Assessing the Challenges That Hinder the Performance of Working Women in the Hospitality Industry- Case Study of Bawku Municipality

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Abstract: The researchers realized that, despite the upward trends in women's participation in the hospitality industry in Ghana and globally, women's participation rate is still lower than that of men. To this effect, the aim of the study was to examine the challenges that hinder the performance of working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. The study used the descriptive research design. The quantitative research approach was used. The population comprised of selected working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. The population is about six hundred and twenty three (623). The sample size of the study was made up two hundred and thirty four (234) working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. Probability sampling procedure was used in the selection of data. The main research instrument used was questionnaires. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 was used to analyse the data. The findings concluded that 89.17% agreed that working women suffer oppression and domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana. Moreover, 80.41% agreed that the inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos. Also, 71.65% agreed that participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints. Moreover, 39.18% affirmed that women who work in the hospitality industry are time conscious, 26.8% said that women who work in the hospitality industry are well versed in housekeeping practices, 19.59% revealed that women who work in the hospitality industry are well versed in proper home health practices. Furthermore, the respondents sought the assistance of house helps and baby sitters to cater for house chores while working women go to work, and furthering their education. The study recommended that the Human Resource Managers in the hospitality industry should organise periodic seminars, conferences, lectures, in-service training programmes for working women in the hospitality industry in order to improve their time management skills, boost their confidence level, and enhance their professional expertise to work effectively.

Keywords: *women stress, Ghanaian women, working Mothers, work environment, Hospitality Industry, Bawku Municipality*

1. INTRODUCTION

The working performances of women in Africa are playing an increasingly bigger role in various spheres, in politics, in the family, economic development, literature, sports and poverty reduction. According to Delgado (2006), the first woman prime minister of Mozambique, the role of women in Africa in fighting against poverty is very important, very important because women are beginning to occupy positions that empowers them to do so. Throughout history, the performance of women has been considered inferior to men. The traditional functions of a female in the society were to stay home, cook, clean and raise children. Women were considered to be weak, had little to say, and were mistreated because of their low self-esteem. Increasingly, women are getting out of their home jobs as home makers and are forced to combine their work at home as mothers, wives and home-makers and their jobs outside

the home. The feminist movements have argued for a desire to renew the economic and political standings of women to a position of equality with men.

The feminist movement took root in the 1960's and today, immense progress could be noted in the job market, in the positions females are obtaining and occupying. This explains the massive entry of women to the world of work. According to the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) (2000), women are two thirds less likely than men to get waged employment, while only 3 out of 10 women in the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa are paid employees. Therefore since the industrial revolution women have entered the world of work in varying areas and professions with diverse skills and energies. In recent times, the debate on the role of women in societies especially their participation in economic activity has generated a lot of controversy, with one side of the debate arguing against

increased women participation in all spheres of economic and social activities, biological and cultural basis, whilst the other side has argued that a woman's status in society depends crucially on her participation in economic and social activities and that the biology of sex does not confine the woman to the home (U.S. Department of Labour, 2013).

Presently, more Ghanaian women are now getting out of their home jobs into paid jobs and are forced to combine their work at home as home-makers and their jobs outside the home. Moreover, another challenge that hinders the performance of working women in the hospitality industry is workplace sexual harassment. Workplace sexual harassment on the basis of an employee's age, disability, gender, race, colour, religion, and sexual orientation is unlawful and must be prevented at all costs. Unfortunately sexual harassment remains the most prevalent type of harassment that takes place and forms the basis of countless lawsuits. It is so pervasive that many women try to cope with the problem by developing a coordinated strategy which for example, may often include appealing to other housekeepers to be with them when they are assigned to clean the room of a perverted guest (Robb, 2014). Unfortunately, the true extent of sexual harassment in the workplace is very often cloaked in a 'conspiracy of muteness which veils the issue. The victims often leave the company to escape any further harassment from either guests or colleagues. The hotel never really knows the real reason at any time.

Eller (2010) asserted decades ago that the maintenance of a stable workforce is a critical success factor in supporting a competitive advantage in the hospitality industry. The hotel industry as then now also faces high staff turnover, and thus high labour costs, and a shrinking supply of employees. Sexual harassment has had a significant role to play in this situation and presents severe economic, social and competitive issues for a hotel. A successful hotel needs employees to work in harmony and to feel safe in the workplace. Where there is sexual harassment this invariably creates poor working relationships which negatively impact on the hotel either directly or indirectly. In a recent article in the journal *Gender, Work & Organization*, a team of researchers interviewed female employees of 5-star hotels on the Gold Coast, and discovered that of 46 women who participated in the study, at least 44 had experienced some kind of improper advance from a male guest and this ranged from jokes to suggestions to even assaults (Robb, 2014).

When women secure 'decent work' this is crucial and it makes it possible for them to build a more promising future for themselves, their families and the wider community. Sustainable development is achieved through the contributions of both women and men. The socially created gender roles and the biological differences between the sexes and how people interact in the world of work are thus at the centre of the concept of decent work (ILO, 2009). The hotel industry is especially susceptible to incidents of

sexual harassing behaviours as a result of its social characteristics. Anything which negatively impacts on decent work and breaks it down is unacceptable, unethical and probably illegal. Sexual harassment is, on the basis of any protected status, deemed to be unlawful and should be clearly explicated in a hotel's employment policies, as well as in any internal employee training that employees may undertake.

Furthermore, other challenges women face in the hospitality industry is that, many corporate executives and managers, almost all men, argue that women have not made significant progress because they do not have the required educational backgrounds, skills and work experiences. These executives view the slow rise of women as an unbiased fact rather than discrimination (Fernandez, 2013). Although most young men and young women are promoted based on performance, a gender gap still exists in the rate of promotions and women are at a disadvantage (Cobb & Dunlop, 2009). Several authors (Adler and Israel, 2012; Morison, White and Velsor, 2012) as sited by Linge, Rensburg and Sikalieh, 2010 said that visibility is increased by being involved in challenging assignments, participation in social events, and professional events and networks. Factors for accounting this state of affairs are complex ranging from preparation to enter the career, recruitment, placement, glass ceiling attitude, social responsibilities, stigmatization and stereotype thinking while on job a few to mention. It can further be deduced that bottlenecks for women's career development fall into two categories of pre job factors above and on job factors, as stated by Graham Snowdon, 2011 on his case study, "there's probably some merit to the idea that female workers have less confidence than men; maybe that is the part of reason why there are many fewer women in hospitality senior management". Despite the economic necessity impelling many women into the labour force, their work is often considered secondary and frivolous. Women face discrimination in pay, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement and access to interesting jobs. This study therefore assessed the challenges that hinder the performance of working women in the hospitality industry, using Bawku Municipality as a case study.

In 2000, there were only two women CEOs in the Fortune 500 companies and a total of six in the Fortune 1000 companies (Catalyst, 2001). Job placement and selection shall maintain appropriate balance between academic or professional qualification and other aspect such as experience, track records and learning potential. The criteria shall however relate only to the issue that are directly relevant to the job to be done. Particular care shall be exercised for the same. Particular care shall be taken to ensure that there is no overt or unintended discrimination against minorities particularly women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable group (Public service Management & Employment Policy, 2009)

1.1 Challenges faced by working women in the work environment

It is an open truth that working women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. Working women here are referred to those who are in paid employment. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. This attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not for other jobs, colours those who are involved in the recruitment of employees. Historically, women suffered oppression and domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana. Women were taught to accept their position through the socialisation process, including their initiation rites. They were taught to be obedient wives and sisters and also respect their elders. They were told that a man could marry more than one woman (Manu, 2014; Nukunya, 2009; Oppong-Mensah et al, 2013).

The inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos. Many of these practices are still found today in some places in the country. Participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints. The number of women holding high-level jobs in public administration is low. Research by AbouZeid (2006) revealed that, there were only three women with ministry-level responsibility in Egypt (out of 79 ministerial positions in total), one female deputy minister out of 14 deputy ministerial positions. That compared to the situation in other societies makes the situation one that needs to be addressed.

Working mothers not only bear the burden of leaving the children to work, but also the stresses of what in many cases equals two full time jobs. The mother has her job that she must leave her family for and then she has her job of taking care of the family she had to leave during the day.

Some houses may say chores are egalitarian, shared equally, however this is not seen in surveys conducted by Essortment, (2002). In executives polled 52% of women were found to complete laundry duties compared to 7% of the men. Likewise 47% of women planned and shopped for meals compared to 8% of men. Similar findings were found in chores such has shopping for children's clothing and staying home with children who came down sick (Gershaw, 2008). Other stresses that working mothers are running into include when one of the children are sick. The responsibility of caring for the sick child still falls predominantly on the mother. The mother feels guilty about missing work or they feel guilt for having to leave the child with someone else when they are sick (Gershaw, 2008).

Finally, working mothers are also feeling stressed about their sex lives. They feel guilt for being too stressed or fatigued for intercourse. The working mother may also hold resentment toward her spouse for not sharing in the housework duties more equally

METHODOLOGY

2 Research Design

Research design is the plan and the procedure for research that span the decision from broad assumptions to detailed method of data collection and analysis. It involves the intersection of philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods, (Creswell, 2009). Given the purpose of this study, the most appropriate research design selected was the descriptive design. It is a type of design that produces a 'snapshot' of a population at one or more points in time and is concerned with the present status of a phenomenon. Descriptive design was used because it is comparatively quick and cheap to conduct and administer. It also enables researchers to identify the proportions of people in particular groups and controls the effects of subjects participating twice (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Although this design has some loopholes such as difficulty in getting respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly.

2.1 The Population of the Study

The population comprised of selected working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. The population is about six hundred and twenty three (623).

2.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the universal to constitute a sample. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a population of 623 requires a sample size of two hundred and thirty four (234). Therefore, the sample size of the study is made up two hundred and thirty four (234) working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality.

2.3 Sampling Technique

Probability sampling procedure was used in the selection of data. This helped the researcher to do away with biases. Probability sampling is also known as 'random sampling' or chance sampling. Under this type of sampling design, every item of the universe has an equal chance of being selected with sample. It is, so to say, a lottery method in which individual units are picked up from the whole group not deliberately, but by some mechanical process.

2.4 Research Instruments

The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. A set of structured questionnaire consisting of items based on the research questions was used to collect data from the population. Turkman (1978) explains that questionnaire is used by researchers to collect information directly given by a person (subjects). By

providing access to what is ''inside a person's head,'' these approach makes it possible to measure what a person knows, what a person likes and dislikes, and what the person thinks. He further said that questionnaire is a way of getting data about person`s by asking them rather than watching them behave or by sampling a bit of their behaviour. The questionnaire items were designed within the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, section one focused on background of respondents, including the respondent's gender, age, and academic qualification. Section two examined the challenges that hinder the performance of working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. Section three examined the characteristics of women who work in the hospitality industry. Section four documented the nature of women's work in the hospitality industry and section five assessed the coping mechanisms adopted by women in the hospitality industry to help them cope with these challenges.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

Primary data was collected through a field survey of the working women in the Bawku Municipality. Data was

collected through the use of a designed questionnaire administered to participants in their offices and workplaces in the hospitality industry. Questionnaires were filled out by participants and the student collected the questionnaires on the same day of distribution.

2.6 Analysis of Data

With regards to the data analysis, the study used computer programming such as statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) version 16, Microsoft word, Microsoft excel and the use of statements, phrases, narratives and quotations. Also descriptive analysis was used for qualitative data obtained from the field. In analysis, the data collected for this study, frequencies/percentages and charts were employed as to serve a basis for drawing justified conclusion from the findings of the study.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Demographic information of the Respondents

Age range of the respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
Below 25 years	14	7.22
26-35 years	36	18.56
36-45 years	61	31.44
46-55 years	43	22.16
56-65 years	27	13.92
More than 66 years	13	6.7
Total	194	100
Marital status		
Married	121	62.37
Single	69	35.57
Divorced	4	2.06
Total	194	100
Highest level of educational qualification		
Senior High School Certificate	45	23.2
Higher National Diploma (HND)	51	26.29
Bachelor's degree	69	35.57
Masters degrees	29	14.94
Total	194	100
Working experience in the hospitality industry		
1-5 years	85	43.81
5-10 years	32	16.5
10-15 years	48	24.74
15-20 years	21	10.83
20 years and above	8	4.12
Total	194	100

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 1 indicated that 61 respondents representing 31.44% were between the age ranges 36-45 years, 43

respondents representing 22.16% were between the age ranges 46-55 years, 36 respondents representing 18.56%

were between the age ranges 26-35 years, 27 respondents representing 13.92% were between the age ranges 56-65 years, 14 respondents representing 7.22% were below 25 years while 13 respondents representing 6.7% were more than 66 years. The study results show that the respondents were matured.

Moreover, 121 respondents representing 62.37% were married, 69 respondents representing 35.57% were single while 4 respondents representing 2.06% were divorced. Furthermore, 69 respondents representing 35.57% were Bachelor's degrees, 51 respondents representing 26.29% were Higher National Diploma (HND), 45 respondents representing 23.2% were SSSCE/WASSCE Holders while 29 respondents representing 14.94% were Masters' degrees holders. This agreed with Figes (2001), Parental education was also a positive aspect of a child's

success. It has been shown that children of a nonworking parent "fail to see the point of getting an education". Other studies found that children of "two working parents get higher grades in high school", but at the same time feel less pressure about doing so (Essortment, 2002). They also found that these children score higher on intelligence tests (Gershaw, 2008).

Again, 85 respondents representing 43.81% had 1-5 years working experience, 32 respondents representing 16.5% had 5-10 years working experience in the hospitality industry, 48 respondents representing 24.74% had 10-15 years working experience, 21 respondents representing 10.83% had 15-20 years while 8 respondents representing 4.12% had more than 20 years working experience. This indicates that the respondents have adequate working experience.

Table 2: Challenges faced by working women in the work environment

Statement	Agree f (%)	Not sure f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Total f (%)
1. Women suffer oppression and domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana.	173 (89.17)	18 (9.28)	3 (1.55)	194 (100)
2. The inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos.	156 (80.41)	31 (15.98)	7 (3.61)	194 (100)
3. Participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints.	139 (71.65)	42 (21.65)	13 (6.7)	194 (100)
4. The number of women holding high-level jobs in public administration is low.	182 (93.82)	10 (5.15)	2 (1.03)	194 (100)
5. There exist a plethora of issues, which confront women as they try to contribute to the quality of life and that of their families and thereby to the economies of various countries through work.	178 (91.75)	11 (5.67)	5 (2.58)	194 (100)
6. Unemployment and temporary work are more common among women than among men. Most women workers do not have any social security or could access health care benefits.	186 (95.88)	5 (2.58)	3 (1.54)	194 (100)
7. A large number of women workers complained of symptoms such as irritability, mood swings, depression, sadness and concentration problems due to high levels of fatigue and increased job demands.	163 (84.02)	27 (13.92)	4 (2.06)	194 (100)
8. Women working in some industries like construction, brick kilns, electronics industry suffer from gynecological problems, miscarriages, premature deliveries, barrenness and give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects.	175 (90.21)	9 (4.64)	10 (5.15)	194 (100)

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 2 indicated that 173 respondents representing 89.17% agreed that working women suffer oppression and

domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana, 18 respondents representing 9.28% were not sure while 3

respondents representing 1.55% disagreed. This finding agrees with Manu, (2014), who asserted that historically, women suffered oppression and domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana. Women were taught to accept their position through the socialization process, including their initiation rites. They were taught to be obedient wives and sisters and also respect their elders. They were told that a man could marry more than one woman.

Moreover, 156 respondents representing 80.41% agreed that the inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos, 31 respondents representing 15.98% were not sure while 7 respondents representing 3.61% disagreed. This agreed with Nukunya, (2009), who said that the inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos. Many of these practices are still found today in some places in the country.

To add more, 139 respondents representing 71.65% agreed that participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints, 42 respondents representing 21.65% were not sure while 13 respondents representing 6.7% disagreed. This finding goes with the results conducted by Oppong, (2013), who revealed that participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints. Moreover, this finding contradicts with Arendall (2007), it is often an assumption that the well-being of the child is dependent on continual access to the mother; therefore mothers are important to their families since child raising responsibilities are part of their role.

The study showed that 182 respondents representing 93.82% agreed that the number of women holding high-level jobs in public administration is low, 10 respondents representing 5.15% were not sure while 2 respondents representing 1.03% disagreed. This finding concurs with AbouZeid (2006) who revealed that, the

number of women holding high-level jobs in public administration is low. The research further revealed that there were only three women with ministry-level responsibility in Egypt (out of 79 ministerial positions in total), one female deputy minister out of 14 deputy ministerial positions. That compared to the situation in other societies makes the situation one that needs to be addressed (AbouZeid, 2006). According to Malone (2008) the steady increase in the number of women in professional and managerial occupations, the pursuit of higher education by women, and a tendency for professional women to develop and maintain a marriage and family life have contributed to the performance of multiple roles. Trying to satisfy job demands, time schedules, family obligations, or social obligations associated with the performance of multiple roles can be stressful, time consuming, and sometimes impossible. Women use time management strategies and organizational strategies to cope with the conflict.

Moreover, a study conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that when mothers work full time during their child's pre-school years the child is less effective at A-level work (Cavel, 2001). Children of full time working mothers achieved at A-level 52 % of the time (Cavel, 2001). These children also found themselves unemployed 9% more of the time as well as suffering from psychological stress 28% more of the time compared to that of children with nonworking mothers (Cavel, 2001).

The study indicates that 175 respondents representing 90.21% agreed that women working in some industries like construction, brick kilns, electronics industry suffer from gynecological problems, miscarriages, premature deliveries, barrenness and give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects, 10 respondents representing 5.15% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 4.64% were not sure. This result had the same opinion with Eswari, (2009), who asserted that women working in some industries like construction, brick kilns, electronics industry suffer from gynecological problems, miscarriages, premature deliveries, barrenness and give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects.
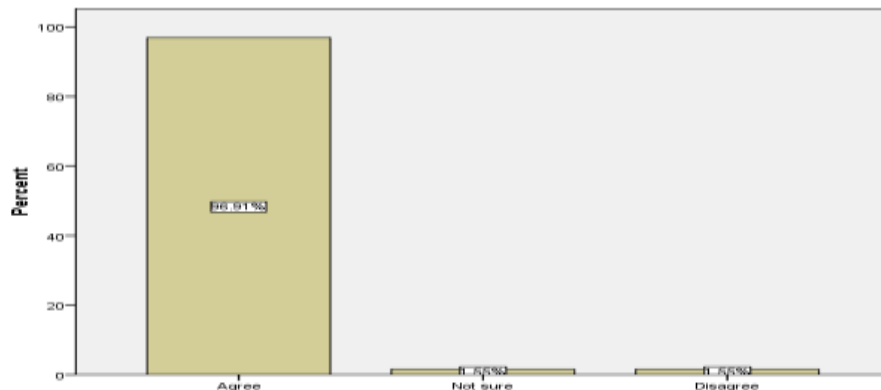
Figure 1: Sexual harassment is another serious problem faced by working women

Source: Field survey 2017

Figure 1 showed that majority 96.9% of the respondents agreed that sexual harassment is another serious problem faced by working women, while 1.5% of the respondents were not sure and disagreed respectively. This finding is in agreement with Eswari (2009), who asserted that sexual harassment is another serious problem faced by working women. Whether in the organised or unorganised sector, whether illiterate, low paid workers or highly educated and highly paid executives, a large number of working women face sexual harassment at the workplace at one time or another. This is mostly from other male employees or their superiors.
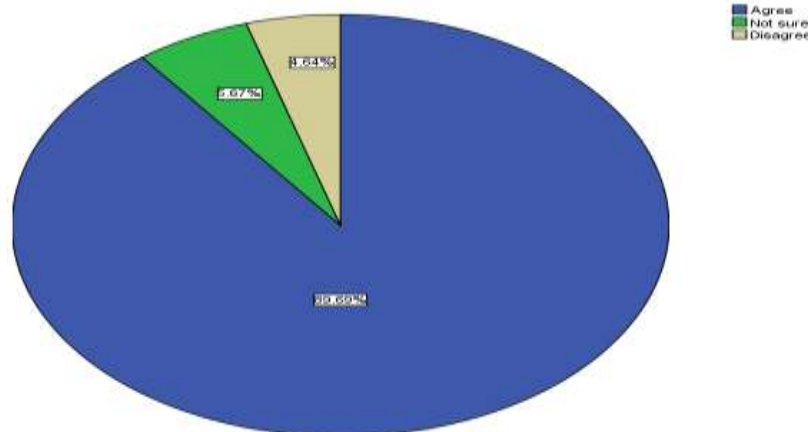

Figure 2: The major problems for working women arise out of the dual responsibilities of the working woman - domestic work and the office work.

Source: Field survey 2017

Figure 2 indicated that 89.7% of the respondents agreed that the major problems for working women arise out of the dual responsibilities of the working woman - domestic work and the office work, 5.7% of the respondents were not sure while 4.6% of the respondents disagreed. This finding of the study concur with Eswari, (2009), who revealed that the major problems for working women arise out of the dual responsibilities of the working woman - domestic work and the office work. Though more and more women are coming out in search of paid employment and their families also need their income, the attitude towards women and their role in the family has not undergone much change. Women continue to be perceived as weak, inferior, and second-class citizens. Even today, looking after the family and children is generally perceived to be the primary responsibility of the woman.
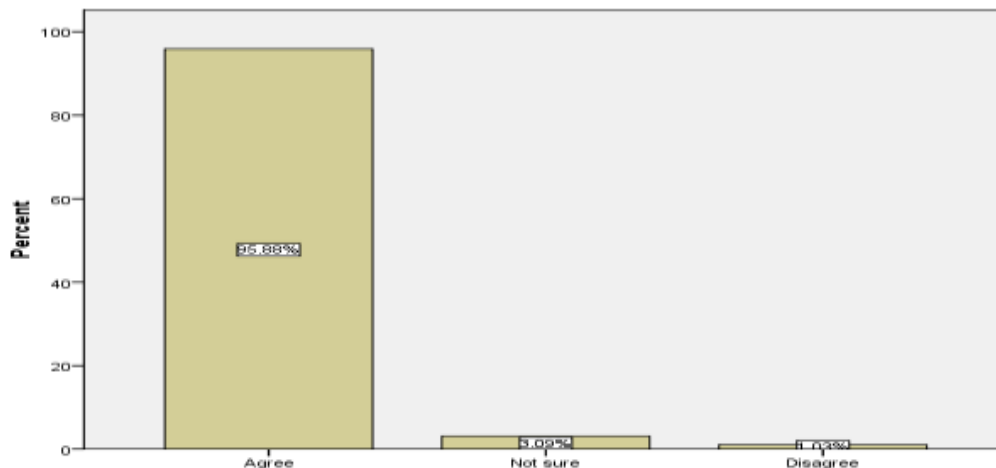
Source: Field survey 2017

Figure 3: Working mothers are mostly affected by stress

Figure 3 showed that 95.9% of the respondents agreed that Working mothers are mostly affected by stress, 3.1% of the respondents were not sure while 1% of the respondent disagreed. This finding is in agreement with Easton (2007), who affirmed that given the socio-economic conditions of women, strained conditions at work often lead to tension and strained relations in the family, along with the physical problems. Maternal occupation seems to exert strong influence over child caring practices, which in turn affects children nutritional outcomes. A study in Tanzania observed that maternal occupation was a key constraint on good child care practices. A similar study in India concluded that a mother's employment compromises infant feeding and care, particularly so when mothers are not able to get alternative caregivers.

Various negative psychological and physical problems can follow from role strain. In many cultures, women experience stress, as a result of combining work and family roles (International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family, 2003). Levels of conflict, however, vary across cultures as a result of perceptions of gender roles and the subsequent amount of time given to work and domestic roles (Moore, 2005).
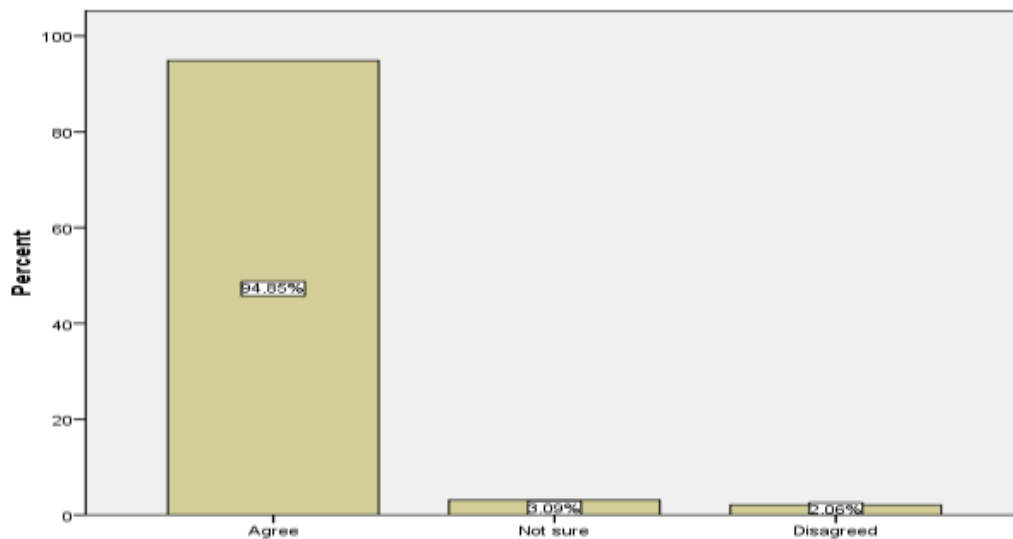

Figure 4: Most working women do not feed their families well

Source: Field survey 2017

Figure 4 indicated that 94.8% of the respondents agreed that most working women do not feed their families well, 3.1% of the respondents were not sure, while 2.1% of the respondents disagreed. In terms of individual care activities, it has been found consistently that maternal occupation plays an essential role in determining child-feeding practices. Gielen et al, (2013), documented that being employed is associated with early cessation of breastfeeding. In Taiwan, a combined effect was detected of maternal employment and transcultural marriage on the continuation of breastfeeding. In the same study, employed mothers were found to engage in early weaning (Gielen et al, 2013). Children of working mothers were also found to skip meals more often than non-working mothers. Additionally, in a developed economy like the US, intensity of work effort negatively affects the intensity of breastfeeding. It is worth noting that in workplaces where there are breastfeeding friendly policies, continuation of breastfeeding improves.

The preceding literature suggests that maternal occupation has a significant impact on caring practices, including breastfeeding and the general feeding pattern of the family (Gielen et al, 2013).

Conclusion

The objective of the study was to examine the challenges that hinder the performance of working women in the hospitality industry in the Bawku Municipality. The study concluded that the challenges that hinder the performance of working women in the hospitality industry are as follows; working women suffer oppression and domination by the patriarchal society in Ghana. Also, the inferior position of women in the traditional Ghanaian society was reinforced by a number of traditional practices such as polygamy, early marriage, illiteracy and food taboos. To add more, participation of women in prominent decision-making positions is limited by severe cultural and social constraints, the number of women holding high-level jobs in

public administration is low, Furthermore, unemployment and temporary work are more common among women than among men and most women workers do not have any social security or could access health care benefits, a large number of women workers complained of symptoms such as irritability, mood swings, depression, sadness and concentration problems due to high levels of fatigue and increased job demands, women working in some industries like construction, brick kilns, electronics industry suffer from gynecological problems, miscarriages, premature deliveries, barrenness and give birth to babies with low birth weight or birth defects, sexual harassment is another serious problem faced by working women.

Recommendations

1. The Human Resource Managers in the hospitality industry should organise periodic seminars, conferences, lectures, in-service training programmes for working women in the hospitality industry in order to improve their time management skills, boost their confidence level, and enhance their professional expertise to work effectively.

2. Employers in the hospitality industry should involve working women in prominent decision making positions to enhance their administrative skills.

3. The employers in the hospitality industry should award study leave with pay to working women to go back school to do further studies to upgrade their professional expertise.

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