

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



**BALANCING MOTHERHOOD AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP:
EXPERIENCE OF MOTHERS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE
AGONA WEST MUNICIPALITY**



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AGONA WEST MUNICIPALITY**



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Faculty of Social Sciences Education, submitted to the school of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Social Studies Education)
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **PRISCILLA MINA TETTEH**, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature

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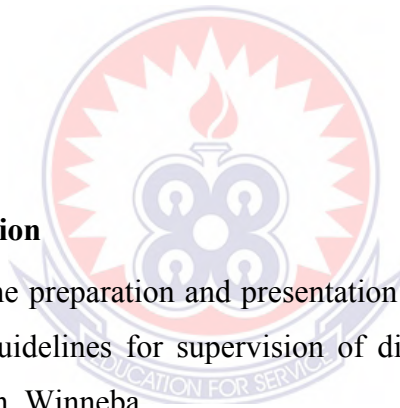
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Seth Frimpong (Supervisor)

Signature

Date.....



DEDICATION

To my dear husband



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My appreciation goes to my supervisor, Dr. Seth Frimpong, for his enormous guidance and support throughout this research work. I am also grateful my children, my colleagues, and friends who in diverse ways have helped make this work a success. To Mr. Benjamin Afriyie Kumi, I am most grateful for the work done.



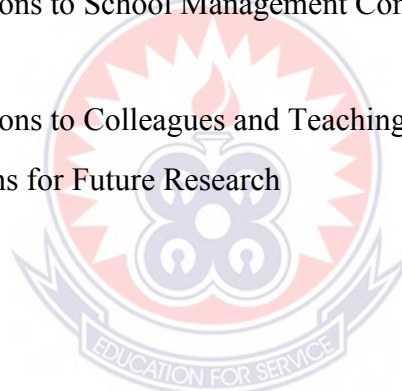
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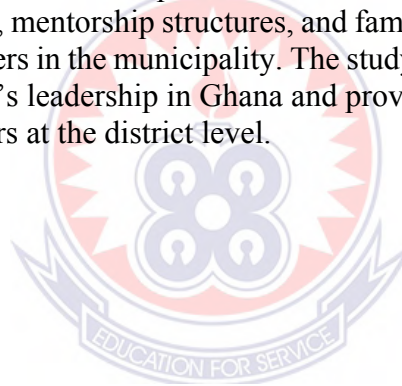
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of mothers in educational leadership within the Agona West Municipality, with a focus on understanding how they navigate the intersection of professional leadership responsibilities and motherhood. Guided by Role Conflict Theory and employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, the study captured the lived experiences of 15 mother-leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that mothers in educational leadership faced persistent role conflict, emotional strain, and feelings of guilt stemming from competing demands of work and family. Participants highlighted challenges such as time pressure, limited institutional support, and societal expectations that reinforce traditional gender roles. Despite these barriers, the women employed coping strategies including time management, delegation, reliance on support networks, and self-care practices to sustain both roles. The study further revealed that institutional support systems were insufficient and primarily informal, with participants calling for improved flexibility, maternity-friendly policies, and organizational reforms tailored to working mothers. The study concludes that balancing leadership and motherhood is shaped not only by personal efforts but also by broader institutional and socio-cultural structures. It recommends context-specific measures such as policy reforms, leadership development programs, mentorship structures, and family-friendly workplace practices to support mother-leaders in the municipality. The study contributes to the limited body of literature on women's leadership in Ghana and provides policy-relevant insights for educational stakeholders at the district level.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Worldwide, the increasing presence of women in educational leadership has not fully mitigated the pressures that come from combining leadership with motherhood. Despite global policy frameworks advocating for gender equity, such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5, female leaders continue to face the dual expectations of high professional performance and primary caregiving (Hong, Zheng, & Ni, 2025). Research in organizational contexts has shown that even when formal gender-friendly policies exist (e.g., maternity leave, flexible working arrangements), their implementation often falls short, pushing women to rely on individual coping strategies rather than systemic support (Soares, Canedo, Pereira, & Mendes, 2023). The expectation that women must perform a "double shift", that is managing both home and high-level job demands, remains pervasive, contributing to stress, guilt, and career trade-offs (Bahrami, Nosratabadi, Palouzian, & Hegedüs, 2023).

From a leadership style perspective, global literature also points to how women adopt participatory, democratic, and transformational leadership approaches, but these are sometimes undervalued in organizational cultures that reward more "masculine" models of leadership (Trinkenreich, Gerosa, & Steinmacher, 2022). Furthermore, international studies have called for structural reforms, not just individual resilience, to better support working mothers in leadership roles (Bahrami et al., 2023). Without such reforms, women's career advancement and well-being continue to be compromised, even when policies formally exist.

In many African countries, traditional gender norms and patriarchal social structures shape how women leaders are perceived and supported. Although some progress has been made in promoting women to leadership roles in education, cultural expectations around motherhood remain strong, often positioning caregiving as incompatible with leadership (Sharma & Susanti, 2024). This tension is especially acute in communities where women are still expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities, creating a significant burden for those in leadership roles. Research also highlights that access to childcare, mentorship, and flexible working arrangements is often limited or informal, requiring women to lean heavily on extended family and religious or community support networks (Sharma & Susanti, 2024).

Institutionally, African educational systems often lack robust gender-responsive leadership policies, making it difficult for mothers to reconcile their roles without sacrificing one for the other. In countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana, female educational leaders have reported limited mentorship, gender-based discrimination, and inadequate support mechanisms that exacerbate the stress associated with juggling leadership and motherhood (Sharma & Susanti, 2024; Obeng, 2022). Despite these challenges, African women in leadership show remarkable resilience by leveraging informal networks, drawing on faith communities, and deploying creative time-management strategies. Yet scholars argue that without more systemic interventions, such as formal mentorship programs and gender-sensitive workplace policies, this resilience may come at hidden personal costs and is not a sustainable substitute for institutional support (Bahrami et al., 2023).

In Ghana, women's representation in educational leadership is increasing, but the gender gap at senior levels remains notable. Although women dominate in teaching roles, relatively few hold top administrative positions such as headteachers or district-

level education officers (Edwards and Oteng, 2019). This disparity is often rooted in socio-cultural norms that associate women primarily with caregiving, which can conflict with the demands of leadership roles. The perception that women should prioritize their duties as mothers can limit their professional advancement or impose additional pressures when they do hold leadership positions (Agyeiwaa & Attom, 2018).

Further complicating the issue are organizational structures within Ghana's educational system that may not be fully supportive of working mothers. While Ghana Education Service (GES) provides maternity leave, school-to-school variation in how policies are applied means that not all female leaders benefit equally (Edwards and Oteng, 2019). Some headteachers, for example, work in schools without childcare facilities or flexible working arrangements, which heightens the tension between leadership responsibilities and domestic demands (Amponsah, 2022). Moreover, gendered perceptions, including the belief that women leaders may be less authoritative or committed, persist in some school communities, affecting women's leadership experiences and acceptance (Agyeiwaa & Attom, 2018).

Workload also poses a significant challenge: female school leaders in Ghana report heavy administrative burdens coupled with limited professional development opportunities (Sowah, 2015). In some cases, they lack mentorship and peer support, which are critical for their leadership development and well-being. Studies have shown that women in Ghana's educational leadership navigate these challenges by relying on informal support networks (spouses, relatives), delegation, and participative leadership styles to manage both school duties and family responsibilities (Brammah, 2021; Danso Mensah & Mensah, 2015).

Importantly, these coping strategies reflect not only personal resilience but also structural gaps: they underscore how institutional mechanisms do not fully accommodate the lived realities of mothers in leadership. For instance, when mentorship and peer-support programs are missing or weak, women often compensate through their social connections, which may not be sustainable long term (Danso Mensah & Mensah, 2015). The need for formal and enforceable gender-responsive policies, such as flexible working arrangements, leadership training tailored for mothers, and accessible childcare, is increasingly apparent across Ghana's education sector (Edwards and Oteng, 2019).

At a policy level, recent national conversations have begun to focus on gender equity in leadership. While there are calls for more women in senior educational management, progress depends on how policies translate into practice at the district and school levels (Brammah, 2021). In the context of the Agona West Municipality, where variations in school resources and socio-cultural attitudes exist, these national trends interact with local realities in complex ways. Examining the lived experiences of mothers in educational leadership within this municipality will illuminate how systemic, cultural, and institutional factors converge in shaping women's leadership journeys and will surface context-specific pathways for reform.

1.2 Problem Statement

In Ghana, like in many other countries, mothers in educational leadership face unique challenges and barriers. These challenges are often shaped by cultural norms, societal expectations, and systemic factors. Balancing the demands of leadership positions with their roles as mothers can be particularly challenging for women in Ghana (Agyeiwaa & Attom, 2018; Boakye-Djan, 2020).

One significant challenge faced by mothers in educational leadership in Ghana is the expectation of traditional gender roles. Society often expects women to prioritize their caregiving responsibilities over their professional aspirations. These biases and discriminatory practices hinder women's advancement in leadership positions (Amoako & Gyasi, 2021). Another challenge is the lack of supportive policies and practices in educational institutions. Ghana, like many other countries, may have limited provisions for flexible working arrangements, affordable childcare options, and maternity leave benefits. This lack of support can make it difficult for mothers to fully engage in their leadership roles while fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities (Boakye-Djan, 2020).

Additionally, cultural beliefs and stereotypes about women's capabilities and leadership abilities create additional barriers for mothers in educational leadership in Ghana. These beliefs lead to doubts about a woman's competence and commitment, limiting her opportunities for professional growth and career advancement (Mensah, 2022). Despite these challenges, there are examples of Ghanaian women who have successfully navigated the complexities of being a mother and an educational leader. These women often rely on their resilience, determination, and support networks to overcome the obstacles they face. Mentorship programs and networking opportunities can play a crucial role in providing guidance and support to Ghanaian mothers in educational leadership (Amoako & Gyasi, 2021).

There however, remains a critical research gap concerning how motherhood specifically influences women's leadership experiences within the Ghanaian education system. Most existing studies focus on women in leadership generally, without exploring the distinct challenges faced by those who are mothers (Mensah, 2022; Amoako & Gyasi, 2021). To gain a comprehensive understanding of the Ghanaian

perspective on the experiences of mothers in educational leadership, it is essential to conduct further research specifically focused on this topic within the Ghanaian context. This research will help identify the unique challenges faced by Ghanaian mothers and inform the development of policies and practices that support their success in educational leadership roles.

To address this gap, this research aims to explore the experiences of Ghanaian mothers in educational leadership positions in the Agona West Municipal, identify the challenges they encounter, and examine the impact of these challenges on their professional growth and work-life balance. Gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences of mothers in educational leadership in Ghana will contribute to the existing literature and inform the development of policies and practices that support the success and well-being of these women.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of Ghanaian mothers in educational leadership positions in the Agona West Municipal.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine the challenges faced by educational leaders who are also mothers in balancing their professional roles and responsibilities with their maternal duties.
2. Assess the strategies adopted by educational leaders to successfully navigate the challenges of balancing motherhood and leadership roles.
3. Analyze the role of organizational policies and support systems available to mothers in facilitating the balancing of motherhood and educational leadership.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What lived experiences do mothers in educational leadership share regarding the challenges they face in balancing professional responsibilities with maternal duties?
2. How do mothers in educational leadership describe the strategies they employ to navigate the demands of both motherhood and leadership?
3. How do mothers in educational leadership perceive the role of organizational support systems in helping them balance their professional and maternal responsibilities?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Understanding the experiences of mothers in educational leadership is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, findings of the study will shed light on the unique challenges faced by these women in balancing their professional and caregiving responsibilities. This knowledge can inform the development of policies and practices that support work-life balance and gender equity in educational leadership positions. Secondly, the study's findings will contribute to the broader understanding of gender dynamics within educational institutions. Findings of the study will provide insights into the barriers that hinder women's career progression and leadership opportunities, helping to identify strategies for promoting gender equality in educational leadership.

The findings add to the body of literature on educational leadership, which has traditionally focused on the experiences of male leaders. By specifically examining the experiences of mothers, the study highlights the diversity within educational leadership and the need for inclusive leadership practices. Furthermore, the findings have practical implications for educational institutions and policymakers. It can inform the

development of supportive policies and practices, such as flexible working arrangements, parental leave policies, and mentorship programs, that will enable mothers in educational leadership roles to thrive. Overall, this study's significance lies in its potential to contribute to the advancement of gender equity, work-life balance, and inclusive leadership practices in educational institutions, particularly in the Ghanaian context.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study focused on examining the experiences of Ghanaian mothers in educational leadership positions in the Agona West Municipal, specifically, the challenges they encounter in balancing their professional roles with their responsibilities as caregivers. The study was conducted within the Agona West Municipal Assembly and included participants from selected educational institutions in the Municipality. It did not explore the experiences of mothers in other districts or regions. Also, the study only looked at mothers in educational leadership positions and did not include other sectors. Therefore, the findings were not generalizable to other contexts.

The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing interviews to gather data. While qualitative research provides rich and in-depth insights into participants' experiences, it may not capture the breadth and diversity of experiences that a quantitative approach could provide. Also, the data collected in this study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability or recall biases. Participants may provide responses that they perceive as more socially acceptable or may have difficulty accurately recalling past experiences.

The study specifically examined the challenges faced by mothers in educational leadership, their impact on professional growth and work-life balance, and the strategies

employed by these women to navigate these challenges. The study did not focus on the experiences of fathers or non-parents in educational leadership positions. It was conducted within a limited time frame. This time frame may restrict the ability to collect data from a larger sample or to explore the long-term impact of challenges faced by mothers in educational leadership. These delimitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study and when applying them to other contexts or populations.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six Chapters to achieve the research objectives.

Chapter one introduces the subject under study highlighting the background and significance of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, and the scope and limitations of the study. Chapter two reviews related literature under these suggested themes; overview of educational leadership and gender, a conceptual and theoretical framework for the study, the experiences of mothers in educational leadership, barriers and challenges faced by mothers in educational leadership, and policies and practices to support mothers in educational leadership.

In chapter three, the methodology employed by this study is presented. This includes the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. The results of the data collected are prepared and presented in chapter four. The chapter will present descriptive statistics of participant demographics, an analysis of the experiences of mothers in educational leadership, the identification of challenges and barriers faced by mothers in educational leadership, and an examination of the impact of challenges on professional growth and work-life balance.

The study in chapter five discusses and interprets the results, a discussion of findings in relation to existing literature, and the implications for educational institutions and

policymakers. In chapter six, the study concludes with a summary of key findings, the contributions to the field, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses a review of the relevant published literature that relate to the experiences of mothers in educational leadership. This encompasses both the theoretical framework and the empirical review. This literature review explores the experiences of mothers in educational leadership roles, examining the complexities that arise from the intersections of gender, care, and power within the educational landscape. The review was guided by the research questions of this study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the role conflict theory. The experience of mothers in educational leadership encompasses a wide range of challenges and role conflicts that need consideration. It is essential to establish a theoretical framework that can guide the understanding of the experience of mothers in educational leadership.

2.2.1 Role Conflict Theory

Role conflict theory is a useful framework for understanding the challenges faced by individuals who hold multiple roles, such as being an educational leader and a mother. Role conflict theory provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of mother-leaders in educational settings. This theory posits that individuals can experience conflict when the demands and expectations associated with one role (e.g., motherhood) are incompatible with the demands and expectations of another role (e.g., educational leadership) (Kahn et al., 1964). This theory suggests that individuals have different roles with associated expectations, norms, and responsibilities. The conflicts and challenges arise when the demands of these different

roles become incompatible or when societal expectations create role strain. By applying role theory, the researcher examined how the roles of educational leaders and mothers intersect, the conflicts that arise between these roles, and the strategies employed to navigate these challenges.

The role of motherhood is often characterized by a range of responsibilities and expectations, including caregiving, emotional support, and household management (Northouse, 2019). At the same time, the role of an educational leader involves a diverse set of responsibilities, such as instructional leadership, organizational management, and community engagement (Bush, 2018). When individuals occupy both of these roles simultaneously, they may experience significant role conflicts and challenges. In the context of motherhood and educational leadership, this can manifest in a variety of ways.

Intra-role Conflict

One type of role conflict that mother-leaders may experience is intra-role conflict, which occurs when the demands and expectations within a single role are incompatible (Kahn et al., 1964). For example, a mother-leader may experience intra-role conflict when the demands of being a mother, such as attending to the emotional needs of her children, conflict with the demands of being an educational leader, such as making difficult decisions that may impact the school community (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This happens especially when such decisions are related.

Inter-role Conflict

Another type of role conflict that mother-leaders may experience is inter-role conflict, which occurs when the demands and expectations of one role are incompatible with the demands and expectations of another role (Kahn et al., 1964). For example, a mother-

leader may experience inter-role conflict when the demands of being a mother, such as attending to the needs of her children, conflict with the demands of being an educational leader, such as attending to the needs of the school community (Northouse, 2019).

Role Overload

In addition to role conflicts, mother-leaders may also experience role overload, which occurs when the cumulative demands and expectations of multiple roles exceed an individual's capacity to meet them (Kahn et al., 1964). This can lead to feelings of stress, burnout, and exhaustion, as individuals struggle to juggle the competing demands of their various roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

2.2.2 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework to the Study

Role Conflict Theory was particularly relevant to this study because it provided a conceptual foundation for understanding how mothers in educational leadership navigate the competing demands of work and family within the Agona West Municipality. The theory made it possible to analyse how and why conflicts arise between leadership and motherhood roles, and how these conflicts manifest emotionally, psychologically, and professionally (Kahn et al., 1964). Through this lens, the study examined experiences of role strain, guilt, and stress that emerged from trying to meet institutional expectations at work while simultaneously fulfilling maternal responsibilities at home (Northouse, 2019).

The theory also provided a basis for interpreting coping behaviours and support systems employed by mother-leaders to reduce role strain. By framing the conflict as structurally and socially produced rather than personally caused, the study emphasized that these challenges are tied to organizational cultures and societal norms rather than individual failure (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This perspective helped the research move

beyond description to uncover the ways institutional policies, gender expectations, and cultural values shape the experiences of women leaders in the study context.

Grounding the analysis in Role Conflict Theory, the study was able to interpret participants' accounts using a psychologically and sociologically informed framework. The theory guided data interpretation, informed thematic development, and supported the formulation of context-specific recommendations related to institutional support, leadership policy, and work–family integration. Ultimately, Role Conflict Theory served as a critical analytical lens that positioned the experiences of mother-leaders as both personal and systemic, clarifying how leadership cultures and gendered expectations intersect to produce the unique challenges observed in the study area (Bush, 2018).

2.3 Conceptual Review

2.3.1 Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is a critical factor in the success and effectiveness of educational institutions, as it directly impacts student outcomes, teacher development, and overall school performance. Effective educational leaders are responsible for setting the vision and strategic direction for their schools or districts, as well as managing and motivating their teams to achieve organizational goals (Bush, 2018). Educational leadership is a critical component of creating and sustaining a successful educational institution. It encompasses the skills, knowledge, and values necessary for guiding and motivating teachers and students towards achieving academic excellence. Educational leadership is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the processes and strategies employed by educators to guide and improve both teaching and learning environments. As the landscape of education continues to evolve, the role of educational leaders has become

increasingly critical in shaping student success and school effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The study of educational leadership has its roots in early organizational theories. Max Weber's notion of bureaucracy and rational-legal authority provided a foundation for understanding the hierarchical structures within educational institutions (Weber, 1947). Over time, models of leadership evolved to include more dynamic and human-centered approaches, reflecting changes in educational philosophies and societal expectations. Understanding educational leadership requires exploring its various theoretical underpinnings.

The Trait theories focus on inherent traits and characteristics that make an effective leader. Stogdill (1948) initiated this approach, suggesting that leadership is tied to certain personality traits such as intelligence, assertiveness, and adaptability. Behavioral Theories emphasize the behaviors and actions of leaders rather than their traits. Researchers like Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) identified autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles, each impacting group dynamics and productivity differently.

Transformational Leadership Theory has been widely praised in educational settings. Transformational leadership, advocated by (Bass & Riggio, 2006), involves leaders who inspire and motivate their followers by creating a vision, fostering an environment of intellectual stimulation, and providing individualized support. Transformational leaders are skilled at articulating a clear vision, fostering a sense of purpose and meaning, and empowering their staff to take ownership of their work.

Burns (1978) describes it as a style focused on exchanges between leaders and followers, highlighting performance, rewards, and penalties. They emphasize vision,

inspiration, and supportive environments. These leaders aim to foster a culture of growth and motivation among teachers and students (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Modern educational leadership practices emphasize collaboration and the integration of technology. For instance, digital leadership has emerged as a critical component, leveraging technological tools to enhance learning and administrative efficiency (Sheninger, 2014). Additionally, culturally responsive leadership recognizes the diverse backgrounds of students and aims to create inclusive educational environments (Khalifa et al., 2016).

2.3.2 The Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Leaders

Educational leaders play a crucial role in shaping the culture, policies, and practices of their institutions. According to the research, the primary responsibilities of educational leaders can be broadly categorized into three main areas: instructional leadership, organizational management, and community engagement (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

2.3.2.1 Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership focuses on the core activities of teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is widely recognized as the core function of educational leaders (Robinson et al., 2008). According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), it involves setting high academic standards, supporting teachers in their professional development, and ensuring the effective implementation of curriculum and instructional strategies, monitoring lesson plans, and allocating resources efficiently. Educational leaders are responsible for monitoring student learning, analyzing data, and making data-driven decisions to improve teaching and learning. They also play a key role in creating a positive and collaborative learning environment that fosters student engagement and academic achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Research has shown that instructional

leadership is essential for improving student achievement and enhancing teacher effectiveness (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005).

Effective educational leaders must have a deep understanding of teaching and learning, as well as the ability to support and develop their teaching staff. This includes knowledge of best practices in curriculum development, assessment, and professional development, as well as the ability to provide meaningful feedback and guidance to teachers. Effective instructional leaders focus on setting clear goals, providing feedback and support to teachers, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in their schools (Hallinger, 2005).

2.3.2.2 Organizational Management

In addition to their instructional leadership responsibilities, educational leaders are also responsible for the overall management and administration of their institutions. This includes tasks such as budgeting, resource allocation, personnel management, and the development and implementation of policies and procedures (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Harris (2008) argues that distributed leadership can enhance teacher agency and improve school performance by leveraging the collective expertise of the staff. Leadership is not confined to a single individual, but rather distributed across various roles and responsibilities within the organization (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

Impactful educational leaders must also possess strong organizational management skills, including the ability to manage budgets, allocate resources, and develop and implement policies and procedures. This also includes the ability to delegate tasks, empower their staff, and create a culture of continuous improvement. Effective educational leaders must be skilled in strategic planning, decision-making, and

problem-solving to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of their schools or districts (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

2.3.2.3 Community Engagement

Educational leaders are also responsible for engaging with the broader community, including parents, community organizations, and other stakeholders. It emphasizes the leader's commitment to serving the needs of others and promoting the well-being of the school community. This involves building partnerships, communicating effectively, and advocating for the needs and interests of the school or district (Epstein, 2018).

Educational leaders must possess strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate effectively, build relationships, and foster a collaborative and supportive work environment (Fullan, 2014). This includes skills such as active listening, emotional intelligence, and the ability to resolve conflicts and mediate disputes. Effective community engagement helps to build trust, foster collaboration, and ensure that the educational institution is responsive to the needs of the local community.

2.3.3 Challenges and Emerging Trends in Educational Leadership

The field of educational leadership is facing a number of significant challenges and emerging trends that are shaping the way that educational leaders must approach their roles and responsibilities.

Increased Accountability

One of the biggest challenges facing educational leaders is the increased emphasis on accountability and the need to demonstrate student achievement and school performance. This has led to a greater emphasis on data-driven decision-making, standardized testing, and the use of performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of schools and school leaders (Hallinger, 2018).

Diversity and Equity

Another key challenge facing educational leaders is the need to address the growing diversity and inequity within the education system (Theoharis, 2007). This includes ensuring that all students, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, have access to high-quality educational opportunities and the support they need to succeed. There is an increasing emphasis on the importance of collaborative leadership in educational settings (Spillane, 2006). This involves fostering a culture of shared responsibility and collective decision-making, and empowering teachers and other staff members to take on leadership roles within the organization. The pursuit of inclusivity requires leaders to confront biases and implement strategies that ensure all students have access to quality education (Theoharis, 2007). Moreover, navigating the complexities of educational reforms and administrative demands can pose significant obstacles to effective leadership.

Technology Integration

The integration of technology in the classroom is another key trend that is shaping the role of educational leaders (Flanagan & Jacobsen, 2003). Educational leaders must be skilled at leveraging technology to enhance teaching and learning, as well as managing the logistical and infrastructure challenges that come with technology integration. Modern educational leadership practices emphasize collaboration and the integration of technology. School leaders are increasingly expected to analyze and interpret data, set targets for improvement, and track the impact of initiatives on student outcomes (Supovitz & Christman, 2003). Data-driven decision-making can help schools identify effective practices, allocate resources efficiently, and promote a culture of continuous improvement. For instance, digital leadership has emerged as a critical component, leveraging technological tools to enhance learning and administrative efficiency

(Sheninger, 2014). Additionally, culturally responsive leadership recognizes the diverse backgrounds of students and aims to create inclusive educational environments (Khalifa et al., 2016).

2.4 Empirical Review

This empirical review presents findings from Ghanaian studies relevant to the experiences of women in educational leadership, with a view to identifying the key issues and challenges faced by mothers in such roles. The review is structured in alignment with the major themes of the current study: the interface of motherhood and leadership, and the institutional and cultural contexts in which this occurs.

2.4.1 Challenges Faced by Women Educational Leaders in Balancing

Motherhood and Professional Roles

2.4.1.1 Gender Bias and Stereotypes

Gendered Perceptions and Challenges Facing Females in Educational Leadership Positions (Agyeiwaa & Attom, 2018) investigated female leaders in the Sunyani West District of Ghana. The study adopted a qualitative case-study design, purposively sampling female leaders, and used semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed that although women are encouraged into leadership roles, they continue to face gendered perceptions that limit their effectiveness and advancement. The authors inferred that cultural expectations to subordinate female authority and the perception that leadership is more suited to men contribute significantly to the challenges encountered by women in educational leadership positions (Agyeiwaa & Attom, 2018).

Similarly, Challenges of Women in Educational Leadership Position in Tano North Municipality of Ahafo Region, Ghana (Boakye-Djan, 2020) explored the experiences of 15 female educational leaders and five of their subordinates via semi-structured

interviews and focus group discussions in the Tano North Municipality. The data were analysed thematically. The findings indicated that female leaders frequently experienced disrespect or lack of buy-in from staff and stakeholders, attributed to prevailing cultural and religious attitudes about women's leadership capabilities. The inference drawn is that gender bias and stereotyping remain structural obstacles for women in leadership in Ghana's education sector (Boakye-Djan, 2020).

Both studies highlight the persistence of stereotypes and biases that may have particular relevance for mothers in leadership, for whom additional expectations (e.g., caregiving responsibilities) may deepen the leadership/motherhood tension.

2.4.1.2 Work-Life Balance

While not specific to educational leadership roles, Motherhood and Higher Education in Ghana: Experiences of Student-Nursing Mothers (Amos, Amoako, Antwi, & Amoah, 2021) examined 30 student-nursing mothers at a Ghanaian tertiary institution, using qualitative interviews to explore their dual roles. Thematic analysis revealed that student-mothers struggled to juggle childcare, domestic obligations and academic duties, experiencing stress, guilt and compromised performance. The authors inferred that insufficient institutional support for caregiving responsibilities exacerbates role conflict (Amos et al., 2021). Though the study is not specific to educational leaders, it underscores the broader Ghanaian context of motherhood and professional/academic roles and implies similar or greater pressures for mothers in leadership positions.

Together these studies suggest that mothers in educational leadership in Ghana are likely to face significant work–life imbalance, stemming from dual role demands, societal caregiving expectations and institutional systems that are not designed for mother-leaders.

2.4.1.3 Lack of Support and Mentorship

In the study by Agyeiwaa & Attom (2018), participants identified weak mentoring structures and limited professional development opportunities as additional constraints. By analysing qualitative interview data, the authors found that women leaders felt less supported than their male counterparts in terms of leadership networks and institutional sponsorship. They inferred that the absence of robust support systems exacerbates the challenges of those combining leadership roles with motherhood.

Boakye-Djan (2020) similarly reported institutional and systemic weaknesses such as heavy workloads, lack of flexibility and minimal recognition of the extra demands on women leaders, particularly those who have caregiving responsibilities. The inference is that without targeted mentoring and support, mother-leaders may struggle to sustain leadership roles.

2.4.2 Strategies Adopted by Educational Leaders to Overcome Challenges

Laura Boche (2022) conducted a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore how mother-leaders in higher education navigated the dual roles of parenting and executive leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study sampled nine self-identified mother executive administrators from a U.S. Midwestern state, utilising focus groups and individual interviews. Data were analysed via Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings revealed three recurrent themes: Burnout and Exhaustion, “Never Enough”: Responsibility Generated Feelings of Guilt, and Receiving Support: Importance of Gender, Family Role, and Agency. Boche infers that mother-leaders experience intensified role conflict, guilt, and boundary tensions, and that institutional and informal support systems are critical in alleviating those tensions (Boche, 2022).

Drawing on the theoretical lens of Role Conflict Theory, the following sub-sections review strategies that mother-leaders adopt to manage the intersection of leadership and motherhood responsibilities.

2.4.2.1 Boundary Management

In her study, Boche (2022) reports that participants described establishing deliberate boundaries between work and home roles, for example, scheduling specific times for email and limiting work activity during designated family time, as a key strategy to reduce spill-over from the leadership role into the maternal role. The inference is that boundary management supports mother-leaders' well-being by enabling clearer role differentiation and reducing role ambiguity (Boche, 2022).

2.4.2.2 Flexible Work Arrangements

Although Boche (2022) did not focus primarily on institutional flexible work schedules in the sense of teleworking policies, several participants in her study attempted to negotiate modified work duties (e.g., remote meetings, adjusted availability) to accommodate caregiving demands. From broader literature, flexible arrangements (such as telecommuting, adjusted hours, job-sharing) are identified as key enablers of integrating caregiving and leadership (see e.g., Torres et al., 2024). Mother-leaders who can access flexible arrangements report less role conflict and higher leadership effectiveness. The inference is that flexible work structures are a critical institutional strategy to support mother-leaders, yet access to such arrangements remains unequal.

2.4.2.3 Supportive Networks

In Boche (2022), participants emphasised the importance of social and professional support systems: family members sharing caregiving duties; peers who understand the dual-role context; and supervisors who themselves were mothers. These networks

provided emotional backing, role modelling, and practical support. The inference is that supportive networks act as buffers against burnout and role strain, enhancing mother-leaders' resilience and sense of agency (Boche, 2022).

2.4.2.4 Professional Development and Mentorship

The study Moorosi (2020) investigated African women school leaders' identity construction; although not exclusively about motherhood, it included elements of negotiating leadership and caregiving identities. Moorosi purposively sampled three women school principals in South Africa and used narrative interviews with narrative analysis. Findings indicated that key strategies included targeted leadership capacity building through professional development and mentorship, thus enabling women to align leadership identity to their caring roles. The inference is that mother-leaders benefit significantly from formalised mentorship, leadership training and professional development that explicitly recognise the motherhood-leadership interface (Moorosi, 2020).

2.4.2.5 Ghana-Specific Evidence

While Ghanaian studies explicitly focusing on *mother-leaders* (i.e., mothers who are educational leaders) remain scarce, research on student-mothers provides contextual insight. Amos et al. (2021) explored the experiences of student-nursing mothers in Ghana's higher education system: 18 participants selected via purposive and snowball sampling, with data collected via interviews and analysed thematically. Strategies reported by participants included reliance on family/friends, hiring childcare, scheduling and time-management efforts. The inference is that for mother-leaders in Ghana, similar informal support strategies are likely central in the absence of strong institutional supports (Amos et al., 2021).

The empirical evidence indicates that mother-leaders adopt a set of strategies, boundary management, negotiation or use of flexible work arrangements, leveraging supportive networks, seeking mentorship and professional development, to navigate the dual demands of leadership and motherhood. The inference is that the success of these strategies is often contingent on institutional willingness to provide supportive policies and environments. Institutions must therefore foster family-friendly leadership cultures, flexible arrangements, formal mentoring acknowledging care responsibilities, and networks for mother-leaders. This underscores the significance of the current study in Ghana investigating how such strategies are enacted in the Ghanaian educational leadership context, particularly among mothers in educational leadership roles in the Agona West Municipal area.

2.4.3 Support Systems Available to Women in Educational Leadership

Karikari, Obiri, Mensah, Nyame & Botsyoe (2024) conducted a qualitative study titled *“The Role of Mentorship and Support Systems in Enhancing Women’s Academic Advancement in Higher Education”*. The purpose was to investigate how mentorship and institutional support systems facilitate women’s progression in higher education leadership positions. They interviewed 22 female academics across various career stages and institutions in Ghana via semi-structured interviews, then analysed the data using thematic analysis. Findings showed that structured mentorship programs, peer-mentoring networks and institutional gender-focused policies significantly enhanced women’s advancement trajectories; however, limitations included under-representation of female mentors and limited institutional resources (Karikari et al., 2024). The authors infer that while support systems exist, to maximise impact they must be inclusive, well-resourced and tailored to women’s leadership contexts.

Korkor (2023) undertook a phenomenological inquiry titled “*Understanding the experiences of women leaders in Ghanaian Senior High Schools*”. The aim was to explore how female principals and aspiring principals in Ghana make sense of their leadership experiences, including available supports. Six female SHS leaders from one region in Ghana participated; data were collected via semi-structured interviews, supplemented by diaries, observations and policy documents, and analysed thematically. The study found that participants relied heavily on informal support systems, such as peer networks, personal mentoring relationships and family support, to navigate leadership. Formal institutional supports were found lacking or inconsistent (Korkor, 2023). The inference is that in the Ghanaian secondary-school context, women leaders often depend on personal agency and informal networks rather than strong institutional support mechanisms.

Kusi & Antwi (2025) investigated “*Challenges and Support Systems for Headteachers in the Implementation of Professional Learning Communities Concept in Effutu Municipality, Ghana*”. Their purpose was to explore headteachers’ challenges and the support systems available when implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). They selected 15 headteachers in the Effutu Municipality via maximal variation sampling, conducted semi-structured interviews and analysed the data thematically. The findings revealed that while headteachers acknowledged the importance of PLCs, they cited limited time, inadequate material support and weak institutional backing as key obstacles, and they identified the need for both financial/material support and mentor/peer support systems (Kusi & Antwi, 2025). The authors infer that support systems for educational leaders are crucial but currently insufficient in many Ghanaian basic-school contexts.

2.4.3.1 Mentorship Programmes

Karikari et al. (2024) found that mentorship programmes, both formal (structured matching with senior leaders) and informal (peer/ally mentoring), offer guidance, psychosocial support and knowledge transfer for women in leadership. Participants emphasized that having a mentor who had “walked the path” was invaluable in navigating leadership transitions. However, they also reported that the scarcity of female mentors and limited institutional recognition of mentorship constrained its reach. The inference: mentorship is a potent support system for women leaders, but to be effective it must be embedded in institutional culture and adequately resourced (Karikari et al., 2024).

Korkor (2023) underscored that female SHS leaders in Ghana often formed informal mentoring relationships (with senior female leaders, former colleagues, or family members) because formal mentorship structures were weak or absent. The inference: in contexts where formal institutional mentorship is lacking, these ad-hoc networks fill a gap, but they may be inconsistent and reliant on individual initiative.

2.4.3.2 Professional Development Opportunities

Kusi & Antwi (2025) identified that although there exist professional learning frameworks (such as PLCs), headteachers pointed to inadequate material support, time constraints and weak follow-up as limiting factors. The inference: professional development in isolation is not enough, support systems (time, resources, peer capacity) are required for meaningful uptake.

Karikari et al. (2024) additionally noted that women leaders benefitted from professional development workshops and leadership training programmes that focused on gender, inclusive leadership and networks of women leaders. They infer that

professional development is a key support system but must align with women's leadership contexts and caregiving realities to maximise impact.

2.4.3.3 Advocacy and Support Organizations

While fewer Ghana-specific empirical studies focused exclusively on advocacy organisations for women educational leaders, Karikari et al. (2024) mention institutional gender-equity policies and networks as part of support systems. They report that women participants benefitted from institutional initiatives that signalled commitment to gender equity and provided networking opportunities. The inference: advocacy/support organisations and policy frameworks form a necessary but underdeveloped support domain for women educational leaders in Ghana.

2.4.3.4 Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Although none of the three cited studies focused exclusively on work-life balance initiatives for women educational leaders, the data from Korkor (2023) indicated that female SHS leaders often relied on informal networks (family, peer support) as part of their coping with work-life demands. The inference: institutional supports for work-life balance (e.g., flexible scheduling, childcare, leave policies) remain under-researched in the Ghanaian context but are likely a critical dimension of support for women in leadership.

Empirical evidence from Ghana suggests that support systems available to women in educational leadership include mentorship programmes, professional development opportunities and institutional/organisational policies and networks. However, these support systems are often informal, inconsistently implemented and under-resourced. The inference is that for women (particularly mothers) in educational leadership, effective support systems must be intentional, accessible and aligned with their dual

professional and caregiving responsibilities. This reinforces the need for your study to examine how such support systems operate (or fail to operate) for mothers in educational leadership roles within the Agona West Municipal area.

2.4.4 Organizational Policies in Support of Educational Leaders Who Are Also Mothers

Maraziotis, F. (2024) conducted a study titled “*Flexibility for equality: Examining the impact of flexible working time arrangements (FWTA) on women’s working hours*”. The purpose was to explore how flexible working time arrangements influence convergence of women’s working hours with those of men, thus reflecting policy-level supports for women in leadership. Participants included a representative sample of professionals in the UK (both male and female) across several industries; data were collected via longitudinal panel data and firm-level policy records, and analysed using multilevel regression techniques. The findings show that organisations with well-defined flexible working time policies were associated with smaller gender differences in working hours and improved retention of women. The author infers that organisational flexible-work policies are effective mechanisms for supporting women in leadership roles, including those who carry caregiving responsibilities, and that education institutions should adapt such policies to help mother-leaders balance work and family demands (Maraziotis, 2024).

D’Silva and Samo (2024) conducted a qualitative study titled “*Exploring the challenges in work-life balance of women educational leaders and its influence on their performance*”. The purpose was to investigate how women in educational leadership positions experience work–life balance challenges and what organisational supports they report. Participants were female school and college principals/section-heads in

Pakistan; data were collected via semi-structured interviews (seven question guide) and analysed using thematic analysis. Major findings included: organisational policies like job sharing, flexible hours and leave were rarely formalised; despite that, those institutions where such policies existed saw higher job-satisfaction and lower burnout among women leaders. The inference: Without clear, formal organisational policies supporting flexibility, mother-leaders in education remain at risk of role conflict and reduced performance (D'Silva & Samo, 2024).

Meza-Mejia, Villarreal-García, and Ortega-Barba (2023) performed a systematic review “*Women and Leadership in Higher Education: A Systematic Review*”. The purpose was to synthesise the evidence on women’s participation in leadership in higher education and highlight effective organisational policies. The review covered 107 empirical studies globally (2010–2022), using PRISMA guidelines and narrative documentary analysis. Findings included that organisational policies such as formal parental leave, childcare support, and gender-sensitive leadership development programs were positively correlated with increased women’s leadership representation. The inference is that for mother-leaders in educational institutions, organisational policy matters critically: institutions that adopt family-friendly policies achieve better gender-equity outcomes (Meza-Mejia et al., 2023).

2.4.4.1 Flexible Work Arrangements

Reflecting the evidence from Maraziotis (2024), the provision of organisational policies that allow flexible work (telecommuting, adjusted schedules, job sharing) emerges as a key support for mother-leaders. The study found that such policies reduced gendered working-hour disparities and improved women’s retention in leadership roles (Maraziotis, 2024). The inference is that educational organisations should formalise

flexible work arrangements as part of their policy suites to support mothers in leadership.

2.4.4.2 Parental Leave Policies

Through the systematic review by Meza-Mejia et al. (2023), formal parental leave policies, especially those providing paid time off and job protection, were associated with higher proportions of women ascending to leadership roles in education. The inference is that in educational settings, policies that support mother-leaders during critical life/career junctures (such as childbirth and early years of parenting) are integral to gender-equitable leadership pipelines.

2.4.4.3 On-Site Childcare Services

While specific studies on on-site childcare in educational leadership are less numerous, the thematic review by Meza-Mejia et al. (2023) pointed out that institutional childcare support (on-site or subsidised) formed part of the broader family-friendly policy ecosystem. The inference: For mother-leaders who face dual demands of leadership and caregiving, organisational investment in childcare infrastructure signals institutional commitment to their retention and effectiveness.

2.4.4.4 Mentorship and Professional Development Programs

D'Silva & Samo (2024) found that in institutions where leadership development programs explicitly acknowledged work–life integration (including for women) and paired female leaders with mentors, participants reported stronger sense of agency and lower role-conflict. The inference: Organisational policy should include structured mentorship and professional development programs that are responsive to mothers in leadership, not just leaders generally.

The empirical evidence underscores that organisational policies—flexible work arrangements, parental leave, childcare support, and targeted mentorship/professional development, have significant positive impacts on women in leadership roles, including those who are mothers. The inference is that educational institutions must adopt and implement such policies if they are to support mother-leaders effectively. In the Ghanaian context, where mother-leaders may face additional cultural and structural pressures, the institutionalisation of these policies becomes even more critical. This justifies the present study’s exploration of how such policies operate (or fail to operate) within the Agona West Municipal educational leadership context.

2.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented a review of existing literature on motherhood and educational leadership. The review had both the theoretical aspect and the empirical aspect. The theoretical framework for this study was the role conflict theory. The theory outlined the internal and external conflicts faced by women combining motherhood with educational leadership. It set the challenges of combining the roles and the implications for both the family and the educational institution. The empirical review looked at studies on motherhood and educational leadership. It reviewed existing literature on the nature, challenges, support systems, and organisational policies that frame the issue of motherhood and educational leadership. The challenges of combining the demands of motherhood with the demands of educational leadership can be significant, but many mother-leaders have developed a range of effective strategies to overcome these challenges. Adopting strategies such as boundary management, flexible work arrangements, supportive networks, and professional development and mentorship, mother-leaders have been able to navigate the intersection of their leadership and motherhood roles and achieve success in both domains. It is important to recognize that

the availability and effectiveness of these support systems can vary significantly across different contexts and settings. Factors such as geographic location, institutional resources, and organizational culture can all play a role in shaping the support systems available to women in educational leadership. The organizational policies and practices that support educational leaders who are also mothers have important implications for the broader field of educational leadership and the education sector as a whole. Creating more supportive and inclusive environments for mother-leaders help educational organizations to address the longstanding gender disparities in educational leadership and promote more equitable and effective leadership practices.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The experience of mothers in educational leadership is a compelling and relevant topic that requires a systematic and rigorous research methodology to adequately explore and understand. This chapter outlines the methods used in conducting this study on the experiences of mothers in educational leadership roles, focusing on key aspects such as sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach used for the study was the qualitative approach. It forms the framework for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of individuals' experiences and perspectives, which is particularly important for understanding the nuanced and complex experiences of mothers in leadership roles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since this study seeks to explore and interpret the lived experiences of mothers in educational leadership, qualitative inquiry provides the flexibility and depth required to capture these realities. It allows participants to express their experiences in their own voices, thereby providing rich, detailed, and contextual insights into how they navigate the dual roles of motherhood and educational leadership.

Unlike quantitative approaches that emphasize measurement and generalization, qualitative research seeks depth rather than breadth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Through the qualitative lens, this study explored how mothers in educational leadership construct and negotiate meaning around motherhood, leadership, work-life balance, and institutional expectations. The approach provided room for reflexivity, empathy, and

context-sensitivity, which are vital for understanding such deeply personal and social experiences.

3.3 Research Design

A phenomenological research design was employed to capture the essence of the experiences and understand the unique challenges and opportunities faced by mothers in leadership positions within the education sector. Phenomenology is a design that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experience it (Teherani et al., 2015). The phenomenological design was particularly appropriate because this study sought to capture the essence of balancing motherhood and leadership, a complex and emotionally layered experience. It enabled the researcher to explore not only what these women experience but also how they interpret and give meaning to these experiences in the context of their professional and familial lives. Through this design, the study explored the shared meanings and challenges common to these women's experiences while recognizing individual differences. In this case, the focus was on the experiences of mothers who hold leadership roles in the field of education. The data gathered through this approach provided a detailed understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and support systems that mothers in educational leadership encounter.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in the Agona West Municipality, located in the Central Region of Ghana. The municipality is an administrative and educational hub characterized by a mixture of urban and peri-urban communities. It is home to several public and private educational institutions, including basic, secondary, and tertiary levels.

Agona West was selected because it provides a suitable environment for studying the phenomenon of interest. The municipality has witnessed an increasing number of women in educational leadership roles, including headteachers, assistant headteachers, circuit supervisors, and education officers (GSS, 2021). Despite this progress, these women often operate within socio-cultural contexts that emphasize traditional gender roles and domestic responsibilities. Consequently, Agona West offers a relevant setting for examining how mothers in leadership positions navigate the intersection between their professional and maternal identities.

3.4 Population

The population is the entire set of individuals to which findings of the research are to be extrapolated. The elements of the population or elementary units are the individual members of the population whose characteristics are to be assessed (Alan, 2015). The target population was limited to mothers who currently hold leadership positions in educational institutions in the Agona West Municipality.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

A criterion purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who could provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Criterion purposive sampling allows the researcher to intentionally select individuals based on their experiences and ability to contribute meaningful data (Patton, 2015).

In this study, participants were selected based on their lived experiences as mothers and educational leaders. The selection process was guided by the principle of information richness rather than numerical representation, in keeping with phenomenological research standards.

3.5.2 Sample Size

A total of 15 participants were selected for the study. Phenomenological studies typically involve small, focused samples to allow for deep engagement with participants and detailed analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The chosen number was sufficient to achieve data saturation, that is, the point where no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020).

3.5.3 Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria comprised of mothers who hold or have held educational leadership positions within the Agona West Municipal. This include mothers who are currently in or have previously held leadership positions in the field of education such as principals, superintendents, department heads, or other administrative roles in schools or educational institutions. They had at least one child (biological, adopted, or step-child) and a minimum of 6 months experience in an educational leadership role. Also, they were willing and available to participate voluntarily in the study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was done through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. Semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended exploration of participants' experiences, while also providing some structure to ensure that key topics are covered (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Interview guide was developed based on the research objectives and they included open-ended questions that explored the challenges faced by mothers in educational leadership, the strategies they employ to navigate these challenges, and the impact of their dual roles on their professional and personal lives. The interviews were conducted either in person or virtually, based on participant preference. These interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim for analysis. The interviews focused on exploring

the experiences, challenges, successes, and strategies employed by mothers in educational leadership roles.

The interview guide was in five thematic areas to answer the research questions. Section one had questions on the demographics of the participant. This included appointments to leadership positions, motherhood periods, educational backgrounds, age and experience. Section two discussed the experiences of participants in educational leadership. It detailed out the leadership style and approach, and also successes attained. Section three focused on answering research question one. This means the section highlighted challenges educational leaders who are also mothers face in balancing their professional roles and responsibilities with their maternal duties. In section four, questions focused on providing answers to research question two. It highlighted the various strategies that can be adopted by educational leaders to successfully navigate the challenges of balancing motherhood and leadership roles. The question of the role of organizational policies and support systems in facilitating the balancing of motherhood and educational leadership, was answered in the final section of the interview guide.

3.7 Rigor of the study

There are four aspects of trustworthiness in qualitative research that establish the rigor of this study: confirmability, dependability, transferability, and credibility. This study ensured that all four were considered.

Confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the research findings (Morse, et. al, 2002). In the context of a study on experiences of mothers in educational leadership, confirmability was achieved by ensuring that the researchers' biases and preconceptions did not unduly influence the data collection and analysis process. This

was achieved through maintaining transparency in the research process, documenting decision-making, and engaging in reflexivity.

Dependability relates to the consistency and stability of the research findings over time (Morse, et. al, 2002). In this study on experiences of mothers in educational leadership, dependability was enhanced by employing rigorous data collection and analysis methods. This included clearly documenting the research procedures, ensuring consistency in the data collection process, and engaging in thorough and systematic data analysis.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied or transferred to other contexts or settings (Morse, et. al, 2002). In the context of this study on mothers' experiences, transferability was achieved by providing rich and detailed descriptions of the research setting, participants, and the context of motherhood and educational leadership. This allows readers to assess the relevance and applicability of the findings to their own contexts.

Credibility refers to the believability and trustworthiness of the research findings (Morse, et. al, 2002). In this study on experiences of mothers in educational leadership, credibility was established through various means. This included employing multiple data sources and data collection methods to triangulate the findings, conducting member checks or participant validation to ensure accuracy, and maintaining a detailed audit trail of the research process.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through thematic analysis, where patterns and themes within the collected data will be identified and analyzed. Thematic analysis involves identifying themes or patterns in the data, which will help to identify commonalities and differences

in participants' experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The themes that emerged created a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of mothers in educational leadership. This process involved coding the data, categorizing themes, and interpreting findings based on these themes. The analysis was iterative and systematic, ensuring that all relevant insights were extracted from the data. Interpretation of the findings were done by drawing conclusions from the analysis. The findings are then related to the research questions and the existing literature on the topic to support the findings from the data collected.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in conducting research involving human participants. In this study, informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the purpose and procedures of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The research was also conducted in accordance with relevant ethics guidelines and standards.

The researcher obtained informed consent from the mothers participating in the research. This is of great importance considering the rights, protection from harm, privacy and confidentiality of respondent. The researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and any potential risks or benefits. This ensured that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

To safeguard the confidentiality of the mothers, the study ensured that the identities of the mothers and any personal information shared during the study are kept anonymous and secure. The use of codes or pseudonyms to protect their identities in the research

findings was a priority, and to strive to maximize the benefits of the research while minimizing any potential harm to the participants. Consideration was given to the well-being of the mothers and this ensured that the research was conducted in a respectful and non-intrusive manner.

The study took steps to mitigate any potential risks or negative consequences that would arise from the participation of the mothers. No harm was caused to the mothers involved in the research.

To ensure that this research adheres to all relevant ethical guidelines, institutional policies, and legal regulations governing research involving human participants, especially vulnerable populations such as women, this study and its design went through the needed frameworks for compliance and approval.

3.10 Limitations

This study, while insightful and relevant, was subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged in interpreting its findings. The research was conducted within a single municipality and involved a relatively small sample of mothers in educational leadership. As such, the findings did not represent the full range of experiences of women leaders in other districts or regions. The perspectives shared were shaped by the socio-cultural and institutional context of Agona West and were therefore not fully transferable to other settings.

The study also did not include other stakeholders such as spouses, teachers, school board members, or education officers, whose perspectives might have enriched the findings and offered a broader understanding of the institutional and social dynamics influencing mothers in leadership. Time constraints additionally limited the depth of

engagement with participants, making it impossible to conduct longitudinal follow-ups that could have revealed how their experiences changed over time.

Although institutional support was discussed by participants, the study did not include a detailed analysis of policy documents from schools or the district education office. A systematic review of such documents may have provided clearer insight into the discrepancies between policy and practice. These limitations did not invalidate the findings but provided important context and direction for future research.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the experiences of mothers in educational leadership in Agona West Municipality. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with 15 mothers who hold leadership positions in educational institutions. The findings are presented thematically in accordance with the study's research questions and the phenomenological approach adopted. Direct quotations from respondents are incorporated to illustrate key themes, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Participants

A total of 15 mothers in educational leadership participated in this study. Table 4.1 presents the demographic information of participants. The participants varied in age, marital status, number of children, leadership positions, and years of experience.



Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Demographic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age	30–35	2	13.3
	36–40	4	26.7
	41–45	4	26.7
	46–50	5	33.3
Years in Leadership	1–5 years	3	20.0
	6–10 years	5	33.3
	11–15 years	4	26.7
	16–20 years	3	20.0
Number of Children	1 child	2	13.3
	2 children	5	33.3
	3 children	5	33.3
	4 children	3	20.0
	5 children	1	6.7
School Type	Public	4	26.7
	Private	4	26.7
	Faith-Based	3	20.0
	Rural	2	13.3
	International	2	13.3
Marital Status	Married	11	73.3
	Single	3	20.0
	Divorced	1	6.7

Source: fieldwork, 2025

The majority of the participants were married (73%), while a few were single (20%), or divorced (6.7%). Their leadership experience ranged from 5 to 20 years, and they held significant positions such as headteachers, principals, senior teachers, and school administrators. This diversity in experience and family structure provided a comprehensive understanding of how mothers navigate leadership responsibilities alongside their maternal duties.

4.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted, and the findings were grouped into key themes based on the research questions. Table 4.2 presents the identified themes, sub-themes, and sample quotes.

Table 4.2: Thematic Analysis Table

Research Question	Theme	Sub-themes	Sample Quotes
What lived experiences do mothers in educational leadership share regarding the challenges they face in balancing professional responsibilities with maternal duties?	Challenges	Work-family balance, Guilt and stress, Workplace pressure, Time constraints	<i>"There are days I feel guilty because my work demands take me away from my children." (P6)</i> <i>"The workload is intense, and I find myself constantly juggling between being a mother and a leader." (P8)</i>
How do mothers in educational leadership describe the strategies they employ to navigate the demands of both motherhood and leadership?	Strategies for Balance	Time management, Delegation, Support system, Self-care	<i>"I ensure I prioritize tasks and seek help from my spouse and colleagues." (P10)</i> <i>"Delegating tasks at work and home has helped me find a balance." (P13)</i>
How do mothers in educational leadership perceive the role of organizational support systems in helping them balance their professional and maternal responsibilities?	Institutional Support	Flexible work arrangements, Maternity leave, Leadership training	<i>"We have policies that allow mothers to take short breaks when needed, but more can be done." (P9)</i>

Source: fieldwork, 2025

4.4 Challenges Faced by Educational Leaders Who Are Mothers

Research question one: What lived experiences do mothers in educational leadership share regarding the challenges they face in balancing professional responsibilities with maternal duties?

The research question 1 examined challenges educational leaders who are also mothers face in balancing their professional roles and responsibilities with their maternal duties.

4.4.1 Work-Family Balance

The results indicate that work-family balance difficulties were a predominant challenge among participants. Many respondents described their daily schedules as overwhelming, balancing professional duties with household responsibilities.

"I constantly feel guilty for missing my child's school program because of an urgent meeting at work" (P5).

"There are days when my child is sick, and I have an important meeting. I feel torn because I know I am needed in both places" (P14).

"There are days I feel guilty because my work demands take me away from my children." (P6).

"There is always a sense of guilt when I miss important milestones in my child's life due to leadership responsibilities." (P3)

"The long hours at school sometimes make it difficult to have quality time with my family." (P12) "The workload is intense, and I find myself constantly juggling between being a mother and a leader." (P8).

This is consistent with Eagly and Carli's (2007) study, which found that women in leadership often experience conflict between professional and maternal roles. Similarly, Kalysh et al. (2016) noted that the dual pressure of fulfilling work and home responsibilities continues to be a significant challenge for women in leadership positions. Also, this struggle aligns with recent studies by O'Neil et al. (2018), who argue that work-family conflict arises when competing roles demand attention simultaneously, leading to stress and burnout.

The evidences from participants illustrate the emotional toll that balancing these roles can take, particularly in contexts where institutional support is limited. The societal expectations place a disproportionate burden on women to prioritize family over career.

This reinforces the importance of structured policies that cater to working mothers in leadership positions, ensuring they can fulfil both roles effectively without undue stress.

4.4.2 Guilt and Emotional Stress

A significant number of respondents reported feelings of guilt when they had to prioritize work over their children's needs. The emotional stress of missing important family moments due to leadership responsibilities was a recurring theme. *"I sometimes feel guilty when I have to leave my child at home with a nanny just to attend school events or leadership meetings."* (P3)

Another respondent shared how guilt affects her emotional well-being: *"The guilt can be overwhelming. There are moments when I question if I am doing the right thing by taking on a leadership role when my children also need me."* (P8)

This aligns with research by O'Neil et al. (2008), which discusses the psychological burden of working mothers and how guilt often leads them to overcompensate in one area, sometimes at the expense of their well-being.

Several respondents expressed that their professional obligations often left them drained, making it difficult to engage in family activities. As one mother shared; *"By the time I get home, I am too exhausted to even help my children with homework. It breaks my heart, but there's only so much I can do"* (P12).

Another mother echoed this sentiment; *"I constantly feel like I am failing in both roles because I can never give my best to either work or family"* (P6).

This experience aligns with findings by Williams and Multhaup (2018), who argue that women in leadership frequently experience higher stress levels due to multiple role expectations.

4.4.3 Workplace Pressure and Stereotypes

Some respondents highlighted the societal and workplace expectations that add pressure to their leadership roles. They described encountering biases about women's ability to lead while also being mothers.

"There's an unspoken expectation that because I am a mother, I should not take on too many responsibilities at work. But when I work hard, I am sometimes seen as neglecting my family." (P14)

Another participant discussed; *"In meetings, I sometimes feel the need to prove myself more than my male colleagues, as if being a mother makes me less competent in leadership."* (P11)

This is in line with research by Coleman (2011), which found that women in educational leadership often face higher performance expectations and biases related to traditional gender roles.

Gender stereotypes and societal expectations further compounded these challenges. Some participants reported that societal norms still expect women to prioritize their domestic responsibilities over leadership roles. One respondent remarked, *"Society expects me to be a mother first, regardless of my professional commitments"* (P3).

Another expressed frustration; *"Male leaders are rarely questioned about how they manage their families, but for women, it is always an issue"* (P11).

These findings align with studies by Eagly and Heilman (2016), who assert that gender norms continue to shape leadership experiences, making it more difficult for women to thrive in their careers.

4.4.4 Time Constraints and Workload

Many participants reported that time management was one of their biggest struggles, as their professional and maternal responsibilities were both demanding. *"My work starts before dawn and ends after dusk. I barely have time for my children"* (P7).

Another participant noted; *"I feel like there are not enough hours in the day. There is always something I need to do at work and something I need to do at home."* (P5)

Another respondent discussed how time constraints affect personal well-being: *"I barely have time for myself. By the time I am done with work and home duties, it's already late, and I have to wake up early the next day to do it all over again."* (P9)

This echoes research by Lumby (2015), who notes that women in leadership positions often have less personal time compared to their male counterparts, leading to burnout.

4.5 Strategies for Balancing Leadership and Motherhood

Research Question two: How do mothers in educational leadership describe the strategies they employ to navigate the demands of both motherhood and leadership?

The second research question explored strategies mother-leaders adopt to successfully cope with the challenges of balancing motherhood and leadership roles. The various coping strategies, included time management, delegation, support systems, and self-care. These strategies align with research on work-life balance (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Shakeshaft, 2006).

4.5.1 Time Management and Prioritization

Many respondents emphasized the importance of planning and setting priorities to manage their responsibilities effectively. *"I use a daily planner to schedule my tasks at work and allocate time for my children. Without planning, everything would be*

chaotic." (P13) Another observed: *"I plan my day meticulously to ensure I cater to both work and family responsibilities. Without proper planning, I would be lost"* (P9)

Another participant discussed the importance of work-life boundaries: *"I have learned to separate work from home life. Once I get home, I focus on my family, and I try not to bring work stress home."* (P2)

This aligns with research by Boche (2022), who highlight the importance of boundary-setting in reducing work-family conflicts. Powell and Greenhaus (2010) emphasize that effective planning is crucial for women in leadership to manage work-family conflicts efficiently.

4.5.2 Delegation and Seeking Support

Delegating tasks both at work and at home was another effective strategy used by participants. Several respondents noted that they relied on their spouses, extended family members, or workplace subordinates to share responsibilities. *"I assign responsibilities to my senior staff members so that I don't get overwhelmed."* (P4)

Another noted: *"My husband helps with household duties, and I delegate administrative work to my assistant. That support is the only way I survive"* (P11). This mother also said: *"Without my mother living with us to help take care of my children, I don't know how I would manage"* (P8) and then this respondent also indicated: *"I have learned to ask for help. My husband takes care of the kids when I have meetings, and that has been very helpful."* (P10)

These findings resonate with the concept of "shared parenting" (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019), which emphasizes how spousal and familial support can ease the burden on working mothers. Also, Emslie and Hunt (2009), highlighted that having a strong support system significantly improves work-life balance for women in leadership roles.

4.5.3 Self-Care and Personal Time Management

Several respondents highlighted that engaging in self-care activities helped them cope with the demands of leadership and motherhood. *"I take time for myself, even if it's just 30 minutes a day to read or exercise. It helps me recharge."* (P9). *"I take a day off occasionally to rest and rejuvenate. It helps me reset and come back stronger"* (P2). *"Prayer keeps me grounded. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, I pray, and it gives me peace"* (P13).

Others emphasized the need for emotional well-being: *"If I am stressed and exhausted, I cannot be a good leader or a good mother. Taking care of myself is just as important as taking care of others."* (P15)

This is consistent with research by O'Neil et al. (2008), which stresses that self-care is essential for maintaining productivity and mental health in leadership. Brough et al. (2014), asserts that self-care practices help mitigate the adverse effects of occupational stress.

4.6 Organizational Support Systems for Mothers in Leadership

Research question three: How do mothers in educational leadership perceive the role of organizational support systems in helping them balance their professional and maternal responsibilities?

The third research question identified organizational support systems that are available to mothers in facilitating the balancing of motherhood and educational leadership. The study found that institutional support plays a crucial role in helping mothers manage their dual responsibilities. Participants highlighted flexible work arrangements, maternity leave policies, leadership training opportunities, and the additional childcare

support. The findings of this study emphasizes that women in educational leadership thrive when organizations implement gender-sensitive policies.

4.6.1 Flexible Work Arrangements

Many respondents expressed a desire for greater flexibility in their work schedules to help them manage both leadership and motherhood effectively. *"Having flexible working hours makes a huge difference. Sometimes, I can start my day later or work from home when needed."* (P14),

"Institutions that introduced policies that formally recognize work-life balance as a necessity, not a privilege, was helpful." (P6),

The structured programs helped mothers transition into leadership roles without feeling overwhelmed." (P8),

Another participant highlighted how schedules impact her responsibilities at home: *"There are days when my child is unwell, but I still have to be at school by 7 AM. Some flexibility in arrival and departure times has been helpful."* (P11)

These views align with the work-life balance model proposed by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), which suggests that rigid work structures create additional stress for working mothers. Also, Kossek et al. (2011), argue that flexible work arrangements significantly improve job satisfaction among working mothers.

4.6.2 Maternity Leave and Support for New Mothers

Participants acknowledged the existence of maternity leave policies but expressed concerns about their adequacy and implementation. *"Maternity leave is there, but sometimes the workload is so much that you feel pressured to return earlier than expected."* (P6).

Another respondent noted: *"Maternity leave is beneficial, but it should be complemented with flexible work arrangements. Returning to work after maternity leave is extremely difficult"* (P8)

Another respondent emphasized the need for better post-maternity support: *"Returning to work after maternity leave is tough. There should be transition programs to help mothers adjust."* (P3)

These perspectives align with research by O'Neil et al. (2008), which emphasizes that maternity policies should not only cover leave but also provide structured reintegration programs.

4.6.3 Leadership Training and Mentorship Opportunities

Several participants emphasized the importance of leadership training programs tailored to women, particularly mothers transitioning into leadership roles.

"Leadership training has helped me develop my confidence and skills, but more programs specifically for mothers would be beneficial." (P4),

"Mentorship programs have helped me develop leadership strategies that ease my burden. Learning from others who have been through this journey is invaluable" (P13),

"Young mothers entering leadership roles need guidance. Mentorship programs would help them manage expectations and responsibilities." (P15),

Workshops on leadership for women should be regular, not just one-time events. Continuous learning and development will help more mothers succeed in leadership." (P2).

Another participant stressed the importance of mentorship networks: *"I did not have a mentor when I started, and it was difficult navigating leadership while managing*

motherhood. A structured mentorship program for young female leaders would be valuable." (P5)

This aligns with research by Shakeshaft (2006), which highlights that mentorship is a key factor in increasing female representation in educational leadership. Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013) emphasize that structured mentorship is essential for women's leadership advancement, offering guidance and support to female leaders.

4.6.4 Childcare Support and Family-Friendly Policies

Some respondents suggested that institutions should provide childcare support to ease the burden on working mothers. *"Having an on-site daycare centre would be a game-changer for mothers in leadership. It would allow us to focus at work without worrying about childcare arrangements." (P9),*

"Institutions should consider setting up crèche facilities for staff members who are parents." (P5),

"Allowing flexible working arrangements and providing childcare support would make leadership more accessible to mothers." (P11).

Another respondent mentioned the need for family-friendly policies: *"Schools should have family-inclusive policies, such as allowing leaders to bring children to work during emergencies." (P5)*

These suggestions align with the "family-friendly workplace" model proposed by Burns and Gottschalk (2019), which argues that institutions that accommodate parental responsibilities create healthier and more productive work environments.

4.7 Summary

The chapter presented the results of the study. It started with the demography of the participants of the study and followed with a thematic table showing the themes and sub-themes identified in this study. The results were presented thematically following and answering the research questions in a phenomenal manner.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the research, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations for policy, practice, and future research. The study aimed to explore the experiences of mothers in educational leadership in Agona West Municipality, focusing on their motivations, challenges, coping strategies, institutional support, and recommendations for improving work-life balance.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study examined the dual role of mothers in educational leadership using a qualitative phenomenological approach. The research was guided by the research questions that sought to examine the challenges, coping strategies, institutional support for mothers in leadership. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 mothers in various educational leadership positions. Thematic analysis was employed to categorize findings into key themes.

5.3 Summary of Findings

5.3.1 Challenges Faced by Mothers in Educational Leadership

The study revealed that balancing professional responsibilities with motherhood is a major challenge. Participants reported feelings of guilt, stress, and workplace pressure, which often affect their personal and professional well-being. Although these women demonstrate commitment and resilience, their narratives implicitly highlight systemic and cultural factors that continue to make the balance between motherhood and leadership challenging. The findings suggest that the balancing act is not merely an

issue of individual capability but is deeply rooted in the broader institutional and societal context. This finding supports the argument that women in leadership roles often struggle with societal expectations and workplace demands, leading to emotional strain and burnout.

5.3.2 Strategies for Balancing Motherhood and Leadership

Mothers in leadership employ various strategies to balance their roles effectively. Key coping mechanisms include time management, delegation of tasks, support from family and colleagues, and engagement in self-care activities. These strategies suggest that women in leadership benefit significantly from strong support systems and structured time management practices.

5.3.3 Institutional Support for Mothers in Leadership

The study found that institutional support for mothers in leadership by providing maternity leave and occasional flexibility in schedules. Many participants expressed appreciation for this structured support. This finding suggests that organizations improved workplace policies enhance gender inclusivity and work-life balance for female leaders.

Participants recommended several policy and institutional reforms to better support mothers in leadership, including enhanced flexible work arrangements, more mentorship programs, and structured career support. These recommendations emphasize the importance of gender-responsive policies in leadership development.

5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings, this study concludes that;

Mothers in educational leadership navigate a complex intersection of professional responsibilities and family roles, and the challenges they encounter extend beyond

personal constraints to reflect deeper systemic and cultural dynamics. Although participants demonstrated resilience, commitment, and the use of practical coping strategies, their experiences implicitly reveal that the difficulties associated with balancing leadership and motherhood are embedded in organizational structures and societal expectations rather than individual inadequacies. The emotional strain, guilt, and workplace pressure reported by many leaders underscore the persistent influence of gendered norms that continue to shape how leadership and caregiving are perceived and valued.

From the findings, it can be inferred that the effectiveness of mothers in leadership is significantly influenced by the quality of support systems available to them, both at home and in the workplace. The reliance on time management, delegation, and family support suggests that women are often compelled to create personal solutions to challenges that, in more equitable contexts, would be addressed through institutional mechanisms. This highlights an implicit dependence on informal support rather than formalized workplace policies. The study therefore deduces that the sustainability of women's leadership success is contingent on the strength and consistency of these support systems.

Furthermore, the study concludes that while some institutions provide maternity leave and limited scheduling flexibility, these provisions fall short of offering comprehensive support that genuinely addresses the needs of mothers in leadership. Participants' concerns implicitly reflect gaps in policy implementation, inequitable workload expectations, and a leadership environment that is not fully accommodating to the realities of motherhood. These limitations suggest that institutional support remains reactive rather than proactive, and often symbolic rather than transformative.

In essence, the study concludes that achieving meaningful work-life balance and leadership effectiveness for mothers requires a shift from individual coping strategies toward institutionalized and culturally supported solutions. Only through such transformation can educational institutions create environments where mothers in leadership can thrive without compromising their professional ambitions or family responsibilities.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

5.5.1 Recommendations for School Administrators

Since mothers in leadership struggle to balance workload and childcare demands, school administrators in the study area should introduce structured flexibility, for example, allowing adjusted reporting times, reduced after-school meeting hours, and rotational leadership duties, where feasible. This will directly reduce the work-related stress identified in the findings. Given that effective delegation was identified as a key coping strategy, school heads should formalize delegation procedures so that responsibilities are shared equitably among senior staff. This reduces pressure on mothers and prevents emotional burnout. Because many leaders reported stress and guilt, administrators should institutionalize periodic welfare check-ins to understand workload difficulties and offer targeted support. This ensures early detection of emotional strain.

5.5.2 Recommendations to District Education Directorate

Findings indicated that mothers need more mentorship and guidance. The District Education Directorate should develop a structured mentorship program linking experienced female leaders with newer ones in the study area. This promotes capacity

building and reduces isolation. Since mothers rely heavily on personal time-management strategies, district-level training should include workshops on balancing leadership and family roles, focusing on planning skills, stress management, and effective communication within school teams. The study revealed gaps in institutional support. The Directorate should establish monitoring guidelines to ensure that existing maternity policies, workload provisions, and leadership support structures are being applied consistently across schools in the study area.

5.5.3 Recommendations to School Management Committees (SMCs) and Boards of Governors

Given the dependence on informal support, SMCs should formalize support structures such as occasional relief duties, supportive school cultures, and fair committee expectations to ease the workload on mothers in leadership. Because rigid scheduling intensifies stress, Boards should review the timing of demanding school activities, such as PTA meetings, major events, and staff conferences, to avoid conflicts with childcare responsibilities.

5.5.4 Recommendations to Colleagues and Teaching Staff

The findings showed that women leaders rely on colleagues' support. Teaching staff should actively engage in teamwork, share responsibilities during peak periods, and provide practical assistance when mothers face unavoidable family demands. Since emotional strain was significant, colleagues should foster a supportive environment through open dialogue, reduced stigma, and understanding of the dual pressures mothers face.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore the experiences of mothers in leadership roles across different regions to provide a broader understanding of the challenges and strategies.

A study on how workplace culture influences the experiences of mothers in leadership would provide deeper insights. And conducting long-term studies on the effectiveness of work-life balance strategies for mothers in leadership can provide more conclusive findings.



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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Instructions

I am Priscilla Mina Tetteh, a final year student of the university of Education, Winneba offering a Masters in Education (Social Studies). I am as part of my degree course; I am undertaking a study to understand the dual Role of Mothers in Educational Leadership. I will be please if you will gladly indulge me and answer the following question.

Consent

This interview guide contains questions about Mothers in Educational Leadership. Please be assured that the information you provided is recorded and will be used for this academic purpose only. No names or private personal information will be needed or recorded. The interview will last about 20 minutes and you are free to end the interview as and when you want to without any recourse to you.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you please introduce yourself? (e.g., name, position, years in educational leadership, number of children)
2. What motivated you to pursue a leadership role in education while being a mother?
3. How do you define success in both your role as a mother and as an educational leader?

Section 2: Challenges Faced

4. Can you describe a typical day for you balancing your responsibilities as a mother and as an educational leader?
5. What specific challenges do you encounter when trying to fulfil your professional responsibilities and maternal duties?

Follow-up: How do these challenges vary based on the age of your children?

- What does your role as an educational leader entail?
- What does your role as a mother entail?

6. Are there particular situations or commitments that you find especially difficult to manage?
7. Have you ever experienced feelings of guilt or stress regarding your dual roles? If so, can you describe those feelings?

Section 3: Strategies for Balance

8. What strategies have you developed or found helpful in managing the demands of motherhood and educational leadership?

Follow-up: Can you provide a specific example of how you implemented one of these strategies?

9. Are there tools, resources, or practices that have been particularly beneficial for you in finding balance?
10. Do you engage in any form of self-care or personal time management? If so, how does this contribute to your effectiveness in both self-ca

Section 4: Organizational Support Systems

11. How would you describe the policies and support systems at your school or organization regarding work life balance?
12. In your opinion, how effective are these policies in facilitating the balance between motherhood and leadership roles?

Follow-up: Can you share any experiences where organizational support made a difference in your ability to balance these roles?

13. Are there any changes or enhancements to existing policies you believe could further support mothers in leadership positions?

Section 5: Reflections and Recommendations

14. Reflecting on your experiences, what advice would you give to mothers who aspire to take on leadership roles in education?
15. What do you think educational institutions can do to better support mothers in leadership positions?
16. Are there any additional comments or insights you would like to share regarding your experience as a mother in educational leadership?

Conclusion

Thank the you for your valuable insights.

Would you be willing to be contacted for any follow-up questions or to share results?

