The Home-Work Interface as a Predictor of Work Stress and General Wellbeing Among Higher Education Administrators in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The well-being of employees is a vital resource for the survival and success of any organisation. However, empirical research regarding work stress and general wellbeing of employees in the context of higher education in low and middle-income countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa is missing. Drawing on the Job-Demand Resource Model and the Social Role theory, this study investigated the extent to which home-work interface predicted work stress and general well-being of administrative staff of public universities in Ghana. A sample of 334 administrative staff was involved in a cross-sectional survey to assess the levels of home-work interface, stress at work, and general well-being and the nature of interaction among these variables. Data were obtained using adapted standardised measures and analysed with Hayes PROCESS in the SmartPLS 4.0 software. The administrative staff reported moderate levels on all three variables. Home-work interface significantly predicted work stress and wellbeing, but stress did not predict wellbeing. In addition, work stress did not mediate the relationship between home-work interface and general wellbeing. We conclude that home-work interface is a significant element that can adversely affect the stress levels and of wellbeing of workers. Moderate level of stress at work, however, is less likely to adversely impair the wellbeing of the worker. The findings have been discussed in the light of the Job-Demand Resource model and the Social Role theory, and implications for policy and practice offered. We recommend that management of public universities in Ghana should implement policies and programmes to help administrative staff manage the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Keywords: Administrative Staff, General Wellbeing, Home-Work Interface, Stress at Work

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I. INTRODUCTION

Significant socio-demographic changes have affected the various aspects of work and family in developed as well as developing countries. These socio-demographic changes have made it impossible to perform work and family responsibilities synchronously (Bobbio et al., 2022; Milledzi, 2017). For instance, the traditional gendered division of work has drastically faded out in order to pave way for dual-earner couples in which partners combined paid work with family responsibilities. This engenders a conflict when role incompatibility arises that makes the performance of both roles difficult. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1995), this conflict takes place at the work life interface.

Conceptually, work-family conflict is bi-directional in nature. In view of this, researchers have made a distinction between what is termed work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict Bobbio et al. (2022). For example, work-to-family conflict is linked to the experiences and commitment at work such as work overload, inflexible work hours and extensive travels. On the other hand, family-to-work conflict takes place as a result of the experiences and commitment in the family interfering with work life with regard to unsupportive family members, interpersonal conflict within the family unit and the presence of young children (Bobbio et al., 2022; Lu et al., 2005). However, we

measured home-work interface as a uni-dimensional construct comprising the two directions of the conflict or interference in this study.

Empirical investigations regarding the nuances of home-work interface and general wellbeing in different context and work settings is imperative because different work settings present different dynamics. Khatri and Shukla (2024) observed that work-life interface research has seen a significant upsurge but "shows no sign of saturation" (p. 287). Khatri and Shukla further noted that almost all employees struggle with how to balance the home-work roles, and that imbalance in this regard is a primary occupational health challenge. We investigated within a higher educational setting with a sample of administrative staff because in recent years, higher education institutions have changed due to socio-economic and political systems that affect both the operations and management bodies of higher education institutions (Milledzi, 2017).

There also seem to be upsurge in telecommuting and COVID-19 also brought some changes in the way work is done within higher educational institutions. Given the dynamics with regard to the nature as well as conditions of work in higher education institutions in recent times, it is imperative to investigate the nature of home-work and well-being of workers within various work settings. The degree to which individuals experience role conflict has long-term effects on their health, performance and general well-being (Fellows et al., 2016; Reichl et al., 2014;). There is limited empirical research, especially within the Ghanaian higher education context on the extent to which work-family interface and work stress influence the general well-being of university administrators. This paper therefore investigated the extent to which the work responsibilities of public higher education administrators interfere with their family responsibilities, and how the nature of the home-work role conflict relates to work stress and general wellbeing of administrative workers in public universities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Universities are often described as professional bureaucracies because their internal organisational structures are highly compartmentalised (Webber, 2016). In order for universities to be relevant to societal needs and adjust to the dynamic complex situations, administrative staff of universities need to demonstrate professional competencies. These competencies include the ability to device strategies in managing financial and human resources as well as academic facilities that influence teaching and research (Balyer & Ozcan, 2017). Given the continuously evolving socio-political context of universities where administrative staff need to develop their own creative thinking and decision making, it is possible that administrative staff of universities in an attempt to combine family roles with their work roles may experience work-family conflict that may affect their general wellbeing.

Available evidence has shown that work interference with family and family interference with work have been viewed by scholars and researchers as having a distinct antecedents and outcomes (Zhao et al., 2014). However, within the Ghanaian higher education context, it seems we do not have enough empirical evidence to substantiate the argument that work-family conflict affects employees' work stress and general wellbeing particularly among administrative staff of public universities. Additionally, results of previous studies in other context domains such as industrial and organisational settings have been inconsistent. In the higher education setting, it appears there is limited empirical investigation with regard to the contention that work stress plays a mediating role in the relationship between work-family interface and general wellbeing of administrative staff of universities.

Drawing on the Job Demand Resource model (JD-R), and the Social Role theory, we explored the mediating role of work stress in the relationship between work-family interface and general wellbeing of higher education administrators within the Ghanaian context. Using the JD-R model, the paper argues that stress may be viewed as a demand in the domains of work which may trigger the process of deterioration in employees' health and general wellbeing particularly, administrators of universities (Cole & Secret, 2012). In addition, Social role theory, posits that the link between work-family conflict and general wellbeing is primarily based on the fact that any increase in work-family conflict tends to reduce the levels of general wellbeing (Frone et al., 1992; Kopelman et al.,1983). This hypothesised negative relationship has been found in most prior studies reviewed in the domains of industrial and organisational settings but not in higher education settings (e.g., Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Netemeyer et al., 1996).

The prime objective of our study was to find out the extent to which the work responsibilities of public higher education administrators interfere with their family responsibilities, and ascertain how the nature of the role conflict relates to the level of work stress and general wellbeing of the workers. Specifically, the study answered one research question and tested three hypotheses:

1.2 Research Question and Hypotheses
1.2.1 Research Question
What are the levels of home-work interface, work stress and general wellbeing among public higher education administrators?

1.2.2 Hypotheses
HO$_1$: Home-work interface will not significantly predict (a) stress at work, and (b) general wellbeing of public higher education administrators

HO$_2$: Stress at work will not significantly predict general wellbeing of public higher education administrators

HO$_3$: The relationship between home-work interface and general wellbeing will not be significantly mediated by stress at work.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review
Theoretically, the Job Demand Resource model (JD-R) and the Social Role theory have been used to substantiate how work can negatively influence family responsibilities as well as how family responsibilities can influence work responsibilities (Fellows et al., 2016; Milledzi, 2017; Peeters et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been established through research that work-family conflict has negative outcomes on the wellbeing of both the individual and the organisations in which they work. Also, empirical studies have revealed that work can negatively influence the fulfilment of family roles and vice versa (Ballout, 2008; Fellows et al., 2016; Milledzi, 2017; Peeters et al., 2020; Warner & Hausgorf, 2009). For example, Warner and Hausgorf (2009) in their study have reported a strong association between work-family conflict and the wellbeing of the individual, including drinking alcohol, emotional exhaustion, work stress, depression, anxiety, and physical health problems. A comprehensive literature review has identified the extent to which the work-personal life interface factors have been studied with job-related outcomes in cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. However, majority of these studies focused on industrial workers with only few studies focusing on the wellbeing of higher education workers (Milledzi, 2017). The relationship between work-family interface and general wellbeing appears not to have been widely investigated especially with regard to employees in the education sector such as administrative staff of universities in Ghana.

The theory of role-strain argues that people encounter certain demands in discharging their responsibilities, but they would not be able to meet all of them and this tends to put stress on them (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1995). Similarly, strain-based conflict occasions when stress from one responsibility influences the ability of an individual to discharge another responsibility effectively. Strain-based conflict could be due to ambiguity within the work roles of an individual. Finally, when time pressure from one role demand frustrates the discharge of other responsibilities, time-based conflict is the result. Time-base conflicts are prevalent in universities and this form of work-family conflict may have negative effects on workers in the form of stress. The work-family interface literature has shown stress linked to work and family responsibilities may result into health challenges such as depression, low morale, low productivity as well as higher absenteeism and turnover (Duxbury & Higgens, 1994).

2.2 Empirical Review
Work-life literature is based on the scarcity hypothesis, which stipulates that exhaustible resources must be managed well and shared appropriately across multiple roles that an individual occupies (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). These exhaustible resources include energy and time. Subsequent research has expanded to recognise the positive aspects of multiple role engagement, such as facilitation (e.g., Frone, 2003), and enhancement (Ruderman et al., 2002). This perspective, which could be conceived as expansionist perspective (Barnett & Baruch, 1985), however, posits that resources such as energy or time are abundant and renewable, based on the commitment that is given to a particular role (Marks, 1977). More recent literature has adopted a global approach to conceptualising the balance between home and work demands, and views it as a unidimensional as well as integrated construct that includes holistic appraisal of how the home and work expectations interplay (Casper et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2019). For example, Liu et al. (2019) assert that this global approach differentiates balance from conflict and enrichment, and goes further to emphasise the gestalt conception of balance as the overall evaluation of the role experiences. This assertion is also supported by Wayne et al. (2017).

There are rising concerns regarding health and wellbeing in the university communities in recent times. Studies have shown that one-third of university staff and faculty members, experience symptoms of depression, anxiety and or stress (Halat et al., 2023). Similarly, stress at work is considered as a significant health outcome that is associated with the work-family interface. This may eventually affect the wellbeing of the individual (Davis, 2020). Empirical

investigations have shown that stress at the work place may be due to heightened expectations in the workplace. For example, Wajcman (2018) in a study reported that work life in advanced countries is based on the fact that employees in organisations at any given time are expected to work faster in order to be more productive. Similarly, Sayin et al. (2021) in a study indicated that symptoms of stress could be associated with a negative intrinsic job satisfaction.

Gleaned from the literature that stress at the work place has become a significant variable of study in the domains of occupational health psychology, industrial psychology as well as sociology of work. However, it seems that in spite of the plethora of studies, the association between work stress and general wellbeing has not been fully explored, especially, among higher education institutions workers, particularly in low- and meddle-income countries. Additionally, there seems to be contradictory findings regarding how work stress is related to the wellbeing of employees. While some studies found positive relationship (e.g., Halat et al., 2023; Wajcman, 2018), other studies, on the other hand, have shown weak or non-significant negative relationships in other context domains (e.g. Haslam et al., 2013). It is essential for studies to be conducted in various contexts in order broaden our understanding on the antecedents and effects of work stress on the wellbeing of employees, so as to initiate appropriate context-specific interventions and strategies to mitigate its negative effects.

Literature suggests that home-work interface has implications on several occupational related variables including job dissatisfaction, lower work-life balance, job performance, work engagement, higher emotional exhaustion, and stress (Elahi et al., 2022). However, prior research has primarily paid attention to the direct association between work-family interface and general wellbeing outcomes of employees (Cho & Tay, 2016). Also, previous studies on family and work seems to have focused only on the direct impacts of social support in decreasing work-family conflict (Allen, 2001; Kossek et al., 2011). We also observe from the literature that limited studies have so far been conducted with regard to the mediating effect of work-family interface on organisational support and work stress with contradictory results. For instance, Mansour and Tremblay (2016) indicated that work-family conflict partially mediated the association between work load and job stress. Similarly, Barnett et al. (2012) also found a partial mediation of work-family conflict in the association between social support at work and psychological distress. Their study concluded that social support at work could be used to reduce psychological distress, because higher levels of social support lead to lower levels of work-family conflict, and subsequently, lower levels of psychological distress.

In the literature, some empirical studies, on the other hand, have reported significant mediation effects of work-family conflict in the relationships between job demands and burnout among employees (Geurts et al., 2003; Karatepe et al., 2010; Peeters et al., 2005). For instance, Karatepe et al. (2010) in a study found   that work-family conflict significantly mediated the relationship between work overload and burnout. However, Leonard (2014) in a study did not find any significant mediation effect of work-family conflict with regard to depression and work synergy. We observe that prior studies have reported contradictory findings such as significant mediation, partial mediation, as well as no mediation in the work-family interface literature, hence, we need   further research.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

We used the cross-sectional survey design to examine the extent to which the work responsibilities of public higher education administrators interfere with their family responsibilities, and ascertain how the nature of the role conflict relates to the level of work stress and general wellbeing of the workers. Cross-sectional surveys, it should be noted, gather data at a particular point in time when there is an intention of describing the nature of existing conditions as well as providing descriptive, inferential and explanatory information that can be used to ascertain correlations and relationships between items and the themes of the survey (Creswell, 2014). Cross-sectional survey was chosen for this study because judging from the main thrust of the study where data was collected just at one point in time on a sample of administrative staff of universities, it was deemed the most appropriate design.

3.2 Population

The target population for the study was administrative staff of public universities in Ghana. The accessible population was administrative staff of universities in Southern Ghana. Given that we used a priori power analysis to obtain the required sample size for the study, the size of total population was not determined.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The respondents were obtained through convenient sampling, using online survey, together with in-person administration of the questionnaire. Memon et al. (2020) indicated that factors such as research approach, analytical approach, number of variables, among others, are important considerations in determining the appropriateness of a given sample. Hair et al. (2018) indicated that 100 respondents is considered sufficient for most social science investigations. Another consideration is the ratio of sample to number of variables in the study, with a ratio of 20 respondents to one variable being the most stringent and favoured (Hair et al., 2018). There ae three variables in this study (two predictors and a criterion variable). Using this approach, a minimum of 60 respondents would be required.

A recent development in sample size determination is the power analysis approach, which takes into consideration the number of predictors, effect size, and level of significance expected (Hair et al., 2018; 2019; Kline, 2016; Ringle et al., 2018). This study involved two predictors; therefore, using a large effect size of .35, significance level of .05 and expected power of .95, the minimum sample recommended was 48, using the G*Power 3.1.9.4 sample size determination software. The number of respondents in this study satisfied any of these recommendations to produce meaningful results.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedure

We adapted general well-being, stress at work, and home-work interface from the Work-Related Quality of Life (WRQoL) scale by Easton and Van Laar (2018). This scale measures the quality of working life of individuals across six psychosocial sub-scales. Responses to items on all the sub-scales are rated on a six-point Likert-type agree-disagree scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). Sub-scale scores are obtained by adding ratings across the items, or averaging the ratings of the item scores of that subscale, making scores range from 1 to 6.

The personal profile sheet of the scale permits interpretation of sub-scales into Higher, Average, and Lower ranges (Easton & Van Laar, 2018). We adopted a class width of 1.67 (33.33%) to categorise the scores into low, moderate and high. Thus, low scores range from 1.00 to 2.66, moderate scores range from 2.67 to 4.33, and high scores range from 4.34 to 6.00. Specific descriptions of the three sub-scale are presented below.

3.4.1 General Well-Being

We measured general wellbeing with the six-item sub-scale that reflects the both general physical health and psychological wellbeing of respondents. We used five items in this study because one of the items did not load adequately and was omitted from the analysis. Composite scale score therefore, ranged between 5 and 30. When this composite score is divided by 5 (i.e. the number of items), the scores range between 1.00 and 6.00, and the higher the scores the better the general wellbeing. Reported scale reliability of .82 (Easton & Van Laar, 2018), and we obtained .801 in this study.

3.4.2 Home-Work Interface

The Home-Work Interface was measured using the six-item subscale that evaluates the extent to which an individual feels the organisation understands and takes steps to help them deal with expectations and demands from source external to the workplace. This measure the extent to which the individual feels he has control over when, where and how to work. Previous studies reported good reliability coefficients of .82 (Easton & Van Laar, 2018) for this dimension, and for this study, it was .692.

3.4.3 Stress at Work

We measured stress at work with the six-item sub-scale. The extent of stress is obtained by summing the responses across the items. Scores therefore range between 6 and 36, or average scores of 1.00 to 6.00. The higher the score, the higher the stress perceived. The scale has a reported reliability of .82. We obtained .771 in the present study.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The study answered one research question and tested three main hypotheses. Data were screened to eliminate influential cases and incomplete responses. We also checked relevant conditions and assumptions as appropriate the analyses. We used to mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, using the SPSS version 27. The levels were categorized into low, average, and high scores on the three variables. Subsequently, determined the frequencies and percentages of staff in each of the levels. The hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS algorithm in the SmartPLS 4.0 software.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

We run preliminary analyses to explore and describe the nature of the data before testing the hypotheses. The preliminary analyses include normality test, test of common method bias, multicollinearity of the predictors and linearity of the predictors and the criterion.

Data were obtained and analysed from 334 administrative workers of public universities in Southern Ghana, with ages ranging from 20 to 59, and an average age of 33.63 (SD = 8.05). One hundred and seventy-three (51.8%) were males, with most (207; 62.0%) being diploma certificate holders, and only 1.5% were master's degree holders. Table 1 resents the highest levels of education and job ranks of the respondents.

Table 1

Level of Education and Job Designation of Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
MSLC	6	1.8
GCE 'O' / 'A' LEVEL	13	3.9
SSSCE	25	7.5
Diploma	207	62.0
HND/First Degree	78	23.4
Masters	5	1.5
Total	334	100.0
Job Designation		
Admin. Asst.	131	39.2
Snr. Admin. Assist.	100	29.9
Prin. Admin. Asst.	87	26.0
Chief Admin. Asst.	16	4.8
Total	334	100.0

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviation (SD), possible score ranges, skewness and kurtosis statistics of the main variables and the age of the respondents. The skewness and kurtosis statistics indicated that the data did not deviate significantly from the normal distribution, especially, the general wellbeing (criterion measure). This is supported is supported by the shape of the distributed presented in Figure 1.
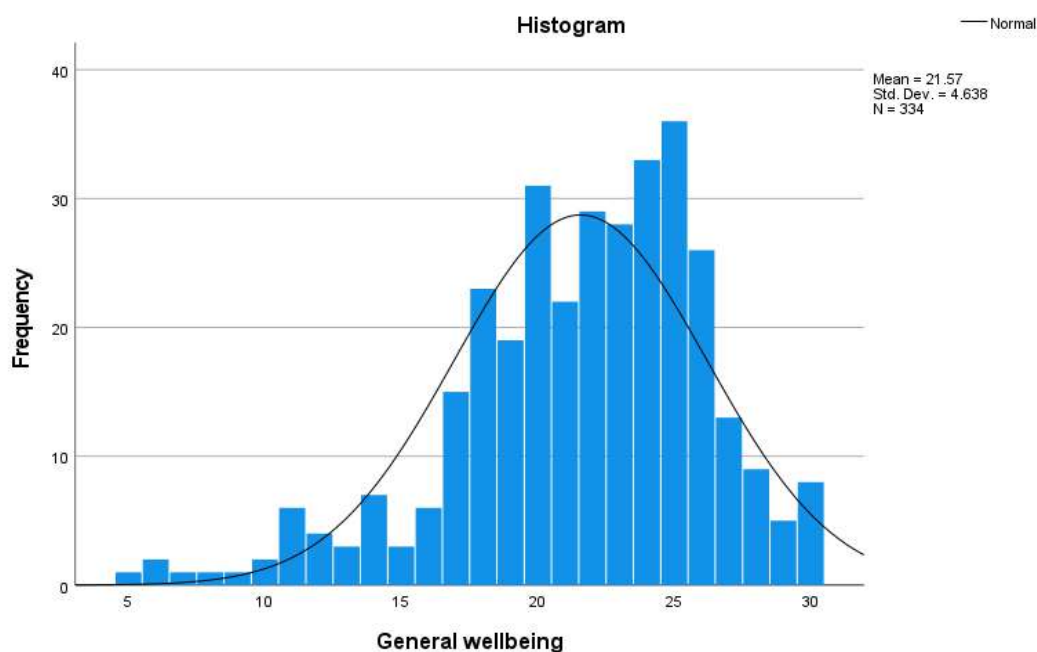
Figure 1

Histogram Depicting Normality Curve of General Wellbeing

Table 2

The Means, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
General wellbeing	4.31	.927	-.831	.946
Home-work interface	3.31	.930	-.064	-.128
Stress at work	3.51	1.033	-.098	-.321

4.1.2 Linearity and Multicollinearity

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients between the main variables. The predictors had significant relationships with the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the relationship between the two predictors (r = .609, p < .01) suggests that there was no issue with multicollinearity.

Table 3

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients Depicting Linear Relationship between the Variables

Variable	GWB	HWI	SAW
General wellbeing (GWB)			
Home-work interface (HWI)	-.306**		
Stress at work (SAW)	-.180**	.609**	

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

4.1.3 Common Method Bias

Kock and Lynn (2012) suggested the use of the variance inflation factor (VIF) to test the presence, and a VIF value greater than 3.3 indicates common method bias (Hair et al., 2019; Kock, 2015). The VIFs between the predictors in this study was 1.59, indicating no issue with common method bias.

4.2 Presentation of Main Results

4.2.1 Levels of Home-Work Interface, Work Stress and General Wellbeing among Public Higher Education Administrators

We assessed the levels of general wellbeing, home-work interface, and stress at work among the administrative staff. Average scores ranging from 2.67 to 4.33 (See Table 2) represent moderate level scores on each of the sub-scales. The mean scores indicated that they reported moderate levels on all the three variables.

We further obtained the frequencies and percentages of the workers who reported high, moderate and low level of scores on each of the variables. The results represented in Table 4 showed that while majority of the workers (57.8%) and (66.8%) reported moderate levels of stress at work, and home-work interface respectively, the majority (56.0%) reported high level of general wellbeing. Only 6.3% reported low level of general wellbeing, with 19.2% and 22.5% reporting low levels of stress at work and home-work interface.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' Levels of Reported Stress at Work, Home-Work Interface and General Wellbeing

	Stress at Work		General Wellbeing		Home-Work Interface	
Levels	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Low	64	19.2	21	6.3	75	22.5
Moderate	193	57.8	126	37.7	223	66.8
High	77	23.1	187	56.0	36	10.8
	334	100.0	334	100.0	334	100.0

4.2.2 Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses tested in the study sought to ascertain the extent to which work-family interface predicts general wellbeing through stress at work. We tested the hypotheses using the PROCESS path modelling algorithm in the SmartPLS 4.1.6. The path model (Figure 2) and Table 5 show the direct relationships.
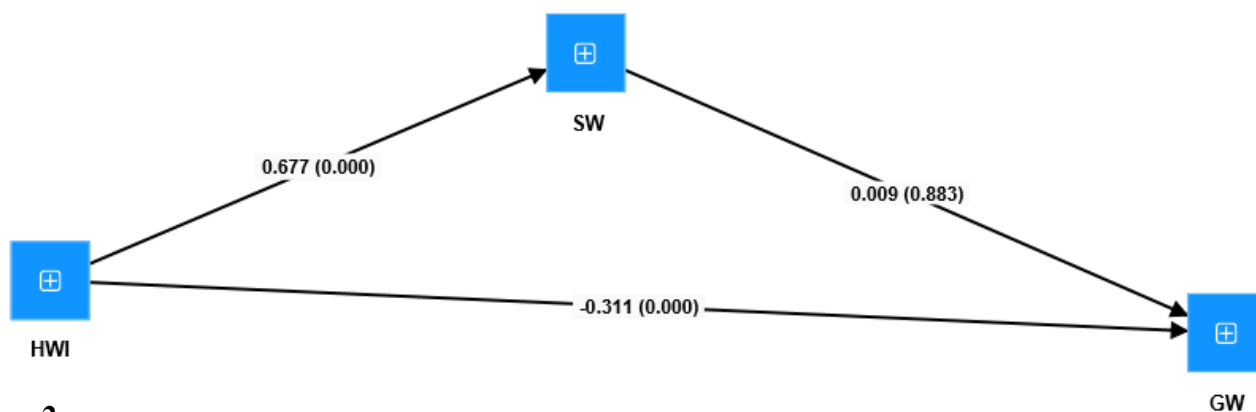
Figure 2

Direct Paths of Predictive Relationships and Corresponding Levels of Significance between Variables

Table 5

Direct, Indirect and Total Effects (Predictive Relationships)

Paths	Total effect			Direct effect			Specific indirect effect			f^2
	B	T stat	Sig.	B	T stat	Sig.	Specific	β	Sig	
HWI -> GW	-.305	5.117	.000	-.311	4.627	.000	HWI -> SW -> GW	.006	.884	.068*
HWI -> SW	.677	13.9	.000	.677	13.9	.000				.590**
SW -> GW	.009	0.147	.883	.009	0.147	.883				.000

The results (Table 5) showed that work-family interface positively predicted work stress (β = .677, p < .001) and negatively predicted general wellbeing (β = -.311, p < .001). Hypotheses 1(a) and 1(b) were therefore supported. Stress at work, however, did not significantly predict general wellbeing (β = .009, p = .883), and did not also significantly mediate home-work interface and general wellbeing (β = .006, p = .884) of the administrative staff of public universities. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were accordingly not supported.

4.3 Discussions

We investigated the levels and extent to which home-work interface and stress at work predicted general wellbeing of administrative staff of public universities within the Ghanaian higher education context. The findings show moderate levels of general wellbeing, home-work interface, and stress at work among administrative staff. Home-work interface had a significant positive relationship with stress at work, but related negatively with general wellbeing of the administrative staff of public universities in Ghana. Stress at work, however, did not significantly predict general wellbeing of the respondents.

The wellbeing of individuals is an important resource for their daily lives and functions, which is influenced by social, economic and environmental conditions (Babbio et al., 2022). Feelings of wellbeing, it should be noted are fundamental to the health of individuals that may help them to successfully overcome challenges in order to achieve their goals and objectives in life. The respondents reported moderate level of general wellbeing in this study. This suggests that individuals need emotional, psychological, social and physical wellbeing which are prerequisites to be able to survive and cope with work and family life.

Further, the study reveals moderate levels of stress among administrative staff. Theoretical literature indicated that moderate stressors are typically events such as conflict with or neglect by family or peers as well as difficult living conditions (Babbio et al., 2022; Carlson & Perrewé, 1999). The moderate levels of stress further suggest that administrative staff of public universities may experience conditions that trigger stress quite often but not to the extent that could be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. Babbio et al. (2022) observed that work pressure and role demands could influence work experience positively and provide challenge and stimulation at work. However, when individuals perceive the extent of work pressure as very strong and overwhelming beyond what they can handle, they become stressed and can affect their wellbeing.

We also found a moderate level of home-work interface reported by the administrative staff. This suggests that their home and work responsibilities moderately interfere with each other. High level of interference between these two critical facets of human existence can be a great source of stress, and could negatively have effects on the health and wellbeing of the individual. Our finding also reveals a significant strong positive relationship between work-family interface and stress at work among administrative staff of public of public universities. This finding suggests that higher level of home-work interface is associated with higher stress at work. The current finding agrees with the broader

findings in the existing literature reported by (Davis, 2020; Sayin et al., 2021; Wajcman, 2015), but in contrast with few studies that reported weak or non-significant negative relationships between work-family interface and work stress (Haslam et al., 2013).

The current study tested the predictive relationship between home-work interface and stress at work and found that home-work interface had a significant negative relationship with stress at work. Theoretical literature suggests that work and family life roles demand physical and psychic efforts and time on task (Ballout, 2008), and this may cause stress at both home and work, as the individual may find the simultaneous demands from the two important spheres of life beyond his or her ability to cope (Karkpnlian et al., 2016). For instance, an administrative staff, who is a father or mother performs parental roles according to the social role theory. In a similar vein, being a spouse is a demand especially, if an administrative staff employment as well as emotional availability is combined with the physical and mental time on task given to family life (Elliot, 2008).

We also found that home-work interface negatively predicted the general wellbeing of the administrative staff of Ghanaian public universities. Extant literature has shown that poorer wellbeing is a major concern for managers in higher education. For example, Milledzi (2017) observed that poorer wellbeing has become a critical   issue in the present Ghanaian psychosocial work environment especially among academic staff of public and private universities. The finding of the current study indicates that higher level of home-work interface is associated with poorer general wellbeing of the administrators, which is also in line with the findings in earlier research works (e.g., Davis, 2020; Sayin et al., 2021). This has implications for productivity among administrative staff of public universities.

Meanwhile, our finding did not show a significant relationship between stress at work and general wellbeing. Extant literature indicated that work stress has implication for the wellbeing of the individual (Maddock, 2024). Work-related stress is suggested to be the most inherent psychological outcome that leaps beyond the surface pressure in any occupation, affecting mental wellbeing and physical health (Maulik, 2017). However, empirical evidence also indicates that the impact of stress on wellbeing depends on the extent or level of stress experienced (Schneiderman et al., 2005). Low to moderate levels of stress are usually tolerable and so do not have adverse impact on the wellbeing of the individual (Sapolsky, 2004). However, stress becomes troubling when the level is high and beyond the ability of the individual to cope with. In the current study, the respondents mostly reported moderate level of stress at work, which could be within their ability to handle, without adversely affecting their wellbeing.

A further goal of our study was to explore the mediating role of work stress in the relationship between work-family interface and general wellbeing. The finding shows that work stress did not significantly predict general wellbeing, and did not also mediate the relationship between work-family interface and general wellbeing. We expected home-work interface to result in stress at work, with stress in turn affecting general wellbeing. However, this is not the case as our current finding suggests with regard to administrative staff of public universities within the Ghanaian higher education context.

The non-significant mediation role of stress at work in the relationship between home-work interface and wellbeing could be due to the generally moderate level among the university administrators. This suggests that the association between home-work interface and wellbeing could be explained through other contextual variables and mechanisms. In a similar study, Leonard (2014) found that depression did not significantly mediate the relationship between work-family interface and wellbeing especially with regard to   work synergy. It is therefore important to situate and explain our current finding by using the settings approach. This is because according the settings approach, the social context and places that workers live is important in determining their perceptions of levels of stress and general wellbeing (Dooris et al., 2007). Therefore, linking general wellbeing of administrative staff to the psychosocial work settings or organizational as well as   other contextual factors in the university communities of public universities in Ghana could be important.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The paper highlights the extent to which work responsibilities of public higher education administrative staff interfere with their family responsivities and ascertained how the nature of the role conflict relates to their level of work stress and general wellbeing. We can conclude from the findings that combining work and family responsibilities is a major source of stress which adversely influences the general wellbeing of administrative staff of public universities in Ghana. The time administrative staff devote in discharging their family responsibilities is associated with higher stress at work. This may be contextualised within the Social Role theory which argues that the individual is likely to encounter tensions and high stress due to incompatible roles. Conflict between family responsibilities and work may lead to occupational burnout, job stress, and low performance among administrative staff of public universities. We can also

conclude from our finding that interference of family responsibilities with work among administrative staff can be a major challenge in the Ghanaian higher education landscape.

5.2 Recommendations

The findings imply that the relationships between work-family interface and general wellbeing have become crucial in recent times as societies are becoming more complex as well as being modernised with administrative staff of public universities performing multiple roles. The consequences of the role conflict may lead to stress and poorer general wellbeing which may lead to reduction in productivity at the work place. Therefore, we recommend that management of public universities in Ghana should roll out policies and programmes to help administrative staff manage the challenges of balancing work and family responsibilities. To this end, we recommend adequate provision of resources to enable university administrative staff to be innovative on the job. In a similar vein, social support from co-workers is highly recommended. This is because lack of adequate resources and social support from colleagues at the work place could lead to stress which tend to affect the general wellbeing of workers. We also call for intervention programmes on re-socialisation, orientation and sensitisation as well as encouragement of administrative staff with regard to balancing work and family responsibilities.

5.3 Declarations

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