, sociology and particularly in the field of management (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott & Pettit, 2005). Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcherr, and Pruitt (2002) postulate that the development in technology has created an avenue for teleworking and freelancing modes of work engagement. This has erased earlier thoughts about work-life balance as unacceptable.

Powell and Greenhaus (2012) argued that there is a single widely accepted definition of what constitutes a work-life balance practice for a worker. The term normally refers to either benefits agreed on by employers, remote working options, over-time opportunities, leaves and holidays, job-sharing opportunities, employees' personal health options, and other incentives that are given by employers to ensure an employee's psychological, spiritual and physical well-being (Estes & Michael, 2005). The basis for supporting such activities is normally linked with the claim that there is a connection between the work-life balance of a worker and organisational effectiveness and office dynamism (Allen, 2001). According to Allen (2001), research suggests that work-life balance of a worker induces an element of performance within his or her particular organisation, yet, there is no specific generalisation presented yet about how this can be achieved.

Allen (2001) noted that work-life balance of workers contributes positively in reducing workload per head in an organisation, improves the productivity of workforce (Wise & Bond, 2003), and helps in developing a motivational organisational culture where the labour force is not fatigued while extra work is not seen as 'load'. In like manner, in contrast to perfect settings, a work-life imbalance comes about when an employee is unable to balance one or both domains of his/her life. The effect in this case includes, but unlimited to, lower job satisfaction, less dedication and commitment to work and organisation (De Cieri et al., 2005), random schedule and absenteeism (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Allen, 2001), decreased workplace performance and contribution (Estes & Michael, 2005), biological dysfunctions and psychological stress and lower socialisation trends (Wayne et al., 2004). These results reveal a negative impact on organisational performance, disrupting the process of development in the workplace.

To provide a more suitable context to place work-life balance, the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics (Clarke, 2001) categorised five key developments that will affect individuals and organizations during the 21st century. Among these trends was the movement to accomplish work-life balance. The U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics emphasized that the variations in traditional gender roles, together with dual career families and single heads of families, have aggravated the lack of balance. According to Clark (2001), 87% of individuals in the U.S. would prefer working harder for establishments that would support with work-family issues in the 21st century. Recent census statistics in the U.S. indicate two-career families are 64% of the populace, and single-parent families' account for 27%, while two-career families and single-parent families accounted for 91% of the U.S. staff (Kersley, Alpin, Forth,

Bryson, Bewley, Dix & Oxenbridge, 2005). The subject of work-life balance has been a continuous topic of debate in the academic and professional circles for the past three or four decades. Nonetheless, according to Kersley et al. (2005), the subject has not been incorporated fully in most of the key corporate circles due to the ever-changing corporate dynamics.

In a broad integration of theory, practice, and context, as well as the multiple viewpoints through which the problem can be seen, Thompson, Beauvais and Lyness (1999) also observed the concept of work-life balance. They expressed the main meanings of the concept and debated the inherent role of conflict in coping with multiple roles. Thompson et al. outlined three main types of conflict:

- i. time-based conflict: which priority, work or life, receives great attention,
- ii. strain-based conflict: the personal understanding and emotional (internal) strain between work and life, and
- iii. Behavior-based conflict: the process of selecting one type of priority over the other” (p. 182).

In addition to the conflict theories for work-life balance, they suggested coping strategies for achieving balance by “modifying the stressful situation, changing the meaning of the stressful situation, managing the symptoms of stress, reactive coping (trying to do it all), and obtaining support from friends, family, co-workers, and others” (p. 182). Thompson et al. also suggested strategies for policy development for establishments comprising time-based approaches, information-based approaches, money-based approaches, and direct services. In addition, they deliberated on the

formal and informal barriers to work-life policy within organisations and the approaches to overcoming these obstacles.

2.3 Characteristics that contribute to issues with work-life balance

Work and family are closely interrelated domains of human life (Estes & Michael, 2005). Most often, meeting the demands from work and family can be very perplexing and stressful which can lead to problems with work-life balance (Md-Sidin, Sambasivan & Ismail, 2008). Most stress research has observed the relationship between stressors (e.g. role conflict, ambiguous roles, lack of perceived control) and effects (e.g. job dissatisfaction, worry, psychological symptoms, non-attendance, and job performance) (Kang, Rice, Park, Turner-Henson & Downs, 2010). There are many personal factors that generate stress which can lead to an imbalance between work and life. They comprise gender, marital status, parental status, family responsibility, age, personality differences, and education level.

2.3.1 Personal Characteristics

Gender is a subject that has been broadly studied in work-life balance literature. Warren (2004) clarified that females with household duties have taken on part-time jobs in order to preserve their economic expertise, as a secondary source of revenue and to help sustain interest outside the home. Nevertheless, there is also a subsequent imbalance between their work and family obligations and duties (Drew, 2005). This is mainly because females typically assume the bulk of childbearing responsibilities (Porter & Ayman, 2010). This role can impact both role stress and negative attitudes at work (e.g. role conflict, job burnout, and dissatisfaction) and are positively linked

with interferences at home (Estes & Michael, 2005). Males and females prioritize work and family roles in a different way; men naturally sacrifice more at home and females often sacrifice more at work for home obligations (Haworth & Lewis, 2005; Jennings & McDougald, 2007). It has been indicated that females' level of involvement at work did not differ from men's, though they did acknowledge a certain level of concern with household concerns at work (Hall & Richter, 1988). Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga (2002) found that females' job satisfaction was adversely affected by work-life imbalance in the course of their lives whereas men showed adverse outcomes later in their profession.

It is opined that married persons consider their personal lives more (Martins et al., 2002). It has been expressed that workers with families frequently experience difficulty in separating work and home borders (Hall & Richter, 1988; Jennings & McDougald, 2007), which can impact adversely on work and family life. Md-Sidin, et al. (2008) stated that married persons encounter more work-life imbalance than those who are unmarried. Md-Sidin et al. (2008) further explained in their study that married employees are sometimes torn between attending to their working demands or family demands, especially when the timing for performing such roles clashes.

The degree of balance that individuals experience can be determined by whether the person has children or not (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). One's parental status also indicates the level of importance the individual places on the role of family (Blau, Ferber & Winkler, 1998; Chong & Ma, 2010). Family duties such as household time demands, family duty level, household income, spousal support, and life course stage have been indicated to be sources of work-life stress (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Dual income earner families who have no children report greater work-life balance,

while both single and married parents report considerably lower levels of perceived balance in relation to single, nonparents (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001).

Causes of the level of work-life stress that individual's experience has been recorded as age and lifecycle (Wang, Lawler & Shi, 2010). It has been noted that there has been an alteration in lifestyle preferences between current generations. Those born after 1969, or "Generation X", are said to select a lifestyle that includes non-work time, regardless of other duties, therefore may actively seek establishments who offer work-life balance provisions (Maxwell, 2005). Tausig and Fenwick (2001) reported that older persons report better success with work-life balance. Haworth and Lewis (2005) suggested that in later life when individuals have attained self-actualization in their professions, they will not be as understanding concerning work-life imbalance because at that point sacrificing the extra work does not seem meaningful.

Jennings and McDougall (2007) established that some personality differences predispose people to work-life balance issues. The propensity to feel guilty, to be loyal towards others, a lack of understanding towards people and the need and desire for "being there" for close family members and one's inability to manage a new state has been said to influence the degree to which a person experiences work-life balance issues (Bekker, Willemse & De Goeij, 2010). According to Rothbard (2001), an individual's emotional reaction to a task is a crucial indicator manipulating their interpersonal accessibility and emotional presence in a different role. Persons with high negative affectivity tend to encounter more negative interaction between work and family (Bekker et al., 2010). Individuals who are intrinsically oriented are presumed to concentrate on developing and realizing their inherent abilities. Further, they are more likely to gratify their fundamental emotional needs for competence,

autonomy, and relatedness and thus perform optimally (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste & Has De Witte, 2010).

According to Jennings and McDougald (2007), intrinsic job standards communicate openness to change – growth, the pursuit of independence, interest, and ingenuity in work. Following intrinsic life value orientations confidently, envisages well-being and optimal performance (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). On the other hand, extrinsically oriented persons assume an outward-oriented focus and try to impress others by obtaining external signs of significance (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Extrinsic work values focus on how job security and income provide employees with the necessities needed for general security and preservation of order in their lives (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). A worker who possesses extrinsic work value knowledge can be related to lesser job vitality, job satisfaction, and work commitment and higher fatigue (Van den Broeck et al., 2010).

Chong and Ma (2010) observed that when one attains higher education and gains extensive working experience, it could make the person become confident and have increased self-efficacy. Work-life balance is better amongst individuals with a high qualification or less, and worse amongst those who possess a lower qualification (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). Those presently attending school also tend to report less balance (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001).

According to Haworth and Lewis (2005), a lot of people find themselves quarantined from kinfolk and relaxation activities due to the growing nature of extended job times.

A great number of persons who experience issues balancing life demands also experience emotional fatigue which has been defined as “a state caused by psychological and emotional demands made on people” which is when a person is

facing overpowering demands on their time and energy (Boles, Johnston & Hair, 1997). Rothbard (2001) postulates that when individuals feel negative about work-related stress, they self-regulate their response. To achieve this, individuals tend to experience dwindling energy levels and which can negatively impact on household roles (Rothbard, 2001).

2.3.2 Work-related variables that can add to work-life stress

A great number of workers are undergoing extended work time, increased assignments, constantly varying job practices and job anxieties (Haworth & Lewis, 2005). Extended work time has been linked with great levels of nervousness and decreased levels of job fulfillment (when workers cannot trust their colleagues to perform their jobs effectively) (Chong & Ma, 2010). According to Gilbreath (2004), the health of employee's not only by a job's physical setting but also by its psychological setting. It has been indicated that stress, (Judge & Colquitt, 2004), has a direct effect on job satisfaction (Maxwell, 2005). People who experience prolonged work pressure are positively linked with a heightened risk of atherosclerotic illness (Kang, et al., 2010).

The administrative milieu comprises the collaboration between employees, taking risks orientation, and a trusting and caring environment (Chong & Ma, 2010). Work domain factors such as work autonomy, timetable flexibility, hours worked, the extent of social support provided by overseers and co-workers, the availability of family-friendly job strategies directly impact work-life balance (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Kang et al. (2010) indicate that employees who work in job environments that demand interaction with other colleagues, added job roles, or professional duties for

others are more likely to experience greater numbers of work-life balance issues. Furthermore, persons working in an executive status profession report greater levels of imbalance between work and their personal life (Kang et al., 2010). Issues about impartiality can also affect the attitudes and how employees behave causing employees to feel they will be unable to manage with work expectations (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). Judge and Colquitt (2004) continued that once workers notice that they have been treated unjustly, they complain of higher levels of misery, outrage, and bitterness.

- i. **Work Demands:** A lot of organisations are coming up with novel expertise and working practices and are thus requesting greater flexibility to counteract the pressures of rivalry (Haworth & Lewis, 2005). Extra work hours deduct from home time, whereas work overload may result in exhaustion, worry or other adverse psycho-physiological costs that can impact the quality of home and family life (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills & Smeaton, 2003).
- ii. **Autonomy:** Persons who do not have control over their jobs often report high work overload and experience interference between work and family duties (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Hall & Richter, 1988; Jennings & McDougald, 2007). People who have low job control are connected with increased truancy rates due to sickness, mental wellbeing issues and coronary heart disease (Bond & Bunce, 2001). When employees are in charge of their jobs it helps to improve stress-related consequences, like lowered fretfulness levels, emotional distress, fatigue, irritability, emotional health complaints, among others (Bond & Bunce, 2001). Once the individual is in charge of working situations and scope for social relations increases, it provides workers the chance to engage in extra-role behaviours or organisational citizenship actions (Baral & Bhargava 2010).

iii. Technology: Technology can help and obstruct work-life balance. Developments in technology have enabled workers to make headway in conducting business, clients get help easily, procedures are more efficient and employees are more accessible. According to Maxwell and McDougall (2004), developments in technology have made working twenty-four hours in a day possible to workers. This has resulted in workers carrying work outside the office to complete. Engaging in work outside office hours has brought about increased meddling with workers' home lives. Employees are expected to use any time available to complete job tasks (Baral & Bhargava, 2010). As a result of technology, employers do not always recognize the personal time of employees.

Job motivation refers to a group of energetic forces that stems from inside and outside a person's being, to bring about work-related performance, and to define its form, course, intensity, and duration (Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) emphasised that people can be motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic motivation mirrors the innate propensity to pursue innovation and trials, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to discover, and to teach (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, denotes the performance of an action in order to attain some separable effect (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). According to Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, and Grouios (2002), motivation is a crucial factor in a person's decision-making process.

Performance standards and targets have been researched and used as a technique to advance the performance of workers. Chong and Ma (2010) reported that suitable behaviours and performance standards are distinct within the job setting. According to Baral and Bhargava (2010), the capability and support received in meeting

performance opportunities enhance the employees' self-efficacy. Chong and Ma (2010) recognized a relation between overseer's behaviour and worker's performance. Performance can be considerably improved when the supervisor provides the employees with valuable resources and favourable feedback (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis & Strange, 2002). Performance can also be improved when workers value their job setting and have understanding managers with whom they can relate with and have poise (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010).

Organisational values can also bring about greater performance standards. Organisational beliefs relate to the traditions, standards, attitudes, and philosophies that are shared among noteworthy groups in an organisation (van Beek & Gerritsen, 2010). Organisational values give workers a sense of belonging and course to follow (Martel, 2002). Porter and Ayman (2010) recommended that work-life balance packages cannot bring desired results except the organisational ethos supports the use of work-life balance programs. Organisational culture is a significant feature in the realization of workers achieving work-life balance. Once the institutional philosophy does not support it, workers will be reluctant in using the programs (Maxwell, 2005). Being committed to meaningful objectives suggests ethical reasons that can nurture fulfillment even when there are no economic or interpersonal advantages (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Workers may find employment in an organisation with a robust belief system satisfying, although other facets of their everyday involvements are not.

Haworth and Lewis (2005) argue that several work-life issues are the outcome of organizational and societal constraints. Godbey, Crawford, and Shen (2010) clarify that there are three kinds of constraints: administrative, intrapersonal and relational. Organizational limitations are outside limitations related to the accessibility of

resources requisite for participating in activities (Alexandris et al., 2002). Intrapersonal constraints are principally concerned with subjective assessments of appropriateness and importance of participation in a given activity by the individual (Godbey et al., 2010). Godbey et al. (2010) continued that the basis for defining such importance may be emotional, social and or hereditary disposition. Social constraints must be operationalized within a given culture. In one culture, belief systems may play a vital part in influencing who can engage in action while in another, it may play no part (Godbey et al., 2010).

Fruitful negotiation of these limitations must be directed in a chronological way (Godbey et al., 2010). The limitations a person comes across can take any posture subject to the individuals peculiar difficulties, comprising one's attitudes, interests or degree of involvement, related information and abilities, locality or ease of access of amenities, social network, cultural background among others (Godbey et al., 2010). It could be debated that some kinds of limitations can affect motivation, which can impact participation (Alexandris et al., 2002).

There are three main forms of work-family conflict and they are time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behavior-based conflict (Porter & Ayman, 2010). Time-based conflict is competition over time spent in diverse roles, such as job schedules, labour orientation, marriage, children and spouse job schedules may all lead to pressures to participate comprehensively in the job role or the family duties (Gilbreath, 2004). Conflict is experienced when these time pressures are mismatched with the demands of the other role (Bloom & Reenen, 2006). Similar to time-based conflict, quantitative role overload is defined as the conflict between administrative

demands and the time allotted to the employee by the organisation to fulfill those demands (Godbey et al., 2010).

Strain-based conflict is job stressors that can yield pressure signs like rigidity, nervousness, exhaustion, depression, indifference and touchiness, these signs of worry occur when strain in a duty role impacts on an individual's performance in an added role (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2010). According to Bloom and Van Reenen (2006), behaviour-based conflicts are definite patterns of in role behaviour that may be incompatible with expectations concerning behaviour in another and if an individual is unable to acclimatize, then they are very likely to experience conflict between the roles. Godbey et al. (2010) indicated that work-family conflict can best be understood hypothetically as a form of a stress reaction to role overload and overlapping non-work and work demands (van Beek & Gerritson, 2010). Many workers take work home to complete and this has made unclear the boundary between work and family (Baral & Bhargava, 2010). It has been established that work-specific role stressors serve as predictors of turnover intentions, job burnout, job dissatisfaction, and physical symptoms (Judge & Colquitt, 2004).

2.4 Organisational strategies to manage work-life stress

Work-life balance does not solely concern being engaged on the job for a few hours, it is now multi-dimensional and can involve the length of time people spend at their jobs, the time individuals perform their job tasks, the place they work at, developing employees through training to enable them to cope with the imbalance better, giving backup support and breaks from the job (Maxwell, 2005). Several strategies are available that employees employ to deal with work-life stress, for example, flexibility, social support and access to resources. The duty of the overseer is crucial in

expanding these strategies. Overseers are in constant touch with workers and can therefore manage, train and tutor, passing on the values, spirit, and pride of their institutions (Martel, 2002).

The intensified loads on organisations necessarily require a versatile employee (Beltrán-Martín, Roca-Puig, Escrig-Tena & Bou-Llugar, 2008). Flexibility is the capacity to react efficiently to variations (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Kara, Kayis, and O’Kane (2002) recommended that the proportions of cost, excellence, time, and flexibility cannot be exchanged. Nonetheless, they must be concurrently prioritised. Porter and Ayman (2010) recounted that when workers were questioned, they stated flexibility as the most appropriate quality of a job setting. There are varied types of flexibility. Job flexibility is concerned with the skill of the system to cope with changes in jobs which the system will process (Kara et al., 2002).

Porter and Ayman (2010) went on to separate work flexibility into place flexibility (the venue an employee works), time flexibility (the duration of work), and timing flexibility (time an employee decides to work). Functional flexibility discusses employees’ ability to work on various tasks, under varied circumstances and the cost and time desired to mobilise workers to take up new responsibilities which are low (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008). Work-group flexibility is the group’s capacity to fine-tune its activities to varying situations such that these adjustments do not result in disorganisation (Kara et al., 2002). Human resource flexibility states the extent to which workers possess skills and behavioural repertoires that can provide an organization with choices to pursue strategic alternatives (Beltran-Martín et al., 2008). Workers like these, mobilised through suitable human resource practices, constitute a source of competitive advantage (Beltran-Martín et al., 2008). Kara et al. (2002)

discussed flexibility with respect to vigour and dexterity. Vigour concerns the ability to be in a certain state regardless of a change, and dexterity is the ability to bring about modification instead of reacting to it (Kara et al., 2002).

Some features have been termed as being able to increase flexibility in the organisation that management can regulate. They are organisational structure flexibility, information system flexibility, technological flexibility, and human resource flexibility (Kara et al., 2002). According to Porter and Ayman (2010), organisations have begun offering workers, improved autonomy with regard to work schedules as an incentive of employment, in other words, workers have more flexibility in deciding when they will work. There are four types of flexibility that an employee can engage in, with respect to their employment: training flexibility, pay flexibility, flexibility to take an unchallenging job, and flexibility to accept a job for which one is over-qualified (Van den Broeck, et al., 2010).

Porter and Ayman (2010) mentioned that once staff are aware that they have adequate flexibility in what, when, and where tasks can be accomplished, they testified greater levels of work-life balance. Beltrán-Martín et al. (2008) noted that as workers indicate flexibility on their jobs, by demonstrating flexibility in abilities and behaviours, the institution's positive outcomes rise. Gilbreath (2004) clarifies that it is imperative to give recognition to the duty of the overseer due to the fact that they can be a key influence on a worker's work-life balance. Overseers daily interact with workers and are therefore better placed to manage, train and mentor, transferring the beliefs, of their institutions (Martel, 2002). A manager can help alleviate the damaging effects of an institutions duty stressors and work-life balance issues (Bloom & Van Reenen,

2006). White et al. (2003) established that supervisory fairness is becoming progressively important as an influence on spillover between work and home.

Social support refers to a relaxed social network that affords persons with understanding, hands-on experience, and evaluation (Md-Sidin, et al., 2008). Improved social support (both by work and non-work sources) is linked to better health and well-being (Md-Sidin, et al., 2008). Overall health discusses satisfaction, resulting from optimum performance (McDowell, 2010). Persons with diverse sources of support (e.g. financial resources, co-workers, and community) generate a shielding result that helps persons cope with work-family conflict (Martins et al., 2002; Cinamon & Rich, 2010). Social support is a vital resource or a coping strategy that is able to decrease the undesirable impacts of stressors and work-family conflict (Md-Sidin et al., 2008).

In like manner, managers can create an enabling work environment to ease the level of pressure in the lives of their personnel. This can be done through formally recognising the significance of a worker's family by assisting with other activities not directly connected to professional achievement (Mani, 2013). Martins et al. (2002) noted that it is very crucial for bosses who would like to develop inspired and dedicated staff to comprehend the causal aspects that can impact their employees' fulfillment in their job. With an increasing number of women in the workforce, Maxwell and McDougall (2004) found that organisations are more likely to offer more work-life balance programmes due to the individual's home responsibilities. Meyer et al. (2004) suggested that managers must build job situations that are more helpful to employees' private lives by fashioning flexible work timetables.

In offering work-life balance programmes, there is a great likelihood that employees will benefit (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) indicate that caring work-family environments have a better outcome on work-family imbalance than official family-friendly organisational strategies. The manager can define how satisfying a job can be by influencing how challenging the job can be (Gilbreath, 2004). Support from supervisors has been described to lessen work role conflict, role vagueness, and subsequent work-family conflict (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). The manager can also regulate how much independence the worker has in the job and the sense of accomplishment attained from executing job tasks (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). McDonald and Hite (2008) posited that a supervisor who is accommodating can considerably increase job satisfaction and the establishment's bottom line when imbalances occur between family life and work.

Those who are managers in dual-income marriages probably may be very cooperative when job and family life clash (Poelmans & Caligiuri, 2008). The link between front line supervisors and their own bosses is crucial and has been revealed as the most important variable clarifying front line supervisor's own levels of emotional commitment and job satisfaction (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). According to Mordi et al. (2010), when managers are seen to be supporting workers, this enhanced workers' dedication to the establishment and minimized the number of stress levels and work-life imbalance reported (Cinamon & Rich, 2010; Judge & Colquitt, 2004). Mothers who work with compassionate supervisors report being less ill-tempered, experience low levels of tension, are less fatigued between job and family duties (Moore, 2007). Baral and Bhargava (2010) clarified that a manager's support enlarges a worker's psychological resource grounds, for example, increased confidence, which can improve performance in the household domain.

Staff come across many causes of pressure daily. One persistent problem facing organisations at present is preventing attrition of staff (Porter & Ayman, 2010). Gilbreath (2004) recognized connections between the office psychosocial situations and health costs. Institutions experience the impact on their finances due to the high costs of workers health insurance. In a situation where stressors cannot be decreased, institutions are endeavouring to put in mechanisms to raise worker's coping resources (Chong & Ma, 2010). With improved coping resources, staff are better placed to handle these demanding circumstances (Chong & Ma, 2010).

Coping resources are said to be individual qualities and abilities that are regarded as beneficial in many respects and are linked with effective coping behaviour (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). According to Godbey et al. (2010), the recognized link between job stressors and the well-being of workers' demands an apparent moral responsibility on an employer's part to offer a congenial environment. Work-life balance programmes are used by organisations to aid employees to manage work-life stress, with the aim that employees' work and personal lives can be reconciled (McCarthy, Darcy & Grady, 2010). McCarthy et al. (2010) defined work-life balance programmes as job conditions that help staff balance non-work demands and work. There are various facets of work-life balance programmes, such as flexible time provisions, for example, providing back-up support, time management training, telecommuting and shift work breaks from work (Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Maxwell & McDougall, 2004) compressed workweeks and job sharing (Porter & Ayman, 2010).

McCarthy et al. (2010) explained that an office is regarded as "family-friendly" when there are a number of strategies or policies that aid workers with children. The particular areas of employer participation in work-family matters are the provision of

child care options, the use of benefits which improve staff flexibility such as job sharing, flexible time, voluntary shifts to part-time work, flexible leaves and work-at-home options (Johnson, 2004). Allen (2001) postulates that the shared objective for managers who engage in the implementation of work-life balance programmes is to help staff achieve greater levels of fulfillment with both their home life and work.

Organisations that can assist staff cope with their varied duties and its attendant stress should have a competitive edge by decreasing health expenses but preserving high levels of job performance (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). They assist to ease pressure and make workers feel valued, save workers time and reduce turnover (Ulshafer, Potgeisser & Lima, 2005). Porter and Ayman (2010) established that an important positive relationship is present between satisfaction and organisational commitment and intents to stay. Work-life balance is an imperative area of public sector human resource management. Actually, it is one of the top three difficulties facing human resources divisions (McCarthy et al., 2010). McDowell (2010) suggests that organisations need to establish helpful strategies in place that afford bosses some level of self-rule and flexibility to cater for personal concerns.

A precise needs analysis with full participation from organizational members is a vital component of responsiveness to work-family issues (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). The records on employee's demographics and work-family concerns may be essential to assist top-level supervisor's detecting work-life issues as it has been significantly and positively related to all types of work-family responsiveness (Ulshafer et al., 2005; Judge & Colquitt, 2004).

2.5 Individual strategies for managing work-life stress

There are a number of strategies researchers have reported on, which workers can use to reduce the volume of work-life stress they experience. Some of these strategies comprise reward, segmentation, accommodation, one job/one career strategy, delaying having children and engaging help at home (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Segmentation is the separation of work and family (Jennings & McDougald, 2007) so that the two spheres are not in conflict (Rothbard, 2001). Compensation is when an individual is disgruntled with one sphere, they compensate by over investing in the other sphere (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Accommodation provisions arise when persons become less entangled in one domain to satisfy the demands of the other domain (Rothbard, 2001). One job/one-career strategy refers to the situation of couples; one companion takes on a more challenging career while the other takes a less challenging job to fulfill family demands (Gilbreath, 2004). Some couples delay having children to enable them to pay attention to their jobs and have fewer demands at home while they build up their profession (Hewlett, 2002). Some individuals engage the services of the house helps to reduce the workload at home or seek support from household members (Ulshafer et al., 2005).

A person's coping style, how he or she copes with demanding events, as threatening appraised external stresses can help a person manage work-life balance concerns (Bekker et al., 2010). Three forms of coping styles: problem-focused, emotion-focused coping (focusing upon the emotional consequences of a stressful situation without solving it) and avoidance-focused coping (Bekker et al., 2010). According to Appel and Kim-Appel (2007), coping strategies can come from multiple life domains, work level, personal level, family level, and couple level. Skill coping dimensions

embrace the constructs of problem-solving and communication (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2007). Appel and Kim-Appel (2007) explain that when an individual is able to develop greater coping strategies, this person is in a better position to manage life stress and thus can easily adapt and enjoy life gratification. Strength in one life sphere (relationship or skill) may offer resources to manage with pressure in the other life sphere (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2007). It is problematic when a person is not eager to seek social support, for this can lead to more undesirable interaction from work to home (Bekker, et al., 2010).

Bond and Bunce (2000) advise that to avert and decrease strain, either: emotion-focused stress administrative interventions, which aim at unwanted thoughts and sentiments stimulated by work stressors or, problem-focused stress management interventions, which detect and alleviate the stressors giving rise to stress. It is said that once a person accepts the actions that cause them stress, the event will not give rise to emotional problems such as strain, hopelessness, and edginess (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2007).

Leisure can be described as experiencing the most optimistic and important impact on a person's quality of life, as well as on the attainment of a successful work-life balance (Warren, 2004). Trenberth and Dewe (2002) clarify that leisure plays a helpful role in health and in providing a variety of health advantages, such as having pressure coping skills and reducing tension.

2.6 Outcomes of work-life balance on employees

One can assess a person's well-being through his or her ambitions, based on a mixture of unbiased realism and their personal reactions to it (McDowell, 2010). McDowell

adds that well-being can be measured in each area of health: physical, emotional, social and spiritual. The sum of a person's total working lifetime spent in non-work undertakings is now greater than the amount expended in paid work (Haworth & Lewis, 2005). According to McCarthy et al. (2010), the significance of relaxation for people's lives should not be underrated by the emphasis on paid work during the course of a person's life. Higgins et al. (2010) argued that workers must have clear borders between the two domains and some degree of departure, for too much intersection between work and life can lead to employee stress and displeasure. There have been many benefits, both at the individual and organisational level, found to be related to achieving work-life balance.

Professional outcomes can both be individual in nature or from the organisational level. Staff experience several favourable outcomes when they admit that they have achieved work-life balance. Allen (2001) emphasises that workers are frequently driven to practice family-friendly policies based on the idea that economic gains will be realised from increased worker productivity and decreased turnover as a result of such policies. According to Maxwell and McDougall (2004), work-life balance programmes help to create a culture of uprightness and trust where staff can acknowledge home problems and get assistance. Some benefits with work-life balance programmes at the organisational level include lower training costs, lower recruitment, improved productivity (Ulshafer et al., 2005), decreased job burnout (Haar & Roche, 2010), enhanced quality service, easier service delivery, enhanced employee capability, less absence, lower turnover, employee flexibility, skills to thrive in fast-growing markets (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004), increased organisational commitment, increased levels of organisational citizenship behaviours

(Baral & Bhargava, 2010) and increased levels of participation within the organisation and initiative (Haar & Roche, 2010).

Maxwell and McDougall (2004) noted that work-life balance programmes make it possible for supervisors to assist staff and decrease the burden of management. The positive sentiments that workers experience through decreasing their stress levels are related with an external focus of attention, such that when people are happy, they report increased liking for others and are prepared to initiate discussions and offer assistance (Rothbard, 2001). Porter and Ayman (2010) stated that the attraction of work-life balance programmes may not be in the operation but in access to them. Porter and Ayman continued that workers who are certain that they have sufficient flexibility in where, when, what work is completed, irrespective of whether they participate in alternative work schedules, are those most affected. According to Cinamon and Rich (2010), when an individual leads a balanced life, they are likely to experience dynamism as a component of work engagement.

Getting involved in several individual roles can lead to benefits for the individual and the organisation (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer & King, 2002). As a result, it is crucial for organizations to identify these benefits and support employees commitments outside of the job by being flexible and affording them the chance to engage in these activities. There are several costs associated with lack of work-life balance. According to Haar & Roche (2010), issues with work-life balance have been associated with weakened organisational commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, turnover intentions, and increased stress. Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate (2000) point out that blurring the line between work and personal life by bringing daycare, recreation facilities and other aspects of personal life to work makes it more

challenging for employees to move between roles and may compromise the integrity of home, work and other dwellings (Ruderman et al., 2002). In attempting to find answers to a major problem that employees are facing, it is probable that it has caused another problem. Haar and Roche (2010) established that work interference with family is more dominant than family interference with work and is more likely to be influenced by workplace factors and supportive supervisor behaviours.

There are some benefits that accrue to employees experience at the individual level, these comprise: less role conflict, more quality time with family, control over their lives, being more content with their lives (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004) and job (Baral & Bhargava, 2010), reduced problem drinking, enhanced physical and mental well-being (Cinamon & Rich, 2010). Baral and Bhargava (2010) indicated that helpful work-family culture improves the psychological resource base for workers by increasing a sense of self-acceptance and flexibility which can aid individuals to develop positive affect towards work. Achieving work-life balance can lead to increased feelings of self-efficacy, which addresses a person's conviction about whether they can effectively perform a task (Trenberth & Dewe, 2002). According to Baral and Bhargava (2010), work-family enrichment is the extent to which experience in one role advances the quality of life.

In addition, Porter and Ayman (2010) maintained that if a worker is able to manage their time in one domain, the spillover of demands to another domain is decreased, hence increasing total effectiveness. This suggests that when individuals are happier with their work role and family life, they are in a position to help others and will be more pleasant to work with. Positive spillover can occur where staff could employ skills used in the workplace, such as directing, setting agendas, counseling and

collecting feedback – with a few alterations, in the home (Ruderman et al., 2002). Other benefits that both the employee and employer may experience include improved productivity, motivation, and commitment to the organisation (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004).

2.7 Work-life balance policies

Work-life balance is a concept with numerous connotations and varied consequences within and among stakeholders. Over the past twenty years, the phrase work-family and work-life balance have received significant attention from employers, workers, politicians, academics and the media. Issues about work-life balance have become relevant for a number of reasons. According to Appel and Kim-Appel (2007), more women are entering the workforce due to demographic and social changes, working mothers becoming the norm rather than the exception. Technological development (e.g., cell phones, e-mail, fax) have also made it easier for work demand to intrude into family and personal life. McCarthy et al. (2010) stated that the move towards global competition has increased pressure on organisations and individual employees to be more flexible and responsive to change. Nevertheless, it is in the context of current skill shortages and the prospect of an aging staff that it is now imperative for organisations to embrace work-life balance practices in order to attract and retain talent, not only from traditional sources but also from untapped and diverse social groups (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008).

These are social groups whose lifestyles demand greater attention to work-life balance: working mothers, mature workers and some minority groups (Ulshafer et al., 2005). This makes the study on female administrators in public universities very

critical. For future commercial sustainability, Godbey et al. (2010) suggested that institutions need to make sure they do not just reassure but mandate a practical and workable work-life balance policy, which would benefit and meet the needs of both the organisation and its workers. According to Bloom and Van Reenen (2006), organisations that are not offering prospects for employee work-life balance are opening themselves up to increasing numbers of dissatisfied and unproductive employees and hence increased attrition rates. Simply creating a work-life policy framework is not enough, rather, nurturing an organisational culture that supports the use of available policies is key (van Beek & Gerritson, 2010). It is very critical that employers and employees find flexible and innovative solutions that maximise productivity without being injurious to employees' well-being, their family relationships and other aspects of life.

Moreover, providing work-life balance policies will have a positive effect on recruiting and retaining good-quality employees and maintaining a competitive edge in a demanding market place (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004). Work-life balance policies are often referred to in practice as 'flexible working', and include the different ways of working which include part-time working, job sharing, flexitime, term-time working, shift working, annualised hours, compressed hours, teleporting or e-working, home working, career breaks, study leave, zero hours, contracts, and V-Time (Chong & Ma, 2010). According to Bekker et al. (2010), the general aim of such working time policies is to strike a balance between employment and domestic commitments that is equitable and beneficial to both employer and employee. The most successful of these policies are those that have been implemented after a consultation process between employer and employee (Wang et al., 2010). This shows

that the level of participation of employees in formulating work-life balance policies is critical in ensuring its success. Some of the common working time policies on work-life balance are explained below.

- i. V-Time: This is voluntary overtime to meet production requirements; extra hours are ‘banked’ and taken as time off or as extra remuneration. This is different from flexitime where opening and opening times are taken in bits and can imply reduced or increased weekly working hours over a period of time.
- ii. Zero hours contract: This is a flexible contract and does not stipulate the amount of time a worker will spend per year on their engagement. This is left open to meet demand.
- iii. E-working: This refers to flexible working that can be performed from any location using technology tools.
- iv. Teleworking: in this case, the location is flexible and one can use technologies to accomplish tasks - thus one can execute job tasks from home. E-working is another name for it.
- v. Term-time working: Here, the individual is giving the opportunity to work only when school is in session, holidays are also off days. Remuneration is calculated by usual payment, and no payment is made for holidays while earnings are spread across the year.

2.8 The gap between work-life balance policy and practice

In the face of the prevalent commitment to the principles of work-life balance, Wang et al. (2010) specified that what persists for the majority of workers is not always consistent with the rhetoric. Maxwell (2005) found that the fact that work-life balance policies are existent does not essentially mean it will be utilised by employees. The

low acceptance in some institutions can be as a result of institutional environments. (Jennings & McDougald, 2007).

Managers play a significant role in the accomplishment of work-life balance programs owing to the fact that they are better placed to inspire or dampen employees' efforts to cope with their work and family lives. Where managers willingly support the incorporation of paid work and life duties, workers will more readily take up existing work-life balance programmes (Porter & Ayman, 2010). It has been indicated that in 'family-friendly' governmental settings, managers do not encourage workers who patronize available benefits and programmes that can cause increased work-life imbalance (Kersley et al., 2005). Therefore, managers play a crucial role in workers' decisions to take advantage of available benefits and programs.

Another reason attributed to the under-utilisation of work-life balance policies is the perception of negative career concerns. According to Md-Sidin et al. (2008), there is a negative perception that workers who take advantage of family-friendly policies are seen as less dedicated to work and the institution, disregarded for training, promotions, fringe benefits, etc. This indicates why family-friendly policies are mostly not patronized. It is indicated that, when managers make use of work-life balance programmes, it changes the notion of work-life balance policy utilisation and career progression as being mutually exclusive paths in the institution (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

A third factor that influences the use of work-life balance policies is institutional time expectations, which is concerned with the working hour's workers are expected to be at post (Estes & Michael, 2005). An understanding work-life culture in terms of organisational time expectations is said to decrease work-life imbalance, increase job

satisfaction and increase output. According to Powell and Greenhaus (2012), there is a false notion that, if a worker wants to succeed, he or she has to be physically present throughout the day. In actual fact, working for very long hours throughout the day prevents a worker from meeting both job and life duties thus forcing employees to choose between achieving balanced roles and developing one's career (Kreiner et al., 2009). However, Kossek and Michel (2010) argued that it is critical to shift away from the out-dated belief of using how long an individual stays in the office as a measure of productivity to performance-based assessment. The shift to assessing performance based on outputs instead of the physical time spent at the office is a critical part of developing a culture that supports work-life balance.

2.9 Antecedents of poor work-life outcomes

Poor work-life outcomes are a function of many variables ranging from individual characteristics and organisational factors. Some of the critical elements that lead to poor work-life outcomes are multiple roles, family-supportive culture, and congruence between individual needs and the organisation's solutions. This section explains how the afore-mentioned factors create the environment for poor work-life outcomes.

Since the 20th Century, the global workplace has seen increased numbers of working women, dual career and single parent families, and increased numbers of employees with eldercare responsibilities; a decrease in job security; and a blurring of work-family boundaries due to technological change (Duxbury & Higgins, 2004; Thornthwaite, 2004). Indeed, people hold various roles in their life, such as the role of a student, worker, parent, or citizen. Each of these roles includes a line of expected

behaviours. When formalised, these expected behaviours become norms. Roles can be defined as the sum of behaviours, rights, and obligations that one has to display in a given social situation (Hudson, 2005). According to Haar and Roche (2010), work-life imbalance arises when role expectations of work and life domains are not compatible i.e. imbalance due to the spillover of work to family life and imbalance as a result of the spillover of family to work life.

Individuals are mostly inclined to satisfy their needs and standards and therefore play roles. Depending on the stage of life of an employee he or she may perform varied roles but not all may be crucial. Most often few may be critical, while others may not be critical. Significant duties represent the essence of an individual; they are the source of one's uniqueness and are vital for the satisfaction of life (Thornthwaite, 2004). When they are performed concurrently the varied roles interact and affect each other. According to Appel and Kim-Appel (2007), roles can complement one another however, they can also be in mutual conflict and be a source of stress when the role demands are not compatible, or when they cannot meet the individual's coping capacity.

Ulshafer et al. (2005) suggested that administrators play a significant role in the success of work-life balance policies because they make both implicit and explicit choices regarding the acceptance of office practices, hence, are in a position to encourage or discourage workers' efforts to cope with their work and family lives. When the immediate bosses are helpful, workers are likely to take up accessible work-life balance strategies. The thought of adverse career consequences of probably not being promoted can prevent workers from utilising work-life balance policies such as working flexitime (Hudson, 2005). Colleagues perceive their fellow workers who take

advantage of work-life policies as not being committed which significantly impacts on reward allocation, progression opportunities and remuneration increases (McDowell, 2010). For instance, a worker may not want to take advantage of the period of her pre-natal leave due to concerns of not getting her full benefits. Such opinions suggest compelling motives why work-life balance policies are often not used by workers. Another concept that is reported to impact the use of work-life balance policies is, the 'time demands' regarding the number of hours, workers are expected to apportion to work-related duties (Higgins et al., 2010) as a result of the strong standards of 'face time' (van Beek & Gerritson, 2010).

Occasionally work-life balance packages appear remarkable however they might not necessarily be of help to workers who do not see its worth. For instance, painstaking efforts are not made to understand the needs of workers such that well-tailored programmes are designed for them (Godbey et al., 2010). Individual values may prevent workers from using work-life balance policies. According to Manfredi and Holliday (2004), a determined worker may choose to focus on his or her profession ignoring the benefits of such programmes. Incongruence among individual work and family standards and institutional responsiveness to work-family issues is a challenge to the efficiency of work-life balance strategies (Haar & Roche, 2010).

The concept of the work-family environment is of the incorporation of its workers' work and family lives which has been referred to as culture (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008), organisational perceptions (Allen, 2001; Kara et al., 2002), and climate (Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). The environment of an organisation emphasizes on everyone's view of the work environment. Depending on their views, this may impact on performance in the office (Judge & Colquitt, 2004). According to Hudson (2005),

there is growing evidence that the ways workers perceive their work environment may affect their behaviour in ways that sustain the aims and the goals of the institution. An understanding work-family environment is one where the institutions comprehend and support that an individual's family comes first, even above the employee's work and the institution (Ungerson & Yeandle, 2005). Another aspect of the unsupportive work-family climate in Bloom and Van Reenen's (2006) definition is the apparent negative career costs.

2.10 Outcomes of work-life imbalance

Higgins et al. (2010) suggested that the unavailability of work-life balance, usually referred to as elevated work-family imbalance has been shown to affect vital organisational consequences, such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, employee turnover, tardiness and absenteeism (Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004), and job performance (Baral & Bhargava, 2010).

Responsive work-life balance policies are essential to reduce undesirable impacts of work-life imbalance which is well-defined by Maxwell and McDougall (2004) as an incompatibility amongst duties from the work and family. According to White et al. (2003), family-friendly strategies should cater for the specific 'family' conditions of all workers. In industrialized and emerging countries, raising proportions of dual-income families, increased the female labour force involvement and the increasing sum of aged wards implies that a greater proportion of workers have household duties (Chong & Ma, 2010). Despite experiencing work-life conflict, Bekker et al. (2010) indicated that workers may maintain high levels of organisational commitment as

long as they recognize the procedures used to strategize and implement organisational resolutions are reasonable.

An individual can spend a lot of time at the office due to his or her commitment as Drew (2005) argues that work coming into conflict with family may signify how much dedication one has for the job. Md-Sidin et al. (2008) considered organisational policies, a source of work-life conflicts. Rapoport et al. (2002) purport that it is likely that having in mind that one is being 'trapped' in an organisation is worrying for workers and a source of imbalance in the home. Wise and Bond (2003) suggested 'flexible-time' benefits are linked with increased loyalty for individuals at all life stages. Estes and Michael (2005), in their research on highly skilled employees, noted that work-life policies have an important association with organisational commitment.

Studies by Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) and Poelmans (2005) showed that there is an adverse connection between individual life and employee performance. For example, Powell and Greenhaus (2012) assessed the influence of work-life imbalance on performance and stated that there was a significant relationship, he made use of a self-reported scale to assess job performance. Poelmans (2005) stated that performance is connected with job-parent conflict but then, not to job-spouse conflict in his study. Kossek and Michel (2010) observed that organisational commitment is negatively connected to family life of the individuals which causes abysmal performance and thereby causing high work-life imbalance. Kossek and Lautsch (2012) wrote that the work impacts on the personal life of employees while the personal lives of employees also impact on one's job. Work to family conflict has a negative impact on the performance of people as put forward by Kreiner et al. (2009) when one's job impacts on the family the performance decreases, however, it is a way

of measuring how an individual is committed to his job. Work-family imbalance is to a large extent connected with organisational commitment Kreiner et al. (2009).

Matthews et al. (2010), in their research on customer service personnel, clients and supervisors, discovered direct and indirect effects among work-family conflict and worker performance where the performances are assessed by the supervisor. Haar and Roche (2010) noticed that there is an imbalance between life and performance of workers. Relationship between work-family imbalance and performance scores given to individuals have also been researched by Manfredi and Holliday (2004). The general performance for males who experienced work-family imbalance than those who did not. However, there was no change in overall performance ratings which were given to females who experienced work-life imbalance and those who did not. Work-family imbalance and job performance have been extensively studied however there have been conflicting outcomes concerning the relationship between the two constructs (Hudson, 2005).

An employee's intention concerning turnover is the rational method of planning, and desire to leave a job (Duxbury & Higgins, 2004). According to Haworth and Lewis (2005) and Jennings and McDougald (2007), intention to stay is significantly negatively correlated with turnover. Porter and Ayman (2010) indicated that it is easier to assess turnover intent than voluntary turnover as organizational records may be non-existent, incomplete, or not correct. In their analysis of occupational turnover, Kang et al. (2010) noted that adequate attention should be paid to the direct and indirect impacts of variables on the intention to leave. From the institution's stance, intention to resign may be a more significant variable than the actual act of turnover. Once the purpose to resign is made clear, the institution could make changes to affect

this decision. Nevertheless, once a worker has left, there is not much the employer can do except hire and train a new employee.

Work-life balance has been termed as the self-perceived, acceptable integration of personal time, family care, and work with less role imbalance (Md-Sidin et al., 2008). An added source of stress in an employee's life is the phenomenon of work-family conflict. In the modern world, a lot of families are expected to earn dual revenue in order to satisfy financial obligations, to enable both parties to become wage earners (De Cieri et al., 2005). In order to balance work and family obligations, a growing number of present-day women and men are involved in work and family provisions which their parents do not know about (Bowes & Poelmans, 2005).

In the view of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association in Arlington, Virginia, 75- 90 percent of medical practitioners visits are related to stress and from the perspective of the American Institute of Stress, the cost to organizations has been projected at \$200 billion-\$300 billion per annum (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). Steven Sauter, chief of the Applied Psychology and Ergonomics Branch of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Cincinnati, Ohio, mentions that current research indicates that the offices of individuals have become one major source of stress (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). It is apparent that complications that emerge out of stress have become a major concern for staff and employers. Signs of stress are exhibited through psychologically and physiologically means. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), constant stress can result in cardiovascular illnesses, sexual health complications, a weaker immune system and frequent headaches, stiff muscles, or lumbago. Other resultant effects include poor coping skills, irritability,

anxiety, insecurity, fatigue, and difficulty in concentration. Stress can also cause binge eating, alcohol consumption, and smoking, (Chang, 2008).

Burnout has been termed as a state of physical, psychological and emotional fatigue ensuing from persistent stress (Chang, 2008). Burnout symptoms comprise a general lack of interest, frustration, emotional exhaustion, inability to focus, and indifference. Burned-out persons appear to work hard but accomplish little. They are easily provoked and lose their sense of humour and are unable to have fun.

The 2002 Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) report, which highlighted work-family reconciliation in Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands, noted that a good work-life balance generates families in the capacity to handle the stresses of modern life, better child growth outcomes, less public spending and higher fertility (Schaufeli, Bakker & Van Rhenen, 2009). Studies by Byron (2005), and Carlson and Frone (2003) showed that poor work-life effects are linked with major health costs across the marketplace. In 2001, Canadian scholars estimated that the health costs in Canada concerning work-life imbalance, attributable to high work overload cost over C\$6 billion. A further cost of C\$5 billion was apportioned to high caregiver strain, \$C2.8 billion to high work-family spill over and \$C5 billion to family-work spill over (Duxbury & Higgins 2004).

Insights from the Canadian National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth noted that children whose parents work non-standard hours are likely to have emotional and social problems compared to children whose parents work standard hours (Strazdins, Welsh, Korda, Broom & Paolucci, 2015). In addition, the study revealed that dual-earner parents working non-standard hours are most likely to report depressive signs, worse family functioning as well as less effective child-caring

(Strazdins et al., 2015). US research using the National Survey of Families and Households has observed that non-standard work schedules highly predispose workers to a high incidence of marital failure or separation (Straub, 2012). Presser notes of her US studies that though there may be positive outcomes from working non-standard schedules, negative effects, for example, marital quality and instability, are predominant (Sweet, James & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2015). These particularly affect the families and workers, as they have the propensity to work non-standard hours. Research has also supported this connection between negative spillover between work and life and a range of negative consequences for individuals, employers, and the community at large (Straub, 2012).

2.11 History of women's employment

According to Baral and Bhargava (2010), the work of females has been of great economic importance since pre-history, although, female workers contributions have been diverse based on societal structures, requirements, cultural rules, and attitudes of society. In Babylonia, about 200 BC, females were allowed to engage in business and to work as clerks. In ancient societies, nevertheless, upper-class females usually were restricted to their homes, and working women were slaves used for unskilled labour and prostitution. In ancient Greece, womenfolk worked out of the home as sellers of goods such as bread, salt, figs, hemp, seamstresses, wet nurses, prostitutes, laundresses and potters, and courtesans. The work arrangements of females in Asia and the Americas were alike. In India, working women crushed stones for making roads and wove cloth for long hours (Straub, 2012).

In pre-historic periods, females and males engaged in hunting and assembled food. Agricultural development brought about the situation where the female was involved in duties around the home. Higgins et al. (2010) noted that females cooked food, made clothing and utensils, and cared for children and helped the men to plough fields, tend animals and harvest crops. As cities developed, females sold goods. From olden to contemporary times, Haar and Roche (2010) indicated that four generalisations can be made about the work of females. First, females have been involved in economic activity as a result of necessity; since they worked mostly to enable them to sustain their families. Secondly, females explain that paid work has often been compared to their work at home. Thirdly, women have continued the primary duty for nurturing children, irrespective of paid work. Fourth, females have traditionally been offered less remuneration than men and have been assigned lower-status jobs.

However, the engagement of women in professional work has increased since the 20th Century through the promotion of equal rights, gender sensitivity analysis of development policy and programmes, gender empowerment, and economic factors (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2007). This has entirely drifted the focus of employment of women from home-based activities to professional activities outside the home. According to McDowell (2010), this change, while helping to improve economic situations of families is causing a lot of strain on families. This is because women have shifted from the sole primary role of homecare to assume dual responsibilities. Since both home and work activities require time, energy and commitment, most professional women experience work-life imbalances, which sometimes lead to the

deterioration of either working relationships or family relationship due to stress (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2008).

2.12 Importance of work-life balance to public sector organisations

In many instances, people associate the benefits of having balanced work-life policies and practices to workers. However, studies have shown that business organisations committed to ensuring work-life balance for employees also benefit from the system. This section presents some of the benefits accrued by business organisations in promoting work-life balance among their employees.

Skill shortages

The provision of flexible work alternatives in the past was considered to be an optional ‘fringe benefit’ by institutions. Nevertheless currently demographic and financial climate and strategies promoting work-life have become pertinent. In several industrialized countries, there are shortages of skilled workers across businesses (Chandra, 2012). Dai, Chen, and Zhuang (2016) attributed it to the staff that will age in proportionate terms over the next 20 years. Research conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) notes that one-quarter of Australians will attain 65 years or more by 2044-45, causing economic and monetary impacts that can be threatening for organisations. A decrease in female fertility also contributes to ‘structural ageing’. The total fertility rate in 1996 fell below replacement level (2.1 births per woman) and a record low of 1.3 births per female happened in 2005 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). From an organisational viewpoint, the adoption of work-life balance practices can alleviate the problem of skill shortages by appealing to and retaining employees, including mothers who engage in paid work, mature employees and

particular marginal groups by creating work environments that would have been previously unsustainable.

Expensive empty desks

One way of improving ‘employee experience’ and retaining staff is through work-life balance policies and practices. Turnover is a key issue for many institutions owing to the costs of employee engagement and staff training, as well as the costs of high attrition rates (Sweet et al., 2015). According to Strazdins et al. (2015), the recognized link between the accessibility of flexible work options and reduction in turnover means that work-life balance is now a strategic public sector management issue. Dai et al. (2016) mentioned that where employee’s inclinations for cultures and values are consistent with actual institutional cultures and standards, turnover is reduced. This is known as person-organization fit. Though, when the main concern and goals are incompatible, workers are likely to search for consistent cultures somewhere else.

Attract skilled and talented workers in a competitive environment

Apart from staff turnover concerns, organisations sincerely endorsing and supporting work-life balance strategies normally receive public recognition as ‘good’ corporate citizens. In situations where qualified staff, receive various job offers, the readiness of an organisation to accommodate employees’ work-life balance can be a determining factor in taking up a job offer (Chandra, 2012). In this competitive business environment for talents, Schaufeli et al. (2009) posited that it is vital for employers to offer attractive work-life strategies and programmes so as to employ and retain their knowledgeable staff. Institutional settings that are conducive to employee’s work-life balance issues are regarded as those which advance organisational commitment, increased job satisfaction, low absenteeism and less predisposition to quit the

organisation, therefore, impacting positively the institution's bottom line (Dai et al., 2016).

2.13 Gender and work-life balance

Some research has noted that there is some proof of gender differences in work-life balance, the main finding being that females experience higher work-to-life imbalance than men (Berntsson, Lundberg, & Krantz, 2006). Nevertheless, a study of engaged people in the Netherlands (Jansen, Kant, Kristensen, & Nijhuis, 2003) and a study of students in the United States found that males experienced considerably increased levels of work-to-life imbalance than females (Ruderman et al., 2002). In some instances the direction of imbalance was essential. For instance, a general population study of professional workers in Canada (McElwain, Korabik & Rosin, 2005) indicated that, although there were no gender differences in life-to-work imbalance, females experienced greater levels of work-to-family imbalance. Other research did not find gender differences in reported work-life balance (Biggs & Brough, 2005; Emslie, Hunt & Macintyre, 2004; Stevens, Kiger & Riley, 2006; Winslow, 2005).

According to Biggs and Brough (2005), gender stratification of the labour market may have an impact on the findings of studies on work-life balance. For instance, whilst a Swiss general population sample (Hämmig & Bauer, 2009) did not find differences in females' and males' work-life balance across the whole sample, when the profession was taken into account variances were found, with females working in full-time or higher professional positions reporting higher levels of imbalance than males. Some research stressed the gendered nature of predictors of work-life balance. For instance, in a general population study in Sweden (Gronlund, 2007), work-life imbalance was

reduced through high levels of job control for females only. Hämmig and Bauer (2009) also discovered evidence for gendered predictors of work-life balance. Research by Biggs and Brough (2005) stated that as role importance increased, females experienced higher work-life imbalance, whereas males' work-life imbalance reduced.

A study conducted on bank employees in the UK (Emslie et al., 2004) brought to the fore that whilst there were no important gender differences in opinions about work-life imbalance, there were gender variances in predictors of this imbalance. Thus, giving birth to children and working in a high ranking position was noted to be a predictor of work-life imbalance for females and not males. Whereas working at odd hours was a greater predictor of work-life imbalance for males than for females. Conversely, a study of dual-earner couples in the United States (Emslie et al., 2004) noted that as mothers experienced higher levels of work-life strains and gains than fathers and non-parents, there were no gender variances in the predictors of these gains and strains.

Socio-economic elements were also found to play a role in work-life balance. In a study of males employed across a range of professions in a number of European countries (Halrynjo, 2009) it was realised that those with higher levels of job security were likely to "outsource life" (p.119) to attain work-life balance, by engaging domestic help, whereas individuals with low income, poorer career opportunities, and low job security tended to have greater care tasks, as a result of less access to resources.

A study of UK home-based teleworkers (Emslie & Hunt, 2009) indicated that, whilst the majority of females and males reported that executing job tasks from home led to a collapse of borders between work and home. Women and men experienced this in diverse ways. Working from home allowed females to complete multiple roles. They pursued their home responsibilities and at the same time accomplished their financial and personal need to work, thus strengthening gendered expectations of work and life. For males, the flexibility gained from working from home gave them the chance to work long hours, thus strengthening gendered norms around work. The males in the study complained of higher levels of meddling between work and home than the contrary, underpinning the regularized legitimacy of work interfering with family for males, and family interfering with work for females.

The family is the main site where gender norms are replicated (Stevens et al., 2006), and so parenting has been found to worsen gender standards and differences in experiences of work-life balance (Bruening & Dixon, 2008). For instance, a study of mothers working as head instructors for sporting institutions in the United States (Bruening & Dixon, 2008) noted that “the dramatic life changes associated with the birth of the first child illuminated the gendered nature of the sports industry” (p.21). Also, the importance of support from family and managers was reported to be vital to ensure participants ‘survived and thrived’ (p.20) as coaches and mothers, a feature which had not been contemplated prior to parenthood.

2.14 Nature and characteristics of career women in Ghana

In Ghana, the 2010 survey indicated that Ghanaians were 24.7 million out of which females were about 51.2%. Females constitute 51.2% of the 2010 population up from

50.5% in 2000 (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2014). With an economically active population of 14 million (15-64 years), females account for roughly 52% of the labour force and can be found participating in all kinds of economic activities in the economy; service sector, agriculture, and commerce. The formal sector (both private and public), which hires only about 14% of the workforce in Ghana, is a significant source of employment only in the big urban centres such as Greater Accra (33.3%) and Ashanti (23.2%) regions (GSS, 2014).

With regard to females' employment, the private sector (formal and informal) provides for about 91%, while the public sector engages only 4.4% of economically active females (15-64 years) (Tsikata, 2009). The distribution of the labour force in the formal sector of the Ghanaian economy demonstrates that females usually occupy lower and middle strata at their workplaces: women form over two-thirds of workers in the lower stratum of the public sector and less than one-tenth of workers in the upper stratum. Salary employment for females is a very low share of total employment in Ghana (Sackey & Sanda, 2009).

Based on the 2010 census data, only 4.3% of females were engaged in public sector service while 5.8% were in private formal service. The Ghana Living Standards Survey 4 (GLSS 4) indicates that approximately 6.2% of women were officially engaged in both the public (3.3%) and private (2.9%) sectors (GSS, 2014). This significantly juxtaposed with that of men, which displays formal sector employment of 22.8%. Additionally, females in formal sector employment are concentrated in the lower ranks and/or non-managerial positions and therefore they are not heard at the decision-making levels. This claim is supported by the 2000 census data, which puts

the number of women in managerial and administrative positions at 0.2 percent (9,543 persons) (Tsikata, 2009).

2.15 Empirical review

This section reviews the empirical literature on studies on work-life balance. The aim was to ascertain the methodology used to analyse work-life balance and the results available in the research area.

In Shobha's (2015) study on 'work-life balance – implications for working women in India, there is an investigation on the factors influencing work-life balance among working females and the effects of poor work-life balance. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to 125 randomly selected working women across organisations in Bangalore City in India. The response rate was about 93% and the data obtained data were statistically analysed. The results indicated that a significant proportion of working women were experiencing difficulty in balancing work and life due to extreme workload, too little time for themselves and the need to fulfill others' expectations of them. A great number of working women experienced job spill over into the home as they had to work for long hours.

Key effects of poor work-life balance were high levels of stress and nervousness, conflict at home, undergoing job burnout and incapability to realise full potential. They felt irritable and indignant often due to their inability to balance work and family life. The findings had consequences for working females and provided insights into finding solutions to preserve a healthy work-life balance. Two models of work-life balance, viz. role-analysis model and three-factor model were developed to

enable working females to resolve the imbalance caused due to poor work-life balance. These models aimed to equip women with the mechanism to strike a fine balance and make them smarter, healthier and better off in every facet of their lives. Both models assumed greater importance for working females across the world as they could help them resolve the problems of managing their multiple roles in the personal and professional lives.

Mani (2013) also conducted a study of work-life balance and females professionals in India. The study attempts to gain insight into the role of a sample population of females employed in different occupations, in balancing work and life in Tamil Nadu, India. The emphasis was chiefly on professionalism and was carried out by conducting a survey among respondents who were first generation female earners. Data were collected by (cluster-random) sampling along with semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The data was studied and analysed in order to discover and depict the sensitivity of females and how they perceive the society as well as to highlight the values, attitudes, and beliefs of women in the formal work organisations and primary family system. The results revealed that role conflict, lack of recognition, organisational politics, gender discrimination, elderly and children care issues, quality of wellbeing, problems in time management and lack of proper social support are the key factors influencing the work-life balance of female professionals in India.

Akua Frempomaa Ampah conducted a study in 2013 on the successful work-family balance among educated Ghanaian females with white collar jobs. The purpose of the study was to discover and comprehend the factors that enabled professional females to balance both career and family duties. The study adopted an exploratory research

method for finding causal factors through online surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. The study found that professional females in Ghana balanced their work and family roles under four main themes; outside help, proper planning, maintaining good relations with bosses and juniors, as well as the flexible schedules of their jobs.

The study suggested that organisations must have a welcoming environment and strategies that encourage good communication between workers and employers. This healthy relationship is believed to enable career women to talk about issues they face at home and work to their employers and colleagues who could give them assistance when needed. From the research findings, most females acknowledged that concrete support from their husbands was a major factor in balancing work and family roles. Therefore, the research suggested a national awareness campaign to sensitise husbands to contribute to the maintenance of the home.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the data collection methods that were employed in this study. In other words, it describes the approaches and processes used to select respondents for the study, the method used in collecting data, and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research paradigm

Research paradigms address the philosophical dimensions of research in social sciences. A research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Although the philosophical backgrounds usually remain implicit in most research, they affect the practice of research. The study was conducted through the interpretivism research paradigm. This was because work-life balance was a subjective construct that required interaction and dialogue with studied participants Wahyuni (2012). According to him, interpretivists believe that reality is constructed by social actors and people's perceptions of it. Interpretivism afforded me the opportunity to detail the meanings of work-life balance from the female administrators' perspectives. Interpretivists recognize that individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions, and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of reality existing in their broader social context through social interaction Lukka (2010). Owing to the fact that, these human perspectives and experiences are subjective, social reality may change and can have multiple

perspectives (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Therefore, interpretivists reject objectivism and a single truth as proposed in post-positivism.

To understand the social world from the experiences and subjective meanings that people attach to it, Wahyuni (2012) posited that interpretive researchers favour to interact and to have a dialogue with the studied participants. They also prefer to work with qualitative data which provides rich descriptions of social constructs. As opposed to generalization or the nomothetic approach adopted by post-positivist researchers, interpretivists use a narrative form of analysis to describe specifics and highly detailed accounts of a particular social reality being studied, which is termed the idiographic approach (Neuman, 2011). Consequently, the parameter to test knowledge in the positivist and interpretivist paradigm-camp is distinct. Whereas, positivist scholars believe in the power of replication research, interpretive researchers vote a study that uncovers inside perspectives or real meanings of social phenomena from its study participants as a good social knowledge (Lukka, 2010). In terms of axiology, interpretive researchers take the stance of the emic or insider perspective, which means to study the social reality from the perspective of the people themselves (Hennink *et al.*, 2011). With this, the experiences and values of both research participants and researchers substantially influence the collection of data and its analysis.

The study adopted the interpretivism research paradigm. This informed the research design of the study. Thus, the choice of research paradigm informed the researcher to adapt qualitative research design, which further influenced all the methodological sections of the study, including the sample size, sampling procedures, method of data collection, research instrumentation, and data analysis. With the adoption of the

interpretivism research paradigm, the researcher perceived reality as not independent from social actors. With this principle, the researcher considered the decisions and actions of the female administrators in public universities, in terms of the amount of time and energy given to each of the domains (work and life), as the cause of their work-life balance or imbalance. As such, any efforts to improve the work-life balance among female administrators should critically consider strategies to balance or equitably distribute the amount of time and energy spent on the two domains.

3.2 Research design

Research design is the basic framework outlining the interrelationships between the various research activities required in order to effectively address the research question (Maxwell, 2005). According to Creswell (2012), a research design is an overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent and achievable empirical research. Thus, it determines the kind of data to be collected, mode of collecting data, instruments to be used to collect the data and how the data should be analysed. Creswell (2009) posited that research design dictates all aspects of a research study as each design has its own principles and guidelines that researchers must abide with. As a result, Neuman (2011) suggested that researchers should always be mindful of the tenets surrounding a particular research design and how best it could be used to address the research problem.

The researcher adopted the qualitative approach as she sought to “stay close to the data and to the surface of words and events” (Sandelowsky, 2000). This helped the researcher as she was particularly interested in collecting valuable information from the female administrators for policy making and practice in the area of public sector human resource management. This method afforded the researcher the opportunity to

describe the female administrators' experiences about how organizational policies helped them to manage their work-life interface. It also assisted the researcher to ascertain the similarities and differences in their experiences. Their reflections were crucial in understanding the effects of work-life imbalances on these female administrators and they suggested the strategies they adopted to manage the work-life interface.

Maxwell (2005) defines qualitative research design as a system of inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon. Qualitative research takes place in natural settings employing a combination of observations, interviews, and document reviews (Easterly-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). A salient strength of qualitative research is its focus on the contexts and meaning of human lives and experiences for the purpose of inductive or theory-development driven research (Neuman, 2011). According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research design adopts a systematic and rigorous form of inquiry that uses methods of data collection such as in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation, and review of documents.

Data gathered through qualitative processes help researchers understand processes, especially those that emerge over time, provide detailed information about setting or context, and emphasize the voices of participants through quotes (Burns & Grove, 2001). Maxwell (2005) indicated that qualitative methods facilitate the collection of data when measures do not exist and provide a depth of understanding of concepts. It also allows flexibility in data collection and provides the ability to observe situations over time and understand human aspects more deeply. A qualitative design is

primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships among categories (Berg, 2007).

The study adopted the qualitative research design to enable the researcher to conduct in-depth investigations into issues related to work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana. With the qualitative research design, the researcher adopted instruments and tools which were flexible and allowed the researcher to probe further for more information to understand the underlying elements influencing work-life balance among the selected group of people under study. The selection of qualitative methods for the study was principally to understand the voice of interest from the participants' perspective and not just from the researcher's. The study sought to highlight the experiences of a selected group of females on how they managed to rise through the rungs of their profession while playing the dual role of a wife, mother or single parent.

The study adopted a phenomenological study design as a suitable approach. The reason was that the study sought to bring out the experiences of female administrators in the selected public universities on how they managed their work-life interface, by engaging them to tell their stories about the sources of competing work-life demands, the effects of work-life imbalance, and how they navigated the work-life interface through their own strategies and those instituted by the universities. According to Patton (2002), a phenomenological study is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. Creswell (2012) argues that in a phenomenological study, it is important to conduct an analysis of the experience so that the basic elements of the experience that are common to members of a specific society can be identified. In like manner, Creswell (2012) adds that

phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the everyday experiences of a group of people, which in this case are female administrators in public universities in Ghana. According to Flowers and Karkin (2012, p11), “phenomenology, is a philosophical approach to the study of experiences. Although phenomenologists have different emphasis and interests, they all tend to share a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like in all of its various forms, but especially in terms of the things which matter to us and which constitute our lived world”.

In this study, the common meanings ascribed to the experiences of the study participants’ stories were outlined and discussed. Further to this, differences are also of interest as they help to identify the different meanings participants gave to their experiences. As a result, the study combines phenomenology with narrative analysis as the means of eliciting and reflecting the different experiences of the study participants. In this study, I attempted to comprehend how the socio-cultural roles of the female African female circumscribe career advancement and the challenges these females face in juggling between work and life.

3.3 Study Areas

This section presents brief descriptions of the institutions selected for the study. The aim is to situate the study into the operations of the selected public universities in Ghana. Three public universities namely; UG, KNUST, and UCC were purposively selected and studied. It includes a brief history, mandate, organisation of the institutions, and academic programmes offered.

University of Ghana

The University of Ghana was founded as the University College of the Gold Coast by Ordinance on August 11, 1948, for the purpose of providing and promoting university education, learning and research. The University is located in Accra, Ghana's National capital city. The vision of the University is to become a world-class research-intensive University over the next decade. Its mission is to create an enabling environment that makes the University of Ghana increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high-quality teaching and learning. The University is run on a collegiate system and comprises College of Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Education, College of Health Sciences and College of Humanities.

In addition, the University has several research institutions and centres for learning and research, including Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIR), Centre for Tropical, Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Regional Institute for Population Studies, Institute for Environmental and Sanitation Studies, and the Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research. All these colleges and research centres have administrators (GAUA members), some of who are females, responsible for their daily management. The lines of authority or communication emanate from the Registrar (who is the Head of Administration) or the Vice Chancellor down to the college registrars, faculty officers and administrative heads of departments and research centres. The Office of the Registrar provides administrative support and services to students and staff of the University. The Office is responsible for maintaining the integrity of academic records of the University. The records comprise of academic evaluations, academic publications Boards/Committees record.

One of the greatest objectives in the Office of the Registrar is to strive to serve students, faculties/ departments/ units.

The student population is over 38,000 as of 2017 made up of students enrolled in our regular programmes, sandwich programmes, and distance education as well as students from affiliated institutions. The growing number of international students come from several countries (both within and outside Africa) to join either the regular undergraduate and graduate programmes or enrolled on studies abroad and other special programmes designed for international students. The University of Ghana has over the years built an image as one of the continent's reputable universities which make the University of Ghana the first choice for academics, researchers and students. There are currently a number of Ghanaian and international institutions that hold an affiliation with the University of Ghana. As a leader in tertiary education, the University has established several link agreements with universities in Africa, Europe, and North America for student, faculty and staff exchange as well as collaborative research.

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)

KNUST is a public university located in Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. KNUST was established as Kumasi College of Technology in 1952. The College was affiliated to the University of London. The Kumasi College of Technology was thus transformed into a full-fledged University and renamed Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology by an Act of Parliament on 22nd August 1961. The University believes in achievement through diligence and commitment.

The Act establishing the University defines its mandate, which essentially is to provide higher education, undertake research, disseminate knowledge and foster relationships with the outside persons and bodies. The strategic mandate of the University is derived from Science and Technology in its name. The vision of the University is to be globally recognised as the Premier Centre of excellence in Africa for teaching in Science and Technology for development; producing high calibre graduates with knowledge and expertise to support the industrial and socio-economic development of Ghana and Africa. In other words, the vision of the University can be stated as ‘Advancing knowledge in Science and Technology for sustainable development in Africa’.

Its mission is to provide an environment for teaching, research, and entrepreneurship training in Science and Technology for the industrial and socio-economic development of Ghana, Africa, and other nations. KNUST also offers service to the community, is open to all the people of Ghana and positioned to attract scholars, industrialists, and entrepreneurs from Africa and other international community. The core values of the University are outlined as follows:

1. Leadership in Innovation and Technology
2. Culture of Excellence
3. Diversity and Equal Opportunity for All
4. Integrity and Stewardship of Resources

The KNUST has, since January 2005, transformed from its previous centralised system of administration into significantly decentralised one called the Collegiate system. Under this system, the various faculties have been condensed into six

colleges, namely Agriculture and Natural Resources; Art and Built Environment; Humanities and Social Sciences; Engineering; Health Sciences; and Science. KNUST has enshrined in its University statutes the following officers as the Principal Officers of the University. They are The Chancellor, The Chairman of Council and The Vice-Chancellor. The Other Officers are the Pro Vice-Chancellor and The Registrar. The Other Professional Officers are The Finance Officer, The University Librarian, The Director of Works, The Internal Auditor, The Director of Health Services, The Director of Information Technology Services, The Director of Procurement and The Estates Officer.

University of Cape Coast

The University of Cape Coast is a university in Ghana established in 1962 out of a dire need for highly qualified and skilled manpower in education and was affiliated to the University of Ghana. It was established to train graduate teachers for second cycle institutions such as teacher training colleges and technical institutions, a mission that the two existing universities were unequipped to fulfill. On October 1, 1971, the College attained the status of a full and independent University, with the authority to confer its own degrees, diplomas and certificates by an Act of Parliament - The University of Cape Coast Act, 1971 [Act 390] and subsequently the University of Cape Coast Law, 1992 [PNDC Law 278]. Since its establishment, the university has added to its functions the training of education planners, administrators, agriculturalists, and health care professionals.

The University of Cape Coast now has a total student population of 74,720. The University of Cape Coast today, organized into six colleges, namely Agriculture and

Natural Sciences, Distance Education, Education Studies, Humanities, and Legal Studies, Health and Allied Sciences, and School of Graduate Studies and Research. Each college has different schools and departments under them. The University Council is the executive body of the university's governance system. It has overall responsibility for the administration of the University and the management of its resources. The Council superintends relations between the University and outside bodies on matters. The Council in carrying out its duties is responsible for the appointment or nomination of certain members of various committees.

UCC has 12 directorates that perform functions to support the university. The administrative and support functions of the University are grouped into the following Directorates; Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Finance, Information and Communication Technology Services, Internal Audit, Procurement, Physical Development and Estate Management, Research, Innovation and Consultancy, and University Health Services. All these directorates are managed by administrators, some of who are females. The vision of the University is to have a university that is strongly positioned, with worldwide acclaim. Its mission is to provide a quality education through the provision of comprehensive, liberal and professional programmes that challenge learners to be creative, innovative and morally responsible citizens.

3.4 Sources of Data

Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with female administrators from the selected universities. The secondary sources of information were obtained from refereed journals, books, published research works, and internet

articles. While the primary data served as the basis for analysis and discussions, the secondary sources of information helped to enrich the arguments by bringing to the fore other studies that have been conducted in relation to the study. With this information, the researcher drew on commonalities, points of departure, recurring trends and areas of consideration for future studies.

3.5 Study population

The study population comprised female administrators in the three public universities in Ghana, representatives of human resource departments in public universities, Executives of women caucuses in public universities, National Executives of Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA), representative at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), and representative of the Social Welfare Department. The targeted population, however, focused on female administrators who form GAUA in UG, KNUST, and UCC in addition to the institutional representatives as outlined earlier. Female administrators under GAUA comprised Junior Assistant Registrars, Assistant Registrars, Senior Assistant Registrars, and Deputy Registrars. The aim was to ascertain how they were able to balance their work-life demands to rise to higher positions in their working profession.

The Human resource Directors in the selected universities' were made part of the study population because they were responsible for the development and implementation of human resource management policies in the universities. The MGCSP was also responsible for enacting policies to protect the interests of women and children. In addition, the representative for the Department of Social Welfare was

included because the department is responsible for enacting policies to regulate home activities to ensure responsible parenting as well as regulate the terms and conditions surrounding the hiring of nannies.

3.5 Sample size

A total of 74 respondents were sampled for the study. It included one (1) representative each from the human resource departments of the selected universities, one (1) representative each from the Social Welfare Department and MGCSP, 18 Executives of women caucuses in the three selected universities, six (6) National Executives of GAUA, and 45 female administrators. Out of the 74 respondents, 22 were sampled from each institution (making a total of 66 from the three institutions), while eight (8) were selected from national institutions and associations.

3.6 Sampling Procedures

The sampling strategy used in this research was non-probability methods which allow for respondents to be chosen by non-random methods (Lo Biondo- Wood & Haber, 1998, p.251). The specific types of non-probability sampling methods used were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select the institutional representatives because of their in-depth knowledge and unique roles in the enactment and implementation of policies and practices regulating work-life balance among female administrators in public universities. According to Berg (2007), purposive sampling is adopted to select a particular group of units deemed most appropriate to respond to the issues under investigation. Thus, the researcher chose the sample based on who they think would be most appropriate for the study.

This is used primarily when there is a limited number of people that have expertise in the area being researched, or when the interest of the research is on a specific field or a small group (Babbie, 2007).

Human resource departments of the public universities were purposively targeted to respond to their roles in ensuring balance in work-life demands because they were directly responsible for the development and implementation of policies and practices to regulate work-life balance among female administrators, representatives from the departments. The same principle applied to the other targeted institutional representatives and association executives. The aim was to solicit for their critical roles and contributions in efforts towards ensuring work-life balance among female administrators in the public universities.

Snowball sampling was used to select female administrators. The female administrators were categorised into five groups: singles, married without children, married with children within five years of age, married with children within six (6) and 17 years of age, and married with children above 18 years of age. This categorisation was made because the cohort a female administrator occupied had a significant influence on her work-life demands. According to Maxwell (2005), snowball sampling is used when there is a small population size in a cluster and sampling frame on the sample units does not exist. The study adopted the snowball sampling because of the small size of the female administrators in the selected universities coupled with the non-existence of sampling frame on their marital statuses and ages of the children.

Snowball sampling enabled the researcher to identify other members in a particular sampling cohort. Three (3) respondents each were selected from each categorisation in the universities. Thus, 15 female administrators were sampled from the five sampling cohorts in each university. The selection of three (3) respondents from each sampling cohort were determined from the experiences from the pre-testing exercise at the University College of Education, Winneba. Three (3) respondents from each sampling cohort were seen to be the saturation point with any additions repeating already known information.

With the application of the snowball sampling technique in the study, the study first identified a respondent from one of the selection cohorts for an interview. After the interview, the respondents led the researcher to other female administrators in the same cohorts for interviews. The process was employed in the three public universities for the selection of female administrators in the various sampling categories (singles, married without children, married with children within five years of age, married with children within six (6) and 17 years of age, and married with children above 18 years of age). The use of snowballing was justified because there were no sampling frames on these categories of female administrators in the selected public universities.

3.8 Research instruments

Interview guide and focus group discussion guide were used as instruments for collecting data for the study. Separate interview guides were developed for the female administrators, representatives of the human resource departments, social welfare department, and MGCSP. The research instruments were largely organised under the

sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators, effects of work-life balance on female administrators, policies, and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators, and the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities in Ghana to ensure work-life balance. All questions employed in the research instruments were open-ended. The aim was to allow respondents to freely explain themselves to generate more information for the study. The research instruments were peer-reviewed to enhance their validity and reliability in addressing the research problem and objectives.

A focus group discussion guide was developed for the Executives of the women caucuses, and National Executives of GAUA. The aim was to get a corporate view from the efforts executed by the two associations to improve the work-life balance of its members. This was important because the associations have a political front to drive critical changes in the management of the universities and also to help ensure improved welfare for its members. The focus group discussion guide for the women's caucuses in the three universities was considered imperative because the executives mostly receive complaints from their members and expect them to influence policies in the universities to help improve their work-life balance situations. A total of four focus group discussions were organised in the data collection process, comprising three women's caucuses (one from each institution and comprising six members each), and the National Executives of GAUA members (comprising six members).

3.9 Pre-testing

The research instruments were pre-tested at the University of Education, Winneba. The University of Education, Winneba was selected for the pre-testing exercise because of their similar characteristics with the other selected public universities in Ghana in terms of staff strength, female staff strength in administration, and geographical characteristics. The pre-testing exercise was organised between February 12, 2017, and February 28, 2017. A total of 32 research instruments were administered during the pre-testing exercise. This comprised 25 female administrators, a representative from the human resource department, and six (6) executives of the local GAUA unit. Experiences from the pre-testing exercise were used to improve the validity and reliability of the research instruments as well as enhance processes in the main data collection exercises. Thus, ambiguous questions were restructured. The order of the questions in some of the instruments was also altered. The pre-testing was used to check the timing of the interviewing process and reduced to ensure convenience for the respondents during the actual data collection exercise.

3.10 Method of Data Collection

To elicit the desired information, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were utilized for primary data collection. These methods enabled the researcher to get the required information concerning the personal and work histories and a range of information that was critical to understanding fully the female's experiences, challenges as well as successes and the meanings they ascribed to them in terms of work-life balance. Creswell (2012) notes that interviewing is a powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have hitherto been implicit. In-depth

interviews provided some important benefits. They are most essential where it is likely that people may rather talk than fill in questionnaires, affording study participants the opportunity to reflect on events without having to commit them in writing (Gray, 2009). Interviews allow for themes that are often unanticipated to emerge from the varied experiences of people rather than preconceived ideas.

The researcher first presented an introductory letter stipulating the name and title of the study to the human resource department of the university. After their approval, the researcher proceeded to the female administrators, introduced herself and the purpose of the study as well as sought their consent to participate in the study.

Each participant was approached in person by the researcher and introduced to the study. The purpose and objectives of the study were clearly articulated. Following this, participants were given two letters of introduction, one from the Head of the Department of Public Administration and Health Services, establishing the credibility of the researcher and another from the researcher that stated the objectives of the study and an invitation to participate in the study. For the respondents who readily expressed interest to participate in the study, appointments were scheduled for suitable times and locations for the in-depth interviews. In cases where participants could not indicate their interest readily, they were asked to keep the letters, which contained the contact details of the researcher to enable them to contact her when they were ready. Notwithstanding, the contact details of prospective participants who were approached by the researcher were taken for follow-up calls. In all 53 letters were distributed. After the distribution of letters to participants, some readily expressed interest in granting an interview. The details of such persons were taken for follow up calls and subsequent appointments were made for interviews.

After their consent, those who were ready were interviewed and their responses recorded. After interviewing respondents from a particular sampling cohort, they were asked to direct the researcher to female administrators in same or other sampling cohorts. The process was repeated until all the required respondents were interviewed. With the representatives of departments, the researcher scheduled appointments with them and followed subsequently to interview them.

The average length of the interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one and a half hours. All the interviews were held at a time and venue suitable for the research participants. Permission was sought from the participants to be audio-recorded for later transcription (Creswell, 2009). The interviews were in four parts; the first part elicited the demographic data of participants, the second part concentrated on what the participants identified as the sources of competing work-life demands. The third part explored the policies and strategies adopted by the universities to ensure a work-life balance of female administrators while the fourth part identified measures female administrators adopted to promote work-life balance. To achieve this aim, an interview guide was developed with open-ended questions that enabled participants to tell their stories from their own viewpoints.

Demographic data collected included age, marital status, number of children and their ages. All the interviews were conducted and transcribed by the researcher. In addition, field notes were taken and a data collection diary was kept by the researcher to help keep track of respondents and peculiar issues that arose during each interview. These

helped the researcher to triangulate the data during the analysis stage (Creswell, 2009).

With the focus group discussion, an introductory letter was sent to the executives. The researcher secured appointment dates with them. Two research assistants were hired to help with the focus group discussion process. Whereas one was responsible for moderating the discussion, the other was recording the responses. The researcher asked the questions, explained them to the respondents and probed further for more information. Six members made up the focus group discussion in each section. They constituted the president/chairman, vice president/vice chairman, secretary, assistant secretary, organiser, an assistant organiser. In all, four (4) focus group discussions (comprising six members each) were conducted; three (3) from the selected universities and one on the National Executives of GAUA. The actual data collection exercise occurred between April 3, 2017, and June 2, 2017.

3.11 Ethical consideration

The ethical issues considered under the data collection exercise were seeking the approval of the authorities of the universities (through the human resource department) before carrying out the data collection exercise, and consent of participation from the respondents. The respondents were also given the opportunity to indicate the times that will be convenient for them for the interviewing. The aim was to avoid interferences from job duties and working pressures to enable respondents to organise their thoughts well to provide good information.

3.12 Data management and analysis

To manage the data in order to ensure that the data gathered was managed, a rigorous system was put in place. A field notebook and a data collection diary were maintained along the main digital audio-recorder used for data collection.

To facilitate the accurate presentation of respondents' views, all the interviews (apart from 3 respondents) were audio recorded with their full consent. The process of recording the interviews was to help overcome the natural limitation of human memories and the oversight of relevant facts that may have occurred due to listening and writing concurrently. Further, it helped for a thorough re-examination of what was said during the analysis stage (Maxwell, 2005). The collected data was organized and prepared for analysis by listening to the audio tapes over and over to get a general sense of each interview and to ensure that all the essential questions were tackled.

Two notebooks were acquired as a field note and a data collection diary and these served two different purposes. First, they served as a backup for the audio recording of the respondents. Although the researcher preferred to have all the interviews audio recorded, it was necessary to acquire a notebook as a tool for data recording. One reason that necessitated the acquisition of the notebook was in relation to instances where respondents did not want to be audio recorded. In such circumstances, the notebook was used as the primary data recording instrument. As mentioned above, there were three such cases. Another reason was that the notebooks served as a supplementary data recording instrument for short notes on other observations that could not be tape-recorded, for example; the body language, mood, facial expressions including cues and other happenings in the environment. Although this was done for

all the interviews, it was particularly useful when the data were being prepared for analysis because the initial thoughts of the researcher after listening to the tapes were compared with the field notes and diary so as to triangulate the data collected.

All interviews were transcribed into text. The ones which were not tape recorded were written in the text during the interviews. For those ones which the notes were not very detailed during the interviews, they were expanded after the interview and field notes were typed. As mentioned previously, the audio tapes were listened to over and over again before transcription. This helped the researcher to gain a general sense of each interview. The transcription was captured as “verbatim” as possible. The transcripts were sorted and organized based on whether they were gathered from female administrators in public universities, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Social Welfare Department or Human Resource Directors of the universities.

Owing to the enormous task involved in transcriptions, the interviews were transcribed at the end of each day. This approach helped the researcher to overcome the challenges of piling up interviews and transcribing them at the end of the data collection process. This could have presented the researcher with a sense of seeing the task as an enormous one and therefore falling into the trap of rushing through the tapes. Such an act could lead to significant errors which could have affected the intent of the study.

Again, Lofland and Lofland (1995) suggest that transcribing data as and when a set of data is available, allows the researcher to be more aware of emerging themes. The emerging themes were further explored in subsequent interviews. Following

transcriptions, transcripts were read through and as the notes were being read, ideas that emerged from the notes were noted for later comparisons to be made. Key questions that were identified to help begin the analysis were also noted.

The above exercises gave the researcher an idea of what the respondents had noted and an overview of the tone of ideas, the depth of the information and how to use the information appropriately. The themes that were common and sub-themes were categorized and organized to give coherence to the data. The themes were analyzed for each individual interview and across different interviews such that the interconnecting themes could be developed into a narrative that will tell the stories of the selected females (Creswell, 2009). The emergent themes from the interviews were interpreted and discussed to reflect the objectives of the study, incorporating the theories and observations from the secondary sources of information.

Narrative analysis was used to analyse the data. According to Czarniawska-Joerges (2004), narrative analysis is a method of qualitative research in which the researcher listens to the stories of the research subjects, attempting to understand the relationships between the experiences of the individuals and their social framework. Narrative, therefore, can be said to provide a portal into two realms:

- i. The realm of experience, where speakers lay out how they as individuals experience certain events and confer their subjective meaning onto these experiences; and
- ii. The realm of narrative means (or devices) that are put to use in order to make (this) sense (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012).

Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) posited that narrative inquiry uses field texts, such as stories, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos (and other artifacts), and life experience, as the units of analysis to research and understand the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives.

The study adopted Labov's thematic organisation or synchronic organisation. This method is considered useful for understanding major events in the narrative and the effect those events have on the individual constructing the narrative (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). The approach utilises an 'evaluation model' that organises the data into an abstract (What was this about?), an orientation (Who? What? When? Where?), a complication (Then what happened?), an evaluation (So what?), a result (What finally happened?), and a coda (the finished narrative). Said narrative elements may not occur in a constant order; multiple or reoccurring elements may exist within a single narrative.

With Labov's thematic organisation, the data was first organised under the various research objectives. Under each research objective, common themes and sub-themes were developed. With each sub-theme, the study presented the main issues or findings that emerged, the relationship with the major issues with literature, and the implications on the work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana. In some of the occasions, the analyses were further disaggregated down to the various sampling cohorts. This was critical to ascertain how differences in the family characteristics of women influence the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

In addition, the analyses were at some other points disaggregated along the three selected public universities to assess differences and similarities in the work-life balance of the respondents and the associated explanations. This was crucial since the selected universities were located in three different cities in Ghana of different sizes and levels of facilities as well as different accommodation issues and traffic levels, which all could influence one's movement and work-life balance. Further, the differences in the implementation of human resource policies and practices across the three selected public universities could cause variations in the work-life balance among female administrators across the universities.

It is critical for the researcher of any qualitative study to be fully aware of her subjective perspective(s) and bracket them. Bracketing is a "reflective process by which opinion and prejudice are (temporarily) suspended to focus attention on what is essential in the phenomenon" (leVasseur, 2003p.411). Tufford and Newman (2012) emphasize the need for a researcher in qualitative work to bracket his or her subjective perspectives in order to "mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of unacknowledged preconceptions related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project". (p.18)

In this study, the subjective realities and perspectives of the researcher were clearly brought to bear. The reason is that the researcher had many similarities with the respondents of the study. First, the researcher was the mother of a nine-year-old daughter at the time of starting her Ph.D. studies. She had to leave the child with her parents in cape coast and attend school at the University of Ghana in Accra. This clearly shows that she had to juggle motherhood and studies while relying heavily on family support especially in caring for the child. Getting to the end of her studies, her

child had attained the teenage age, caring for a child at such a crucial stage in life in absentia had its own attendant encumbrances.

As an older child caring for aged parents and a daughter as well as a Ph.D. candidate, she had to find varied ways of balancing family life and studies. She also identified strongly with her respondents from the non-teaching field in the universities, working in the university environment as a student and a worker. This background of the researcher was one of the realities that the researcher shared with her respondents.

The researcher was fully aware that her assumptions, values, interests, emotions, and theories (subjective perspective) could inevitably influence how data are gathered, interpreted and presented (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Based on this, one sought to bracket her subjective perspective by constantly asking herself what it was that respondents were seeking to communicate in their narratives. To answer the question as to what the respondents sought to communicate, she would listen to three interviews in a row, noting her initial comments and questions, then after a few days, listen to the same tapes over and over again. She applied this same strategy to the transcripts and field notes. Ensuring that few days elapsed before referring to the data presented her with a fresh perspective each time. After reading the notes several times, the themes that remained consistent were selected as the major themes for analysis. The themes that did not run through were not discarded but interrogated further to come out with how best to analyze and discuss them without imposing the researcher's own subjective perspectives on them.

The researcher is not claiming that the analysis interpretation and discussion of data are free from her subjective perspective(s) as she is not sure any researcher can fully bracket herself from her data (Salsbury, 1989). She seeks to emphasize that,

throughout the research process, she was aware of her own subjectivities as much as practicable, bracketed them from her data so as to present the lived experiences of her participants as best as she could. However, she believes that her own subjectivities also helped enrich the analyses she came up with since she possessed an empathetic understanding of the experiences of the participants.

3.13 Reflections from the Field of study

In general, female administrators and respondents were eager to share their experiences with me; they appreciated the fact that I had chosen a topic on work-life balance. I interviewed most of the participants in their offices except for one who asked me to come to her home due to her schedule at the office. My participants did not recognize me as an outsider; they acknowledged that their voices were important to my research and for improving the lives of Ghanaian female administrators working in public universities. Indeed some of the female administrators I interviewed shared their personal stories including the challenges they encountered as they tried to climb through the rungs of their profession concurrently with the socio-cultural roles they had to play. Lykes and Coquillon (2007) encourage researchers to situate themselves as facilitators of the voices of the respondents by creating opportunities through which they are enabled to recount their stories and where there is a public to both hear these stories and be held accountable to storytellers. The respondents were anxious to ascertain whether their experiences were similar in the other universities where I had interviewed. My respondents indicated that they would love to read my dissertation after the research is completed.

One of the challenges encountered during the data collection process was difficulty in identifying respondents for the various sampling cohorts, rescheduling of

appointments causing delays, and poor perception of respondents on researchers. Some of the respondents complained that researchers use them to get money, while others did not want to be voice recorded. The researcher explained to them that the study was for academic purposes and also to inform policies to enable them to meet their work-life demands effectively. Respondents who did not want to be voice recorded had their responses recorded through writing. Other challenges encountered in the data collection were delays by the human resource departments to give approval for the exercise, and delays by the association executives to constitute their teams for the focus group discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. The chapter is organised under the following themes; sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators, effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities, policies and strategies established by the Universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators, and effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance.

4.1 Sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators

This section presents the results and discussion on the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was imperative because Hughes and Bozionelos (2007) posited that efforts to manage work-life balance should first consider the sources of competing work-life demands. This enables people to devise strategies to effectively manage the activities and allocated times in each domain to balance work-life demands. The section was organised under themes and sub-themes based on the responses from the data collection exercise. The main themes were socio-cultural factors, economic factors, and organisational factors. Each theme was further organised under sub-themes.

Socio-cultural Factors

The study found socio-cultural factors as one of the cardinal sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities. This was because some life and professional roles are defined and interpreted through socio-cultural

perspectives of the people under investigations. Thus, apart from the natural role of women as caregivers of babies in the family, other professional and family roles are socio-culturally tilted against women which disrupts their work-life balance. According to Aryee et al. (2005), the Ghanaian society is a traditional one which assigns so many family roles and responsibilities to women, making it challenging for women to combine professional roles with family responsibilities. In other words, the socio-cultural roles of women have been a source of competing demand over their professional duties. The study categorised the socio-cultural factors presenting competition over work-life demands for female administrators in public universities into marriage, family stage, and menstrual and reproduction processes. Responses on how the socio-cultural factors act as sources of work-life demand on female administrators were explained under these sub-themes.

Marriage

Marriage was found to be a critical source of competing work-life demand on female administrators in public universities. Even though marriage was seen as a blessing by the female administrators, some conditions and elements in marriages were making it difficult for them to ensure a balance between their work and family demands. The study found that the location of husbands was considered as an essential element influencing work-life balance situations of female administrators. Thus, female administrators who were not staying with their husbands had to be paying regular visits to maintain the relationship and preserve the marriage. A female administrator from UG who was not staying with the husband reported,

“you always retire to bed very tired because of so many house duties... sometimes waking up from bed to prepare for work becomes very

difficult... you come to work and you still feel tired and sleepy... it sometimes affects the quality of my work output”.

Another respondent from KNUST who was also not staying with the husband stated,

“My sister, as I’m speaking to you now, my husband is threatening me with a divorce that if I don’t quit my job to come and stay with him in Sunyani... I don’t know the kind of job I’m going to do there but he is insisting... it’s not easy for me at all... I’m very much confused... I get to work always in a confused state... I smile because I have to but deep within me, I’m a confused woman... sometimes I vent my anger and frustration on my subordinates which I regret later”.

The above statements show how marriage elements create confusion for female administrators in the workplace. The extension of such frustration affects the focus and the quality of work done in the work domain. Thus, family issues have the capacity to negatively influence the quality of time a female administrator spends in the work domain.

A participant from UCC who was not staying with the husband stated,

“I have thought on a number of occasions to leave my husband because I don’t see his usefulness anymore... I do everything all by myself, yet he doesn’t appreciate me... he hardly comes here... he always wants us to go to his place... so if even a month and I don’t get time to go there because of job demands, he won’t come here... I pray I don’t break my marital vows one day... yes, I am a woman and have feelings so sometimes I feel attracted to my male colleagues which is not my fault”.

The statement above shows that the absence of men in marriages increases the workload in the life or family domain on professional women such as female administrators which creates frustration in the attempt to meet the demands from both work and life domains.

Another issue about marriage identified by the study as a source of competing demands in the work-life nexus of female administrators in public universities was the type of husband. From the study, husbands were categorised as supportive and non-supportive. Responses at this section were from the female administrators who stayed with their husbands. The study found that female administrators with supportive husbands were effectively able to attend to their work-life demands. Thus, supportive husbands provided support to their wives (female administrators) in their family roles to ease pressure on them to balance work-life demands.

A female administrator from KNUST reported,

“my husband picks the children from school before picking me to the house... he assists them with their homework and engages them after work, while I concentrate on cooking and other house chores... he helps in preparing the children for school as well... this helps us to leave for work early”.

A respondent from UCC also stated,

“my husband really supports me with the house chores... he cooks well so I don't get disturbed when I'm still engaged at the office outside working hours... he understands the nature of my job”.

A participant from UG indicated,

“my husband makes it easy for me to combine my family roles with that of my job duties”.

All the above shows the critical role supportive husbands play in ensuring those female administrators in public universities effectively combine their work roles with family duties.

On the other hand, female administrators with non-supportive husbands were found to have difficulty to balance their work-life demands. Non-supportive husbands were described as those who were not providing satisfactory assistance to their wives in the execution of home chores and attending to other family responsibilities. The study found that female administrators with non-supportive husbands struggled to meet work and family competing demands. A female administrator from UG stated,

“I have to create time for both job and family demands... you always retire to bed very tired, while he goes around with friends to have fun... I’m always wearing this hairstyle because I don’t even get time for myself”.

Another female administrator from KNUST indicated,

“I sometimes ignore some of his requests because of tiredness and frustration I have to endure in meeting demands and pressures from both work and family without his support”.

A respondent from UCC also reported,

“I have to run around the whole day with excuses to my superior officer just to meet some family demands and occupational demands... my husband is

not supportive at all... sometimes when I see men sending and picking up their kids from school I wonder where mine was coming from”

The results show the frustration, stress, and strain married female administrators with non-supportive husbands had to endure to meet their work-life demands. It also shows the importance of the roles played by husbands in supporting wives to balance their work-life demands.

The results above showed that issues about marriage played an essential role in the sources of work-life demands on female administrators in public universities. The results further showed that female administrators across the three public universities had similar issues regarding marriage and its impact on their work-life balance. This was because the three universities were located in cosmopolitan areas with a mix-up of several tribes or ethnic groups and people from diverse backgrounds with different perceptions about marriage. As a result, cultural differences among the people of Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast where UG, KNUST, and UCC are respectively located, have minimal influence on marriages. In other words, the cosmopolitan areas in Ghana have assumed a universal or common cultural identity which explains the similarities in the marital factors influencing work-life demands of female administrators in public universities.

Family stage

Another socio-cultural factor identified as a source of competing work-life demand on female administrators in public universities was the family stage. It was defined in terms of the marital status of female administrators and the growth stages of their wards. With this factor, the sampled female administrators from the three public universities were organised into five cohorts; singles, married without children,

married with children within five years of age, married with children within six and 17 years of age, and married with children above 18 years of age. These family stages were deemed important in analysing work-life balance among professional women, such as the administrators of public universities because they all have implications on the family demands on the workers.

Thus, the hypothesis was those female administrators with children within the formative years will have more demands from the family domain and will also be more committed to pressures and activities from the family domain as against those coming from the work domain. On the other hand, female administrators with matured children will require less attention from the family domain since the children could provide support in the execution of some family roles expected of the women. This hypothesis was largely influenced by the natural and socio-cultural role of women as caregivers of children.

The study found that female administrators, who were single largely, did not find work-life demands as challenging. However, those with children under the age of five years and below 12 years complained of always having divided attention both at work and at home. From the study, a female administrator from UG with children under five years of age stated,

“At work, you will be thinking about kids in other people’s care, whether they are handling them well or not, while thinking about your uncompleted job tasks at home”.

A female administrator from KNUST also stated,

“Honestly, the three months maternity leave is woefully inadequate... how do you expect us to do six months exclusive breastfeeding with three months

maternity leave?... initially, what I did was to wake up in the night and express as much milk as I can for my baby. But I realized that it was taken a toll on my health because when he's up I can't sleep again... for me what I did was to take my annual leave... I was not even fully fit after the three months maternity leave”.

From the study, a female administrator from UCC reported,

“It is really difficult preparing the kids for school... you have to wake up early, prepare their food, iron their uniforms, bath and dress them... even after waking up at dawn, I mostly get to the office late”.

The results show how work-life imbalances, caused by the family stage, could affect the job performance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. All the above quotations showed that female administrators in public universities with children within five years of age were largely not satisfied with their work-life balance. The results also showed that female administrators with such characteristics across the three public universities had similar experiences with regard to work-life balance. This was due to the common policies used to regulate human resource activities across public universities in Ghana.

It was, however, found that female administrators of public universities with children between 12 years and 18 years of age were largely satisfied with their work-life balance. From the study, some of the respondents with children within the ages of 12 and 18 years reported that such children support other young siblings as well as help mothers to perform family duties. This helped to reduce the activity load and stress of female administrators in the family domain, thereby enabling them to concentrate much on their professional job. One of the respondents from KNUST indicated that

the eldest son picks the younger siblings from school to the house, while she is at work. Another respondent from UCC reported that the eldest child within 12 and 18 years of age helped the younger siblings to prepare their homework and prepare them for school.

The study, however, found that female administrators with children above 18 years of age complained of difficulties in meeting their work-life demands. Such respondents were mostly above 50 years of age. This suggests that aging and its associated deterioration in the physical strength, activeness, and health of people influences a professional woman's ability to meet her work-life demands. Some of the respondents attributed their difficulties in coping with job stress to menopause and other health-related issues as well as shifting of their focus to family and grandparenting issues. From the study, a female administrator from KNUST with children above the age of 18 years stated, *"I take care of my grandchildren to enable my daughter cope well with her job and marriage in Accra"*.

Another respondent from UG reported,

I sometimes feel very uncomfortable at work... you will feel too cold with the air conditioner on but when you put it off too you will feel too hot and be sweating all over... the menopausal stage is not easy at all... just that because of education, we understand some of the changes the body is going through".

From the results, other family matters coupled with menopausal changes in the bodies of female administrators in public universities in Ghana makes it difficult for them to meet effectively their work-life demands.

Menstrual and reproduction processes

Menstrual and reproduction processes were found to be another socio-cultural element influencing work-life demands of female administrators in public universities. Issues concerning menstrual and reproductive processes (pregnancy) were about the discomfort, pain, and strain associated with the two, and the little regard given to them in the execution of job duties and family responsibilities. The study found that some menstruation and pregnancy periods were associated with discomfort and pains which made it difficult for female administrators to perform their dual roles about work and family. In other words, such discomfort and pains cause stress and reduce the energy levels of female administrators to effectively meet work-life demands.

It was revealed from the focus group discussion with the executives of women caucuses in the three selected public universities that some professional women, and for that matter, female administrators in public universities, find it extremely difficult to combine work and life demands in their menstrual period due to pain and discomfort. It was explained during the focus group discussion that menstrual pains are really uncomfortable and sometimes unbearable which slows down one's functionality. A female administrator from UG reported, *"I always have to slow down work during menstrual periods due to headaches, abdominal pains and discomfort"*.

Whereas some respondents perceived the institution of policies to address the difficulties associated with menstrual and reproduction to be a disadvantage to female engagement in professional jobs and more likely to be subjected to abuse, others were of the view that acknowledging menstrual difficulties in human resource management policies will help to encourage more women to assume professional duties. This suggests the lack of a consensus among female administrators about the need to

incorporate menstrual discomfort and difficulties in human resource management policies in public universities.

A female administrator from UCC stated,

“Pregnancy periods slow us down as women... By the time you go through the nine months pregnancy period with maternal leave for delivery and breastfeeding, many of your colleagues may have gone ahead of you in terms of writing papers for promotion... Your office will have been declared vacant and filled by another person... So you come back and have to be posted to a new office with different job tasks... It’s difficult but you can’t complain because of it’s natural”.

The above result shows that female administrators are naturally disadvantaged in job progression due to issues related to pregnancy. It also shows that the maternal leave policy is not adequate enough in addressing issues related to pregnancy among professional women in public universities. The above also shows that socio-cultural factors have significant influence over the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities.

Economic factors

Economic factors were also identified as a critical source of competing work-life demands on female administrators in the public universities of Ghana. According to Warren (2004), economic elements could either enhance or frustrate the work-life balance of professional women. Positive compliments from economic elements could enable professional women to effectively balance their work-life demands, whereas negative demands from economic elements could create extra frustration to distort the work-life relationship. The main issues considered under the economic factors were

female administrators with other economic commitments apart from their work and transportation issues.

Other economic commitments aside from primary employment

The study found that female administrators with other economic commitments such as trading had it more difficult to balance their work-life demands. From the study, many shops on university campuses were owned by female administrators. As a result, such female administrators had to create time to manage the shops for good returns. This affected the work-life balance as they had to share their scarce resources (time and energy) among all these competing demands. With the extra economic commitment, some of such female administrators had to join the workers in the shops after the official working hours to relieve them of their duties and continue trading for some time before going home. They report to the shops on weekends and holidays as well to continue their private business activities. This could reduce the quantum and quality of time such female administrators have with their families, thereby distorting their work-life balance. The implication is that such female administrators did not have clear boundary lines between work and life domains.

One of the respondents from UG who was engaged in extra economic activities reported that

“Sometimes, we also have to take advantage of opportunities on the university campus... we cannot allow only the men to grab such opportunities... if you only think about family issues you will not move on because we need monies from such businesses to supplement our salaries to meet our household demands... I, for example, use part of the income

from my shop to employ house help to take care of my kids so that I can focus on my business”.

A female administrator from UCC narrated that such extra income generating activities sometimes conflict with their job roles as they had to frequently check on the activities and items in the shops during working hours. Another female administrator from UCC reported that they engage in extra income generating activities because their husbands were not contributing much to the household budget. The result shows that the female administrators perceived other economic commitments as an opportunity to enhance their living conditions or quality of life.

Transportation issues

This section considers how issues about transportation could influence work-life balance on female administrators in public universities. It included access to vehicles and traffic congestions that female administrators in public universities had to contend with daily in meeting their work-life demands. The study found that female administrators with personal vehicles were able to switch between their dual roles of work and life more swiftly and conveniently than those who had to depend on public transport. A female administrator from the KNUST with a vehicle stated that,

“after work, I just pick the kids from school and drive them home and continue with the family activities”.

Another participant from UG reported that

“vehicle has become a necessity because you have to leave home very early to get a car to drop the kids to school before coming to work... after work, I have to join long queues with the kids to get a car home... I sometimes have to close early to avoid issues about getting a car home... I am thinking of securing a loan to acquire a vehicle”.

The study, however, found that there were no significant differences among female administrators across the three public universities with respect to the extent to which their engagement in other economic activities influences their work-life demands. This could be attributed to the common conditions of service for female administrators in all public universities in Ghana.

Nonetheless, the female administrators of the UG largely complained of traffic congestion as a critical element influencing their ability and capacity to effectively meet their work-life demands. Thus, the study found that heavy vehicular traffic and road congestion compelled most of the female administrators to leave home early to work, drop their kids to school, and return home late to attend to their family needs. From the study, a female administrator from UG narrated,

“I am forced to wake up at dawn and prepare the kids for school just to avoid heavy vehicular traffic on the road... sometimes you get to work already exhausted from not having proper sleep and driving through the rush hour... after work is even worse since everybody is also going home... you get home very tired... sometimes I sleep without eating”.

The above narration shows the difficult conditions female administrators in public universities have to go through daily to meet their work-life balance.

Organisational factors

Another source of competing work-life demand on female administrators in public universities as identified by the study was organisational elements. These included the type of office (in terms of how busy the place is), staff strength at the office, quality of staff, and posture of supervisors. The study found that female administrators in the

principal offices (offices of the Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Finance Directors, and Provosts) found it more difficult to maintain their work-life balance than those in less busy offices. From the study, one could not afford to be late or go for long leave in such offices because of the heavy demands on them. Such female administrators spent much time at the office, even after the close of work than those in other offices.

Some of the female administrators in the principal offices of the public universities reported that they always have to wait for their superiors to close before they can go home. This suggests that the nature of work (the type of office) of some female administrators in public universities automatically can cause an imbalance in the time and output between their family and work demands. Another issue was those female administrators in offices with small staff strength and poor quality of staff found it difficult to go on leave or absent themselves for family issues. A female administrator from UCC reported that,

“I even work from home during my leave because of the small staff strength and poor quality of staff”.

Working from home disrupts the quality of time one spends in the family domain. It was also found that the posture of the supervisor was essential in effectively meeting work-life demands by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Female administrators across all the three sampled public universities indicated that having an understanding supervisor enables them to effectively balance demands from both work and life domains. The respondents reported that an understanding superior officer could close them early to attend to their kids when one has kids at the crèche. This shows the role of superior officers in ensuring a balance between work and life domains of female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

4.2 Effects of Work-Life Balance on Female

This section analyses the effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was necessary to ascertain issues female administrators have to work against and at the same time compete with their male counterparts to progress through their working career. This was expected to inform stakeholders about the impact of work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, and how the system could be improved to ensure positive outcomes from work-life demands. The section was organised under slowing down career progression, deterioration in health, reduction in job performance, separation of marriages and divorce, and capacity building to handle occupational pressure.

Slowing down career progression

The study found that one of the major effects of issues surrounding work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was the slowing down of their career progression. From the study, most of the female administrators reported that the excessive demands on them from the family domain makes it difficult to put themselves together on time to progress through the promotional rungs of the universities. A respondent from UG narrated,

“you always get home tired and always trying to manage kids and other family roles... so you don't even get the zeal and strength to write papers for promotion”.

The narration shows that the socio-cultural demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana from the family domain cause deterioration in their strength to perform other roles that could enhance their career progression.

Another female administrator from UCC presented that she is unable to attend conferences capacity building programmes to enhance her performance and fast track her promotions because she had young kids and cannot leave them to attend to such programmes outside Cape Coast for over a day. As a result, she is unable to present conference papers and learn new and emerging issues on the job, which has slowed down her career progression at the university. The results show that the socio-cultural roles expected of professional women take too much of their time, energy and attention to focus on their career progression.

This was confirmed by a female administrator from UG that women spend too much time, energy and attention with childbirth and child care, especially catering for children under five, while the males get time to put their documents together for promotion. A female administrator from UG, therefore, recommended that the promotion requirements for females should be made lower than the males to enable female administrators in public universities in Ghana to effectively combine the family roles with their job demands to achieve a balance. A female administrator from KNUST also narrates,

“Some of my colleagues are now senior assistant registrars and deputy registrars, but I’m still an assistant registrar... this is all because I have to spend some time giving birth to two children and taking care of them... there is nothing I can do because the kids are very important to me and demand more time and attention to ensure proper upbringing... this is one the reasons why some Heads do not want young female administrators... they think you will leave in the process to go and deliver and take some

long leave to take care of the children... meanwhile, they wish their wives get more time and attention for their children”.

The above narration shows that female administrators get divided attention over the two domains as to whether to focus their attention on family roles to protect their kids and forgo job role on efforts towards a promotion or vice versa.

Deterioration in health

Another negative effect of the work-life relationship as reported by the female administrators across the three sampled public universities was deterioration in health. From the study, this was largely attributed to stress resulting from poor sleeping habits. The study found that most of the female administrative staff had poor sleeping habits of less than six hours a day. This situation was worse for female administrators with children under five years of age, and even worst for female administrators in UG with children under five years of age and living outside the university’s campus. A female administrator from UG with a child of less than one year of age reported,

“I sleep less than five hours a day due to the workload in the house... I mostly experience headaches in the afternoon and take pain killers... because of that I always have pain killers in my bag... I get good sleep only during weekends, and because of that I don’t attend church or any other programmes”.

The above extract shows how work-life imbalance is causing stress for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Another participant from KNUST stated,

“I was diagnosed of hypertension after my third born, and it’s all because of the stress I go through to manage my kids and attend to my roles at work without the support from my husband... sometimes I think I will be better off being single than staying under marriage and giving birth to many children”.

The above narration shows how deteriorating health resulting from work-life imbalances could cause frustration in marriages of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. It also shows the importance of the expected supporting roles from husbands in the family to ensure work-life balance for professional women, including female administrators in public universities. Thus, the lack of such support from the husbands implies that the female administrators have to manage the kids and attend to other family roles alone while responding to their job roles and demands.

Reduction in job performance

From the study, reduction in job performance was also identified as a negative effect of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Many of the female administrators across the three sampled public universities in Ghana reported of a dip in their job performance due to strain and stress from family responsibilities and the investment of part of the working hours to attend to family roles. A respondent from UCC indicated

“I observed a reduction in my job performance after my firstborn... this was because I had divided attention... I will come to work alright but my mind will be at home... this is normal and natural due to the affection between mothers and their kids”.

The result above shows that divided attention has the tendency to reduce the job performance of female administrators in public universities. Thus, divided attention does not enable them to give maximum focus and attention to their job roles to avoid mistakes. The result further shows that efforts to measure the performance of workers, including female administrators in public universities should go beyond regularity at work to actual productivity levels and quality of work done. This is because workers could be physically present but psychologically absent.

Separation of marriages and divorce

Another negative effect of the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was the separation of marriages and divorces. The study found that some of the female administrators had either been separated from their marriages or divorced. The main argument advanced to explain the separation of marriages and divorces of the female administrators in public universities was a work-life imbalance. Many of such respondents complained of lack of support from their husbands and continuous increase in workload from the family domain. A female administrator from UG indicated,

“I realised that it would be impossible for me to achieve my career goals with marriage... this was a person who doesn't come home early and you have to do everything all by yourself and attending to the demands of the children... it was having a huge toll on my health and job performance... so I decided to opt out of the marriage send my children to my mother... and I'm okay now... sometimes if you think so much on what people in the society will say about you, you will die or not achieve anything in some marriages”.

The above narration above shows how frustration from family demands could cause work-life imbalance and compels female administrators to quit from their marriages. It also shows that work-life imbalances could create conflict with career development goals. In other words, work-life imbalance could frustrate people's ability and capacity to achieve their career development goals. The result above also demonstrates the effect of the weak social support systems and skewed socio-cultural roles against women on the creation of work-life imbalances for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Capacity building to handle occupational pressure

The only positive effect from the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was having built its capacity to handle occupational pressures. From the study, some of the sampled female administrators from the three public universities reported that their ability to perform the dual roles of work and family demands has built their capacities to respond to occupational pressures. One of such respondents from UCC indicated

“I have become used to waking up at 4:00 am and prepare myself for work... I'm always the first to report to work in my office... because of that I hardly have backlogs on my desk... I make sure I always clear issues on my desk”.

It is indicated from the above extract that work-life balance could build the capacities of female administrators to increase their job performance. However, this occurred to female administrators who had matured children and those who have family support to take care of part of the responsibilities from the life domain. Another female administrator from KNUST reported,

“I feel comfortable working at my department because of the high volumes of work... I get bored when I come to work and there is nothing much to be done... and I think it is largely due to the difficult times I spent to raise my kids while attending to job demands at the same time”.

4.3 Policies and Strategies Established by the Universities to Ensure Work-Life Balance among Female Administrators

This section presents the results on the policies and strategies established by the public universities to ensure a balance in work-life demands for female administrators. This was in line with the conceptual framework of the study that human resource management policies and job characteristics of workers influence demands from the work domain, which eventually affects the length and quality of time one spends in the family domain as well as the energy to balance the demands from both domains. From the study, the various human resource management policies and strategies that influenced the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities were organised under leave, welfare, education, and accommodation systems. The following sections explain these broad thematic human resource management policy issues and how they are contributing to ensure a work-life balance of female administrators in public universities.

Leave policy

Annual leave system is a requirement from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to every business setup to enable employees to rejuvenate their strengths and create time for family affairs. As a result, organizations in countries including Ghana which has ratified the ILO charter on employment are automatically bound to uphold

this tenet to ensure conformity with international standards and practices. The study found that all administrators, including female administrators in public universities, were entitled to 62 days (weekends inclusive) annual leave. Thus, representatives from the human resource departments of the sampled public universities reported that female administrators were entitled to 62 annual leave days to be taken as and when one deems fit and appropriate. This was confirmed by both the National Executives of GAUA and the Executives of women caucuses from the three public universities.

It emerged from the focus group discussion with the Executives of the women caucuses that some female administrators take their annual leave after their maternity leave has expired to enable them to take proper care of their babies. Some of the female administrators stated that they take their annual leave to enable them to spend quality time with their family and attend to personal and family issues. Another female administrator from KNUST reported,

“sometimes we downplay the importance of issues about leave... but my sister, I have realised that I get conception when I spend such long quality time with my husband... in that period the mind and the body are relaxed for effective interaction and conception... so for me, I don't play with my leave at all”.

The results show the important role of the leave system in balancing the work-life relationship of female administrators in public universities. Nonetheless, it was mentioned through the focus group discussion of the Executives of the women caucus of UCC that one has to discuss the annual leave with her superior for approval before she could go for the annual leave. In other words, a female administrator's ability to

take advantage of her annual leave for family issues is dependent on the approval from superior officers.

The representatives of the human resource directorates from the three public universities indicated that the policy on the annual leave system is that all accumulated leave over the years should be cleared by the end of 2017 to avoid being squashed. This was confirmed by some of the female administrators across all the three public universities that they have had some of their leave days squashed. A female administrator from UCC narrated,

“sometimes you condition your mind when you want to go for leave but your boss just thwarts the decision... it becomes so frustrating that you get angry and tired over the job”.

The results show that the rescheduling of annual leave of female administrators by their superior officers had a psychological influence on their zeal to work, which could also affect their performance.

The study found out from the focus group discussion with the Executives of the women caucuses of the three public universities that female administrators in principal offices such as the Vice Chancellors, Registrars, and Finance were hardly allowed to go on their annual leave. This was due to the high workloads associated with such offices.

Nonetheless, the focus group discussion with the National executives of GAUA members revealed that female administrators in the principal offices and other key positions or offices intentionally forfeit their annual leave to avoid replacement or transfer from such offices. It was reported from the same focus group discussion that

administrators in such principal offices in the universities were entitled to many allowances, including duty post in lieu of overtime and entertainment. This has made the appointment of administrators to such offices very competitive as almost everyone would wish to be working there. The payment of such allowances was, however, dependent on an individual being at post. The allowances are scrapped off once an individual is not at post. As a result, female administrators occupying such offices always forfeit their annual leave to continue to enjoy the benefits attached to the office.

The representatives of the human resource directorates across the three public universities further indicated that administrators were entitled to 10 days of casual leave in a year. Female administrators were, therefore, expected to take advantage of this policy to seek a balance in their work-life relationships. From the study, the implementation of this policy is such that one cannot take all the 10 days at a go. The representative of the human resource directorate of KNUST posited that casual leave is approved for workers who have to take one or two days off to attend to personal or family issues. This could be to attend to seek medical attention, accompany children to school or attend a family funeral.

However, when the number of days is to extend beyond two or three days, one has to apply for proper leave or the extra days will be deducted from the person's annual leave days. This shows that female administrators in public universities could activate their casual leave system to meet some short-term demands from the family domain to adjust the relationship between their work and life domains to ensure a balance.

A participant from UG indicated that she normally takes her casual leave when she has 'morning sickness' or feeling discomfort resulting from pregnancy or menstrual cycle. This suggests that whereas the annual leave system was used to meet long-term family needs and demands by the female administrators in public universities, the casual leave system was used for short-term personal and family needs. The implication is that both leave systems for female administrators in public universities were used to meet different levels of family needs to ensure an effective balance between work and family demands.

From the study, both the representatives of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and human resource directorates of the three sampled public universities stated that female administrators were entitled to three months maternity leave prior to delivery and three months after delivery. The aim of the maternity leave policy was to prepare pregnant female administrators for the smooth delivery and to ensure total recovery from post-delivery complications to enable them to report to work with much energy. The focus group discussion with the National Executives of GAUA revealed that the work output of most pregnant workers in the last trimester of their pregnancies are low and associated with complaints of tiredness. This was part of the reason for granting three months leave in the last trimester of the pregnancy period. The aim was to enable the female administrators to take enough rest, create more time to meet personal and family demands to ensure a smooth delivery. This strategy is laudable as it seeks to protect the sanctity of a key natural functionality (childbirth) of womanhood.

However, it was reported through the focus group discussion with the Executives of women caucuses across the three public universities that the focus of the maternity

leave policy concentrates solely on the worker without references to other government policies on the newly born babies. Thus, it was indicated through the same focus group discussion that the three months post-delivery maternal leave policy was not in tandem or unison with the government's health policy of six months exclusive breastfeeding to newly born babies.

A respondent from UG stated,

“Since the post-delivery maternity leave is not adequate to allow me to complete the six-month exclusive breastfeeding policy, I don't even start it to ensure that my babies get used to other varieties of food... so I normally use the three-month post-delivery maternity leave to introduce them to so many things to know which ones they like and those good for them... with this, I am able to prepare adequate food for them before I leave for work after the leave period”.

The narration above shows that the three-month post-delivery maternity policy discourages some female administrators in public universities from implementing the six-month exclusive breastfeeding for their babies. The study, however, found from the focus group discussion of both the National executives of GAUA and Executives of women caucuses of the three public universities that female administrators who were bent on completing the six months exclusive breastfeeding had to top their post-delivery maternity leave with part of their annual leave. Another female administrator from KNUST reported that

“I wake up deep in the night every day, since my post-delivery maternity leave expired, to express milk that will be adequate for my baby throughout the whole day... I do that because I also want my children to

benefit from the importance of breast milk... however, I have developed back pains from the process... it's not easy sitting down in an uncomfortable posture to express milk for more than two hours... the situation is even terrible when the light goes off in the process or the baby wakes up... you always come to work very tired".

The narration shows the difficulties female administrators in public universities have to endure to implement the government's health policy of six months of exclusive breastfeeding for their babies. A female administrator from UCC reported that she abandoned the exclusive breastfeeding after the post-delivery maternity leave period because of fear of contamination of the expressed milk by the caretakers of her baby.

All the above shows that the leave system of public universities has a critical influence on the quality of care female administrators have for their babies. However, there was no consensus among the Executives of the women caucuses of the three public universities about the extension of the post-delivery maternity leave to six months to enable them effectively implement the exclusive breastfeeding health policy. The main argument for any possibility of extending the post-delivery maternity leave for female administrators was that it will make them less competitive on the job front. The suggestion was that once there is the possibility of using part of the annual leave to complete the exclusive breastfeeding policy, people should take advantage of that avenue. This shows how the socio-cultural roles of women could make them less competitive in the professional environment.

To help assuage the difficulties female administrators encounter with the post-delivery maternity leave policy and caretaking of children, the representative of the human resource management directorate of UCC stated that female administrators

automatically qualify for half day work for one year. As a result, female administrators resuming from the post-delivery maternity leave close from work at 12 pm. The aim is to enable them to take maximum care of their children while remaining competitive at the job front. This policy seems to balance the issues surrounding job competitiveness and the socio-cultural role of women.

Welfare policies

Welfare policies were also identified as some of the strategies adopted by the management of the public universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana. The argument was that meeting some of the financial obligations and other critical needs of the workers in public universities in Ghana would enable them to be psychologically satisfied and stable to perform their roles effectively in both work and life domains. Welfare policies of the public universities in Ghana that female administrators were taking advantage of to balance their work and life demands were financial rewards and health support. The study found that the establishment of these policies was initiated by the human resource, finance, and legal directorates to support staff, including female administrators to enable them to meet their family's financial and other related needs to reduce pressures from their households. The intention, was also to enable them to concentrate much on their job responsibilities.

The interviews with the representatives of the human resource directorates of the three public universities indicated that the universities have a number of financial welfare policies such as the payment of electricity rebate, vehicle maintenance allowance, security and sanitation, and rent allowance for workers, including female administrators.

Interviews with the sampled female administrators in public universities, however, revealed mixed results. Whereas some were satisfied with the contribution of the welfare policies towards meeting family needs and demands, others complained that they were less adequate to effectively meet those demands. A female administrator from UG reported that she was able to employ a house help only upon her assumption as a senior member in administration because of the high quantum leap in financial benefits. The implication is that work-life balance is not only about stability in the time apportioned between the two domains, rather ensuring a balance in resource sharing to adequately meet the demands from each domain.

Apart from the direct financial welfare packages to workers of the universities, including female administrators, the study found each of the public universities had credit unions that workers fell on in times of financial distress to offset some of their emergency financial obligations from the family domain. From the study, some of the female administrators using facilities from the credit unions to pay children's school fees, rent, purchase land, purchase vehicles, and purchase other properties to meet family demands. One of the female administrators from KNUST indicated that

“easy access to soft loans from the credit union always help me to settle my rent on time to ensure peace at home while I concentrate doing my work”.

Another welfare package for female administrators in public universities in Ghana that aims at ensuring work-life balance was health care benefits for workers, spouses of workers and children. From the focus group discussions with the Executives of women caucuses of the three public universities, it was revealed that health care

benefits covering family members played a critical role in maintaining psychological balance for female administrators to concentrate on their job roles. A female administrator from UG recounted she delivered her child at the university's hospital without attracting any cost, and the critical attention given to her in the process because she works with the institution. Another female administrator from KNUST described how her son was swiftly attended to when he got sick from school without having to make any payment. They both admitted that the health benefits they enjoyed from the universities helped to relieve them of financial demands from the family domain and also enabled them to recover quickly to attend to their work-life roles.

Educational policies

The study found that all the sampled public universities had educational policies to promote work-life balance for workers, including female administrators. From the study, all three public universities had basic schools on campus to ensure easy access to school for the wards of workers. In addition, UCC and KNUST had senior high schools on the universities' campuses. From the focus group discussions with the National executives of GAUA and Executives of women caucuses of the three public universities, it was indicated that the siting of schools (especially basic schools) on the campuses of the universities has helped to reduce the stress, workers including female administrators had to go through in taking their wards to school and picking them from school every day. One of the female administrators at UCC reported,

“I did not struggle to get my kids enrolled in the university's basic school when I and my husband joined the university... in some places, you will have to comb through the town looking for a good school ready to admit

your kids... it's very hectic... but ours was facilitated by our staff membership with the university”.

Another female administrator from UG also indicated that

“the siting of a basic school on the university’s campus enables me to attend to work with my kids and go home with them... I can’t imagine driving through this heated traffic in Accra to drop my kids in different parts of the city before coming to work and picking them after work to the house”.

This shows how the siting of basic schools on the campuses of the three public universities had contributed to relieving female administrators from the time, energy and resources to have been used in dropping and picking wards to and from school. It is expected that the savings in time, energy and resources resulting from the siting of basic schools on the universities’ campuses could be used to create a balance in work-life demands and responsibilities.

Nonetheless, one of the important elements cited throughout the interviews and focus group discussion with the various groups of respondents was the lack of a formalised and recognised crèche schools on the universities’ campuses. It was generally indicated among the female administrators and the Executives of the women caucuses of the three public universities that combining job roles with caregiving for children under five years is the most difficult and stressful stage in every professional woman’s career. As a result, the lack of any recognised and formal arrangements to support women, in this case, female administrators in public universities in Ghana, makes it extremely difficult for them to ensure work-life balance.

It was indicated from the focus group discussion with the Executives of women caucus of UG that most marriage separations or divorces and quitting of jobs concerning female administrators occur at this stage in their career. It was also confirmed by the representative from the Department of Social Welfare that most marital complaints and divorces concerning professional women occur at this crucial stage. However, the representative from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) reported that the education system of Ghana does not formally recognise crèche as part of the formal education system. This could, therefore, explain the reason for their absence in the basic school system in public universities.

The study, however, found that some private individuals and religious organisations had taken steps to address this vacuum by providing crèche for workers in the universities. For example, the University Inter-denominational Church (UIC) at UCC provides crèche services to workers. This shows that when universities fail to provide certain critical services for its workers, private enterprises will take advantage of the situation. Some of the female administrators from UCC admitted that the crèche services provided by UIC have contributed to reducing their burden since they were able to provide on-site care for their wards during break periods. However, other female administrators across the three sampled public universities were of the view that once such services were not formally recognised by the Ghana Education Service (GES), they could not track the progress being made by the private crèche schools to properly integrate their wards into the formal pre-school system. Some other female administrators also complained of high charges and fees demanded by such private crèche schools.

Consequently, many of the female administrators were not patronising the services of the crèche schools and adopted other measures which compounded their stress in meeting family demands as well as encountered difficulties in balancing their work-life relationships. The frustration generated through the imbalances in work-life relationships caused some problems in the marriages of female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Another issue raised during the interviews with female administrators and focus group discussion with the Executives of women caucuses of the three public universities was the incongruence of the closing times for the schools and working hours for workers. The study found that the basic schools were closing at 3:30 pm, while workers were closing at 4:30 pm. The challenge for most of the female administrators with children at the basic school level was managing or engaging the children between 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm. From the study, many of the female administrators had their children hanging around in their offices between 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm, while others who stayed on the campuses and had elderly people at home dropped them in the house and returned to the office. Nonetheless, many of the female administrators reported of serious distractions from work and disturbances from their children after school. All the above show lapses in the educational strategies of the public universities in ensuring work-life balance for workers, including female administrators.

Accommodation policies

The study identified accommodation policies by the management of the universities as one of the strategies adopted to ensure work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The study found that all the three sampled public universities had provided campus accommodation for workers and accommodation

allowances for workers staying outside the campuses. The provision of accommodation facilities on campuses for workers, including female administrators has contributed to reducing the turnaround distance between home and work. From the study, a female administrator at UG indicated that it is the ultimate goal of every worker to get accommodation on campus to avoid heavy traffic in town and the payment of high rental charges in Accra. Another female administrator from KNUST stated,

“if you stay on campus, it takes few minutes to drive to work, but outside campus, you always have to wake up early to prepare your children and set-off early to avoid heavy traffic to get to work on time... the same thing applies when you close from work... if you don't take care your family will always eat late, which is also not good... so we all wish to get accommodation on campus”.

The above shows the extent to which workers want to benefit from the campus accommodation policy of the universities to ensure a balance in their work-life demands and relationships. A female administrator from UCC who lived on the university's campus indicated that she gets everything within the school and only drives outside the university on weekends, which helps her to get extra time to attend to family issues. The result shows that the provision of accommodation facilities for female administrators on the universities' campuses enable them to free time spaces from transportation to attend to family roles and responsibilities.

However, the focus group discussion with the Executives of the women causes revealed that only a few workers, including female administrators, have benefitted from the campus university policies. Many of the female administrators complained

of biases in the allocation of accommodation facilities to workers, whereas others complained about the lack of clarity in the criteria for the allocation of accommodation facilities to workers.

4.4 Effectiveness of the Approaches Adopted by Female Administrators to Ensure Work-Life Balance

This section assesses the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure a balance in their work-life demands and relationships. Thus, the chapter identifies the mechanisms adopted by the female administrators to balance their dual roles expected of them from the society and their employers, and how effective the mechanisms have been in enabling them to perform their dual roles. From the study, the major approaches adopted by the female administrators in public universities in ensuring work-life balance were the hiring of nannies, family support, planning the number and spacing of children, and acquiring facilities to ensure flexible and convenient movement between the dual roles.

Hiring of Nannies

From the study, one of the mechanisms or approaches adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure a balance in their work-life demands was the hiring of nannies or 'house helps'. The role of the nannies was to perform house chores which should have been performed by the female administrators. These included washing, cleaning of utensils, tidying of the house, sweeping, and weeding. Others were attending errands, going to the market, picking children from school, and taking care of children in the absence of the female administrators. Thus, the nannies provided support in the family domain of female administrators. The assistance provided by the nannies helps to relieve female administrators in public universities of

some of the socio-cultural roles and expectations on them. This enables female administrators to concentrate on their job roles.

The hiring of nannies was most common among female administrators in UG. This could be attributed to the deep cosmopolitan nature of the city of Accra. The cosmopolitan nature of Accra, resulting from it being the national capital of Ghana attracts people from all parts of the country who may not have close family or relatives to fall on in the process of ensuring work-life balance. The major option left was the hiring of nannies.

However, there were mixed reactions or responses to the effectiveness of the use of nannies to ensuring work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Whereas some of the female administrators were satisfied with the role of their nannies in ensuring work-life balance, others were sceptical and less comfortable entrusting them with so many responsibilities without any supervision. A female administrator from UG reported,

“had it not been the support from my nanny, when I gave birth to my second child, I would have quit this job... she prepared the first one to school and picked her every day, supported me with the new baby, doing all the errands, cooking and all the house chores until I became fully fit to do some things”.

From the study, the hiring of nannies was largely on the recommendations of friends and relatives. Thus, people recommended the siblings of their nannies to their friends. As a result, there was no due diligence to investigate the background of nannies before their engagements. The other mode of engaging nannies for the female

administrators of public universities in Ghana was through recruitment agencies. However, some of the female administrators reported that such agencies also do not perform any background checks on the nannies before engaging them. A female administrator from UG reported that one of such agencies used the nanny as a conduit to burgle her belongings when she was at work.

An interview with the representatives of the MGCSP and the Social Welfare Department revealed that there are no laws or policies to regulate the engagement of the services of nannies into people's homes. In addition, the Social Welfare Department did not have any database about nannies to disseminate data about them with respect to their services and people's reviews on them. This was attributed largely to the informal nature of the society and the absence of a reliable database on nannies. As a result, it is virtually not possible for the Social Welfare Department to engage the nannies and organise training programmes for them to enable them to perform professional roles to women to ensure work-life balance. A female administrator from KNUST indicated that getting a good nanny is just by luck.

Many female administrators across the three public universities reported how their nannies left without their knowledge, which brought a lot of stress on them because they had not made any provision to assume additional roles and responsibilities from the family domain. A female administrator from UG indicated that the situation really affected her job performance in the first month as she always reported to work late and left before closing to pick her kids from school. This shows how the lack of a proper contractual arrangement between female administrators and nannies backed by law or national policy could cause imbalances in the work-life demands and relationships. In other words, the informal nature of the engagement does not equip

the female administrators to secure more information from the nannies. As a result, once they live without their knowledge, they have no clue as to where to look for them or trace them. A respondent from UG narrated how a nanny nearly collapsed her marriage:

“my sister, I have sworn never to engage the services of a nanny again... a nanny nearly collapsed my marriage... I never knew she was sleeping with my husband and telling him things I have not done... she started maltreating my kids in my absence... had it not been my daughter who gave me a hint, the girl would have ruined my marriage by now... they are very dangerous some I fear them”.

The narration above shows the harrowing experience of a female administrator in engaging the services of a nanny to help balance her work-life demands.

As a result of such experiences, some female administrators with nannies had employed other mechanisms to monitor the activities of their nannies. From the study, some of the female administrators across all the three public universities reported frequently calling the house to check on activities in the house and monitor issues. Others had also installed close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in their homes to monitor the activities of nannies. This shows the extent to which some of the female administrators had lost confidence in the engagement of nannies to support family roles to maintain a work-life balance. A participant from UG narrated,

“I don't feel comfortable at all leaving my baby in the hands of the nanny, but I have no choice... I don't have anyone to support me at home... most often your physical body is present at work but your soul, heart, and mind are at home... you keep thinking about how she is taking care of the

baby... sometimes the disturbing experiences of colleagues make us lose trust in our nannies, even though they have not done anything... a colleague had her nanny fleeing the house and leaving her baby behind without any care... me, sometimes I fear that she might run away with my baby”.

The above report shows the effect of the disturbing experiences of female administrators on the trust and confidence in nannies. It also shows how the loss of trust is affecting the job performance of female administrators. Thus, the loss of trust in that social support system (engagement of nannies) is having a negative impact on the job performance of female administrators. This could result in an imbalance in demands between the work and family domains. The narration also showed the weakness in that social support system in supporting professional women to ensure work-life balance.

Family support

Another important approach adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance was the engagement of family members to support roles and responsibilities from the life domain. This was a major strategy for most of the female administrators, especially from UCC and KNUST. Thus, Cape Coast and Kumasi were less cosmopolitan compared to Accra. As a result, many of the female administrators either hailed from the Central and Ashanti regions or were raised from the two regions, which implied that they had their family members close to the places they work and stay. Some of the family members engaged in the process were mothers, siblings, mothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law.

From the study, whereas some of the female administrators had their family members staying with them to provide support in the home to ensure work-life balance for the female administrators in public universities in Ghana, others had sent their wards to the family members to cater for them to enable them concentrate fully on their jobs and marriages. Almost all the female administrators who had adopted this strategy were satisfied and comfortable with its contribution to ensuring work-life balance. A female administrator from KNUST reported,

“since my sister joined us at home, I don’t go through the daily hustle to drop the kids and pick them from school... she does everything in the house... I only go home to eat and sleep... I’m now able to attend conferences, which hitherto was not possible”.

The narration shows the role of the family members in ensuring a balance in work-life demands for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Another respondent from UCC narrated,

“once my mother is around, I don’t care about anything... I leave the kids with her... she will cater for them as long as I am away... and I’m not afraid because they are her grandchildren... she can’t harm them... the way she is happy to be around them... that’s the joy of grandparents... to have their grandchildren around them... the children are even more comfortable with the grandmother than me because she will pamper them”.

The extract above shows the psychological liberation given to female administrators in public universities in Ghana when they have their family members around them to support them in family roles and responsibilities to ensure work-life balance. The

entire argument shows that combining professional roles and socio-cultural roles for female administration in public universities makes their workload burdensome which distort their work-life relationships and also makes it virtually impossible to meet the demands from both domains without any social support systems.

Another female administrator from UG, who had sent her children to live with the mother in a different part of the country also indicated,

“I’m now able to find time for myself and work... I have been relieved from waking up at dawn to prepare children for school and them hanging around my office after school... we always got home tired... even though I sometimes miss them but I think it is all good... they normally come here when they are on vacation”.

The above extract further reveals how the socio-cultural role of women in taking care of children creates stress as they combine it with their professional duties. It also shows how relieved the female administrators are when issues about child care are taking away from their responsibilities. It demonstrates that child care responsibilities were a major cause of imbalance in work-life relationships and demands. This explains why female administrators with children under five years of age had it difficult to effectively combine their job roles with family roles. The above indicates that family support systems are very critical in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

However, the study found that family support for female administrators in public universities in Ghana attracted some costs. Many of the female administrators receiving family support reported having to sponsor their siblings in schools and apprenticeships as they stay with them. One of such female administrators from

KNUST indicated that the extent of their stay and support depended on the financial support they provided for their education or apprenticeship. This was because the female administrators were not paying for the services rendered by the family members. Accordingly, the payment of their school fees and apprenticeship fees were seen as a demonstration of commitment and satisfaction with the services they were providing. Nonetheless, almost all the respondents benefiting from family support were satisfied with the outcome. This was because they also considered such investments in their family members as an avenue to reduce poverty in the family as well as gaining social recognition in the family.

Spacing of childbirth and calculated number of children

The study found the spacing of childbirth and calculating a number of children as another approach adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure a balance in work-life relationship and demands. From the study, some of the female administrators adopted the approach to space their births and control the number of children to have. This was to enable them to create time for their job responsibilities while attending to family roles as well. With the spacing of childbirth, some of the female administrators indicated that having two children who are less than three years of age is very hectic because they have to do everything for them. As a result, they decided to space their childbirth so that the elder child could provide some form of support by taking care of the young ones when the need arises.

Almost all the female administrators who adopted this approach wanted to give birth every three to four years. They indicated that such an approach enabled them to create adequate time for both their family demands and the demands from their jobs. It also enabled them to gain much energy to meet the demands of both work and life

domains. These were essential as time and energy were important elements in ensuring work-life balance as described in the role scarcity theory.

In addition, the female administrators adopted the approach of having a few numbers of children to enable them to balance their work-life activities and demands. From the study, many of the female administrators in public universities in Ghana wanted to give birth to a maximum of three children.

Nonetheless, many of the female administrators who adopted this approach described it as less effective in ensuring work-life balance. This was because the decision to space childbirth and have fewer children was met with a lot of pressure from husbands, parents, and in-laws. As a result, many of the female administrators could not space their children as they desired, part of which was attributed to the failure of contraceptives and miscalculation of safe periods. In addition, pressure from society (husbands, parents, and in-laws) compelled many female administrators in public universities in Ghana to have more children than they had planned for or desired. From the study, many female administrators who shared such experiences admitted to having stressful schedules to meet work and life demands. Consequently, they have adopted other mechanisms to enable them to establish a work-life balance. In other words, pressure from society limited the effectiveness of this approach in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Ensuring flexible and convenient movement

Another mechanism adopted by the female administrators in public universities in Ghana to ensure work-life balance was ensuring flexible and convenient movement to switch between family and job roles. From the interviews with the female administrators and focus group discussion with the Executives of women caucuses in

the three universities, having a personal vehicle to commute between the dual roles is a necessity as it helped to reduce the time and energy exerted in switching roles between the two domains. A participant from UG reported,

“just after one month of taking my child to school early in the morning and picking her from school to join public bus home, I told him I will leave him if he doesn’t support me to buy a car... he agreed with dropping and after six months we acquired a vehicle... even though it was a drain on our finances, it’s been very helpful... we move around in our own convenience... it makes us all happy”.

The extract above shows the convenience giving to female administrators in having personal vehicles to switch between job roles and family roles.

Nonetheless, the study found that this approach was always supported with other mechanisms in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was because the flexibility and convenience in moving with children was only a mechanism to switch between the two roles. Some other mechanisms adopted by the female administrators were having extra classes for children and taking children to friends’ houses. This resulted from the situation where the schools closed earlier than the closing hours for work. The challenge was how to manage the children between their closing hours and the time the female administrators will close from work.

The use of extra classes was to keep the children engaged in the schools’ premises until the female administrators get the time to pick them. From the study, this was considered a convenient approach since the children were still in the care of their

teachers. However, some of the female administrators indicated that the children get too exhausted. A female administrator from UG reported,

“Many times, I see that my boy is exhausted but I don’t have any other choice”.

The result shows that the lack of available opportunities for female administrators in public universities in Ghana to handle their children after school is a major concern that compels them to adopt various mechanisms, which might not be in the best interest of their children, to ensure work-life balance.

The study also recorded a mixed reaction in the mechanism of taking children to friends’ houses after school to enable them to concentrate on their job roles. Whereas some of the female administrators were satisfied because the children were under the care of adults, some also reported that children sometimes come home with bruises resulting from fighting and playing. As a result, some of the female administrators were not comfortable sending their children to the homes of their friends to wait for them after school. The result shows that this approach was less effective in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Working from the house

The study found that some of the female administrators have resorted to taking part in their job roles home to enable them to supervise the activities of their wards after school. From the study, some of the female administrators across the three sampled public universities in Ghana indicated that to ensure the protection of their children, they close from work and take their children home when they close from school and continue working from the house in the evening to meet their deadlines and reduce the workloads.

A respondent from UG reported that the strategy enabled her to avoid heavy traffic and time spent in reaching home as well as increased her job output. The result shows that having children under control and proper supervision enabled female administrators to concentrate on their job roles. The result further shows that reducing the time for switching between job roles and family roles helps to improve the working output of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This suggests that when the management of the universities steps up efforts to provide more accommodation facilities for workers, including female administrators, it could help improve their work-life relationships, thereby contributing to increasing their performance. With this strategy, female administrators might not leave work before closing times to avoid heavy traffic on the roads and create much time to execute their job functions and responsibilities. Another female administrator from UCC narrated,

“the workload is so much that I always have to carry some home and work on them at night... even in my leave periods, I work from the house and deliver my outputs through the email to the office... if I don't do that the work will continue to pile up and people will be given me pressure... as a result, I create less time for family activities... sometimes my husband complains but the pressure is too much from the office”.

The extract above shows that some female administrators kept a permeable border between work and life roles to enable them to ensure work-life balance.

Nonetheless, a female administrator from KNUST reported that disturbances from her children do not allow her to be effective working from the house after work. This was because she had to attend to their homework, bath them and prepare dinner for the family. The result shows that closing early from work to take children home does not

always enable female administrators to balance their work-life demands to increase work output. This shows that the strategy of working from the house had mixed effects on the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. However, all the above shows that having a strategy to effectively engage children after school would enable female administrators in public universities in Ghana to ensure a balance in work-life demands and roles.

The less effectiveness of the majority of the strategies adopted by the female administrators in public universities in Ghana to achieve a work-life balance and the associated challenges encountered showed that the female administrators largely experienced work-life imbalance. This is likely to translate in a more negative work-life balance effect, in terms of their career progression, deterioration in health and a dip in job performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results or findings of the study. It is organised under four main themes namely; sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators, effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities, policies and strategies established by the Universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators, and effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance.

5.1 Sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators

This section presents the results and discussion on the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Socio-cultural factors

The sub-themes identified under the socio-cultural factors were marriage, family stage, and menstrual and reproduction processes.

Marriage

The study found that in cases where the female administrators were not living with their husband, the women had to combine house chores with child care, and job responsibilities all by themselves, while creating time to pay regular visits to the husbands as well. This created stress and dissatisfaction among such women in the attempt to meet or balance work-life demands. Relating this marital issue with the role

scarcity theory by Goode (1960) shows that female administrators who were not staying with their husbands experienced all the three sources of work-life conflict; time (i.e. time dedicated to one role makes it difficult to meet the requirements of the other role), strain (i.e. strain from involvement in one role makes it difficult to engage in another role) and behaviour (behaviours required in one role make it difficult to meet the requirements of another role).

The results showed that the vacuum created by the absence of husbands in the family increases the workload on the female administrators in public universities which creates work-life imbalance. This situation is partly explained from the traditional nature of the Ghanaian society that has assigned child caregiving role to women and professional roles to men. However, as society gets modernised with more women taking professional roles, it was expected that issues about child nurturing will also be a shared responsibility between men and women.

Whereas the society was quick to accept the professional roles of women as a medium to support men in taking care of the family, it has, however, been slow in accepting child nurturing as a shared responsibility between men and women. This explains the difficulties female administrators (especially those who were not staying with their husbands) go through to meet both work and family demands. Thus, in the situation where husbands work in a different region or community from the wives, the children are given to the women to cater for them to enable the men to concentrate on their jobs. Cinamon and Rich (2010) postulated that the socio-cultural biases perpetrated against women are the underlying causes of work-life conflicts among professional women in developing countries. Buddhapriya (2009) opined that work-life imbalance

has a psychological toll on women which could subsequently have a subtle effect on their output and progress in both work and life domains. The above quotation shows that work-life conflicts could have rippling effects on other working colleagues.

According to Shobha (2015), the greater psychological effect of marital issues on work-life imbalance in professional women compared to men in traditional societies in Africa is as a result of the socio-cultural expectation that a woman should preserve her body and is more honoured in marriage. As a result, most women continue to endure work-life imbalance created through marital challenges over a long period of time (Md-Sidin et al., 2008). This may explain the difficulty and the psychological toll the female administrator in the above narration was going through. Porter and Ayman (2010) posited that quite significant numbers of professional women in traditional societies will quit their professional jobs to maintain their marriages and families as a solution to work-life imbalance.

The study also found that work-life imbalance created as a result of the absence of husbands posed threats to the survival of marriages. The result corroborates the assertion of Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) that the increased numbers of marital conflicts and divorces in Ghana are largely as a result of work-life imbalances. One of the critical and basic family roles in marriages expected to be performed by each partner towards the other is to satisfy the emotional needs of one another. Accordingly, the moment one is denied of such emotional satisfaction from the family domain, he or she decides to consider sources external to the marriage to satisfy that need. Md-Sidin, et al. (2008) postulated that poor emotional satisfaction from the family domain creates psychological dissatisfaction which affects a balance in the

satisfaction between the two domains. This has the tendency to sway the commitment of an employee from one domain to the other, thereby creating work-life imbalance.

The study found that husbands support roles in children handling were very much appreciated by the female administrators and contributed immensely in balancing their work-life demands. Such support enabled female administrators to concentrate on their job responsibilities. In other words, shared responsibilities in the family domain between husbands and wives enable women to satisfactorily meet the competing demands from both work and life domains. The results agree with the assertion of Jennings and McDougald (2007) that complementarity between husbands and wives helps to reduce pressure from responsibilities and activities from both work and life domains which enables them to balance demands from the two sources satisfactorily. Jennings and McDougald (2007) also argued that home support provided by husbands to their wives is justified from the point women were socio-culturally accepted to be professionally engaged at the work front. Jennings and McDougald (2007) further indicated that it is just ethically and morally right that once women are economically engaged to support the family, home chores become a shared responsibility between husbands and wives to balance work-life demands.

The study, however, found that married female administrators with non-supportive husbands had to endure frustration, stress, and strain to meet their work-life demands. The result agrees with the resource-scarcity theory that time, strain and behavior are major sources of work-life imbalance. In other words, work and life demands compete over time and energy, and as a result, some competing demands cannot be executed concurrently due to time and energy limitations. Other activities which

could be executed simultaneously are also restrained by energy limitation which translates into strain and frustration on the professional women. Bekker et al. (2010) opined that the job performance and physical appearance of professional women could sometimes be explained through the nature of support they receive in the execution of their family roles. This explains the reason why one of the female administrators complained of wearing the same hairstyle for some time.

According to Van den Broeck et al. (2010), the deliberate refusal of husbands to support their professional wives because of socio-cultural reasons is perpetration of cultural injustice against women. Jennings and McDougald (2007) also posited that husbands support to their wives in home chores should be reciprocal for the economic engagement of women to support men to meet the basic and esteem needs of the family. Thus, the support provided by husbands helps to reduce the stress and strain professional women have to go through to perform such roles in the family aside from their occupational demands. Such support enables professional women such as female administrators to gain time for other work-life demands without getting strained.

Family stage

The study found that work-life imbalances, caused by the family stage, affected the job performance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was partly due to the fact that children in the formative years required more attention and care. In addition, the natural bond between mothers and their babies makes it difficult for them to leave them with other caregivers over a long period of time. The results also show policy incoherence between the maternal leave period and the government's health policy of promoting six months of exclusive breastfeeding by

mothers to their children. The study found that pregnant female administrators in public universities were entitled to three months leave prior to and after delivery.

The complaint was that the three months post-delivery leave was not adequate enough to commit oneself to the six months exclusive breastfeeding programme. As a result, some of the respondents indicated that they abandoned the exclusive breastfeeding programme from the onset to avoid difficulties when resuming work after the three months post-delivery leave. Thus, female administrators in public universities find it difficult to balance their work-life demands to meet maternal leave and exclusive breastfeeding policy expectations. This policy incoherence between the maternal leave policies in public universities and the six months exclusive breastfeeding health campaign could cause some children to be denied with the necessary nutrients from breastfeeding required for proper growth and development. According to Perrigino, Dunford, and Wilson (2018), policy incoherence in work-life balance has the capacity to cause further damage to socio-economic structures and systems as people will be underperforming from both domains.

The results further show that policy incompatibilities were creating work-life imbalance on female administrators in public universities. This was in agreement with the conceptual framework and assertion from Fontinha, Van Laar and Easton (2018) that human resource management policies influence work-life balance. The study found that attempts to meet the competing demands from HRM policy on maternal leave and the six months exclusive breastfeeding health policy within the work-life domain were causing too much strain on lactating female administrators in public universities. The implication is that policy incoherence could cause excessive work-

life demands on female administrators leading to stress and strain in the performance of their duties.

It was also shown from the results that life demands and family responsibilities on female administrators with children less than five years of age sometimes cause them to use part of the allocated time for the work domain. This could affect the performance or job achievement of such female administrators, which could further affect their career progression in the universities. The result is in consonance with the argument in the conceptual framework and assertion by Kenny (2018) that life stage influences activities in the life domain of female administrators in public universities which could distort their work-life balance. The study found that reduction in the physical strength of female administrators in public universities as they age makes it difficult for them to juggle between the two domains (work and life) and perform their activities. The results corroborate the finding of Chong and Ma (2010) that socio-economic characteristics of workers influence the work-life balance of professional women.

The study found that other family matters coupled with menopausal changes in the bodies of female administrators in public universities in Ghana makes it difficult for them to meet effectively their work-life demands. The results disagree with the findings of Kossek et al. (2010) that professional women with children above 18 years of age feel less stress in meeting their work-life demands. It also disagrees with the initial hypothesis that female administrators with older children find it easy and more satisfying meeting their work-life demands compared to those with children below the age of 18 years. The disagreement is attributed to the grandparenting role assumed by

some of the female administrators in public universities as well as the deterioration in physical health and strength resulting from sicknesses or menopause.

Menstrual and reproduction processes

The results showed that discomforts associated with menstruation reduce the energy levels of female administrators in public universities to perform their job roles. This corroborates the argument made by Goode (1960) in the role scarcity theory that strain from the involvement in one role makes it difficult to engage in another role. Even though discomfort and excessive strain were acknowledged to be real and encountered by many female administrators in public universities, none of the selected three universities had a human resource management policy to reduce such difficulties among female workers.

There was, however, no consensus among female administrators about the need to incorporate menstrual discomfort and difficulties in human resource management policies in public universities. The lack of a consensus at the women's front could affect the enactment of any human resource management policy to address the difficulties they encounter during menstrual periods in the public universities.

The study found that female administrators were naturally disadvantaged in job progression due to issues related to pregnancy. This was in consonance with the finding of Matilla-Santandera, Lidón-Moyanoa, González-Marróna, Buncha, Martín-Sánchez & Martínez-Sánchez (2019) that the formal organizational work environment is naturally designed to suit the males at the expense of the female counterparts. The study also found that the maternal leave policy was not adequate enough in addressing issues related to pregnancy among professional women in public universities. This was because the time spent on reproductive processes caused

delays in the career progression of female administrators in public universities. The declaration of the offices of female administrators on maternal leave vacant and subsequent filling of such offices with permanent staff could be considered as unfair since such offices could be filled by caretaker staff. In other words, the transfer subsequent to the resumption of duties after delivery adds to the stress of female administrative staff as they had to acquaint themselves with the operations of their new offices and staff while attending to their newborn children as well.

Thus, various socio-cultural elements were found to be unfavourable for the woman as a professional-working being, who could be free to engage in formal job processes. This could be attributed to the cultural and historical antecedence on professional employment. According to Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, and Johnson (2019), professional employment was initially built for men due to the high physical strength and labour required. Women were largely associated with house chores to avoid attempts of sexual exploitation by superior men. However, as the job processes to transit from physical strength to psychological brilliance and innovativeness as well as the empowerment of women through various laws and declarations, societies have been slow in shedding some of the family and socio-cultural responsibilities on women to enable them to freely engage in professional employment.

The professional work setting and operational issues were originally planned and designed with the man in mind. The system has not fully transformed to properly accommodate or incorporate the concerns and feminine characteristics into professional job roles. This, however, requires gradual and total rejuvenation of the perceptions associated with womanhood, especially in the twenty-first century, and realignment of certain socio-cultural roles to free women from such socio-cultural

bondage, and empower them to effectively balance their work-life responsibilities for the development of the entire society (Yu, 2019). It also requires the attachment of certain facilities such as crèche to common places of work to properly absorb the interests of women into professional organisations.

Economic factors

The main issues considered under the economic factors were female administrators with other economic commitments apart from their work and transportation issues.

Other economic commitments aside from primary employment

The study found that female administrators with other economic commitments had to spend part of the time for the family on these economic activities. This reduced the time to be used to perform their expected roles in the family domain. Per the tenets of the work-life border theory, flexible and permeable boundaries may increase work-life conflict as they may generate confusion in an individual as to which role he/she should be engaged in at a particular point in time. According to Matthews et al. (2010), the integration and blurring of boundaries between work and life domains create conflicts which affect one's performance in both domains. This is because the blurring of the borderline creates the conditions that compel an individual to increase commitment in favour of one domain as against the other.

The study found that some of the female administrators who operate shops on the universities' campuses considered the extra income from the other income generating activities as more important than the sticking to their family roles. Such women perceived the extra income as essential in ensuring psychological satisfaction to the maintenance of households' economic demands. Shobha (2015) reported that

psychological satisfaction from one's level of income contributes significantly to reduce the extra time spent by people on other economic activities. In addition, the use of part of the income from the other income-generating activities to employ house helps to cater for children of female administrators in public universities demonstrates the importance of economic factors in maintaining a balance in work-life relationships.

A female respondent from UCC narrated that the extra income generating activities sometimes conflict with their job roles as they had to frequently check on the activities and items in the shops during working hours. This is likely to affect the effectiveness of such female administrators in the performance of their job roles at the universities as described by Poelmans and Caligiuri (2008) that when clear boundaries are not established between job and family roles, individuals perform below their optimum in both domains.

From the results, some of the female administrators engaged in extra income generating activities because their husbands were not contributing much to the household budget. This suggests that the women were taking part in the socio-cultural role of their husbands as providers of household needs. The result further implies that women could contribute immensely to household welfare when socio-cultural structures and functions are realigned to effectively accommodate them by absorbing some of their family roles to enable them to concentrate on their job roles and responsibilities. According to Anyidoho and Manuh (2010), traditional society has failed to acknowledge and appreciate the immense contribution of professional women to household welfare. As a result, the society expects so much family roles

from them which in many occasions lead to the creation of imbalances in their work-life relationships.

Transportation issues

The results showed that a vehicle was an important facility that could determine the level of stress a female administrator could go through to meet the demands from both work and life domains. This is in line with the assertion of Rothbard et al. (2005) that the speed and flexibility with which females could switch between work and life domains are essential to reduce the stress associated with meeting work-life demands. This is critical as the speed and flexibility of switching between the dual roles of female administrators have a significant influence on the quantum and quality of time one spends in one domain as well on the energy one exerts in maintaining a work-life balance.

It was established in the results that heavy vehicular traffic negatively influenced the ability and capacity of the female administrators to effectively meet their work-life demands. The results agree with the principal tenet of the role scarcity theory by Goode (1960) that there is a negative relationship between time and energy in meeting work-life demands. In other words, the more time is spent on one domain the more stress is exerted on one's energy to cause tiredness. As a result, one is unable to effectively meet the demands of the other domain. Porter and Ayman (2010), therefore, suggested that women should be encouraged to work close to their place of abode in traditional societies to enable them to switch easily in-between their job and family roles with less strain or stress. Jennings and McDougald (2007) also argued that to effectively incorporate the needs of women in professional business life,

employers could provide certain facilities such as accommodation and educational facilities close to the place of work.

Organizational factors

From the results, female administrators in the principal offices found it difficult maintaining a balance in their work-life demands as they spent much at the office even after the close of the normal working hours. The implication is those female administrators in such offices do not have clear boundary lines between their work and life domains, which affect their performance in the life domain as described by the work-life border theory by Clark (2000). According to Greenhaus and Powel (2012), failure to establish a clear boundary line, in terms of the time and space, between work and family domains affects the commitment and performance of workers in one domain and automatically distorts the balance between work and life demands.

All the above show that the female administrator in a public university in Ghana has multiple sources of competing work-life demands. These range from socio-cultural roles expected of them, economic factors, and organisational factors. As a result, efforts to ensure a balance between work and life demands of female administrators in public universities in Ghana should consider elements from all the above dimensions.

5.2 Effects of Work-Life Balance on Female Administrators

The section seeks to assess how the work-life balance or imbalance resulting from work-life demands and effectiveness of the social support systems was influencing job outcomes of female administrators in terms of their career progression, health, job

performance, and capacity to handle occupational pressure. The section was organised under slowing down career progression, deterioration in health, reduction in job performance, separation of marriages and divorce, and capacity building to handle occupational pressure.

Slowing down career progression

The study found that the socio-cultural demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana from the family domain caused deterioration in their strength to perform other roles that could enhance their career progression. This is in line with the tenets of the role scarcity theory that there is a negative relationship between time and energy in work-life demands and relationships, in that the more time spent in executing the functions in one domain the less energy one will get to execute the roles and responsibilities in the other domain.

It was established in the results that the socio-cultural roles expected of professional women take too much of their time, energy and attention to focus on their career progression. This situation puts professional women, including female administrators in a disadvantaged position to compete effectively with their male counterparts in the promotion processes. This is in consonance with the assertion of Goode (1960) in the role scarcity theory that individuals have limited resources in terms of time and energy, and as a result, one's involvement in multiple roles implies competition over these scarce resources to meet demands from different domains, which creates conflicts.

From the study, some of the female administrators were mostly compelled to focus on the upkeep of their kids and postpone efforts towards promotion. The postponement of issues about promotion to focus more attention and energy on childbirth and child care is an outcome of their decision-making process. According to Meyer and Parfyonova (2010), individuals make work-life decisions throughout their lives that affect demands and benefits associated with work and life domains. In other words, the slowing down of career progression of some female administrators in public universities in Ghana is as a result of the choice they make concerning work-life demands to engage in the activities of one domain over the other at a particular point in time. However, McDowell (2010) posited that choices over certain socio-cultural roles and responsibilities are non-negotiable for professional women that they have to sacrifice some roles and elements in their job roles to meet the expectations of the society.

All the above results showed that efforts to ensure a balance between work-life demands caused delays in the career progression of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was largely attributed to the limited and less effective social support systems to enable professional women to effectively combine their family roles with their job demands to achieve a balance. The implication is that work-life imbalances caused by few avenues and weak support systems compelled female administrators to focus much time and energy in the family domain and lose out on the benefits associated with the job roles, such as career progression.

Deterioration in health

The study found that work-life imbalance caused stress for female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Thus, the study found that excessive demands from the

family domain caused distress to female administrators compelling them to take personal medication to meet the demands from the work domains. This demonstrates how work-life imbalance affects the social life of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This agrees with the assertion of Baral and Bhargava (2010) that the impact of work-life imbalances and conflicts extends beyond the two domains to other critical life facets of people.

As a result, Haar and Roche (2010) suggested that issues about work-life balance should critically be considered at both the national policy level and organisational policy level to maintain cohesion in society. The difficulty expressed by female administrators with children under a year old agrees with the finding of Cinamon and Rich (2010) that the life-stage of a professional woman plays a crucial role in determining a balance or imbalance between work and life demands and relationships. In other words, the socio-cultural role of women in a certain period of the life stages makes it virtually impossible to effectively combine them with job roles to achieve work-life balance without any strong and effective social support systems and mechanisms.

It was found from the results that the larger the family size, the more workload is created in the family domain that requires the attention, energy and time of the female administrators to attend to them. The implication is that part of their resting time would be squeezed to attend to such demands, thereby reducing their resting periods, causing stress, and deteriorating health of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Since Greenhaus and Powell (2006) posited that there is a negative relationship between energy and time in work-life balance, the more time female

administrators spent on attending to family issues, the more their energy deteriorates, which affects their stress and health status. In other words, the negative relationship between time and energy spent in meeting work-life demands explains the deterioration of health in the female administrators as they strive to achieve work-life balance.

Reduction in job performance

From the study, it was indicated that the attention required by children under a year causes a reduction in the performance levels of some female administrators. This was because the female administrators could be physically present at work but psychologically absent. The study, therefore, found the need to establish direct policies and strategies for professional women, including female administrators to address their peculiar needs. It is expected that the establishment of such policies and strategies could help improve their job performance levels in the midst of work-life balance issues confronting professional women.

From the study, many of the sampled female administrators in public universities in Ghana attributed the reduction in their job performance to tiredness in their performance of the dual roles and responsibilities from work and life domains. Thus, many of the female administrators reported tiredness after performing their life roles and responsibilities and having to switch to their job roles. This was in line with the time-energy conflict in work-life balance espoused by Goode (1960) under the role scarcity theory. Greenhaus and Powell (2012) argued that there is always a conflict between time and energy and as a result, one could not get the same time and level of energy used to execute roles and functions in one domain to perform the functions and responsibilities in another domain.

The study, however, found that work-life imbalance and reduction in job performance resulting from tiredness in the performance of roles and responsibilities from the life domains were mostly associated with young female administrators with children below 12 years of age. This was largely attributed to the critical attention required by such children and the weak social support systems and facilities to cushion female administrators with such special but common needs. The implication is that society has been weak to respond to such peculiar needs of professional women, including female administrators of public universities in Ghana (Abubakari, 2013). In other words, society has been slow in recognising the changing role of women from solely family and reproduction roles to economic roles and contributors to households' economy.

By the current diversification of women's role in the society, some family roles should be understood to be shared responsibilities between males and females to give women some time and energy space to perform their dual roles effectively to achieve work-life balance. However, despite the changing roles of women in society, they are still traditionally held to perform their socio-cultural roles as before. This has contributed to the complaints of tiredness, reduction in job performances and work-life imbalances by the female administrators in public universities in Ghana. These static elements in the tradition of most marriages in Ghana disagrees with the assertion of Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) that culture is dynamic and as such the society creates opportunities to address emerging trends in the cultural development processes.

Aryee et al. (2005) attributed the difficulties in the efforts toward the liberation of women in Africa from archaic cultural practices to the traditional and slow response to the modernity of many African societies. This shows that the complaints of tiredness and reduction of job performance by some of the female administrators are an outcome of an unfair, static and traditional nature of the Ghanaian society. Such a society does not perceive family roles as a shared one between husbands and wives, and also does not encourage or compel husbands to support wives in the performance of family roles and responsibilities.

Separation of marriages and divorce

The study found that some of the female administrators had either been separated from their marriages or divorced. The main argument advanced to explain the separation of marriages and divorces of the female administrators in public universities was a work-life imbalance. This corroborates the finding of Anyidoho and Manuh (2010) that work-life imbalance is the underlying cause of many marriage breakdowns in the twenty-first century. This is due to the changing trends in organizations and excessive demands from employers on employees for organizations to remain competitive.

However, the extension of work-life imbalance to marriage separation and divorce is an outcome of a decision making process about the available options and support systems. The decision-process theory postulates that individuals make work-life decisions throughout their lives that affect both their work and private life domains. Powell and Greenhaus (2012) explained that the outcome of such a decision-making process hinges on the opportunities and support systems associated with all the

available options. As a result, the decision by some of the female administrators in public universities in Ghana to quit from their marriages is an indication of the interaction between the extent of work-imbalance and their resolve to achieve their career development goals.

Capacity building to handle occupational pressure

The study found that work-life balance could build the capacities of female administrators to increase their job performance. However, this occurred to female administrators who had matured children and those who have family support to take care of part of the responsibilities from the life domain. This shows that professional women, including female administrators, could contribute immensely to both organisational and societal development if strong and improved social support systems are built to relieve them of some of their family duties.

From the study, the past experiences of work-life imbalance helped to build the strengths and capacities of female administrators to adequately and effectively respond to their job demands and responsibilities. In other words, the time and energy gained through improved work-life relationships are invested in job roles and demands to enhance the performances of female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

The effects on work-life balance as presented in the results showed that female administrators in public universities in Ghana experienced more negative outcomes than positive ones. This implies that most of the female administrators in the sampled public universities were experiencing work-life imbalances. This was mainly attributed to the less effective social support systems to enable them to combine their dual roles effectively to achieve a balanced work-life relationship.

5.3 Policies and Strategies of the Universities to Ensure Work-Life Balance among Female Administrators

This section presents the discussion on the policies and strategies established by the public universities to ensure a balance in work-life demands for female administrators. To Chong and Ma (2010), human resource policies and practices adopted by business organisations are central to ensuring work-life balance among workers. According to Kang et al. (2010), work demands are largely dictated by human resource management policies. The human resource management policies and strategies that influenced the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities were organised under leave, welfare, education, and accommodation systems.

Leave policy

The results show the important role of the leave system in balancing the work-life relationship of female administrators in public universities. Thus, the annual leave system was used to meet or address the peculiar needs of professional women administrators in public universities in Ghana. However, it was also found that the approval for leave was subject to the convenience of superior officers. This suggested that one may not get the opportunity to use the annual leave to attend to planned family issues as envisaged due to the interferences of superior officers. Many of the female administrators reported having postponed their annual leave for more than two or three years consecutively because their superior officers blocked their leave applications.

This is likely to reduce the effectiveness in the use of the annual system of the public universities to seek a balance between work-life demands of female administrators. This was because the programming and the timeliness of the leave system are important to enable female administrators in public universities meet particular planned family demands. The results show that interferences from superior officers sometimes deny female administrators from going on their annual leave. This posture could significantly defeat the purpose for which the leave system was established as it will not allow female administrators to take some rest and rejuvenate their strength for optimal job performance. Such denials are against the ILO's charter on employee welfare where employers have to allow their employees to go on leave based on a common agreement among all stakeholders and within the context of the nature of the job. Judge and Colquitt (2004) reported that the denial of employees by superior officers from benefitting from common human resource management policy could frustrate their commitment and zeal for increased performance at work.

The denial and postponement of the annual leave of female administrators could distort their work-life balance as such periods enable them to effectively attend to some of their numerous socio-cultural roles. In addition, the denial and or postponement of the annual leave of female administrators defeats the intended purpose of using the leave policy of the universities to ensure a balance in the work-life relationship. The discretionary nature of the implementation of the leave policy system in the public universities rather contributes to compound the work-life imbalances for female administrators.

The results showed that some of the female administrators deliberately forfeited their annual leave for their personal financial gains. In other words, the forfeiting of the annual leave days by the administrators was to enable them to maximise their gains from such offices. This shows the important role of financial or economic elements in work-life balance. Thus, financial or economic elements could significantly support or distort the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities.

The casual leave system for workers shows that the management of the public universities understood the exigencies confronting the modern day professional workers, including female administrators. This is in consonance with the recommendation by Maxwell (2005) that employers should help build organisational structures and human resource management policies to meet the demands of the day to enable workers effectively respond to exigencies from both work and family domains. The implementation of different types of leave policies for workers enabled female administrators to activate any of them to meet both their short-term and long-term personal and family needs.

The study, however, found incongruence in the three months post-delivery maternity leave for female administrators in public universities and the purpose of the six months exclusive breastfeeding policy for the newly born babies by the Ghana Health Service. This policy incongruence between the three-month post-delivery maternity leave and the six-month exclusive breastfeeding could disadvantage and deny the babies of female administrators in public universities from benefiting from the breastfeeding policy. This was because the female administrators had to resume work

after three months of delivery when they were expected to be practicing six months of exclusive breastfeeding.

The difficulties associated with practicing exclusive breastfeeding after the resumption of work discouraged the majority of the female administrators in implementing the six-month exclusive breastfeeding policy. From the study, many of the female administrators admitted that they started the exclusive breastfeeding but had to abandon it because they could not bear the difficulties and the physical toll on their energies and health.

The results show that the socio-cultural role of women could make them less competitive in the professional environment. The result agrees with the finding of Godbey et al. (2010) that the professional job front was originally created for men and has been slow to respond to the mass incorporation of women in the corporate environment.

All the above issues on the leave policy for female administrators in public universities show that varied measures and mechanisms have been instituted by the management of the universities to address various parts of the family demands on women. The aim is to ensure the effective combination of professional roles with family roles to promote woman empowerment. In other words, the various types of leave were targeted at different demands on female administrators in public universities from the family domain to ensure a balance between work and life relationships.

From the results on issues about the leave policies in public universities in Ghana, it could be deduced that such policies were used to address issues on time in relation to work-life balance as indicated in the role scarcity theory and the conceptual framework. Thus, demands from work and life domains conflict with each other and as a result, compete for time to meet the needs and expectations from each domain. The leave policies enabled female administrators to create additional time to attend to demands from the life domain without compromising on their abilities to meet the demands from the work domain. In other words, the leave policies were to enable female administrators in public universities in Ghana to create additional time to establish a work-life balance.

However, the decision to honour the leave period or postpone it for other gains is influenced by the individual's assessment about the cost and benefits associated with each choice. It is explained in the decision-process theory that the determination of the final outcome in a decision-making process is influenced by an evaluation of information available to the individual about the various choices in terms of benefits and cost, ethics, morality, values, and norms.

Welfare policies

The universities have a number of financial welfare policies such as the payment of electricity rebate, vehicle maintenance allowance, security and sanitation, and rent allowance for workers, including female administrators. The aim was to relieve workers of some of their expenses and provide additional resources to workers to meet their household budgets. This is in line with the finding of Porter and Ayman (2010) that access to financial resources enables workers to adopt strategies and mechanisms as well as services of other people to perform part of the family roles,

and by this, concentrate on their career development. The result also agrees with the role scarcity theory that conflict naturally exists between work and life demands in terms of resources, however, the adequate provision of resources from one domain to meet the demands of the other domain contributes to establish or restore a balance between the two conflicting domains.

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The findings showed that financial welfare support from the work domain helped to ensure stability in the demands from the family domain as well as ensure a balance in work-life demands. This confirms the earlier assertion that work-life balance is not only about the distribution of time between work and life domains, rather adequate or equitable sharing of resources between the two domains. The results also showed that

the health policies of the public universities in Ghana were contributing immensely to ensure a balance between work and life roles and demands.

Educational policies

From the study, educational strategies instituted by the management of universities had contributed to easing access to schools for the wards of workers, including female administrators. The time gained from creating easy access to school for the wards of female administrators could be invested in meeting the demands from work and life domains to ensure equilibrium. This is in line with the finding of Higgins et al. (2010) that the provision of critical services and facilities at vantage locations in the society could help create a balance in work-life demands for professional women.

From the study, the non-recognition of crèche schools in the formal education system of Ghana made them largely absent in the educational set-ups of the universities. The study found that the lack of formal recognition of crèche schools in the formal education system had a rippling effect on the work-life balance of female administrators and on their marriages. Thus, the absence of a policy on crèche schools affected the quality and the fees they charged, prevented some female administrators to send their wards to such schools. The results showed how the neglect of a policy direction in this critical stage of the women in public universities is creating imbalances in work-life balance.

Accommodation policies

The study found that all the three sampled public universities had provided campus accommodation for workers and accommodation allowances for workers staying outside the campuses. However, the lack of transparency in the allocation of

accommodation facilities to workers unfairly denied some female administrators with the opportunity to balance their work-life demands and relationships.

5.4 Effectiveness of the Approaches Adopted by Female Administrators to Ensure Work-Life Balance

This section discusses the results on the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure a balance in their work-life demands and relationships. This is in line with the conceptual framework and the assertion of Ungerson and Yeandle (2005) that social support systems play an essential role in supporting professional women to ensure a balance in their work-life demands. The section was organized under the hiring of nannies, family support, planning the number and spacing of children, and acquiring facilities to ensure flexible and convenient movement between the dual roles.

Hiring of Nannies

It was established in the results about the contribution of the use of nannies in the process of ensuring a balance in work-life demands of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The results showed that when one gets a supporting nanny, it helps in relieving female administrators of some of their family demands and responsibilities. However, one of the major issues raised concerning the hiring of nannies during the interviews with female administrators and focus group discussions with the Executives of women caucuses from the three public universities was the process of identifying the right nanny to support activities in the house. This was one of the major challenges most female administrators encountered in the hiring of nannies for their homes.

From the study, poor background check on nannies made it riskier in engaging their services to support family roles expected of the female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance. It also showed a major weakness in one of the available social support systems for female administrators to ensure work-life balance. This could discourage many female administrators in public universities in adopting this mechanism to ensure work-life balance.

The study found that some of the female administrators encountered harrowing experiences with their engagement of nannies to ensure work-life balance. This is likely to cause an imbalance in work-life demands on the female administrator as the family roles previously performed by the nanny had to be performed by her in addition to her job roles. This could cause stress and deterioration of performance in both domains as described by Bloom and Van Reenen (2006) that imbalances in work-life demands often lead to a reduction in performance and effectiveness of individuals in both work and life domains. Such experiences may send bad signals to other female administrators in employing nannies to support their family roles to maintain a work-life balance.

Even though the hiring of nannies was considered important and necessary, it was found to be less effective in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This was due to the loss of trust emanating from bad experiences of female administrators about the engagement of nannies over the years. As a result, female administrators who engaged the services of nannies had to employ other mechanisms and tactics to monitor their activities in the house.

Family support

The study found that family members absorbed part of the socio-cultural roles of female administrators in public universities and enabled them to gain much time and energy for other roles and responsibilities in the two domains. The result is in consonance with the conceptual framework of the study that social support systems could relieve female administrators of some of their responsibilities to enable them to concentrate on other duties to ensure a balance in their work-life demands. The result also agrees with the tenets of the role scarcity theory by Goode (1960) that time and energy dedicated to one role makes it difficult for an individual to meet the requirements of another role until he or she is relieved of part of the time and energy invested in the initial role. This is due to the conflict between time and energy in work-life balance as described in the role scarcity theory that spending much time in executing roles in one domain will have a toll on the energies of the individual, which will make it difficult to have much energy to perform the roles in the other domain.

Female administrators found it more convenient when getting support from family members to attend to their family roles. The psychological relief resulting from the support from family members enabled female administrators in public universities to concentrate on their job roles and other family demands to maintain a work-life balance.

It could be concluded that the female administrators were satisfied with the work-life relationship and demands as they received support from family members. This was because they were relieved both psychologically and physically from the demands of

meeting certain family demands such as house chores, and taking care of children. This could explain the situation where some of the elderly female administrators in public universities adopted their grandchildren to enable their daughters to focus on the career and to ensure work-life balance. This could be due to their experiences in the past. Per the contextual definition of work-life balance from the conceptual framework as people's satisfaction with the time and energy expended between work and life demands, it could be concluded that the female administrators in public universities in Ghana had work-life balance when they receive family support. In other words, the use of family support by female administrators in public universities in Ghana was effective in ensuring work-life balance.

The spacing of childbirth and calculated number of children

From the study, most of the female administrators wanted to space their childbirths and also have a few children. This was to reduce their workload from the house and to enable them to attend to their job roles and career goals. The implication is that many of the female administrators perceived more children as an additional workload in the family domain. This was due to the weak support they receive from their husbands in the handling of children in the family. As a result, having children implies that one has to spend much time and energy to attend to their needs while meeting their job demands as well. However, pressure from husbands and family member compelled them to abandon the spacing and having a calculated number of children strategies.

Ensuring flexible and convenient movement

The study found that having personal vehicles made it more convenient for female administrators to switch from one domain to the other. The implication is that convenience and flexibility in switching between family and job roles is a critical factor influencing work-life balance. This is in consonance with the tenets of the

work-life border theory by Clark (2000) that both flexibility and permeability of work and life boundaries can help reduce an individual's work-life conflict. Another female administrator from UCC narrated that with access to a personal vehicle, she puts everything in the car and sets off. She is able to feed the children and change their diapers in the car without any stress. The study, however, found that most of the female administrators were compelled to secure loans to acquire vehicles to ensure flexible movement with their children. This shows how the lack of a vehicle was a challenge for female administrators in ensuring work-life balance.

Some of the female administrators were unable to fully concentrate on their job roles when their kids were not under proper care. Thus, even though they were physically present at work, their hearts and minds were at home within the few hours before closing. This is due to the permeability of family roles and thoughts into job hours. This agrees with the work-life border theory by Clark (2000) that flexibility and permeable boundaries could increase work-life conflict as they generate confusion in the minds of people as to which role to be performed at a particular point in time.

Working from the house

The study found that some of the female administrators have resorted to taking part of their job roles home to enable them to supervise the activities of their wards after school. This result is in consonance with the assertion of Beltrán-Martín et al. (2008) that the advancement in technology has enabled people to work from the house, thereby removing barriers and borders between family and work domains. However, Porter and Ayman (2010) posited that the flexible and permeable boundaries between work and life domains could increase work-life conflicts as people may be confused in terms of the roles to be attended to at a particular point in time.

It was established in the findings that some female administrators kept a permeable border between work and life roles to enable them to ensure work-life balance. This agrees with the assertion of Van den Broeck et al. (2010) that flexibility and permeability of work and life boundaries could help to reduce the work-life imbalances mostly experienced by people.

Conclusion

All the above policies adopted by the public universities in ensuring work-life balance for workers indicate that most of the strategies were general and not directed specifically to address the peculiar needs of the professional woman. It is suggested that the incorporation of peculiar gender needs in the policies and strategies of the universities could help to effectively ensure work-life balance among female administrators on public universities in Ghana. This could be done by including women in the policymaking process. The commonalities in the strategies across the three sampled public universities in Ghana were as a result of the fact that public universities have common policies for regulating activities and functions. The differences come with differences in locational characteristics, facilities, and services available in the cities in which the universities are located.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the thesis and major findings of the study as well as the overall conclusions on the various research objectives. In addition, it focuses on the contribution to knowledge and makes recommendations on how to improve work-life relationships for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

6.1 Summary

Work-life balance is a major concern for people and institutions interested in the quality of working life and its relation to the broader quality of life. The aim is to provide quality of life for an employee at the same time retaining the productivity levels of an employee at the workplace. A balanced work-life score provides an organisation with a productive and innovative employee, whereas disparity in the work-life balance tends to develop depressed and dissatisfied staff. The study sought to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, analysed the effects of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, and assessed the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance.

The study was conducted through the interpretivism research paradigm. Since the interpretivism research paradigm manifests itself through qualitative research design, the study adopted the qualitative research design to sample respondents, gather data and analysed the data. The study population comprised female administrators in public universities (UG, KNUST, and UCC), representatives of human resource departments in the selected public universities, Executives of women caucuses in the universities, National Executives of Ghana Association of University Administrators (GAUA), representative at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), and representative of the Social Welfare Department.

A total of 74 respondents were purposively selected and interviewed for the study. It included one (1) representative each from the human resource departments of the three selected universities, one (1) representative each from the Social Welfare Department and MGCSP, 18 Executives of women caucuses in the three selected universities, six (6) National Executives of GAUA, and 45 female administrators. Purposive sampling was used to sample the institutional representatives, whereas snowball sampling was used to select the female administrators. Interview guide and focus group discussion guide were used as instruments for collecting data for the study.

6.2 Major findings of the study

This section presents the major findings of the study. The section is organised under the research objectives.

6.2.1 Sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators

From the study, socio-cultural factors were found to be one of the cardinal sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities.

Marriage was found to be a critical source of competing work-life demand on female administrators in public universities. Thus, female administrators who were not staying with their husbands had to be paying regular visits to maintain the relationship and preserve the marriage. This created stress and dissatisfaction among such women in the attempt to balance their work-life demands. The absence of husbands in the family increased the workload on the female administrators in public universities which creates work-life conflicts. Female administrators with supportive husbands were effectively able to attend to their work-life demands.

Another socio-cultural factor identified as a source of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities were the family stage. The study

found that female administrators, who were single largely, did not find work-life demands as challenging. However, those with children under the age of five years and below 12 years complained of always having divided attention both at work and at home. It was, however, found that female administrators of public universities with children between 12 years and 18 years of age were largely satisfied with their work-life balance.

Menstrual and reproductive processes were seen to be another socio-cultural element influencing work-life demands of female administrators in public universities. Issues concerning menstrual and reproductive processes (pregnancy) were about discomfort,

pain, and strain which reduces the effectiveness of female administrators in both work and life domains.

Economic factors were also identified as a critical source of competing work-life demand for female administrators. The study identified that female administrators with other economic commitments such as trading found it more difficult to balance their work-life demands. The study found many shops on the university campuses were owned by the female administrators. As a result, such female administrators had to create time to manage the shops for good returns. This affected the work-life balance as they had to share their scarce resources (time and energy) among all these competing demands.

The study highlighted those female administrators with personal vehicles were able to switch between their dual roles of work and life more swiftly and conveniently than those who had to depend on public transport.

Another source of competing work-life demand on female administrators in public universities as identified by the study was organisational elements.

The study discusses that female administrators in the principal offices (offices of the Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Finance Directors, and Provosts) found it more difficult to maintain their work-life balance than those in less busy offices. Such female administrators spent much time at the office, even after the close of work than those in other offices.

It was also indicated that the posture of the supervisor was essential in effectively meeting work-life demands by female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

Superior officers who understood the demanding role of women from the family domain sometimes compromised on issues for female administrators to spend time to perform some roles in the family domain during working hours.

6.2.2 Effects of work-life imbalance on female administrators

The study found that one of the major outcomes of issues surrounding work-life imbalance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was the slowing down of their career progression. From the study, most of the female administrators reported that the excessive demands on them from the family domain makes it difficult to put themselves together on time to progress through the promotional rungs of the universities.

Another negative effect of the work-life relationship as reported by the female administrators across the three sampled public universities was deterioration in health. From the study, this was largely attributed to stress resulting from poor sleeping habits. The study found that most of the female administrative staff had poor sleeping habits of less than six hours a day. This situation was worse for female administrators with children under five years of age, and even worse for female administrators in UG with children under five years of age and living outside the university's campus.

From the study, reduction in job performance was also identified as a negative effect of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Many of the female administrators across the three sampled public universities in Ghana reported of a dip in their job performance due to strain and stress from family

responsibilities and the investment of part of the working hours to attend to family roles.

Another negative effect of the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was the separation of marriages and divorces. The study found that some of the female administrators had either been separated from their marriages or divorced. The main argument advanced to explain the separation of marriages and divorces of the female administrators in public universities was a work-life imbalance.

The only positive effect from the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana was having built its capacity to handle occupational pressures. From the study, some of the sampled female administrators from the three public universities reported that their ability to perform the dual roles of work and family demands has built their capacities to respond to occupational pressures.

6.2.3 Effects of the Policies and strategies of the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators

The study found that the management of the universities had instituted different leave policies to meet both short-term and long-term family needs of female administrators. These included annual leave of 62 days (including weekends), 10 days casual leave, three months pre-delivery maternity leave, and three months post-delivery maternity leave. However, the study found that some superior officers prevented some female administrators from taking their annual leave which created work-life imbalances.

The study also found that the three months post-delivery maternity leave was not in congruence with the national health policy of six months exclusive breastfeeding for newly born babies. As a result, many female administrators were unable to take advantage of such policies to conform to the national policy, thereby denying their babies from benefitting from the policy.

The universities have instituted a number of welfare policies to enable female administrators to effectively meet their work-life demands. These included financial welfare policies (such as the payment of electricity rebate, vehicle maintenance allowance, security and sanitation, and rent allowance) and health care policies for workers and their immediate family members.

From the study, all three public universities had basic schools on their campuses to ensure easy access to school for the wards of workers, including female administrators. However, the absence of a national policy and regulation on crèche and their absence in some of the universities' campuses created work-life imbalances for female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

The study identified accommodation policies by the management of the universities as one of the strategies adopted to ensure work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana. All the three sampled public universities had provided campus accommodation for workers and accommodation allowances for workers staying outside the campuses. The provision of accommodation facilities on campuses for workers, including female administrators has contributed to reducing the turnaround distance between home and work. However, the study found that only a

few workers, including female administrators, have benefitted from the campus university policies. Many of the female administrators complained of biases in the allocation of accommodation facilities to workers, whereas others complained about the lack of clarity in the criteria for the allocation of accommodation facilities to workers.

6.2.4 Effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators to ensure work-life balance

From the study, one of the mechanisms or approaches adopted by the female administrators in public universities to ensure a balance in their work-life demands was the hiring of nannies or 'house helps'. The role of the nannies was to perform house chores which should have been performed by the female administrators. These included washing, cleaning of utensils, tidying of the house, sweeping, and weeding. Others were attending errands, going to the market, picking children from school, and taking care of children in the absence of the female administrators.

However, there were mixed reactions or responses to the effectiveness of the use of nannies to ensuring work-life balance among female administrators in public universities in Ghana. Whereas some of the female administrators were satisfied with the role of their nannies in ensuring work-life balance, most of them were sceptical and less comfortable entrusting them with so many responsibilities without any supervision. This was partly due to the poor background checks on nannies and the absence of policies and regulations to control the process of engaging nannies in Ghana.

From the study, almost all the female administrators were satisfied with the work-life relationship and demands they received support from family members. This was because they were relieved both psychologically and physically from the demands of meeting certain family demands such as house chores, and taking care of children.

6.3 Conclusions

Work-life, a contemporary managerial issue has become a challenging factor not only for the young corporate female's life but also the middle-aged parents who need to provide constant attention to their children. In practice, work-life balance involves adjusting work patterns so that everyone, regardless of age, race or gender can find a rhythm that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations. An Increasing number of organisations are currently operating under the assumption that personal life and work life are complementary to each other and not competing priorities. This helps employees to balance their work lives with their personal life and leads to positive effects for the employee and the organisation.

In respect of the first objective which was to identify the sources of competing work-life demands among female administrators in the selected public universities' the study concludes that work-life balance largely depended on the extent to which FAs received support from the society (in terms of sociocultural support) and organization (HR policies and strategies) to meet WL demands. Many of the female administrators could not implement the six-month exclusive breastfeeding policy for their newly born babies. In addition, the lack of transparency in the implementation of some of the

policies denied some female administrators to benefit from them to balance their work-life demands.

The second objective of the study sought to ascertain the effects of work-life imbalances on female administrators in public universities and on this the conclusion is that work-life imbalance influences social obligations and job performance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. The female administrators in these public universities experienced many negative effects of work-life balance relationships. This was attributed to the less effectiveness of the social support systems to cushion female administrators in the execution of their family roles. Some of the negative outcomes of work-life balance were slowing down of career progression, deterioration in health, marital separation and divorce, and reduction in job performance. The only positive outcome of the work-life balance for female administrators in public universities was capacity building to handle occupational pressure.

With regard to the third objective which was to investigate the effects of the policies and strategies put in place by the public universities to enable the female administrators manage the work-life interface, the study concludes that the effects of the policies adopted by the Public universities appeared general and was not specific to females alone and so public universities should put measures in place to make policies more gender sensitive.

The fourth objective of the study sought to assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by the female administrators to manage the work-life interface and the study

concludes that in respect of the findings, family support appeared to be the most effective strategy they adopted to ensure work-life balance in all the three public universities. This is an area that needs to be strengthened. Indeed issues about work-life balance for female administrators in public universities in Ghana, are critical for both organisational managers and employees. This is because work-life balance sits at the center of many societal and organisational problems. As a result, achieving a work-life balance could enable female administrators to effectively execute their dual roles to ensure both societal and organisational development.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to improve the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana.

The study recommends that the Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should embark on a vigorous sensitisation program on cultural reorientation to encourage husbands to understand the need to support their wives at home. This will help to reduce the workload on professional women, including female administrators in public universities to achieve work-life balance. This was because the female administrators felt much comfortable receiving support from their immediate family members. This sensitisation program will also help to reduce marital separation and divorces resulting from work-life imbalances. In addition, the sharing of home responsibilities with husbands and male partners in the house through cultural reorientation sensitisation program will help to avoid the deterioration in health experienced by some female administrators in the

process of achieving work-life balance. Such a program could be implemented through radio and television programmes, and community engagement programmes.

The study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Ministry of Education should incorporate crèche schools in the formal education system. This recognition will enable the Ministries to enact policies to regulate quality standards in terms of facilities, services, and personnel to manage crèche schools. The Ministry of Education could, therefore, monitor activities in such schools to ensure high safety and high quality of service. This will give confidence to many female administrators in public universities to use such services to achieve work-life balance.

The study suggests that Executives of the women caucuses in the public universities should collaborate with the management of the universities to incorporate crèche schools in their education system. This will help relieve many female administrators of the psychological toll of leaving their babies with nannies with which they do not feel comfortable with. The engagement of the universities in the management of crèche schools will help to ensure standard service quality to children of female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This will enable the female administrators to have a maximum concentration on their job roles and responsibilities to increase performance and job output. In addition, the engagement of the universities in the provision of crèche education will help to reduce the cost of care of young children on female administrators. This could be done by the Executives of the women caucuses in the public universities making a case about the need to have such facilities and services on the campuses and how they could support

female administrators to effectively increase their work output and ensure work-life balance. Further, the operationalization of crèche school services on the universities' campuses could encourage on-site services during break periods that would help avoid the situation where female administrators have to wake up at dawn to express breast milk that could cater for babies throughout the whole day. This would also encourage many of the female administrators in public universities to implement the six-month exclusive breastfeeding policy for their kids.

The study further suggests that the human resource management directorates of public universities in Ghana should review the three months post-delivery maternal leave policy in line with the six months exclusive breastfeeding health policy. This will enable children of female administrators in public universities to also benefit from the national health policy to avoid any growth deficiencies. The strategy could be by reducing the pre-delivery leave period from three months to one month and adding the extra days to the post-delivery leave period.

It is recommended that the human resource management directorates of the three public universities should discuss and program the annual leave chart of workers in each department from the beginning of the year. This will enable the female administrators of public universities in Ghana plan and program their leave period with their families and activities from the beginning of the year to maximise the quality of time with their families. This would help to eliminate issues about interferences from superior officers in the leave period of female administrators in public universities. It would also enable female administrators in public universities in Ghana to achieve work-life balance. This strategy will also inform the human

resource management department about staff planning and programming on how to replace female administrators going on leave at any point in time to ensure continuity in operational processes of the public universities as well as a smooth transition.

It is suggested that the management of the universities in collaboration with the basic school management committee should develop strategies to engage children till the closing hours for workers. Such strategies should not be rigorous academic exercise since the pupils may be tired by then. As a result, the school management committee could come up with talent management programmes and craftwork to identify and develop the special skills and talents of students in a playful environment. The aim is to learn through playing in that period to enable parents to focus on their jobs until the official closing hours. It will help to eliminate the situation where female administrators use to take part in the office hours to pick their wards from school. This will also enable female administrators in the public universities to have a maximum concentration on their job roles till the closing period.

The study suggests that the criteria for allocating accommodation facilities for workers in public universities in Ghana should be made transparent. This will enable female administrators to properly assess their chances of getting campus accommodation to free time space from turnaround time to balance their work-life demands. The Executives of the women caucuses of the public universities should make a strong case for the inclusion of gender as one of the main criteria in the allocation of accommodation facilities to workers. This would enable many female administrators to secure accommodation facilities on the universities' campuses to effectively combine their job and family roles to achieve work-life balance.

The study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare should enact a policy to regulate the services of nannies in the country. Such a policy should indicate the guidelines and rules to regulate the activities of nannies. With this, the Social Welfare Department could build a database on nannies and register them to provide effective services to professional women, including female administrators of public universities in Ghana. The registration could be done at the local level (district assemblies). With this, an individual could engage the services of a nanny from the Social Welfare Department under the Assembly. It will, therefore, be the responsibility of the Social Welfare Department under the Assembly to get much information about the nannies and recommend them to the individuals. This will give confidence to female administrators and other professional women in securing the services of nannies in their lives. The system will also help to ensure prompt payment and good wages to nannies as the Department will bargain on behalf of the nannies. In addition, the registration exercise will allow the Department to build a reviewed database about nannies and increase their wages based on their reviews from past employers. Thus, the professionalization of nanny businesses would play a major role in the lives of professional women, including female administrators in public universities in Ghana is progressing steadily in their working career to compete effectively with the male counterparts.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The subjective nature of the qualitative research process in terms of its sampling, data collection methods, and analysis does not allow for the generalising of the findings

from such studies. As a result, findings from qualitative research studies are largely confined to the study population or within the studied geographical or organisational setting. This implied that the findings of the study were largely restricted to work-life balance and human resource management issues in UG, KNUST, and UCC. However, since an in-depth understanding and underlying principles about work-life balance were explored under the study, it would be informative for researchers, policymakers and practitioners interested in gaining insight into the phenomenon.

Another limitation is that the study focused on three out of the nine public universities in Ghana. Thus, the subjectivity in the selection criteria automatically eliminated six public universities. The implication is those female administrators in such schools did not get the opportunity to demonstrate their issues in relation to work-life balance. It also means that the findings of the study may be of less importance to female administrators in those universities. Nonetheless, the common social structure and work ethics in Ghana would still make the findings of the study, somehow, relevant to female administrators in the other universities.

In addition, since few studies have been conducted on work-life balance in Ghana, the researcher did not get more literature on human resource management practices and policies adopted by organizations in Ghana to ensure such equilibrium. The study, therefore, cited more works and human resource management practices adopted by business organisations in the advanced countries and how they are contributing to ensure work-life balance among female employees.

6.6 Contribution to knowledge

This study focused on a critical contemporary issue in public sector human resource management and organizational development. The increasing engagement of women in the professional working environment has created tremendous disequilibrium in work-life demands with serious debilitating impact on professional women and households. This study contributes to identifying the sources of work-life imbalances among professional women in Ghana's public sector. It is expected that such knowledge would inform public sector human resource management policies to enable professional women to effectively balance their work-life demands. The unique contribution of this study is the incorporation of a new socio-cultural setting in the work-life balance discourse. Almost all the discourses around work-life balance focus on advanced settings with different social support structures and opportunities. The assessment of work-life balance among public sector female administrators in Ghana has helped to introduce the important role of family structures in working-life balance. The study highlights the different or unconventional strategies professional women in Ghana and other developing countries adapt to ensure work-life balance in the absence of formal institutional structures to support them meet their work-life demands.

Another contribution to the work-life balance discourse is its finding that deviates from the norm that professional women with children above 18 years of age find it easy and more satisfying in meeting their work-life demands compared to those with children below the age of 18 years. The uniqueness of the research setting introduced that such women find it equally stressful compared to the other professional women with children within their formative years. This is due to their additional roles as

grandmothers taking care of the grandchildren to enable their children (especially female working children) to effectively meet their work-life demands.

Contribution to the theoretical literature

The study provides insights on the Role Scarcity Theory (Goode 1960); Work-Life Border Theory (Clark 2000); Decision Process Theory (Poelmans 2005). The work-life border theory appears to offer the most insightful explanation on how FAs manage the work-life interface through the work-life balance policies and strategies.

Contribution to the empirical literature

A pioneering study on how female administrators in three public universities in Ghana manage their work and life interface. The focus on the sociocultural context of Ghana where male patriarchy affects the work and home domains.

Contribution to policy

Directs the attention of policymakers to previously overlooked challenges of balancing work life pressures among female administrators. Highlights the need for organizational policies to be gender sensitive. HR Directorates of public universities in Ghana should review the three months maternal leave policy in line with the six months exclusive breastfeeding health policy. The educational policies by the public universities are good as it addresses the work-life border so it should be maintained and expanded.

6.7 Suggestion for further studies

The study suggests that future studies should perform a comparative analysis of the work-life balance between male and female administrators in public universities in

Ghana. The aim is to compare which of them is able to manage his or her work-life balance better. Such a study would also inform policymakers about the concerns about males in issues concerning work-life balance. Such information would enable policymakers both at the university level and the national policy level to institute a comprehensive policy that addresses the concerns of both male and female administrators to ensure work-life balance.

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APPENDIX A

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS OF PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES**

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you

SECTION A: Background of Respondent

- a. **Institution**.....
- b. **Designation of respondent:**
- c. **Position of respondent:**
- d. **How long in the position:**
- e. **Age range:**
- f. **Educational background:**
- g. **Marital status:**
- h. **Number of children**
- i. **Age (s) of children**.....

SECTION B: sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators

1. To what extent would you say the position you occupy affects the performance of your home responsibilities? Please explain your answer

2. Which other social responsibilities do you find yourself in? How does work influence the performance of these roles?
3. How tight is your schedule at work and does it affect your home activities?
4. To what extent would you say the length of your working time affects your home activities?
5. To what extent has your work caused you any health related problem?
6. Do you find yourself performing office work at home after closing of work due to ICT whereby virtual hours cannot switch off?
7. Will you say you are someone who makes friends easily?
8. At home, can you tell me how you manage multiple tasks?
9. At work, can you tell me how you manage multiple tasks?
10. Supposing you have an emergency to handle at home and you also have issues to deal with at the office, how will you react?
11. Tell me whether you have extended family support.
12. Do you have the responsibility of caring for any aged or sick person? If so, how does this influence your work-home balance
13. Did childbearing affect your work?
14. Can you tell me whether work causes any form of marital distress?

SECTION C: Policies and strategies adopted by the universities to ensure a work-life balance of female administrators

1. To what extent does your organization promote work-life balance among female administrators?
2. Can you mention and explain some main strategies that your organization puts in place to enable women workers to have a fair balance between work and home responsibilities?
3. Does your institution have any flexible work time that you have ever taken advantage of? Please explain your answer.
4. Is there the availability of any daycare facilities in your institution? How does your answer contribute to how you manage work-home balance?
5. Can you talk about some factors in your university that you think enables females to perform their office tasks without compromising much of their home responsibilities?

6. Which factors in your university do you think negatively affects work-life balance of females.

SECTION D: Measures to promote work-life balance among female administrators in public universities

1. How do you think specific policies or regulations could help reduce work-life imbalance that affects female administrators?
2. How do you think technology, ICT and online services could help shape work-life balance among women?
3. In what ways do you think flexible work arrangements could help reduce work-life conflict?
4. Kindly suggest some measures you think the university could institutionalize to promote work-life balance among women administrators.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you

1. What are the sources of work-life imbalance for female professional workers in Ghana?
2. What role does the ministry play in ensuring work-life balance for professional women in Ghana?
3. How do you engage professional women groups to improve on their work-life balance?
4. What policies and regulations are available to ensure work-life balance for professional women?
5. How effective are such policies and regulations in ensuring work-life balance for female professional workers in Ghana?
6. What challenges do you encounter in your attempt to promote work-life balance for professional women?
7. Any additional information

Thank you

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you

1. What kind of complaints do you receive about work-life imbalances from female professional workers?
2. How have work-life imbalances affected family cohesion and unity?
3. What social support systems are available for female professional workers to ensure work-life balance?
4. How effective are such social support systems in ensuring work-life balance for female professional workers in Ghana?
5. What role do you play in ensuring work-life balance for professional women in Ghana?
6. How do you engage professional women groups to improve on their work-life balance?
7. What do you think should be done to ensure the achievement of work-life balance for female professional workers in Ghana?

Thank you

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECTORATES OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1. What policies are available for female administrators to ensure work-life balance for female administrators in the university?
2. How effective have such policies been in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in the universities?
3. What human resource management strategies have been instituted by the university to ensure work-life balance among female administrators?
4. How effective have such human resource management strategies been in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in the university?
5. What have been the effects of work-life imbalances on female administrators in the university?
6. What social support systems are available in the university for female administrators to ensure work-life balance?
7. What do you think should be done to ensure the achievement of work-life balance for female administrators in the university?

Thank you

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR NATIONAL EXECUTIVES OF GHANA ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1. What are the causes of work-life imbalances for female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
2. How do work-life imbalances affect the performance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
3. What role do you play in ensuring the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
4. What policies are available for female administrators to ensure work-life balance for female administrators in the university?
5. How effective have such policies been in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in the universities?
6. What are the outcomes of work-life balance or imbalance for female administrators in Ghana?
7. What do you think should be done to ensure the achievement of work-life balance for female administrators in Ghana?

Thank you

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EXECUTIVES OF WOMEN CAUCUSES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

Dear Sir/Madam

This interview guide is designed to investigate the strategies adopted to manage work-life balance by female administrators in public universities in Ghana. As part of this broad aim, the study explored the sources of competing work-life demands on female administrators in public universities in Ghana, examined the policies and strategies established by the universities to ensure work-life balance among female administrators in Ghana, assess the effectiveness of the approaches adopted by female administrators in public universities to ensure work-life balance, and analyse the outcomes of work-life balance on female administrators in public universities in Ghana. This is in partial fulfillment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at the University of Ghana. As a result, any information given would be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

1. What are the causes of work-life imbalances for female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
2. How do work-life imbalances affect the performance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
3. What role do you play in ensuring the work-life balance of female administrators in public universities in Ghana?
4. What policies are available for female administrators to ensure work-life balance for female administrators in the university?
5. How effective have such policies been in ensuring work-life balance for female administrators in the universities?
6. What are the outcomes of work-life balance or imbalance for female administrators in Ghana?
7. What do you think should be done to ensure the achievement of work-life balance for female administrators in Ghana?

Thank you.