BALANCING MOTHERHOOD AND WORK IN THE FORMAL SECTOR IN GHANA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF WOMEN WHO WORK, AND WOMEN WHO GAVE UP THEIR CAREER.

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I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother Francisca Adriana Sam. Thoughts of you kept me through this journey. I love you dearly grandma. I miss you.

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ABSTRACT

Responsibilities of motherhood and climbing the career development ladder can be hectic because it entails a wide range of duties, including attending meetings, supervising children's assignments, sending and picking children to and from school, among others. Since childbearing is of extreme importance in the Ghanaian society, some mothers are left with no choice than to sacrifice their careers. Well- educated women who have risen high on career ladders are confronted with gender- role conflict, causing some to quit or consider quitting their jobs. The intersection between motherhood and career conflicts is largely explored especially in literature on Western societies, however, the benefits women derive from playing both roles still remain scantly mapped, especially in sub- Saharan Africa. The main purpose of this study is to examine how Ghanaian women balance work in the formal sector and motherhood.

Six dominant themes emerged from the analysis including motivating factors, coping mechanisms, social support and the conduciveness of organizational and governmental policies. This phenomenological study interviewed seven women- five working mothers and two mothers who quit their jobs in the formal sector. Using snowballing, respondents were selected from similar socio-economic backgrounds in Accra. The results showed that working mothers experienced some form of stress in integrating work and family roles, however, there were great satisfaction and fulfillment in being able to balance both roles. Their major challenge was the insufficient time they had with their children because of work and vice versa. Respondents suggested that the formal working environment, existing organizational and governmental policies needed amendments since they were not conducive for mothers. A major recommendation was to adopt family-friendly policies such as the establishment of baby nurseries and learning centers at the workplace, where children could be, during school vacations. The findings of this study are important to help promote gender equality and make it easier for women to combine motherhood and formal work.

Key Words: *formal sector, working mothers, career, coping mechanism, role conflict*

ACRONYMNS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
HRM	Human Resource Manager
ILO	International Labor Organization
PA	Personal Assistant
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDI	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

The main objective of this study is to ***examine how Ghanaian working mothers balance work in the formal sector and motherhood responsibilities***. The focus of this thesis, however, is not on the underlying conflicts between motherhood and career, but on how some mothers are able to maintain their work in the formal sector amidst all the challenges and why some women decide to leave the formal work they once had. My research is centered on Ghanaian mothers who are married (living or not living with husband, but must be living with children), educated (higher than secondary school level) and who are presently, or were formerly employed in the formal sector. The aim of the study is to contribute to discourses surrounding issues on gender in development**.**

Responsibilities of motherhood and climbing the career ladder can be daunting because it entails a wide range of duties, including attending meetings, feeding and putting children to bed, changing diapers, supervising children's assignments, sending and picking children to and from school, taking children to the hospital, among others (Sarpong, 2017). A mother must have a flexible time schedule to accommodate all her responsibilities. However, gender role conflict is likely to arise because the inflexible nature which characterizes the formal sector complicates a mother's ability to perform her motherhood roles and vice- versa, and this can cause some mothers to quit or consider quitting their jobs (Byron, 2005; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011; Mokomane, 2013). Apparently, there has been a growing trend of mothers pulling out of the labor force during child care years globally, especially in the USA(Marcinkus & Hamilton, 2006). This observation generates many questions: In this modern day where there is constant advocacy for girl child education, gender equality, women empowerment and women making their way into the higher echelons of decision-making power in the formal sector, should this be the case? Should a woman feel burdened to choose between motherhood and her career? Are women being trained to spend so much time in school, earn a good job only to quit mid-way through because they must have and raise children? Work - family experiences, and the meanings associated with motherhood practices, the ideas in variations conception and child rearing vary across countries due to differences in cultural values, structural policies and family structure (Baggar & Love, 2010; Tettey, 2002; Waterhouse, Hill, & Hinde, 2017). The issue of mothers moving out of the formal sector is patent in sub- Saharan Africa also. Particularly in Ghana, the cultural validation of marriage

and procreation (Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2006), an ageing and dependent population (Mokomane, 2013) and inadequate support from government and private organizations, poses a challenge to working mothers who have the responsibility of juggling paid work and caring responsibilities (Annor, 2014).

1.2 Context

In Ghana, since motherhood duties vary from fatherhood duties in a lot of ways (Tettey, 2002), women are likely to face different challenges than men when it comes to combining parenthood with a career. In understanding how working mothers balance career and motherhood responsibilities, this section will look at the economic and family institution. Firstly, in the *economic institution*, though the majority of Ghanaian mothers are employed in the informal sector (Waterhouse et al., 2017), there is an appreciable level of women found in the formal sector and this can be attributed to access to education (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005). Education is highly related to employment in the formal sector and educational levels of women lead to access to economic empowerment, especially in terms of acquiring a decent work and gaining career advancement (N. Kabeer, 2012). In Ghana, women found in formal wage employment are considerably low as compared to men, but the proportion of women found there has doubled from the 1990s to 2000s (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005).

In the traditional Ghanaian society, the *marriage and family institution* is valued as paramount (Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2006), with the consummation of marriage being the birth of a child (Burke, 1988). Even though fertility has decreased in urban Ghana, attaining the status of a biological mother remains important for gender identity, with the bearing of children being a marker of full womanhood (G. Clark, 1999). The majority of the citizens in Ghana are Christians (71%), and in Ghanaian Christianity, there is the belief that wives are helpmates to their husbands. The man and woman are considered the breadwinner and caregiver of the family respectively (Annor, 2014). As a helpmate, she is expected to assist her spouse in contributing to household income and this is because, the definition of motherhood in Ghana partly includes one who engages in economic activity (Waterhouse et al., 2017) in order to feed her children. For instance, among the tribes of southern Ghana, particularly the Akans, in fulfillment of social expectations, a woman is expected to combine her role as a wife and mother with income generation (G. Clark, 1999). In the early 90s, women played an important role in supplementing their spouses' income as men's wages declined (Akyeampong, 2000). This proves that, the

cultural and religious messages received by women regarding motherhood and career often complicate issues for women who seek to participate in both domains simultaneously. Therefore, in the context of this study, a married woman wears a lot of caps, including that of a mother, a wife, financial supporter, caregiver and an employer or an employee. Indeed, these multiple roles can burden mothers, especially since the labor market conditions, general work environment, and governmental policies in the country are not conducive for working mothers. For instance, the absence of support from government and private organizations threatens working mothers who juggle paid work and caring responsibilities (Annor, 2014) and so, discharging motherhood responsibilities may affect work duties and vice versa. A study of staff at the University of Ghana reported that there was daily conflict in taking children to and from school, and child sickness was seen as a major interruption to work (Annor, 2014). Due to this, working mothers sometimes find themselves in a position where they feel they must make mutually exclusive choices (Snow, 2017; Stockdell-Giesler & Ingalls, 2007) between having children and maintaining a career.

Nevertheless, for a working mother to adequately perform her responsibilities, she needs to have a support system such as a supportive spouse, extended family members, hired helps, and most importantly, as a worker, she will need conducive organizational and governmental policies that can help her maintain a balance. As noted by Annor (2014) in the case of spousal support, the absence of paternity leave in Ghana makes it difficult for employed fathers to contribute to childcare, and this strengthens existing gender inequalities in household labor. Family-friendly policies such as flexible work arrangements and employer-provided childcare are largely non-existent in the country, and so, working mothers must rely on both formal and informal sources of support at the workplace (Annor, 2014; Mapedzahama, 2014; Mokomane, 2013; Öun, Trujillo, & International Labour Office, 2005; Smit, 2011). As Ghana is signatory to ILO, women in the formal sector are protected by labor legislation such as the mandatory three months of fully remunerated maternity leave (Government of Ghana, 2003). Whilst such regulations exist regarding maternity leave, entitlements and working time limits they do not necessarily facilitate combining work and motherhood responsibilities (Annor, 2014).

1.3 Problem statement

By exploring the narratives of their experiences, the knowledge gained from this study findings has vital implications for gender in development, as it directs the attention of gender activists

who can engage policymakers and stakeholders to understand, appreciate and address the challenges and benefits of working mothers, by putting in place appropriate measures that facilitate combining work and motherhood responsibilities. In so doing, there is progress achieved in promoting women empowerment. My research also helps to bridge the gap between researchers, scholars, and practitioners as they work together on discourses to enhance the achievements women derive from balancing work and motherhood. Most importantly, it adds to the literature on the benefits women in Ghana derive from performing both roles.

1.4 Definitions of terms used: mothering, formal sector, family, balance

In this thesis, the term mothering involves the set of activities related to the caring and nurturing of children (Arendell, 2000). The words 'women' and 'mothers' will be used interchangeably. The formal sector encompasses all jobs with fixed hours and wages of which taxes are expected to be paid on income received (N. Kabeer, 2005). Social support is any form of assistance are all forms of assistance a person receives from others. Family, as used here, refers to a woman's nuclear relations including her husband and children, whereas extended family includes all other family members, outside of her nuclear family. The word balance in this context refers to one's ability to have effective control over all his or her responsibilities. The words 'balance' and 'combine' will be used interchangeably.

1.5 Outline thesis structure

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, Chapter 2 is a review of existing literature on motherhood and career balance and an examination of, the theoretical framework used, which are the *empowerment theory* and theories on *work-life conflict*. It also consists of the research objectives and questions. In chapter 3, I present the research methodology, which comprises of research methods, design and the methods of data generation. In chapter 4, I present the study findings, which are divided into two sections. The first section is submitted in the form of cases, where the narratives of two respondents are given. The second section presents the findings as categorized under five broad themes. Chapter 5 gives an in-depth discussion of the findings and a highlight of the study limitations. The concluding chapter, which is chapter 6, summarizes my key findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Theory & Literature Review

This chapter provides a discussion of relevant literature that informs and contextualizes my research. A literature search of Oria, Web of Science and Google Scholar used the inclusion criteria of research studies addressing aspects of motherhood and career balance, motivating factors, coping mechanisms, social support, empowerment and work-family theories in peer-reviewed journals in the English language from January 2000 to 2019. However, a few relevant publications dating back to the 90s and 80s were included. The search process involved the use of synonyms and the articles were thoroughly read to choose the most relevant to my study objectives. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the research background. This study is guided by the Empowerment and Work-family theories, of which the second section explains. The next section briefly gives the limitations of existing literature, of which my research seeks to fill some of those gaps.

Previous research on motherhood and career normally overlooks sub- Saharan mothers employed in the formal sector, thus, by focusing on mothers in this continent, my research will add depth to already existing western literature. As noted by Aryee (2005), such studies are essential in understanding the dynamics of the work-family interface which will provide the knowledge base for global organizations to design culturally appropriate family-friendly initiatives to assist employed women in sub- Saharan African to balance work and family roles. Whilst most literature focuses on the conflicts; my research highlights the benefits Ghanaian mothers derive from functioning simultaneously in both domains. I begin by reviewing the discourse on gender equality which led to women moving into the formal sector of the economy.

2.1 Movement of women into the formal sector & Gender role change

Commitments to gender equality can be traced back to the 1970s when feminists such as Ester Boserup argued for the inclusion of women and women's needs in development, particularly their economic contributions (Tiessen, Parpart, & Marchand, 2017). From the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there is an emphasis on the inclusion and empowerment of women in all aspects of society. By encouraging women to break the glass ceiling and fulfill their career potentials, female participation in the global workforce has grown extensively, with the trend reported for the USA (Auster, 2001). According to Aryee (2005), although in sub-Saharan Africa, women's involvement in diverse forms of income- generation activities is largely in the informal sector, access to better education and economic opportunities coupled with urbanization and industrialization has increased women's participation in formal

wage employment. He adds that even though the percentage of males working in professional or managerial occupations remains higher than females, the proportion of females has increased from 19.7percent in 1960 to 37.0 percent in 2000 (Aryee, 2005) and reports from GSS also confirms this (Annor, 2016). In spite of these achievements, questions have been raised as to whether the inflow of women into the paid labor force will continue or not (Gutek, 1993; Long & Kahn, 1993). As women have adopted new roles because of their movement into the paid labor force, their old roles in the unpaid realm of the home domain still exist (England & Swoboda, 1988). It is believed that this has left women in more stressful positions than before and that is why women are pulling out of the formal sector.

2.2 Women Opting out of the formal labor force

Although many women around the world have been successful in their careers, many are confronted with choosing between a challenging and promising career and the demands of home life (Dex & Joshi, 1999). In a research on professional women's career exit, the authors note that press publications center on mothers' withdrawal from formal work to take care of their children (Hamilton Volpe & Marcinkus Murphy, 2011). Among the factors responsible for women's exit, are the long and inflexible work schedules, which makes it difficult to perform traditional female roles at home (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011). Women may feel they have no option than to sacrifice one for the other, and it is normally their careers that are sacrificed because they do not want to be tagged as 'bad' mothers. In a study on Christian women dually called to motherhood and career, the researchers cite Ashcroft's work, where she notes that women can easily lose themselves since they have been taught to idolize their family (Ashcroft, 1996; Schermer Sellers, Thomas, Batts, & Ostman, 2005). Hence, women continued to view themselves as responsible for children despite men's increasing participation in childcare following women's progression into paid employment (Boeckmann, Misra, & Budig, 2014). Such notions can reinforce women's guilt, especially when they have to delegate 'motherhood' duties to others (Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds, & Alldred, 2004).

Mothers may consider other alternatives available to them before quitting their careers. They might quit their formal job to be self- employed in the informal sector. The informal sector, however, has its downsides. It is anticipated that being self- employed grants mothers better flexibility as compared to work in the formal sector, but the assumed flexibility of the latter has been questioned; for instance in a study of traders in Ghana, it was observed that traders worked at certain times of the day in order to get the best business (G. Clark, 1999). Scholars have also

argued that potential entrepreneurs face difficulties starting up a business since African states often put impediments in their way (Hansen & Vaa, 2004).

Women deriving satisfaction in two different domains

Yet, some mothers find fulfillment in operating in two separate domains, and this explains why they chose to remain in the formal sector. There is not necessarily a strict distinction between motherhood and work, rather, they complement each other in special ways (Paré & Dillaway, 2005). Tom's (1993) early analyses on women's work in western industrialized societies critiques the ideologies surrounding motherhood-work dichotomy, adding that these two are mutually inclusive; she states financial responsibility for children as an incentive to find good jobs although the responsibility may complicate having a job. Women may derive a sense of satisfaction and achievement from operating successfully in two very different domains (S. C. Clark, 2002), for instance, Bushra Jamil a Ph.D. student and a mother of three young children, emphasized that achieving a career goal and contributing to household income gave women a sense of empowerment and confidence which some stay-at-home moms lacked (Jamil, 2014). Auster (2001) confirms that women could derive greater satisfaction from some employment duties than the traditional duties of a wife and a mother. While there is a deep sense of motherhood because becoming a mother changes one's worldview, career is of high importance as women seek stimulation, challenges, achievement and enrichment in their work (Grady & McCarthy, 2008). However, lack of social support makes it difficult for mothers to find a balance. The next section reviews literature on organizational and governmental support available to working mothers.

2.3 Formal & Informal Social Support at the workplace - the case of Ghana

Women's formal work participation is closely related to the provision of conducive work policies, including maternity or parental leave and childcare provisions (Boeckmann et al., 2014). Ghana's Labor Act, 2003 (Act 651) grants women 12 weeks of maternity leave and during this period, a woman is fully paid her salary (Annor, 2016). However, the 12-week maternity leave is inadequate, especially since lactating mothers are advised to breastfeed exclusively for six months, so, to help overcome the challenge of inadequate leave period in Ghana, an advocacy to extend maternity leave from three to six months has been put forward by stakeholders (Sarpong, 2017). Yet still, with the absence of paternity leave in the country, Annor (2016) notes that mothers perform the bulk of the work whiles employed fathers

contribute less to child care, and this incites existing gender inequalities in household labor. However, some European countries have favorable policies that ensures that fathers contribute as much to child care as mothers. For instance in Norway, there is paternity leave and also a system known as the *cash-for-care benefit* which allows the father or mother of young children to choose to remain at home even after their parental leave has expired and this is intended to give parents more flexibility (Stangeland, 2012). This lessens the burden on women since responsibilities are equally shared between parents. Annor (2016) adds that since such support is largely unavailable from the Ghanaian government, mothers have to depend on both formal (e.g. family-friendly policies) and informal support (e.g. Supportive bosses) at their workplace. Having supportive supervisors and family-friendly policies can decrease work-family conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). In an older study conducted in the global north on breastfeeding, participants indicated that supportive supervisors could greatly diminish workplace stress, but a non-supportive boss made it almost impossible to maintain an adequate milk supply (Thompson & Bell, 1997). Likewise conducive organizational policies including child care, parental leave, and eldercare services can shape women's employment and reduce stress (Boeckmann et al., 2014; Frye & Breaugh, 2004). However, in the absence of family-supportive programs from government and organizations, Ghanaian mothers have to rely on support from spouses, extended family members, or hired helps.

2.4 Support from family & hired help

Marriage and procreation are of high relevance in Ghanaian culture, in addition to the emphasis on extended family networks as they contribute to an increasing need to provide care for young children and vulnerable relatives (Aryee, 2005). The extended family which formerly used to be a major support for employees has declined, as traditional kinship networks weaken due to increased migration and urbanization (Namuggala, 2015; Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2006). These support embraces providing information, advice and other assistance with the aim of helping individuals meet their family obligations (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Within the family domain, an integral source of support is spousal support (Annor, 2016). In Ghana, male involvement in household chores and childcare is gradually increasing in urban settings (Ghana Statistical Service., 2008). The findings of past research show that husbands who are supportive and contribute to household labor are greatly appreciated by their wives (Piotrkowski, Rapoport, & Rapoport, 1987). Aside from spousal support, extended family members play vital roles for working mothers by caring for young children (Annor, 2016) and helping with house

chores. Also, drivers, cooks, house helps and nannies all fall under the category of domestic help, who are alternative sources of support for employed parents (Annor, 2016). A study of the role of house helps in Kenya concluded that the inflexible work schedules that is commonly found in urban formal sector in sub- Saharan Africa, forced many workers to employ house helps as a strategy to balance work and family demands (Muasya, 2014) and various chores are assigned to these people at a cost, which was relatively lower (Mapedzahama, 2014) in sub-Saharan Africa. Regardless of their low cost however, Sarpong (2017) cautions that care must be taken in hiring the services of such people. Some parents are highly skeptical in employing house helps, although retaining working mothers in the formal sector is closely related to the contributions of house helps (Namuggala, 2015). Yet, Muasya (2014), emphasized that house helps are essential because most of them live with the family and play basic parental roles in the absence of parents; they are tasked with the most sensitive responsibilities including picking up children from school, feeding them and supervising their homework, and also protecting their employer's house and properties. Social support including house helps are therefore a source of satisfaction and appreciation for employed women (Piotrkowski et al., 1987) that can keep working mothers in the formal sector. The ensuing paragraphs examine the literature on mother's motivating factors and coping mechanisms that help them deal with associated stress.

2.5 Motivating factors

Although financial motivation is key, it may not be the only reason mothers maintain their jobs. According to Gutek (1993), women sought entry into many male-dominated fields because those fields offered a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as challenge, exposure, job security, opportunity for advancement, generous fringe benefits including pensions, ample paid vacation, company-sponsored education and the desire to make an impact in the lives of others (role model figure) which may usually be unavailable in female-dominated jobs or even in the informal sector. These serve as motivating factors that encourage some mothers to maintain their jobs in the formal sector despite the challenges.

2.6 Coping mechanisms

Although women have taken up new roles, they are still required to fully perform their family duties, in addition to work responsibilities and this may burden them (Gutek, 1993). Hence, coping mechanisms are efforts to reduce negative the impacts of stress (Edwards, 1988). Gutekk (1993) explains that work and family may ironically provide coping mechanisms for working mothers. In her submission, she cites a woman who finds solace and meaning in her work, after the death of her husband. For this widow, she is using her work as a coping mechanism, vis a vis the presence of an active and supportive family, who provide comfort towards work stress (Crosby, 1982). Other mothers may take drastic measures like withdrawing completely from the formal sector as a way to cope with stress.

2.7. Theoretical framework

Work-family Theories: The experiences associated with engaging in multiple roles has led to the development of several distinct but related theories (Waterhouse et al., 2017). Role strain arises from issues of compatibility between activities performed in the fulfillment of role obligations, as well as from overload through demands exceeding available resources (Goode, 1960). Role conflict happens when work and family roles are incompatible; by engaging in work, participation in family life becomes difficult and vice versa (Beutell & Greenhaus, 1985). Role enhancement is the privileges, compensation, the accumulation, and transfer of resources and enrichment of personality acquired from multiple roles (Sieber, 1974). Focusing on role enhancement, this study identifies the fulfillment mothers derive from performing double roles.

Empowerment Theory: With empowerment, individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them, and a relationship between their efforts and life outcomes (Mechanic, 1991). According to Kabeer (2005), one way to think about power is the *ability to make choices*, so to be disempowered means to be denied choice. Some Ghanaian women have been denied the ability to make choices so far as balancing motherhood and career is concerned. In my research, I problematize a situation where mothers working in the formal sector have little or no control over their life choices. Their inability to challenge existing power relations and institutional norms and biases are constraining mothers' ability to make strategic life choices (N. Kabeer, 2005). In this study, I look at the meanings, motivations, and purposes that mothers in the formal sector and those that quit their formal work, attach to their decisions. Also, I share in the view that empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party rather those who desire to be empowered must claim it (Mosedale, 2005), consequently, the

outcome of this research is to facilitate women to empower themselves and others as well, especially the younger generation.

2.8 Research questions

My study aims to supplement the already existing literature on motherhood- career balance which is relatively limited in sub- Saharan Africa at the moment. By exploring how mothers find a balance, my study throws more light on the fulfillment working mothers gain from undertaking double roles, by identifying their coping mechanisms, motivating factors, and their advice to the future generation.

I will address the study's objective by focusing on the following **specific** research questions:

a) How do working mothers and those who gave up on their career perceive motherhood and career experiences?

b) What motivating factors encourage mothers to continue working in the formal sector and what are the coping mechanisms mothers have adopted to deal with stress?

c) How conducive are organizational and governmental policies in Ghana in facilitating motherhood and career balance?

d) What role does family and other forms of social support play in shaping the opportunities for combining motherhood and their career?

e) Are women judgmental of the decisions of other mothers, and what knowledge do they pass on to the younger generation about combining motherhood and career?

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter gives an overview of the research design used. As a researcher, I identify my position, followed by a vivid illustration of the research design, the data generation method, the ethics, quality assurance and the framework adopted for data analysis of this study. I also point out the shortcomings of the designs used and my role as a researcher.

3.1 Research design

Per the study objective, the qualitative research approach was most appropriate to use because the study was interested in exploring the experiences, interpretations, and meanings, mothers attached to the decisions (Golafshani, 2003) and most importantly to generate findings that were solely based on the shared experiences of participants. As a researcher, it is necessary to declare my philosophical assumptions in undertaking this research. By bringing my own worldview paradigms and beliefs to the research project, it informs the conduct and my writing and shapes the content of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017). My ontological position is that of social interpretative/ constructivist because I concur that there are several truths or interpretations of reality. Being a qualitative study, the phenomenological design was used. This method was most appropriate because it presented the opportunity to probe the *'whys'* and *'hows'* of mothers' experiences on the phenomenon at study (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Green & Thorogood, 2018). By describing and reporting the meanings of the phenomenon shared by several mothers (Creswell & Poth, 2017), this design is most appropriate because it closely aligns with the research objectives. Also, this design describes the shared commonality of what all participants experienced and how they experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). It is most important to use phenomenology because, as Creswell & Poth (2017), stated, it does not only showcase a description of the process but as an interpretative process, the researcher makes an analysis of the different meanings of the lived experiences as accounted by the participant. Hence, the philosophical assumption is based on the fact that there is a common ground and the reality of the phenomenon is fulfilled only within the meaning of the experience of the individual. The research designs chosen were reflected in the methods employed and in-depth interviews were most appropriate for this study other than group interviews because although the research topic was not sensitive, it required that participants shared a lot of personal information, thus, individual interviews proved to be most suitable.

3.2 Data generation method

For the study, a total of seven (7) semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting between 30 minutes and 1 hour 15 minutes. The interview guide consisted of 20 questions. The opening questions were closed questions, covering basic demographic information. The second and third sections consisted of open-ended questions, which were mainly narrative, and problem - focused *(See Appendix 1 & 2).* All interviews were conducted in English, although some participants said one or two sentences in the local dialect (Twi), which was translated by the researcher. Participants were asked to select locations that they would be most comfortable with; three of the interviews took place in their homes, three in their offices and one in my home. Participants were contacted beforehand via text message, phone call or email to confirm the date, venue and time for the interview. It was imperative that the purpose of the project was explained in detail to the participants prior to the start of the interview. At each interview, only I and the interviewee were present. This was necessary to ensure privacy so that participants could speak freely. All participants agreed to have the interview recorded after I explained to them the purpose of the recording, which was to enable me to focus during the interview and to provide accurate data for the analysis stage. Interviews were recorded using the voice recorder on my phone, after which I transcribed.

Study site

The study location for the interviews was Accra, the capital town of Ghana. Being highly urbanized with a spanning variety of ethnic and religious groups, Accra is home to people originally from the remaining 15 regions in Ghana, who are now settled permanently there, mainly in search of jobs and educational opportunities. This study area was ideal for the research due to its great diversity of women from different ethnic backgrounds, their autonomy and increase participation of women employed in the formal sector. Geographically speaking, Accra was convenient for me because that is where I live, and I had contacts who could be of assistance in recruiting participants.

Recruitment Strategy

A snowball sampling strategy was chosen to locate participants. Snowballing was most effective for this study because it was comparatively easier to identify people with similar traits of interest, some of whom were colleagues at work, friends or related. However, informal contacts vital in accessing initial participants were made through the services of two

gatekeepers. It was important to explain to gatekeepers that, potential study participants were not to be cajoled or forced into partaking in the research.

Participants

The inclusion criteria for interview participants comprised of the following: they should be married Ghanaian women, they should have children, they should be currently or previously employed in the formal sector in the Ghanaian economy and currently residing and working in Ghana. Participants were not excluded on the basis of their ethnicity. However, the uniformity amongst the mothers was in terms of marital status, nationality, and whether they were currently or previously employed in the formal sector. No attention was given to the ethnicity of participants, in fact, the study sought participants from different ethnic groups in Ghana, and this influenced the decision of the study area, although ethnicity was not a criterion for recruitment. I anticipated interviewing four mothers working in the formal sector and four other mothers who quit their formal jobs, but it proved difficult locating women who had quit their jobs. Therefore, I interviewed five working mothers and two mothers who had left the formal sector to be self- employed. In-depth interviews were conducted with the assistance of two gatekeepers who willingly helped recruit research participants. Details of participants are recorded in table 1 below:

Table 1: Interview Participants (Mothers working in the formal sector)

Pseudonym	Level of Education	Position at work	No. & Gender of children	Ages of children
Akosua	Masters' degree	HRM	4 (2 girls, 2 boys)	15,13,11,6
Anita	Masters' degree	Director, Civil Service	2 (girls)	14, 11
Bernice	Masters' degree	Health Assistant	1 (boy)	1
Kukua	Masters' degree	CEO of a bank	2 (1 boy, 1 girl)	17, 15
Nhyira	MPhil & a fellow	Medical Doctor, Head of department	2(girls)	10, 7

Table 2: Interview Participants (Mothers who quit their job in the formal sector)

Pseudonym	Level of Education	Position at work	No. & Gender of children	Ages of children
Akua Duku	High School	Self- employed (Business woman)	3 (1 girl, 2 boys)	27, 23,20
Serwaa	Masters' Degree	Self- employed (Caterer)	3(2 girls, 1 boy)	14,11,9

Prior to going into the field, I conducted a pilot study (to test my interview guide and examine the feasibility of my approach) with a Ghanaian national living in Bergen at the time. However, I later decided to include her as a participant in the study because she had very interesting inputs which clearly reflected the issue of motherhood and career balance.

Data Management

All interviews were recorded using the voice recorder on my phone and later transcribed into a text-based format for easy management. The transcripts were stored on my password-protected computer and the names of the participants were not included in the transcripts, to protect their identities. All data used during the data analysis stage was anonymized.

3.3 Ethics

They are also ethical actions that are dictated as universally necessary for research by a larger organization or institution (Tracy, 2010). As described by Shenton (2004), procedural ethics are vital to ensure honesty in informants. Thus, this research was subjected to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) code of ethics *(see Appendix 4)*. I ensured that harm and deception were avoided, I negotiated informed consent and protected the privacy of participants (Sales & Folkman, 2000). I ensured that the respondents understood the purpose of the study, willingly agreed to be part and informed them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. By giving them the opportunity to refuse participation in the study, I was confident that my respondents consisted of only those that were genuinely interested in partaking in the research. Participants were handed a copy of the informed consent *(Appendix 3)* for them to read, understand and agree to, by signing, before the start of the interview. I also verbally explained the purpose of the research and reiterated to participants that, their involvement in the research was voluntary and they could withdraw from the interview at any time without

giving any explanation. Also, the identity of participants and all information given by respondents was kept private and confidential. To aid in taking accurate notes, I used a recording device, but only with their permission. In line with the general ethical requirement for social research, all names of individuals were anonymized, and I was cautious to maintain the anonymity of interviewees during the writing of the findings. Using iterative questioning, (including probing and rephrasing questions), specific ploys were incorporated to uncover deliberate lies and to ensure honesty in the data given by informants (Shenton, 2004). Briefing and debriefing were built into the interview guide and I created rapport with all interviewees before and during the interview process. At the end of the interview, I encouraged participants to contact me if they were interested in the research report. Frequent Debriefing sessions with my supervisor was important to discuss alternative approaches to help in my research, and during such sessions, my attention was drawn to certain flaws that I had overlooked, including subjective biases and preferences.

3.4 Quality assurance: Trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is described through the lens of concepts of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Golafshani, 2003; Neuman, 2014). **Credibility**: involves the various steps taken to ensure scientific rigor, with prime focus on what the study looks at, the context of the research, choice of research participants, and approach of data collection (Golafshani, 2003). The concept of credibility should answer to questions such as, how context-rich and detailed are the basic descriptions? In reference to the framework provided by Yilmaz, (2013) context-rich descriptions of the participants' accounts were gathered in my research to ensure credibility. During the data generation and analysis stage, it was important for me to be reflexive in order to minimize subjective biases, thus, I collaborated with my colleagues to read and give me feedback. My supervisor was readily available to provide constructive criticisms where necessary. My work was subject to scrutiny by peers and academics (Shenton, 2004).

Again, social factors as the age and educational background were considered while sampling. I generated illustrations and pictorial overviews where needed in order to facilitate readers' understanding of the analysis; this, I believe helped produce findings that were believable and convincing (Yilmaz, 2013). By using two different theoretical approaches, (Empowerment theory and Work–family theories) I was able to ensure triangulation. Being candid about my

strengths and shortcomings meant that I had to be reflexive even before going into the field. However, I must say I had some preconceived ideas prior to my data collection, although all such notions were cast- off, by undergoing an introspection and discarding my own biases and motivations.

Dependability: this refers to the extent to which the reader is convinced that the findings happened as mentioned by the researcher (Yilmaz, 2013) and it should respond to questions such as, are research questions clearly defined and the features of the study design congruent with them? Hence, a topic guide with broad questions was used to facilitate the data collection process. Also, I constantly probed the responses of the participants and this helped bring out in-depth and most relevant findings. In order to address dependability, procedures and choices were accurately described, whiles detailing the plan, execution of design and implementation process (Malterud, 2001). Dependability is similar to credibility in the sense that the researcher must be as transparent with encountered challenges. Consequently, I did this by critically reflecting on the entire research process, detailing what was challenging, my strengths, and how effective the process had been (Shenton, 2004).

Transferability: Yilmaz (2013) posited that transferability can be achieved if the findings of a qualitative study are transferable to other similar settings. In my case, respondents were from different cultural background, thus, the context of transferability was ensured since the findings can be transferred to other similar settings. Again, to ensure transferability, I confirmed that there was ample background information and thick description of the study area, setting, context, people, actions and sequence of events as accounted by my respondents since this will help readers make such a transfer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Role of the Researcher

Being a Ghanaian citizen and also resident in Accra, the possibility of my background influencing the study was high. However, I detached myself and my personal opinions in order to get genuine and unbiased findings. Being reflexive in this case as a researcher, I was aware that my personal experiences and opinions could influence the study. My own motivation for undertaking this study was my anticipation of how I will combine my future career and responsibility as a mother. This sparked my curiosity regarding the experiences of women who are playing double roles and this research is going to be a source of reminder and motivation to me in the near future. During the interview process, my inexperience in the interview technique

may have in a way limited the depth of exploration. Although there was much probing, I believe I could have done better if I had the expertise and adequacy. During two interviews, I felt the participants guided the interview, with one sharing very little information and the other speaking quite lengthy and digressing a few times. I believe this was as a result of power imbalance whiles conducting an elite interview. I noticed that in my position as an amateur student interviewer, I was intimidated by the high-level position of the interviewees and because of that, I was unable to further probe to get more details during one of the interview processes.

3.6 Framework for data analysis

I used thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) to analyze generated data from my interviews and I coded manually, and this was effective in helping me systematically identify and examine themes within the data. The analytical approach taken was that of deductive, where themes emerged from my research questions and theories. The coding table and thematic map produced during the analysis of interview data are provided in the *appendix (5a &5b)*. The data analyses included the following:

Understanding the transcriptions: After performing data transcription, I continually read the interviews and listened to the audio recordings. I also reviewed the notes I took during data collection. This step was essential in helping me to reach the required overall understanding of the interviews before coding the data.

Coding data: Having familiarized myself with the data, I started coding them, which included categorizing the results into significant fragments of text. I coded the interviews with a colleague to get another perspective. Initially, we examined and individually codified each interview; next, in the second round of analysis, I compared my findings and selected the outcomes that best fit each interview.

Identifying themes linked to the theoretical framework: After coding the data, I identified relevant concepts by extracting basic ideas out of the coded data. To bring out these fundamental issues, I grouped issues constantly mentioned in basic themes. I listed these in a table and organized them for the next phase of the analysis

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is presented in the form of in-depth cases, where the narratives of two participants are given. The second section presents the findings as categorized under six broad themes.

4.1 In-depth cases

This section examines the narratives of the lived experiences of two mothers: one is currently working in the formal sector and one has quit her formal work in order to be self- employed.

Serwaa: Quitting work in the formal sector

A mother's personal decisions are not only important to her as an individual but also relevant to her family. An example of a woman who sacrificed her formal job is 'Serwaa', a married woman with three children (2 girls and 1 boy), aged between 9 to 14 years. She holds a master's degree in Finance, and she acquired this 11 years ago. Prior to quitting her formal job, she worked as the Facilities Manager in one of the advanced information technology institutes in the country. Having quit her formal job eight years ago, of which she has no interest in returning to, she now runs her private catering business, where she supplies food to various workplaces. According to Serwaa, leaving her formal job to be self- employed was a sacrifice she took for the sake of peace in her family. Recalling her experience as a working mother, she said balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector in Ghana was extremely demanding and challenging. She complained about the obstinate nature associated with the 8 am to 5 pm job. At that time, it was a challenge since her husband also worked full time and they had no one to help them with the children. When asked why she did not employ the services of a house help, she said that they had tried a couple of house helps in the past, but it did not work; the house helps were not dependable. She quit her formal job and took over the house chores and child-care responsibilities, although her husband was always available to support and sometimes her mother- in- law came in to assist.

Although she is afforded flexibility as a self- employed woman, Serwaa mentioned that this was not easy. She still had to wake up early and prepare the children for school, after which she prepared meals for delivery. Although her duties were mostly that of supervision, there was a huge responsibility on her to work hard and ensure that she accumulated enough money to pay her staff. Also, she supplemented her husband's income with her monthly earnings from the catering business and saved the rest in her personal account.

When asked if she had any regrets so far as quitting her formal job is concerned, Serwaa heaved a long sigh and recalled an instance when her daughter brought a school assignment, and when she tried to assist, her daughter questioned Serwa's intelligence. This was because, since her daughter became of age (*seven years at that time*), she had not seen her mother going to the office and this made her doubt her mother's ability to supervise her assignment. She added that occasionally, she had been disrespected by the people she delivered food to and this was as a result of society's negative attitude towards people working in the informal sector, especially those that supplied food. They were of the opinion that such people did not have the educational qualifications to work in the office (formal sector). According to Serwaa, occasionally, when she was pushed to the wall, she told them: "*Hey! I hold a masters' degree and I got it 11 years ago when you were probably in the secondary (high) school…I am only here because I want to run my own business, and this does not give you the chance to disrespect me*". While such attitudes infuriated Serwaa, she was not bothered by it. Even though Serwaa sometimes regretted the decision she took and would not advise her daughters to ever quit their formal jobs, her greatest pride was when her children performed excellently in school.

"*Motherhood is very important because once the foundation of a child is jeopardized, it cannot be repaired and the bible says train up a child the way he should go and when he grows, he will not depart from it. So, if you neglect a child as a mother, and concentrate on your work, business, money, you will earn the money anyway, but you will come home and you don't have a home, you don't have children you will be proud of. I can say I am really proud of my children, because of how I have brought them up by the grace of God*" says Serwaa.

Nhyira: The importance of a supportive husband

Being a role model to one's children goes beyond a person's current employment status. However, there are diverse reasons why mothers continue to remain active in the formal labor force, although playing such double roles is difficult. Women's experience of stress, coping mechanisms, and motivating factors remain highly relevant to understand the reason for their choices.

'Nhyira' is a mother of two, aged 7 and 10. She is a medical doctor and holds an MPhil in Demography. Personally, she believed that balancing motherhood and career in the formal sector was extremely difficult. In addition to her work as a doctor, she was promoted recently to take up other responsibilities aside from her clinical work, which has doubled her responsibilities both at home and work. On a few occasions, she had to leave the office at 12 midnight, which negatively affected her family. On weekdays, she woke up at 5 am and

prepared the children for school. Whiles her husband dropped them at school, she remained behind to put the house in order before she left for the office. She did all these on her own because she did not have a house help. However, her husband, who was also a medical doctor was extremely supportive. Nhyira said: '*my husband and I do the cleaning and the laundry, that is how we have shared it….my husband is very supportive…very (3x) extremely so, as for that one I have to put it in capital letters, bold, make it red… He is very helpful'*. She explained how her husband picked the children from school, prepared lunch and started homework with them before she returned home. Occasionally, her mother came to assist with the kids. The earliest time she closed from work was around 5 pm, and when she got home, she assisted her husband with the kid's homework but often left to prepare dinner. She was normally in bed at 11 pm or 12 pm.

Nhyira is sometimes thinking about quitting her job, in fact, she said there were several mornings when she questioned herself: "*I just ask myself, why won't I just stop work and stay at home and take care of my kids?*" However, she chose to continue working in order to assist her husband to provide for the family. Though her husband's income was good enough to support the family's expenses, Nhyira said the added support from her side was required. Whereas her husband paid the school fees and other utility expenses in the house, her salary was put in an investment towards their retirement plans and other projects. By doing so, the man did not have to stress about catering for all the expenses. Thus, finances were one of the motivating factors keeping her in the job. She felt guilty that she was not present for her daughters as much as she should. According to Nhyira, although her mother is a professor, and was a lecturer when she was young, her mother was constantly around to attend to her needs. Comparing the role her mother played to what she was doing now, she doubts she was doing half as much for her daughters especially ever since she took on her new job and this really weighed her down in thoughts. Again, being able to accumulate more than enough money for quality family holidays, recreation and luxurious trips outside the country motivated her to continue working. Both Nhyira and her husband working in the formal sector afforded them the liberty to travel, which to her, it was necessary for the kids' exposure. Being able to put her skill in practice, offered her the chance to save lives, through which she built long-lasting relationships with her patients; this really gave her joy. Nhyira adored her work, she emphatically said: "*Oh yeah…if I die and I have to come back again, I will still do medicine…. oh, I love medicine, it's an interesting subject … oh I love it*".

Her daughters gave her a lot of motivation to continue working and thoughts about them motivated her to work harder to give them a good future. To her, money answered everything, Thus, if she worked hard, she could help secure the future of her daughters. Personal financial independence was another motivating factor for Nhyira. Nhyira felt that, maintaining her job, gave her financial liberation as a woman. With that kind of financial independence, she could provide certain basic needs for the family without having to request from her husband. Although quitting her job would have afforded her excess time to effectively manage her family, this will have financially crippled her. Nhyira described herself as not business inclined, hence if she was to quit her formal job, there might not be an alternative for her. However, staying at home would not surmount to boredom at all, because she yearned for her countless hobbies that she has had to put on hold as a result of her busy schedule. She used to play the piano, of which she was sure to return to if she quit her job. Also, she loved to read, and crochet and she would want to introduce her daughters to some of these activities. Quitting her job would also give her the opportunity to thoroughly perform her house chores and most importantly spare her adequate time to spend with her daughters. Regardless of the stress encompassed with maintaining the delicate balance between motherhood and career, the above-mentioned reasons motivate Nhyira to keep working. Nevertheless, she adopted some practical strategies to use during stressful moments. For instance, in order to sustain a fine balance between work and home, she had negotiated with her boss, and he agreed to cut down her traveling responsibilities. She added that it was important to negotiate with her spouse as well. It was necessary to let him know if your work was demanding, what it entailed, and if he was not ready to give you that support and sacrifice, to stand in your absence, then, as she advised would be best that one looked for a less demanding job that she could still utilize her professional skills. As a strong social support, her husband was part of the decision- making process, he advised and encouraged her to take up the new job and at the moment, he was supporting her by taking up extra family obligations in her absence.

Additionally, Nhyira advised that even if one was required to travel on an official purpose, it was important to engage your partner and kids ahead of time and prepare their minds. Especially with your husband, she said: "*even though men don't show weakness, they may pass certain comments, that will have you thinking that your work is taking over your family. You must let your husband know that he is more important than the work you are doing. So, you have to engage your husband sexually*, *with men, the main thing is sex*". She added that Ghanaians tried to avoid the issue of sex, and this was a problem.

Regardless of all the challenges, she took inspiration in the fact that others had been able to pull through and that it was just a phase that will pass eventually. When asked if she thought it is important for her to maintain her job and attain higher career goals for the sake of being a role model to her daughters, she said fortunately for her, just being a doctor was enough to encourage them. Although nowadays women were taking part in economic activities, it was essential that her daughters saw her taking part in a sort of formal work, nonetheless, one did not necessarily have to be a working mother to be a role model.

4.2 Thematic findings

Interesting findings which depicts how mothers perceive the conflict between career and motherhood experiences emerged through the analyses of the textual data. For clarity, these findings are presented here systematically in accordance with the basic, organizing, and global themes using thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001, pp. 388-389). Six 'Global Themes' were identified: i) Women's perception of the conflict between motherhood and career, ii) role of social support available to working mothers, iii) motivating factors, iv) coping mechanisms, v) conduciveness of structural, organizational and governmental policies, vi) personal opinions about the decisions of other mothers and advice to the younger generation.

4.3 Women's perception of the conflict between career and motherhood

In the interviews, respondents were asked to identify their current and past experiences and challenges associated with being a working mother, by describing their daily routines, how they managed their time, outcome and the values they attached to their double roles.

Experiences and Challenges: The conflict between career and motherhood was recounted by both mothers working in the formal sector and those who quit their formal jobs. The conflict in roles to a large extent arose due to the incompatibility of work and motherhood roles which the majority of the respondents perceived as demanding and challenging. The similarity in their responses ranged the same among both categories of women. Anita, a working mother said: *"hmmm, it's not easy at all. It's a difficult task because sometimes you get to work very tired……. It's a bit tiring and sometimes you feel like giving up."* In extreme cases, these challenges, could cause internal conflicts within the family. Nhyira a working mother said: *"It's not easy… maintaining that delicate balance…. I have had issues with my husband…."*

Regardless of these, a few of the respondents believed that there was great joy in working in two different domains. Akosua, who owned a retail shop, in addition to her position as the HRM in an oil firm was pleased when she was able to carry out all her duties and she considered

motherhood as her responsibility, but she also agreed that the whole experience could be challenging. She explained: "*when I am able to help the kids with whatever I am supposed to do, am okay. I see it as a responsibility, whether am ready for it or not…..On the side of my job (formal), I do whatever responsibilities that has been placed on me, and on the other side too that is my investment (private work), so I make sure things are in order for me, because if it doesn't go well then it means my investments has gone waste so, putting all these together, [chuckles]…. it's not easy*". However, Kukua, a working mother of two, chose to see the good side of this. To her, multitasking was a skill required of every mother. She said: *"There is joy in motherhood…. am probably lucky that my husband doesn't live in Ghana, so it lessens my work in the mornings but when he is around, then I have to wear the cap of a wife but there's joy…in my opinion, I enjoy working, combining, you know every woman is supposed to multitask, so I multitask and at the end I think I try to make everybody happy". (CEO of a bank)*

Daily Routines: From the accounts of these mothers, their challenging experiences were as a result of their daily routines. Some mothers woke up as early as 3 am. With the heavy jam - packed traffic in Accra, almost all respondents recounted waking up early to avoid being late. The traditional duties expected of mothers remained in addition to their duties at work. From dropping and picking children at school, performing house chores, supervising the ward's assignments and putting children to bed were all evident in their accounts. As described by Anita: "*Normally weekdays I wake up around 3am, and get the children's breakfast, snack and lunch… and leave with them around 5:30am" (Director, Civil Service).* The early morning wake-ups and preparing children for school was the same for at least both categories of women I interviewed. Mothers who had quit their formal jobs also had to wake up very early in order to prepare their children for school. Serwaa, who quit her formal job eight years ago, still woke up early to get her children ready: "*My mornings start as early as 5am, I do my quite time, I say a short prayer and am out of bed…….prepare their water for bathing, their breakfast, lunchbox and then, basically, I see them off for school in the morning*". These mothers added that their evenings were equally stressful. Akosua had hired help to pick her children from school since she closed late from work. Sometimes her children were already asleep by the time she got home. She explained: "*Someone picks them because with the nature of my work I can't pick them from school…… there are times I get home and they are already asleep*".

Inadequate Time spent with family due to long working hours: Inadequate time spent with family was a major theme that emerged, with descriptions such as spending long hours at work resulting in difficulties fulfilling family roles. The majority of my respondents started work as

early as 8 am and closed at 5 pm. This was especially worrisome if both parents were working full time which affected the time spent with family. Serwaa recalled:

…. any time you have for family, or to take care of a sick child, you had to get permission, there you are restricted to this 8am-5pm which you have to be in the office. I quite remember the other time, the last born was not well, after taking him to the hospital I had to take him to the office with me, and he was sleeping under my desk till I closed because I had work to do and there was nobody at home to take care of him. (Caterer- self- employed)

For Anita, this insufficient time spent with family meant that once in a while, she had to keep her children in her office at very odd hours and sometimes, she had to work on weekends. She explained: "*…there are days that we have board meetings and the meetings run till 9pm, I keep them in the office till that late……they close school around 3:30pm and I keep them in the office till 9pm or 10pm. It happens once in every two months and when there is work to be done, I go to work on Saturdays also*". (Director, Civil Service). In contrast, 'Kukua', stated that her work did not necessarily affect the time she spent with her family, rather, being in the position she did, it was social events that had replaced quality family time. Being called upon to attend weddings, funerals and many such occasions had taken her time. She said: "*I don't think my work affects any time I devote with my family, because the children go to school……but being a career woman and being in a position that I find myself, is very difficult…… functions are more than the time you spend with your family but you have to balance it*". She reiterated that her work did not affect her time with the family. But as a career woman with a vision, there were some sacrifices to be made, including her time. She said: " *if you want to focus as a career woman, there are a lot of sacrifices that you need to do…number one sacrifice is your time, so you have to sacrifice a lot and you should also know that every minute counts*".(CEO, bank)

Outcome of Role Conflict*:** Although child sicknesses were rarely mentioned as arising from mother's insufficient time spent with children, the majority of the respondents stated that stress had a negative impact on their personal well- being. It affected them physically, mentally and emotionally. The source of stress was as a result of juggling two or more roles. Serwaa recounted: ***"Hmmm it was all the stress of combining work and home and taking care of kids. When stress builds up, [my dear], it's not easy… I remember one time I nearly got an accident, the policeman stopped me, and I was actually shedding tears. I was just so frustrated. They were calling me at work for a meeting and I was late, all because I had to…. take care of children before going to work, at that time the stress was just too much." (Caterer)

Nhyira talks about the physical form of stress associated with balancing career and motherhood. In trying to be effective in these different domains, mothers are confronted with bodily ailments. She said: *"...there is a lot of stress on me, health challenges, like headaches...sometimes you just feel under the weather, but you are not sick ...."* (Medical Doctor).

Values attached to playing double roles (role enhancement): This study was primarily interested in identifying the meanings working mothers attached to their multiple roles. In highlighting the fact that other women had withdrawn from the formal sector, it was necessary to find out from women who chose to remain the values they attached and derived from their double roles. From their responses, there was a sense of satisfaction in operating effectively in two different domains. Anita said: *"When I am on leave, I see them off latest by 6am they are gone, then by 8am, I am done with the house work, then what will I do from 8am till they get back? [Laughs] you can't waste your skill, you have the qualification, you have the experience, I should be able to manage the two, its tiring, but it means a lot."* (Director, Civil Service)

According to Bernice, her education and career are achievements, but motherhood is a responsibility, nonetheless, it was fulfilling when she was able to effectively balance both roles. She explained: *"It means so much, like that kind of fulfilment, [yeah] I have a son and taking care of him gives me joy, even though it's not easy and at the same time my work also gives me joy... but with motherhood, I don't see it as an achievement, it's my responsibility to take care of him but the work and my education, that is an achievement."* (Health Assistant)

Role that the family and other social support play: A recurring theme was the role social support played in easing the conflict between motherhood and career. Social support in the family interface included all those involved in providing assistance, advice and suggestions with the aim of helping individuals meet their family obligations. The sub-themes under this overarching theme were spousal support, external family support and hired help.

Spousal support: In as much as there had been a continuous shift of women from private into public spheres, it was rare to see men take up routine and unpaid care roles. However, the findings of this study proved different. Although the husbands of these women did not quit their formal jobs to take up traditionally female gender roles, they were of tremendous support to their wives as respondents explained. The nature of Anita's work (Director, Civil Service) entailed huge responsibilities, coupled with long hours at work but she received great support from her husband. They worked as a team to get the house chores done. She said*: "It's kind of 30: 70. He does 70 percent (of the homework with the kids) and I do 30 because I do the cooking...I do most of the house chores, yeah, but he does the ironing"*.

Support from extended family: Support could also come from extended family members. One of the respondents whose husband worked outside the country received help from other family members whenever they were available. During the interview, she said: "*My husband is not around, it's my niece who has been helping me at home, whenever she is available…. the weekdays she comes around to help*". (HRM). Prior to quitting her formal job, Serwaa occasionally had her mother-in-law helping*: 'Oh, once in a while I had my mother- in- law coming in to help with the kids…. [yeah] especially when school is on vacation and you need somebody to be at home, you have that opportunity to call on her."* (Caterer).

Hired Helps*:* It was however surprising to note that, with the busy schedules of the majority of my respondents, most of them did not employ the services of house helps or any other form of hired help. Although most of the respondents had previously employed their services, they were not interested in hiring them any more due to past experiences. Regardless of their low cost, the majority of my respondents did not trust house helps. They complained that most house helps were inadequate in their duties, whereas others maltreated their children. Bernice, a health assistant said: "*there has been issues and you cannot trust 100 percent those you have entrusted your kids to, they could teach your children very bad morals."* Serwaa also, chose to do her own house chores other than employing a house help, since most of them were inefficient: *"…. because I don't have a house help, I do my house cleaning……the stress of taking a house help, then….. a week they want to go (to stop working for you)….but when you have these house helps around, you even leave something there (you give them a chore), they wouldn't do it. That's why I said we have tried a couple of house helps, but it didn't work……"* (Caterer).

However, there was one respondent who had very differing views about house helps. Having worked with her house help for over a decade, she had built a solid relationship with her, to the extent that she enrolled her in the university. Kukua said: "*Yes I have a house help, but I have put the help in the university…. I have lived with her for 12 years, so I make sure she goes to school…she's in the university, so now I only have her when she's on vacation, but during the school time, I get somebody else to come and clean my house, twice in a week.*" (CEO, Bank)

Kukua also believed that, in as much as mothers were supposed to multitask, it was equally imperative to delegate chores to others and pay for the services. As the saying goes, 'it takes a village to raise a child', so as a mother, she could not do everything: *"….in our part of the world, there are a lot of people who can help you balance it, you can employ the services of whoever you want to. I have employed the services of a teacher who comes to help my son with his school things because I sometimes don't go home early, I have a PA in my office who helps*

me a lot, I have security men in my house who clean the environment but as in the food, we do them and sometimes if you have to outsource, you outsource and go and pick the food if you are tired….life is very simple……." (CEO, Bank).

4.4 Motivating factors

In the interviews, various motivating factors were described as central to mothers' active involvement in the formal sector regardless of the challenges they encountered. Motivating factors included financial, recreational and educational. Others were motivated by their children, and also the need to lead exemplary lifestyles for the younger generations to emulate. These were the reasons some mothers remained in the formal sector amidst the challenges.

Financial motivation: Some mothers said finances was both a motivating factor and a challenge. The desire to acquire money to be able to take care of their families motivated them to keep their jobs. Also, finances were one of the challenges of working mothers. For instance, Bernice said: "*Yes, I have had the thought of quitting my job before but of course I need to take care of my soon, [uhm] in terms of resources, and I need money, so I need to work ….…....you should be a bit sound, financially, to hire somebody (babysitter)….."*(Health Assistant).

The desire to also remain financially independent and provide for the family is a motivating factor. One of the respondents believed that, as a woman, having financial independence to provide equally for the family is very necessary. This encouraged her to continue working regardless of the challenges. She had a feeling of self- fulfillment, and satisfaction when she was able to financially contribute her quota, other than solely depending on her spouse. She explained that: "*You know if you have worked a bit and you stop, then you lose financial independence so everything you will have to discuss with your partner for him to provide the cash ……[chuckles]…. but when I am financially independent, I can buy something for the house, I don't have to ask my husband for such basic things." (Medical Doctor).*

Likewise, women who had quit their formal jobs also believed that it was still essential to have financial independence and not depend on their husbands. Serwaa insisted that it was still important to have financial independence, even after she had withdrawn from the formal sector: "*…at least I always have something of my own, in terms of money, to bring on board…[yeah] because as a career woman, you can't all of a sudden rely on your husband for everything".*(Caterer)

Educational motivation: Women are now increasingly attaining higher educational heights, specifically with the aim of acquiring good careers in the future. Eventually, when they had secured such positions, it became difficult to put all that aside and quit their career. They believed that they had sacrificed too many resources to get to where they were now. So, educational attainment served as a motivation to maintain their jobs in the formal sector: *"So apart from the finances, also the fact that I have come a very long way, you know, as in working towards this career, education wise, all the time and resources that has gone into it, I think it's not so fair to just let it go."* (Bernice, Health Assistant)

Others believed that education should not end the moment a person started working; the majority of my respondents were seeking career advancement, and to do this, they were willing to further their education and because of that, quitting their formal jobs to stay home was not feasible. Kukua emphatically said: **"***No, to stay home and look after my kids….no, that one hasn't crossed my mind, because you can't be a career woman and claim you want to stay home, I have a vision of who I want to become, so there is no point in becoming a house wife, if I become a housewife then that vision is no more. Now I want to do a PHD, so am looking for schools to apply."* (CEO, Bank)

Some women were also motivated by their fellow colleagues who had already tolled the path they were aiming for. Anita who was also seeking to undertake a PhD said: *"Education is also a motivating factor, and you know, the out and out civil service, you can even stretch yourself till you get a PhD. I mean there are a few ladies with a PhD and am looking out to that any time soon, [yeah] am applying to a few schools around."* (Director, Civil Service)

Akua Duku, one of my respondents who quit her formal work over 20 years ago, also believed that a person was never too old to get an education. In her submission, her inability to further her education when she was young had affected her. She said: *"hmmm, education is very important no matter your age and position at work, for me, being unable to continue my education years ago has affected my life in many ways, but now, I am going back to school to complete my education, and am happy with that."* (Business woman)

Love for the job: Some of my respondents confirmed that they derived greater satisfaction from their formal jobs as compared to their traditional roles as wives, mothers, and caretakers. They said they gained personal satisfaction from their jobs because they had invested a lot of time, energy and resources in their education which prepared them for paid work. According to the respondents, their love for the job stemmed up from the exposure and experiences they gained

and the social network that they had created from the formal sector. Akosua explained: ***"I love my job…I love it… the people I meet, the opportunities that come for me to help people, if I have to counsel somebody, if I need to set certain rules for somebody, I mean I love all that I do…yes, so that is one of the motivating factors that keeps me moving."*** (HRM)

One's love for a job could be as a result of the new challenges the job presented. These challenges imbied in them a new work ethic and for this reason, they remained in the formal sector. In response to a challenging new opportunity or in search of greater personal achievement, one respondent said: *"I meet a lot of challenges, learn new things every day which is very good for me, it's not only what I do but am open up to other experiences, because this is an industry that the kind of work we do, no matter your position, you can go into other people's area, do certain things which you are compelled to learn."* (Akosua, HRM)

Children as source of motivation: Other mothers' source of motivation was their children. Thoughts of their children encouraged them to continue working, in order to give them a better future. For Anita, she was encouraged to maintain her job, so that her daughters would learn from her. She put it this way: *"I just want to attain a position that…. because I have kids, they can always look up to me. This is the main reason why I don't want to give up on my job and it's because they are girls, I feel like I have to attain a position, so that they can say that mommy was able to do this, so I have to do more than mommy."* (Director, Civil Service)

Role Models to the younger generation: Other women believed that maintaining their career gave them the opportunity to model others who were looking up to them. Besides their children, they were also role models to other younger ones in the society, and for this, it was necessary to maintain their jobs and attain higher career successes: *"……and also of course I see it as, you know, not only satisfying my personal goals, but I have also been put in that career to also help somebody….someone to look up to me and achieve their aims."* (Bernice, Health Assistant).

4.5 Coping mechanisms

Almost all the respondents had considered quitting their formal jobs to either stay home or start their own business. Quitting their formal jobs meant that they could effectively manage their family, especially as a result of the ample time that would be at their disposal. However, they discarded such thoughts and maintained their jobs in the formal sector. Nevertheless, most working mothers were confronted with role conflict leading to role strain. From their accounts, there were a multitude of stressors caused by their limited work autonomy, flexibility and

support both at work and home. So, all respondents had developed effective coping strategies to deal with stress.

Time Discipline: One respondent explained that in order not to lose her family to work responsibilities, she had to come to an agreement with her boss and be disciplined with her work hours. "*I had to negotiate with my boss, because I realized I risked losing my home to the job, so I told my boss the travel had to cease, now I am really controlling that. I don't want the job to take over my life, so I definitely have to be disciplined about leaving (the office) at 5pm and once am able to do that I think it should be fine.*" (Nhyira, Medical doctor). Similarly, Bernice said: "*I need to make sure that my weekends, I make time for the family, my kids because that is also important, so spend time with them, teaching them some good morals from the bible as well. Not that on weekends, weddings upon weddings and all that, your family is number one priority, they even come before the work.*" (Health Assistant)

Quitting Formal Job: In identifying how Ghanaian working mothers coped with the challenges associated with motherhood and work-related stress, some women took drastic measures; two of my research participants withdrew from the formal sector to be self- employed. During the interview, they said sacrificing their career was for the sake of peace in their family. Even though working in the private sphere was equally demanding and carried more responsibility, they were afforded the flexibility and thus, they did not have to follow a monotonous routine, where they were constantly monitored by some's clock. Serwaa and Akua Duku, are typical examples of such women. Akua Duku also a caterer, concurrently owned a supermarket in her neighborhood and sold all sorts of groceries. They both added that, even though their spouses were happy with their decisions, there were times they personally regretted the decision they had taken. Serwaa, for instance, said she was able to handle such moments when she looked at how well her children had grown, and she took solace knowing that her sacrifice had yielded positive results: "*Hmm it was the stress of combining work and home and taking care of kids…so I had to sacrifice and run something on my own, and what quickly came to mind was the catering business…. having time for the kids and making sure they are learning, it's something that I look at how well they have improved in their academics, that's what gives me joy even when I have my regrets and I look at them…am like at least the children for which you have made this sacrifice…they are doing so well in school, so why worry?*' (Caterer).

Backup plan: A basic theme that arose from the coping mechanisms especially on the part of women who withdrew from the formal sector was the fact that they had a backup plan before

finally leaving the formal sector. From the interviews, it was noted that all the respondents were thinking of alternative options if ever they were to leave the formal sector. With the two respondents who had quit the formal jobs, they mentioned that they had thoroughly thought of what they could do after they had quit the formal job, and they did this before finally quitting their jobs. Akua Duku said: *"Before I finally decided to quit my job, I had to look for what I could do next. I had been to the vocational school and I had learnt ……a lot from there, hmm so it was when I was convinced that I could start a catering business and open a supermarket before I finally quit my formal work… am sure if I didn't know what to do next, I may not have quit the formal work."*(Akua Duku, business woman).

For those still working, a number of them were unwilling to retire on someone's clock, hence, they were also thinking of alternatives, although some, already owned private businesses in addition to the formal work. For instance, Kukua (CEO of a bank) and Akosua (HRM) owned a private salon and a retail shop respectively. However, other respondents were of the view that it was difficult to start up a business in Ghana and for that reason, they were focusing solely on the formal work. Anita, for example, said: *"That (entering into entrepreneurship) came up when the younger one was in pre-school because it was quite frustrating, [you know] then I was like ah! if am managing my own business, I think I would have all the time, but setting up a business in this country too is no joke…so I just had to practice what I studied.* (Director, Civil Service)

Further Education: It is believed that mothers with higher education are able to safeguard their expertise and networks, which plays a crucial role in advancing their careers. For instance, Anita was of the view that furthering her education would come with career promotion, which came with fewer workloads and more autonomy: *"…am looking out to a PhD any time soon, so I am praying for promotion because, promotion will come with less work schedule……[yeah] because there are some other things that you will have to delegate. So, as you go higher, there is a junior officer that can do that work."* (Director, Civil Service)

Recreation: Recreation was seen as a necessary way to release stress. Kukua described that she regularly took vacations as a way of handling stress: *"I take a lot of leave, if I have to rest I take leave, if I feel am not well, I take a day off, I have 30 days leave in the year, so I go on vacations to rejuvenate my life, so it's well, in a year, I travel a lot to rejuvenate."* (CEO, Bank)

4.6 Conduciveness of Work environment, structural policies & governmental policies

Inconducive: Women's work participation is normally related to welfare provisions that are made available to them in the workplace. Hence, the work environment and various related policies are of great importance should a woman choose to remain or withdraw from the formal sector. The main theme was the conduciveness of the work environment and the availability of structural and governmental policies that lessened the burdens of working mothers. Most of the responses from the participants proved that the working environment, structural and governmental policies were generally unconducive for pregnant, lactating or mothers in general. One of our respondents, being an HRM and a mother herself, confirmed this by saying: *"They are not conducive at all, because I know parliament…… there have been so many debates on extending maternity days for pregnant women and nursing mothers, which has never materialized, so you see all the time, especially the mothers here…… everybody complaining 'my child this, my child that', so they have to leave their jobs and go. You will be here, and you will be called, your child is sick, come and pick him or her, you have to leave and go…. the conditions here are that, after the three months maternity leave, you come and do that (close early from work) for another 6 months, other institutions are considerable… they consider you till the baby is one year."* (Akosua, HRM). Again, a few of the respondents mentioned that a number of organizations in the country, especially the international ones were trying to improve the working conditions for mothers, especially nursing mothers. But generally, this did not cut across, particularly in the government institutions. Anita said: *"It's not conducive because a few of the international organizations, like MTN, they have baby rooms, so even after three months when you have to come back after maternity leave, you have a place to keep the baby. They call it baby nursery…… so after every 2 hours, you can go and breastfeed the baby, and they see it as normal, just to help the nursing mothers, but the out and out government organizations don't have, some offices will not even allow you to keep your kids there."* (Director, Civil Service). Likewise, another respondent said: *"No, some organizations are trying to do something, I know Data bank if you have a baby… they have a nursery where you can keep your child, but for us doctors and clinicians, it's a no go area, your kids don't come anywhere near your work ….yes it's all not fair, [you see] I don't think the policies are friendly for women."* (Nhyira, Medical Doctor).

Manageable: In responding to the conduciveness of structural and governmental policies, all but one respondent thought otherwise. As the CEO of one of the renowned banks in the country, Kukua believed that being a career woman meant that there was no room for excuses and

complains. Being a woman, with a lot of responsibilities, she could give a lot of excuses, but she had a goal, and with that goal, she had to do defy the excuses. In her argument she said: *"Well I hear a lot of women complaining about the three months ….but you see, as I sit here, I wear the cap of a woman, mother and an employer, if you give me a whole year to sit home and eat and sleep, I will be very happy, but you are the employer, you need your employees around to work, you need to think outside the box as a career woman if you want to move higher, you cannot just sit and complain. I used to take my kids to hospital in the night (in cases of minor sicknesses), I didn't want to take a day off, I think it will have affected my productivity, I had a vision of where I wanted to go….."*

4.7 Opinions about fellow mothers & Advice to younger generation

It was also necessary to understand how women perceived the decisions and choices (either to remain or quit formal work) of other women. From the findings, a crucial theme from the interviews was to identify mothers' opinions about the decisions undertaken by other mothers. It was quite encouraging to know that none of the respondents spoke negatively about the choices of other mothers. They were not judgmental of the decisions of other mothers. Even though some were personally not in favor of the decisions of other mothers, they respected each other's choices. Serwaa who quit her formal job said: *"It's good if you can combine your work and home successfully, it's the right thing to do….sometimes when am in my down moments, I tell my girls, don't even think of doing what I did."* (Caterer). Nhyira also said: *"I respect them, because it's not an easy decision to take, it's a big sacrifice…. I won't say I will encourage others to do it, but if someone takes that decision (quitting the job), I won't look down on the person."* (Medical Doctor). *Bernice* added: *"People have different reasons, but for me, I wouldn't want to quit my job even if it's an extreme case and I have to quit my main line career, there are other things that I can do….at least you should have something to do, not just to help you financially, but it makes you productive".* (Health Assistant). In the same vein, this study inquired from respondents some valuable advice they could pass on to the younger generation. Bernice's advice was: *"… you get more responsibilities and you should be able to combine all that effectively, you have your career goals, pursue them, and definitely if God permits, you will have children and then also there should be a way of balancing it, don't just rush into quitting your job… weigh other options, try other things, if it's on the extreme case and you need to quit your job, still find something that will make you productive as you stay home and take care of your children."* (Health Assistant).

Chapter 5: Discussion

This study explored how working mothers balance work and motherhood by examining their perceptions of motherhood and career experiences, their coping mechanisms, motivating factors, social support system, opinions about the decisions of other mothers and their advice to future generations based on their lived experiences. Though women had moved into the formal labor force, their traditional roles as wives, mothers and unpaid care workers still remained. This had the potential of stressing women, especially if they had little or no form of social support. It could be nearly impossible to perform effectively in both areas; most likely one domain will thrive at the expense of the other. The findings presented in the preceding chapter guided this section. Limitations and challenges encountered during the research process are also mentioned here. Using the three dimensions of the concept of empowerment, I describe the pathway through which empowerment occurs, whilst mentioning important elements that surfaced in this study such as gendered division of labor and local gender ideologies. The study was also inspired by work-family theories.

5.1 Women's access to economic empowerment

According to Quisumbing et al. (2016) women possess the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to access and compete equitably in markets and they also have the agency to control and benefit from economic gains which are necessary for women's economic empowerment. With positive thinking about their abilities, women are competent (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995), and are gaining mastery in their fields of specializations which paves the way for better opportunities, including career advancements. My findings confirmed this, as almost all my respondents had a masters' degree, they were experts in their fields and held top positions, such as medical practitioners, HRMs, CEOs, directors, managers, and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, all the mothers working in the formal sector sort career advancement, for which they had set personal goals and were willing to further their education. The implication here is that respondents knew exactly what they wanted and had set goals to help them achieve it. My findings confirmed with Mechanic that they could see a closer correspondence between their goals and how to achieve it (Mechanic, 1991).

5.2 Role Conflict & Role Strain

Regardless of all these accomplishments, it has become increasingly necessary that gender activists continue to advocate for the transformation of power relations in favor of women's rights, social justice and the transformation of economic, social and political structures (S Batliwala, 1994), since women are withdrawing from the formal sector as a result of the burnouts they encounter from the double roles they play. My findings pointed to the fact that working mothers experienced high levels of stress, both psychologically and physically, due to the performance of double roles which were incompatible and all respondents admitted facing similar experiences because, in most African societies, house chores and child care were considered as the responsibilities of the mother and not the father. This illustrated a pattern in gender arrangements (Connell & Pearse, 2009) known as the gender regime of an institution, where certain roles were attributed to men and others to women. In the image, we see both men and women positioned on the same start line to compete in a race. From their dressing, we can suggest that they are employed in the formal sector. They all have an equal starting line and probably the same finish line. However, there are a lot of obstructions in the pathway of the women but not the men. These obstructions include house chores such as laundry, dishes, and ironing. All these home responsibilities, in addition to their duties at work, can overburden women and this might explain why an increasing number of women are withdrawing from the formal workforce, thus, paving the way for more men to hold topmost positions at work.
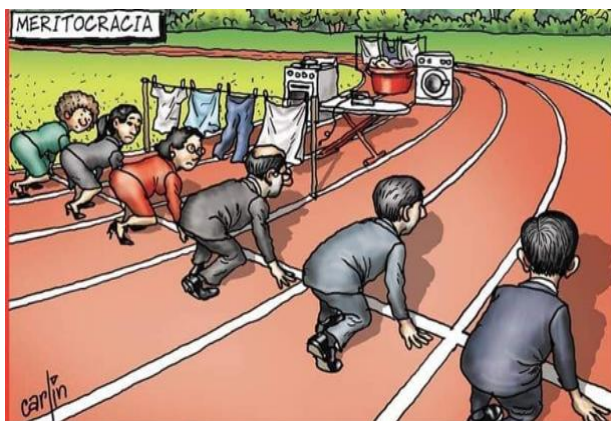
Figure .1. Men & women in a race (Retrieved on February 2019 from https://bit.ly/2UOiQeg)

If men and women are to compete in such a race, where they would be judged equally, how then are women expected to make it to the finish line at the same time as men? It is very likely that some of these women will drop out of the race at a point in time. As one of my respondents lamented: "*it's a man's world…. everything favors them*" (Nhyira, medical doctor). Most work-

family conflict research proves that the hostilities between work and home have the potential to affect employee work commitment (Benligiray & Sönmez, 2012; Malik & Awan, 2015).

The concept of Empowerment as used in this study refers to the processes by which those formerly denied the ability to make choices, now have that ability (N. Kabeer, 2005). We explore motherhood and career experiences by making inferences to Kabeer's three dimensions of empowerment: agency, resources, and achievements.

5.3 Agency: Women' personal choices

Kabeer (2005) identifies agency to be the process by which choices are made and put into effect. Agency is also the ability to define one's goals and act upon them (Mosedale, 2005) and it entails the choices women make in relation to their career, family, and other important life decisions. In my findings, with all my participants being educated and almost all of them having a masters' degree and working (either in the formal or informal sector), this implied that they all demonstrated a high level of agency, by being able to act upon their individual goals.

A woman makes choices surrounding important aspects of her life including who and when to marry, the career pattern she wants to take of which she must tailor her education towards and when she wants to start a family. Generally, in the African tradition, especially in the Ghanaian culture, the birth of a child marks the "consummation" of the marriage and marriage is never just an affair between two individuals, it is an agreement between two families or even in some cases, two clans (Burke, 1988). It is for this reason that family members, especially the parents of the couple can question their children when they think they are delaying in having children. It is very common for parents to question the personal decision of a couple, particularly the woman when they decide to delay child-bearing. According to Kabeer (2005), such a woman may be disempowered because, power means her ability to make and embark on personal choices, which includes when to have children. The nine months' pregnancy can cause women to miss business opportunities, lose work time and consequently, affect women's career advancement, hence leaving the top positions for their men counterparts (Sarpong, 2017) and due to this, some women would want to hold on with childbearing until they feel they are well grounded in their careers. But such women's decisions may be questioned and scrutinized. Hence, a woman who gives in and does not question these scrutinization, has then been denied choice, because as Kabeer (2005) suggested, gender inequalities are reinforced through the unquestioned acceptance of power and a woman may give in because behaving otherwise might

be considered outside the realm of possibility within the society she finds herself in. Even though a woman's decision as to when to or when not to start having children was not a major theme, such issues were subtly mentioned by study participants as a contributing factor to the challenges they experienced before getting married.

However, with society revolving now, and women's greater independence, they have the right to make strategic life choices including when to have children, although this does not necessarily forbid family members from questioning her choices. Such choices as stated by Kabeer (2005) helps frame other choices that may be important for one's day- to – day life. When a mother makes a decision, usually, it must favor her family (husband and children) and she tailors her choices to suit their demands. In my findings, it was very common to hear respondents admit that they could not embark on a particular career path or take up a job opportunity because it was unfavorable for their family. Some turned down promotions and had to cut down on work-related trips because it affected their time with family. One cliché statement that resurfaced in my study was giving up or sacrificing their career for peace to reign in the family. Another said she embarked on a particular decision because she realized she risked losing her family to her career. From this, my understanding is that, although women are now in the position to take independent decisions, these decisions are normally taken to benefit their family and not necessarily for their own personal benefit.

Also, respondents were asked about their personal life choices, including the willingness to further their education in order to advance their career. This question was most relevant for the study because I wanted to know how much resources and sacrifices working mothers were willing to dedicate to build their careers. In my findings, all respondents were keen on furthering their career, two of them had already made plans towards attaining a Ph.D. education, whereas one had just started a bachelor's degree at the time of the interview. As explained by Mosedale (2005), this demonstrated their sense of agency (power within), because they had taken steps to act upon their goals. For the one who had just started a bachelor's degree, education was the best resource she could have, and she had made that personal choice to go back to school regardless of her age. According to her, going back to school implied that she would be able to accomplish something valuable in life, which will give her the ability to take control of her life and build her confidence. To Akua Duku, her inability to complete her education had affected her life in many ways. Her case suggests that a woman's access to education could enhance her capacity to exercise control of her life and these findings corresponded with a study conducted

by Sen in the 90s in West Bengal which showed that a woman's knowledge gained in literacy and numeracy could enhance her self- esteem (Sen, 1999).

'Power To'& Taking power out of Empowerment

The ability to make choices has both positive and negative connotations. 'Power to' which connotes positivity represents a person's ability to make their own life choices, even in the face of opposition. Opposition in this study were the barriers that made it difficult for women to achieve a balance between motherhood and career. From the findings, with mothers who had been able to retain their jobs even in the face of oppositions, this implied that they had been able to take charge of their own life choices. On the other hand, when "power" was taken out of empowerment, it put the double burden on mothers. As described in Batliwala's (1994) work in South Asia on women's empowerment, findings showed that women's active involvement in economic labor, might have created new problems for them in terms of indebtedness, GBV, and it had also augmented their burdens. In my study, similar findings were recorded. Working in the formal sector had given mothers some level of economic empowerment, but their burdens had intensified. For instance, in my findings, Nhyira, the medical doctor, had received a promotion about a year prior to the study. As she explained, even though this promotion came with a lot of benefits, including autonomy and self-confidence, it at the same time meant she had to spend long hours at work and less time with her family. The implication here was that her ability to effectively discharge her motherhood duties had been inhibited by her responsibilities at work.

'Power Over': Institutional biases & Local gender ideologies

On the other hand, 'power over', which has negative connotations refers to the capacity of some actors to dominate the agency of others through for example the exercise of authority (N. Kabeer, 2005). In this study, experiences in the form of institutional and gender role biases at homes, workplaces and the society at large were found. In my findings, it was identified that people holding authority in such places could either help empower women or not. Evidentially, my findings revealed that in the workplace, an understanding and accommodating boss could help empower working mothers as they created a balance between motherhood and work responsibilities, but at the national level, unfavorable policies could disempower working mothers. As Cornwall & Rivas (2015) suggested, empowerment is concerned with the relations of power where people are located. The implication here is that women may be disempowered

or empowered (acquire the 'ability to make strategic life choices), depending on where they are located and the powers at work there. My findings are consistent with arguments made by Cornwall & Rivas (2015) and Kabeer (2005), that the people holding authority at the places where working mothers are located, could either cause women to be empowered or not. For instance, with the case of Nhyira, her boss had facilitated her ability to be empowered because he agreed to minimize the rate at which she traveled so that she could spend more time with her family. Again, the presence of institutional and governmental biases such as the absence of paternity leave, insufficient maternity leave, rigid work hours, unpaid breastfeeding hours and the absence of other family-friendly policies in various organizations could constrain the agency of working mothers. As we saw in the case of the two respondents who had to quit their career for several reasons including the unfavorable work conditions, their agency had been constrained. Likewise, at home, an authoritative and unsupportive husband could disempower a woman, whereas a supportive and understanding husband could empower her and this is evident as seen in the cases of Nhyira and Anita, who had supportive husbands. Also, cultural or ideological norms that valued patriarchal controls could disempower working mothers. From my findings, the absence of paternity leave in Ghana implied the existence of local gender ideologies which regarded fathers as income providers and mothers as caregivers, thus, the man was expected to work and fend for his family whereas the woman, being the caregiver had to take a break from work to attend to her newborn baby whiles performing other motherhood duties. Again, when women internalized and accepted sole caregiving responsibilities, they normally endured guilt feelings of being 'bad' mothers when they were unable to undertake these duties. My findings correspond with a similar study on work-family experiences which found that women faced a sense of stigma when they were unable to fully meet gender role expectations (Mapedzahama, 2014). My findings proved true to this, with respondents using phrases such as motherhood is *'my responsibility'*, it is *'my duty'*. The implication here is that this internal acceptance of childcare as a responsibility of mothers but not the fathers could easily reinforce gender inequalities. This is so because, women in this situation were likely to deny the existence or unfairness of such gender role stereotypes because the society had normalized this (N. Kabeer, 2005). Additionally, it was common to hear them commend and describe husbands who helped with childcare and house chores as being extremely supportive. This is illustrated most clearly in the case of Nhyira, a medical doctor and a mother of two. She had a very tight schedule due to her position at work. As she described it, this made it quite difficult to devote as much time for her children as she would have wanted. However, her husband was very supportive and was always available to take in additional responsibilities at

home when she was caught up in work and for this, she showed much appreciation to her husband. I must endeavor to add that these internalizations and acceptance of cultural norms were not necessarily wrong. In the socio-cultural context of Ghana, these were the accepted practices. Women remained caretakers of the children even if they had paid work responsibilities and men were the income providers or breadwinners of their family. This clearly corresponds with Connell (2009) who emphasized that people could make their own gender, but they were not free to make it in whichever way they chose because gender practice is powerfully shaped by the gender order of a person's society. Kabeer (1999) confirms this by recognizing that norms in the society determine behaviors appropriate for men and women, and such gendered identities developed throughout life and could not easily be ignored (N. Kabeer, 1999). Therefore, in the Ghanaian society, it was mainly a woman's responsibility to take care of the children (Overå, 2007). But gender ideologies and social norms regarding gender-appropriate occupations may depend on the time and place, hence they are continuously modified or bargained even if the change took long to be effected (Agarwal, 1997; McDowell, 2011; Overå, 2007). Thus, it should not be surprising to see men taking the childcare responsibilities of women if the situation demanded it. Yet still, since people were 'held accountable' for gendered conduct (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995), it was rare to have husbands willingly take up child care and other responsibilities considered to be female duties. So, the few women whose husbands were helpful in that aspect were extremely appreciative.

Again, from my findings, these same local gender ideologies which identified men as income providers for the family, also viewed women, not just as caregivers but also as important financial helpers, who had to work to supplement the income of their husbands. The majority of my respondents spoke in this manner when they described their economic contribution to their family, using words such as 'support', 'assist' or 'help'. My findings suggested that Ghanaian mothers considered themselves as secondary providers of income for the family. Whereas the fathers paid school fees, utility bills, house maintenance, and other huge expenses, the mothers' earnings normally covered basic expenses including groceries, children's clothing or investing in it. Their role as income providers was more limited to assisting and supplementing the income of their spouse. In my findings, two respondents (Akosua and Nhyira) described that whiles their husbands paid children' school fees and most of the utility bills in the house, their income was geared towards savings, house projects and, retirement plans, as well as basic household amenities. In their case, they had equal ownership of their investments with their husbands, which was registered in both their names. This finding

confirms earlier research by Kabeer (2005) on wage labor in agriculture, showing that married women usually managed joint incomes with their husbands.

Challenging & transforming power relations

Additionally, agency does not only imply exercising choice, but it must also challenge power relations (N. Kabeer, 2005) and fundamental change in structural power relations by challenging the ideologies of patriarchy, subordination, and discrimination against women in institutions and the structures of the society (S. Batliwala, 2007; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). From my findings, respondents identified numerous hostilities against creating a work-life balance for working mothers (unfavorable work conditions, local gender ideologies). With my respondents being able to identify the constraints to action, this implied that the first step towards empowerment, had been achieved as per Mosedale's analysis; empowerment can be assessed by identifying the constraints to action, how agency has developed and changed constraints to action (Mosedale, 2005).

Having identified the constraints, responsible stakeholders must engage the right authorities to address these challenges. Since empowerment is about the fundamental change in structural power relations (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015), when stakeholders argue and propose better working conditions, the issues can be addressed and modified for the better. From the submissions of my respondents, these mothers were cognizant of the call made by CSOs to the government to extend maternity leave from the current three months to six months. Even though this appeal had not come into fruition yet, a preliminary two weeks extension ahead of the six months proposed leave had been granted. Hence all respondents commended this step as they eagerly awaited the extension. According to Cornwall & Rivas (2015), a transformative agenda seeks to change the institutions and structures through which unequal access and control over resources are persistent, and to include the voices and opinions of the less powerful in the society (in this case working mothers) in decision- making process at work and the national level; by doing so, working mothers, especially those in the formal sector could gain greater access to and control over material and knowledge resources. The implication here is that women could have greater autonomy of their life choices and would not have to be forced to take decisions just because they felt they had no other alternative, as seen in the situation of Serwaa and Akua Duku, who had to quit their formal jobs. The implication here is that, maintaining women in the formal workforce and providing access to economic empowerment helps to attain SDG Goal 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and Goal 8 which aims to

promote full and productive employment and ensure productivity and economic diversification, which leads to positive development outcomes (Malapit & Quisumbing, 2015; UN Women, 2018).

5.4 Resources: distributed through relationships in the society

Kabeer (2005) further mentions resources as another dimension through which the concept of empowerment can be explored and they are the medium through which agency is exercised and they are distributed through various institutions and relationships in the society. In understanding the processes by which choices are made, it is necessary to know the channels through which they are made. Resources may be distributed through relationships in the society and my findings prove this. For instance, in my findings, themes such as social support were relevant in helping to understand how working mothers balanced their double roles. For a mother to be able to make and put choices into effect, it was important to identify her support systems. My findings confirm with Annor's (2016) work that most forms of social support are from family members, especially spouses, without whom, most working mothers will be unable to cope with the challenges. This is why proponents of empowerment theory have suggested that empowerment must be changed from individual to collective (N. Kabeer, 2005), in the sense that individuals seeking to be empowered may need a bit of external encouragement from others, who can also clear obstacles from their pathway(Cornwall & Rivas, 2015), even though empowerment itself cannot be bestowed; whoever seeks to be empowered must claim it (Mosedale, 2005). As seen in my findings, external encouragements which came from spouses, extended family members, friends and hired helps were a great support in clearing obstacles (house chores, childcare responsibilities) from the pathway of working mothers.

The issue of house helps was an important sub-theme that emerged. In sub- Saharan Africa, house helps were of an immerse source of support and the cost of their services was relatively cheaper than in other parts of the world (Muasya, 2014). However, from the way majority of my respondents spoke about them, it showed that their services could complicate and worsen the situation of working mothers, hence, most mothers would rather perform house chores on their own other than employing a house help. The implication here is that mothers were more interested in the well-being of their children. They were unwilling to jeopardize the future of their children by employing people they could not trust, so even if this meant that they had to take up extra chores at home, they were willing to do it than to entrust their children and homes

into the hands of people they could not trust. Almost all respondents spoke in this manner, with the exception of Kukua who insisted that some house helps were trustworthy.

Resources: distributed through institutions

Secondly, resources can be distributed through various institutions, where some actors exercise greater authority and privileges over others (N. Kabeer, 2005). At the workplace, for example, formal and informal support includes the presence of an understanding boss and conducive work policies respectively and my findings provided empirical evidence suggesting that these supports could help facilitate motherhood and career balance. Serwaa, who quit her formal job described her former boss as an accommodating and thoughtful person who had the intention of creating a library at the workplace for children during their vacations. The implication here is that, for a woman to maintain or withdraw from her formal job, this will be dependent on the support they received from people in authority either at work, home or in the society at large. We can assume that supposing the library was created on time and all other things equal, Serwaa might not have quit her job. This supplement the points expatiated in preceding paragraphs about the advocative role of stakeholders including CSOs. When such activists come together, they are able to challenge the status quo of gender order, which will result in positive transformation, because women will be able to fight for better conditions of services that they might have been once denied as compared to men (Mosedale, 2005). Respondents explained that understanding and accommodating bosses helped them cope with work-family related stress, whereas unsupportive bosses intensified their stress. My findings support an earlier study conducted on Women, Infants and Children, where participants indicated that supportive supervisors could greatly diminish workplace stress associated with breastfeeding, whereas non-supportive bosses made it difficult (Thompson & Bell, 1997). Likewise, with having supportive husbands, almost all my respondents explained that the presence of supportive husbands lessened their duties and as a result they were able to maintain that delicate balance. Again, Empowerment must start from within, because one's beliefs and values play a role in endorsing or denouncing inequality (N. Kabeer, 2005). Consequently, in my study I sought to understand the values and meanings women attached to their decisions, of which Kabeer (2005) identified as their *sense* of agency. Therefore, in understanding the reasons some mothers chose to remain or withdraw from the formal sector, this study sought to explore the essence of their decisions. From the findings, with women who chose to remain in the formal sector, when asked about the value they attached to their decision, they mentioned a number of interesting

motivations underlying their decision; all of which coupled with their motherhood responsibilities led to role enhancement which will be further explained in the section under achievements.

5.5 Achievements

While resources and agency help people exhibit their potentials for the kind of life they want to live, achievements refer to the extent to which these potentials are achieved or not, based on their efforts (N. Kabeer, 2005), that is, the consequences of their agency. Under this, themes included the reasons mothers remained or withdrew from the formal sector, and the values attached to motherhood or their double roles were asked. Firstly, understanding why some women chose to remain in the formal sector regardless of the challenges was very necessary. Their motivations could be categorized under the following; either in response to a new opportunity, in search of greater personal achievement and self- reliance, the need for self-fulfillment or in response to a 'distress sale' of labor, as put by Kabeer (2005). Working mothers who were motivated to 'acquire greater personal achievement' could be described as those who also pursued towards higher levels of education in order to advance their career, of which Kabeer (2005) described as evidence of progress in women empowerment. Thus, evidence of empowerment progression among women included Kukua and Anita's desire to undertake a Ph.D. and Akua Duku's decision to go back to school. The implication here is that these women were motivated by what they had achieved so far and were inspired to attain a niche further. Again, the desire to be self- reliant or self-dependent also connotes progress in women empowerment and my findings showed that all respondents' desired to supplement the income of their spouse to help provide the needs of the family, these women desired to be financially independent. Financial independence coupled with other intrinsic and extrinsic benefits acquired from working in the formal sector was a major motivating factor to them. My findings also correspond with Kabeer (2005) that, empowerment among women was evident when they took up waged work in response to new challenging opportunities. One respondent (Nhyira) chose to maintain her work in the formal sector because this new job challenged her, and it was different from the previous work she had done. Nevertheless, empowerment was not evident in a situation where a woman remained in her formal job (waged labor) in response to a distress sale of labor or as a means of survival or necessity (N. Kabeer, 2005).

Again, Kabeer (2005) likens the three dimensions of empowerment to the pathways through which the processes of empowerment occur, and since they are interrelated, a change in one

dimension is likely to cause a change in the other. For instance, a woman who has overcome all obstructions and has been able to achieve her career ambitions is more likely to educate her child, especially her daughter. From my findings, a study participant (Anita) explained that she was encouraged to keep her formal job even in the face of oppositions because her mother who had also encountered a similar situation was able to overcome and similarly, she believed she could also overcome the challenges and achieve her goals. This suggests that daughters drew a lot of motivation from the experiences of their mothers.

Achievements derived from playing double roles
Still, on the outcomes of the decisions of women who chose to maintain their formal jobs, it was important to understand what these women achieved from playing double roles. Since most existing literature on motherhood – career balance was centered on the challenges and conflicts, this research was interested in highlighting the positive outcomes women achieved from performing both roles. The theory of work-life balance explains role enhancement as the privileges or benefits derived from engaging in multiple roles (Sieber, 1974). Respondents explained that certain intrinsic and extrinsic benefits which they derived from the formal jobs were non- existent in their traditional female roles. Nonetheless at home, the presence of support, care, love, and peace experienced from family could ease the stress they experienced at work. This suggested that both domains complemented each other in diverse ways and could bring out the best performance in women. The words of Maria Montessori confirm this as she emphasized how both roles complemented and supplemented each other: "there are two kinds of life." We have our careers and our motherhood, and a woman "is privileged to share in both. [But] the better of the two is that with children, for nearness to them brings out our best side." (Ross, 2015). An increased agency at the workplace (supportive institutions), autonomy (power both at work and at home), high income, decision-making power, leadership (at work came about with fewer work duties), confidence, facilitates working mothers' ability to achieve their goals and this leads to role enhancements (N. Kabeer, 2005).

Achievement derived from making motherhood a priority

Also, with women who chose to make motherhood a priority by withdrawing from the formal sector, it was important to know if their agencies (personal choices) and resources (medium through which agency is exercised) had been realized or not. From my findings, both women who had quit their formal jobs explained that there were times they regretted the decisions they took. The implication here is that women's agencies could be conducive for them at the time of

making that choice but in the long run, it might have a negative impact on them. Serwaa, one of such respondents admitted to regretting her decision but was happy she made that sacrifice, because her children were well-trained, and were performing exceptionally well in school. From her response, we can conclude that though she had her regrets, her potential had been achieved. Moreover, for these achievements to be realized, mothers had to adopt important coping mechanisms to help them deal with stress. Thus, adopting diverse coping mechanisms was an empowering tool for women.

Coping Mechanisms

To avoid the risk of losing their jobs to family responsibilities or losing their family because of work duties, my findings suggested that, developing effective coping mechanisms was fundamental. Evidently, respondents took the following practical measures; cutting down on excessive job responsibilities (E.g. less traveling), reaching a compromise with bosses, ensuring that they engaged in effective communication with their families, had private jobs in addition to formal work (in order to earn extra income and save more) and further their education in order to enhance professional skills that will promote them at the workplace. The implication here is that, for a working mother to be able to maintain a delicate balance between work and family life, they had to adequately plan (Sarpong, 2017) and by so doing, they could have personal control of the decisions they took, which helped minimize the impact of stress. In this same respect, a few of my respondents chose to make motherhood a priority by quitting their formal jobs to be self- employed. Such women withdrew from the formal sector to start their own business as a way of coping with the pressures associated with work in the formal sector and family life. This suggests that by being self- employed, mothers were afforded the flexibility and could have full control over their daily activities. This was because they had ample maternity leave to take care of themselves and their children and they could also take their newly born babies to work without any prohibition from employers and colleagues (Sarpong, 2017) and the feelings of guilt, and divided attention, no longer existed. However, as the informal sector comes with its own challenges and my findings confirm this vividly in the case of Serwaa. As a self- employed caterer, she admitted that though the informal sector was flexible and she could schedule her time to suit her, as an employee and business owner, she had an extra burden on her. According to Serwaa, she had to work extra hard, even much more than she did when she was in the formal sector, to be able to accumulate more than enough income to pay off her employees. This confirms with Kabeer (2005) that, economic

empowerment doubled women's burden for instance, unlike the formal sector where she would receive her monthly salary no matter how much profit the company made, here in the formal sector, she was to ensure that she had worked hard enough to make enough profit. But in the formal sector, she was assured of employment stability, received better wages as compared to the informal sector, had social security and the formal sector came with a degree of prestige. As Serwaa explained, she had been on several occasions disrespected by those she supplied food for. This was because of society's negative attitude towards people working in the informal sector.

5.6 Discussion on other themes

During the analysis, other relevant themes which were outside Kabeer's framework of empowerment were examined. This section will present key themes, issues, and questions that emerged during the process of research and analysis that are worthy of discussion and may necessitate further exploration.

Opinions about the decisions of other mothers

This was quite a unique and uncommon theme. I wanted to know the opinions women had of the decisions of other mothers. Since I interviewed two categories of mothers, (women working in the formal sector and those who had quit their formal jobs) I wanted to know what working mothers thought of women who had quit their formal jobs and vice versa. An interesting revelation generated which was that mothers in general, or at least for my study participants, showed no form of judgmental views about the decisions of others. For instance, a respondent who felt guilty because she did not dedicate much time to her children, explained that she had so much respect for women who had quit their jobs, in the sense that they had been brave enough to go ahead with a decision (of quitting their jobs) she had considered so much but had not had the courage to go ahead with. For that, she respected and admired such mothers for their sacrifice. Other respondents were not in favor of the decisions of others, yet, they were not judgmental towards them, they explained that people had reasons for taking various decisions and for that it was understandable. The implication here is that mothers understand the difficulties that they each go through and they believe that each mother has a unique experience, and based on whatever choice she decides to take, her decisions must be respected.

Advise for younger generation

This theme formed one of the core aspects of this research because I believed for women empowerment to be progressive, there had to be a platform on which they could share their life experiences with the younger generation. Though this theme was a gray area in research, it was useful to know the kind of messages women passed to the younger generations. In Armentini's (2004) work on faculty women seeking tenure and parenthood on the lessons from previous generations, she explained how faculty women looked to other women as role models, especially in combining motherhood and career. Therefore, empowering the world through female role models is positive for both young girls and women in societies and could help promote and elevate issues of Gender in development. Again, by connecting younger girls with role models, they could anticipate and prepare towards their future with confidence as they learned from the experiences of others. My findings prove this because the majority of my respondents explained that, they had been able to go through the course of their lives because of the advice they received from other women, especially their mothers. In my findings, one of the women who had quit her formal job, emphatically said that she was not going to advice anyone, especially her daughters to take the decision she took of quitting her formal job. She had her regrets and advised the younger generation to go all out and strive for the best, and not to quit their formal work even during tough times. Another mother still working in the formal sector advised that women had to involve their families in every decision they took since they were their most important support system, and even during very stressful times, they had to weigh other options, of which quitting one's formal job had to be the last resort, after all, others proved futile. This shows that as women told their stories and compared their own situations to those of other women, their words revealed several messages about the difficulties of having children prior to stabilizing their careers (Armenti, 2004) and how others could learn from their experiences.

Back- up plan/ other options:

Having a backup plan of what to do next, if one was to quit her formal job was an unexpected theme that emerged from my findings. It was interesting to note that, all the five working mothers who had been interviewed had considered quitting their formal jobs. But thoughts of quitting one's job was complemented with primary thoughts of what she could do next, as in what other options were available for them, was it starting their own business, engaging in a trade or finding employment elsewhere. Looking at the economy of the country, with economic hardships due to unemployment, it was very rare for women to quit their formal jobs and decide

to stay-at-home doing nothing. These back-up plans guided their decisions as to either to quit their jobs or not. For instance, one respondent said she could not quit her main line of career because she did not know what else she could do since she was not business inclined. Another said she would also not quit her career, because starting a business in the country was very tough, so she was better off remaining in her formal work. Conclusively, my findings suggest that Ghanaian mothers working in the formal sector are most likely to retain their formal jobs amidst all the challenges. This confirms with an earlier study which showed that a person was more likely to retain his or her job in the formal sector because of certain benefits that were not available in the informal sector (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). For instance, in the formal labor force, employers may enjoy health insurance, pension schemes, and some cover the educational expenses of employers who wish to further their education, and all these are largely non-existent in the informal sector.

5.7 Limitations of the study

A potential limitation of this study could be that being from Ghana, which is where the study was conducted, the potential to be bias was high especially since this topic was one that I was very passionate about. This made it almost impossible for me to deny preconceived notions and ideas about the topic. Also, I acknowledge the small sample size of this study since it was a 30-credit thesis, thus the findings of the study cannot be generalized to include the experiences of all Ghanaian working mothers, it may only be understood within the context of the research. A major limitation of the study was the fact that I had anticipated recruiting an equal number of study participants (four working mothers and four mothers who had quit their formal jobs), but this could not be achieved since it was difficult coming by women who had quit their formal jobs. So, I decided, after consulting my supervisor, to slightly change the objective of the study by focusing on how mothers who maintained their jobs in the formal sector balanced work and motherhood duties. My main aim was to concentrate on the fulfilment they derived from playing double roles by identifying their motivating factors and coping mechanisms. Two women who had quit their work in the formal sector were included to understand the differences and similarities in their experiences.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The overall objective of this study was to examine how working mothers in Ghana balance motherhood and career in the formal sector. A summary of key findings for each research question, and implications arising from them are presented below, in addition to unexpected findings that emerged from the study. Suggested areas for further research and recommendations for research and practice are also outlined.

How do working mothers and those who gave up on their career perceive motherhood and career experiences? All respondents admitted that balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector in Ghana carried a lot of challenges. Hence, both working mothers and those that gave up on their careers perceived motherhood and career experiences as challenging and demanding. These challenges were mainly as a result of the incompatibility of both roles. Largely the inflexibility and monotonous nature of the formal sector made it nearly impossible to undertake motherhood duties and vice- versa. The incompatibility of both roles led to role conflict and those that had tried beyond all means but could not handle the stress chose to make motherhood a priority by withdrawing from the formal sector. Even with those that quit their formal jobs, they had to look for other ways to earn an income. This was because the Ghanaian economy was currently experiencing hardships and for that reason it was imperative that both parents worked to provide for their family. So, even with those that quit their formal jobs had to undertake a trade to be able to assist their spouses in providing for the family, since in Ghana, mothers played an important supplementary role in financially contributing to house hold income. *Implication:* All respondents experienced difficulties in working in two separate domains (motherhood and career). Thus, it was only those who were very determined to maintain their jobs against all odds that remained in the formal sector.

What motivating factors encourages mothers to continue working in the formal sector and what are the coping mechanisms mothers have adopted to deal with stress? Amidst all the challenges experienced, those that chose to remain in the formal sector did so because of a number of reasons. They were motivated by the financial benefit, the desire to give their children a good future and they also were motivated by how far they had come in terms of their education and career and were not willing to give up. Aside these factors that motivated them, they also had to adopt coping mechanisms to help them handle stress since it was bound to arise. Hence, my respondents took practical measures such as taking vacations to rejuvenate, reaching a compromise with their bosses, being time- disciplined, engaging in effective communication with their family and many others. All these were strategies that helped them deal with

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unavoidable stress that characterized the double roles they played. My findings also showed that working mothers benefitted from both domains, and their role as mothers complemented their role as career women and vice versa. *Implication:* this insinuates that though there were challenges associated with balancing motherhood and career responsibilities, a mother could still achieve her goals. Also, she could develop effective coping mechanisms to help her handle stress. Most importantly, this suggests that balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector did not always produce conflicts, rather, it enhanced a working mother's role as she derived role enhancement.

How conducive are organizational and governmental policies in Ghana in facilitating motherhood and career balance? All respondents confirmed that the work environment, especially the inflexibility associated with work in the formal sector made it difficult to balance work and motherhood responsibilities. Organizational and governmental policies were inconducive for working mothers and pregnant women. For instance, the lack of family-friendly policies (inadequate maternity leave, absence of paternity leave) were factors that drove most women and not men out of the formal sector, thereby reinforcing gender inequalities and ideologies. *Implication:* for women to remain active in the formal sector and for the formal sector to be attractive for women, the policies should be more friendly.

What role does family and other social support play in shaping the opportunities for combining motherhood and their career? In exploring the role, the family and other social support played in facilitating motherhood and career balance, this study focused on how family members, friends and hired help could assist working mothers. It was found that spousal support was the most important form of support, followed by the external family, even though as a result of urbanization, and migration, the Ghanaian kinship system was losing its close-knit relation. House helps were also important in easing the stress of working mothers. However, from respondents, it seemed that, if the character of the help was not well assessed before hiring them, these helps could double the burdens of working mothers. *Implication*: Effective motherhood and career balance are closely related to a woman's access to social support and the more effective her support system, the higher her chances of retaining her career.

Are women judgmental of the decisions of other mothers and what knowledge do they pass on to the younger generation about combining motherhood and career? My findings concluded that women were generally not judgmental of the decisions of other mothers. They may not be in favor of the choices of others, but they respected others' decisions. I also found that some mothers had regretted the decisions they took, but they did not consider them as mistakes, they were just unfavorable choices that they made. As such, they advised others not to take those

decisions. Also, they considered themselves as role models to the younger generation, thus, they felt it was their duty to live lifestyles that was worthy of emulation. As role models, they warned the younger generation of the difficulties and advised them to prepare for it, but regardless of it all, they had to work hard towards achieving whatever aim they set for themselves.

Recommendations for research and practice

The study raised some issues that could be considered in further research. A proposed study area that could be a continuation of this study is to explore how adolescent girls and unmarried women anticipate their future career and motherhood responsibilities, and their visions of how to effectively balance motherhood and career.

The study also generated some recommendations for policy- makers and practitioners within the field of gender in development

◊ Creating a supportive family-friendly environment in the workplace is highly essential if women are to remain in the formal sector. Gender equality leads to economic growth; hence it is important to facilitate girls' access to education and women's access to employment in the formal sector since it leads to economic empowerment which reduces the likelihood of household poverty.

◊ Again, female empowerment is necessary to address gender in development issues. Thus, there should be a platform in schools and the community, where female role models can help empower the younger generation in society. Female role models play an essential role in the way societies view and treat women. So, having female role models is positive for both young girls and women in the development of societies.

◊ The study suggests inculcating a system of working from home so that it allows new parents to remain in the workforce while employers retain valuable business assets, and this improves productivity and reduces the cost of staff turnover.

◊ Inculcate subjects on career and motherhood studies for young teenagers in school. I suggest that this training should include boys as well, as this can break the barriers of any form of gender stereotypes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide for mothers working in the formal sector

Demographic Questions

1. How many children do you have?
2. What are the ages of your children?
3. What educational qualification do you hold?
4. What position do you hold at work?
5. Do you seek career advancement, and if yes, are you willing to further your education in order to attain/ achieve your career ambition?

Narrative

6. Could you describe a typical weekday and weekend in your life, (ie. Life at home and work)
7. What is the experience for you like, in terms of working and catering for your family, including your husband and children?
8. Are you normally home early enough to help your children with their homework and also to put them to bed?
9. How do you keep your daily routines going? Do you have anyone (relatives or hired people) that helps you with household chores and in taking care of your children?

Problem Focused

10. Do you feel your work affects the amount of time you spend/ devote to your family? If so, how do you intend to work on it?
11. What are some of the challenges you face being a working mother?
12. How are you able to cope with motherhood and your career, i.e. what are some of the motivating factors that pushes/ encourages you, during times that you feel like giving up?
13. What does it mean to you to be able to combine motherhood and your career?
14. Do you think you will be able to effectively manage your family if you give up on your career?
15. Have you ever thought of quitting your job to be a stay at home mom or even to start your own business, i.e. to be an entrepreneur?

16. What is your opinion about women who quit their careers to be stay at home moms?

17. As a working mother, would you say the working environment and existing organizational policies (at your workplace) and governmental policies are conducive enough for pregnant women and women with kids?

18. As a working mother with a daughter, do you think it is especially important for you to maintain your job and attain higher career goals, especially for the sake of being a role model to her? (your daughter)

19. Do you think your family (children & husband) are happy having a working mother/ wife?

20. What advice do you have for the youth/ future generation about how to effectively combine motherhood and their career?

Appendix 2. Interview guide for mothers who have quit their jobs in the formal sector

Demographic Questions

1. How many children do you have?
2. What are the ages of your children?
3. What educational qualification do you hold?
4. What position did you previously hold at work?
5. Do you intend to go back to work?

Narrative

6. Could you describe a typical weekday and weekend in your life, (ie. Life at home)
7. How do you keep your daily routines going? Do you have anyone that helps you with household chores and in taking care of your children?
8. What led you to quit your job? Do you have any regrets now?
9. How did your family, especially your partner receive the news of quitting your job to be a stay at home mom?
10. What was the experience for you like, in terms of working and catering for your family, including your husband and children?

11. Having quit your job, will you say you are able to effectively manage your home and family well?

Problem Focused

12. Did you feel your work affected the amount of time you spent/ devoted to your family? If yes, how so?

13. What are some of the challenges you are facing now as a stay at home mom and how do you intend to deal with it? (e.g. Do you have economic or financial independence?)

14. How important is motherhood to you?

15. What role does family, including partners and social support play in helping to ease the stress on women when combining motherhood and their career

16. Do you have any intentions of going back to work or even starting your own business i.e. being an entrepreneur?

17. What is your opinion about mothers who are still active in the formal labor force?

18. Do you think the working environment and existing organizational policies and governmental policies are conducive enough for pregnant women and women with kids?

19. Having quit your career to be a stay at home mom, do you think this can negatively have an effect on your children, especially your daughter?

Topic: *"Balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector in Ghana: A qualitative, comparative study of women who work, and women who gave up their career"*.

Background and purpose

My name is Maria Okyere Addo. I am a student pursuing *Master of Philosophy in Global Development-theory and practice* at the University of Bergen, Norway. In fulfillment of the requirements to earn this degree, I am undertaking a research project which looks at the issue of balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector in Ghana by exploring and comparing the lived experiences of women who work and those who have given up their careers to be stay at home moms. I kindly request your participation in this study.

Confidentiality

The researcher will keep your information confidential. The interview tapes will have numbers and carry no names. This consent forms which you have to sign with your names will have no connection with the tapes and it will be destroyed after the analysis is made and the thesis completed. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is complete, your data would be returned to you or destroyed. Your data would also be destroyed upon your request if you withdraw from the study after the data collection is completed.

Benefits / Risks

The information that will be collected will be of immense help to both the researcher and the respondents. Your participation will not expose you to any risks. It will help me and be of immense contribution to already existing research on motherhood and career challenges. The research has been approved by the ethics committee at the University of Bergen and the Norwegian Centre of Research Data.

Your participation and contribution

I will interview 8 women individually for the study of which you will be one of them. Each interview will last for approximately 1 hour, 15 minutes, at a time and venue convenient for

you. It will be an in- depth interview consisting of casual conversations. You are not required to answer the questions if they make you feel uncomfortable. At any time, you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the study and there is no penalty in discontinuing participation. Aside this research contributing to existing research and policy formulation by policy makers, it will also aid me in the writing and completion of my master thesis in order to acquire a master's degree.

What happens to the information you give?

The information collected will be transcribed and analyzed to answer the research questions of this study. All information given will be treated confidentially and only used for purposes of this project. It shall not be shared with anyone other than the project supervisor. For any inquiries, please contact the researcher or supervisor at Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen Norway (Christies gate 13, 5015 Bergen).

Researcher: Maria Okyere Addo(mariaokyereaddo@yahoo.com/ Maria.Addo@student.uib.no)
Supervisor: Siri Lange (Siri.Lange@uib.no)

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have understood the above information and thereby give my consent to be part of the study.

Signature... Date........./........./.........

NSD

Siri Lange
Christiesgt. 13
5015 BERGEN

Vår dato: 05.07.2018   Vår ref: 61232 / 3 / HJT   Deres dato: Deres ref:

Vurdering fra NSD Personvernombudet for forskning § 31

Personvernombudet for forskning viser til meldeskjema mottatt 21.06.2018 for prosjektet:

61232	*Balancing motherhood and work in the formal sector in Ghana: A qualitative, comparative study of women who work, and women who gave up their career*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Siri Lange*
Student	*Maria Okyere Addo*

Vurdering
Etter gjennomgang av opplysningene i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon finner vi at prosjektet er meldepliktig og at personopplysningene som blir samlet inn i dette prosjektet er regulert av personopplysningsloven § 31. På den neste siden er vår vurdering av prosjektopplegget slik det er meldt til oss. Du kan nå gå i gang med å behandle personopplysninger.

Vilkår for vår anbefaling
Vår anbefaling forutsetter at du gjennomfører prosjektet i tråd med:
• opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet og øvrig dokumentasjon
• vår prosjektvurdering, se side 2
• eventuell korrespondanse med oss

Vi forutsetter at du ikke innhenter sensitive personopplysninger.

Meld fra hvis du gjør vesentlige endringer i prosjektet
Dersom prosjektet endrer seg, kan det være nødvendig å sende inn endringsmelding. På våre nettsider finner du svar på hvilke endringer du må melde, samt endringsskjema.

Opplysninger om prosjektet blir lagt ut på våre nettsider og i Meldingsarkivet
Vi har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet på nettsidene våre. Alle våre institusjoner har også tilgang til egne prosjekter i Meldingsarkivet.

Vi tar kontakt om status for behandling av personopplysninger ved prosjektslutt

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Ved prosjektslutt 30.06.2019 vil vi ta kontakt for å avklare status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Se våre nettsider eller ta kontakt dersom du har spørsmål. Vi ønsker lykke til med prosjektet!

Dag Kiberg

Håkon Jørgen Tranvåg

Kontaktperson: Håkon Jørgen Tranvåg tlf: 55 58 20 43 / Hakon.Tranvag@nsd.no

Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Maria Okyere Addo, mariaokyereaddo@yahoo.com

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

According to your notification form the sample will receive written information and will give their consent to participate. The information letter we have received is well formulated.

However, the project will continue until June 2019. The EU's Privacy Regulation (GDPR), which will come into force in 2018, will therefore regulate the processing of personal data in this project. With the new legislation, the participants in your project will get additional and clearer rights. We therefore request that the following is added to your information letter/consent form:
- that the personal data being processed is based on the participants legal consent
- that the participants have a right to send a complaint to your privacy representative or data protection authority regarding the processing of your personal information.
- NSD's contact information (personvernombudet@nsd.no, +47 55 58 21 17)
- the rights of the participants (data subjects), including the right to request access to the personal data that is being processed, the right to request that the personal data is corrected or erased, and the right to request a copy of the personal data being processed (data portability)
- the project's end date and when the data will be anonymised

The Data Protection Official presupposes that you will process all data according to the University of Bergen's internal guidelines/routines for information security. We presuppose that the use of a personal computer/mobile storage device is in accordance with these guidelines.

The estimated end date of the project is 30.06.2019. According to your notification form you intend to anonymise the collected data by this date.
Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be identified. This is done by:
- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)
- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable personal data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such as residence/work place, age and gender)
- deleting digital audio

Appendix 5a: Summary of themes developed during analysis of interviews with mothers who remained and those who quit their work in the formal sector

BASIC THEMES	Organizing Themes	GLOBAL THEMES
Difficulty combining motherhood & career demanding & challenging constrains mothers' ability to perform effectively	Experience with work and motherhood	Women's perception of the conflict between motherhood & career
Preparing children for school Assisting with homework	Daily routines	
Work affects time spent with family Long hours spent at work Difficulty attending to children because of work Support from extended family members Role strain	Inadequate time spent with family Outcome of role	
Fulfilling when able to adequately combine both roles Gives a satisfactory feeling	Values attached to double roles	
Access support from husbands Team work is essential Husbands are able to take up extra duties in the absence of their wives	Spousal support	Role of Family & social support
accessing help from extended relatives help received is not consistent	Support from extended family members	

BASIC THEMES	Organizing Themes	GLOBAL THEMES
Financial benefits encourage them to remain Other fringe benefits received at work. Eg. pensions	Financial Motivation	Motivating Factors
Motivated by their educational achievements Desire to further education Energy & time dedicated to achieving their educational qualifications	Educational motivation	
Desire to attain high positions at work Resources spent at attaining their current position Love for the job Role played at the job	Career advancement Love for the job	
Encouraged by the desire to give their children a good future Their children will emulate what they are doing They are a source of motivation to the younger generation	Role model to the younger generation	
Being disciplined with the time they close at work Not working over time Ensure that work does not take over their family	Time Discipline	Coping mechanisms
Stress associated with double roles Quitting formal job as a way of coping Starting own business (entrepreneurial)	Quitting formal job Backup plan	

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Appendix 5b: Thematic map from data analysis of interviews with working mothers

1.Difficulty combining motherhood & career
2.Constrains ability to perform effectively

Experience with work and motherhood

1.morning & evening routines
2.Preparing children for school
3.Dropping & picking them from school
4.Assisting them with homework

Daily routines

1.Fulfilling when able to adequately combine both roles
2.Gives a satisfactory feeling

1. Women's perception of the conflict

Values attached to double roles

Inadequate time spent with family

1.work affects time spent with family
2.Long hours spent at work
3.Difficulty performing motherhood roles because of work and vice- versa

Support from external family members

1.Accessing help from extended relatives
2.Help received is not

2.Role of Family and other social

Spousal support

1.Access support from husbands
2.Team work is essential
3.husbands are able to take up

Back- up plan

Quitting formal job

1.Stress associated with double roles
2.Quitting formal job as a way of coping

1.Encouraged by the desire to give their children a good future
2.Their children will emulate what they are doing
3.They are a source of motivation to the younger generation

1.Financial benefits encourage them to remain
2.Other fringe benefits

Financial motivation

Desire to be role models to

Education al

3.Motivating factors

1.Desire to attain high positions at work
2.Resources spent at attaining their current position
3.Love for the job

1.Motivated by their educational achievements
2.Desire to further education
3.Energy & time dedicated to achieving their educational qualifications

1.Career advancement

1.Furthering education often comes with

4.Coping Mechanisms

Further education

Recreation

1.Taking luxurious trips helps to rejuvenate
2.Expose their children to the world

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5.Opinions about the decisions of other mothers / advice to younger generation

Respect their decisions

Advice to younger

Not in favor of their decisions

1.Nonjudgmental views of the decisions of other mothers
2.Advise for the younger generation

6.Conduciveness of Working Environment, structural & Governmental Policies

Manageable Or Unfavorable

Work Environment is not good enough for working mothers