Women in Academic Leadership Positions and its related Job Challenges

Irene Akuamoah Boateng (Corresponding author)
School of Business, Valley View University, P.O. Box AF 595, Accra-Ghana
E-mail: ohenewah80@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract
Women in academia have the need for a work-life balance. Thus, the necessity to prioritize their career and personal life. The study was conducted using a sample of 100 women in 3 tertiary institutions located in the Greater-Accra Region of Ghana. Findings revealed that, work-life balance policies should be enforced to provide communication and documentation of a company's work-life commitment and programs. Written and published policies that define work-life expectations and programs create a culture that encourages employees to manage stress, time and work and enables them to be more productive and happy at work and home. Ghana has produced two female vice Chancellors and ongoing, with emphasis on the girl-child education.
Keywords: Gender, Communication, Universities, Employment, Career, Development, Economics.

1. Introduction
Researches over the last few decades have indicated that women have been less represented than men in leadership positions (Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke, 1999). However most societies in recent times are experiencing women gradually emerging as top position holders in many organizations and sectors of the economy. Women in workforce earning wages or salaries are a part of modern phenomenon. One that developed at the same time as the growth of paid men yet women have been challenged by inequality in the workforce. Till now legal and cultural practices, combined with the inertia of longstanding religious and educational conventions seems to have restricted women's entry and participation in the workforce (Razavi, 2011). Hence their lack of access to higher education had effectively excluded them from the practice of well-paid and high status occupations. Currently, women at the grassroots level are being dared to utilize the environment that government has created to provide equal opportunities to women as their male colleagues, by taking up leadership positions. The cultural disposition of women as the care takers of the home usually makes it cumbersome balancing personal life and profession (Sen 2001). Bilen-Green, Froelich & Jacobson, (2008) have posited that women are scarce in upper levels of academic leadership. They normally suffer biases in recruiting, selection, and promotion efforts, especially those in the sciences. Those who happen to be in male dominated departments sometimes receive fewer professional development opportunities.

Many women feel that their career opportunities actually come to a halt when they start barring children. Other times too women do suffer sexual harassment such as mild flirtations and sexual jokes, especially in instances when they seem to be climbing up the ladder. Even though men face serious challenges at the work place women tend to suffer more from wider variety of psychological and physical complaints (Kuther, 2006, Karasek, & Theorell, 1990). In this modern world a balance must be strike between work and family life. The work environment should be designed in a suitable manner to make combination of work and family life easy. The aim of this research therefore, is to examine the nature of the job and family life of the career woman in academics. Identify their challenges and their influences.

2. Literature Review
Women in modern societies are simultaneously socialized in two life-spheres orientation towards family and employment coexists more or less compatible over the life span of women (Knapp 1990). Family lives and employments are complementary (Becker 1996); nevertheless the "life for others" often constitutes a setback in both income and career. "Claiming for a piece of one's own life" (Beck-Gernsheim 1983) causes in lots of women distinct experiences of ambivalence between the spheres of family and that of employment.

2.1 Family and Employment in Women's Life
According to Dugger (2001) it is a fact that a great deal of women are part-time employed. It is not surprising that female employment is often considered to be an additional source of income to the main male provider - especially during the "family phase". The responsibility of men is emphasized in the provision of material and that of women lies in the work of reproduction (Bailyn, 2003). The reproduction of gender specific division of labor within and outside the family is often described as a consequence of interdependency of gender specific segregation on the job market on one hand and the "female working capability" on the other (Ostner 1983). Women tend to do more social jobs than technical jobs, which in turn are paid less and are more suitable for part-time employment. There is ample evidence that when women are able to develop their full labor market potential, there can be significant macroeconomic gains. (Loko and Diouf, 2009)). Aguirre *et al.* (2012) suggest

that raising the female labor force participation rate (FLFPR) to country-specific male levels would, for instance, raise GDP in the United States by 5 percent, in Japan by 9 percent, in the United Arab Emirates by 12 percent, and in Egypt by 34 percent. Based on International Labor Organization (ILO) data, Aguirre *et al*. (2012) estimate that of the 865 million women worldwide who have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies, 812 million live in emerging and developing nations.

2.2 Challenges Facing Career Women

Working women try as much as possible to balance careers, personal life, and raising a family. However, working women especially women in academia face some challenges as they try to accomplish this objective (now called integration).

2.2.1 Work-life Balance

It is seen as having enough time to fulfill activities in both work and family contexts (De Cieri et al, 2005; Voydanoff, 2002). It is the separation between your work life and your personal life. It is the boundary that you create between your profession, career, or business and every other segment that makes up your life. Work-life balance plays a huge role in determining whether a person will reach career advancement, and is now the second most important driver of employee attraction and commitment", says Corporate Executive Board (CEB) research. Work life balance now ranks as one of the most important workplace attributes-second only to compensation, according to research conducted by the Corporate Executive Board among more than 50,000 global workers. Time is of incredible value to both employers and the employees today, and therefore many talented workers are not looking for more money but instead looking for better quality of life…that which you get through work life balance.

2.2.2 Work Place Stress and Job Demands

There is a growing concern in the current state of the economy, where employees increasingly face conditions of overwork, job insecurity, low levels of job satisfaction, and lack of autonomy. Workplace stress has been shown to have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of employees, as well as a negative impact on workplace productivity and profits. Job demand can be referred to as the degree to which the working environment contains stimuli that require some effort (Jones & Fletcher, 1996) and encapsulates the idea that job demands lead to negative consequences if they require additional effort beyond the usual way of achieving work goals (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001)

2.2.3 Women in Academic Leadership Positions

According to Bilen-Green et al. (2008), while representation of women at higher professorial ranks is disappointing, women are even scarcer on the administrative career ladder. Relatively few women advance to top academic leadership positions such as dean, provost, president or chancellor. An exception is in traditionally female fields such as nursing and education (Dugger 2001), yet many social science and professional fields have shown substantial gender desegregation and an increasing supply of women for these positions. Where women are in top positions, it is typically in smaller, less prestigious schools. With women over-represented at instructor/lecturer ranks and less likely (controlling for experience, publications, and educational attainment) and taking longer to reach the associate and full professor ranks (Dugger 2001) which generally are tapped for leadership positions, the small number of women administrators is yet another piece of the problem.

2.3 Benefits of Being a Career Woman

Even though there are some challenges that comes along been a career woman, there are also some benefits associated with been a career woman especially women in academia.

2.3.1 Self-confidence

The social involvement and lives of working women have had a positive effect on businesses and institutions. Working outside the home allows mothers to have friends and co-workers to interact with which allows them to find a sense of fulfillment outside the house, and also being able to do quality work helps mothers build a level of self-confidence that only comes from working with one's peers.

2.3.2 Responsible

A working mom gives children and spouses a chance to become more responsible. Mothers work to provide the second income so that fathers don't have to work two jobs and can spend more time with their family. This shift of balance provides an excellent role model for fathers and children, and maintains a smooth running family.

2.3.3 Role Model

Career mothers also serve a role model for their children. Children who are raised watching both of their parents work are more likely to have a great work ethic themselves when they grow up. They learn the value of working and, unfortunately the importance of money and consumerism to a family.

2.3.4 Liberation of Men

Allowing women to work wherein they assume the role of the primary financial backbone of the family would liberate men from a role they have donned for millions of years and would allow them to live the kind of life they want to. Men can concentrate on other areas and improve their emotional and psychological health which will ultimately move them to their experiential domain.

3. Methodology

Survey research design was used in this study. This design is considered suitable because of its ability to view comprehensively the major questions raised in the study. The population of the study comprised all female teaching staff of 2 private universities and a public polytechnic in the Greater-Accra Region of Ghana. The purposive sampling technique was employed in this study. This is because the study targeted female teaching staffs who have worked for one-year in the selected institutions. A sample size of one hundred (100) was targeted. The choice of this sample size was guided by literature on the maximum and minimum practical sample size of not less than thirty (30) subjects per group category for any statistical test. Primary data was obtained from the respondents through a carefully constructed questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed descriptively. The descriptive method was used to both demography of respondents and the research questions on organizational politics using frequencies and percentages. Analyses were carried out with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Discussion of Findings

Panel A (Table 1.0) shows the marital status of 100 respondents. Out of these respondents, 31% were single, followed by divorced 8%. Married dominated with 55% of the total sample. With regards to the educational qualification of the respondents which can be seen in Panel B, 22% of respondents held a doctoral degree, 49% held masters degrees, and the remaining 29% respondents held bachelor degrees. The tenure of office of the various respondents can also be seen in Panel C. 22% have worked not more than 5years, 40% have worked for 6 to10 years, 24% have worked for 11to15 years, and the remaining 14% employees have worked not less than 16 years.

Table1: Demography of respondents

Panel A: Marital status		
	Frequency	Percentage
Single	31	31
Married	55	55
Divorce	8	8
Widow	6	6
Total	100	100
Panel B: Educational qualification		
	Frequency	Percentage
Doctorate	22	22
Masters	49	49
Degree	29	29
Total	100	100
Panel C: Tenure in office		
	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5	22	22
6-10yrs	40	40
11-15yrs	24	24
Above 16	14	14
Total	100	100

Source: field work, 2014

4.1 The Influence of Women in Academia on departments

A-I Strongly Agree   B-I Agree   C-I am Undecided   D-I Disagree   E-I Strongly Disagree

Table 2: Influence of women in academia on departments

	Percentage					Total
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	
It is believe that, women in academia are difficult to be approached especially occupying high position	0	20	14	43	23	100
Educated women convince people whenever they talk or comment on an issue.	27	53	14	5	1	100
Educated women are believed to have good interpersonal relationship	17	50	13	10	10	100
Generally women work with accuracy and timeliness	27	53	8	6	8	100
Women in academia talk or make decisions based on facts	34	39	11	5	11	100

Source: field work, 2014

Through the analysis and findings generated by the researcher, it was revealed that almost 82.0% of the respondents agrees and confirm to the fact that, they have the ability to influence their follow colleagues at work in a positive manner and also those within their environs. According to Loko and Diouf, (2009), women in high and respectable position throw much challenge to up and coming young women in society and the labor market that, the sky can be their limit. They are seen as a role models and as a source of motivation to other women within the labor market and society as a whole.

4.2 Evaluating the Work-Life Balance of Women in Academia

Table 3: Elements associated with work-life balance of women in academia

	Percentage		Total
	Yes	**No**	
Satisfied with the working hours of institution	76	24	100
Working overtime	37	53	100
Enough time for family after work	77	22	100
Thinking about the family while working	48	52	100
Is your family comfortable with your work	61	39	100
Do you value your career more than your family	19	81	100
Will the family be better off without you working	18	82	100

Source: field work, 2014

Table 3.0 indicates that, almost 88% of the participants affirmed they have a work life balance because they are able to prioritize their personal life as well as their career. With regards to the marital status of the employees (respondents), it was revealed that more than half (55%) of the respondents are married. This confirms the fact that women are able to combine their personal lifestyle (social life) and work without many difficulties.

4.3 Evaluating the Requirement of Job and its Effects on Women Behavior

A-I Strongly Agree   **B-I Agree**   **C-I am Undecided**   **D-I Disagree**   **E-I Strongly Disagree**

Table 4: Job requirement and its effects on women behavior

	Percentage					Total
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	
The work demand strictness (following procedures)	18	47	9	25	1	100
My institution provide incentives that motivate me to work or give out my best	25	46	10	12	7	100
The policies of your organization are flexible and it enables me to discharge my duties well	21	51	12	10	6	100
The culture of the organization	27	44	17	12	0	100
The stressful nature of the work	16	24	38	14	8	100

Source: field work, 2014

According to fieldwork, the demands of the job influence the behavior of women. They (women) are bound to follow the procedures and also adapt to the culture of the institution which eventually becomes a part of their life which makes their co-workers and other people see them as too strict and principled honoring their duties and this can be seen in Table 4 above. Aguirre et al. (2012) concluded that every employee in an organization is there for the achievement of the organizations' goals and must follow, adapt to the culture, policies, rules and regulations of the organization.

4.4 Challenges Women in Academia Face in Institution

A-I Strongly Agree   **B-I Agree**   **C-I am Undecided**   **D-I Disagree**   **E-I Strongly Disagree**

Table 5: Challenges that women in academia face in institution

	Percentage					Total
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	
Discrimination	41	22	9	11	17	100
Sexual harassment	25	36	2	17	20	100
Work life balance	35	33	17	8	7	100
Salary (not getting paid as much as men)	0	0	15	38	47	100
Health issues	9	26	17	19	29	100

Source: field work, 2014

Table 5.0 sought to find out the challenges that women face as they go about performing their duties. It was

revealed that, with the exception of "women not been paid as equal as men", majority of the respondents agreed to some extern that, the remaining challenges above is what they (women) are been confronted with at work place. Anonymously, all the respondents disagree to the fact that their follow colleague men are paid more than them because over 90% of institutions and organizations in Ghana and world-wide paid their workers base on their educational qualification they hold. The institutions that were used as the population for the research pay their workers base on the qualification they hold. Research has shown and can be confirmed that majority (95%) of organizations world-wide pay workers base on their qualification and experience. In many countries, distortions and discrimination in the labor market restrict women's options for paid work, and female representation in senior positions and entrepreneurship remains low. Women in the field of academia with regards to the sampled firm have had tremendous challenges yet they are able to combine career with their home responsibilities.

5. Conclusion

The field of academia has seen a tremendous increase in women taking up various responsibilities which would have rather been taken up by men. Ghana witnessed the first female Vice Chancellor in 2008, University of Cape Coast and the second one in 2012, University of Energy and Natural resources. Women are seen to be rapidly rubbing shoulders with their male counterparts in so many spheres. The finding has shown that women face so many challenges as they go about discharging their duties. Work-life balance plays a huge role in determining whether or not a person will attain career advancement. It was revealed that women try their best to satisfy both their employers and family with all the challenges they go through both at work and the home.

6. Future Directions

- Institutions should have policies that will reduce discrimination to allow women discharge their duties.
- Work-life tools that provide convenience and comfort to busy employees. Benefits such as concierge services for auto service allow employees to better manage their personal lives either at work or on the way to and from work.
- Stress management seminars should be organized periodically by the institutions to enable the women know how to adjust fully to their busy schedules.

References

Aguirre, D., Hoteit L., Rupp C., & Sabbagh K. (2012). Empowering the Third Billion. Women and the World of Work in 2012, *Booz and Company Limited*.

Blättel-Mink, B., (1997). Frauen - Biographie -Methode, Nr. 2/1997 der Forschungsreihe "*Aus Lehre und Forschung*" der Abteilung für Soziologie der Universität Stuttgart, Stuttgart.

Barsh, J., &Yee, L., (2012). "Unlocking the Full Potential of Women at Work," McKinsey & Company/*Wall Street Journal.*

Beck-Gernsheim, E., (1983). "Vom 'Dasein für andere' zum Anspruch auf ein Stück 'eigenes Leben'. Individualisierungsprozesse im weiblichen Lebenszusammenhang", *Soziale Welt,* Nr. 3, Vol. 34, pp.307-340.

Bilen-Green, C., Froelich, K.A., & Jacobson, S.W. (2008). The Prevalence of Women in Academic Leadership Positions, and Potential impact on Prevalence of women in the Professorial Ranks. WEPAN Conference Proceedings.

Bailyn, L. (2003). Academic careers and gender equity: Lessons learned from MIT. Gender, Work and Organization 10: 137-153.

Coates, J. M., & Herbert, J., (2008). "Endogenous Steroids and Financial Risk Taking on a London Trading Floor," *PNAS,* Vol. 105, No. 15: 6167-172.

Dugger, K. (2001). "Women in higher education in the United States: I: Has there been progress?" The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 21:118-130.

Dresel, T. (1997). "Drei Frauen. Analyse des Protokolls einer Gruppendiskussion zum biographischen Zusammenhang von Beruf und Familie bei Frauen", *Blättel-Mink, B. (ed.),* pp.65-93.

International Labour Organization (ILO), (2010). "Women in Labour Markets: Measuring Progress and Identifying Challenges", Geneva.

Knapp, Gudrun Axeli (1990). "Zur widersprüchlichen Vergesellschaftung von Frauen", *Hoff E.H. (Ed). Die doppelte Sozialsiation Erwachsener,* Weinheim

Loko, B., & Diouf, M. A, (2009). "Revisiting the Determinants of Productivity Growth: What's New?" IMF Working Paper 09/225 (Washington).

Matczynski, T. J. (1991). Mentoring women and minorities in higher educ,ation: An anecdotal   record. Dayton, OH: U of Dayton. ERIC 02

Ostner, I. (1983). "Berufsform und berufliche Sozialisation von Frauen", *Bolte, K. M./Treutner, E. (ed.),*

Subjektorientierte Arbeits-und Berufssoziologie, Frankfurt a. M., pp.110-140

Revenga, A. & Shetty, S. (2011). *World Development, Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development.* Washington D.C: World Bank.

Razavi, S. (2011). *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development. An Opportunity both Welcome and Missed. An Extended Commentary.* 5 October. New York: UNRISD.

Revenga, A., & S. Shetty, (2012). "Empowering Women is Smart Economics," *Finance & Development*, Vol. 49, No. 1, International Monetary Fund

Steinpreis, R.E., Anders, K.A., & Ritzke, D. (1999). The Impact of Gender on the Review of the Curricula Vitae of Job Applicants and Tenure Candidates: A National Empirical Study. Sex Roles 41: 09-528

Statistisches Bundesamt (1997). Daten report 1997. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bd. 340, Bonn.

Stotsky, J., (1996). "Gender Bias in Tax Systems," IMF Working Paper 96/99 (Washington).

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
http://www.iiste.org

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: http://www.iiste.org/journals/ All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: http://www.iiste.org/book/

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digtial Library , NewJour, Google Scholar