

The Influence of Career on Household Responsibilities of Women in Tamale Metropolis

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of career on household responsibilities of career women in the Tamale metropolitan area of the northern region of Ghana. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study while questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data for analysis. A total number of 300 career women from different categories of professions were randomly selected based on their willingness to participate. The questionnaire items were coded and fed into the SPSS software package and analyzed. The data was organised into frequency counts and converted into percentages and presented in tables. Regarding the hypothesis, the Pearson's correlation with an alpha level of 0.05 was the statistical technique used for the study. The study concluded that there is statistically significant correlation between the career of women and their household responsibilities. Also, the study found that inadequate time for care of children, spousal conflict, mental and emotional stresses were major challenges facing career women in Tamale. The study recommended that husbands and family members should be encouraged to assist their career women of some of their household responsibilities such as laundry, cooking and domestic cleaning services. This would help reduce the burden and stress of career women.

Keywords: Career Women, Household Responsibilities, Tamale Metropolis

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Introduction

The debate on the role of women in society, and their participation in economic activities have sparked a lot of controversy for a considerable period. To this effect, different groups of people women groups, government, development partners, and civil society groups - have presented many points of views to support their stance. According to Boserup (2005), the most important clue to a woman's status anywhere in the world is her degree of participation in economic life and her control over property and the product she produces. According to Gordon & Whelan-Berry, (2005) the traditional view of the male as breadwinner and the female as homemaker has shifted over time, and social norms have resulted in women placing a high value on both work and family roles. However, often times, the responsibilities and expectations of the work place often compete with those of the home for most career women.

The activities of women are regarded as household responsibilities. The term household responsibilities encompass many tasks from organizing and schedule making to cleaning, meal preparation and child care. Also, household responsibilities include tasks that must be completed on daily or weekly basis to maintain a functioning household. These kinds of ideologies about women have tended to marginalize women and have belittled women's career in the home and outside the home and therefore women's contribution to economic wellbeing of the home and society.

Career is a job or profession an individual does to earn an income for a living. Career woman is used to describe a woman who does a job or profession for income. Women seek to either supplement their family's income through career or to remain independent by seeking careers as career women. Women want to break out of their confines of being homemakers and determine to be independent by way of their own skills and strengths, believing that personal economic stability is the best way to earn their freedom. Women now engage in all kinds of professions all over the world (Ufomata, 2000). This development has many advantages, such as the emancipation of women and a better family income; it has also increased the likelihood that career women will be faced with difficulties in organizing both career and non-career responsibilities.

Career and family goals seem to be on a collision path for women. Jobs are very demanding and taking care of the family is demanding too, especially when there are young children, elderly parents and/or sick family members to take care of. When it comes to care giving, women are expected to sacrifice their careers in order to

become the care givers. Women's roles in Africa are largely traditional. Taking care of the children and of performing household responsibilities is considered to be the woman's docket and even if the husband has a lighter workload, he is very unlikely to offer help in that area (Ogbolu, 2013). Women therefore find themselves struggling to take care of the domestic responsibilities while also trying to get ahead in their careers.

In Ghana and particularly the Northern Region, women's traditional household responsibilities include childbearing and rearing, household chores, care for the aged and the vulnerable in the family. With increasing urban life and emphasis on female education, many women have been employed in either the formal or informal sectors of the economy. As a result, the phenomenon of change in roles of career women within the Tamale Metropolis is assuming increasing importance as many women have had to engage in paid jobs or other income generating activities and are regarded either as co-bread winners or contribute to family upkeep and maintenance.

However, it has been observed that the careers women engage in most often turn out to be incompatible with the performance of their household responsibilities. Although career has many positive attributes, it also may affect people in a negative manner. For instance, family-related experiences can negatively impact careers and vice versa. Thus, there is a growing need to devise strategies to overcome these problems. Although several people have studied the changing roles of women, they are concentrated in the other parts of the developing world. In Ghana, there appears to be limited research on the theme. It is an undeniable fact that both family and work of career women constitute crucial aspects of life in any modern society. It is therefore important to find a balance between the two. It is against this background that this paper is deemed necessary. The paper therefore seeks to examine the influence of career on women household responsibilities in the Tamale Metropolitan Area of the Northern Region of Ghana.

Research Objectives

The objectives that guided the study are to:

1. examine how career of women influence their household responsibilities in Tamale Metropolis.
2. assess the challenges that career women encounter in combining career with household responsibilities.
3. evaluate coping strategies that career women adopt to combine career and household responsibilities in Tamale Metropolis.
4. determine the relationship between career and household responsibilities.

Research Questions

1. How does career of women influence their household responsibilities in the Tamale Metropolis?
2. What challenges do career women encounter in combining career and household responsibilities?
3. What coping strategies do career women adopt to combine both career and household responsibilities?

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant correlation between career and household responsibilities of women in the Tamale Metropolis.

Theoretical Framework

The study is situated within the framework of role theory. Role theory was propounded by Ralph Linton in 1936. According to Ralph, role refers to a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face and fulfill. The theory deals with the organization of social behaviour at both the individual and the collective levels. Individual behaviour in social contexts is organized and acquires meaning in terms of roles.

The role theory states that, the amount of time and energy individuals have is constant (fixed). Thus; an increase in roles results in the increased likelihood of role conflict which poses stress on the individual concerned. According to the theory, experiencing ambiguity and/or conflict within a role will result in an undesirable state. Role theory also proposes that multiple roles lead to personal conflict (inter-role) as it becomes more difficult to perform each role successfully, due to conflicting demands on time, lack of energy, or incompatible behaviours among roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1994 and Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal 2005).

Work responsibilities in organizations and homes are organized into roles. Therefore, role theory is a key element in understanding the relationships among them. The role theory is relevant to the study in the sense that it provides a useful framework for us to understand how career women attempt to balance multiple household roles with their paid careers. Role theory suggests that the demands for multiple roles accentuate inter-role conflict which in turn leads to symptoms of strain and negative outcomes such as reduced performance. The theory provides appropriate explanation as to how career women in the Tamale Metropolis will organize their time which is constant and respond to different household and career roles they may be confronted with. If career women effectively organize their time and energy, they may experience less role conflict. Failure to properly organize their time and energy could lead to role conflict and negatively affect their performance. Based on this theory, the study concludes that career-family conflict has a direct effect on the job performance and well-being of career

women.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area/Design

The study was conducted in the Tamale Metropolis. Tamale is the capital town of northern region of Ghana. Tamale lies within the Guinea Savanna belt of Northern Ghana. Geographically, the metropolis lies between latitude 9°16 and 9°34 North and longitudes 0°36 and 0°57 West. According to the 2010 population census, the metropolis has a total population of 223,252 (male 49.7%, female 50.3%). The economic activities of the people include agriculture, banking, education, industries/artisanal activities among others. Islam, Christianity and traditional religion are the major religions in the metropolis

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. A descriptive survey is a research method that is non-experimental and deals with the relation among non-manipulated variables, (Avoke, 2005). Since events or conditions related to career influence on household responsibilities of women do exist or already have occurred, the descriptive survey was considered appropriate. This is because it enabled the researchers to use questionnaires to gather data for analysis in order to draw meaningful conclusions.

Population and Sample Size

The target population of this study comprised all career women in Tamale metropolis. The participants were career women categorized into ten areas. These include teachers, lecturers, health staff, bank staff, telecommunication staff, secretaries/administrative staff, staff from the hospitality sector, security personnel, Non-governmental organization staff and artisanal career women. The researchers could not find an official document stating the actual number of career women in Tamale Metropolis and as a result, a statistical calculation for the sample size could not be used. Instead, the researchers took into consideration the number of participating institutions and assigned an equal number of 30 participants to each of the ten categories of careers selected for the study. This brought to a total sample size of 300 career women selected for the study. The researchers believe that a sample size of 300 is large enough to make the results feasible for generalization. Other research on Career-Home Conflict used less than 300 sample size and has generalized their results, especially that of Carlson and Kacmar (2000).

Research Instrument

Questionnaire was the instrument used to gather data for the study. Questionnaire are an inexpensive way to gather data from a potentially large number of respondents. They are also easy to administer confidentially, especially, if participants are to respond honestly (Munn & Drever 1999). It is against this background that questionnaire was preferred. The questionnaires were rated on a five-Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) with a score of 5 as the highest to strongly disagree (SD) with a score of 1 as the least.

As part of validating the questionnaire, a pre-test was carried out. Twenty (20) women who were not part of the study sample were used. During the pre-test, item analysis was done. Questionnaire items that were either difficult or ambiguous were re-worded or rephrased to make them simple, clearer and unambiguous. This perfected the questionnaires and ensured that participants in the main study experienced fewer difficulties in responding to the items. Bernard (2000) supports the above assertion when he stated that pre-test helps reduce errors and reveal any inadequacies in a research instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected for the study. The items of the questionnaire was coded and fed into the SPSS software package and analysed descriptively. The data was organised into frequency counts and converted into percentages. The results were presented in tables and discussed. Inferential statistics was used to test the hypothesis. Thus, Pearson's correlation with an alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine the relationship between career and household responsibilities of women in Tamale Metropolis.

Analysis of Results

Research question 1: How does career of women influence their household responsibilities in the Tamale Metropolis? Participants were presented with a list of statements describing household responsibilities. They were required to indicate their opinion whether their careers have influence on their household responsibilities or not. To make the analysis simpler for understanding, the five Likert scale was re-classified in to a three point Likert scale. Thus, "strongly disagree and disagree" were merged together as "disagree". Similarly, "strongly agree and agree" were merged together as "agree" while not sure stood independently. Three hundred participants responded to questionnaire items and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: How Career of Women Influences their Household Responsibilities in Tamale Metropolis.

Household Responsibility	Agree Freq. (%)	Not Sure Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)
Shopping	250(83.3)	50(16.7)	- -
Child care	244(81.4)	52(17.4)	4(1.3)
Preparation of Family meals	230(76.7)	70(23.3)	- -
Laundry	222(74.0)	78(26.0)	- -
Cleaning	186(62.0)	96(32.0)	18(6.0)

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents (250: 83.3%) agreed that their careers have influence on shopping as a household responsibility as compared to only 50 respondents representing 16.7% who indicated that their careers do not have any influence on shopping as a household responsibility. Similarly, majority of the respondents (244: 81.4%) opined that their careers have influence on child care as a household responsibility. On the contrary, 17% (52) of the respondents disagreed whilst 1.3% (4) of the respondents were not sure. Regarding preparation of family meals as a household responsibility, 230 respondents (76.7%) asserted that their careers influence it while 70 respondents (23.3%) said their careers have no influence on such household responsibility. Also, majority of the respondents 222 (74.0%) were of the opinion that their careers have influence on laundry as a household responsibility as against fewer respondents 39 (26.0) who stated that their careers have no influence. Finally, majority of the respondents (186: 62%) posited that their careers influence cleaning as a household responsibility. On the contrary, 96 respondents constituting 32% indicated that their careers had no influence while 9 respondents (6%) were not sure if their careers have influence on such a household responsibility or not.

Research question 2. What challenges do career women encounter in combining employment and household responsibilities? A list of statements deemed as challenges were provided for participants to indicate their opinion as to whether they agree, disagree or are not sure about the statement as a challenge. Similarly, Three hundred participants responded to questionnaires and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Challenges Faced by Career Women in Tamale Metropolis

Challenges	Agree Freq. (%)	Not Sure Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)
Difficulty in combining work with household chores	282(94)	- -	18(6)
Inadequate time for children	272(92)	- -	28(8)
Suffer mental, physical and emotional stress	240(80)	24(8)	36(12)
Disagreement & friction with husbands	216(72)	30(10)	54(18)
Lateness to work	60(20)	- -	240(80)
Inability to finish office work	62 (21)	- -	238(79)

Table 2 reveals that majority of the respondents (282: 94%) were of the opinion that, they have difficulties in combining their work with their household responsibilities. However, 18 respondents representing 6% did not see the combination of work with household responsibilities as a challenge. Regarding inadequate time for care of children, 272 respondents (92%) viewed it as a challenge as compared to 28 respondents (8%) who disagreed. Additionally, most of the respondents (240:80%) opined that they suffer from mental and emotional stress. On the contrary, a few respondents (24: 8%) disagreed whereas 36 respondents (12%) were not sure whether combining career with household responsibilities negatively affects them mentally and emotionally. Also, majority of the respondents (216: 72%) indicated that disagreement and friction with their husbands regarding the time they either leave for work or return from work constitute challenges. On the other hand, 54 respondents (18%) disagreed whereas 30 respondents (10%) could not indicate their opinion. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (240: 80%) disagreed to lateness to work as a challenge whereas a fewer respondents (60:20%) were of the opinion that, lateness to work constitute a challenge to them. Regarding inability to finish office work, a greater number of the respondents (238: 79%) disagreed as compared to 62(21%) respondents who agreed.

Coping strategies career women adopt to combine both career and household responsibilities. This addresses research question 3. What coping strategies do career women adopt to combine career and household responsibilities? The method used to analyze the research question 1 and 2 was equally used for this research questions. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Coping Strategies Career Women adopt to combine Career and Household Responsibilities in Tamale Metropolis.

Coping strategies	Agree Freq. (%)	Not Sure Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)
House help	260(87)	- -	40(13)
Family support	246(82)	6(2)	48(16)
Effective planning & Time Management	240(80)	- -	60(20)
Flexible work arrangement	168(56)	18(6)	114(38)
Spousal support	90(30)	- -	210(70)

Table 3 reveals that the use of house help (260: 87%), family support (246: 82%), effective planning and time management (240: 80%) as well as flexible work arrangement (168: 56%) were major coping strategies adopted by career women to combine their career with household responsibilities. These coping strategies are considered major because majority of the respondents agreed that they employed them to enable them combine their career with their household responsibilities. On the contrary majority of the respondents (210:70%) did not view spousal support as a major coping strategy adopted by career women. Only a few of them (90:30%) utilized it as a coping strategy.

Research Hypothesis

Testing of Hypothesis: H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between career and household responsibilities of women in Tamale Metropolis.

Table 4: Correlation between Career and Household Responsibilities of Women in Tamale Metropolis

Variable	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Career	2.016	0.004

Level of significance: 0.05

Table 4 shows that r_{-cal} (2.016) is greater than r_{-table} (0.004) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. This implies that there is a statistically significant correlation (relationship) between career and household responsibilities of women. This means that career has influence on women household responsibilities; thus the more a career demands from a woman the less time the woman is able to carry out her household responsibilities at the right time. When long hours are spent at the workplace or in the office, fewer hours are effectively utilized for the household responsibilities. This finding agrees with the findings of other researchers. For instance, Breyfield (1992) found out that gender is a significant determinant of negative job spill over because employed women are expected to carry out the responsibility for family services and still be able to smoothly handle their work roles. Similarly, Aryee (1992) concluded that there is a strong correlation with gender, in that women are more affected by workplace challenges and problems as compared to men.

Discussion of Results

The study revealed that career of women had influence on household responsibilities such as shopping, childcare, preparation of family meals, laundry and cleaning.

In the first place, careers of women have influence on their shopping activities. Shopping activities refer to purchasing food items for the house, clothing for the family and other items relevant to the needs of the family. Shopping requires a lot of time and patience to be able to move around from place to place to buy quality products and food stuff for the family. Although career women earn income which improves their purchasing power, they may not have enough time to do shopping themselves. Instead, they resort to the use of house helps or family members to do shopping for the family. This can sometimes be expensive or lead to poor quality shopping services. Corroborating this finding, Kahn et. al. (2005) reported that household responsibilities such as shopping roles and careers of women are incompatible. Similarly, Greenhaus & Beutell (1994) concluded that due to inadequate time, career women are not able to shop family needs themselves instead they use middle persons for their shopping needs.

Another household responsibility affected by the career of women is childcare. Childcare is a practice that involves the upbringing of children by having time to provide for their emotional, psychological and physical needs. Career mothers, in spite of having their children's best interest at heart, might fail to provide them the needed emotional satisfaction due to pressures and demands of their offices. The inadequate time of career women could lead to poor quality childcare services. This could hamper the emotional and social development of their children. This finding corroborates the findings of other researchers. For instance, Crosby (2007) posited that a combination of career and child bearing and care roles often lead to conflict, work overload, stress and impact negatively on families. Similarly, Voydanoff (2009) reported that, career women with children are continuously busy trying to respond to multiple roles and responsibilities, which cause time and energy imbalance. Jacobs and

Winslow (2004) found out in their study that career women often delay having children as long as possible in order to meet tenure demands.

Meal preparation is another household responsibility that strongly affects women careers. Meal preparation starts with first taking the decision on what, how and when to prepare meals for the family. Career women are expected to prepare variety of meals to meet the nutritional requirements of their families. However, they may not have enough time to cook regularly and may result to cooking in bulk and storing in fridges for subsequent usage, which sometimes may not be wholesome for consumption. Others may also resort to buying, thereby exposing the family to disease infections. Corroborating this finding, Houston & Waumsley (2003) observed that long-hour work in organizations could negatively affect career women's meal preparation. Also in a study carried out by Sutor, Mecom, and Feld (2001) they found out that female professors suffer more distractions as they spend considerably more time on family meal preparation than their male counterparts.

On the part of challenges facing career women in Tamale Metropolis, the study revealed the following: First, difficulty in combining career with household responsibilities. Combining career with household responsibilities is sometimes demanding, tiresome and stressful. This could take a toll on the energy, time and mind of career women forcing them to have divided attention. Career women need time for both household and office or workplace duties. This competing time, creates conflict making career women suffer from divided attention. If career women focus so much on their household responsibilities, they will be late to work and this can attract punitive measures against them from their superiors at their work places. Corroborating this finding, Greenhaus & Beutell (1994) reported that career women have difficulties in combining their career and household responsibilities roles successfully due to conflicting demands on time. In a similar vein, Bryne (2000) opined that conflict between one's career and family responsibilities is bi-directional and have been found to decrease performance and satisfaction in the particular domain in which interference is experienced.

Also, inadequate time for care of children was identified as another major challenge. This finding tallies with the findings of other researchers. For instance, Greenhaus (1988) asserted that the demands placed upon women employees as part of the career-related experience often are met at the expense of time and energy investment for family and self. Similarly, Houston & Waumsley (2003) revealed that, the long-hour work culture by career women in organizations do not support appropriate parenting. This implies career mothers might not have enough time to provide the needed emotional satisfaction and physical care for their children due to pressures and demands of their official duties.

Mental and emotional stress was another challenge faced by career women in the Tamale metropolitan area. Career women are expected to meet the demand of their employers and at the same time satisfy demands from the family (husband, children, and extended family relatives). This may put a lot of pressure and stress on them physically, emotionally and psychologically. Supporting this finding, Boserup (2005) confirmed that workload is perceived to cause the greatest strain and stress for career women. In another breadth, and with responsibilities for multiple roles, Yank and Hawkins (2004) posited that female employees are more likely than men to experience inter role conflict involving incompatible demands between their careers and family responsibilities.

Disagreement/friction/conflict with husbands/families was identified as another challenge. Misunderstanding could arise between career women and their husbands or husbands' family members due to the time career women may leave home in the morning for work and the time they arrive home in the evening from work. Husbands or family members may have the impression that their women do not care about the home, children, among others. This could bring about family frictions and conflicts. This finding is in tandem with other findings. Baxter (1992) found that combining housework and employment increases the possibility of spousal conflict among career women and their spouses. Kim (2015) reported in a study that women are much more likely than men to experience varieties of family-related career interruptions and interferences.

Regarding coping strategies of career women in the Tamale Metropolis, the study revealed a number of them. First, the most utilized coping strategy was support from family members. This means siblings, sister in-laws or other relatives of the couple could be brought to offer support. Such relatives could support in bathing the children, cooking among others. By this career women burden in the house is reduced as compared to those who do not get such support. This finding confirms the finding of Baxter (1992) that employment outside the home reduces the time spent by women in housework and slightly increases the contribution of husbands in household responsibilities. In another finding, Fatoki and Kobiowu (2015) reported that career women fairly share their household responsibilities with younger family members staying with them so as to enable them be able to function well at their respective organisation.

Also the study showed that the second most utilized coping strategy was support from house help. This means career women could rely on the assistance of a paid house help to support in their household responsibilities such as cleaning, washing and cooking. This could offer some relief for career women to be regular and punctual at work. This finding concurs with the finding of Anor (2014) when he found out that domestic helpers commonly known as house helps serve as an alternative source of instrumental support for career women when support from relatives and family members are not feasible. However, this finding contradicts that of Fatoki and Kobiowu (2015)

when they found out in a study that securing outside help such as house help/keeper is not an effective way of coping with the effect of family-work responsibilities on academic career progression of female lecturers.

Effective time management was the third most utilized coping strategy. By this, career women effectively plan and use their time judiciously to be able to combine work with household responsibilities. Fatoki and Kobiowu (2015) reported that a significant number of career women employed effective planning and time management skills such as judiciously using their annual/maternity leaves, and flexible work schedules as coping strategies to combine their careers with household responsibilities. Similarly, Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2005) concluded that women act as superwomen in order to cope with competing demands or find other ways of handling the overload at work or at home.

Conclusion

In the first place, the study revealed that there is statistically significant correlation between career of women and their household responsibilities. In other words, career of women had significant influence on their household responsibilities.

Also, the study established that the challenges facing career women in combining their careers with their household responsibilities are varied. These include: inadequate time for care of children/family, spousal conflicts/disagreements, mental and emotional stresses.

Finally the study concluded that career women in the Tamale Metropolis relied on the assistance from family members, house help and effective planning and time management strategies to be able to combine their careers and household responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

First, career women should effectively plan and manage their time judiciously so that they can combine their careers with household responsibilities.

Besides, husbands and family members should be encouraged to assist their career women with some of their household responsibilities such as laundry services, cooking and cleaning. This would help reduce the burden and stress of career women.

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