

IMPACT OF MOTHERHOOD ON FORMAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT: A CASE OF FORMALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY

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**IMPACT OF MOTHERHOOD ON FORMAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT:
A CASE OF FORMALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

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(N69/76355/2012)

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, GENDER
AND AFRICAN STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER ARTS
IN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.**

NOVEMBER 2019

DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

Signature:

Date:

Mark Ekech Mukhaga Abaha

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature:

Date:

Professor Owuor Olungah

DEDICATION

I dedicate **this** undertaking to my wife, mother and daughter as well as current, future and potential working mothers. **I didn't know how** much it takes **to be a** working mother. Without you, there would be no us, and for this, I am grateful. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to the women who gave insights into how they balance their work, private, and motherhood responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the tireless efforts of my supervisor – Professor Owuor Olungah – without his guidance; I wouldn't have accomplished this work. I am grateful to the support and active participation and engagement of the respondents who willingly accepted to participate in this research for their insights into the workings of a mother's life.

ABSTRACT

Over the decades, working mothers have been on the losing end in career advancement due to the constraint of balancing motherhood and employee roles. Most women have had to choose one role opting out on the other due to various barriers that limit their ability to juggle both roles effectively. The ³⁶ main objective of this study was to probe and assess the impact of motherhood on career progression for women who in formal employment residing in Nairobi City County. Two specific research objectives guided this evaluating ²⁷ women's career advancement as impacted by; the different stages of motherhood and stereotypical and professional assumptions on mothers' "commitment" to work.

This was a qualitative study guided by a conventional content analysis approach, with data collected using in-depth interviews on 35 participants; 15 women currently experiencing motherhood and within childbearing age, five women post-childbearing age, and 5 Human Resources practitioners. The collected data was then transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the Enviva software and presented using means, frequencies, and standard deviation. The study confirmed stereotypical assumptions of how women handle professional employment and motherhood, and the combination of professional “commitment” and motherhood as having an adverse impact on women’s career advancement. Most working mothers have canceled plans of advancing their careers due to the pressures experienced both at the workplace and at home. Besides, society has created a key barrier, with the assumptions and stereotyping of working mothers – expecting mothers to prioritize reproductive over productive roles. But in as much as most women are continuously affected by the lack of balance between these two roles, most employers are now warming up to providing a conducive working environment for working mothers both in pre-partum and post-partum period.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BAM	Becoming A Mother
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
KNBs	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MRA	Maternal Role Attainment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

1.0: CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This study examined the impact of motherhood on career advancement for women employed in the formal sector in Nairobi City County in Kenya and informing policy and practice on the high impact areas to focus on to enhance women's career advancement despite motherhood concerns. Motherhood roles are within the intersection of gender, profession, family, and social identities. These roles are context specific to culture, time, and space (Gaviria et al., 2019) and the primary consideration to present-day gendered expectations for women (Ridgeway and Correll 2004).

In the past half-century, the entry of women into paid labour worldwide is viewed as one of the most significant social changes (Connor & Wright, 2013). In developed countries, the participation of women in the formal economy is a considerable route to empowerment and increased gender equality. However, the cultural tensions between valuing motherhood against success in paid-engagements are viewed as "competing devotions" (Blair-Loy 2003). The motherhood penalty is dictated by the timing of returning to work, the requisite skills and effort expected by the role, and other work-related factors (Anderson, Binder, & Krause, 2002; Anderson et al., 2003).

According to Vision 2030 (GoK, 2007), Kenya aims to grow at 10 percent per year to achieve middle-income status by 2030. However, a 5.8 percent GDP growth rate in 2018 is way below the targeted average growth rate of 10 percent (World Bank, 2018). This poor performance can be explained by, among other reasons, a large proportion of women being excluded from productive activities (Jescah et al., 2016).

The need to appreciate and minimize the impact of the motherhood penalty becomes more critical towards the attainment of the Kenya Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Women in formal employment express better economic and social advancement (Chant, & Pedwell, 2008), and are certainly not among the poorest of the poor and hence contributing to the growth of their nations. We situated this empirical work in Nairobi City County, Kenya, and examined the impact of motherhood on career advancement for women in formal employment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Kenyan women continue to increasingly join the labour force since the 1980s due to enhanced enrollment in vocational schools, though heavily tilted to "traditional female occupations" (Collette, 2002). Data available shows gender parity as being far from realization as women have not made a substantial progression into management positions. For example, according to KIM (2017), women representation in listed companies' board rooms in Kenya is 21 percent in 2017 - up from 12 percent in 2012. Professional commitment is essential to career advancement (Legault and Chasserio, 2003) and equated as the prioritization of professional at the expense of the personal (Aarons and Sawitsky, 2006). Besides, McIntosh et al. (2012) determine commitment as the essential arbiter in career progression.

Kenya is pursuing the two-thirds gender rule to enhance women's inclusion in the working environment. However, the issue of motherhood, the various stages of motherhood, and the impact on formally employed women have not been exhaustively addressed. Heilman and Haynes, (2005) argue that stereotypes of women associated with motherhood and perceptions concerning employment, lead to negative performance expectations and women's performance being devalued. This study sought to investigate, analyze, and enhance access to information on the impact of motherhood on the career progression of formally employed women.

1.3 Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

- i. How career advancement of female employees impacted by different stages of motherhood?
- ii. How does the stereotypical assumptions and professional “commitment” assumptions on motherhood impact career progression?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

General Objective

Assess the impact of motherhood on career progression for women who are in formal employment in Nairobi City County.

Specific Objectives

- i. To evaluate how the different stages of motherhood impact on women career advancement in the formal sector
- ii. To examine the extent to which stereotypical assumptions and professional assumptions on mothers “commitment” to work impact women career advancement

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

Based on the study objectives, the assumptions were; firstly, that stereotypical assumptions of how women handle professional employment and motherhood have a negative impact on women’s career advancement; secondly, that the combination of professional “commitment” and motherhood have an adverse impact on women’s career advancement.

1.6 Justification and significance of the Study

The study enhanced the understanding of the barriers to women's career growth – more so the impact of motherhood on career advancement. There has been a scarcity of research addressing gender issues in management within developing countries – with less information expounding on the stereotypical and professional "commitment" assumptions individually and in-combination to motherhood and how this affects women's career advancement. More so, describing all the stages of motherhood and how this affects work quality and career advancement enables a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Given the differences in socio-cultural and religious infrastructure between the western world and Africa – Nairobi City County to be precise, Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) make it important to investigate the extent to which western perspectives are applicable in developing countries like Kenya. This study has provided a precise explanation and understanding of the motherhood penalty facing women employees and their career advancement in Kenya.

The focus has been on the motherhood penalty, its correlation to stereotypical and professional commitment of female employees, and how these interact individually and collectively with motherhood and the career growth and progression for employed women in various sectors. The outcomes of this study will inform: firstly, the design, development, and implementation of approaches that can foster and sustain equal opportunity and friendly working environments that allow women to achieve their career goals and objectives better. Secondly, identify knowledge gaps that future researchers could focus on to enhance the body of knowledge on how society – Kenya in particular, could position herself to better support professional/career growth and motherhood without one affecting the other. Thirdly, generate evidence that can support and strengthen evidence-based advocacy aimed at formulation and review of policies, guidelines, and frameworks that will advance the rights of women in employment regardless of job sectors/industries.

⁷ 1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

1.7.1 The scope of the study

This study focused on the impact of motherhood (from conception(s), child(ren)-birth, and reintegration into the workplace) and how that period has impacted the career growth and development of women. Data was gathered from 35 participants residing in Nairobi City County and deployed through In-depth Interview Guides.

1.7.2 Limitations of the study⁶

The results of this study on the impact of motherhood on women's career advancement had limitations. Women, as the primary audience, were the sole target and not men; the possible biases were mitigated by targeting women currently experiencing motherhood, those past-child bearing ages, and human resource practitioners to give an all-round opinion on the research topic. This study was conducted on a small sample size of women formally employed in Nairobi City County and picking very few individuals per industry/sector. But being exploratory research and targeting diverse women and their experience of motherhood, the study has shed more light on the subject matter.²⁷

The study focused on employees of formally registered organizations, excluding the more significant proportion of women in informal employment, sole proprietorship, and other small unregistered business entities, who are affected by the motherhood penalty. This study, to the best of my knowledge, should be able to generate interests that could allow other researchers to dig deeper into this issue and the potential in informal employment.

1.8 Definitions of key terms

Career Advancement: This refers to the upward progression of one's primary paid occupation or vocation. An individual can advance by graduation from an entry level to a senior management position within the same sector or by switching from one sector to another paid occupation.

Career This is a series of related jobs or different jobs undertaken within an organization or different jobs within various companies.

Maternity: This is the leave period reserved for mothers when they give birth to a child or adopt a child. In this context, it covers the leave period for giving birth to a child.

Motherhood: This is the state of being a mother. In this study, it covers the period from conception, birth, and the 27 months post-childbirth.

Productivity: Productivity is a ratio of the output (i.e. quality and quantity of work done) of an employee against input (time, remuneration, allowances and all resources) invested by the employer on the employee.

2.0: CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examined the literature on the influence of motherhood on career advancement for formally employed women. The first section contains various theories that are relevant to this study. The second section examined the determinants of career advancement. The third section discusses motherhood and employment interface as presented in empirical literature by various scholars, and the summary ultimately explains the gaps identified in the literature.

2.2 Motherhood – Theoretical Framework

⁸ Becoming A Mother (BAM) – developed by Ramona Mercer (2004) proves further elaboration of Reva Rubin’s original theory of Maternal Role Attainment (MRA). It suggested, “An ideal image of self as a mother is constructed from her extensive psychosocial work during pregnancy and postpartum, and through this image, the maternal identity is incorporated into her self-system” (Mercer, 2004, p 226). Mercer (2004), stated that mothers’ maternal identity was “characterized by the mother’s sense of harmony, confidence, satisfaction in the maternal role, and attachment to her infant” (p. 227). Mercer suggests that several factors affected MRA such as “maternal age, socio-economic status, perception of the birth experience, early mother-infant separation, social stress, social support, personality traits, self-concept, child-rearing attitudes, perception of the infant, role strain, and health status” (Mercer, 2004, p 227). In her work, Mercer (2004), described four distinct phases that affect a mother’s identity with changes that occur immediately after conception and ending four months postpartum. The timeline is not static and is dependent socio-environmental factors playing a significant role in how these stages form and evolve.

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ii. Symbolic Interactionism - Theorist Herbert Mead suggests that individuals experience situations in various ways, which continually affect their identity. In the context of this study, this theory suggests that mothers develop, engage, and find value from their lived experiences (Craig & Mueller 2007). How these experiences affect one's identity is best captured by Mead's three steps; where the action of a mother will generate a response from others and combined the action-response continuum leads to an outcome (Littlejohn & Foss 2011). The primary actor, read mother, concludes how positive or negative the outcome was; this conclusion underpins the mother's identity. For example, if a policewoman arrests criminals' and is consistently stern, her colleagues could easily brand her as being less motherly, the outcome of which could affect her self-confidence in how potentially pathetic she would be as a mother - from the questions she asks, she will react positively and therefore gain confidence and vice versa. This theory expounds on how 8
each action and reaction develop differently in everyone (in this case, formally employed women).

2.3 Formal Employment and Career Advancement

The informal and formal sector in Kenya represents 82.7 percent and 17.3 percent of employment, respectively (KNBS 2014). The World Bank (2016) greatly expounded the immense benefits that will accrue to Kenya, if Kenya formalizes informal businesses and the implication on GDP growth and attainment of Vision 2030. Chant and Pedwell (2008) ably stated that for women in the informal economy (or their daughters), making the transition to formal employment – becomes a critical pathway or route to economic and social advancement. In 2015, the number of formally employed and salaried persons stood at 2.6 million, accounting for 17 percent of total employment. Out of this number, 0.9 million women, i.e., 33 percent, were formally employed (KNBS, 2016).

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Career advancement is an organized, planned effort that includes structured activities or processes that result in a mutually beneficial career growth between an employee and the employing entity (Gilley & Eggland, 1989). Career advancement is a shared responsibility 56 between the employer and employee; with the employee tasked to undertake planning of their career growth and the employer with managing the career growth of its employees (Gutteridge & Otte, 1983, p. 7).

In spite of the entry of women into paid labour – now more than half a century, women, in this case wives, are significantly directly responsible for a bigger proportion of household and childcare chores while the roles of their husbands has remained static – as breadwinner (Aldous, Mulligan, & Bjarnason, 1998; Hochschild, 1989). The interaction of motherhood roles and employment play-out daily in the lives of employed women, hence this study focused on the interaction of career management and planning, how these interact with the perceptions and assumptions on motherhood, and the manifestation in the career advancement of women mothers.

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According to Davidson & Cooper (1992), a significant proportion of women find it tasking to advance their careers and achieve executive-level position, as the balancing of career and domestic, read motherhood, roles overwhelms them. Carpenter (2018) states that women's progress on climbing up the corporate ladder has not only slowed, but it has stalled. She continues to state that, in as much as there have been women empowerment, most promotions in the corporate ladder have been held up by issues such as national and international relocation. For women, family relocation becomes a hurdle leading them to turn down any promotional advances in as much as that may be of great significance in career growth and development.

Brizendine (2008) suggests that conventionally, promotion opportunities to executive or senior management positions becomes available to individuals in their forties. Moreover, for working mothers, their conflicting responsibilities at home and work make it slightly difficult to progress than it is for men in their forties. When children outgrow day-in-day-out support from their mothers, then are women significantly able to advance their careers ambitions(Connor and Wright, 2013).

¹ A working mother's ability to generate quality work is doubted, with concerns on their ability to be efficient at work. ¹ Motherhood leads to a definite bias in employment for women seeking a job in traditionally male settings (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008). In general, for either gender - parenthood changes how either ¹ men and women are viewed in terms of expected work focus, especially producing expectations of undependability. The authors also add that there are possible heightened associations with gender stereotypes that occur when women are mothers; this may lead to heightened performance expectations that predispose greater negativity to be directed at mothers than at non-mothers when career advancement decisions are made (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008). According to ⁶⁶ (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008; Williams, 2001), mothers, whether employed or not, suffer the *Maternal Wall* problem - i.e., ¹ women suffer definite disadvantages when at the workplace.

According to Barnett (2004), employment harms women, with ¹ an underlying assumption that the roles of mothers and wives being somewhat less stressful as these are natural roles. While the role of being employees - being ⁶² unnatural - is considered highly demanding and potentially stressful. As such, the doubts of mothers' (and women in general) abilities to handle these competing roles are doubted. Hence when a young mother decides to work, the work environment

and work continue to be hostile. Balancing these dual responsibilities could potentially reduce productivity at work.

Traditional gender roles - classifying women as caregivers and men as providers - with women earning less create strong incentives for women to reduce their employment and take on a vast majority of childcare responsibilities (Ray, 2008). The most obvious outcome of this is women bearing a disproportionate burden of childcare responsibilities, ultimately costing their career advancement in the short and long-term.

2.4 Motherhood and Formal Employment

Motherhood is the role that women rate as being most salient in their lives (Rogers & White, 1998). Francis-Connolly (2000) defines motherhood as a social construct learned through social interactions rather than implied through biological links. It is constructed within layers of micro and macro variables such as intra-family dynamics, economic and social resources, ethnicity, and culture. These variables provide diversity to motherhood roles, with women continually refining their definition of motherhood through daily interactions with others (e.g., friends, family, and co-workers).

Pregnancy is an expensive affair to formally employed women, especially during the first trimester and the after-childbirth. According to the US Department of Health (2017), the first trimester is one of the harsh periods of pregnancies, especially for new mothers. With so many changes happening in the human body, women may feel weak – a considerable challenge in employment environments. Attitudes, norms, and stereotypes on the roles of mothers and workers and perceived conflicts between these roles are likely to be evident for pregnant workers (Halpert et al., 1993). Banks and Russell (2011), states that pregnancy and childbirth necessitate a break in

employment for mothers, and how this interruption is managed will have implications on mothers working and family lives.

Pregnancy news is received differently by employers and easily affects women on how to cope or adjust if the employer is negative. According to Salihu et al. (2012), with pregnancy, for employer extra costs of hiring a cover or higher risks of poor performance, the backlog of tasks and possible absenteeism due to pre and post-natal clinics are considered. There is substantial literature on the impact of childbearing on women's employment careers. Transitions back into work, these studies restrict their focus on the post-partum period and rarely during or pre-pregnancy. This literature review brings together evidence from these three periods, and how these periods are experienced in the workplace and to understand the immediate and longer-term outcomes of pregnancy and childbirth on women's employment (Banks and Russell, 2011).

Mbugua (2019), in a column on BBC, states that the motherhood journey since conception is a battle with most employers in Kenya. With some limiting careers such as professions in the media industry, i.e., news anchors, most employers are not as understanding as need be. In such jobs, pregnancy makes you a liability to the employer since, as much as you can be relied upon to deliver on your responsibilities, there is a 20% chance of not showing up at work due to pregnancy complications that may occur at any given moment. Mbugua (2019), goes ahead to state that motherhood has forced many mothers to either resign, settle for fewer wages in an attempt to juggle motherhood and employment. A pregnant- working woman in the corporate field has her share of challenges, especially when it comes to being valued in comparison to the male counterparts. As time goes by, we need systems that allow women (whether pregnant, mothers) to be able to bring their best in the workplace and at home.

For employed women, weeks leading to childbirth are harsh, full of fatigue, and challenging to balance the physical demands of pregnancy and balancing work. In Kenya, no law caters for this period. As such, most women take annual leave to cover such days. Immediately post birth, assuming any complications occur, no special leave days are afforded to the mother – other than maternal leave. A female ⁶⁵ employee is entitled to full pay while on three months maternity leave, as per Section 29 of the Employment Act (2007), and any unused annual and sick leave. ² Provisions for maternity leave are likely to influence the timing of women's return to work (Stier et al., 2001; ² Gornick et al., 1997; Gornick, 2008; Esping Andersen 1999).

⁴ Many employers provide maternity benefits to employees who give birth to ⁹ children (Woodward et al., 2000). Also, as people get older, the benefits of a compensation package assume importance. It is the time when employees establish a family. Those benefits that will serve the family are valued, like maternity benefits, children's education, annual vacation pay, etc. (Andrews et al., 2009).

For women balancing motherhood and employment in Kenya – specifically Nairobi City County – that has high traffic congestion; forcing formally employed women to leave for work at dawn and return well past 6:00 pm (Muasya, 2014), exacerbate work-family challenges that women face, especially those who have infants and pre-schoolers. Most women in the formal sector have fixed job schedules working between 8:00 am 5:00 pm. Therefore, many families hire domestic workers (Muasya, 2014), but this doesn't lessen the burden on women with young children. Nor how they balance their professional obligations and motherhood responsibilities, for example, if the child is sickly.

Many companies still view motherhood as a mutually exclusive activity from employment. These societal perceptions and cultural expectations surrounding motherhood limit women's contributions at work, families, companies, and economies that are adversely affected. Most mothers face quite some challenges after getting back to work, such as anxiety, fatigue, and low concentration levels, mostly due to the separation of the newborn and coping with set work targets. According to Washbrook et al. (2008), Very few mothers are working one month after birth, but at least 26 percent do so after 2-3 months. Overall most mothers get back to work after six months when most babies can start feeding on other foods and are not dependent on breastfeeding. The return to work after maternity leave varies across specific characteristics such as family structures and education. Under family structures, single mothers who cannot rely on their spouses' earnings tend to be financially pressured to work than their married counterparts.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2017), for employers to continuously have access to women employees – then retention of women on maternity leave becomes a critical consideration to increase employees gender ratio and diversity. Working mothers undergo a steep learning curve in and acquire critical skills such as prioritization and empathy that are important in a business environment. Thus, as much as getting back to working environments may be challenging for mothers. Employers should provide a better return to work terms such as working for a few hours than the usual 8 hours shifts, providing childcare services for newborns below one year (International labor organization, 2014). However, some organizations such as Safaricom have worked towards ensuring that mothers feel at ease when they return to work after maternity, by providing childcare and nursing sections at work (Ngunjiri, 2018). This allows mothers to improve work performance and concentration, which goes towards the growth and development of the organization.

In conclusion, as per the review of literature - the lived experiences of a woman before pregnancy, during pregnancy and post pregnancy; and how during this time – how society and the work environment interact with her – informs the identity of the woman. However minimal, literature brings out a direct link between this transition into motherhood, motherhood roles, and the interaction with formal employment – more so career advancement. ⁵Missing from this literature, however, is an exploration of motherhood stages over formal work and life course of a woman. This study addressed ⁵this limitation by examining two stages of motherhood – focusing on conception to 27 months post-partum period - and the interaction with formal career advancement for women.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

²² This section highlights the methodology used to carry out this research, outlining the ⁹ research design, the population, sampling design, the data collection and analysis methods deployed, and the ethical considerations.

⁴⁵ 3.1 Research Design

This was a qualitative study guided by the use of conventional content analysis approach (Bryman & Bell, 2003) is used with a study design - same as this study - aiming to describe a phenomenon. This research did not use pre-conceived ²⁶ categories (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002); ²⁶ instead, new insights from the data formed the categories and names (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002), an approach also described as inductive category development (Mayring, 2000). The ⁶¹ studied phenomenon was the impact of motherhood on career advancement and exploration of the ¹⁹ stereotypical and professional commitment assumptions of motherhood and their implication on the career advancement of women. This qualitative study aimed at improving the understanding of phenomena through human experiences (Myers, 2000).

3.2 Research Site

Nairobi City County is growing at a rate of over 4% annually, mainly because of high birth rates and economic immigrants. It is estimated that the city will have a population of 5,766,989 people in 2025 – currently, it has an estimated population of 4,556,381 persons - accounting for about 10 percent of the Kenyan population (UN, 2019). Nairobi City County contributes 21.7 percent to the Gross Domestic Product of Kenya (KNBS, 2019). The County is a cosmopolitan, financial, and communication center in Africa after Johannesburg and Cairo and boasts as the largest economy in East Africa and the region's primary trade artery (MKU, 2019).

The economic vibrancy of Nairobi City County results from its cosmopolitan nature and being the business hub of not only Kenya but the region. This, as well as the fact that Nairobi City County accounts for 33 percent of the female labour force formally employed in Kenya (Winnie, 2003) – makes this City County an exceptional Study Area. The findings should have a more significant impact beyond the city. Besides informing how the City-County plans her endeavors to enhance women’s career advancement in spite of motherhood, it also offers insights that other Counties and Countries in the East African region could learn from to enhance career advancement of women in formal employment.

3.3 Target Population

Purposeful random sampling of the respondents lived experiences with the study phenomenon was the main consideration for inclusion into the study; women who have or were experiencing any stages of motherhood (including HR practitioners) was the main exclusion criteria. The focus was made to ensure that the participants are formally employed and contributing to their household expenses and aiming to enhance the quality of life their family (Adofo, 2013; Forster & Offei-Ansah, 2012; Leaman, 2015). For maximum diversity, no limitation was set on the age of the child, rather the range of the age was an entry criterion.

Towards this end, the study focused on formally employed women working and residing in Nairobi City County. As per (UN 2019 and KNBS, 2016), 33 percent of the labour force in formal employment in Nairobi are women.

3.4 Sampling Frame and Sampling Technique

The sampling process allowed for valid inferences and generalizations to be drawn from the observations and analysis of variables of the relatively small sample. This study, as an exploratory research, analyzed the findings captured from in-depth interviews conducted on 35 respondents.

The number was purposively selected based on the different criteria to meet the requirements of the study. One had to be formally employed, be a mother, and at the same time, be interested and willing to participate.

3.4 ²⁴ Data Collection Methods

In-depth interview forms were used to collect data from 35 mothers, with this sample split as follows: 15 women currently experiencing motherhood and within childbearing age, 5 women post-childbearing age and 5 Human Resources practitioners. The foci of questions covered was:

- ³ What is your experience of being a mother and an employee at the same time?
- How do you play your roles as a mother and employee at the same time?
- How do you feel you are judged ³ as a mother and employee at the same time?
- Do you feel motherhood has created a barrier in your career growth?

Sample questions for HR personnel:

- As an employer, does being a mother change how you manage career advancement for women in your organization?
- Is there any difference on the considerations and/opportunities denied to women not experiencing motherhood and those experiencing motherhood?
- From your experience, would you say women would generally advance further in their career with delayed motherhood debut?

3.5 Data Analysis

The interview sheets ³ were transcribed verbatim, read several times, including a review of the voice recorder and the data ²⁵ analyzed using the method suggested by Graneheim and Landman (2004) at the end of each day of data collection. From this, the ³ meaning units as phrases and sentences that captured the experience of motherhood were determined, as well as the stereotypical

and professional commitment assumptions. Depending on how similar or different the meaning units were, coding and sorting into categories and subcategories was done – and their interaction with career advancement. Lastly, similar categories were abstracted and labeled with themes and sub-themes, capturing a latent meaning in the text. The rigor of this research was achieved by severally going through the transcripts, ensuring nothing was missed. Through this process, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability was enhanced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in partial fulfillment of the author's Master's program, and as such, review and approval from the supervisor was sought. With defense and the approval of the proposal, the researcher went ahead and obtained informed consent from the participants. Respect for anonymity and confidentiality was maintained, and participants were at liberty to withdraw from the study at will and were not subjected to any form of coercion.

Permission to participate and publish the findings was sought from each respondent after they were carefully and exhaustively informed of the purpose and methods of the study, and the voluntary nature of participating in the study. No identifying information has been included in the write-up, and all were requested to sign a written consent after a satisfactory explanation of the protocol was made by the researcher. The tape recording of the conversations was also based on additional consenting, and no one was included without prior arrangements.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

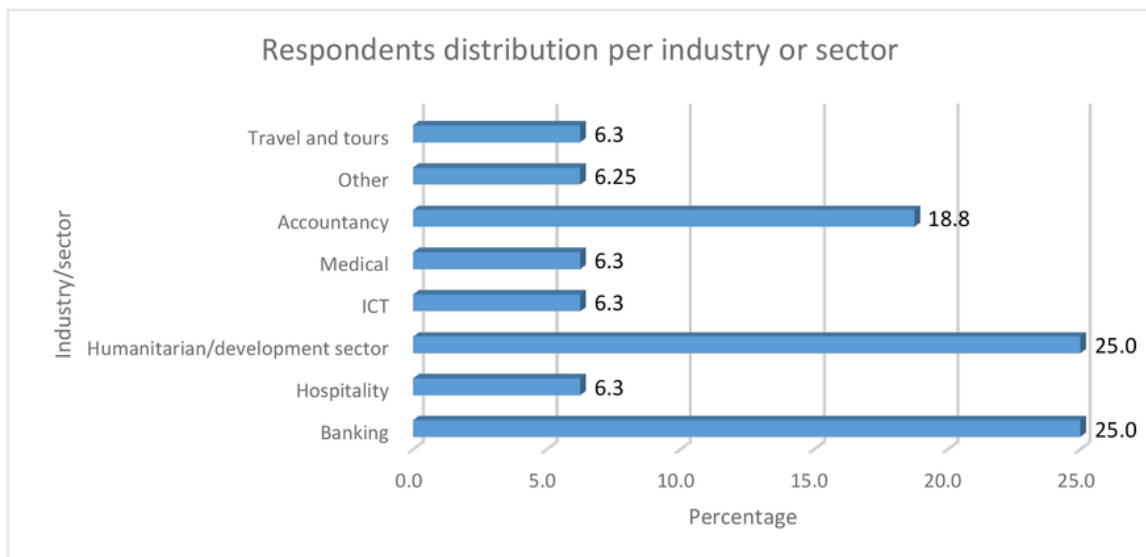
This section expounds on the findings from the data collected and analyzed. It entails the distribution of the general characteristics and professional fields of the respondents, findings on the impact of motherhood on career advancement, organizations' policies, and work environment for working mothers.

4.1 General Characteristics of the respondents

1. Industry/Sector of respondents

Of the 35 respondents interviewed, banking and humanitarian/development sector each contributed 25 percent whilst 18.75% of the respondents were from the accounting sector.

Table 4.1 | Respondents distribution per industry or sector



2. Duration in the industry

Most respondents (14, 43.8 percent) had been in the industry for between 6 and 10 years, while 31.3 and 18.8% of the respondents had been in the industry for between 11-15 and 0-5 years

respectively. Those who had been in the industry for over 15 years were the least, accounting for 6.3% of the respondents.

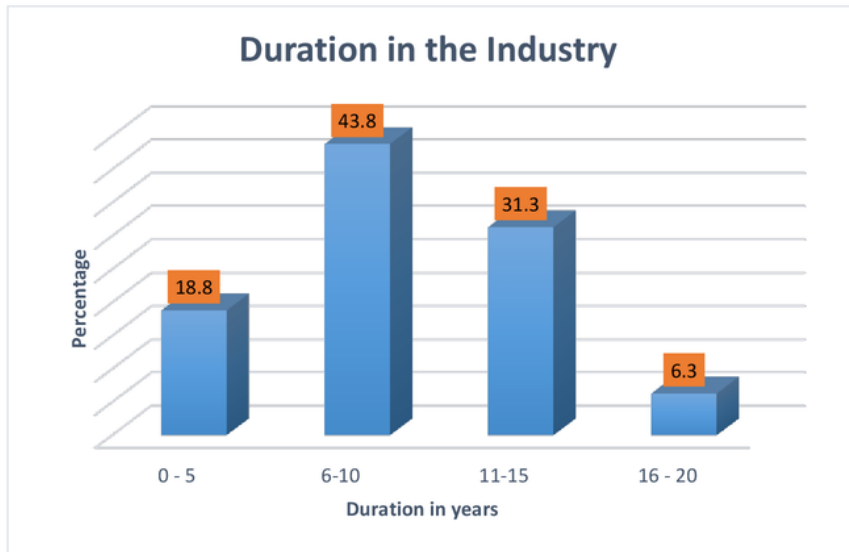


Table 4.1 2 Duration in the industry

3. Duration in the current organization

There was a noticeable trend in the period the respondents had been in employment with their current employer. 50 percent of the respondents had been with their current employer for less than five years, 43.8 percent for 6-10 years, and 6.3percent for 11-15 years.

³⁴ Valid	Frequency	percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
0-5	16	50.0	50.0	50.0
11-15	2	6.3	6.3	56.3
6-10	14	43.8	43.8	100.0
Total	32	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 3 Years in the organization

4.2 Analysis of emerging themes

To address the objectives of the study from the data collected, a thematic analysis approach was employed. The emerging themes were identified and coded with supporting excerpts from the interviews. Below are the emerging themes, their detailed descriptions, and the excerpts from the interviews supporting the themes:

Theme 1: Most working mothers generally have a work/family balance as far as their job and family are concerned. **Description:** Despite explicitly admitting that motherhood as an employee is a daunting task, most working mothers have devised ways to find a balance between the two, albeit rather difficultly. To attain this balance, some mothers have strict schedules on when to work and not carry work at home; others delegate some mothers' roles to the house helps and spouses. They have set apart specific days of the week exclusively (weekends) for family time. However, the pressure from external perceptions harms this balance. This is where there are expectations from say, society, that dictate that the working mother needs to be a full-time mother forfeiting her career. Also, occasionally, there is a conflict of interest when a mother is required to work extra hours or on weekends, or travel for more than a day. These usually with the mother prioritizing her family at the expense of her career advancement.

Excerpts:

"Making time for each and sticking to the timelines set for each. Like working hours are 8-5...

Weekends and holidays are for family. I also don't carry my work laptop home." –Participant

NRB002

"I try and make a schedule for all the activities I have both at home and work. I utilize the time I have at work fully to avoid backlogs. I try and get help with the housework i.e., get a house help to ease the workload a bit." – NRB008

“At times, there are those doubtful moments and critics. However, I choose to believe 'Yes' there is a balance most of the time, for my sanity.” – NRB021

“I try and accomplish as much as I can during the normal working hours and work extra hours but on rare occasions, this ensures that I do not lag behind in terms of performance among my peers, then I ensure that I get home early enough to be able to rest and have time and energy to engage and play with my child.” – NRB016

(On family expecting to spend more time with her): “It can affect my career in that by creating more time for them it would mean not going an extra mile in my work and just doing the required bare minimum which will in turn mean I am unable to stand out and grab career growth or promotions at work.” – NRB032

“It has not created a barrier in my career growth as such, however, whenever I have to make a decision in regard to my career, the first thing I weigh out is the impact of that decision on my family.” – NRB016

Theme 2: Motherhood affects the quality and quantity of the work output of an employee.

Description: Motherhood period (pre-partum and post-partum) affects the quality of output at work. This is exhibited in absenteeism to attend clinics or sick babies, inability to travel and/or work long hours, et cetera. These limitations are due to the biological and physical changes as well as medical reasons that limit the extent of strenuous activities as well as the hours a working mother can effectively endure. In some cases, employees' roles are changed (to less strenuous ones)

In addition, sometimes working mothers find themselves in a conundrum where they have to choose between their young ones or their work and more often than not, their career is what suffers.

Excerpts:

"I was mostly on bed rest and could not deliver on my expectations" - PARTICIPANT NRB002

"During the last trimester the body naturally slows so is the quantity of your work as for quality there is no compromise about it so I had to give the best." – NRB016

"As an IT support, my work involved a lot of movement, dealing with clients in various locations, but as my pregnancy progressed I had to move to a different department altogether where I was based in the office fulltime." – NRB007

"Sometimes, you may need to take time off work to attend sick kids, house help challenges.... it is very difficult to work after working hours because you have to go and help with homework and other duties at home. this may directly affect how you deliver on your tasks" - NRB018

"You make hard choices on what you're willing to give. So if my partner is unavailable, I must be there for the children sacrificing my career" – NRB026

Theme 3: Working mothers are perceived and consequently treated differently as employees compared to other non - mother employees. **Description:** Mothers are perceived differently by employers, colleagues and family. Some employers and colleagues perceive working mothers as employees in need of extra support and understanding. This results in working mothers getting more flexible schedules, preferential treatments in the allocation of duties and access to immediate off days if need be to attend to parental duties. This, however, has a flipside. Mothers are not allocated duties that require serious commitment (and with them good career growth opportunities). They are sidelined when it comes to travel, trainings and promotions.

Excerpts:

"Am allowed to report to work by 9 and not report on Saturdays" – **PARTICIPANT NRB001**

"...The riskier jobs are not given to you...." – **NRB004**

"I think my colleagues now think there are assignments I can't do because I am a mother hence I am exempted without being consulted." – **NRB011**

"I was treated sensitively, though I don't take it to heart. People generally expect one to be less productive or require more time off. I was privileged to work in environments that strongly supported pregnant ladies & mothers. The principle being that the privilege is not misused." –

NRB028

"Now, unlike before, my colleagues are more understanding especially in situations where I find myself having to take abrupt offs.

I am also well supported by my colleagues in terms of being assisted with urgent matters in the office in case I have to be absence abruptly." **NRB016**

Theme 4: There are no specific career advancement plans for mothers. **Description:** There are no career advancement plans for mothers, or the mothers are not aware of them. The only plans available cut across all employees and sometimes disadvantage the working mothers who cannot live up to them due to motherhood responsibilities. There are no policies outlining a return to work process and this is decided arbitrarily by the employer.

Excerpts:

"Some (employers/colleagues) are understanding and supportive while others are not and expect you to operate and function like nothing has changed" – **NRB009**

“KPIs and targets remain the same for new and existing mothers as well as for male colleagues.”

– Participant NRB002

*“Apart from the maternity period & postnatal period (until the child is 6 months) where one has a very flexible schedule, the rest of the time work is as usual.”***NRB012**

“The plans are uniform and dependent on performance” **NRB015**

Theme 5: Motherhood does hinder career advancement for mothers. Description

Motherhood in and by itself hinders career advancement. This happens because of the time off taken by mothers while nursing their young ones, the reduced output and their inability to take up opportunities that will jeopardize the wellbeing of their children. Mothers forego opportunities that would otherwise propel their careers to great heights and instead choose to take care of their families. Career advancement opportunities as well as employment are denied to mothers because their roles as mothers won't allow them, especially when the babies are too young or during pregnancy. They're not deemed flexible enough. When it comes to family emergencies, mothers tend to take more time off work than their spouses or non-mothers, consequently losing out in the competitive job market. Motherhood roles and duties hinder working mothers from completing education, travelling for work assignments, enrolling on training programs, et cetera.

Excerpts:

“I have always chosen jobs that allow me to be in Nairobi with my family. I have resigned from a job that required me to be based in Juba. I have also resigned from an assignment that required 50% time for travel. I have also missed an opportunity of growth because I had a 4-month-old baby and the assignment was in Somalia but based in Nairobi.” – **NRB011**

“You are constantly making decisions that favor your children's wellbeing. Sometimes, I let opportunities pass as they will cause me to be away from my children more.” **NRB018**

“I have lost some few opportunities such as professional training that would really impact my career growth” – NRB023

“When I left for maternity, I was due for confirmation and promotion, but I missed out on this as I left for maternity leave abruptly.” – NRB032

“... But if I would compare myself with my male colleagues who we joined together, then, yes most probably it would have advanced differently.” – NRB021

“The growth has not been as fast as expected (compared to my male colleagues) but there has been growth.” –NRB005

“I would have pursued an international assignment in humanitarian work and would have also pursue my masters abroad. Both this are good for career advancement.” – NRB027

*“I would be 3 or four levels ahead. Because I would give in more hours, take on additional tasks and responsibilities, study more and basically give more of myself in the job.” – Participant
NRB002*

Theme 6: There are family, societal and work expectations that are specific to the working mother. **Description:** Working mothers have high and often antagonistic expectations placed on them by family, employer and society. Family expects more of them at home carrying out motherhood responsibilities and any deviation from this (e.g. long working hours) is considered bad parenting. Some employees expect the mother to execute her roles and duties as before motherhood, totally disregarding the new change and motherhood demands on her side. The society dictates the mother to prioritize her family and especially children more than work. Delegating duties to house helps is frowned upon and interpreted as neglect of parental

responsibilities by the mother. It is also expected that the working mother provide for her family and help in settling the bills as well as contribute money in social meetings.

Excerpts in support:

My family expect me to put my child first before work”- Participant NRB003

“Same demand for attention from kids, you should be there for them 100%, feel bad when you miss key activities in their lives, complain of too much travel” (sic) – NRB009

“(My family expects me) to be able to provide to the family and still be the primary caregiver. I am expected to pursue my career growth including higher education yet my limited time doesn't allow. I am expected to excel in all that and still be a happy calm parent.” NRB011

“Some (employers/colleagues) are understanding and supportive while others are not and expect you to operate and function like nothing has changed” – NRB009

“(Society expects you to) choose between your career and family . . . you can't give both equal attentions.” NRB020

“Society feels that the place of a woman is in the kitchen...a home maker to rear children, not a career woman. But the same society expects you to give them money when they need some...” - NRB005

“... I am not expected to leave too much to be done by my house help as society views this as neglect of the child.” – NRB016

“... that you raise your children like a stay at home mum and still work. We are expected to spend a lot of time and show up for our kids every time there are events failure to which one is branded a bad mother. With all the responsibilities we compete with our male colleagues for limited opportunities and judge against a similar criterion in terms of our performance.” -NRB011

4.3 Discussion of findings

This section focuses on the discussion of the findings and exploring the impact of motherhood on career progression for women who are formally employed in Nairobi City County. To best analyze the results, the discussion followed through the key four foci questions and objectives that acted as a guideline in data collection and analyzed the information as shown below:

4.3.1 Assess the impact of motherhood on career advancement of formally employed women residing in Nairobi City County.

As per the research findings, motherhood in and by itself hinders career progression. This statement is supported fully by most of the participant's responses, who, most if not all, agree that motherhood has inversely affected their careers. As one participant states, unlike before, when she had the freedom to work in any location since she began her journey into motherhood, she has had to resign from her employment and only take up job offers that are in the same location as her family. Lake (2019), in her study on the impact of motherhood, supports this by stating that 80% of working others have had to delay their education plans and careers to cater to their children. This defines the true meaning of the motherhood penalty, a working mother having the inability to achieve a certain goal, treated differently, overlooked, or even undermined due to her position as a mother. In general, society assumes women experiencing motherhood can't maintain the same professional output as their peers who don't have children, or their male colleagues.

Cumulatively, working mothers spend 33 hours per week on childcare and household chores, as opposed to 16 hours spent by their spouses on the same chores (Lake, 2014). When one compares the extra 40 hours spent at work and adds this to the household/childcare time of 33 hours, then career advancement for working mothers becomes a herculean task. As such, Lake

(2014) some employers may rightly or wrongly so doubt the ability of such working mothers and this reinforces the perception that mothers are unable to meet the professional demands and hence a plateau. As one participant stated, "when she left for maternity leave, she was due for confirmation and promotion, but she ended up missing on the opportunity as she went on maternity leave."

4.3.2 Examine the extent to which stereotypical assumptions and professional assumptions on mothers “commitment” to work impact women career advancement

Working mothers are perceived differently by society at large, and significant assumptions are made about them balancing motherhood and their careers. Over the years, the community has assumed that working mothers are incomparable to stay at home mums. To the extent that most working mothers are portrayed as selfish since they are assumed to choose their careers over their role as mothers. Women with children face a lose-lose situation, as those that are considered as warm and likeable easily earn the tag of incompetence of non-commitment to the cause. While those that exhibit passion are deemed to be breaking from traditional gender stereotypes.

⁶⁰ Based on the findings of this study, professional women who also wear the hat of motherhood continue to face the stereotyping that exists in society and at the workplace. As one participant states, "her experience before and after joining motherhood was different, other employees' perceptions towards her changed, there are a few responsibilities that have been lifted off her position since they feel her commitment and priority has shifted." Such situations continue to happen in the workplace more often than individuals think. To support this, Feloni (2014), States that stereotyping of working mothers in the workplace continues to elevate by the day. Working mothers are deemed to be less maternal just because they have chosen to pursue their careers; the

society has placed the primary caregiving card to the mother as opposed to a shared responsibility with both the Mother and Father (Feloni, 2014). Working mothers are assumed to be too career-minded and less maternal just because society has placed the stereotypical mindset that mothers should quit their jobs and focus on bringing up children.

Based on a book by Sheryl Sandberg (2013) "Lean In," she explicitly explains how her rise across the departments and managerial levels compelled her to create a better path and environment for other working women who desire to join the top administrative positions. She states, "there are so many stereotypes professional women across the globe face, could be society, working environment, family, etc. (Sandberg, 2013). ²³ A key premise of "Lean In" is that strong, confident women risk coming across as selfish or domineering, even if the same qualities being assertive, direct, and persistent would be readily admired from a man but frowned upon from a woman."

Nonetheless, a critical aspect that was conveyed in the findings is that, in as much as the stereotyping exist in the workplace and the society at large, some individuals are in support of working mothers and work best in providing supportive environments where they can balance motherhood and their careers. As one of the participants' states, "' unlike before, her colleagues at the workplace are more understanding especially in situations where she has to take abrupt off-days due to personal reasons such as attending clinics and parents' days at schools." Overall, the findings convey that stereotyping exists for working mothers, but there is also a balancing element of positive assumptions of working mothers in the 21st century.

4.3.2.1 Family, societal and work expectations of the working mother

Over the years, society has placed antagonistic expectations towards working mothers, deeming them to be less nurturing and too career-minded. Society expects the working mothers to

prioritize motherhood and halt their career progress just to fit into the "good mother" title. The findings convey how much working mothers have been pushed and somewhat fraught with fitting into the societal and family expectations. As one of the respondent's state, "the society has made it a norm that the place of a woman is in the kitchen, being a homemaker and rear children and not being in a successful career. But the same society expects you to cheap in and help out with fundraisers and contributions when the need arises."

Juneau (2019), about a viral post about motherhood and society pressure, asserts that society has put up unrealistic societal expectations about working mothers compared to men. She goes ahead by giving an example of how men are celebrated and applauded when they go to store or even to the clinics with one child, but if a mother did the same, even with three kids under her belt, the society takes this as normalcy. In the findings, one of the participants' states, "(My family expects me) to be able to provide to the family and still be the primary caregiver. I am expected to pursue my career growth, including higher education, yet my limited time doesn't allow. I am expected to excel in all that and still be a happy, calm parent." This response ascertains the extent to which society has pressured women to be the excellent all-round employee come mothers, yet these two roles are quite overwhelming.

As expressed by the findings, 80 percent of the respondents asserted that the society at large had placed them at a losing end as working mothers. In her posts, Ferranto (2018) shares that the societal, family, and work expectations have pushed the new generation of women and working mothers to an overwhelming state, making the transition of motherhood become an expensive affair. As per Ferranto (2018), the family expects a working mother to prioritize her role as a mother above everything else, where else the society expects the same working mother to balance being an employee and mother, and the employer expectations of her to prioritize her job. All these

expectations have pushed working mothers to extremes such as halting their goals and career advancement just to fit in the society, family, and work expectations.

4.3.3 Evaluation on how the different stages of motherhood affect women career advancement in the formal sector

Based on the findings, every stage into motherhood, pre-natal to post-natal, dramatically affects women's careers based on the quality and quantity of the work they can handle. The quality and quantity of the output at the workplace is affected due to various reasons that limit them from working effectively and efficiently to deliver exceptional output at the workplace. One of the key reasons, as depicted in the findings, is medical and biological changes during the pre-partum period. As one of the participants stated, she was put on bed rest during her pregnancy. Thus she was not able to perform and deliver on her work effectively. According to Nierenberg (2015), a woman's body undergoes various transformations during and after childbirth such as weight gain, enlarged belly, morning sickness, etc. While some of these changes are normal, others are risky, which could bring harm to the mother and even cause fetal death. Some of these are high blood pressure, which mostly renders women on bed rest in most cases (Nierenberg, 2015). This outrightly means that the individual is not able to attend to her roles and responsibilities at work. But in the case, she can work from home; still, her output is not comparable to her output while working from the office.

Other reasons include absenteeism to attend pre-natal clinics, as well as day, offs when the children suffer from ailments. As one of the participants expressed, "there are things that you can't control, such as ailments." Such situations create a role-compete condition whereby the role of a woman as a mother is at war with the role of the woman as an employee. Mara (2014), a journalist,

states that the moment any woman wears the title of motherhood, clearly, this will affect her employment in one way or the other. She describes this from a personal point of view, where states that any free time from work becomes quality time for you and the child.

But, a key point to note is that in as much as motherhood in the workplace has been portrayed to harm the work output of a female employees, the contrast of this statement stands for other women. Tenety (2016), a blogger, states that based on her study, women with children tend to be super productive at work. In the first phase of their career, most women without children underperform compared to women with children, as shown in the figure below.

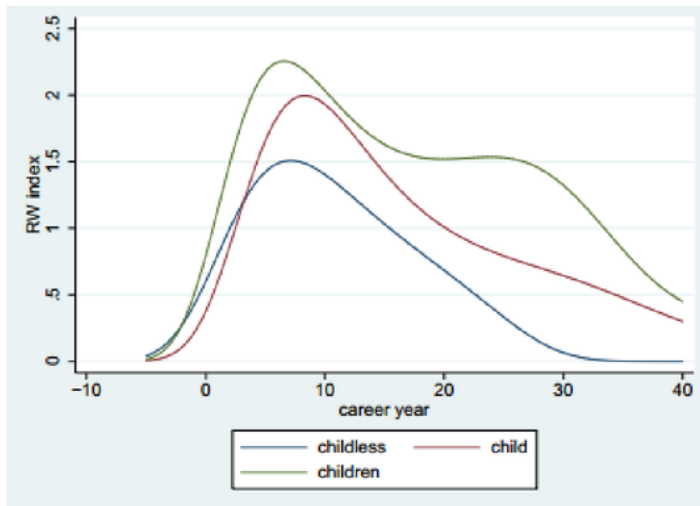


Table 4.3 Women with/without children performance

The study found that in early childhood years, women's work output takes a dip, but those same women more than made up for that brief decline through increased work output in the years before and after a baby's birth. As Tenety (2016) notes, women make up for the stress of new motherhood "by being hyper-productive before they have kids, and after." Turns out that the demands of mom's life-changing a diaper with one hand while feeding a toddler lunch with the other, for example—do give you powerful skills that translate to productivity at work. That said,

the impact of motherhood is felt on both ends, positively and negatively, is dependent on the individual. To some women, as stated by Tenety (2016), women such as single mothers are more productive overall regarding balancing both motherhood employment roles since they are dependent on the job to provide financial stability to their children.

4.3.3.1 *Balancing employment and motherhood*

⁵¹ Combining work and family life can be quite complicated; on both ends, an individual is expected to prioritize one over the other. Based on the respondent's views, at least 70 percent of the participants have and are still struggling to balance motherhood and employment. According to a document published by Pew research center (2013) on research conducted in regard to balancing family and careers, ³³ 51 percent of working mothers, stated that being a working mother makes it hard for them to advance their studies which will impact their careers in terms of growth and promotion.

Working Parents and Career Advancement

% who say being a working mother/father makes it ... to advance in job or career

	Harder	Easier	No diff.
All working parents*	27	7	63
Working mothers	40	2	56
Working fathers	15	12	70
Kids under age 18			
Working mothers	51	2	46
Working fathers	16	10	72

Table 4.3 2 working parents and career advancement

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Younger formally employed mothers are the most likely to say motherhood makes it harder for them to progress in their careers. Among Millennial mothers who have worked, 58 percent say being a working mother makes it harder for them to get ahead at work. To balance work and family, many working mothers have to make accommodations to their work schedules or even to their career ambitions. This statement is supported by one of the responses from the participants that states "I try and accomplish as much as I can during the normal working hours and work extra hours, but on rare occasions, this ensures that I do not lag in terms of performance among my peers, then I ensure that I get home early enough to be able to rest and have time and energy to engage and play with my child."

But even the crash of prioritizing between the role of employee and motherhood, most working mothers have managed to devise ways to manage these two roles as one participant stated, "Making time for each and sticking to the timelines set for each. Like working hours are 8-5... Weekends and holidays are for family. I also don't carry my work laptop home." Based on the findings, even with the difficulties of adapting to motherhood, especially for new mothers, with time, they can balance both roles comfortably. As Parker (2015) states, women are blessed with the ability to multitask, and somehow, they still manage to find a balance between family life and careers. But a key point to note is that, even as they find balance, most remain stagnant in their careers since they do not get enough time to go for further studies and training that would advance their careers.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section concludes and recommends in summary on the impact of motherhood on career advancement for working mothers. Herein the conclusion and suggestions for possible areas for further research also summarize the study.

5.2 summary of findings

Based on the study, working mothers bear a heavy burden when it comes to motherhood and career advancement. To date, even with innovation and modernization, working mothers still feel challenged in advancing their careers and undertaking their obligations of parenthood. As depicted by the results, most mothers have had to make difficult decisions as a way to mitigating the issue of balancing both motherhood and career progression. These include: quitting employment, halting educational and work training, adjust working schedules just to create time for their children. To most employers, motherhood has a significant impact on an employee since her working priorities are affected adversely since the employee will be out attending to clinics, parent's day, and other motherhood duties once in a while. Thus, the issue of reliability crops up since the employer feels he/she has to be accommodating to the employee. Still, at the same time, the company feels the impact of the employee's absence.

The quality and quantity of output for working mothers during pre-partum and post-partum periods are greatly affected by motherhood. In the findings, the pre-partum period significantly affects working mothers due to the physiological changes that affect the body. In most cases, most mothers reported absenteeism due to medical-related reasons. Post-partum absenteeism was mainly due to post-natal clinic days. The quality of the work output by working mothers was at balance based on the fact that, in as much as most women were absent on a few occasions, most

women managed to create a great balance of motherhood and employment during their post-partum period. As depicted by the participant's responses, most working mothers re-adjusted their working schedules to ensure they can handle their roles and responsibilities better. As explained by Tenety (2016), most working mothers tend to be more productive after bearing children. The skills that a woman learns through motherhood, through the concept of changing a diaper on the one hand and feeding on the other, develop multi-tasking skills that enable women to handle a lot within a short period.

Through this study, it's quite clear that society has developed adverse assumptions towards working mothers. To the community, the role of women as being housewives still exists as a cultural norm. To some, a woman's is expected to be at home taking care of the children and doing household chores. To women, even mothers should be allowed to work but put their careers on hold when they become mothers. The society still has some reservations with working mothers pursuing their careers; further, it's an issue of confusion since, in as much as women have proven to balance these two roles, the society still develops stereotypical assumptions about them. Working mothers are easily deemed to be domineering and less maternal when they decide to prioritize their careers. Even with the various women talk debates around the world, the society still stands on the role of women in the society as housewives rather than equal human beings who can both handle careers and parenthood like men.

The study portrays that even as we live in the 21st century, with more modernized policies and a better understanding of respecting individual choices, there are still aspects of adverse stereotyping and assumptions towards working mothers, which acts as a challenge to progressing their careers. Some of the critical difficulties expressed are; poor labor policies that do not consider maternity leaves, lack well-structured facilities such as nursing stations and baby day-care to ease

the integration of mothers back to work, poor company policies that do not reconsider working mothers and lastly, adverse stereotyping from all ends.

5.3 Conclusion

⁴¹ The results of this study portray that motherhood has a significant impact on women's career advancement. Adverse effects are felt by working mothers who choose to wear the hat of motherhood while at the same time wish to work and advance their careers. Most women experience various challenges, as depicted in the findings that halt their hopes of improving their careers. Most of them state that time- management becomes one of the key issues in advancing their careers since every minute spent away from the office is directed towards spending time with the children. Thus the time that can be slotted in for work training and furthering studies to enable an individual to get a promotion or advance their career goes into motherhood.

A key point noted, though, is that even though the society has built all these contusions and stereotyping around motherhood and career balance, most employers are now warming up to implementing policies such as flexible work schedules for mothers to ease balancing both roles. Most working mothers are accustomed to balancing motherhood and employment, and very few are still experiencing struggles in this area. The fact that most working mothers have taken upon themselves to ensure their work output, both quality and quantity, remains constant or even better should be an eye-opener to the society on how strong and reliable women are.

It is evident that most working mothers face the challenge of promotions and advancing their careers, say to managerial levels, due to the issue of reliability and prioritizing, which came up in the study. To some employers, working mothers may not be deemed reliable since they will always prioritize motherhood over their responsibilities. The fact of the matter is, a child will remain a constant priority over any responsibility. Thus, employers should always understand

situations where mothers may not manage specific responsibilities and should not judge or ridicule in such cases. Overall, this study proves that motherhood harms the career progression of working mothers.

5.4 Recommendations

The issue of motherhood and its adverse effect on career advancement on employed women continues to spark debate worldwide. Most women, as depicted by the findings, continue to face challenges in advancing their careers due to society and workplace stereotyping on their role as mothers. According to Parker (2014), family-related career interruptions, in this case, motherhood, affects women's economic prospects by limiting the pool of women that can potentially deliver on executive-level jobs pipeline. A majority of women who choose to experience motherhood, and juggle their careers and motherhood easily live more balanced lives. The opportunity cost of which outweigh any lost financial benefits. What is needed to change the society and workplace stereotyping is a culture shift in the way women are perceived and held in high esteem.

A change in how society thinks, how the workplace environment treats mothers would significantly change or else reduce the adverse impacts experienced by working mothers. The employers should get more involved with their employees and provide a platform where working mothers can give suggestions on new policies that could be implemented to help them adjust and balance their career life with motherhood. More in-depth studies need to be undertaken on this topic to understand the prevalence and economic cost of this impact. Policies that support employers to facilitate better 'back to work' environment need to be formed including setting up nursing stations, flexible work shifts, and daycares that would be of use to mothers as much as is practical.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: GANT CHART

INCEPTION PHASE: WEEK 1 – 2														
ACTIVITY	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Prepare for the training of research Assistants														
Identify and hire research Assistants														
Train research assistants														
Pilot data collection tools														
Discuss logistics and prepare for field work														
IMPLEMENTATION PHASE: WEEK 3 – 4														
Conduct Phase 1: Impact of motherhood on formal career advancement; identify organizations and participants														
Conduct Phase 2: the exercise; the collection of data														
REPORTING PHASE: WEEK 5 – 7														
Debrief research assistants														
Analyze the data and draft a report on the findings														
Draft a brief of findings and actionable programmatic recommendations of the exercise														

APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Mark Abaha, a student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a master's degree in Gender and Development Studies.

The purpose of this study titled: '**Impact of Motherhood on Formal Career Advancement: A Case of Formally Employed Women in Nairobi City County**' is to evaluate the challenges that motherhood poses to working mothers and the impact of the same on their career advancement.

Notes to the participant:

1. The data collected in this study will solely be used for educational purposes and no information you give as part of this study will be used for any other purposes.
2. I understand some of the information being requested herein is highly sensitive, personal confidential in nature and I commit to uphold the same confidentiality with my research team.
3. No respondent will be identified in the findings of this study. The names and other contact information requested will only be used by the research team for recording purposes only.
4. Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary, and as such you can refuse to participate or answer any question you are not comfortable with, without any repercussions whatsoever.
5. There are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, the information you provide could be used to inform formulation of policies that address any challenges that motherhood poses to career advancement.

Your signing below, indicates you have read and understood the information and hence agree to be part of this study.

Participant Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date _____

Research Assistant's Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 3: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW – Formal Employed Mother

**STUDY TITLE: IMPACT OF MOTHERHOOD ON FORMAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT: A
CASE OF FORMALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

IDI Code: _____

Date of interview: ____/____/2019

Time: Start: _____ Finish: _____

General Questions

1. Which industry/sector best describes your organization?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplined Forces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ICT | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Academia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Humanitarian/Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel and Tours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____ | |

2. How many years have you been employed in this sector?

- 0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 Above 20 Years

3. How long (in years) have you been employed in this organization/firm?

- 0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 Above 20 Years

4. What is your job title / position / designation? _____

In-depth Questions

Question 1: Balancing motherhood and Employment

a) Did motherhood change your roles at household levels?

- Yes
 No
 May be

Kindly expound on your response.

b) Did you change your professional duties when you experienced motherhood?

- Yes
 No
 May be

Kindly expound on your response.

c) Did your pregnancy period affect the quality and quantity of your work output?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Kindly expound on your response.

d) Are there any motherly roles/responsibilities that hinder you from performing at your best at work?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Kindly state them down.

e) How do you balance between your roles both as a mother and as an employee?

f) Is there a time when you are forced to choose either of the two and neglect the other?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please cite (an) example(s)

Question 2: Perception of everyone on your capabilities to juggle motherhood and employment

a) Are you perceived or treated differently as an employee by your colleagues before and after you became a mother?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please expound

b) Are you perceived or treated differently as an employee by your family before and after you became a mother?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please expound

c) What expectations does your family have on you as a working mother?

How does this affect your career?

d) Are you perceived or treated differently as an employee by your employer before and after you became a mother?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please expound

e) What are the stereotyping misgivings you think the community/society has on working mothers?

f) Are you perceived or treated differently as an employee by your community before and after you became a mother?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please expound

g) What are some of the expectations that the society at large has on you as a mother vis a vis your career growth?

h) Do you think you have a balance on your roles as a mother and as an employee?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Please explain

Question 3: Career advancement and motherhood

a) Would you say that motherhood in and by itself has created a barrier in your career growth?

- Yes
- No
- May be

Kindly expound on your response.

b) Do you think your career would have advanced differently if you were not a mother?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Kindly expound on your response.

c) Has there been an opportunity denied to you because of motherhood compared to other female (non-mothers) colleagues?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Kindly expound on your response.

d) Are you aware of any career management plans in your organization? Please mention them? (These may include professional courses, targets to attain promotions, KPIs, etc)

e) Are there any different career management plans for working mothers?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

f) Do the plans change for mothers?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Kindly expound on your response?

APPENDIX 4: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW – Human Resource Staff

**STUDY TITLE: IMPACT OF MOTHERHOOD ON FORMAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT:
A CASE OF FORMALLY EMPLOYED WOMEN IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY**

IDI Code: _____ Date of interview: ____/____/2019

Time: Start: _____ Finish: _____

General Questions

1. Which industry/sector best describes your organization?
 Teaching Medical Disciplined Forces
 ICT Legal Academia
 Hospitality Humanitarian/Development Sector) Travel and Tours
 Banking Other (Please specify) _____
2. How many years have you been employed in this sector?
 0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 Above 20 Years
3. How long (in years) have you been employed in this organization/firm?
 0 – 5 6 – 10 11 – 15 16 – 20 Above 20 Years
4. What is your job title / position / designation? _____

In-depth Questions

Question 1: Effect of motherhood on performance

- a) What has been your experience on how mothers balance their roles as mother's vs roles as employees at the same time?
- b) Does pregnancy and post-birth period affect the quality and quantity work women deliver in the organization?
 Yes
 No
 I don't know
Kindly expound on your response?
- c) If motherhood affects performance, from experience, how long does it take for a mother to fully regain their productivity as an employee?
- d) What are some of motherhood roles that affect the professional roles of (mother) employees?

Question 2: Perception of colleagues on motherhood and career advancement

- a) From your experience, how do you think mothers are perceived as employees?
- b) Do you think working mothers are misperceived by family, society and community on their roles as mothers and as employees?

- Yes
 No

Kindly expound on your response?

- c) Do colleagues treat mothers differently based on their motherhood status?

- Yes
 No
 Not sure

Kindly expound on your response?

- d) What are the stereotyping misgivings you think are being perpetuated by people on the capacity of working mothers to deliver on their professional roles?

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Question 3: Motherhood as a barrier to career advancement

- a) Do you think motherhood in and by itself bars career advancement for working mothers?

- Yes
 No

Kindly expound on your response?

- b) As an employer, does being a mother change how you manage career advancement for women in your organization?

- Yes
 No

Kindly expound on your response?

- c) Are there any opportunities that pregnant women and/or mothers denied, or special consideration made to accommodate working women experiencing motherhood?

- Yes
 No

Kindly expound on your response?

d) Is there any difference on the considerations and/opportunities denied to women not experiencing motherhood and those experiencing motherhood?

Yes

No

Kindly expound on your response?

e) From your experience would you say women would generally advance further in their career with delayed motherhood debut?

Yes

No

Kindly expound on your response?

Question 4: Management of career advancement for women

a) As an organization, do you have any career management plans that are focused towards advancing the careers of your employees?

Yes

No

Please list the components of the plan if any? (if answer is no, please list what should ideally be the components of the plan)

b) Are these plans different for working mothers? (if answer to 'a' above is no, do you think the plans should be different)?

Yes

No

Please list the difference of the plan if any?

c) Are there structures in your organization to help new mothers integrate back to work post maternity?

Yes

No

Kindly expound on your response?

d) In addition to the statutory maternity leave, what other assistance, leave or measures are instituted to help the employee transition into motherhood?

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