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**The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy**

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE APPROACHES AMONG EDUCATED WORKING
MARRIED MOTHERS IN EGYPT**

A Thesis Submitted to

Department of Public Policy and Administration

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Public Policy and Administration**

By

Duaa Abdel Hussein Nasr Allah Marafi

FALL 2016

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to many.

First to my baby girl Farah as she was the main reason I choose the thesis topic. To help her in the future to have work and family balanced life. I hope that someone may use it as a source of information to improve the lives of the working mothers in Egypt in the near future.

To my beloved father for everything he taught me, and my dear mam for her continuous encouragement

For my angle on earth and my great supporter Ahmed Hossam, my husband

To Ms. Asmaa El Nabalawy my Godmother for her continuous support and advises

To Ms. Maha Hegzi, my friend and elder sister for her understanding and encouragement

And to many of my friends, Ms. Abla Osman, Nevein, Samah, Lana, Manar, Salma, Hala, Menna, Marrine, Reham, Forkan, Heba, Zizi for their continuous encouragement and support to finish this thesis as they were all my support group

Thank you

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Firstly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor Prof. Ghada Barsoum for the constant support during writing this thesis, for her patience, understanding, motivation, and immense knowledge of the topic. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

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In addition, Prof. Khaled Abdel Halim, for his acceptance to be my reader in the last minutes even when he had a busy schedule

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Duaa Abdel Hussein NasrAllah Marafi
Supervised by Prof. Ghada Barsoum

ABSTRACT

This research will explore the ways in which the work–life balance (WLB) approaches can assist Egyptian educated working married mothers in balancing their lives successfully between their work and families. These mothers are navigating their way through several challenges. The major challenge is the ability to pursue a career while also managing family responsibilities. This research will focus on two streams, the working conditions and the surrounding environment of interviewed women. The research design of the study was based on qualitative methods. A purposeful sample of educated Egyptian working married mothers was chosen from women working in a variety of private, government and nonprofit organizations. The data collection method will be based on ten in-depth interviews. The study shows that the major challenge these women face is be related to time deprivation. The overall conclusion of this research indicates that a supportive environment at both home and work is crucial for these women to combine their different roles.

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Abbreviations:

- WLB : Work-Life Balance:
- CAPMAS: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
- NPO : Nonprofit organization: NPO
- OECD : Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- ILO : International Labor Organization
- EU : Europe

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Chapter One

1 - Introduction

Finding enough time to balance between one's personal life and work load is the daily living challenge that all employees face. Close family members are the most who are affected in this daily dilemma. The ability to successfully balance between work, family responsibilities and personal life is a key factor for one well-being and all members in her/his family. Organization can assist to address the issue by supporting flexible working practices in another word initiate the work life balance approaches, making it easier for their employees to live better balanced lives.

This research will explore the ways in which the work–life balance (WLB) approaches can assist Egyptians educated working mothers in balancing their lives successfully between their work and families.

To begin, we must discuss the initial creation of the WLB program. It was first introduced in the early 1970s in the United Kingdom in order to assist working mothers in balancing their work and family responsibilities (Frame & Hartog, 2003).

Conducted research on WLB had showed the significant insights into the challenges of joining work with family responsibilities “in relation to policy relevant agendas” (Levy, 2012). To study work life balance variables is a challenging process for many scholars and researchers because, unlike the ease in which work variable can be defined with, it is more challenging to define life variables with specificity. It is common, then to use terms such as “home”, “housework, and “family responsibilities”, despite their general nature (Levy, 2012).

According to CAPMAS statistics in 2015, the percentage of working women is 20.5% of the total of work force while working men is 79.5 in 2015 (CAPMAS, 2015).

Studies have been conducted regarding the challenges that working mothers face when trying to balance their work and life; however, few have tackled Egyptian educated working mothers.

Working educated mothers in Egypt are often not offered solutions to their daily challenges. As a result, there is an increasing need to promote WLB approaches for their significant roles in helping educated working mothers. Recognizing and admitting the challenges, is by itself a recognition to the role of educated working mothers in the work force. Without such recognition, these mothers are likely to leave the labor market. In the 2015 CAPMAS report, the number of women in the job market, as well as the number of women who want to join but are unable to, is very low compared to men (CAPMAS, 2015). These statistics suggest that these numbers are a result of the competitive and stressful environment that Egyptian mothers face at work combined with the social pressure they encounter to be perfect mothers as well as wives.

In this research, the researcher will attempt to study certain variables related to the Egyptian society. The focus will be specific to Egyptian educated working married mothers. This research will examine the two major streams of challenges that Egyptian educated working married mothers face during their daily life. In addition, the researcher will examine what effect these have on their careers and family lives. The two main streams are working conditions and the surrounding environment.

This study will investigate several challenges, which if overcome, may help working mothers. It will be categorized under the two main stream. Furthermore, as

each challenge possesses several variables, the challenges will be carefully investigated and discussed in detail. The objective of this research is to seek recommendations on how to improve working conditions for Egyptian educated working married mothers in order for them to be able to remain in their job; furthermore, this research hopes to examine the challenges which Egyptian educated working married mothers' face and how WLB approaches can help

This research was built on interviewing ten Egyptian middle class working mothers from different generation who are selected through snowball-chain method. The interviews gave more insights about the topic discussed and its different variables based on the Egyptian culture.

It was shown by analyzing the data of the interviews that the major challenges which affect the working mothers is the time management. The time which they need to deliver their responsibilities towards their work and family in order to have balanced life. Therefore, if they found the time to balance between their work needs and family responsibilities, they will have balanced life. This can be done through providing appropriate work life balance approaches that suits their life style.

2 - Research Questions

In order to have sufficient answers the correct questions should be asked. Each question will be discussed in details in the literature and interviewee analysis. The research will focus on finding answers to the following questions

The main research question

1. What are the challenges that educated working married mothers in Egypt face which might propel them to leave the labor market?

Specific questions

1. What are the challenging working conditions for educated working married mothers and how can they be improved?
2. What are the variables in the surrounding environment of the educated working married mothers which drive them out of the labor market?
3. How does the support of the husbands, family and managers affect educated working married mothers and how crucial is this support to their continuation in the labor market?
4. How far the availability of good childcare support for the educated working married mother help get to work or retain their jobs?

3- Conceptual Framework

The core essence of work life balance (WLB) depends on several variables. Such variables include, the working hours in addition to their flexibility, commuting time and the location of the job, and the training which employees receive to maintain a balance between their work and personal lives (Maxwell, 2005).

Another major factor of WLB success is the managers, in particular managers who implement WLB practices with specific attention to working mothers and who implement them in a positive manner which does not reflect a negative bias towards them (Maxwell, 2005).

On the other hand, on a study that was done on public accounting sector, it examine certain factors and their relations to each other (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). To illustrate, it examined the relation between WLB and quality of life among employees (ibid). There were three components of WLB which were assessed the first was the time balance which means the “equal time devoted to work and family” (ibid). The second component was the amount of the involvement balance which means the equal involvement in work and family and the last component was the satisfaction balance which means “equal satisfaction with work and family” (ibid). The study showed that for employee who spent extensive time “in their combined work and family roles, those who spent more time on family than work experienced a higher quality of life than balanced individuals who, in turn, experienced a higher quality of life than those who spent more time on work than family” (ibid).

Also, there have been several definitions and concepts in which the explanations and analyses of WLB depend on different researches’ perspectives as

well as the angle of the study. Some defined it as “the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities” (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2001).

Regarding this study, there are three appropriate definitions which are applicable. Work life balance can be defined as the “equal time, satisfaction, and involvement in each of the work and family spheres irrespective of job demands, family demands, family structure, financial pressures, and so on” (Maxwell, 2005). To illustrate, three variables that affect WLB are the amount of time, personal fulfilment and the dedication to both personal lives and work (Reiter, 2007).

A further study argued that it should be defined as the “the distribution of time and effort between work and other aspects of life” as life includes such valuables, such as health, family and friends (ILO 2011).

Also, it was suggested that one must look at WLB “as a means of tackling the problem of increasing amounts of stress in the work-place as people try to juggle a wide range of factors in their life/work environment, including: work; family; friends; health; and spirit/self” (Byrne (2005).

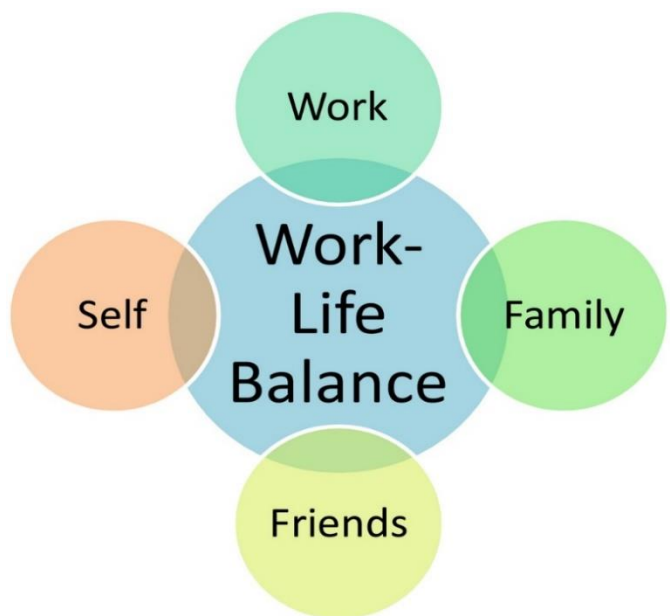


Figure 1 Work life balance

http://www.thedoctorscoach.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/shutterstock_74877166.jpg

Overall, these definitions and analyses which have been presented differ slightly; however the greatest similarity with which they tackle the definition of WLB

is that it contains several variables which affect it. These include aspects such as work, family, friends, self.

The researcher will use these variables as the main frame work in the research of WLB for educated working married mothers in Egypt.

4. Labor Regulations in Egypt: Background

A. Labor regulations; difference between public and private sectors

According to the labor law of 2003 which is implemented in both the public and private sectors and the new Civil Service 2015 Law which is implemented only in the public sector, there are articles that support the working mothers if fairly implemented in the private sector it will sure have its positive effect to attract more the female employees to it. However, the difference between both laws in the women section is the length of the maternity leaves. In the labor law 2003, the women can take up till 3 month while the new Civil Service 2015 Law she can take till four months. The common articles of the working women that are related to this research are as follows:

- The maternity leave for a female employee who spent ten months working with an employer has the right of her maternity leave with full pay.
- After giving birth, the mother has the right of to obtain non-paid leave for a maximum of 2 years.
- Working mother have the right of one hour nursing break which she can divide into two breaks to nurse her child.
- Employers with 100 female workers are required to establish a daycare to care for the female workers children.

As a result of poor execution of these rules along with others in the private sectors, women showed more interest to apply in public sector jobs than private one (Barsoum, 2016). To illustrate, in a study made in Egypt, it was interesting to see that the information provided shows that young Egyptian want to work in the public sector even when it offer lesser salaries (ibid).

In addition, finding a job in the Egyptian public sector is “a social legacy” that started in the 1960s. (ibid). As a result of the overstaffing and lack of proper structuring, in 1990 new adjustments and policies were implemented. (ibid). However, the traffic of applying still continues, as a result of private sector failing to contain the new generation entering into the Egyptian labor market (ibid).

As a result of private sector limited access to social protection, more young people were applying into the public sector (ibid). In addition, previous research had showed that young female employees in Egypt prefer to work in the public sector for “its more family-friendly working conditions” (ibid).

In addition, working in the public sector gives other tangible and non-tangible benefits such as:

- Social insurance
- Public sector is considered as trusted employer unlike the private-sector employer. As because of poor supervision, private sector employer may not submit the proper documentation to ensure the employee right in the social insurance.
- Stability in the government pension plan which is considered in many families as the main sources of income later on.

- The lack of stability in the private sector as an employee can be fired any time unlike the public sector
- The respect that working in public sector give to the employee.
- The ability to take the full maternity leaves.

As a result and based on “nationally representative survey data” it is shown that working in the public sector is highly valued (Barsoum, 2015) & (ibid).

Therefore, in order to attract again the youth especially working educated married mothers, the private sector should first grantee the implementation of the labor law of 2003 to its employees, especially the ones related to the female employees and start to implement the WLB approaches.

Chapter Two

1- Literature Review

A – International Approaches to Work-Life Balance:

In this section of the literature review, the different international experiences with work life balance will be mentioned. There have been several initiatives and directives to promote for WLB in Europe. The one which most discussed is the Parental Leave Directive (Hardy, Adnett, 2002). This directive main objective is to encourage the new parent to give more quality life to their kids; in addition to their career development (ibid). This is by providing several WLB approaches (ibid). These approaches includes and not limited to, flexible working hours, part time jobs, reduced working hours, and sharing the maternity leave with the father (ibid). This initiative was created also to encourage the working mother to contribute into the labor market for her need in the economic development and maintain society social justice (ibid).

The EU counties still need additional 10 million women in the work force even when it was double in some countries during the past 50 years (ibid). Even when based on national surveys, the employment rate for women increased and ranged between 72% to 40%. (ibid). Countries such as United Kingdom, Denmark, The Northlands, Sweden and Finland percentages already exceeded the 60% (ibid).

Each of the EU countries, has its way to implement the Parental Leave Directive that suits its laws, culture and regulations; however, at the end their major objective is to increase the working mother participation in the EU labor market (ibid).

In the global literature, two streams of research can be identified on WLB approaches. The first research stream can be labeled as the working conditions literature (e.g. Markarian, 2007; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris& Weitzman, 2001). This literature focuses on variables related to working conditions. In the working conditions, one can find many variables however, the ones which are suitable to Egyptian educated working married mother are divided into two sections ones related to time while the others depend on the nature of the job or career chosen. To illustrate, the working conditions that will be referred to in this study will be related to the following, the number of working hours, working from home, part times jobs, workload, and length of commuting time, business trips, and organization manager roles.

In the second research stream of the study will be labeled as the surrounding environment of the working mother (e.g. Joeques, Basu, Daga, Voit, DeRose, Blau, & Popkin 1991). Anything that affect the mother from her own environment. To illustrate, the surrounding environment will refer to the home responsibilities, the husband's contribution, the family support and the child-care care services/methods. Each of the two stream variables will be discussed further in the literature below in details in order to verify them with the data conducted from the interviews.

B - Working Conditions

I - Flexible working hours and working from home:

Long working hours is a major challenge for educated working married mothers; hence, flexible working hours is of key importance (Markarian, 2007).

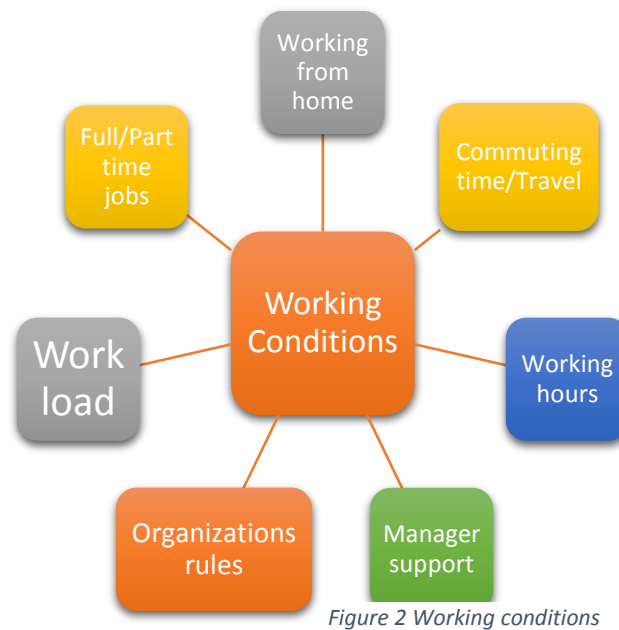


Figure 2 Working conditions

First, one must define the meaning of flexible time. It is generally defined as “the ability to rearrange one's work hours within certain guidelines offered by the company. In addition, employees are then given varying degrees of control over when they choose to fulfill their work commitment” (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, Weitzman, 2001). On the other hand, the regular jobs have regular working hours in which the employee must be working during and most of the time is required to be on-site (ibid).

Given the option of flexible working hours to the employees has its significant effect on the employees' productivity as it increases because they have a balanced life between their work and own life (Markarian, M. 2007).

Related to flexible working hour's variable, there was a study about work family balance that examined the impact of flexible working hours and location of work. (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). The data of the study were driven from "International Business Machines (IBM) work and life issues survey in the United States" in 1996 (ibid). The results of the study indicated that flexible working hours and working conditions improved the work-family balance. (ibid) Also in this study the flexible jobs is perceived by the employees and the organization as beneficial for both them (ibid).

Another case which was done in Yalova city in Turkey shows part of the advantages of flexible jobs (Work-Life Balance). In this city, ZAMBAK system was introduced, which is integrated electronic document system that enhanced the public services (ibid). The system allowed nearly 70% of employees to work remotely when needed (ibid). This system not only benefited the employee as they did not need to commute to work but also the organization as it helped the managers to better monitor the performance of their employees (ibid). In addition, it decreased office space needed which decreased the cost for the organization to manage work (ibid).

Another case study which was conducted in the UK showed that "94 percent of employers and 95 percent of employees agreed that people work best when they can achieve a good balance between work and personal life" (ibid). As listed above, there is a positive relationship between working flexible hours and employee

productivity. That also proves that flexible working hours will not only benefit the employee but also the organization.

Also positive findings were also demonstrated in study in which a recent survey by Dell and Intel suggested that “half of the remote workers surveyed said they get more work done at home, while 36 percent reported that they are equally productive as in the office (Markarian, M. 2007). On the other hand, just 14 percent said that they feel more productive when in the office (ibid).

Furthermore, beside the increase productivity of the employees, there are other positive aspects of flexible working hours which affect the employee herself such as improve one’s health. In addition, another survey indicated that working from home improves the sleeping habit of the employees (CASTELLANO, 2015). They can sleep more hours because they do not spend time in commuting to and from work every day which improves their health (ibid).

From a survey based study that was conducted from 17 different organizations based on 167 German staffs, a significant data were driven about flexible working hours at work. The more autonomy an employer gives to its employees, the more control their have over their time which reflects to have less exhausted employees. However, this study could not link between the productivity and exhaustion level (Kattenbach, Demerouti & Nachreiner, 2010).

Despite these positive arguments, there continues to be a number of mothers who have opposing opinions. Even when working from home is an option, some mothers still prefer to work in an office in order to separate their work life from their personal life because they believe that working from home will not be productive

when there is a child or children also in the home (Markarian, 2007 & Hasan, 2011). This is suggested to be especially true in telecommunications jobs (ibid).

II - Part time jobs:

According ILO part-time work convention, part-time worker is “an employee whose normal hours of work are less than those of full-time workers” (ILO, 1994). Part-time work is one of the casual and non-standard forms of employment among women (ibid).

The educated working married mothers seek any possible way to maintain their job while having balanced family life. One of these ways is working as part timer (Higgins & Johnson. 2000). Part-time jobs help women, especially those with kids or additional care responsibilities such as taking care of old family members, to enter or remain in the job market (ILO 1994). In addition, it can also provide chances for women who want to combine between being employed and continue their higher studies (ibid).

In regards to part-time jobs, a Canadian study indicated that 70% of part-time employees are mothers because of their responsibilities towards their homes and children (Higgins & Johnson 2000). The study also suggests that a part-time job offers the “best of both worlds” as it allows mothers to pursue their careers while still being able to spend time with their families (ibid).

There are, however, some drawbacks. These disadvantages include lower salaries, limited career advancement opportunities, and the assignment of routine tasks (ibid). The study continues, however, by clarifying that there are two types of part-time jobs, good and bad ones (ibid). The good part-time jobs require high-level skills and responsibilities (ibid). The good part time jobs help the mother to develop her skills

and be updated with her career path. On the other hand, the bad part time jobs are characterized by low salaries, poor training, and a low status (ibid). After a while they it will be demotivating to continue in these jobs for some mothers and only the ones who needs any kid of financial support continue (ibid).

To illustrate, it is stated that career-orientated mothers seek good part-time jobs as a source of personal and professional fulfillment, especially when time-consuming family responsibilities make it difficult to retain a full-time job (ibid). On the other hand, mothers in bad part-time jobs seek employment in order to increase the household income even if for a modest amount of money (ibid).

While evaluating the family lives for part timers, in both cases, the good or bad part timers, mothers who worked in part-time jobs stated that they are happier at home and more satisfied with their children than mothers who worked full-time jobs (Higgins& Duxbury& Johnson 2000). Therefore, in order to attract mothers into the labor market and not to lose current one, part-time jobs should be more rewarding psychologically and financially, in order to attract or maintain mothers to the job market (ibid).

III - Length of commuting time:

Not only are working hours considered a challenge but also long commuting times and in some cases business trips depend on the career chosen and road traffic. The number of people who work far away from their homes has increased during the last years due to changes in technology and relatively better transportation methods which have made it acceptable to work in place that is far away from home (Stutzer, & Frey, 2008). Therefore, long commuting times is another challenge which was added recently to the list of working mothers challenges must overcome in their daily routine

especially when there is a high traffic while in other cases, it is not considered a challenge due to less traffic and better public transportation.

In Egypt, according to study which was based on data taken from mobile application called “Beyollak” in 2012, that’s depend on users’ feedback about routes daily traffic, Egypt considered to have high traffic especially during the morning and afternoon.

The density of traffic during all week days is high in Egypt. In addition density increases during the times of usual in and out of the employees. The commuting time in Egypt if someone does not work near his/her home may take more than hour. In addition, sometimes, it takes an hour even if it is near their homes as the high density of the traffic.

These long commutes have been shown to have far more negative than positive consequences if any. The negative consequences involve negative physical effects and mental ones. (Stutzer, & Frey, 2008). It should be noted that the high mental stress rates mothers tend to have due to long commuting times are not related to gender tolerance ability, but rather to the significant amount of responsibilities that the mothers have towards their daily housework, including child care more than their male colleagues (ibid)

The stress levels decreases when the housework responsibilities, including parenting, are shared equally between the husband and wife (Roberts, Hodgson & Dolan, 2011). However, if this does not occur then more stress is placed on the working mother which then often results in her leaving her job. (Roberts, Hodgson, & Dolan, 2011).

IV - Long working hours and work load:

A significant variable of WLB is the amount of time an employee spends at work. According to evidence, long working hours increase stress and weaken personal health (Work-Life Balance). Furthermore, the more working hours, the less time people have to spend on other things, such as family time and oneself (ibid). It is noted that quality of time spend on personal life is important for people's overall well-being, and it brings additional mental and physical benefits (ibid)

A study conducted in Sweden examined the effects of long working hours on the household responsibilities of both females and males (Casinowsky 2013). The study highlighted some major points. For example, mothers tend to reduce their working hours to take care of their newborns until the child reaches an older age; men, conversely, tend to keep their full-time jobs (ibid).

In addition, well-educated couples share the domestic responsibilities more equally than the less-educated ones, especially less-educated males (ibid). It is also argued that even if mothers have free time, they spend it on their families and kids because they feel guilty for leaving them in order to work. Men, on the other hand, do not share the same feeling and instead enjoy their free time (ibid).

Some couples in the study who have kids had an agreement where one can leave the home for longer working hours and the other can take more domestic and family responsibilities to compensate for the absence of the other (ibid). However, in many cases of working mothers, this tends not to occur because of the reasons of guilt mentioned above (ibid).

V - Organization and managers' rules:

Since the beginning of the 21st century and voices of the right to have WLB life arose as the rules of family members started to change and women are more involved in the labor market. (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Introducing WLB approaches can help employees to manage “the contemporary stresses associated with balancing work and family demands” (ibid).

By rejecting to implement the WLB approaches, the employer may be assuming it will increase the operational costs; however, this means that the employers are not considering the cost resulted from the stressful working conditions. (Halpern, 2005). The stressful condition of the job do not “depend on the nature of the job as much as it depends on whether workers believe that they have the ability to control the stressful aspects of the job” (ibid).

If the employers invested into keeping their employees through providing WLB approaches, they will have positive return from this investment. (ibid). To illustrate, the employers will pay less in the health care services they pay for their employees as the employees will have less health issues (ibid). In addition and as a result of a better health, the worker will produce more (ibid). As for the cost of training the new employees, it will decrease as the employers will have less turnovers because they would develop a committed employees (ibid).

The more flexibility is given to the employees in regards of work timing and location of decreases their sense of stress in fulfilling the needs of work and family (ibid). Therefore, organization can be encouraged to offer this to their employees especially when the costs of such arrangements and programs are relatively small (ibid).

Regarding positive WLB approaches in the organizations, the benefits to companies who understand and support these practices have been investigated. (Maxwell, 2005). First of all, offering WLB approaches creates a positive impression in the eyes of prospective employees which then results in the company having a larger selection pool for recruiting new staff (ibid). In addition, the rise in 24/7 service options has supported an increase in a particular WLB practice: implementing flexible working hours (ibid). Another benefit is that technology facilitates WLB practices, thus making it easier to implement (ibid). As an overall result, practicing WLB encourages a higher level of employee commitment to their companies (ibid).

As with all advantages, however, there are also disadvantages. If WLB is poorly supervised, it can discourage companies from implementing it and it can cause resistance from managers to reinforce it (ibid).

The culture and structure of the organization are other factors which can affect the success of WLB in any organization (ibid). Despite these possible complications, a study suggests that managers are the key factor when ensuring a positive implementation of WLB practices. Specifically, managers must monitor the working hours, work flow and assure the quality of the work presented. (Maxwell, 2005).

An example of successful WLB practices was witnessed in a hotel and leisure complex in Peebles Hydro in the Scottish Borders region (ibid). This hotel introduced

WLB practices in 2001 in an attempt to resolve the difficulties they were facing in retaining and recruiting quality staff in a field where employees are expected to work long shifts (ibid). As a result of these changes, more qualified employees were retained and better job performance was shown (ibid). Hence, to guarantee successful WLB practices, there should be a strong management system with a focus on supervision.

C - Surrounding Environment

I - The child-care care services/methods and family support:

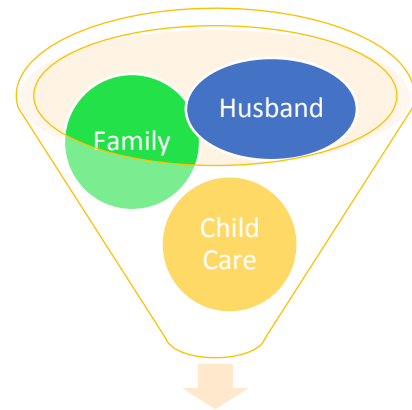
The researcher will analyze in this section the second stream which is the surrounding environment of working married mothers.

To begin, childcare services and the methods provided for working mothers will be analyzed as they are often considered the most essential factors affecting whether a working mother can have a career or not.

It is important to note that the literature regarding childcare in developing countries lacks information and analysis of the different childcare methods. Nevertheless, it has been shown that working mothers in urban areas face more childcare difficulties than in rural areas. (Joekes, Basu, Daga, Voit, DeRose, Blau, & Popkin, 1991).

In this section of the literature, the researcher aims to outline the different means used for childcare by working mothers in Egypt, including feasibility and availability. With regards to Egypt, no national-level survey has been found nor statistical reports on the methods of childcare; however, studies exist concerning the customary childcare arrangements of developing countries which can then be related to Egypt.

In developing countries where the family income is low, children are left unattended or with a neighbor or older siblings while the mother is at work. (Joekes, Basu, Daga, Voit, DeRose, Blau, & Popkin, 1991).



Surrounding Environment

Figure 3

In middle-class families, it is socially acceptable for children to be left with an adult member of the family such as grandparents and aunts until the child reaches preschool age (ibid). The most common method is to pay for a professional daycare or nursery; this arrangement is the most financially demanding (ibid).

Access to childcare support is a major challenge to many mothers. When appropriate childcare support is unavailable, many mothers who can afford the option of staying home give priority to take care of their kids rather than seeking paid work. This tends to occur in many societies, especially developing ones, where a woman's worth is defined by her role as a mother (ibid).

Although the absence of available childcare services may prevent a mother from pursuing a career, it has also been shown that when there is a financial need this may force her to accept a job (ibid). Furthermore, she is likely to take a job that has minimal opportunities for career development and which has a low salary (ibid). It is also common for mothers to accept low paying jobs which allow them to work from home as a way to simultaneously care for their children (ibid).

In addition to what was found in the scope of this research, it has been discovered that low-class working mother who do not have access to childcare support sometimes leave their children unattended at home after they have fed them a large meal in the morning (ibid).

In some cases, working mothers tend to prefer working part-time when their children are young because childcare services are financially demanding, especially care for children under three years old (Bagger& Gutek, 2008).

Later on, when their children are in the teenager years, the mothers often return back to the normal working hours as their children require less time dedicated to their

daily care (ibid). It has been suggested that handling work and family becomes less demanding as children grow older (ibid).

In general, when mothers work full-time they often work twice as much as men due to the unpaid household duties they complete after work (ibid). Not only this, but the household tasks consume a considerable amount of time especially when there is also a child to take care of (ibid). The younger the child is, the more responsibilities and duties are consigned to the mothers, even more so when housework duties are added into the equation (ibid).

Another element that affects mothers' working patterns is the expectation that her time should be compromised for her children's schooling time. Hence, sometimes the best job for many mothers is a part-time job. Regarding men, while mothers tend to compromise their careers for their families' sake, men tend to have more stable careers (ibid). However, recent years have shown an increase in options for mothers regarding childcare arrangements as fathers and grandparents have become more involved in family life.

11- Home responsibilities and the husband's contribution:

One of the major challenges which working mothers face due to their surrounding environment is the amount of unpaid work which they are expected to perform at home compared to men. (Shafer, 2011). Such responsibilities at home include cleaning, ironing or driving the kids on a daily basis. Men, on the other hand, are often considered less responsible for completing housework duties, even if they have less working hours (ibid).

In other words, in some cases wives contribute more income to the household, yet men do not assist in the house responsibilities (Shafer, 2011). Furthermore, an

economic theory found that if the husband's salary is sufficient to support the couple's desired lifestyle, then mothers tend to leave their jobs for the housework. (ibid). This is particularly true if the mothers' salaries are low (ibid).

The economic theory further explains that mothers also tend to leave the job market if their husbands work more than 40 hours per week because of the necessary domestic responsibilities and childcare (ibid). The mothers justified this by explaining the negative consequences which children often experience when both their parents work for long hours; hence mothers tend to exit the job market for the sake of the family (ibid). In addition, mothers often sacrifice their careers for their husbands' career development if they work more than 40 hours per week; however, that does not happen visa- versa as men tend to keep their jobs even if the mothers work longer hours (ibid). Furthermore, regardless of the quantity of hours that the mothers work, men tend not to increase the amount of assistance they provide towards domestic responsibilities; this sometimes leads the working mothers to exit the labor market to fulfill the domestic responsibilities (ibid).

However, leaving the labor market for a period of time makes it difficult for mothers to return, and it also affects their ability to apply for higher salaries and positions (ibid). It is detrimental to their careers and it can "cause a 30% decline in earnings upon professional mothers' reentry to the labor force" (ibid). In the end, the husband's contribution to the housework is a significant factor for the continuity of their wife's careers. Furthermore, housework responsibilities are an evident challenge for many working women, in particular, mothers (Jones, 2012).

Chapter Three

1 - Research Methodology

The research area will focus on Egyptian educated working married mothers. The sample of the research is derived from Egyptian working married mothers who were chosen from a variety of private, government and nonprofit organizations with no focus in a particular field. In addition, educated mother refers to higher education degree and higher socio-economic background.

They will be chosen through the snowball- chain technique which “identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know cases are information rich.” (Marshall & Rossman,, 2011).

The research design of the study was implemented based on qualitative method. The reason behind this choice is that the qualitative method increases the understanding of the topic discussed. It make the reader live the experience rather than reading figures which make him/her to understand the view target reached population (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

The researcher collected detailed data regarding the challenges which Egyptian married educated working mothers face, as well as the difficulties which encourage them to leave the labor market. In order to provide insight into the topic, 10 in-depth interviews were conducted for a length of 20 to 30 minutes; however, some interviews took more than hour as the participants were open to providing more information and eager to participate in reach which may help them or their daughters in the future. The interviews were conducted from 1st of August 2016 till 31st 2016

Table 2: interviewees selected characteristics

Pseudonyms Names	Age	Current Job	Married since	Number of kids	Place of work	Work experience
Amal	<60s	Head	< 35	Three	NPO	< 40 yrs
Lama	<55	Director	< 35	Three	Government	< 35 yrs
Karma	<35	Senior Officer	< 10	Two	NPO	<10 yrs
Maha	<30	Manager	< 6	Two	NPO	< 8 yrs
Ruba	<37	Manager	< 15	Two	NPO	< 15 yrs
Gana	<30	Coordinator	< 12	Two	Private	< 12 yrs
Noha	<30	Teacher	< 7	One	Schools	< 3 yrs
Nourhan	<30	Coordinator	< 5	One	NPO	< 8 yrs
Donia	<40	Adviser	< 15	One	NPO	< 15 yrs
Hager	<30	Coordinator	< 5	Two	Private	< 5 yrs

The structure of the interviews was semi-structured. The lists of questions were set; however, there was still a room for other similar and in depth questions in case of interesting answers.

The interviewing sample from the target population, gave lots of details which were needed to know more about the topic since, it was rarely talked about. Pseudonyms names were used as to protect the interviewees and make them feel more comfortable to give more in depth answers.

The interviews were principally conducted by phone calls so as to accommodate the busy schedule of working mothers. Also, even though the participants knew that the interview may be taped; the researcher decided not to tape anything. This is to make the interviewees feel more comfortable to answers any question. In addition, it was noticed that some interviewees were concerned. Therefore, all the interviews were not recorded as it may cause the interviewees to not talk freely.

As the research data was to be collected from interviews, a pre-determined set of questions were written and then applied in the interview; however, additional time for further follow-up questions were permitted. The interviewees were not provided the questions in advance, however, they were given briefing about the topic and question types. In addition, there was a statement of consent which each participant read and signed prior to the interview. The statement of consent highlights the research topic, aim and objective as well as how the data will be used. The researcher acquired IRB approval before conducting the interview.

It was a big challenge to find someone who is willing to talk freely about the research study topic without feeling censored or shy. Another challenge is to take 20 mints to 40 mints from her valuable time to conduct the interview from busy schedule. Some interviews were interrupted many times by the interviewees' kids or husbands. During the interviews one question which should be asked, was not asked as it would cause embarrassment to the interviewees to answer which was their salaries.

Chapter Four

1- Data Collection and Analysis

In the following section, ten interviews with Egyptian educated married mothers who work in the government, private and nonprofit organizations will be analyzed for more in-depth data about the topic. The questions covered the two streams of the literatures which are the working conditions and surrounding environment.

After analysis of the interviews, the researcher grouped the interviewees into the two categories that emerged from the rich qualitative data. The first group gave great credit that they still working due to the help of surrounding environment especially supportive family members. While the second group, gave the full credit to their current job better working conditions.

A - Working conditions

I - Working hours:

In this section, the major variables which affect working conditions will be analyzed which are number of working hours, working from home, part times jobs, workload, and length of commuting time, business trips, and organization manager roles.

The first variable that will be analyzed is the number of working hours as this was an essential component to job consideration for interviewees. Specifically, interviewees chose their current jobs based on fixed or flexible number working hours that were compatible with their family life responsibilities. This occurred even when their previous work has been more rewarding.

Maha, mother of two boys aged less than 5 years, had a promising and financially-rewarding job before she was married. She was working in newly well-established governmental business company that was under direct supervision from the Egyptian prime minister to encourage the Egyptian economy.

“I was working in well know and booming place. It was newly established government office which the Egyptian prime minister just opened so we were his baby. We got very competitive packages. The only disadvantage was the late working hours. Therefore, when I was engaged and the wedding date was set, I had to quit as it was far away from my husband flat and we planned to have babies without any delay” (Maha, August 2016)

Unfortunately in Maha’s case, it required long working hours and in some cases her work day continued beyond 6 or 7pm. Two months before marriage, it became apparent to Maha that these long working days would not coordinate well with her future family lifestyle; thus, she made the decision to quit her job. According to Maha, her priority at that time was to have kids and to spend more time with them; she therefore would need to select a less demanding job with fixed working hours until 4pm. When asked to rate her career development, she appraised it as 2 out of 5, where 5 is the highest; her assessment of her family life was 5 out of 5 (where 1 is the least and 5 is the highest). Maha also added that she wishes her current career was as rewarding as her previous one. She is satisfied of her current job as she can balance between her desire to work and her desire to have successful family life but still wish to have excitement job as she used to.

“I like my current job but wish if I still feel the thrill of my previous job when I achieve my target and it was really finically rewarding job” (Maha, August 2016)

Similar case was Hager who is mother of two boys aged less than 5 years, she left her former job because, as she explained, her manager would require her to do overtime even when that does not suits her.

Presently, she is working at an institution which has fixed hours.

“My manager is not considering one, she forced me to work to finish the report that she present as hers to the top administration. I hated that job” (Hager, August 2016)

Also Ruba, mother of two teenage girls, left her promising job in exchange for a less demanding job with fixed working hours. This current situation has left her feeling dissatisfied with the state of her career development. She wishes she had remained in her former job; however, she admitted that her ability to stay in such a demanding environment would have been very limited due to the fact that she is a working mother. Ruba rated her carrier development as 3 out of 5, and her family life as a 3 because she faces marital problem due to a lack of support from her husband.

“I loved my previous job, but I had to leave for the girls. I am fine with my current job but still I do not feel any career development at all” (Ruba, August 2016)

While the interviewees above showed dissatisfaction with their current career situations, other working mothers expressed contentment. An example of the latter is Gana. Gana, mother of two boys less than 13, chose to work in the education field, specifically in schools, because of their working hours and more holidays especially during the summer; however, she also made this career choice because she loves the school environment. Gana also expressed satisfaction with her career development and family life; she further explained that she prefers her current situation over her previous bank job because she is currently able to spend more time with her two kids.

Working in schools gave her more time with her kids as she used to take more holidays and her working hours are shorter than the bank's one where she used to work till 5.

“I love the school environment, I love to teach and work in schools. Schools gives lots of benefits for working mother from my point of view. The major one is that I can take the days off with my kids easily as we have same holidays” (Gana, August 2016)

Noha, mother of a three year old boy, also elected to work in a school because of its working hours and holidays. Interestingly, Noha's previous job was also in the education field however her position was adjunct faculty at a university. Despite its better status than working in schools, Noha left the university and currently works as a school teacher in order to fulfill her career goals. She considers herself fortunate to have a career where she is not only passionate but which is also compatible with her family lifestyle.

“Not all people work in the field they wish for. I am lucky because I actually love what I do. I love working with this age group. I like the feeling that I actually making a difference” (Noha, August 2016)

Nourhan, a working mother of a 3 year old girl, also regards herself as lucky to work in a place and in a job where she feels content. She hopes to continue working there and to receive a promotion.

“My job is not complicated but simple and must be organized very well. I love it and the love the fact that I can work in the place I do work at now.” (Nourhan August 2016)

Donia, a mother of a three year old girl, explained that she selected to work in an organization with fixed working hours as it positively suits her lifestyle and allows her to fulfill her travelling duties as a PhD scholar.

“My boss accepts the fact I travel a lot which makes me think twice before I consider leaving this job”

Lama, a working mother of three children aged 18 and over, has been working in the government sector for approximately 30 years. She chose to work in this sector because it has fixed working hours, several holidays, and she explained that the workload is minimal. Lama further clarified that she is motivated by the financial aspect of her job and not by the possibility of future career development; moreover, she was “*blessed*” and received promotions until she attained the managerial level because she remained in her job and the Egyptian labor law delivers promotion based on completed cumulative years. Quoting Lama’s words talking about her work:

“The main reason for women to work is to support her family financially any extra benefit we should thank God for. The women should focus more on is her home, kids and husband are happy” (Lama, August 2016)

When asked on scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is the least and 5 is the highest) how they would rate their satisfaction levels in regards to their career development, some interviewees wished for higher satisfaction and more opportunities.

For example, unlike Ruba, Gana rated her family life and career development as a 5; she emphasized her desire to keep her career and she acknowledged the support of domestic helpers who assist in managing a positive family life. Many interviewed mothers shared similar experiences but also added that their work is more productive when they are confident that their homes are organized and their kids are content.

“When the home is organized, I can focus more on my career, without the domestic help I would never made it so far.”(Gana August 2016)

Despite these positive experiences, some of the interviewees, such as Ruba and Maha, continued to emphasize the commitment they made for a better family life by sacrificing their promising careers.

“It was hard decision to leave the job I love but I took it for the girls.” (Ruba August 2016).

The first part of the findings confirmed the conclusions drawn by previous studies discussed in the literature review concerning working hours; specifically, the results agreed that long working hours and demanding jobs are one of the challenges for working mothers and one of the causes for making them change their careers (Markarian, M. 2007). In addition, when they choose a career path based on financial gains they expressed dissatisfaction with their career development later in life (Markarian, M. 2007 & Syed Shabib ul Hasan. 2011).

Despite choosing to work in less demanding jobs, all the interviewees acknowledged that they still wished for less working hours, even those who finished by 1:30pm or 2:00 pm, in order to dedicate more time to their family and self being.

“I still wished for less working hours even when I used to finish around 2:00 pm. I loved to spend time with my kid’s especially when they were young” (Gana August 2016)

Noha, a mother who works at school, desired more time for herself to read and paint as she used to prior to being married and have kid.

“I always wished for more time for myself to paint again as I used to. Also to read more books as I believe it is healthy to have more time away from all the home and kid’s responsibilities” (Noha August 2016)

On the other hand, Gana, who also works in school, wished for less working hours in order to have more time for the kids, only. These same sentiments were shared by Karma, working mother of two boys less than 10.

“An extra time for the kids would be great for me and them. It would sure make me more organized and feel less guilty as they love to spend time with me” (Karma August 2016)

The findings of this research, when compared to the literature, suggest strong similarities as both suggest that working mothers prefer working for less working hours to give more time for their home responsibilities and to support their kids (Joeke, Basu, Daga, Voit, DeRose, Blau, & Popkin 1991) & (Markarian, 2007 & Hasan, 2011).

II - Part time jobs:

When asked about working in part time jobs, all interviewees expressed discontent with the term, explaining that their concerns originated with the low status image that part time jobs are given by society. This was discovered while interviewing the working mothers.

All of them preferred to call it a reduced working hour job.

“I won’t prefer working in job as part timer and prefer to work in job where I can work less hours” (Karma August 2016)

Agreeing with Karma, Gana said that

*“No way will I work in job as part timer. I can work in job which have few working hours as its nature, or which I can seek permission to work reduced working hours.”
(Gana August 2016)*

Additionally, they listed the benefits of full time jobs in terms of money, number of days off and maternity leaves and remarked how settling for a part time job deprived them of these benefits.

*“If I accept the part time job, then I will have to accept the few benefits that are offered while, I can work as full timer with reduced working hours but with more benefits”
(Karma August 2016)*

III - Working from home:

Working from home was not an option for all interviewees, especially overtime unlike some. For example, Amal, mother of three and working in a non-profit organization, explains that she was always required to complete overtime work from home, particularly when she had senior level positions.

Working mothers who were interviewed agreed it was often necessary to return to their offices to complete overtime work as it provided the required facilities as well as the ability to work without interruptions, mainly from their kids.

Donia, a mother of a three year old girl, insists she does not accept working from home except in rare cases because she would be interrupted by her little girl and unable to focus on her work.

*“It is very difficult to work from home. I prefer to finish my work at the office as my kid love to interrupt me while working at home so it’s easier for me to work the overtime at work and also by this way I finish the work faster”
(Donia August 2016).*

This same point was addressed in the literature review as it suggested that mothers tend to separate their work life from their home life due to interruptions cause by their children (ibid).

IV - Length of commuting time:

In the literature, the commuting time was a significant variable among working mothers, and this was supported by the research findings as interviewees explained that this affected where they choose to work (CASTELLANO, S. 2015). They stated it should be near their homes, their kids’ activity venues, clubs, and training sessions. For example, Karma, a working mother of two boys aged less than ten years, is responsible for driving her boys from school to their club trainings; therefore, it was important to her to choose a job that was located in close proximity.

“To balance everything, everything is near everything. The club, our home, the nursery and the school to save time and effort.” (Karma August 2016)

Another example is Gana, a working mother of two boys. She expressed the same concerns but for her it would be unmanageable to work more than 30 minutes away from her house in order to fulfill the needs of her family responsibilities, social life and kids' sport trainings.

"I would never work in place away from my home more than 20 minutes" (Gana August 2016)

Amal also considers working near her home as a key factor to her success in maintaining a positive WLB. In addition, Lama, stated she chose to work in the government sector because of its proximity to her home less than 30 minutes; she further added that she does not believe it would be easy to relocate to a private company as many would not enable her to have stable family life.

"For sure working near my home helped a lot. I used to reach home in 25 minutes." (Lama, August 2016)

V- Organizational Rules and Support from Supervisors:

The organization and manager rules were influential in encouraging the interviewees to continue working for the same company (Maxwell, 2005). For example, Hager, a working mother of two boys below the age of three years, left her job due to her manager's lack of support to her family emergency situations, especially when her kids were young.

Also Gana, a working mother of two boys less than 10 years, faced a similar but worse situation with her manager who forced her to go to work when her son was in the hospital to receive care for a sensitive medical condition. Despite that situation, Gana did not leave her job.

"My manager was very tough but taught me well how to work under pressure. She made me learn by the hard way

how to handle family emergency situations while keeping the same level of good preference. I loved her for that". (Gana, August 2016)

Although several interviewers experiences extreme lack of support from their managers, other did not.

Lama, a working mother of three aged 18 and over, revealed that

"During my thirty years of work, I was managed by several managers, each has his own way to deal with me and my colleagues' family situations. When the manager has a daughters, he usually treat us better than the one who do not". (Lama, August 2016)

Karma, a mother of two, explains a more positive experience with her manager and reported that

"The manager was always supporting me to be there for my kids even in their school mid-day parties, so I worked many time after the working hours and tried to do my best to be up to her expectations because she is kind with me concerning my family circumstances." (Karma, August 2016)

Noha, a mother of a three year boy, on the other hand did not share an open relationship with her manager as Karma was able to.

Noha used to lie to her managers and would not provide prior notice when it was necessary to leave work to take care of her sick son because her manager believes that a sick child can be taken care of the grandmother and not necessary the mother .

According to Noha,

"This is the only way I can take day off, I say a lie about me, my car ...anything as long as it not because of my son and in the same day. But, if I said to them in ahead one day, they will say no". (Noha, August 2016)

Similar cases were described by Maha, a mother of two boys under the age of five years, and Nourhan, a mother of girl less than three years. Maha and Nourhan shared the same manager and defined her as “moody” (Maha, August 2016).

To illustrate, they explained that if she were to be in a positive mood then requesting a day off of work could be easily attained; however, if she were to be in a negative mood and the work load was high she would become irritated. Furthermore, she would begin delivering harsh notices to them even if their request was to take care of a sick child.

From the interviews, the researcher has found that the findings support the literature in suggesting that the manager is an important factor who can encourage or discourage working mothers to continue in their work (Maxwell, 2005).

B - Surrounding Environment

During the interviews, the questions related to the husband’s contribution and family support were the most discussed and had the most significant effect on the working mothers.

I - Husband Contribution

The husband's role either made it easier or more difficult for the working mothers to work. Amal, a working mother of three aged 25 and over, who used to take the role of a father and a mother in the same time as her husband had a demanding business.

Still, her husband was used to spend time with his kids whenever possible. She stated that

“Since thirty years and my husband work is considered demanding job, he used to work even in weekends because he works in his own private business; therefore, I was the mother and father to my kids most of the time. However, in his free time, he makes sure to spend sometimes with the kids.” (Amal, August 2016)

When she was asked how she felt about that, she said

“In many times I was tired and feel I cannot do it anymore; I needed his help; however, I believe if he worked in the usual working hours he won't agree that I work from home or work for late hours and I won't be at this position that I reached now”. (Amal August 2016)

In addition, Amal explained that she and her husband used to work very hard to provide the necessities that their children required as they grew up, and that they were successful in achieving this.

Lama shared the same experience as Amal. Amal assured that she was content to complete the housework without the assistance of her husband because she appreciated the long hours he put into his work and that he was able to provide a good income for the house.

On the other hand, Gana, a working mother of two boys under the age of ten years, faced different situation with a husband who does not know much about kids and was not interested to spend time with them even when he had time. She said that

“I am doing everything for my kids because my husband is not there and busy in his private business. Sometimes, the kids does not see him and he actually do not know anything about the kids. To the extend he was surprised that his elder son had great sport achievements that he did not know about till he was 8 years old. He does not want to involve himself in the kids’ lives. He make me work just to me not to bother him.” (Gana August 2016)

Donia, a mother of one girl under the age of three years, explained that her husband’s late working hours enabled her to work more. She continued to add that his overtime work was beneficial in helping her start, as well as finish, her higher academics degrees more easily. Furthermore, she explained that her husband was afraid to handle their baby in the beginning but that he has begun to overcome this and is able to handle her within certain limits.

From these interviews, it seems that some mothers are not bothered by the lack of their husband’s presence in the family with the condition that he is away most of the tie due to career development goals. This sentiment continues to be true even when the interviewees felt overloaded with their kids’ responsibilities.

On the other hand, Hager, a working mother of two toddlers’ boys, wished her husband was more helpful even with his extended working hours. Hagar explains that at times she does not see him for days and that she feels unable to take care of her kids without his assistance.

“I wish he can help more in raising the boys. Sometimes I feel I am overwhelmed” (Hager August 2016.)

Ruba shared common sentiments with Hager. Ruba is a working mother of two teenage girls and her husband does not offer much support with the housework. When asked to comment on her career advancement, Ruba admitted she wishes it were better and that she had changed her career path for her family. She continued to explain that she had been very content in her prominent jobs and that she feels frustrated that her husband does not appreciate her sacrifice.

“I really wish my husband to appreciate me leaving my previous job but he does not which frustrates me. (Ruba August 2016)

As for Karma, a mother of two boys, she said that her husband rarely shares the responsibility of taking care of the boys; however, he will immediately offer his assistance in critical times. She explains that he is helpful to some extent but would appreciate it if he would do more.

Noha, a mother of a three year old boy, shares the same experience as Karma about her husband. She explains that her husband does not offer to help except on hectic days; furthermore, he will only assist with limited tasks such as feeding a snake or watching him for a few minutes.

Only, Maha, a mother of two boys, shared her appreciation for any effort her husband provides to help her with the kids. She contended he does the best he can do. *“I appreciate everything he does with the boys, he is a kind hearted husband and he is doing his best for me and the boys.” (Maha August 2016)*

II- Supporting extended families:

The significant factor that aided many interviewees in balancing their lives was the help of their families. Lama gave immense credit to her mother for her support in taking care of her kids while she was in school. *She said:*

“My mam, never accepted me to put the kids in a day care. She used to say, as long as I am a live my grandson and granddaughters, are always welcome to my house.” (Lama, August 2016)

A similar experience was shared by Donia who explained that her mother is the one who helps her raise her little girl. Donia’s mom takes the child to nursery and brings her back and she is responsible for her when she is sick. Donia remains living with her mom because she is certain that she would not be able to raise her child if her mother was not there.

“It is impossible I can raise my child alone, as I just told you my husband rarely help so I definitely need my mom’s help” (Donia, August 2016)

Hagar feels she is blessed to have a mother and father who are available to take care of her two boys when her workload is overwhelming. For example, when she must remain at work to complete overtime, they will take the two boys back from the nursery; similarly, they will take care of them when they are sick and Hagar must go to work.

“Thank God I have my parent to help me with the kids, without their help, I would be able to work till now” (Hager, August 2016)

While Maha and Noha's parents cannot assist with taking care of their grandsons, Maha and Noha still feel blessed with their mothers in laws who babysit their kids after school until they return from work.

III - Child Care Services/Methods:

While the interviewees already mentioned have immediate family members to assist in raising their children, other interviewees do have such support because their families are deceased or too old to take care of the kids. Gana and Amal described their appreciation for the domestic help they have and both described having nannies for their kids since they were born.

Ruba, Karma and Nourhan have similar situations concerning family members but rather than hiring domestic help, they bring their children to day care. All three interviewees believe that without the help of the day care and after school activities they would not be able to work.

Conclusion

Working mothers in Egypt are navigating their way through several challenges. The major obstacle is the ability to start a career while also managing family responsibilities. The meaning of the work life balance in this research study is based on two streams: the working conditions and the surrounding environment of the mothers.

The two streams that the researcher focused on were working conditions and the surrounding environment. Working conditions refer to, the number of working hours, working from home, part time jobs, workload, length of commuting time, business trips, and organization and manager rules. While the surrounding environment is related to home responsibilities, the husband's contribution, family support and the child-care care services/methods.

Each was discussed in details in the literature and was validated by the interviews data. Based on the literature review and interviews, one can validate the concepts and variables which were mentioned and related them to these challenges that affect the work life balance.

The interview results supported what was mentioned in the literature. Speaking with these working mothers was a transformational experience as they were eager to discuss their daily struggles to balance their work and personal lives.

The researcher believes that although it may prove to be difficult to maintain a successful WLB, it can nevertheless achieved if implements and has access to the appropriate variables and factors. Furthermore, the more positive factors then the higher the success percentage

The data collection method that the researcher mainly depended on was through interviews which gave more insights to the topic and highlighted the major challenge that all mothers face, which is the factor of time.

The general research question asked what are the challenges that working married mothers in Egypt face which propel them to leave the labor market? It may appear easily to indicate what motivates a working mother to abandon the labor market; however, at the in the same time we must recognize the complexity of this issue as one variable may affect one working mother more than another. For example, some of the interviewees do not consider it is important if the husband's supports or contributes to the house responsibilities, while others believed it is vital and needed.

The findings suggest that the main challenge which working mothers face is the ability to find time to fulfill the work assignments and family needs. The time to do what no one around her can do except her, her work tasks, driving the kids, cleaning the house and making all the cooking, ect.

Thus, anything that takes from her the time will sure cause her a problem to manage. To illustrate, if the commuting time is long, if the working hours are extensive, or the work requires overtime then it can be considered a challenge. Similarly, if the house chores need lots of time, it is considered a challenge as it will take away from her family quality time.

Therefore the possible solutions, any assistance that will provide more family time for the working mother is beneficial. Such solutions include improving the two main streams discussed in both the literature and the data analysis chapters.

Concerning the first stream, the working conditions, and the working mother can be offered the option of the reduced working hours to give her more time. Also, her manager understanding toward the working mother life style and emergencies that she endures every day, will decrease the level of her daily stress and will make her continue working. The organization should empower the working mother to be more productive by providing understanding supportive working environment. Also, the organization can start offering more good part time jobs that not only financially rewarding but also a job where working mother can gain experience and skills. In addition, the organizations should encourage the working mothers to work when they are most productive and creative by providing work flexible hours.

On other hand, working mother can choose to work in close proximity to her home to save time and energy. All these solutions, that is driven from the literature and the interview analysis which are related to the working condition and will help in keeping working mother in the labor market.

The second stream which is the surrounding environment have a great impact on the working mother. If working mother has a supportive and helpful husband, this will sure help the family to have balanced life.

In addition, the factor of having helping and caring family members, helped many working mothers when there was no option for child care services. Therefore, the families are encouraged to help their daughter or even their sons to have balanced lives. On the other hand, offering good child care services, helps working mother taking care of their kids when no one can. The more options the mother have, the mother time she can maintain her job.

Recommendations

The below proposed recommendations section is presented to help both the Egyptian married working mother and the organization, along with the government to implement WLB approaches successfully. The below section will be divided into three, recommendation for the working mother, for the organization and for the government.

For the working mothers:

- Work in a place near by the home to save time and efforts.
- Apply for jobs in the organizations that encourage the WLB approaches

For the Organizations:

- Give to the working mothers the right to choose between the different WLB approaches discussed in this research such as flexible working hours, reduced working hours and good part time jobs.
- Started an effective monitoring system for these approaches to control their outcomes.
- Give the working mother the right to take her maternal leave according to 2003 Labor laws
- Offer more training workshops for the WLB approaches

For the government:

- Start integrating the WLB approaches into the labor law.
- Have more strict monitoring system to monitor the private sectors to make sure the employees have taken their rights.

All of these recommendations would help a working mother while she struggles to find time for all of her responsibilities. When balanced is achieved in working mother family, personal and work lives, all will have their share of gain. The organization will gain a productive happy employee, the family will have balanced peaceful life and the working mother will have happy, healthy, peaceful, stress-free and balanced life.

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Appendix 1

Interviews questions:

- Are you married?
- Are you employed? Since when?
- Is it private, government institution or else?
- What is the nature of your job?
- What is your working hours?
- How long it takes you to reach work?
- How long it takes you to reach home?
- What is your average salary?
- What are your job benefits?
- Are you paying in your home expenses? If yes what percentage from the home expenses?
- Are you paying in your kid's school daycare expenses? If yes what percentage from kid's school daycare expenses?
- Do your employer has daycare for its employee kids? If yes, are you satisfied with it?
- Do you see you manager as supporter you or not in terms of family emergencies? Why?
- Do you have kids? If yes, how many?
- What are their ages?
- Do you have kids at school?
- Who drive them back and forth?
- At summer time where they goes to during your working hours?
- When you are at work, who take care of your baby and toddlers kids (who are not in school)?
- Who drive them back and forth?
- How long it takes?
- Is your kids with or against you working?
- Do you feel guilty going to work?
- If no please elaborate why useful to her
- If your kids in daycare, please advise your feedback about it (why you choose it, is it costly, ect)
- Does your husband support or object you going to work? Please elaborate.....,
- Does your husband share with you your home chores responsibilities? If yes, what he do? How often? If no why?
- Does your husband share with you your children responsibilities? Feeding, bathing, doing homework and driving to sport or art activities, ect...? If yes, how often? If no why?
- Do you hire domestic help? If yes, what domestic help means to you? (Babysitting, cooking, cleaning, ect...)
- How much you pay for it each time it is used?
- How often you uses it? If no why?

- Does your family members support your work (By family member I mean, father, mother, sister, ect) If yes or no: How often they offer help to balance your life? And how do they help?
- What is your daily routine during working days?
- What is your daily routine during weekends?
 - On scale from 1 to 5 where one is least and 5 at highest how you are satisfied with your family life and please elaborate?
 - On scale from 1 to 5 where one is least and 5 at highest how you are satisfied with your career development and please elaborate?
 - On scale from 1 to 5 where one is least and 5 at highest how you are satisfied with your social life and please elaborate?
 - Have you ever heard about Work/Life Balance?
 - What do you think it means?
 - Does your employer have WLB options
 - If yes, have you used any of its option before, and how often?
 - What of the following options suits you better if given an option for job?
 - Full time
 - Part time
 - Flexible work shifts
 - Reduced working hours
 - Working from home
 - Sharing your job responsibility
 - Please explain your selection.....
- Have you ever thought to leave your job? If yes what was the reasons? And how often?
 - Have you ever done it before? If yes what was the reasons?
 - Did you face before or facing any health issues because of your job? Please elaborate?
 - What are your daily challenges and obstacles you face to keep your current job?
 - Describe you wished life
 - What do you think it will help you most to achieve it?

Thank you

Appendix 2

Consent



Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Middle class Egyptian working mothers and work life balance

Principal Investigator:

Name: Duaa Hussein NasrAllah Marafi

Email: Duaagrad@aucegypt.edu

Mobile 01003146009

- You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is Research about middle class Egyptian working mothers and work life balance, and the findings may be published and presented.
- The expected duration of your participation is from *15 to 30 mints*.
- With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to being audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request.

Please specify:

 - I accept the interview to be audiotaped with my full right to stop taping at any time
 - I do not accept the interview to be audiotaped
- The procedures of the research will be to study and analysis the obstacles that the middle class Egyptian working mothers face to balance between their personal lives and work and how can work life balance approaches can benefit them.
- There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.
- The information you provide for purposes of this research [*is confidential*]
- An explanation of whom to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subject's rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject; for example: "Questions about the research, my rights, or research-related injuries should be directed to Duaa Hussien NasrAllah Marafi at (01003146009)
- Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature: _____

Printed Name : _____

Date: _____

الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة



استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث : الطبقة الوسطى لامهات المصريين العاملين و طرق التوازن بين العمل والحياة الشخصية

الباحث الرئيسي: دعاء حسين نصرالله معرفي - طالبة ماجستير في الجامعة الامريكه بالقاهره

البريد الالكتروني: duaagrad@aucegypt.edu

الهاتف: 01003146009

انت مدعوه للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية عن الطبقة الوسطى لامهات المصريات العاملات و طرق التوازن بين العمل والحياة الشخصية.

هدف الدراسة هو لدراسة وتحليل العقبات التي تواجه الطبقة الوسطى من الأمهات العاملات المصريات و التي تواجههم لتحقيق التوازن بين حياتهم الشخصية والعمل وكيف يمكن أن يبرمج التوازن ما بين العمل و الحياة الشخصية أن يستفاد منها.

نتائج البحث ستنتشر في دوريه متخصصه أو مؤتمر علمي أو ربما كليهما.

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة في هذا البحث (المقابله ستأخذ وقت من 15 دقيقه – 30 دقيقه)

بعد إذنك سوف يتم تسجيل المقابله صوتيا وتدون الملاحظات أثناء المقابله و ذلك للتدقيق في المعلومات ، وسوف تستخدم لأغراض النسخ فقط. إذا اخترتي عدم التسجيل الصوتي سوف أخذ الملاحظات بدلا من ذلك. إذا كنت توافقين على التسجيل الصوتي ولكن شعرت بعدم الارتياح في أي وقت خلال المقابله، سوف التسجيل بناء على طلبك.

يرجى تحديد:

- أوافق على التسجيل الصوتي مع الاحتفاظ حقي الكامل لوقف التسجيل الصوتي في أي وقت
- أنا لا أقبل المقابله أن تكون مسجله

لا يوجد مخاطر من المشاركة في هذه الدراسة

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: المعلومات التي ستدلى بها في هذا البحث سوف تكون (هويتك سرية).

أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها أو عند حدوث أي اصابات ناتجة عن هذه المشاركة يجب ان توجه الى (دعاء حسين نصرالله معرفي و رقم الهاتف 01003146009).

ان المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ماهي الا عمل تطوعي، حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لا يتضمن أى عقوبات أو فقدان أى مزايا تحقق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.

الإمضاء:

اسم المشارك :

التاريخ :/...../.....