

Work-family Balance: Experiences of Doctoral Women Students in Kenyan Universities.

Dr. Janis Kaimuri Marangu, Prof. Anne W. Kanga

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500664>

Received: 10 May 2026; Accepted: 15 May 2026; Published: 10 June 2026

ABSTRACT

Work- family balance has influence on women doctoral students which leads to slow progression and increased attrition. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women doctoral students in balancing work and family. The study was guided by the research question: What are the experiences of women doctoral students in balancing studies, work and family? The study employed transcendental phenomenology approach, with an in-depth interview of 11 participants who were sampled from public and private universities in Kenya through criterion sampling. The criteria used to select participants was; women who are in formal employment, married and mothers with more than two years in the doctoral program. Data were collected using semi-structured interview guide. Data were recorded using audio recorder, then transcribed, coded and analyzed to come up with significant statements, meaning and themes which formed textual descriptions. Finally structural description formed the essence. From the data analyzed, six themes emerged which were: Managing time, managing roles, prioritizing tasks, finding support, limited socialization and stressing. The overall structural description was purposeful management which made the essence. The study concluded that doctoral women had to manage the available time, roles and resources in order to balance family, work and studies. Recommendations were made on offering support services in universities to assist women pursuing doctoral studies in managing roles in order to complete their studies on time.

Keywords: Doctoral students, Doctoral education, Work family balance

INTRODUCTION

Doctoral education is considered to carry significant benefits both to public and individual which enables the country to remain globally competitive (Martinez, Ordu, Sala, & McFarlane, 2013). Doctoral education develops human resources that are critical to nation's progress such as scientists, engineers, researchers and scholars who create and share new knowledge and new ways of thinking in the society. It develops leaders in their respective fields that contribute to nation's economic growth, cultural development and raising people's standard of living (Survey of Earned Doctorates-SED, 2016). Thus, emphasis is placed on doctoral education due to its contribution to the economy.

However, despite the emerging interest on doctoral education, the growth in PhD production is not uniform across the world and there is considerable debate about whether there is a clear positive development (Cloete, Mouton & Sheppard, 2015). Moreover, countries that already have high levels of doctorate production such as Germany, Canada, United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) have an output that is growing at around 5% less, while fast-developing countries are growing doctoral output at more than 7%, with Mexico at 17% and China 40%. In U.S.A, women's share of doctoral awards has grown over the past two decades in all broad fields of study, for example in 2016, women earned the majority of doctorates awarded as follows: life sciences 55%, psychology and social sciences 59%, education 70%, humanities and arts 52% (SED, 2016). Culturally, women are associated with various roles particularly in family roles. However, there is an increase in participation on doctoral education. Hence, there is need to investigate how work and family roles influence doctorate students.

In Africa as a whole, the desire of wanting to increase the number of doctoral graduates is on the rise (Da Wan, Azman, Pang & Gatcha, 2020). From the report, the number of doctoral students has been on the rise, for

instance, in Tanzania the doctoral enrollment doubled from 470 in 2012 to 832 in 2013, while in Rwanda the number rose from 12 in 2013 to 169 in 2015. This shows an increasing trend in enrollment in doctoral programmes. Botswana had also experienced an influx of doctoral students within a span of 6 years where numbers have risen from 36 in 2010 to 200 in 2016 (Lekoko in Da Wan, Azman, Pang & Gatcha, 2020).

Kenya is also experiencing increasing enrolment of students in doctoral programmes even though there are shortages of academic staff with doctoral degrees (Mukhwana et al cited in Rugar, 2020). According to them, in 2016 there were 5604 academic staff with doctoral degrees representing 34 percent of the teaching staff in all universities. Therefore, there is need to increase doctoral students to replace the ageing faculty. Further, Mukhwana et al. (2016) identified that female had lower enrollment at a ratio of 2:1 compared to male. From the report, 4915 doctoral students were male compared to 2232 female in Kenyan universities. This shows there is gender disparity in doctoral enrolment which could be attributed to many roles women play in the society. Looking at graduation trend from 2012 to 2015, there is a widening gap between the two genders in terms of completion and enrollment as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Showing the Completion Trend of Doctoral Students in Kenyan Universities

Year	Male	Female
2012	134	63
2013	167	102
2014	268	159
2015	295	174
Total	864	498

Source: Mukhwana et al., 2016

Women active participation in work and career development in recent years has led to researchers' interest on work-family balance. According to Worell (2001), there is an ever-increasing presence of women in the labour force and particularly during their child-bearing years and thus an issue of balancing work and family remains central. Clark (2000) defines work-family balance as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with minimum role conflict. Work and family are two key elements of contemporary human life that women have to encounter alongside other demands (Bulgan & Ciftci, 2017). Incompatibility of work and family leads to role conflict. A literature review by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) showed that time-based conflict comes from work schedules, work orientation, marriage, children and spouse employment pattern. While, strain-based results from absence of support in the family unit which contribute to work-family conflict. Conflict according to Yusuf and Hasruidar (2020) is triggered by imbalances and unmatched pressures that arise in roles carried out by employees.

Work and family conflict is experienced globally. For example, in America, both privately and publicly, families complain on the scarcity of time available to them to spend with families and connect with other people in their communities (Bengtson, Acock, Allen, Anderson & Klein, 2005). The situation may be worse in developing countries like Kenya where work-family policies are limited as shown by a study done by Strathmore University (2011). Also, there is limited knowledge in the existence of work-family policies among teachers in Kenya which affect work-life balance (Muasya, 2016). However, work-family policies should not only be limited to work place, but also in universities where women are advancing their education level such as PhD programs. Hence, the need for the current research to identify challenges facing women pursuing PhD in order to formulate policies in the universities geared towards work-life balance.

Work and PhD related tasks often overlap in the case of public employment at a research institute or university where students have to meet the multiplied and multifaceted requirements like course work, examinations, PhD research, work place research/action research, publication, conferences and huge amount of teaching and administrative tasks (Paksi, 2015). In light of this, doctoral students are not able to complete the amount of PhD workload on time. This means that students have to go to their universities or workplaces on weekends to finish their work which makes them cross the border between work and family life domains frequently.

Gender difference affects completion rate of PhD programs as shown by a study done in Zimbabwe by Chauraya (2024) on gender within the pursuit of doctoral education. From the findings, more male students pursued PhD studies and completed their PhD studies within the stipulated period of study than the female students. Further, women are affected by a myriad of gender challenges that affect their doctoral education journey, thus delaying their completion time.

Studies done by Matheka, Jansen and Hofman (2020); Mbogo et al. (2020) indicated that there is slow rate of completion of doctoral degree ranging from university factors, supervision and students' factors. However, little focus has been given on students' factors particularly in connection to work-family balance among female students. Hence, the current study explored the challenges facing women doctoral students in Kenyan universities and the strategies they employ to complete their PhD program.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of Africa's low higher education participation rate at 5.2% annually, universities have a relatively smaller pool of students who can potentially proceed to PhD programs compared to other continents (Obamba, 2017). A study carried out on eight universities in sub-Saharan Africa, shows that there is an explosion of Masters Students compared to PhD students in certain universities. In Kenya, Nairobi University had a ratio of masters to PhD at 46:1 in 2011 (Bunting et al. cited in Cloete, et al. 2015), also from a recent report done in 2016 on higher education by Commission University Education-CUE revealed that the country has a total of 7,146 PhD enrolments of which 4,915 were males and 2,231 females (Obamba, 2017). Studies shows that women and men enter doctoral programs in equal numbers but women take longer to complete due to family responsibilities and society perceptions of women, thus complicating their professional life (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011).

Despite the increase in numbers on women studying doctoral studies, women and men face different challenges during their doctoral studies. Women are believed to be more affected than men, and hence the reason for low completion rates of doctoral studies among women. Therefore, the need to explore on the experiences of women doctoral students on managing work and family roles in Kenyan Universities.

Research Questions

The study is guide by the following research question.

- i. What are the experiences of women doctoral students in balancing studies, work and family?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Societal roles and expectations have not changed much and women participating in roles such as family, work and doctoral studies have greater responsibilities to play to maintain a balance in all roles. Doctoral experiences vary from individuals, gender and across universities, but there are common challenges found among doctoral students at all stages. Pifer and Baker (2016) reviewed literature on doctoral education using a three-stage model of Knowledge consumption, knowledge creation and knowledge enactment. Focusing on students, they identified various challenges in doctoral education. First, the lack of fit which negatively affected doctoral students at various levels. Secondly, students perceiving themselves to be different discounted their ability to achieve program completion or obtain resources such as support, research opportunities and professional networks. Thirdly, identity-based challenges in terms of race and gender influenced doctoral students. Finally, the task of balancing personal and family roles and responsibilities during the doctoral journey posed a greater challenge.

A study by Pop and Wiest (2016) investigated "Balancing family responsibilities and graduate schools demands". Based on the findings, doctoral degrees require commitment and perseverance as it involve demanding work and rigorous study that takes between four to ten years to complete. Further, in order to complete the doctoral program successfully, one need to be resilient and emotionally secure and even

emotionally intelligent. Additionally, women in doctoral programs who are also mothers have to balance their time and financial issues as majority of them fund their education through family budget.

In Spain, a study was done by Castello, Pardo, Sala-Bubare and Sune-Soler (2017) on “Why students consider dropping out of doctoral degrees: Institutional or personal factors”. The study indicated that young, female and part-time students’ motive of dropping out was due to difficulties in achieving a balance between work, personal life, doctoral studies and socialization. The students cited the conditions and demands for part time doctoral studies. The qualitative study obtained data from students pursuing doctoral studies in 56 Spanish Universities.

A study was done in Hungary by Paksi (2022), on “PhD and childbearing? – work-life balance of female PhD students in the field of engineering”. The findings revealed that female doctoral students encountered time and strain- based work to family conflicts such as time-squeeze, tiredness, exhaustion, stress, strain, bad mood, insomnia and negative spill over. In order to overcome the challenges faced, they sought support from their families. However, there was a lack of well-developed coping strategies and therefore, they used different approaches to work-life balance. The qualitative study interviewed 27 female doctoral students in engineering.

Martinez et.al (2013) studied on “Striving to obtain a school-work-life balance: The full-time doctoral student in Bustle University”. Based on the findings, some women have internal battle in terms of identifying conflicting responsibilities and priorities concerning personal and academic components of their life. Furthermore, doctoral students struggle with time management while juggling with multiple roles and responsibilities. Women have to sacrifice their time, families and finances in order to cope with their studies. The study employed grounded theory design to obtain experiences of doctoral students and a sample size of 5 participants who were selected using a criterion sampling.

A literature review done by Aitchison and Mowbray (2013), on “Doctoral women: Managing emotions, managing doctoral studies” showed that balancing doctoral study and family relationships created powerful and conflicting emotions. The study found out that doctoral women experienced the feelings of scholarly pride and satisfaction in academic achievements alongside the feelings of frustration and anxiety about neglecting the family. Further, most women found balancing family relationships and doctoral studies as emotionally challenging work. The women indicated that they are frequently required to make difficult decisions, and as the pressure to complete the program increased, they devoted more time to study and less to family. Therefore, missing family events and using childcare services to help with family roles.

A study done by Levecque, Anseel, Debeuckelaer, Vander-Heyden and Gisle (2017) in Fladers, Belgium on “Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students”, revealed that, with a sample of 3659 out of the 12 mental health symptoms (GHQ-2), 32% of PhD students are at risk of having or developing a common psychiatric disorder especially depression. The most prevalent are feelings on being under constant strain, unhappiness, sleeping problems due to worries, inability to overcome difficulties and not able to enjoy day-to-day activities. Further, the study indicated that organizational policies especially work-family interface, job demands and job control, supervisors’ leadership styles and team decision-making culture were significantly associated with the prevalence of mental health problems.

A study in Sweden was done by Schmidt and Umans (2014), on “Experiences of well-being among female doctoral students”. From the findings, all participants admitted that they are unwilling to compromise their private life for the sake of succeeding in their studies. Though majority admitted that at times when the workload became heavier and in stressful situations, other parts of their lives suffered and lead to a feeling of guilty, frustration and bad conscience. Therefore, as much as women are engaged in their studies there is need to balance all the roles to meet societal expectations. The study applied phenomenological hermeneutic approach. And collected data using focus groups on 12 women who were purposively sampled.

In Nigeria and South Africa, a study was conducted by Okeke-Ihejirika, Moyo and Van Den Berg (2019) on “Experiences of female graduate students in African Universities”. The study identified that even though both male and female students face similar challenges during their study, women faced additional challenges such as gender stereotyping, family and childcare responsibilities, lack of role models and sexual harassment. These

challenges affect their completion time. The study used qualitative feminist research and data were collected using semi-structured interview guide on a sample size of 43 female students.

A study by Asamenew (2015) on “Challenges to the doctoral journey: A case of female doctoral students in Ethiopia” indicated that women faced academic, psychosocial and home-work related challenges. The specific problems raised by women were concerning quality of supervision support, inadequate academic skill, nature of education, stress, motivation, isolation, balancing personal and professional life, relationship problems, home and work related. The study utilized a qualitative approach and specifically a single case study research design. Data were collected using structured interview on 5 female doctoral students.

Fisher, Nyabaro, Mendum and Osiru (2020) explored “Making it to the PhD: Gender and student performance on Sub-Saharan Africa”. From the findings, a correlation exists between publication productivity and PhD completion which differed on gender. The study acknowledged that good supervision had stronger impact for men than women, while marriage during PhD affected women publication productivity than men. Further, becoming a parent during PhD training was a key reason that women took longer to complete the PhD. Therefore, women were more affected while studying PhD than men. The study employed a mixed method approach and an online survey was conducted on a sample of 227 participants.

In Ghana, Chebesi (2022) investigated “Challenges facing women pursuing doctorate degrees”. From the findings, women are under much pressure from the society compared to men as they are expected to perform certain gender roles or meet societal gender expectations. Further, women gender roles and expectations often clash with roles and expectations of their studies thus bringing tension. These tensions make the PhD journey more challenging for women especially the married ones. The study employed qualitative approach and the specific design was phenomenological hermeneutic. Data were collected using semi structured interview guide on a sample size of 12 participants.

A study by Mbogo, Ndiao, Wambua, Ileri and Ngala (2020) on “Supervision challenges and delays in completion of PhD programmes in public and private universities: Experiences of supervisors and graduate students in Kenya”. The study found out that students faced challenges in managing time which caused delays in completing the doctoral programmes as they had other responsibilities like work and family. Therefore, work and family greatly influenced doctoral students. The study used mixed method design and specifically descriptive design and a sample size of 60 dissertation students and 40 doctoral supervisors.

Matheka, Jansen and Hofman (2020) carried out a study on “Kenyan doctoral students’ success” and identified that students age significantly predicts their pace of graduating as younger PhD students move faster than their older counterparts. This could be attributed to responsibilities as one age, whereas older people have more responsibilities and family obligation that places constraints on time and resources. This affects study time as they try to balance family, social and employment obligations. The study used cross-sectional design and a sample size of 628 doctoral students who filled an online questionnaire.

Coping Strategies Applied by Doctoral Students in Managing Roles

A literature review was done by Aitchison and Mowbray (2013) on “Doctoral women: Managing doctoral studies”. The study found out that women experience difficulties in managing their time and the day-to-day demands of doctoral studies and family life. However, women identified that formation of supportive groups was more valued and helpful in accommodating emotional expression where they could express their emotions and fears.

Pifer and Baker (2016) reviewed a literature on “Stage-based challenges and strategies for support in doctoral education: A practical guide for students, members, and programs administrators”. The study found out that strategies such as peer support and socializing helped doctoral students to develop resilience and network with friends and family outside academic programs or department. The students developed their own sense of personal agency by being the drivers of their own success. Also, the students were able to establish their own goals and took ownership of those goals by obtaining clarity about expectations and seeking help whenever

needed. Finally, students formed the strategy of communicating openly about the challenges of doctoral education which helped in reducing the negative effects of these challenges substantially.

Schmidt and Hansson (2018) reviewed literature on “Experiences of well-being among female doctoral students in Sweden” and identified strategies such as social support as a way of coping with doctoral studies. Further, they identified that social interaction with friends, clinging to spiritual realm, planning, exercising, seeking professional, organizational and academic support from supervisor and university at large helped students to manage roles. Finally, personal interaction with family and spouse were found to be very useful.

A study was done in USA by Rockinson-Szapkiw, Spaulding and Lunde (2017) on “Women in distance doctoral programs”. From the findings, women utilized social support such as supportive spouse, friends or employers which provided them with confidence and space to succeed in their studies. Therefore, supportive environment played a big part in the success of their studies. The study employed a qualitative approach and specifically grounded theory design. Data were collected from 17 women using questionnaires, life maps and semi-structured interviews.

In Tanzania, Kisanga and Matiba (2023) explored “Coping strategies student-mothers employ in pursuing higher education studies”. The study found out that women pursuing their studies employed baby sitters, friends and relatives to care for their children. Also, they embraced social support networks especially from partners and relatives in order to navigate through studies, work and family roles. A qualitative approach was used which obtained the experiences of student-mothers. Data were collected through structured interview guide on a sample size of 16 participants.

In Kenya, Musili (2018) investigated “Motherhood experiences of postgraduate students at the university of Nairobi” and revealed that students’ mothers experienced conflict between various role commitment such as childcare, domestic work and academic responsibilities. However, they applied coping strategies such as good organization, sound time management and family support in managing roles. The study applied qualitative approach and the specific design was phenomenology. Data were collected using in-depth interview on a sample size of 32 female students.

Students’ completion time by be affected by myriad factors as shown by Wairungu (2021) on the “Best practices for reversing high attrition and reducing graduation time frame: Doctoral education in public university in Kenya”. The findings revealed that student strained financially, academically and socially due to existing gaps in the university policies, however, the students remained persistent due to good social, academic and financial support from their peers, faculty and university. The study used qualitative approach, a sample size of 7 (5 female and 2 Male) participants and data were collected using semi-structured interviews.

The literature reviewed showed the challenges and strategies used by women undertaking doctoral studies in different context. Therefore, it is paramount to investigate the same in Kenyan context to obtain the lived experiences of women doctoral students in managing work-family roles. The study employed transcendental phenomenology and semi structured interview guide to explore the experiences of women doctoral students in Kenyan universities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Work/Family Border Theory

The study used work-family border theory by Campbell Clark in 2000. The theory explains that people are daily border crossers between work and family and they make transitions between the two worlds (Clark, 2000). People shape the two worlds by molding the borders between them and are able to predict when conflict will occur that give a framework for attaining balance (Swarnalatha & Rajalakshmi, 2016). A conflict may arise as people try to balance the two worlds which are interconnected. The relationship and interactions between work and family brings about border crossing between work and family world (Clark, 2000). Whereas, an individual cross over from work to family and vice versa.

Since the two domains are interconnected and interact daily, people will tend to manage and negotiate between work and family spheres and the borders between them in order to attain balance. They make daily transitions between these two settings and often tailor their focus, goals and interpersonal style to meet unique demands of each (Clark, 2000). Women in career are border crosser between, work, family and education. The border crossers transit from one life domain to the other daily where there are permeability, flexibility and blending (Paksi, 2015). During this process, spillover may occur from one role to another.

According to Clark, the borders may be permeable, flexible, blending and the strength. When there are flexibility and permeability then blending occurs, whereby work and family are blended together and an individual can work at home attending family responsibilities or a person may use personal or family experiences in their work. Similarly, a student can do assignments and study at home and at workplace. Permeability allows interruptions from people and other social activities which may influence the performance of an individual. When the permeability, flexibility and blending are combined, they determine the strength of the border and vice versa. The theory assists the study by showing how border crossing of roles influences an individual in balancing roles of family, work and education. How a role may be permeable and flexible to allow border crossing. Therefore, a student may be able to work and study over the weekend and after work.

Research Methodology

The study sample was derived from a population of 38 public and 36 private universities in Kenya (CUE, 2020). The study employed qualitative research approach and the specific design was phenomenology research design. Phenomenology is used to describe the meaning and experiences of several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The transcendental phenomenology was used because it focuses on the descriptions of the experiences of the participants developing reflective meaning of the experiences (Creswell, 2013). Participants were drawn from universities offering doctorate programs in Kenya through criterion sampling to select the study sample. The criterion used to select participants was: they must be women studying doctoral program in Kenyan universities for over two years, married with children and in full time job. Therefore, unmarried women and single parents were excluded from the study.

According to Creswell (2007), a phenomenology study involves 5-25 individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon. Hence, 11 participants were selected to participate in the study through criterion sampling. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. The researchers conducted interviews with the participants and each interview lasted for 45 minutes. The interview sessions were recorded using an audio recorder. The interview data recorded were transcribed using speech-to-text software where the audio was converted into a Word format for analysis. The researchers created verbatim transcriptions of data. Creswell and Clark (2018) emphasize that researchers should first ensure the accuracy of transcriptions, then format and organize the data to prepare it for analysis.

Data underwent thematic analysis where the major themes were identified. First, the researchers thoroughly reviewed the transcripts multiple times, as recommended by Creswell (2013). This process is known as data review and it involves noting initial thoughts by writing brief memos in the margins of the transcripts (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The authors, have defined coding as a process of grouping ideas so that they reflect a broader perspective. Since the researchers performed manual coding, the transcripts had margins on both sides. On one side of the transcript, the researchers recorded significant statements, and on the other side, the emergent themes were recorded. The significant statements were further broken down to develop codes. Codes were organized into broader categories which formed themes. The researchers employed in vivo coding where the exact words of the participants were used. Descriptive and analytical codes were also applied where deemed necessary.

During data analysis, coding was done to come up with a cluster of significant statements and formulated meaning. The significant meaning was formulated from the significant statements which were clustered to form emergent themes. The emergent themes gave the essence of the phenomenon under study. Textural description was done for the first two transcripts which is a process of attributing meaning to participant's statements (Creswell, 2007, 2013). The textural meaning was added throughout the data analysis. Inter-rater coding was

done to come up with structural descriptions which helped to develop an essence. The researchers kept an audit trail of transcripts, codebooks, member checking responses and notes to ensure confirmability.

To validate findings, the researchers used various methods of ascertaining trustworthiness of the information given during the interview to avoid research bias. Credibility was ascertained through prolonged engagement during the interview. Peer debriefing was used where an experienced colleague re-analyzed some of the data to identify similar codes (Gunawan, 2015). Dependability was determined through member checking, where, the researchers went back to the participant after data analysis to confirm some information. Reflexivity was also applied where the researchers continually reflected on the process of knowledge production (D’cruz & Jones, 2004). Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process. To maintain the authenticity, confidentiality and anonymity, the researchers employed P code for participant.

Research Findings

From the 11 participants, 186 significant statements were extracted. However, the most common statements were recorded in the tables. From the codes, significant statements, formulated meanings and themes were formulated. Overall, six salient themes emerged: Limited socialization, prioritizing tasks, stressing, managing time, managing roles and supportiveness. Following a description of these themes, data were coded and analyzed and presented. The table shows significant statements, formulated meanings and themes.

Theme 1: Stressing

Table 2: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Stressing

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme
I always felt a huge burden that am walking around with when I was doing my course work.	Managing roles affected individuals emotionally, physically and psychologically	Stressing
I always felt that there was something that I needed to do that I had not done.		
You are present physically, but your mind is absent with a lot of thoughts on assignments.		
I used to feel very irritable because there were so many expectations that you are not able to meet, it would make me a bit short tempered and frustrated, and I felt that I was always under pressure.		
At times you get so tired because you are trying to juggle between a mother, work and being a student, it’s very tiresome, getting tired every time and coming back late in the evening.		
It reached a point I felt I cannot handle it, it’s too much, and I can break down because this is too much.		
My sleep is cut short and it affects the way am working because the mind is divided, I have divided attention on work, assignments, writing term papers that have deadlines and the office work has deadlines.		
At times the studies are pushing you too far, you have submitted your work to the supervisor, and they keep on asking this or that and you have just given in your very best.		
I think all this brings burnout because at times there is isolation because people may not understand what you are doing.		
I slept for few hours and it affected me, but I still had to cope.		

Source: (Field Data, 2018)

The participant expressed being stressed while managing roles due to limited time, deadlines that were supposed to be meant and family issues. As a result of challenges with time management the participants felt overwhelmed as they struggled to meet the demands of school, work and family which affected their whole being. The following are statements from the participants; P1: “I used to feel very irritable because there were

so many expectations that you are not able to meet, and it would make me a bit short tempered and frustrated and I was always under pressure” (P1, Interview, September 10, 2018). Similar sentiments were made by P2: “I always felt a huge burden that am walking around with when I was doing my course work” (P2, Interview, September 12, 2018). Similar findings were obtained from P5 as shown in the excerpt,

At times you get so tired, because you are trying to juggle between a mother, you are working and you are a student, it’s very tiresome, so it’s a big challenge getting tired every time and coming back late in the evening (P5 Interview, September 22, 2018).

The findings obtained from P6 indicated that managing roles was a challenge as shown in the excerpt.

I would like to enjoy my sleep but my sleep is cut short because I have to perform several tasks before I leave to work and by the time I get to work am already fatigued and it affect the way am working because my mind is really divided. There is work, assignments, writing term papers which have deadlines, the office work has also deadlines which drains someone (P6 Interview, September 24, 2018).

The results concur with findings from a study by Martinez et al (2013) that expressed how the doctoral students felt stressed due to the challenges of time management and meeting deadlines. The study identified how the students felt always under pressure to perform the expected roles.

Theme 2: Managing Roles

Table 3: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Managing Roles

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme
The children required my time and attention and they used to call for my attention through crying and I felt like I denied them a bit of time.	Proper organization and planning were needed to manage the roles	Managing roles
A child will always cry upon mother’s shoulder.		
As a mother you are running everything from what people are eating, wearing, house help, from small matters for a house to function it’s the mother, its women.		
You have to give in more hours so that, for example, in the evening when everyone has gone to sleep at least you know you have done your motherly duty, wife duty and now you are in the world of your own.		
I normally arrive home at 10.00 from classes and I must check on my children whether they are well fed, they slept having done homework and then I plan for the next day.		
Sometimes you feel you are neglecting your family because you are coming home late.		
I have learnt to make sure that am at home by 7.00 or 6.300 pm in the evening to spend some time with children before they sleep especially if they are going to school.		
As a mother with young children the biggest challenge is that you cannot work from home which means I have to get to workplace constantly, when you wake up at night to study, the children are also waking up at the middle of night, so you don’t have much time as you would have wanted.		

Source (Field Data, 2018)

The researcher came up with a theme of managing roles where students were required to manage their roles in order to balance. As women, they were expected to perform the family roles within the available time. The participants’ roles included parenting, student role, spouses and work roles in the organization. They had to manage the roles and the responsibilities accorded to them in the organization, family and societal. Some of the participants had extra role of supervision at the work place. The following statements were derived from the participants. “Time was always a challenge and I had to give attention to everything that required attention” (P2,

Interview, September 12, 2018). “As a mother you are running everything from what people are eating, wearing, house help, from small matters for a house to function, it’s the mother, it’s women” (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018). Another participant noted that: “I normally arrive home at 10.00 pm from evening classes and I must check on my children whether they are well fed, they slept having done homework and then I plan for the next day” (P11, Interview, September 29, 2018). Similar findings were obtained from the participant who noted that:

As a lecturer you don’t have enough time to be with the children especially those who are going to school because at times you have evening classes to attend and to teach. Sometimes you make a phone calls to the house help to find out which assignment the children have been given at school so that you can try to assist through the phone where possible (P5, Interview, September 21, 2018).

Being a mother, the participants had to manage the time to meet all the demands that required their attentions especially children who required their mother’s presence. Due to limited time with family, children are mostly affected because they feel the absence of their mother and the only available time, they keep closeness and clinginess to their mother. The finding concurs with findings from a study done by Aitchison and Mowbray, (2013); Paski, (2015); Schmidt and Hansson (2018) whereby women had the feelings of frustration, anxiety, exhaustion, and stress caused by overburdening obligations. This was supported by the findings from a participant 2. “You could see the children are feeling your absence by action because they kept on clinging on you and they would follow, fight to be as close as possible” (P2, Interview, September 12, 2018).

The participant admitted that balancing work, family and studies is not easy, there are a lot of sacrifices that they had to make in order to meet the demands required by those roles. Martinez et al. (2013), identified that women have internal battle in terms of identifying conflicting responsibilities and priorities. This was supported by the following statement from the participant 6 and 7 who noted:

I would find myself really working extra hours that is what I would say. You have to give in more hours so that for example in the evening when everyone has gone to sleep at least you know you have done that motherly duty, the wife duty and now you are in the world of your own (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018).

As a mother with young children the biggest challenge is that you cannot work from home which meant I have to get to workplace constantly, when you wake up at night to study, the children are also waking up at the middle of night, so you don’t have much time as you would have wanted (P7, Interview, September 25, 2018).

Women and Men are affected differently in terms of balancing roles and they are able to navigate easily due to roles ascribed by the society. Women do majority of household and caregiving roles. The findings are supported by Gervais and Miller (2016); Carter et al. (2013). From the study findings, it was noted that:

For a man he will go to work and come in the evening and concentrate without any distraction, but for you, you are making sure that the home is like a home, not that because it is easy for them but it’s a bit easier because the children are not looking too much to the father the way they are looking upon mothers. A child will always cry upon mother’s shoulder (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I started my PhD in 2014 when I had one child and now in 2019, I have 3 children. So, I was pregnant twice during my PhD, and the impact of that was for those years I was not able to register for my PhD, I was not able to do any work the year of birth 2015 and 2018. There are various challenges encountered, you cannot work from the house, I actually envy men or single people because they are able to work at home which means I have to get to work constantly (P7, Interview, September 25, 2018).

Theme 3: Limited Socialization

Table 4: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Limited Socialization

Significant statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme
I had to cut down on my social life.		

I missed social functions because of exams or classes over the weekend.	Being in school meant being unavailable to attend to social functions	Limited Socialization
For the extended family I set boundaries of the level of interaction and I let them know that my time is limited, it's scarce and I cannot afford.		
My social life has been affected because it's not like the way it used to be before because now when you are free you need to be doing assignments or maybe research		
Most of the time you are not able to associate with people the way you want even your own children because you are too busy		
I shelved any kind of baggage and other responsibility even in the church or any other role and just decided whatever responsibilities I had, it's a No		
My social life has definitely been affected because I don't have much time to spend with other family members like my siblings		
My social life is limited and the furthest I go is to engage on church activities on Sunday		
I was a Sunday school teacher and a coordinator for Sunday school teachers; I had to drop that and even my family activities I had to sacrifice.		
I used to go for gym after work for one hour but now I find am not able to because I have to use that time to finish my assignments or revise for exams.		

Source: (Field Data, 2018)

All the participants interviewed indicated that socialization aspect of their life was affected by the demands of the doctoral program. This is because the students had limited time, needed to attend classes on Saturdays, have demanding assignments that had deadlines and giving attention to children and family at the same time. Therefore, there was no time for social life because every moment there was something that required attention. "I had to cut down on my social life" (P3, Interview, September 13, 2018). "I had to miss social functions because I had exams or classes on Saturday" (P2, Interview, September 12, 2018). "My social life has been affected because it's not like the way it used to be before, because now when you are free you need to be doing assignments or maybe research" (P5, Interview, September 21, 2018).

It stretches someone and what I discovered there are things I had to forfeit then, I was a Sunday school teacher, that one I dropped because I could not be able to handle all that. I was a coordinator for Sunday school in our church teaching teachers, I had to drop that and now, even the family activities I had to sacrifice but that is with information (P9, Interview, September 27, 2018).

In socialization, you miss out on extended family your social life basically you give up. For the extended family I set boundaries of the level of interactions, and so my time is limited and let them know that my time is limited, my time is scarce and I cannot afford, maybe I choose to end social relations (P4, Interview, September 14, 2018).

The program required a lot of time that the participant had to forego the social events or any other activities that were happening over the weekend or they were doing previously in order to concentrate on studies. During free time they spent it on doing assignments or with close members of the family.

Theme 4: Finding Support

Table 5: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Finding Support

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme
The best support I get from my workplace is time to go through the studies.	Receiving support	Finding Support
At the work place I get some financial support though it's small and time to study.		

The children had to take over some responsibilities.	really helped to manage roles	
In the family life you have people around you who can understand and support you.		
If you don't have a supportive person, it can tear the family apart because you are not giving enough time to the family.		
I have seen families break up; the children feel abandon because you are not available for them and your husband.		
I have supportive husband at least it has helped me a lot because he would support me a lot, understand and give me space to do what I want to do, he supports me financially and with home chores.		
My children supported me a lot with taking small roles her and there and they prayed for me; they kept on inquiring on my progress something which encouraged me a lot.		
I have gotten support from my colleagues at the work place, so when it's tough, I can talk to someone and share it especially to doctors who have walked the same journey and they understand.		
My husband is the biggest support, the day I don't feel like working, he is the one who pushes me to work, reading through the articles and whatever I have typed he helps me with that.		
Some lecturers in the university are very supportive and understanding when they give strict deadline and I ask them to extend for me.		
I had to negotiate with my lecturers on submission of assignments late and some were very understanding.		
I have tried to form a support group where we can sit together as PhD students and vent, share experiences and as we share, we realize that some things we are going through and think of coping strategies.		
Having a support group even in the faculty as we are studying PhD has really helped to ensure that we are in terms with our well beings or our health wise mental framework is supported.		

Source: (Field Data, 2018)

The participants indicated that they received different forms of support from various sources which helped them to manage their roles, but it greatly helped them in managing their roles. The results from the study concurred with findings obtained from Pasque and Nicholson (2011) that when there is less support given to women, they may experience the inability to balance their roles. The support explored from participants was mainly from work, university and family. The greatest support according to the participants was from spouses and children. Some of the participants received support from work as noted "At work place I get some financial support though it's small and also time to study" (P10, Interview, September 28, 2018). "The best support I get from my work place is time to go through the studies" (P3, Interview, September 13, 2018). Majority of the participants indicated that the best support they received from work was time to be away to attend classes.

On university support, the participants admitted that some lecturers were so understanding that they supported them in course work. Similarly, some participants pointed out that having supportive groups assisted them in overcoming the challenges they were facing. The results agreed with findings from Jairam and Kahl (2012); Pifer and Baker (2016), that academic friends provided empathy and they acted as sounding boards allowing participants to vent about courses and struggles with professors, challenges that they were facing together and how to deal with stress. The students created good rapport with the faculty and doctoral advisers and when students communicate openly about the challenges of doctoral studies, they reduced the negative effects of these challenges. A participated noted that "I get support from my supervisors and keeps on updating them on what am doing, updating them makes a difference because someone will know you are not neglecting your duties" (P9, Interview, September 27, 2018). Further, participant 6 and 8 noted that:

I can say I have gotten a lot of support from are my colleagues at the work place, at least the work environment, at least working in a university, that environment is conducive. I have people who they understand the journey. So, when it's tough, I can walk to someone and share its tough or by the way just talking to them. You know if you share or talk to people who have not gone or walked the same journey

you are wasting time, but if you talk to other doctors who have walked the same journey, they understand the journey and I have seen a lot of support even with colleagues. Have seen a lot of support even people just pop in my office to just ask how far or how am fairing (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I have tried to form a support group where we can sit together as PhD students and vent, share experiences and as we share, we realize that some things we are going through and think of coping strategies. Some lecturers in the university are very supportive and understanding when they give strict deadlines and I ask them to extend for me (P8, Interview, September 26, 2018).

The family also supported the participants by encouraging them, prayers and helping in family chores to lessen duties in the family as supported by Lin (2016); Pop and Wiest (2016); Aitchison and Mowbray (2013); Pasque and Nicholson (2011). “I received moral encouragement from my partner and children” (P3, Interview, September 13, 2018). Participant 6 and 9 noted that:

I have received 100% support from my children including prayers. I find my children asking me that they are supporting and praying. My husband also comes in handy, he prays for me and at the same time support me, he is in the field, he is a lecturer too and therefore once in a while I tell him please read this I have written but am not very sure whether this is making sense, so I have received support from him including financial support, when I need a vehicle to travel whenever, he supports (P9, Interview, September 27, 2018).

In the family life you have people around you who can understand and support you. If you don’t have a supportive person, it can tear the family apart because you are not giving enough time to the family. I thank for me, because I have a supportive husband, at least it helped me a lot because he would support me a lot, he understands and give me space to do what I want to do, support me financially and home chores (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Theme 5: Prioritizing Tasks

Table 6: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Prioritizing Tasks

Significant Statements	Formulated Meaning	Theme
Sometimes it’s hard to keep a balance, but at times it’s your work that is being affected, sometimes it’s your doctoral studies and sometimes it’s your family.	There was need to prioritize what seemed more important and urgent at the expense of the other	Prioritizing Tasks
When work becomes too much, usually and sometimes urgent you tend to focus on the work at the expense of the doctoral study.		
Sometimes when you focus more on work, you throw off your writing, then you need to focus on it again.		
I would say writing suffers more than work because sometimes work is more urgent and needs to be done.		
Whenever you are focusing more on one thing then the other thing suffers.		
At the beginning it was a bit hard balancing because you had to put more effort on things that you think have priority.		
I would give work priority		
I would prioritize what seems very urgent in the workplace and at home then my studies would come last.		
My strategy is being able to prioritize with time and saying No, where I can say No and trying to give my studies a priority.		

Source: (Field Data, 2018)

The participants' biggest strategy to overcome the challenges of balancing the roles was to prioritize on the activities that required urgent attention and which had deadlines. They had to organize their work in such a way that they dealt with the most urgent to least urgent. The results agreed with Martinez et al (2013), where priorities are managed on day-to-day basis although emergencies may arise but need to be attended as they come. Also, more time is allocated to one domain and less time is allocated to another. The following are participants' statements: "At the beginning it was a bit hard balancing because you had to put more effort on things that you think are a priority" (P8, Interview, September 26, 2018). "I would prioritize what seems very urgent in the workplace and at home then my studies would come last" (P9, Interview, September 27, 2018). Similar statements were obtained from P4 who noted that:

Sometimes it's hard to keep a balance, but at times you find it's your work that is being affected, sometimes it's your doctoral studies, sometimes it's your family, and actually this depends on what is going at different places. When work becomes too much, usually and sometimes urgent, you tend to focus on the work at the expense of the doctoral studies. I would say writing suffers more than work because sometimes work is more urgent and needs to be done (P4 Interview, September 14, 2018).

Theme 6: Managing Time

Table 7: Formulated Statements Forming the Theme Managing Time

Significant Statement	Formulated Meaning	Theme
Time was always a challenge and I had to give attention to everything that required attention.	Time was limited and the available time needed to be managed properly.	Managing time
I needed time for my family and my children, basically I needed time to run home.		
I didn't have enough time to parent the children; you don't have time to even notice them because your mind is too much preoccupied.		
I wake up very early in the morning so that I can constantly work on something before going to work.		
At work I try as much as possible to meet the deadlines so that I don't have to carry work at home.		
To be able to plan well, I used to wake up early than I used to so that I can use that time to finish my assignments or revise for my exams.		
I created awareness to my family members so that am able to create time even if I want to wake up at 2.00am in the night there are no issues.		
The program is manageable depending on time organization		
I dedicated arriving very early at the workplace and do my personal work like for one hour and also in the evening another one hour on my research work.		
At the weekend I would go the workplace to concentrate more on my work.		
I could take my sleep as the opportunity cost to be able to handle the issues when the demand comes.		
I have to work overboard including Sundays and holidays to be able to meet the demands of the program.		
Having young children means waking up at the middle of the night so you don't have much time as you would want.		

Source: (Field Data, 2018)

The participants had to manage the time available so that they can accomplish all the activities. They had to forego some leisure and make some sacrifices in order to meet the deadlines of the doctoral program and also manage their roles. They would devote more time on studies. The findings are supported by Aitchison and Mowbray (2013) that doctoral women would dedicate more time on some roles at the expense of other roles. From the findings, participants indicated that "I would wake up as early as 4.00am to make it at work before 6.00am to maximize the time doing assignments" (P2, Interview, September 12, 2018). "I wake up very early in the morning so that I can constantly work on something before going to work and I would try as much as possible

to meet the deadlines so that I don't have to carry work at home" (P7, Interview, September 25, 2018). "I could take my sleep as the opportunity cost to be able to handle the issues when the demands come" (P1, Interview, September 10, 2018).

Findings by Paski (2022) shows that overlaps occurs when women are not able to finish their PhD workload on time. This means they have to go to their workplace or university over the weekend to finish their assignments or work. They have to cross the border between work and family domains frequently. The following quotes from the participants shows overlaps between roles.

At times there are a lot of overlaps which happens often, because sometimes I find I have too much on my desk in terms of student's assessments, term papers, CAT quiz. I must carry them at home to mark sometimes even research projects, internship reports and I have to work extra time. Over the weekend just to try and make sure I meet some deadlines so that I don't inconvenience my students it's not easy because back at home my children need my attention and I also need to clean up my house, to do some household chores, so it's never really easy but I am actually forced to meet all the requirements of what am suppose at work and to be able to satisfy my students and also to basically have a good performance. I have to work overboard including Sundays and holidays to be able to meet the demands of the program (P11, Interview, September 29, 2018).

There have been some kind of overlaps constantly almost 100% there has been overlaps. During Marking I have to carry it at home, my PhD, yes, you will find the day when am in the office and am not teaching am working on my PhD in the morning as opposed to marking because with PhD, it requires concentration so hard, so there are very big overlaps (P7, Interview, September 25, 2018).

I think the key thing is time management, because I shelved any other kind of responsibility even in the church or any other role this period when I was doing my studies. I shelved any kind of role or baggage and just decided whatever the responsibilities I had its No. At the weekend I would go the workplace to concentrate more on my work (P6, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Planning, planning is the major thing because without planning all other things will fail so, I have to plan. I will do this during this time, this time is for family, this time is for study, and this is the job I have to do (P10, Interview, September 28, 2018).

Majority of the participants indicated that time was very critical in their studies, because every moment counts and one had to utilize the available time properly. Similarly, they had to sacrifice their time by foregoing their sleep to complete the tasks that were very important to perform. The study findings are supported by Martinez, et al. (2013) that the greatest challenge was time management in balancing roles. Some participants stated that they had to go to work place very early in the morning or on the weekend to complete school assignments.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study highlighted the ways in which women doctoral students balance their work and family. Based on the findings, the following themes emerged, managing time, managing roles, supportiveness, limited socialization, prioritizing tasks and stressing. As the participants were aiming at balancing their roles, they encountered stress due to high expectations and demands of the doctoral program. A study by Lin (2016), indicated that increase in roles, demands and time conflicts were related with higher stress, anxiety, and depression for female adult students. Similarly, due to limited time, participants lost connection with close friends and relatives which detached themselves from social life in order to concentrate on their studies.

The participants admitted that they encountered challenges with time management while they juggle with balancing roles. However, they had to forego some leisure and make sacrifices in order to meet the demands of the roles and studies. This involved sleeping late and waking up very early in the morning. Martinez et al (2013) indicated that time is an integral component to school-work-life balance. This is due to time allocation on different domains.

As highlighted in analysis, support from work especially time off, helped a lot in balancing as it gave participants time to do assignments and attend classes. Support from work, family and lecturers assisted participants in achieving their targets. Majority of the participants admitted that family members especially children and spouses played crucial roles in their studies. Emotional, psychological support and encouragement helped participants in balancing their roles as they had caring people around them. Lin (2016) indicated that family support plays a significant role for female adult learners towards their academic experiences and lack of support from spouses or other family members would impede female adult education.

The structural description that emerged from the 6 themes was purposeful management, where participants had to manage their roles within the available time. Time factor affected roles such as socialization and in turn the participants felt stressed when trying to balance roles. Therefore, they had to prioritize on the crucial roles that required immediate attention and others could be performed later.

The study has revealed that there are different challenges encountered by women doctoral students, a conflict between work, family and studies exist which influence how they perform various roles. The gender roles and cultural expectations of women interfere and hinders academic progression and completion rate of doctoral students. There is need to support women by putting interventions measures in universities and workplace to assist women achieve their academic goals. Some of the strategies such as; financial support, flexible working schedules, family support and faculty support can assist women complete the programs on time. Universities need to come up with services such as; counseling services, mentorship programs and flexible schedules for faculty consultations.

REFERENCE

1. Aitchison, C., & Mowbray, S., (2013). Doctoral women: Managing doctoral studies. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 18(8), 859-870.
2. Asamenew, B. B. (2015). *Challenges to the doctoral journey: A case of female doctoral students from Ethiopia*. Open Praxis, 7(4), 287-297.
3. Bengtson, V. L., Acock, A. C., Allen, K. R., Anderson, P. D., & Klein, D. M. (Eds.) (2005). *Sourcebook of family theory and research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication
4. Bulgan, G. & Ciftci, A. (2017). The interplay of work-Family life and psychosocial Adjustment for international graduate students. *International Journal of Human and Behavioral Science*, 3(1), 1-10, Doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.19148/ijhbs.345808>
5. Castelló, M., Pardo, M., Sala-Bubaré, A., Sune-Soler, N. (2017). Why do students consider dropping out of doctoral degrees? Institutional and personal factors. *Higher Education*, 74(6), 1053–1068
6. Carter, S., Blumenstein, M., & Cook, C. (2013). Different for women? The challenges of doctoral studies. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 18(4), 339-351.
7. Clark, C. S. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747-770
8. Chebesi, D. N. (2022). *Examining challenges facing women pursuing doctorate degrees in Ghana*. Undergraduate Thesis: Ashesi University.
9. Cloette, N., Mouton, J., & Sheppard, C. (2015). *Doctoral education in South Africa*. Cape Town: African Minds.
10. Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
11. Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
12. Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
13. CUE (2018). *Status of universities in Kenya*. Commission for University Education. Kenya
14. D'cruz, H. & Jones, M. (2004). *Social work research: Ethical and political contexts*. Thousand Oaks: Sage publication.
15. Gervais, R. L. & Millear, P. M. (Ed.) (2016). *Exploring resources, life-balance and well-being of women who work in a global context*. Switzerland: Springer international Publishing.

16. Holm, J. M, Prosek, E. A., & Weisberger, A.C.G. (2015). A phenomenological investigation of counseling doctoral students becoming mothers. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 54(1), 2-16
17. Jairam, D., & Kahl, D.H. (2012). Navigating the doctoral experiences: the role of social support in successful degree completion. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 7
18. Kisanga, S. E., & Matiba, F. M. (2023). Coping strategies students-mothers employ in pursuing higher education studies in Tanzania: A qualitative study. *Current Psychology*, 42, 4143-4154
19. Khadabocus, F. (2016). Challenges to doctoral education in Africa. *International Higher Education*, 85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2016.85.9246>
20. Levecque, K., Anseel, F., De Beuckelaer, A., Van der Heyden, J., & Gisle, L. (2017). Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students. *Research Policy*, 46(4), 868-879.
21. Lin, X. (2016). Barriers and challenges of female adult students enrolled in higher education: A literature review. *Higher Education Studies*, 6(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/hes.v6n2p119>
22. Martinez, E., Ordu, C., Sala, M.R.D., & McFarlane, A. (2013). Striving to obtain a school-Work- Life balance: The full-time doctoral student. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 8. DOI: 102894511765
23. Musili, L. W. (2018). *Motherhood experiences of postgraduate students at the university of Nairobi, Kenya*. Doctoral Thesis: University of Nairobi.
24. Merrian, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San-Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
25. Muasya, G. (2016). Is work-family balance a possibility? The case of Kenyan female teachers in urban public schools. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 8(5), 37-47
26. Obamba, M. O. (2017). *Constructing innovative doctorates: Scoping evidence on doctoral structure and practices from six African Countries*. Scoping report to the partnership for African Social and governance research (PASGR)
27. Okeke-Ihejirika, P. E, Moyo, S., Van Den Berg, H. (2019). Exploring the experiences of female graduate students in African universities: Questions about voice, power, and responsibility. *Gender and Women's Studies*, 2(3), 1-14
28. Paksi, V. (2022). *PhD and childbearing? Work life balance of female PhD students in engineering*. Doctoral Thesis: Corninus University of Budapest.
29. Pasque, P.A. & Nicholson, S.E. (Ed.) (2011). *Empowering women in higher education and student affairs: Theory, research, narratives, and practice from feminist perspectives*. Virginia: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
30. Pifer, M.J., & Baker, V.L. (2016). Stage-based challenges and strategies for support in doctoral education: A practical guide for students, members, and programs administrators. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 11, 15-34
31. Pop, K. J., & Wiest, L. R. (2016). Balancing family responsibilities and graduate school demands. Educational Research: Theory & Practice. *Proceedings of the 34th Annual Meeting of the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association*, 28(2), 40 – 42
32. Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J., Spaulding, L.S., & Lunde, R. (2017). Women in distance doctoral programs: How they negotiate their identities as mothers, professional, and academics in order to persist. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 12, 49-71
33. Rummell, C. M. (2015). An exploratory study of psychology graduate student workload, health, and program satisfaction. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 46(6), 391-399. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pro0000056>
34. Schadel, C. (2011). *Work-life balance among cruise ship crews: A quantitative research approach*. Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag GmbH
35. Schmidt, M., & Umans, T. (2014). Experiences of well-being among female doctoral students in Sweden, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9(1), DOI:10.3402/9HW.V9.23059
36. Schmidt, M., & Hansson, E. (2018). Doctoral students' well-being: A literature review. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 13 (1), DOI: 1080/17482631.2018.1508171
37. Strathmore University (2011). *Kenya family responsible company survey: Employee index*. Nairobi, Kenya: Strathmore University.

38. Survey of Earned Doctorates (2016). *Doctorate recipients from U.S. Universities*. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics.
39. Swarnalatha, C. & Rajalakshmi, S. (2016). *A handbook on work-life balance*. Solapur: Laxmi Book Publication.
40. Worell, J. (Ed.) (2001). *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and impact of society on gender*. San Diego: Academic Press.
41. Wairungu, J. M. (2021). *Best Practices for Reversing high Attrition and Reducing Graduation Time Frame: Doctoral Education in a Kenyan Public University*. Doctoral Dissertation: Texas Technical University.
42. Yusuf, R. M., & Hasruider, H. (2020). Work-family conflict and career development on performance of married women employees: Case of bank employees, Indonesia. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478), 9(1), 151-162