AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF WORK AND LIFE OUTSIDE WORK OF WOMEN ACADEMIC AND TEACHING STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN HONG KONG

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ABSTRACT

The higher education sector is characterised as competitive with heavy workloads and increased scrutiny of performance (Barcan, 2018; Gill, 2014). Yet this culture remains a relatively unexplored area in Hong Kong (HK) and the aim of this research is to explore and deepen understanding of women academic and teaching staff's experiences of work and life outside work. The research questions were: 1). How do women academic and teaching staff view the notion of 'work'? and 2). What are their experiences of work and life outside work under the trend of marketisation of education? An exploratory qualitative study of 15 participants working in higher education underpinned by social constructivism and relying on semi-structured interviews was adopted while thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. Evidence of work intensification and extensification was found in participants' accounts. However, differences were noted in terms of how participants explained their experiences of work with the negative experiences of teaching staff being closely associated with work intensification, extensification, and a perceived lack of recognition from management, whereas the positive experiences were linked with a strong professional work identity, personal achievement, ownership and a perceived tolerance of the work culture. A distinct finding was that husbands/partners were willing to perform feminised roles by helping participants manage domestic duties in Chinese culture, while the availability of inexpensive paid domestic help enabled participants to better manage work and other aspects of life although participants were expected to be 'superwomen' in managing all roles well. Life outside work experiences, which did not exclusively focus on childcare/family, were impacted particularly by the precarious nature of contracts. This thesis makes a contribution to the body of knowledge on work and life issues through exploring our understandings of the meanings attributed to work and life outside work experiences in the HK context.

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List of Abbreviations

CWV – Chinese Work Value

FWC – Family-work Conflict

HK – Hong Kong

HE – Higher Education

KT – Knowledge Transfer

QAC – The Quality Assurance Council

QS - Quacquarelli Symonds (World University Rankings)

RAE- Research Assessment Exercise

SSCI – Social Sciences Citation Index

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine

TDG – Teaching Development Grant

TUC – Trades Union Congress (in the U.K.)

UGC – University Grants Committee of Publicly-Funded Universities in Hong Kong

WLB – Work-life Balance

WFB – Work-family Balance

WFC – Work-family Conflict

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the work and life outside work experiences of women academic and teaching staff in the Higher Education (HE) sector in Hong Kong (HK). The aim of inquiry into women is because in a traditional society like HK, societal traditional gender roles expect women to focus more on household duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012), coupled with that HE institutions focus on ranking and publications, which has made work more demanding (Aiston, 2014; Gill, 2014; Parker, 2014) for women who are required to prioritise work first (Beninger, 2010) and perform domestic duties such as childcare and eldercare (Baxter and Chesters, 2011). Women academics often report higher levels of work-life conflict than men (Kinman and Wray, 2013; Weinrib et al., 2013), and research suggests that women feel more guilt when their job intrudes on their family responsibilities (Glavin et al., 2011; Raddon, 2002). Women academics have also reported difficulties in managing teaching, research and service duties (Misra et al., 2012). My focus on the experiences of women is both timely and relevant to the growing body of research on work-life issues, which identifies women academic and teaching staff in HK as under-researched.

The argument of my thesis is that by using a qualitative study to explore women's notion of work and experiences of work and life outside work, this can shed light on the HE culture that facilitates or hinders them from experiencing positive/negative experiences, and highlight how the meanings attributed to work affect their work and life outside work experiences. A review of the research suggests that academic work includes many characteristics that are linked with a conflict between work and life roles, including a heavy workload, long working hours and a blurring of work and life boundaries (Kinman, 2014; Kinman and Wray, 2013; Kotecha et al., 2014; Mark and Smith, 2012; Winefield et al., 2014). Some studies found that the amount of psychological distress in HE is much higher

than that in other occupations (e.g. Kinman et al., 2006; Winefield et al., 2008). A survey of around 14000 academic employees in the U.K. (55% females) found that 65% often felt they neglected their personal needs/life goals due to their work and family roles (Kinman and Wray, 2013). My study, which is based on HE, can elucidate the thinking processes of women or other aspects such as a support network that enable women to have positive/negative work and life outside work experiences. Information of documented studies exploring such experiences of women academics in HK HE is scant while a considerable number of studies have been conducted in other countries (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Caretta et al., 2018; Santos, 2015; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016). In Chinese culture, women are expected to undertake childcare and eldercare duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Lui, 2013; Luke, 1998) but in HK, work is also considered important for the financial well-being of the family (Choi, 2008; Lu et al., 2012). Therefore, the different expectations of fulfilling the roles of a professional, mother, daughter and a wife are challenging (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012), which makes HK an interesting setting to explore the issue of work and life outside work experiences, alongside the apparent absence of prior material testimony. A social constructivist paradigm with the use of semi-structured interviews, aiming to deepen our understanding of women's notion of 'work' and their subsequent experiences, can provide the detailed knowledge that is currently lacking. This study therefore makes an important contribution to the understanding of women academic and teaching staff's work and life outside work experiences beyond the western culture.

The impetus for my study is also driven by my personal experience. I have been working in HE as a teaching track staff for the past 19 years and have witnessed changes such as an emphasis on achieving higher performance standards by management, an increase in workload together with the longer working hours and the constant fear of not having one's contract renewed. With elderly care responsibilities, I have had to navigate my work and life outside work experiences meticulously. My professional development through undertaking my doctoral studies has deepened my understanding of the theoretical perspectives on work and other areas of life and this has made me ponder the experiences of teaching staff and academic track staff in HK HE.

This chapter sets the context for my study by exploring the theoretical perspectives underpinning the work-life balance (WLB) debate, particularly the problematic, complex and contested notion of work-life balance, the shortcomings of the current research, and why and how my proposed topic is investigated.

1.1 Theoretical Perspectives on the Work-life Balance (WLB) Debate

To justify why the work and life experiences of women academic and teaching staff were explored rather than WLB, it is necessary to understand the key debates concerning WLB before highlighting the construct of WLB as a contested terrain, and what my thesis aims to achieve. WLB has gained attention due to a rising number of dual-earner families and increased work-family pressures (Swan and Cooper, 2005). Work and family are assumed to be the most important domains of employees' lives (Blair-Loy, 2003; Jacobs and Gerson, 2005), and the need for good WLB means that employees can combine paid work with their family life well (Warhurst et al., 2008). Considerable research has shown that a lack of WLB is linked to outcomes including absenteeism, turnover intention, and psychological and physical illnesses (Jones et al., 2013; Nohe et al., 2015; Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012). WLB is rooted in the role stress theory (Merton, 1957) and assumes that the performance of one role leads to tension with the other role (Dex and Bond, 2005) and this is particularly evident in the negative impact brought by work-family issues whereby work takes away time from family, resulting in work-family conflict (Dex and Bond, 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

The relationship between work and family spheres has generated an extensive body of research on work-life or work-family balance (WFB). In fact, no general agreement exists in the literature on describing WLB or WFB in one particular way (see e.g. Kalliath and Brough, 2008). Some researchers (e.g. Gervais and Millear, 2016) suggest that work-family, work-nonwork, and work-life are terms which could be employed interchangeably since many aspects that affect married employees can also affect single employees (Geurts and Demerouti, 2003; Major et al., 2013). Scholars have put forward definitions of WLB, yet there are multiple definitions and a lack of consensus on how it should be defined and measured (Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007). For example, WLB is seen when a balance exists

between work and family (e.g. Clarke et al., 2004; Marks and MacDermid, 1996) and Greenhaus and Singh (2003) define WLB as the extent to which people participate equally in their work and family roles. However, they just focused on two spheres: work and family, excluding other aspects of life such as performing voluntary service.

As seen in the above definitions, underlying the assumption of 'balance' is that an equal amount of time is devoted to both work and family roles, and 'balance' assumes that this is an ideal situation (Ransome, 2007). Also, work and life are viewed as separate domains and balancing family and work suggests that tensions exist between these two, mutually exclusive realms (Currie and Eveline, 2011; Eikhof et al., 2007). Warhurst et al. (2008, p.1) highlight that studies on WLB do not "adequately capture empirically key aspects of work and life" since the studies view work and life as separate spheres when in fact they are intertwined or amalgamated, depending on one's occupation. As Edley (2001) asserts:

> In actuality we never leave one sphere and enter another…we traverse the false boundaries of either/or distinctions while being immersed in both worlds simultaneously. (Edley, 2001, p.29)

This applies to academics who often state that work is part of their lives. Employees' work attitudes play a main role in attaining WLB and they might prefer working long hours to achieve their goals (Eikhof et al., 2007). Cowling (2007, cited in Eikhof et al., 2007) found that over 20 percent of workers in the U.K. desired to work longer hours and 60 percent of them did so as they desired a promotion. The issue of whether long working hours are viewed as good or bad is contingent on employees' attitude towards their job and whether the job fulfills career aspirations (Eikhof et al., 20007). Work can be a part of employees' lives and bring meaning to them (Barcan, 2018; Gill, 2009), and is linked to psychological well-being as well as performs a function in personal and social life (Frone et al., 1997; Gambles et al., 2006; Jahoda, 1982; Lewis et al., 2000). Work can also increase employees' self-esteem and identity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Hochschild (1997) stipulates that work offers women a means to escape from tedious home responsibilities. Thus, it is evident that WLB does not take into consideration individual differences such as personal attitudes and values, life cycle

stage and domestic situations, which can affect one's experiences of work and life (Fleetwood, 2007; Murphy and Doherty, 2011).

The approach to my thesis is informed by a recognition that for academic and teaching staff, work is often entwined with other areas of life and, therefore, rather than exploring the concept of WLB, exploring the subjective understandings of the work and life outside work experiences of staff and their inter-relationships was the research focus. Most definitions of WLB (e.g. Clarke et al., 2004; Greenhaus and Singh, 2003) also assume that when there is a lack of balance, family-friendly policies can restore the balance but based on research, provision of these policies does not necessarily lead to positive WLB experiences for employees because employees may view work as a source of success and satisfaction and prefer to spend more time on it (e.g. Fangel and Aalokke, 2008). Balance may also not be achieved as it assumes that employees have control and choice in their lives and in the workplace (Caproni, 2004), when in reality, socio-cultural expectations (e.g. Cheung and Lui, 2017; Choi, 2008) and workplace practices (Warhurst et al., 2008) can impact work-life experiences.

Researchers have also emphasised the importance of reducing conflict between work and non-work/family roles in their formulation of WLB or WFB definitions. Clark (2000, p.751) defines WLB as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict", while Grady and McCarthy (2008) define WLB as:

> the sense of balance and satisfaction employees experience between their work/professional and personal lives. When the demands of work and life exist in harmony with each other, then work-life balance is achieved. (Grady and McCarthy, 2008, p.3)

To Frone (2003, p.145), WFB is defined as "low levels of inter-role conflict and high levels of inter-role facilitation." It is also defined by the absence of negative relationships (i.e. lower work-family conflict) and the presence of positive relationships (e.g. greater work-family balance) (Major et al., 2013). Yet these definitions indicate a common thread of WLB being viewed as a lack of conflict in work and non-work roles, while other research suggests that work can be beneficial for one's life even when role conflict is high (Morganson et al., 2013).

Boundaries between home and work are increasingly blurred (Ransome, 2008), particularly in HE and professional work (Barcan, 2018; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000) since academics work long hours and work intrudes into their personal time, and there is bound to be conflict. Work intensification (i.e. more demanding work) has led employees to devote more time to work and they may willingly do so as they find their work rewarding (Eikhof et al., 2007; Warhurst et al., 2008) and may not perceive a conflict between their various roles. Approximately 20% of U.K. workers wanted to work longer hours (Cowling, 2007) and 40% hoped to do so as they liked their work (Isles, 2004). Thus, working long hours may not necessarily mean that one's life outside work is compromised. The use of mobile technology has also meant that academics are available during non-work hours too. Warhurst et al. (2008) argue that negative or positive work-life experiences are due to:

> changes in the relationship between work and life that relate to the nature of work and employment and the fit between labour and lifestyle. This complex configuration thus suggests that work and life can be interpenetrating rather than distinct and balanceable. (Warhurst et al., 2008, pp.8-9)

In addition, the perspective on work-family conflict rests on the assumption that work is detrimental and has a negative impact on life because it takes away time from family, while life is predominantly about childcare/family responsibilities and can bring personal satisfaction (Eikhof et al., 2007). Work can be recognised as rewarding and lead to life satisfaction (Kinnunen et al., 2008; Warhurst et al., 2008). Eikhof et al. (2007) argue that employees' work attitudes need to be explored since working long hours might enable life goal achievements. For many academics who define themselves by the research that they do, work is fulfilling to them, so the construct of WLB cannot capture the essence of their work-life experiences. Gill (2009, p.233) corroborates that for academics, academic work is a "noble" calling and even when they overwork, they still enjoy it. Even when taking into account occupation, industry and personality, studies such as the European Working Conditions Surveys in 1995-2005 found that over 80% of employees were satisfied with their work (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007). Lifestyle can be integrated with work as suggested by Murger (1988, cited in Warhurst et al., 2008); lifestyle includes the "ensemble of the partners, goods and practices an actor has

chosen for himself" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.21, cited in Warhurst et al., 2008, p.14) and beliefs and values; for example, theatre artists view their work and life as intertwined and as a work of art, resulting in work fulfillment from producing the artwork with most of their time spent on work (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006).

Another strand of research views WFB as a holistic construct placing emphasis on the social perspective. Grzywacz and Carlson (2007, p.458) define WFB as the "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains." WFB is associated with family and job satisfaction, organisational commitment and family performance (Carlson et al., 2009). Greenhaus and Allen (2011) adopt a fit approach in defining balance by combining both attitudinal and behavioral components, arguing that balance arises when role effectiveness and satisfaction in work and life coincide with values in life. For instance, an employee will feel balanced if he/she values his/her work very much and performs well at work. Kalliath and Brough's (2008, p.326) definition of WLB is "the individual's perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities." According to the authors, WLB is a subjective construct since individuals have a personal assessment regarding the balance of their work and family roles wherein the amount of time spent at work and home does not have to be in equilibrium.

The above holistic construct of WFB appears more tenable as an equal amount of time cannot be spent on each role and this research is moving away from simplistic WLB definitions while contemplating the overlapping and individualised articulations of how one manages work and life. Yet Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) still primarily focus on work and family when in reality, there might be other roles in life such as personal development. The use of 'balance' by Greenhaus and Allen (2011) can be critiqued because employees can still feel satisfied without achieving 'balance' between various roles.

Priorities and preferences of employees can determine how they choose to spend their time on different roles (Peng et al., 2011). For example, Hakim's (2000) preference theory highlights the choices made by women. She argues that preferences towards work have an impact on the participation of women in the workplace and categorises women into three types: home-centred, work-centred and adaptive (i.e. combining both work and family) with

each group exerting different choices on how they manage WLB and raise children. She found that women have to juggle raising children while working and many Scandinavian women would opt to work part-time or have part-time childcare, which in part would affect their career prospects. She also used longitudinal studies from the U.S. and argued that government policy and economic changes over time have not given women the control to exercise greater choice in managing their family and other roles (Hakim, 2000).

However, Hakim's (2000) theory has been criticised for being over-simplistic in proposing only three types of preferences adopted by women. Bennett and Tang (2008) argue that there are other types of preferences in public corporations and suggested the term 'women in contention' to refer to those who were in between adaptive and work-centred women mainly comprising middle and senior managerial staff. Halrynjo and Lyng (2009) investigated the processes leading to working mothers' withdrawal from their jobs on account of their dual roles: being an employee and a mother, leading to criticism of Hakim (2000) for overlooking the complexity of working mothers' experiences. This suggests that women's choices are more constrained by gendered role expectations and socio-cultural expectations than preferences.

Employees' values might dictate how they manage work and life and for Hirsham (2006), the choices made by women might be shaped by their moral values that they uphold in relation to the traditional notions of what women should do. This notion of coping is coined by Hochschild (1997) and Kremen Bolton (2000) as the 'third shift' which refers to the psychological dialogue that women engage in with themselves whereby they reflect on their choices and motives revolving around their work, personal and home lives. This involves a deep negotiation regarding the different roles that they perform.

An explanation of other important aspects of WLB research (i.e. work-family conflict, enrichment, work-family integration and segmentation) is provided below to inform our understanding of the WLB issue. Frone (2003) suggests that balance is seen when work-family conflict is low and work-family enrichment is high. Work-family conflict (WFC) is described as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p.77). Interference from family to work occurs when family responsibilities hinder

performance at work whereas interference from work to family takes place when work roles interfere with family responsibilities (Gutek et al., 1991; MacEwen and Barling, 1991). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) conceptualised three kinds of WFC: time-based conflict (time in one role reduces time for another), strain-based conflict (strain in one role negatively impacts one's role in another sphere), and behaviour-based conflict (behaviours required in one role are inconsistent with those required in another role). Professionals' resources (e.g. time) are limited so there is conflict in managing demands from work and home and they often face time- and strain-based conflict in managing multiple roles (Perlow, 1999).

Researchers have suggested that work-family conflict is a bi-directional construct because work can interfere with family while family can also interfere with work (Adams et al., 1996; O'Driscoll et al., 1992). Netemeyer et al. (1996) identified two kinds of work-family conflict. Work-to-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the demands created by one's job interfere with family responsibilities, while family-to-work-conflict is an inter-role conflict whereby the demands created by one's family interfere with work responsibilities. Research studies have found that work-to-family conflict has more consistent effects on family outcomes whereas family-to-work conflict has more impacts on work outcomes (Frone et al., 1997; Frone, 2000); long working hours tend to result in work-to-family conflict whereas parental and eldercare duties lead to family-to-work conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Ngo and Lau, 1998). Some studies have shown that women and men have similar levels of family-to-work and work-to-family conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Frone 2000) while others have found a higher amount of work-to-family conflict among women (e.g. Boulis and Jacobs, 2008; Jacobs and Gerson, 2005). Fox et al. (2011) found that work-to-family conflict was more common among both men and women, noting that work interferes more with family and the heavier importance placed on work. Women experienced slightly more family-to-work conflict in their study, as has been reported elsewhere (e.g. Boulis and Jacobs, 2008). The results of different studies are mixed and they do not provide insights into how women negotiate the interplay between work and life outside work, and thus, a qualitative study is needed.

Additionally, studies have suggested that family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict effects are related but separate forms of inter-role conflict (O'Driscoll et al., 1992).

Three views on the processes of role interaction between work and family have been proposed. They include a). spillover where attitudes and behaviours are assumed to spill over from one role to another (Leiter and Durup, 1996); b). compensation where roles are viewed as interrelated in a counterbalancing manner (Dubin, 1956; Lambert, 1990); and c). segmentation where it is viewed that role demands can be compartmentalised (Lambert, 1990). Some studies support the spillover hypothesis with the assumption that the effect of work roles on family roles tends to be negative (Leiter and Durup, 1996; O'Driscoll et al., 1992). Spillover refers to how work and family affect each other, which creates shared characteristics of the two roles in the individual (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). The four kinds of similarities include spillover of mood and feelings, values about work and family, skills and behaviours. Both negative spillover (bad work/family experiences intrude on the other sphere of work/life) and positive spillover effects have been observed (Ilies et al., 2009; Song et al., 2008).

Another theoretical perspective, which is contrary to work-conflict, is the enrichment perspective, which views that work and family can benefit each other (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Work-family enrichment is defined as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in another role" (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006, p.73). It assumes that engaging in multiple roles can result in higher well-being and better role performance because employees have access to more resources (i.e., resources from work roles can be used in family roles) and thereby having more opportunities to experience success (Barnett and Hyde, 2001; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Rothbard, 2001). Enrichment is distinct from positive spillover as mentioned by Wayne (2009, cited in Casper and Harris, 2008) with positive spillover being defined as benefits such as good mood or skills gained from one sphere being used in another sphere without boosting performance in the other sphere. Therefore, work-family enrichment only occurs when benefits from one role raise performance in another role. Work-family facilitation has also emerged and is defined as "a form of synergy in which resources associated with one role enhance or make easier participation in another role" (Voydanoff, 2004, p.399).

Clarity is further needed not simply because of the contrast implied where the conflict perspective reveals how managing dual roles can result in interference whereas the

enrichment perspective highlights the mutual benefits. The work-life enrichment perspective is more plausible but employees might have a clear boundary between their work and life. For some occupations such as academics, work and family may not be separate domains and the meaning given to family and life may vary depending on one's culture. For example, in Yang et al.'s (2000) study, work demand had a stronger effect on work-family conflict in China than in the U.S. The Chinese place importance on their family and, therefore, work-to-family conflict may occur when there are more work and family responsibilities (Spector et al., 2007). However, Redding (1993) found that mainland Chinese managers attached less importance to their family but more to work, similar to people in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Lu et al. (2012) and Xiao and Cooke (2012) found that work is the means to better financial security, and the Chinese bring prosperity and pride to their family via their work and thus taking on more work is beneficial for the family, even if that means sacrificing family time, and this emphasis on work by the Chinese has been found in other studies (e.g. Lai, 1995; Lin and Lai, 1995). To safeguard the financial security of the family, HK Chinese have a strong commitment to work, resulting in permeable work and life boundaries (Aryee et al., 1999a). To the extent that culture affects the way professional bindings are considered, it is worth exploring how such differences influence views of academic and teaching staff in HK towards work and life outside work. Since western assumptions are embedded in WLB and WFB measures, it is important to clarify the meaning of work and other areas of life and their interplay in a different cultural context (Shaffer et al., 2011).

Prior research on WLB either views WLB on a continuum in which segmentation (work and life roles are different) and integration (work and life roles do not have boundaries) are the dominant strands of thought (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996a). Work-life integration was derived from boundary theory, which posits that one's role is determined by a boundary that separates it from other roles or that there are separate domains for life and work (Ashforth et al., 2000). Boundaries are "mental fences…used to simplify and order the environment" (Ashforth et al., 2000, p.262). Boundary theory rests on the assumption that people try to reduce role transitions (Thompson et al., 2006). The extent to which the boundaries are porous changes depending on the jobs and individuals, leading to roles being either segmented or integrated (Nippert-Eng, 1996a). A framework, which is a combination of segmentation and integration to comprehend the WLB debate, is Nippert-Eng's (1996a,

1996b) 'boundary work.' She categorised employees into 'segmentors' or 'integrators', and boundary work refers to the mental organisation of practices, which lead to the segmentation or integration of home and work. Integration occurs when 'home' and 'work' are tied together whereas segmentation is seen when the work and home boundary are distinct. There is a continuum for these two ends of the poles (one being 'home' and the other being 'work'), and individuals are assumed to be involved in boundary work. According to Nippert-Eng (1996a), each person is on a continuum with a high degree of segmentation on one end of the continuum to a high degree of integration on the other end of the continuum based on how they manage their work and family roles. Drawing on this theory, work intensification and use of technology have made work life boundaries more permeable (Eikhof et al., 2007; Golden and Geisler, 2007). Bergman and Gardiner (2007) found that the work life boundaries of professionals in a university in Sweden were permeable as work was often done at home.

While Nipper-Eng's (1996a, 1996b) conception of the relationship between work and life using the boundary concept seems useful because boundaries are negotiated by employees, it has weaknesses as she focuses on the 'home' more. In reality, one's articulation of life comprises many aspects like meetings friends and leisure. Further, it seems that rational decisions and choices are made by individuals to manage their home and work, yet there are external workplace constraints that affect individuals' choices (Warhurst et al., 2008). Individuals with similar levels of integration or segmentation tend to have very different work-life experiences (Warhurst et al., 2008).

Recently, other scholars (e.g., Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen et al., 2008) have focused on the demands and resources of work-life. Work demands are aspects of the job requiring mental and/or physical effort such as working hours and workload while family demands include childcare/eldercare, household chores and commuting. Resources refer to aspects that help employees manage work and life roles and encourage personal development, for example, support of the boss, autonomy at work and pride in one's work. Strain arises when the demands are high while resources are limited. Although this framework seems robust, I contend that these researchers' definitions of 'life' focus predominantly on childcare and eldercare when it could include other aspects like leisure.

To summarise, the debate on WLB continues with many issues unresolved. Various views

on WLB suggest that WLB is a problematic and multi-faceted construct and employees need to handle multiple roles (not just work and family roles but personal development roles and others). The assumption that there should be no conflict between work and family roles to achieve balance is almost impossible to achieve with work intensification, and the assumption that work generates conflict is also fraught with pitfalls. A major criticism of WLB research is that most of it is done in western countries (Major et al., 2013), with scant research conducted in HK. In fact, Kossek et al. (2011, cited in Major et al., 2013) found that around 95% of WLB studies were based on western samples. Also, most WLB studies used survey methods and in particular, Eby et al.'s (2005) review of organisational literature from 1980–2002 noted that:

> the overwhelming majority of studies predicted specific relationships between work and family variables (n = 170, 89%) as opposed to posing exploratory research questions (n = 20, 11%), reflecting an orientation ... toward predictive rather than exploratory research. (Eby et al., 2005, p.133)

As Pichler (2009) notes, work is defined in these studies as paid work only and other kinds of work like voluntary service are not counted as work. Also, measures on WLB scales often presume that a negative relationship exists between work and life and that WLB will engender satisfaction (Sallee and Lester, 2017). Hypothesis testing was relied on rather than exploratory research, which predetermined the factors and excluded any previously unknown factors (Sallee and Lester, 2017). Recently, there have been more qualitative studies on the work-life experiences of academics but again they were conducted in other countries (e.g. Britain, Portugal, Sweden, Australia, Mainland China) (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Caretta et al., 2018; Ren and Caudle, 2016; Santos, 2015; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016) rather than in HK. Qualitative studies could result in the discovery of some unknown views of work and provide insights into factors that are linked with work-life experiences, and this is what my study aims to achieve.

1.2 Work-Family Conflict Studies in HK

Researchers have studied work-family conflict (WFC) for associated staff turnover (Boles et al., 1997) and burnout (Aryee, 1993), together with the coping strategies of working parents in the HK context. Aryee et al. (1999b) conducted a quantitative study on WFC in dual-earner families in three public organisations and a university, noting that parental tasks brought family-work conflict (FWC) while work tasks were associated with WFC and FWC and the support of the spouse was negatively related to WFC. More WFC was experienced than FWC, showing work interfered more with work. Women also experienced more FWC than men, consistent with Pleck's (1977) finding. Work overload was related to FWC in HK, suggesting that work was viewed as more important for ensuring the financial position of the family (Xiao and Cooke, 2012). However, Choi (2008) found that work tasks had less effect on WFC than family demands because the Chinese view work as very important and thus work tasks are not likely to interfere with family tasks. Lo et al. (2003) conducted telephone interviews with 50 female married professionals in HK to identify their WFC and coping strategies and found that women held themselves responsible for handling such conflicts and did not expect their companies to provide any policies. They experienced problems including feeling exhausted from the various roles (i.e. mother, professional, etc.) and receiving little support from spouses, lowering their career expectations and seeking help from others such as domestic helpers, relatives, and tutors for children as a coping strategy. Ng et al. (2002) and Ng and Fosh (2004) found evidence that WFC tended to affect the promotion prospects of women in HK or, in other words, women were likely to subordinate their career to their family or be less ambitious to reduce conflict between work and life. Venter (2002) interviewed female and male managers in Britain and HK and for the HK group, family was viewed as most important for women managers due to the collectivist orientation; they assumed more household responsibilities and could also rely on domestic helpers to manage their careers. They perceived that hard work could result in success and worked harder than men to achieve career success (Venter, 2002).

The above studies primarily focus on conflict and the two domains: paid work and family duties, the latter of which is associated only with housework and childcare. However, life

includes other aspects apart from childcare and domestic responsibilities. Conflict may appear likely as in many organisations in Asia, working extra hours is the norm and being available in the office indicates diligence (Cooper, 2015). Nonetheless, the results from different studies are also mixed with no definitive conclusions. The predominance of western assumptions throughout these studies renders it necessary to explore the meanings ascribed to work and the work and life experiences outside work, and the interplay between them in a different cultural context (Shaffer et al., 2011). Similarly, although Lo et al.'s (2003) study was qualitative in nature, academics were not included in the sample of professionals. Generalisations for women academics are additionally unwarranted in the case of Venter's (2002) study showing the importance of gender-role attitudes and use of domestic help for professionals in HK.

1.3 How My Study Moves Beyond WLB

As noted, the WLB debate is a contested and multifaceted issue. Having a simplistic notion of achieving 'balance' and having work and life as separate spheres does not consider individuals' views of what work means to them nor does it consider work practices and structural constraints, and this is where my study fills the gap in the literature. One has to move beyond WLB, WFC and the boundary theory to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between work and life experiences. Bourdieu's (1990, cited in Warhurst et al., 2008) theory of people as producers of social practices, could offer a promising approach to understanding the complexity of work and life outside work experiences, and can be viewed as work-life patterns as suggested by Warhurst et al. (2008). These patterns include practices produced by an individual such as work goals, family activities, leisure pursuits, professional development, voluntary work, and these patterns are experienced by individuals in different ways. According to Warhurst et al. (2008) who synthesised and interpreted Bourdieu's (1990) views, contextualised individual experiences and thus, work practices (e.g. intensification and extensification) and structural constraints that affect individuals have to be examined as they have an impact on work-life patterns. The structural constraints include one's resources (e.g. economic, cultural and social) and the structures in which individuals work and live (e.g. organisation of work; conditions of employment; markets; industry; flexible working). Economic resources can allow one to hire

paid domestic help; cultural resources include educational qualifications; while social resources like extended families can affect work-life patterns and work-life experiences through taking care of one's children (Warhurst et al., 2008; Williams, 2007). Also, one's lifestyle influences individuals' practices. Lifestyles refer to an individual's "ensemble of the partners, goods and practices an actor has chosen for himself" (Bourdieu, 1998, cited in Warhurst et al., 2007, p.14) and beliefs and values regarding work (Warhurst et al., 2008) that affect work-life patterns.

My study, therefore, partly builds on Warhurst et al. (2008) that the complex relationship between work and life can be viewed in terms of work-life patterns whereby these patterns are driven by work practices, structural constraints and lifestyles (e.g. one's view of 'work' and emphasis on certain aspects such as hobbies, etc.), and these patterns in turn result in positive or negative work and life outside work experiences. Thus, work-life patterns are synonymous with work-life experiences in my study although for the latter, affective words such as 'positive' and 'negative' are added to the word 'experiences.' Since work-life patterns depend on one's industry (Warhurst et al., 2008), I focus on how they are manifested in the work-life experiences of academic and teaching staff in the HK HE context. Work refers to paid work activities and work experiences refer to all positive and negative experiences that may be intertwined with life outside work experiences or separate consistent with Warhurst et al.'s (2008) view that work and life may not be demarcated but mixed. All other activities and experiences beyond paid work come under life experiences outside work and these focus not only on family duties such as childcare and domestic responsibilities but leisure activities and socialisation in line with Pocock et al. (2008). Family experiences are not used as it is deemed 'life outside work' encapsulates a more comprehensive view of what people do. Warhurst et al. (2008) and Currie and Eveline (2011) note that the WLB problem arises from work intensification and higher pressure imposed on employees. Currie and Eveline (2011) add that the increased use of technology has meant that academics have to be available for many hours after work. Further, different individuals have different attitudes towards work (Eikhof et al., 2007), and varied work-life experiences, and discerning work-life patterns and experiences suggests that "there is more to the work-life relationship than either boundary or balance" (Warhurst et al., 2008, p.16). Thus, my study also explores individuals' different experiences of work and life by drawing on Fangel and Aalokke's

(2008) study that individuals' conception of work can impact their work and life experiences. There are multiple realities of work and life experiences based on work-life patterns, and the dynamics of work and life are complex and inter-related with many aspects included (Sallee and Lester, 2017) such as one's view of work and the support network. Participants create their own reality of such experiences and my study aims to make sense of their experiences and illuminate the interplay of the meaning attributed to work and the resulting work and life outside work experiences. In short, I aimed to offer a realistic and holistic understanding of how women academic and teaching staff view and manage their work-life experiences in HE. I contend that the way an individual views the notion of work and work-life patterns which are shaped by workplace practices, structural constraints and lifestyles is of paramount importance in affecting the subsequent work and life experiences.

The competitive HE sector in HK with the insecure nature of jobs (i.e., most jobs are contract-based) can affect one's experiences of work and life. Yet academics, as revealed in some studies (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000), consider the blurring of work-life boundary as good since they are usually committed to their work. My study, therefore, specifically addresses the shortcoming in the existing research that work may not be viewed as bad but can be fulfilling by advancing research on how women academic and teaching staff frame their notion of 'work' and work and life outside work experiences in HK HE. Individuals' work and life experiences can be affected by their gender (Wattis et al., 2006) since women usually report that other than doing a paid job, they have another unpaid job, which includes domestic duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Hyman and Baldry, 2011; Lui, 2013; Wattis et al., 2006). Tomlinson (2004) studied how women and mothers managed their work and life by conducting interviews with 62 working mothers (i.e., 28 full-time and 34 part-time mothers), noting that women worked full-time to earn the seniority and position and only then could they negotiate flexible working arrangements to meet their personal needs. This suggests that power dynamics are inherent in individuals' framing of work-life experiences since a couple has to negotiate the responsibilities that each of them has to perform (Warhurst et al., 2008). Given that women in HK are often expected by their family to undertake childcare and domestic responsibilities (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012; Lee, 2003; Lui, 2013), it was worth studying them, namely, how they viewed work

and how their work and life experiences played out as well as any interesting factors or coping strategies that they used in the HK cultural context.

This section has critically reviewed some concepts and debates surrounding WLB. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the vast literature on WLB in its entirety. In the following section, academic work is explained and it is argued that tensions are inherent in academic and teaching staff's framing of work-life experiences due to work intensification in HK HE.

1.4 Academic Work

It is imperative to highlight how changes in the working conditions of HE institutions have affected the nature of academics' work in other countries (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Gill, 2014; Loveday, 2018; Parker and Jary, 1995; Read and Leathwood, 2018) and whether this is evident in the HK HE sector. Neoliberalism has been observed in universities and this ideology views that socio-economic gain can be maximised through the use of market forces (Peck et al., 2009). Since market forces and performance are stressed, control is needed in the form of audits through which output can be measured by management (Bal et al., 2014; Loveday, 2018; Shore, 2008). This emphasis on individual performance and output (Waring, 2013) has led to a rising focus on the individual having to deliver results (Bal et al., 2014). Coupled with marketisation, it has made HE a more insecure work environment (Bal et al., 2014; Gill, 2014; Loveday, 2018). Bal et al. (2014), Gill (2014) and Parker and Jary (1995) found that the insecure nature of jobs, the time pressure placed on academics and the long working hours alongside monitoring of academics' performance through research output have blurred the boundaries between work and life, resulting in anxiety among academics. Recently, Barcan (2018) observed that worsening work conditions, similar to the ones mentioned above in HE, led to disillusionment among academics, but Levidow (2002) and Fletcher et al. (2007) had already reflected on the instability resulting from commodification and marketisation of education in publicly funded universities. The commodification of knowledge places emphasis on generating knowledge and exerting control to give the greatest value to its owners (Fletcher et al., 2007). Academics at universities are increasingly

required to "reinvent themselves, their courses, their cultural capital and their research as marketable commodities" (Morley, 2003, p.68).

Work intensification is seen in British universities due to rising student numbers and competition for students, students becoming more demanding, increased emphasis on obtaining research grants and having publications, scarce resources, more administrative duties, and quantification of performance with efficiency and accountability stressed (Barcan, 2013; Baron, 2014; Deem et al., 2007; Gill, 2014; Thomas and Davies, 2002). Doherty and Manfredi (2006) found that academic staff at a U.K. university desired a more manageable workload and shorter work hours but the unrelenting intensification of work meant that good work-life experiences were limited. Gill (2009) revealed that academics in the U.K. were more likely to perform unpaid overtime tasks. Similarly, in Australian universities, work intensification and extensification (i.e. longer working hours) together with the frequent use of mobile technology meant that positive work-life experiences for academic staff with young children were more difficult to achieve (Currie and Eveline, 2011).

Similarly, HK's HE sector is comparatively similar to that in the West (Aiston, 2014); six out of the eight publicly-funded University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities in HK are ranked in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) top 500 world universities (Aiston, 2014). HE institutions in HK have been focusing on raising their rankings worldwide and to achieve this, they expect academics, who are required to both teach and do research, to publish in top-tier journals and gain more external research grants as well as perform knowledge transfer and administrative duties (UGC, Teaching and Learning Quality, 2019; UGC Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019). Teaching staff, who are not required to conduct research, are expected to obtain good/excellent teaching evaluations from students and perform more administrative tasks. The limited resources provided to HE institutions in HK has led to more competition for grants and students among universities, quantification of research output and teaching results. This suggests that teaching and academic staff are faced with work intensification, and thus it becomes difficult to manage various roles in life. Many things are measured including teaching effectiveness, the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and alongside this, the Academic Consultation Panel Visit is conducted once every

four years to evaluate departments' performance (UGC, Teaching and Learning Quality, 2019; UGC Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019), and this in turn has led to increased workload, longer working hours, and mounting work pressure. Research is given more emphasis since peer-reviewed publications and external grants bring about more funding and higher ranking, while teaching is valued less by universities. At the same time, the Asian culture expects women to be good wives, mothers and homemakers (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Luke, 2000) but academic and teaching staff are expected by HE institutions to be competitive and dedicated to their work. Therefore, understanding the ways in which HE culture is viewed by staff is critical in shedding insights into women academic and teaching staff's work and life outside work experiences.

In the section below, the reasons why women are studied will be explained.

1.5 Women's Labour in Higher Education

This section which explores why women academics are studied is important because the competitive HE culture in HK means that work takes precedence over other aspects of life and thereby presents challenges to women with domestic responsibilities (Aiston, 2011). This could have an effect on their work-life experiences given that women often need to perform more domestic roles and childcare in comparison to men (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Luke, 2000). Gender relations come into play at universities as the 'formative culture' in universities embodies some gender bias such that the ideal academic is masculine and linked with characteristics including competitiveness, high efficiency, and outcomes (Fletcher et al., 2007; Leathwood, 2013; Read and Leathwood, 2018). Thomas and Davies (2002, p.385) found that women academics faced difficulties in managing their work and life roles with comments noted such as "having no free time, constantly feeling exhausted, even 'missing out' on their children's formative years in an attempt to establish a career". With work intensification, it seems that ambitious women without family responsibilities are those that would succeed in this result-driven climate (Thomas and Davies, 2002). A study at Berkeley University corroborates this, noting that only 44% of tenured professors were women with children as opposed to 77% of men (Mason, 2011). Therefore, it is important to explore how women academic and teaching staff experience this challenge in HK. It is undeniable that HE institutions are arenas of gender construction (Acker, 1990; Aiston, 2014; Thomas and

Davies, 2002) and thus, the way women perceive work and manage work and other aspects of life in HK is worth exploring.

Women are often expected to follow traditional gender expectations set by society and culture that limit their options, making them focus on their roles in the home as a mother/caregiver and a wife (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Damaske, 2011; Grummell et al., 2009). The expectation in Chinese culture is that women should look after children (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012; Lui, 2013). Aspirations of career success can lead to work tensions whilst trying to provide for a family (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Those who want to be promoted have to make decisions on whether to have children and place less importance on their research or postpone their desire for children.

Men often believe that they need to support the family financially and work allows them to fulfill that goal, without engendering guilt feelings (Groysberg and Abrahams, 2014). On the other hand, women who are career-minded and want a fulfilling family life find that they need to do much more than men. The conflicting demands of work and family often mean women perform a 'second shift' of domestic work (Hochschild, 1990); the second shift refers to domestic duties expected of women after work that may lead them to make changes in their careers. Women also tend to subordinate their life outside work experiences such as leisure to those of their family members (Warren, 2010). Warren (2004; 2010) found that working long hours (i.e. over 40 per week) was associated with reduced satisfaction with social life/leisure among women in Europe while financial security had an impact on women's work and life experiences in the U.K. In HK, financial security is important for the family and the means to a good life (Lu et al., 2012; Redding, 1993), hence women tend to work full-time rather than part-time. My study will elucidate the multiple realities women academic and teaching staff experience at work and life outside work with vital insights to an under-researched HK context.

1.6 The Effects of Social, Occupational, Organisational and Individual Factors on Work and Life Experiences

This section discusses pertinent aspects such as social, occupational, organisational and individual factors relevant to work-life integration, since professionals, similar to academics, tend to integrate their work and life spheres rather than separate them (Peng et al., 2011). Integration refers to the permeable boundaries between work and life such that work duties are completed at home while family duties can be planned in worktime (Reindl et al., 2011). Concerning the social aspect, women's increased participation in the labour market though they still assume most childcare duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Granrose, 2010) means that integrating work and life is more challenging. Men's family responsibilities are affected too through the blurring of work-life boundaries (Peng et al., 2011). The increased use of technology facilitates work-life integration but strain arises in managing work and family roles as work tasks might be done at the expense of family time (Ashforth et al., 2000).

Regarding occupational and organisational factors, professionals devote a lot of time to their jobs to gain better career prospects (Eikhof et al., 2007; Jacobs and Gerson, 2005) and may work at home, resulting in porous boundaries between work and life. Yet professionals also have more autonomy and can manage multiple roles more effectively (Judge et al., 2002).

As for individual factors, the individual can make choices to manage work and life roles (Kossek and Lautsch, 2008) especially professionals who often have more job control in completing work tasks (Jacobs and Gerson, 2005). Peng et al. (2011) argue that two individual characteristics affect work-life integration: role priority and multi-tasking. Role priority is the priority that the individual places on each role and Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) found that roles with high priority tend to be incorporated into roles that are less important, for instance, individuals who view their work as important are more likely to perform work tasks at home. An individual's multi-tasking ability can also determine whether he/she can manage multiple roles at the same time (Peng et al., 2011).

The consideration of professionals is of particular interest in my research since academics fall under this category. However, most research conducted on academics is quantitative,

relying on self-report surveys to obtain data (e.g. Bergman and Gardiner, 2007; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000). Qualitative studies on work-life experiences in other countries will be critically reviewed in the literature review section. Overall, the quantitative research shows that professionals have more work demands than lower-skilled white-collar employees (Kinnunen et al., 2008), but professionals have more choices to achieve success (Judge et al., 2002). For instance, Bryson (2004) analyzed how the changes in the nature of academic work affected the perceptions of work and life of research staff only and teaching (and research) staff where he found that both groups had a strong professional identity and enjoyed the variety and autonomy in their work although the former had slightly less work autonomy due to changes in academic work. Similarly, McInnis (2000) found that academic satisfaction and commitment among Australian academics were high despite the work intensification that they faced. Rantanen et al. (2011) conducted a study on the typology of WLB among university professionals with spouses and/or children in Finland as well as Finnish managers and Estonian managers. University professionals experienced conflict between work and life because of changes to academic work but their work enrichment outweighed their conflict because they used coping strategies to manage their work and family roles.

Summarising these studies on the experiences of professionals in the academic sector, it can be seen that 1). their work and life boundaries were blurred due to changes in the academic nature of work; 2). academic professionals enjoyed their work and identified with it and did not minding doing it at home; 3). academic professionals used coping strategies, while the enrichment perspective was more frequently observed than the conflict perspective in the way they reconciled work and other aspects of life.

1.7 Research Focus

As noted, there is a complex relationship between work and life that is beyond WLB assumptions and life comprises more than domestic duties, while work can be self-fulfilling, and work and life may not be separate spheres for some occupations, so a holistic understanding of work and life outside work experiences is needed. Additionally, the support provided by the government, gendered division of domestic labour, and cultural expectations in society vary in different countries (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006) and I contend that all these considerations could affect one's work and life experiences. Further, the work-life issue is intertwined with the occupational and institutional structure of the workplace (Hyman and Baldry, 2011; Warhurst et al., 2008). Research on the qualitative work and life outside work experiences of academic and teaching female staff in the HK HE sector is scarce, and a qualitative study using a social constructivist approach can produce a deep understanding of how work is viewed and the subsequent work and life experiences. In theory, exploring the complex dynamics of these experiences can contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by women in managing their experiences and this could advance research in considering individual framing of work and life outside work experiences. This could also lead to practical implications such as policies and support systems in HK HE that could enable women to have better work and life experiences.

My study is underpinned mainly by Warhurst et al.'s (2008) view that the relationship between work and life should be viewed as work-life patterns in which these patterns are shaped by work practices (e.g. work intensification) structural constraints (e.g. labour market) and lifestyles (e.g. views related to work), resulting in varied work and life outside work experiences. My study builds on Warhurst et al.'s (2008) ideas particularly the organisation of work and work intensification, and how work and other aspects of life are experienced by women academic and teaching staff in HK HE. My study also draws on Fangel and Aalokke (2008) who contend that individuals' attitudes towards work should be explored to offer a comprehensive understanding of work and life experiences. For example, academics at universities take pride in their own work and work is meaningful to them although they experience difficulties in integrating work and other aspects of life.

Specifically, my study explored women academic and teaching staff's work and life outside work experiences amid the increasingly competitive HE sector in HK with the precarious nature of jobs and work intensification as noted by Gill (2014). Similar to Fangal and Aalokke (2008), the stress placed on completing 'real work' that is measurable and adds value (e.g. research output, obtaining grants), and real work intruding on one's private life are arising more often. Work tasks are increasingly completed in private time due to the rising use of information technology (Ahuja et al., 2007; Gill, 2014; Valcour and Hunter, 2005). By employing an exploratory in-depth qualitative study, my study was able to advance understanding of the complex interplay between work and life outside work experiences, the diverse ways in which such experiences are defined, and other factors that enable or restrain one from managing various experiences. It was hoped that I could make some theoretical contribution to the body of knowledge on the multiple realities of work and life outside work experiences of women in HK HE, where scant research has been done.

1.8 An Overview of the Research Design

The aim of my thesis was to contribute to an in-depth understanding of women academic and teaching staff's experiences of work and life outside work in HK HE, and for research that focuses on an exploration of experiences, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it provides in-depth and rich data about how people view things in a certain context (Mason, 2002). My study adopts a social constructivist approach because it attempted to develop an in-depth understanding of the complex interplay between work and life outside work experiences. Face to face semi-structured interviews with 15 academic and teaching staff were selected as the research method to shed light on the experiences of participants and the meaning they attribute to work. Thematic analysis was used to code and analyse the data.

The overarching research questions were:

1). "How do women academic and teaching staff in higher education institutions in HK view the notion of 'work'?

2) "What are their experiences of work and life outside work under the trend of marketisation of education in HK?"

The first question is concerned with academic work and participants' views of work. The second question seeks to explore the work culture/practices and structural constraints in HE and participants' work and life outside work experiences. It is believed that this study would provide some practical implications for senior management and human resources practitioners in HE. Understanding the experiences of female staff can possibly expose the tensions between feminised labour (expectations about women's family/domestic roles) and workplace labour (expectations of paid work) in HE, and this in turn may contribute to the establishment and delivery of support systems for women.

1.9 Thesis Structure

My thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter Two (i.e. Literature Review) explains the prior research on changes to academic work in HK HE which is then followed by the experiences of women in HE, and qualitative studies on work and life experiences. Gaps in the literature are also identified. The theoretical underpinnings of my research in using a qualitative study to shed light on the experiences of participants are detailed. In Chapter Three: Methodology, the methodological choices grounded in social constructivism are justified followed by an explanation on the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews. The analysis of qualitative data using thematic analysis is then presented including ethical considerations.

Chapter Four (Findings and Analysis) presents the interview data with reference to the four key themes that emerged by drawing on extant literature. In Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion, the salient findings are critically analysed and summarised with reference to the literature and overarching contributions. The research questions and how the gaps in knowledge are filled are answered, as well as what body of knowledge I have added to the literature. My study concludes with practical implications for HK HE, the limitations and further areas for research

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

My study aims to offer a holistic understanding of the individual notion of work and experiences of work and life outside work, and explore the workplace practices and structural constraints affecting women academic and teaching staff in HK HE. This chapter begins with the relevant literature on employment patterns highlighting women's participation in the labour market and the state of work and life in HK to highlight why this issue is worth examining. This leads onto a discussion of changes to academic work in HK HE to understand how this occupational context is affecting the work and life experiences of staff. Then gender roles and women's labour as well as the availability of paid domestic help are explained. Finally, the chapter presents recent qualitative research on work and life issues in HE and the work and life experiences of different professional occupational groups, and concludes with a summary of the key points resulting from this chapter in addition to gaps in the literature and the research questions.

2.1 Employment Patterns and the State of Work and Life in HK

Firstly, some background information on employment patterns is necessary. In HK, there have been major changes in work and family structures with more women in the labour force and dual-earner families (Census and Statistics Department, 2018; Siu, 2015). According to the Census and Statistics Department (2018), with a working population of almost four million people, the percentage of men in the labour force was 68.3% while the percentage of women excluding foreign domestic helpers was 50.9% in 2017. With an inclusion of foreign domestic helpers, women in the workforce constituted 55.1% in 2017. The percentage of women who were home-makers/housewives stood at 17.8% in 2016 while the labour participation rate for married women accounted for 53.4% in 2016 (The HK Council of

Social Service, 2019). Also, the percentage of female professionals among all professionals constituted 44.6% in 2016 (The HK Council of Social Service, 2019).

Employees in HK work long hours of 48.7 hours on average per week (Community Business, 2014) with many doing unpaid overtime work (Welford, 2008). Approximately 25.8% of employees worked more than 50 hours a week (Chung et al., 2010). Employees indicated that they had abundant works to complete and felt that they had to leave the office after their boss had left to show that they met their bosses' expectations of an ideal worker with his/her job as the first priority (Gambles et al., 2006), and the Community Business (2014) study found that employees' WLB was adversely affected. The latest Opinion Poll commissioned by Community Business (2015) and conducted by the University of Hong Kong involved 1013 participants from a variety of industries (the education sector accounting for 10%), of whom 41.5% were professionals; telephone interviews were used. It was found that 61.8% of respondents thought that the state of WLB was becoming worse in HK. More than 50% thought that they were responsible for managing their overall WLB and 59% thought choosing a work location such as staying home to do work could help them achieve better WLB. While 85% of respondents believed that it was important to manage their work and personal life well, 55% of them expressed that WLB was valued by their companies to some extent.

Certain studies have shown that work-family conflict in HK is almost the same as or slightly worse than countries in the west (Hang-yue et al., 2005; Ngo and Lau, 1998). In Chan and Chan's (2002) study, close to 33% of employees reported that they had conflicts between their family and work demands. Although HK is an international city, the issue of work-life has not been given adequate importance; only multinational organizations have adopted family-friendly policies and there is no law to ensure that employees' rights to manage their work and family demands are upheld (Siu, 2015). In 2006, the five-day working week law was adopted in Hong Kong (Chung et al., 2010). However, employees still work overtime with 63% frequently having to work overtime with no pay (Welford, 2008). The use of the Internet has further exacerbated the problem as it means that employees have to be accessible after work too (Siu, 2015). The above section has outlined the state of WLB for HK employees, and next, the nature of professional work will be explained.

2.2 Professional Work

As my study is concerned with academic work, which is subsumed under professional work, the concept of professional work should be defined. Freidson (1987) defines professions as:

> …occupations especially distinguished by their orientation to serving the needs of the public through the schooled application of their unusually esoteric knowledge and complex skills. (Freidson, 1987, p.19)

This views professionals as possessing expertise in a certain field (von Nordenflyct, 2010). Professionals include those in professions such as lawyers, doctors and academics. Hill et al. (2011) note that professionals have higher educational qualifications, more job responsibilities, a higher salary and longer working hours when compared with non-professionals. Professionals often secure good jobs in their mid to late twenties and start a family in their early thirties, with the associated challenges in managing their work and life (Reindl et al., 2011). They also understand that they need to focus on their job to achieve career success (Perlow and Porter, 2009). The workplace provides intrinsic reward and recognition for the completion of complex tasks that need higher-level skills and expertise from professionals (Reindl et al., 2011). Obtaining recognition through establishing a profession has been identified as attractive for women (Hewlett and Luce, 2006). Professionals work long hours amounting to 50-60 hours per week and often work on holidays (Blair-Loy, 2009; Perlow and Porter, 2009). Long working hours are a precondition of career success (Brett and Stroh, 2003; Milliken and Dunn-Jensen, 2005). However, professionals often find their work satisfying and rewarding, consistent with Hochschild's (1997) research who found that work-life can be more rewarding than home-life. Professionals may experience conflict as work intensification intrudes on their private life but their commitment to work provides enjoyment (Cinamon and Rich, 2002). The high value placed on work and the perception that work is part of their self-concept (Reindl et al., 2011) aggravates work-to-life and work-family conflict since it is difficult to reduce work hours (Ahuja et al., 2007; Hewlett and Luce, 2006; Kossek et al., 2006). Gender, dual-career families with children and the cultural backgrounds of professionals affect role conflict

resulting in higher levels of WFC (Duxbury and Higgins, 1991; Wharton and Blair-Loy, 2006).

Thus, professionals' work-life issues are different from other occupations as noted by Wharton and Blair-Loy (2006). Issues such as identifiable completion of tasks as well as the cut-off point of contact blurred by smart technology lead to complications (Brett and Stroh, 2003; Reindl et al, 2011; Valcour and Hunter, 2005). According to Prasopoulou and Pouloudi (2006), mobile technology makes it difficult to manage work and life and can pose a threat to professionals who fail to draw a temporal boundary between their work and non-work tasks. Towers et al. (2006) conducted a study on Canadian civil servants, finding that mobile technology made work expectations higher as employees were expected to answer emails after work, indicating work extension, resulting in more WFC and less family time.

Individual values also affect work-life integration. The perception of WFC is contingent on the value one places on life roles (Bagger et al., 2008; Cinamon and Rich, 2002) and Cinamon and Rich (2002) found that WFC was found to be the highest among those who placed great importance on both their family and work. Thus, employers need to consider the values and needs of staff to retain and motivate employees (Reindl et al., 2011).

Because my study is based on the HE sector, changes to academic work are explained in the following section.

2.3 Changes to Academic Work

This section details the characteristics of academic work, which informs our understanding of the context of my study. Universities have undergone transformation based on what Barcan (2013) calls marketisation and internationalization. Universities increasingly function like businesses and many have been privatised (Bailey, 2011; Parker, 2010; Washburn, 2005), with students having to bear higher costs of education, a higher student to staff ratio (Gill, 2014; Parker and Jary, 1995; Parker, 2010), the use of new ways of audit (Callon and Law, 2005), the reduction of pay of academics and the offering of more temporary or short-term contracts at universities (Gill, 2014; Loveday, 2018).

The term 'marketisation of higher education' refers to the notion that the reduction in

government funding has compelled universities worldwide to find other sources of funding (Ashburn, 2007). Thus, HE institutions focus on competing for competitive government research grants and develop marketable programmes/courses (Ashburn, 2007) as well as use promotional discourse to attract students (Hoang and Rojas-Lizana, 2015). Terms such as corporate identity, mission statements and strategic plans have been increasingly used by HE institutions (Connell and Galasinski, 1998).

Parker and Jary (1995) argue that the HE sector is characterised by increasing management control and less academic autonomy, and changes on three levels have been observed: the structural, organizational and professional levels. First, structural and policy changes have led to increased student numbers without an increase in staff numbers and changes made to research funding. Surveillance in the form of audits is done regularly. Second, internal changes are evident in the context of teaching and research. These changes include the focus placed on the marketing of courses, stronger managerial control and use of reward pay. Third, the goals and motivation of academics have changed since they are under pressure to publish not just for personal benefit but for the university's ranking, coupled with a heavier teaching and administrative workload, and less personalised relationships with students. These pressures change the way academics think such that research in the form of publications and impact factor are sought after and anything that is not assessed may not interest them. Therefore, academics have become more instrumental and reward-driven (Parker and Jary, 1995). Parker and Jary (1995) add that 'McDonaldization' as coined by Ritzer (1993) is prevalent because standardisation and ranking of universities and academics have been frequently adhered to. Alongside these changes is a trend of casualisation of academic labour via the employment of part-timers and short-term contract staff (Gupta et al., 2016; Loveday, 2018; Parker and Jary, 1995; Read and Leathwood, 2018). The Times Higher Education Supplement (2017) indicated that casual staff on short-term and temporary contracts were increasingly hired and were demoralised by the precariousness of contracts. This McUniversity mode is a highly masculine corporation where aggressive, reward-driven and competitive behaviour is rewarded (Parker and Jary, 1995).

Similarly, Gill (2014) highlights three key aspects of university academics' experience: 1). the precarious nature of jobs, 2). time pressure, and 3). constant surveillance, and she argues

that these characteristics are similar to the features of the lives of cultural workers. Both cultural workers including artists and academics like their jobs but they face insecurity due to short-term contracts. Academics face the added pressure of having their performance under surveillance and measured in the form of performance metrics (Gill, 2014; Parker, 2010; Read and Leathwood, 2018; Times Higher Education Supplement, 2017). Regarding the three aspects highlighted by Gill (2014), it is found that academic jobs are more insecure since the data show the casualisation of the workforce where more academics are on temporary contracts. This is done to save costs and these contracts give staff insecurity. As Gupta et al. (2016) note, there has been an increased casualisation of labour in the last twenty years. According to the UCU Report (2016, p.1), 54% of academic staff and 49% of teaching staff were on contracts that were insecure in the U.K. Gender relations become even more pronounced as TUC (2014, p.11) found that "casualised and precarious work pose particular problems for women" who tend to have caring duties. Aiston and Jung (2015) conducted a comparison of the number of hours academics work in HK and the U.S., noting that women academics in HK spent 10-17% more time on teaching as opposed to their male colleagues, which explained why their research output was lower. This suggests the gendered division of labour in HK HE. Women academics tend to overwork, and convey "a strong sense of endless hours of work and desperation" (Leathwood and Read, 2012, p.16). This precarious nature of jobs is evident in HK because almost all academic and teaching staff are on contracts and only if academic staff are promoted to professors can they get tenure.

Gill (2014) also argues that academics face time pressure, as is noted by Crang (2007) and Loveday (2018) who state that the lack of time brings about anxiety among academics. Academics are under heavy pressure to produce higher quality research (Aiston, 2014; Aiston and Jung, 2015), deliver more to students and this consequently leaves little time for their family (Gill, 2014). Work intensification (more demanding tasks) and extensification (longer hours) are brought by increasing pressure to obtain research funding and to publish, the need for academics to do administrative work, and the increased use of information technology (Gill, 2014; Parker, 2010). This leads to increased workload and as Crang (2007) and the Times Higher Education Supplement (2017) confirm, academics feel the workload and bureaucracy are relentless and they need to work harder to complete their work with the latter finding that academics feel the workload is unbearable. Kaiser et al. (2011) and

Warhurst et al. (2008) highlight that work intensification and increased work pressure placed on staff affect their experiences of work and life and this is particularly evident in the context of the HE sector in Britain, as well as I argue, in HK. This will be explained in the next section.

In addition, Gill (2014) draws on Burrows' (2012) finding that academics are placed under surveillance and in the U.K., they can be ranked using more than 100 different scales that measure their productivity. These metrics measure, for instance, grant income, research 'excellence', citation scores, student evaluations, and impact factor. Shore (2008, p.292) notes that "auditing processes are having a corrosive effect on people's sense of professionalism and autonomy." This audit culture instills insecurity among academics (Loveday, 2018; Strathern, 2000). Leathwood and Read's (2012, p.9) found from the 71 UK academics who were participants in their research that many experienced changes such as the introduction of the Research Excellence Framework as "having a negative impact on their own research and experience in the profession." Likewise, Willmott (1995, p.6) argues that academics are required to make profits to fund their research and hence face "a commodification of their labour."

In a similar vein, academic staff in HK are subject to the delivery of results including having high teaching evaluation scores, research publications in top-tier journals and successful applications for external research grants, and this is explained below.

2.3.1 Changes to Academic Work in HK

As Aiston (2014) notes, HE institutions in HK are similar to those in the West and six of the eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities are ranked in the QS top 500 world universities. Also, in HK, a number of developments have emerged similar to those described under new managerialism, which is defined by Deem et al. (2007) as:

> managing and management are, respectively, socio-technical practices and the collective agents and institutions responsible for their enactment that are universally required in a modern, economically and technologically advanced society. (Deem et al., 2007, p.5)

In HK, the UGC advises the Government on the funding and development of HE in HK (UGC, Mission Statement of the UGC, 2019). The UGC works with eight public UGC-funded universities in HK, the government and the community "to promote excellence in the higher education sector" (UGC, Mission Statement of the UGC, 2019, p.1). The key mission of universities is 1). teaching and learning quality, 2). research and 3). knowledge transfer (UGC, Teaching and Learning Quality, 2019). The Quality Assurance Council (QAC) "conducts quality audits of individual UGC-funded universities to assure the quality of the educational experience…"; the QAC conducted audits of universities in 2015-2016 (UGC, Teaching and Learning Quality, 2019, p.1).

The UGC also supports excellent research activities through the Block Grant and competitive research finding schemes and promotes the strengthening of "transferring knowledge, technology and other forms of research outputs into real socio-economic benefits and impacts for the community and society" (UGC, Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019, p.1). The UGC has adopted measures of greater competitiveness in awarding research funding and research postgraduate places to encourage research excellence aligned with the aim of universities to "aspire to be able to compete with the best in the world" (UGC, Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019, p.5). The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) has been set up by the UGC to assess the research outputs using international benchmarks

with the aim to promote research excellence; the first started in 1993 and in 2020, another cycle will be conducted (UGC, Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019, p.6). This RAE, based on the British system, is where the quality of research publications is evaluated and these indicators provide evidence of research output in promotion decisions (Aiston, 2014). Knowledge Transfer (KT) is another key focus of the UGC, which is concerned with transferring knowledge to society that could lead to improvements in the community and businesses (UGC, Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019). These KT activities include providing consultancy services, continuing professional development courses for social enterprises, and arrangement of talks and public events (UGC, Research and Knowledge Transfer, 2019, p.10).

Major changes in HK UGC-funded public universities have emerged in the last twenty years, which resonate with Harvie and Angelis' (2009), Gill's (2014), Parker and Jary's (1995), and Thomas and Davies' (2002) findings that output, performance, and efficiency and accountability prevail over other aspects. As Krause-Jensen and Garsten (2014) note, educational reforms serve to enhance global competitiveness and meet the needs of the knowledge economy. These changes include more competitive funding criteria for research with research grants obtained by staff from the UGC being matched with university funding; the intervention of the UGC in standardising, measuring the performance of universities like using quality audits; benchmarking, and line managers' use of performance-related pay. Academic staff in each department need to submit their top three published research outputs once every two years with the paperwork, and the quality of the publications is then assessed using a point system by a number of panels (the panel members comprise professors from HK and other countries); academic staff are required to achieve a minimum number of points to get their contracts renewed (e.g. one Grade A publication in Social Sciences Citation Index [SSCI] is worth a certain number of marks). This focus on output and accountability has been coined "McDonaldization" of universities (Parker and Jary, 1995). As Macfarlane's (2012) study of professoriate leadership roles found, research excellence was viewed as most important, and similarly, HE in HK focuses mainly on research. The phrase 'publish or perish' has widely been heard among academics worldwide (Smith, 1990); publications and research grant-income obtained are necessary for promotion and tenure (Aiston, 2014). In other words, HE institutions that conduct high-quality research and obtain more research

funds and those that undertake internationalisation (e.g. attracting overseas students and sending students on exchange programmes) are viewed as doing a great job. This puts stress on staff to work harder and thus, these workplace practices and structural constraints as suggested by Warhurst et al. (2008) can impact staff's work and life outside work experiences. They can also affect the health of staff and lead to anxiety, and increased turnover intentions (Kinman and Jones, 2009; Loveday, 2018; Sallee and Lester, 2017).

To produce more research outputs, academics have to minimize administration work so that they can focus on their research and teaching (Ylijoki, 2013). As Maddock and Parkin (1993) argue, only the dedicated staff can thrive in this competitive climate of HE and as Harvie and Angelis (2009, p.5) further add, the capital value that is produced by staff is "immaterial and not measurable" and, therefore, exploitation in the form of imposing a heavy workload on staff is likely to occur. Academic and teaching duties have the characteristics of what is known as immaterial labour such as social cooperation like collaboration with other institutions (Harvie and Angelis, 2009).

Universities worldwide are nowadays also focusing on "knowledge exchange" with those in HK no exception (Aiston, 2014), and this has further added to the workload of staff. Abreu et al. (2008) note that:

> universities are central generators and repositories of knowledge in our society. How that knowledge is developed, disseminated and applied affects not only the cultural richness of our society, but also our global competitiveness. (Abreu et al., 2008, p.5)

This means the way universities interact with other sectors such as voluntary organisations has been turned into a goal for HE institutions (Aiston, 2014). Heads and line managers in HK produce workload plans for academic and teaching staff and this workload consists of not only teaching and research but administrative/service duties, and nowadays, knowledge transfer is added to the list of service duties, which includes, for example, creating massive open online courses (MOOCS) and providing consultancy services for businesses in the community. Teaching staff in HK HE are required by management to teach 17-22 contact hours a week and perform service, culminating in a 47-55 hour workweek (20-23 hours for class preparation, consultations with students and marking of assessments). The workload

does not include activities like attending meetings and arranging activities. Previous research has found that long working hours are commonly seen among academics (Menzies and Newson, 2007) and this trend has been noted in the U.K. (Gornall and Salisbury, 2012), Norway (Kyvik, 2013), Australia (McInnis, 2000) and Canada (Acker and Armenti, 2004). However, detailed studies of HK HE are scarce and thus warrant further investigation.

As seen above, the HK HE sector is characterised by a heavy workload, long working hours, higher performance expectations set by management and the precarious nature of contracts. To the extent that gender roles, women's paid and unpaid domestic labour and gender relations in HE might impinge on women's experiences of work and life outside work through their sense of vocation, a critical review is given in the following section. The easy availability of paid domestic help in HK is also elucidated to offer a better understanding of how such help enables women to better manage their work and other aspects of life.

2.4 Gender Roles and Women's Labour

Gender role theory focuses on the expectations placed on women in terms of how they should act and think based on their gender and negotiate their various roles (Damaske, 2011). It posits that women are socialised into gender roles which are culturally defined and women are in charge of the roles of childcare/care, domestic duties (Boushey, 2009; Charles and Harris, 2007; Cheung and Lui, 2017; Collins, 2019; Granrose, 2010; Groves and Lui, 2012), and undertaking the emotional work (e.g. listening to others and pacifying them) (Strazdins and Broom, 2004). Gender roles are shaped by institutional contexts and society (Collins, 2019; Damaske, 2011). However, qualities such as autonomy and commitment to work that are masculine are essential in the workplace for women to thrive (Cheung and Halpern, 2010; Leathwood, 2013), and thus, women who aim to advance their careers in the workplace which is characterised by masculine characteristics have to manage the multiple work and other roles (e.g. childcare) and conflicting demands involved.

Studies of employment have revolved around men and historically, men have served as the breadwinner of the family (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). This meant that women were excluded from the work arena (Carney, 2009). Serving as a breadwinner meant that men did not need to take up childcare and domestic duties at home, which was performed by women

(Hochschild, 1997). Warren (2007) notes that the use of the term breadwinner for men presumes gender bias. Hollway (2006) points out that women have the innate capacity to care for others, while Groves and Lui (2012) and Gutek (1993) assert that women who focus on their career might be criticised for not looking after their children, while men who focus on their career are presumed to be doing good by financially providing for the family. Women's role in employment has also been subservient to men in that women have assumed less powerful roles in corporations (Walby, 1990). Paid employment seems to have gendered connotations since the salary and conditions given to women vary from those given to men (Smithson et al., 2004). Walby (1990) argues that women do not place as much importance on paid employment as men, and most women focus on their family instead, reflecting the patriarchal perspective of employment.

Other researchers have suggested that the breadwinner-carer dichotomy should be discarded (e.g. Crompton, 1997; Smithson et al., 2004). Crompton (1997) asserts that the dichotomised ideology which assumes that women are responsible for family duties while men take up work responsibilities is subject to criticism, since she suggests that as time progresses, women are choosing to have children later when their career is moving forward and having fewer children. However, gendered norms still influence how people view the appropriate roles for working women. Charles and Harris (2007) found that the availability of childcare and a changing labour market where good salaried jobs exist for women meant that women had more choices although such choices are constrained by gendered role expectations. When a woman academic is devoted to her research, she is likely to spend less time on domestic duties, which is an expected gender role that she should fulfill (Raddon, 2002; Staines et al., 1986), leading to a role conflict between the gendered role involving time spent on domestic duties and the work role involving time spent on research (Korabik et al., 2008). With a sample of 8000 women academics in the U.K., Kinman and Wray (2013) found a high level of time-based and strain-based work-life conflict among women academics, who worked long hours and had a heavy workload, but they also found that tasks done at home helped them better manage tasks in their life outside work. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) explored the difficulties that female academics faced concerning work and life and although they found that women could handle multiple roles, they performed more domestic roles and this in turn reduced the time they could spend on academic work. Jolly et al. (2014)

investigated gender differences in physician-researchers and found that women tended to perform more domestic and childcare duties, and thus had less time for research as opposed to their spouses.

Despite the fact that the gendered division of labour regarding household duties for married couples has narrowed over the years (Bianchi and Milkie, 2010), women in most societies assume more childcare duties whereas men are mainly responsible for providing for the family (Charles and James, 2005; Cheung and Lui, 2017; Collins, 2019). Charles and James (2005) conducted a study on job insecurity and breadwinner roles in three organisations in South Wales in Britain, from the manufacturing, retail and public sectors, noting that a modified form of the male breadwinner model was apparent in which women would perform work or contribute financially to the family but men would be the main breadwinners, while some men took on more domestic and care duties only when their jobs were insecure due to their beliefs in gender equality. Chandra (2012) and Cheung and Lui (2017) have confirmed that childcare and domestic duties mainly rest on Asian women's shoulders, reflecting the presence of traditional gender division of labour. This is further corroborated by Ren and Caudle (2006) who noted that Chinese male academics place more emphasis on work rather than their family in comparison with Chinese female academics who focus more on their family. This is also suggested by a study that women academics with children tend not to obtain a tenure-track position when compared with men (Schiebinger and Gilmartin, 2010). The fact that women have to assume some domestic duties means that there is also a subsequent reduction in time for leisure activities, which are integral to achieving satisfaction in life (Rafnsdottir and Heijstra, 2013; Warren, 2010).

In view of this, the way work is viewed by men and women varies and, therefore, it is worth separating the genders when exploring the topic of work and life outside work experiences. Given that women have to navigate different roles based on the traditional gendered division of labour particularly in the Asian context, my study focuses on their experiences.

2.4.1 Gender Relations in Higher Education

Prior research has confirmed that universities are gendered institutions with cultures and structures that often place less value on women than men (Acker, 2006; Dean et al., 2009; Leathwood, 2013). As Aiston (2014, p.59) argues, "Universities are essentially seen as gendered, rewarding the competencies and skills supposedly associated with men, thereby placing male academics as 'gatekeepers' to career progression and central to decision-making processes." Therefore, gender relations need to be carefully considered in HE since the work culture is designed in such a way that masculine traits such as competitiveness, ambition, and instrumentality are emphasised with regard to research (Fletcher et al., 2007; Gill, 2014; Leathwood, 2013). Traditional gender roles are apparently perpetuated in HE (Carrigan et al., 2011) as research which requires 100 percent devotion and competitiveness, indicating masculine traits, is valued over teaching and administration/service which are frequently viewed as feminine work (Aiston, 2014; Park, 1996). A successful academic is defined as devoting more time to research than mentoring and teaching work (Bailyn, 2003; Goode, 2000; Ylijoki, 2013).

Thomas and Davies (2002) found that work intensification in universities meant that women academics faced more challenges in navigating work and other roles in life such as childcare. Byron (2005) also found that women experienced more family interference with work. Women academics might be marginalised in this process and radical feminist research often reflects this picture (e.g. Currie et al., 2000; Davies and Holloway, 1995) with the lower status accorded to women academics worldwide (Currie et al., 2000) and women being remunerated less than males (Halvorsen, 2002; Hodges, 1999). Gardner (2013) investigated why women quit their jobs at a research university, noting that there were pay differences based on division of labour, and women were asked to undertake more service work, while the university promoted a gendered organisation with a focus on competition and a lack of transparency. Universities are indeed predominated by masculine discourses (e.g. Acker, 2006; Aiston, 2014) with feminine voices given less importance (Thomas and Davies, 2002).

The demands of home life, children and elderly parents pose difficulties to women academic and teaching staff as they need to work longer hours or manage their work and other duties more efficiently to meet work standards (Deem, 2003b; Grummell et al., 2009). Studies have

shown that women often find it hard to manage work and other aspects of life since they have home responsibilities (Chesterman et al., 2005; Pocock, 2005). Higher education requires a lot of dedication and for women with childcare responsibilities, the time they can spend on academic work, is reduced in comparison with men, thus affecting their career prospects (Aiston, 2011; Beddoes and Pawley, 2013; Raddon, 2002). As Raddon (2002) found, her participant's narrative revealed conflict between being a good mother and a good academic (focusing on research and travelling for conferences/work) and she felt guilty when she did not focus more on her daughter. In HK, a socio-cultural expectation exists that women should raise children (Cheung and Lui, 2017) and look after their parents (Liu and Cheung, 2015; Luke, 1998), with implied impacts on their work and life experiences.

The research also shows that women academics have difficulties in focusing on important work duties as they have to do small tasks such as administrative work, committee work, and pastoral care (e.g. welfare support of students, counselling) assigned by their superiors (Fenton, 2003; Gardner, 2013; Morley, 2007; Thomas and Davies, 2002), and this is congruent with Trowler's (1997) and Aiston and Jung's (2015) study, suggesting that women academics often have to perform more duties relating to teaching and student matters, and this takes away time from doing important tasks such as research. This vicious cycle in turn perpetuates the marginalised status of women. Women academics in Canada performed pastoral work with students and administrative work, resulting in increased stress and longer working hours as well as fatigue when taking into account their heavy research workloads (Acker and Armenti, 2004). It appears that women academics who succeed are those who are focused, and this view is consistent with the masculine discourse of competitiveness rather than the feminine discourse of being nurturing (Gill, 2014; Thomas and Davies, 2002). Coupled with work intensification, it is likely that only committed women without or with few family responsibilities could succeed under this environment. Therefore, it is worth exploring how women academic and teaching staff experience this tension in HK HE and how this impacts their experiences of work and life outside work.

2.5 Paid Domestic Help in HK

Studies have shown that families in postindustrial societies have outsourced domestic tasks including housekeeping, childcare, and cooking (Baxter et al., 2009; Bittman et al., 1999) to poor, working-class women from third world countries (Anderson, 2000). In HK, paid domestic help offers an affordable solution to manage household duties and childcare (Chan, 2005; Cheung and Lui, 2017). Childcare facilities in Hong Kong are not provided or subsidised by the government (Chan, 2005). Provision of childcare is the responsibility of families, and paid domestic help serves an important role. Paid live-in domestic helpers can be recruited at a low salary (i.e. HK$4520 or UK$450 pounds per month) to perform domestic duties such as household chores, childcare and elderly care (GovHK, Hiring Foreign Domestic Helpers, 2018), with recent approximations recording 300,000 domestic helpers in HK (Census and Statistics Department, 2018). The resource hypothesis states that greater resources in the form of household income helps families to hire domestic help and, as a result, have more time for other tasks (Baxter et al., 2009). Outsourcing household duties helps reduce WFC and marital conflicts (Hochschild, 1989; 1997), enabling more women to work full-time. In prior research (e.g. Hyman and Baldry, 2011), working women who had children in Scotland often worked part-time in order to accommodate their husbands' careers but in HK, the majority of women can still work full-time.

Although domestic helpers presumably relieve the household burden of women, HK, as an Asian city, still conforms to traditionally culturally-based gender notions in which women are responsible for more domestic duties such as childcare as opposed to men (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Chow and Lum, 2008; Groves and Lui, 2012). Most men would only interact and play with their children but not perform domestic duties (Tam, 1999). The traditional gender ideology held by men (i.e. men want to do less housework) and their wives' high incomes are linked to the increased likelihood of hiring helpers (Cheung and Lui, 2017). When men are reluctant to perform domestic duties, the wife's income is crucial in determining whether to hire a domestic helper to relieve her household duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017). Groves and Lui (2012) and Lui (2013) note that hiring helpers is a strategy for men not to do housework; likewise, Hochschild (1989) identifies outsourcing domestic work as a useful strategy for women to avoid spousal confrontation with housework. Anderson (2000)

conducted research in six European Union countries and argues that white, affluent European middle-class working women can undertake employment and pass on domestic duties to migrant, poor working-class domestic helpers and this reinforces "masculinized employment patterns that now characterize the work histories of so many European female workers" (p.5). Although the domestic helper performs duties similar to her female employer, she is perceived as an unequal "other' with few rights (Anderson, 2000). In contrast, an egalitarian husband would be willing to do housework (Davis and Greenstein, 2009) or as Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) argue, those with egalitarian attitudes are usually unwilling to hire helpers to avoid exploitation of these women.

Groves and Lui (2012) and Tam (1999) describe domestic helpers as only providing less than ideal childcare. Working women have to communicate with their helpers and teach them how to look after children and perform household chores correctly (Groves and Lui, 2012). Groves and Lui (2012) add that women who do not perform childcare will often be criticised for not being a good mother, and hence feel guilty. Women academics with young children experience more conflict between work and life with Chan's (2005) study supporting this because more time has to be spent on bonding with toddlers. This shows that women with children are likely to experience conflicts with their role as a mother and as an academic/teaching staff since when they focus on their research/teaching too much, they might feel that they are not allocating enough time to their children (Raddon, 2002). They also need to use coping strategies including doing work when the children are asleep or sacrificing their personal time for leisure (Granrose, 2010). Warren (2010) adds that the second, third and fourth shifts of work are done by women (Hochschild, 1997; Venn et al., 2008), reducing their time spent on leisure. Acker and Armenti's (2004) study presented female academics as often engaged in a 'third shift' with this involving a night shift of doing research and a significant loss of sleep time. In HK, some families may also rely on social resources like their extended families (e.g. grandparents) to help with childcare and this could affect women's work-life experiences (Williams, 2007).

Given that paid domestic help is commonly relied on in HK, the implications for the way academic women manage their roles such that their time spent on domestic duties can be reduced, is worth exploring. The following section focuses on professionals' work and life

experiences in different occupations to highlight the importance of considering occupational contexts separately when examining work-life issues.

2.6 Views of Work and Life by Professionals in Different Occupations

In this section, studies focusing on professionals' work and life experiences in a range of occupations are summarised. Overall, the studies suggest that for professionals, work and life boundaries are permeable and most professionals have a strong commitment to their jobs, while a number of factors such as autonomy and workplace practices affect their work and life experiences. Most importantly, the way professionals view 'work' determines their work and life outside work experiences.

Pocock et al. (2008) interviewed 1435 Australian male and female workers to investigate factors underpinning work-life outcomes in Australia whereby they assumed that the spheres of work and life were permeable. The interviews took place via telephone in 2007 to determine patterns of work-life interaction and six job quality characteristics: work overload, job insecurity, time and task autonomy, work schedule flexibility and job satisfaction. They found that job security, work overload and employee control had an impact on the work-life experiences and satisfaction of employees, and those with poor quality jobs experienced negative work-life experiences. Overall, their study found that job quality, gender, working hours and the fit between actual and preferred hours, job demands and financial, personal and domestic resources affected the work-life experiences of employees. For example, they found that a high-salaried male employed on a secure contract with domestic support and a good boss who accommodates workers with the ability to control working hours is likely to have much better work-life experiences than a low-paid worker with a temporary contract and an unsympathetic boss. Their study highlights that in conducting research on work-life experiences, one should take into account factors such as job quality, work overload (i.e. the workplace and structural constraints), and employees' voice or control over working time, or explore a wider range of factors that could affect one's work-life experiences.

Burke et al. (2011) replicated Carlson et al.'s (2000) study using data from professionals in three countries. Professionals in the manufacturing sector in Turkey, senior managers in a hotel in China, and service and manufacturing professionals in Egypt were the sampled

population. In general, females experienced more WFC than their male counterparts and work-oriented managers reported having more WFC, which suggests that personality and attitudes towards work play a role in affecting WFC. This study suggests that one's personality or individual notions of work can affect one's work-life experiences.

Previous research has shown that individual, organisational, societal and cultural factors affect work-life experiences too (e.g. Byron, 2005; Kossek et al., 1999; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2006). According to Fangel and Aalokke (2008), who used three Danish case studies to investigate the impact of employees' views of work on their work and life experiences, the blurring of work and home boundaries was not an issue nor did family-friendly policies help to achieve balance, but rather it was employees' own view of work that helped them attain good work and life experiences. The relationship between boundary setting and work-life for professional employees adopting flexible working arrangements in a law firm, an IT company and a media company was investigated using semi-structured interviews, observations and work logs. Notions of work and home depended on organizational, cultural and personal factors. Drawing on Nippert-Eng's (1996a) framework of work-life boundaries in the form of segmentation and integration, Fangel and Aalokke (2008) found that employees who segmented their work and life spheres did not have improved work and life experiences when compared to those who integrated their work and life. Employees reported that segmentation meant that they had to work longer, leaving less time for life and thereby, affecting their work-life experiences. For employees who integrated work and life, it was found to be a positive experience, enabling then to achieve better work-life experiences. For instance, some young parents could work from home at times and, at the same time, be able to spend quality time with their family. Lawyers thought of their work as interesting, and they took their work tasks home without feeling that their work and life experiences had been compromised. Yet for some employees, integration of work and home was more challenging as work intruded on private life, so the case studies show that for both segmentation and integration, different employees had different experiences of work and life.

Fangel and Aalokke (2008) stressed that Nipper-Eng's (1996b) continuum did not dictate work and life experiences because employees had very different work-life experiences, so they continued investigating why employees had such differences by exploring factors such

as gender, occupation, and socio-cultural expectations. The most significant finding was that employees' own understanding of the notion of work influenced their work and life experiences. Employees reported 'work' as work that was done 'individually' on work tasks, and did not include tasks like informal meetings, while observers who kept records of work included team work or informal meetings as 'work' in addition to individual tasks (Fangel and Aalokke, 2008). Therefore, it seems that the "work mindset" of employees has to be delved into when we refer to the notion of work (Bjerrum and Aalokke, 2005, p.1). Many factors affect one's view of work, for instance, structures in society, norms in occupations, culture, and these factors are closely tied to the individual's choices and preferences (Fangel and Aalokke, 2008). This then brings about different views of work in occupations as well as within the same occupation. Fangel and Aalokke (2008) found that employees' individual view of work affected work-life experiences in that employees who thought of their work as "individual" work overworked and had pressure in managing all tasks since they did not count interaction, meetings and collaboration as "work" especially in the law and IT companies. Working from home was an escape from interruptions at work and a means to complete the unfinished work. This once again supports the view that individual notions of work make the notion of work-life more complex, particularly for the IT and law firms whereby individual work was perceived as "real work" and any interaction was viewed as "non-work." Yet for the media company, the conception of work was wide-encompassing since both individual and team work including meetings were considered as 'real work,' which led to better work-life experiences. Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) study highlights that one's notion of work has an influence on one's experiences of work and life outside work and this notion of work is based on an individual's mindset, alongside factors such as work structures, culture, rewards, and traditions in society.

Hyman and Baldry (2011) used questionnaires and interviews to analyse knowledge workers (i.e. software professionals) in five Scottish companies, and found that their work and family lives were permeable, noting that they completed some work tasks at home using long hours due to their strong professional occupational identity with a degree of autonomy, as well as increased management control and intensification of work. Approximately 20% reported that their work prevented them from having sufficient time with their friends and family. In terms of gender differences, they found that women were more likely to do part-time work and

women with children viewed their career as less important when compared with women without children. Women also sacrificed their paid jobs and their own careers to accommodate their other half's careers and were likely to perform domestic duties especially if they had children. This study supports the notion that professionals who identify strongly with their occupation might devote more hours and still have good work-life experiences and highlights that female professionals make different choices regarding paid work depending on their socio-cultural conditions and whether they have children.

Critical analysis of these studies suggests that work-life issues are complex because they relate to not only workplace practices, job security and occupational commitments but also family responsibilities and individual perceptions. Although the primary focus of the studies described in this section was on professions beyond the field of academic endeavour (IT, media, manufacturing, hotel, legal and other occupations) and the methodology specified collecting quantitative data, my study particularly draws on Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) in exploring employees' notion of work in HE and how this in turn affects their work and life outside work experiences.

To date, there has been little research on work and life outside work experiences of academics and the conditions they face in HE in HK. Several studies on academic staff were conducted in Australia, the U.K. and U.S., noting that there is a blurring of roles, work intensification, job insecurity, casualisation of labour, less autonomy, and increased management control (Fulton, 1996; Harman, 2000; Leathwood, 2013; Loveday, 2018; McInnis, 2000). For example, McInnis (2000) conducted a study on Australian academics and despite work intensification, their job satisfaction was still high although the reduced autonomy over work by academics coupled with the depreciated salary and job insecurity placed them in a disadvantaged position. In addition to the challenge of transferring applicability to the HK context, McInnis' (2000) study can be criticised for not considering the individual notion of 'work' and how that affects individuals' work and life experiences.

The experiences of work and life are also affected by factors including the organisational context, one's gender and occupation (Bergman and Gardiner, 2007). Bergman and Gardiner (2007) in their investigation into three Swedish occupation groups (a paper and pulp mill, a university college and a bank) found that occupational changes for professional workers

negatively impacted their work-life experiences the most because these workers are spatially and temporally more available for work. Using questionnaires, they found that professionals in the college performed most of their work at home, thus the boundary between work and life was blurred. For blue-collar employees in the paper and pulp mill, the spheres of work and life were distinct while for those in the bank who comprised mainly managers, their patterns of work were similar to the college professionals. The blurring of work and life was further aggravated by using information technology, which compromised employee time. This indicates that the availability for work is determined by one's position in the occupation/industry such that the higher the position one has in the occupational structure (e.g. professionals in college), the higher the required availability for work (Bergman and Gardiner, 2007).

Another large-scale study using quantitative self-report surveys on academics' work and life experiences was conducted by Bryson (2004) in the U.K. with 1168 teaching (and research) and research staff only. Most expressed that their family or relationships outside work and having a salary to sustain their living were most important to them. In relation to work issues, they expressed that the nature of the job, autonomy, and job content were important followed by reward and recognition, job security and opportunities. More teaching staff obtained intrinsic satisfaction from the job itself. Both research staff only and teaching/research staff worked long hours with the latter over 49 hours. Work was necessary in the evenings to manage the increasing job demands. Staff with permanent contracts faced job insecurity since they thought that they might be forced to retire early due to university funding decisions. However, Bryson (2004) found that there were differences in the perceptions of teaching/research staff and research staff only. Requirements of teaching/research staff included increased class sizes, good teaching evaluation scores and high research outputs which led to work intensification. Staff who were only employed for research, were mostly newly recruited and worked long hours to further their career prospects. Both groups enjoyed their work and cherished the academic value of variety in their work. A difference was noted between research staff only and teaching/research staff in that the former had more work autonomy and higher satisfaction. This study supports the finding that professionals who have a strong professional identity might devote more hours and still find their work fulfilling, and experience work positively. This study also shows that the work-life

experiences of staff with different academic positions may vary. My study, focusing on teaching staff, who are not required to conduct research, and academics who teach and research, could highlight the variations in their experiences of work and life to a greater extent.

In summary, the above studies, which primarily relied on quantitative studies, examined professionals in different occupations and there is a consensus that professionals' work and life boundaries are blurred with integration of the two spheres without feeling that one sphere encroached on another. Also, many factors affected their work and life experiences such as the way they thought of 'work' (e.g. Fangel and Aalokke, 2008), and the nature of the job, workload, job control, workplace context, and job security (e.g. Bryson, 2004; Pocock et al., 2008). Professionals with a strong work identity experienced work and life positively (Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000), while professional women with children were more likely to experience WF conflict (e.g. Hyman and Baldry, 2011). My study, which relies on a qualitative approach and in-depth interviews, adds to this growing body of knowledge in terms of exploring the notion of 'work' among women academic and teaching staff by drawing on Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) study, and aims to advance understanding of their conception of work as affected by the HE culture.

2.7 Recent Qualitative Studies on Work and Life Experiences

Only a few recent studies have adopted a qualitative approach to examine the work and life outside work experiences of academics in Britain, Australia, Portugal, Sweden and China, and within this dearth, research on HE in HK is notably lacking. In all these studies done predominantly in HE in other countries, work intensification and extensification were evident (Barcan, 2018; Caretta et al., 2018; Santos, 2015; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016). These studies will be drawn upon to inform our understanding of the complex nature of the work-life issue, and supplement where appropriate the grounds for the current analysis of the HK context.

The discourse of work and life among 31 women academics using interviews at an Australian university, with a focus on how they viewed work and life issues, was explored by Toffoletti and Starr (2016). They found that the way women academics constructed their work-life

view was in congruence with gendered notions of paid and unpaid domestic work. Work-life was primarily viewed as an individual task to be handled or a choice exercised by women (Toffoletti and Starr, 2016). Since universities offered staff flexible working hours, it was assumed that they were providing support for work-life balance. Women academics mentioned that they were themselves responsible for not devoting enough time to their family and often showed guilt about this. They also indicated that it was impossible to achieve WLB since they spent more time on work than their family. They pointed out that if they chose to perform family duties on weekends, they felt unhappy about it since that time could have been devoted to research.

The emphasis on parenthood experiences, which are crucial in determining whether work and life experiences are positive (Emslie and Hunt, 2009; Gatrell, 2008) with women often being the primary caregivers of children and their careers determined by their choices, was the main focus of Santos' (2015) study. She studied both male and female academics (40 males and 47 females) in five Portuguese universities using semi-structured interviews, particularly women with young children, noting variations in work-life relationships in accordance with individuals' life cycle, parenthood and personal values. The outcomes of Santos' (2015) interviews showed career-focused academics viewed work as a source of fulfillment, and thus, family subordination was seen. Older male academics tended to depend more on their wives to look after children. Women tended to restrict having a certain number of children or postponing having the first child while some younger women academics were often childless. Women with children felt guilty about not being there for their children and having to succumb to HE culture which involved working long hours (Acker and Armenti, 2004; Santos, 2015). For those who viewed work and life as complementary, work was less emphasised while family life was focused on more and vice versa. Caretta et al. (2018) analysed the lived experiences of three early and one mid-career academic women in HE institutions in Sweden using autobiographical writing and reflection. They found that these academics' contracts were short and the critical timing of their early career in academia tended to conflict with childcare and family planning (Mason and Ekman, 2007).

Another study exclusively focused on the experiences of vocation in academic life among 30 academics from mainly the U.K. and Australia and some other countries who had left their jobs or stopped looking for work (Barcan, 2018). Interviews and surveys were conducted with academics (80% being women), where a notable finding was most were disillusioned with their work due to the competitive culture, but viewed their profession as a vocation, bringing them a sense of purpose and meaning. According to Barcan (2018), a sense of vocation is a noble calling and is defined as a link between work and emotions (e.g. love), values (e.g. duty), and a responsibility to something bigger than oneself. Vocation creates a personal and social identity and is tied to one's mental well-being, meaning, a sense of purpose in life, satisfaction with life (Bunderson and Thompson, 2009; Duffy and Dik, 2013; Hagmaier and Abele, 2015) as well as job satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2011). Almost all academics in Barcan's (2018) study mentioned that they loved their work even though HE was demanding. They also highlighted the indivisibility of work and life since they had to work long hours, and noted that they had no option but to continue working as they could not see themselves working in another career. When they decided to quit their jobs, it was linked with the stress of having to renegotiate their work identity (Barcan, 2018; Dalgleish, cited in Dunn, 2013).

Other scholars have explored the coping strategies used by academics to manage imbalance in work and life. Ren and Caudle (2016) employed in-depth interviews to investigate how female and male academics in British and Mainland Chinese universities achieved WLB, noting that they used behavioural, interpersonal and intrapersonal coping strategies. Both groups learnt to manage time more effectively and prioritise tasks. In terms of cultural variations, the Chinese academics relied on external support such as their extended family to manage work and life (Ren and Caudle, 2016). In Britain, paid childcare services through babysitters or working part-time were the options rather than depending on the extended family (Ren and Caudle, 2016). Spousal support was important for both the British and Chinese with regard to the provision of emotional support. Chinese academics mentioned that their family upbringing shaped how they coped with work and life imbalance and male academics placed work above everything else whereas females focused more on their family

(Choi, 2008; Ren and Caudle, 2016); Chinese male academics mentioned that women should focus more on the family whereas for men, their career came first. This shows the importance of gendered division of labour and possibly, Chinese cultural values. For British academics, both work and family life were regarded as important and they preferred a policy of not attending to work after certain hours of the day and intentionally excluding work from family life, while half of them worked part-time to manage work-life imbalance (Ren and Caudle, 2016). On the other hand, the Chinese academics thought that working part-time would undermine their career and financial security and thus, did not prefer this option (Ren and Caudle, 2016; Westwood et al., 1999).

The above studies tended to focus exclusively on one specific aspect such as vocation, coping strategies or parenthood, and how each could affect work and life experiences. These studies have not provided a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics of the interplay between the work and life issue such as the different meanings attributed to work or the wide range of experiences of life outside work, with life outside work meaning not just childcare or parenthood but leisure. In reality, there are multiple ways as to how academics view work and their subsequent work and life experiences. Experiences can be defined in extensive ways, and support systems differ across countries and cultures; for example, paid domestic help is easily available in HK, so most people use it rather than their extended family support for childcare, and such help could alleviate part of women's family duties. Aside from this, women academics is a broad term used in these studies, and it is vital to separate them into categories such as research and teaching staff and teaching staff only, which my study does in that academics perform the former roles while teaching staff only perform teaching and service duties. Most importantly, my study aims to explore their experiences in a severely under-researched context: the HE sector in HK.

2.8 Gaps in the Literature and Aims of my Study

The studies on WLB, as noted in the Introduction chapter, which drew heavily on quantitative methodologies, have mainly focused on work-life conflict and separated work and life into distinct domains, and the concept of achieving a 'balance.' Structural and workplace constraints are given little attention as noted by Lewis et al. (2007) and it is assumed that individuals have the personal choice to manage work and life. In reality, this view of work-life is unrealistic as professionals experience permeability across work and life that is subject to change depending on their career stage, choice and control in their job, and gender-related societal and cultural expectations (Sallee and Lester, 2017). Also, it is assumed that organisations are non-gendered. However, Aiston (2014) and Hyman and Baldry (2011) have found that gendered expectations exist in the workplace and tend to disadvantage women.

For example, the ideal worker is defined by Williams (2000a) as:

> someone who works at least forty hours a week year round. This ideal-worker norm, framed around the traditional life patterns of men, excludes most mothers of childbearing age. (Williams, 2000a, p.2)

This suggests that women experience difficulties in conforming to the norm of an ideal worker because they are expected to care for the home and children based on gender roles. Women have domestic responsibilities (Byron, 2005; Chesterman et al., 2005; Pocock, 2005) and might not be able to fulfill the masculine work expectations (Aiston, 2014; Fletcher et al., 2007). It appears that women academics have to be very work-focused, consistent with the masculine discourse of instrumentality, to succeed in HE (Thomas and Davies, 2002). According to prior research (e.g. Caretta et al., 2018; Hyman and Baldry, 2011), women are more likely to sacrifice their career when they have children or accommodate their spouses' needs. Nonetheless, in HK, women can easily rely on paid domestic help to enable them to focus more on their career and this might have implications for their career. In view of this, it is beneficial to explore how women academic and teaching staff handle work and other aspects of life and how this impacts their experiences of work and life outside work.

Regarding the studies of professionals summarised earlier, a common thread emerging is that most fields have undergone changes leading to work intensification and extensification. This has increased WFC both for men and women, but particularly for women (Burke et al., 2011; Hyman and Baldry, 2011). The studies have also shown that employees' notion of work (Fangel and Aalokke, 2008) and their professional identity (Hyman and Baldry, 2011) affected their work and life experiences with many professionals feeling that their work was fulfilling, thereby giving them a strong sense of professional identity (Bergman and Gardiner, 2007; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000; Rantanen et al., 2011). Indeed, work and life are interconnected for many professionals (e.g. Hyman and Baldry, 2011) and exploring each in isolation without a consideration of external constraints and internal socio-cultural factors does not do justice to the work-life issue. The above suggests that the nature of work has changed and individuals' choices and identities are affected by workplace practices, as well as socio-cultural conditions, and thus it is worth exploring the work and life experiences of women academics in more depth.

The weaknesses of most studies are that very often, self-report surveys/questionnaires were used to investigate work and life experiences with few qualitative studies as noted, which could potentially shed more light on employees' perceptions or other unknown factors that affect their work and life experiences. There is a scarcity of research on the work and life experiences and the notion of work in HK HE with most research predominantly done in the U.K., U.S., Sweden, and Australia (e.g. Bell et al., 2012; Fox et al., 2011; Kinman and Jones, 2008a; 2008b). Moreover, some studies on HE in other countries (i.e. Bergman and Gardiner, 2007; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000) did not address certain factors such as the social (e.g. a support network), workplace and individual factors, which are closely linked with how one integrates or segments work and other aspects of life. Further, prior research as noted above indicates that work and life issues are complex as they encompass different meanings for different people. Individuals' perception of work and life outside work depends on many factors such as their personal attitudes, family responsibilities, professional identity, goals in life, and social factors. Tensions and power relationships underlie one's experiences of work and life. The intensification of work together with the precarious nature of jobs have exerted an impact on employees' experiences of work and life (Gill, 2014; Leathwood, 2013; Parker

and Jary, 1995; Warhurst et al., 2008) and universities are increasingly commercialised (Aiston, 2014; Ayikoru et al., 2009; Gill, 2014). There is also inconclusive research on how work and life issues are underpinned by national cultural values. As Yang et al. (2000) note, work and life may be experienced differently in collectivistic versus individualistic cultures with Redding et al. (1993) and Westwood et al. (1999) highlighting that work is perceived by the Chinese as important for their family's financial security. However, Spector et al. (2007) argue that the Chinese place more importance on the family than work, while Ren and Caudle (2016) and Xiao and Cooke (2012) ascertain that male academics view work as more important whereas female academics focus more on the family.

In view of this, there is a need for qualitative research to explore women's notions of 'work' and how that affects their HE work and life experiences in HK. Since work and life are interconnected for academic and teaching staff, neither can be explored in isolation without considering external and internal factors. My study therefore draws on Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) study that individual notions or attitudes towards work affect one's work and life experiences, and Warhurst et al.'s (2008) view that the workplace (e.g. organisation of work; work intensification) and structural constraints and lifestyle should be investigated since they are intricately intertwined with one's work and life experiences. I contend that the way an individual views the notion of work and work-life patterns which are shaped by workplace practices, structural constraints and lifestyles is of paramount importance in affecting the subsequent work and life experiences. In other words, my study provides a comprehensive understanding of the work pressures and constraints that combine to affect the work-life experiences of academic and teaching staff. By exploring the complex nature and variety of work and life outside work experiences of women academic and teaching staff in HK HE contexts, my study goes beyond just exploring the notion of 'work' and workplace culture. Life outside work experiences could consist of aspects such as hobbies and personal development rather than just childcare and eldercare and could be further understood through the accounts of participants. In exploring experiences, participants may provide insights into how they cope with the various roles, and this in turn could deepen our understanding and contribute to the body of knowledge on work and life experiences. The more that is understood about women academic and teaching staff's work and life experiences, the better

interventions and support mechanisms HE institutions can adopt to help them manage various roles.

Therefore, my Research Questions were as follows:

1). How do women academic and teaching staff in higher education institutions in HK view the notion of 'work'?

2). What are their experiences of work and life outside work under the trend of marketisation of education in HK?

This chapter has presented the key quantitative and qualitative studies on work and life experiences and the nature of academic work in HK HE. There are criticisms in the existing literature with regards to an in-depth understanding of the work and life experiences of women academics, and therefore, this will be addressed through discussion in the next chapter by the use of a qualitative cross-sectional study in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews and work logs in HK HE.

<div align="center">**Chapter Three**</div>

<div align="center">**METHODOLOGY**</div>

There is a paucity of research into the work and life outside work experiences of women academic and teaching staff in HK and therefore, exploring their experiences is best done by adopting a qualitative research study using a cross-sectional analysis. An interpretivist social constructivist paradigm was used because it could provide rich in-depth information about the complex relationship between work and life, in the midst of work intensification and extensification in HE. Since the work-life issue is complex as noted with structural constraints and the workplace as well as gender and socio-cultural expectations affecting one's work-life experiences, it is important to tease out the underlying and challenging factors, which contribute to positive or negative work and life outside work experiences.

In this chapter, the research process and paradigm will be described first and I will justify the use of the social constructionist theory (Gergen, 1999) and interpretivism as the major paradigm. Then, details including the researcher's reflexivity and the rationale for using in-depth semi-structured interviews will be elucidated. Afterwards, details on the analysis of data using thematic analysis will be explained followed by ethical issues.

3.1 Approach to Study

Epistemology refers to how one can know whether something is viewed as scientific knowledge (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Hill and McGowan (1999) point out that when it comes to examining the social reality of a construct, it will be influenced by which paradigm is employed in the research methodology. Kuhn (1970) states that a paradigm refers to a group who share similar ideas and beliefs about the world. There are a variety of research paradigms including positivism and interpretivism (Hill and McGowan, 1999). The former employs scientific and quantitative data collection methods, which are more suited to

scientific research rather than a description of experiences of individuals (Bryman, 2004). Since my study focuses on the subjective interpretation of work and women academic and teaching staff's experiences of work and life outside work, the positivist approach is not deemed appropriate as it cannot allow the exploration of the subjective views of people. The interpretivist approach is more suited to the purpose of exploring the subjective interpretations that staff ascribe to work and their everyday experiences of work and life outside work in HE. The interpretivist paradigm views that meaning is constructed by people in relation to their social world, and the focus is not placed on drawing empirical generalisations but rather making inferences about the relationships that can be seen in different phenomena (Williams, 2000b). In other words, the emphasis is placed on people's interpretations of their experiences, perceptions and meanings of practice (Parahoo, 1997). This paradigm is not concerned with proving or refuting theories but rather builds and refines knowledge since work and life experiences are subjective and broad, complex terms. My study is exploratory, and such studies do not pose hypotheses but use the data to draw conclusions concerning the relationships between work and life outside work experiences.

3.1.1 Social Constructivism

Ontology involves the nature of social reality (Grix, 2002) and the realist ontology or realism views that "the world is made up of structures and objects that have cause and effect relationships with one another" (Willig, 2013, p.13). On the other hand, Gergen (1999), who adopts a relativist ontology, argues that everything is socially constructed in a complex world in which we live. Social constructionists view that reality is constructed by individuals in a subjective way and that there is no objective truth (Gergen, 1989). As Allen (2005) puts it:

> all knowledge is historically and culturally specific…Processes of constructing social identities depend heavily on social, political, and historical factors, as humans rely on current ideologies to create social identity categories and their meanings. (Allen, 2005, p.37)

The lack of objectivity in research should not be viewed as a limitation because meaning-making as a result of interactions and interpretation is how knowledge is constructed (Creswell, 2013). Similarly, subjectivity in research is not a weakness as theory would emerge from narratives of experiences in HE whereby work-life experiences and tensions are explored. As such, since my study places emphasis on meaning-making, and quantitative research criteria such as objectivity, reliability, validity and generalisability (Bryman, 2004) were not used.

Regarding my study, as emphasis is placed on the nature of the individualised experiences of work and life outside work as articulated by women academic and teaching staff in HE, I employed the social constructivist approach to gain a deeper understanding of how these experiences and attitudes were re-constructed as they faced different situations in their work, family lives and reality. My study reveals the multiple realities of work and life experiences and understanding of individuals in HE. Prior studies indicated that work and work-life experiences mean different things to people from different occupational groups (Fangel and Aalokke, 2011; Hyman and Baldry, 2011), and this in turn has an influence on their social reality. My study explores how participants responded with their own subjective interpretations of work and life.

3.2 Positionality and Reflexivity

Transparency and reflexive practice are needed in qualitative research as they ensure quality (Mason, 2002). The researcher's perspective and standpoint are significant as he/she is involved in creating knowledge through the position that he/she adopts (Bryman, 2004) and spelling out the researcher's positionality can contribute to the validity of the study (Bryman, 2004). Reflexivity is also crucial in the research process and could be observed in both the researcher and participants or in either one of the parties (Etherington, 2007). Etherington (2007, p.601) states that reflexivity is "a tool which allows us to make transparent the values and beliefs we hold in coming to the research process." Working in HE and being a woman myself, I am therefore drawn to the investigation of this topic. However, I also believe that this study can shed some light on the experiences of women in HE and contribute to understanding and knowledge through the use of in-depth interviews. As the researcher of this study, I possess in-depth knowledge of HK HE and I have been working in this sector

for 19 years. Currently, I am a teaching staff on a contract. My considerable experience in this sector has given me detailed insights into the operations and enabled me to know some staff at all levels, which has given me access and social contacts. I was also born and raised in HK so I am cognizant of the HK work culture in general. Issues such as the reticent, quiet nature of Chinese women and unwillingness to disclose personal feelings to people that they were not familiar with were noted (Luke, 2000) based on my prior knowledge and during the interview process. I had to probe for meaning or rephrase questions to obtain more detailed answers in interviews. As an insider, I had access to some social contacts. As an outsider at the other HE institution, participants were slightly more unwilling to disclose detailed information so establishing rapport was vital and obtaining access to these participants through social contacts was useful. In addition, I might have also been perceived as an outsider at both institutions given that I am not Chinese ethnically or racially although I was raised here, so participants might have perceived me as a foreigner and their general perception that foreigners tend to be direct might have led some of them to be more willing to disclose details to me as opposed to a Chinese interviewer.

3.3 Sampling: Purposive and Snowball

Purposive sampling was employed as it is suited the goals of my research (Bryman, 2004) whereby I had to select academic (e.g. professor, associate professor, assistant professor, research assistant professor, senior lecturer) and teaching staff (senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant lecturer) who worked in different positions, had or did not have children, and were on contract/untenured or tenured jobs. I intentionally selected both academic and teaching staff since their different job nature (i.e. emphasis placed on research and teaching) (e.g. Bryson, 2004) and nature of contracts, whether they were on contract or tenured (e.g. Gill, 2014; McInnis, 2000), could have an impact on their work-life experiences. I contend that there are differences in experiences between teaching and academic staff based on studies; for example, Bryson (2004) did research on teaching and research staff, similar to academic staff in my study, and research staff only and found that research staff had more autonomy and focused on career progression whereas teaching/research staff had less of these and needed to teach well and produce research output which led to work intensification. Spurling's (2015) research can also shed light on some differences pertaining to time and

flexibility offered between academic and teaching staff in four UK universities; teaching staff had temporal locations since they had to be present for lectures while for academic staff who conducted research, the temporal locations were more flexible (Spurling, 2015). Therefore, staff with a high teaching load (i.e. teaching staff) tended to have less flexibility with fewer chances to pursue their academic ambitions (Spurling, 2015).

In my study, teaching staff in HE are only required to teach and do administrative/service work and their teaching load per week ranges from 17 to 22 contact hours, whereas academic staff are required to mainly conduct research as well as teach (the teaching load ranges from 6-9 hours per week) and perform administrative/service work. Gambles et al. (2006) identified work intensification as a difficulty with respect to fulfilling the role of an ideal hard-working employee, especially for those with caring responsibilities such as childcare, and thus participants with children were selected too. I selected participants from every faculty in a HE institution and sent emails to four staff in each faculty. In total, 30 participants were sent emails, six of whom I had prior familiarity with. These six participants referred other participants (seven in total from this HE institution and another institution). From the correspondence effect, 15 participants accepted my invitation to participate while a further 15 declined. All active participants held full-time positions. My sample focused on three categories as follows:

Teaching staff: a focus on contract teaching staff with/without children

Academic staff: a focus on tenured academic staff with/without children

Academic staff: a focus on untenured academic staff with/without children

The six participants I knew contacted and recruited seven other participants using a snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is useful in exploratory, qualitative research particularly in studies in which a high level of trust is needed in order to conduct the interview and the population is difficult to reach (Baltar and Brunet, 2012; Browne, 2005). Snowball sampling begins with a convenience sample of some known subjects (Etikan et al., 2015). Since my study covered HE culture and the nature of 'work', which are considered as sensitive, increasingly demanding issues, most staff who did not know me were reluctant to

participate in the interview for fear of career repercussions or a lack of trust, hence snowball sampling was helpful. The drawbacks of this sampling method are that the sample obtained can be biased because only those who knew my participants or could be described as cooperative, willingly took part in the interviews (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). Also, the representativeness and selection bias lower the external validity (Baltar and Brunet, 2012). However, due to time constraints as it takes time to build trust with staff, I was not able to obtain a larger sample of participants and this is a limitation, but I was able to secure participants from all three required categories. I also made sure that the six participants I knew were sufficiently varied in terms of their characteristics or views on issues so that the participants that they referred to me would be varied too since respondents often refer others who share the same outlook on issues (Etikan et al., 2015).

The issue of sample sizes arises in qualitative research (Bryman, 2004). Prior research (e.g. Guest et al., 2006) suggested that theoretical saturation occurs with a sample ranging from six to twelve interviewees. For my study, six academic and nine teaching staff were interviewed before saturation occurred. For each of the categories above, saturation was reached fairly quickly since several participants mentioned similar ideas. This may have happened due to the quite precise nature of questions. Yet I tried to probe into details such as asking 'can you tell me more about…', 'how do you feel… 'how do you want this to be different…' and 'what does this mean for you…' questions.

Owing to ethical concerns and to avoid compromising anonymity, I have not included demographic details on the participants. The profile of the respondents was as follows:

Table 1 Profile of the Participants

Teaching Staff	Pseudonym	Tenure / Untenured	Marital Status	Nationality
Teaching Staff	Polly	Untenured	Married with children	White British
Teaching Staff	Christy	Untenured	Married	Korean
Teaching Staff	Claire	Untenured	Single	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Whitney	Untenured	Single	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Yvonne	Untenured	Single	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Elsa	Untenured	Single	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Ivy	Untenured	Single	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Agnes	Untenured	Married with children	HK Chinese
Teaching Staff	Annie	Untenured	Married with children	HK Chinese
Academic Staff				
Senior Lecturer	Maya	Untenured	Single	White American
Associate Professor	Francoise	Tenured	Single	HK Chinese
Associate Professor	Julie	Tenured	Married with children	HK Chinese
Assistant Professor	Doris	Untenured	Married with children	HK Chinese
Research Assistant Professor	Katie	Untenured	Married	Mainland Chinese
Research Assistant Professor	Rachel	Untenured	Married	HK Chinese

3.4 Research Method: In-depth Semi-structured Interviews

Research methods refer to techniques that are utilised to collect and analyse data (Blaikie, 2000). The method adopted is dictated by the research questions, purpose of research, and the philosophical assumptions held (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is useful in explaining processes/actions/behaviour/phenomena, which are based on interactions between individuals and society in different contexts (Creswell, 2013).

An exploratory qualitative research strategy was used to address the research questions. This study was exploratory and the aim of interviews was to capture the variety of experiences that existed among women academic and teaching staff. A semi-structured interview was used because participants' perceptions and experiences are meaningful properties (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative in-depth semi-structured interviews were used over a period of four months to allow me to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning attributed to work and work and life outside work experiences of staff through their articulations. Each interview lasted from 1 hour to 1.5 hours and 12 interviews were conducted in English while 3 were conducted in Cantonese. Eleven participants agreed to be audio-recorded while four declined, necessitating detailed notes. These notes served as the primary data source coupled with the data obtained from interpretations (Bryman, 2004). Interviews that were audio-recorded were transcribed verbatim at the earliest opportunity and within three weeks. Interviews were either conducted in my office, in participants' individual offices or a coffee shop, depending on participants' preferences. Owing to time constraints, semi-structured interviews with only 15 full-time academic and teaching female staff were conducted. The aim was to obtain a better understanding of participants' views (Gerring, 2007).

The objectives and details including interview questions were listed in the email sent to staff and their consent was voluntary. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. The Ethics Committee was asked to grant permission to me for interviewing a selected group of staff from different faculties. The interview data and notes were stored in a secure office, which were subsequently analysed by reading and rereading the transcripts in detail, highlighting repeating ideas and identifying common themes.

3.4.1 Advantages of Interviews

Interviews offer details and insights into the ways in which work is perceived in HE, and how work and life outside work experiences are defined, constructed and contested through the discourse amid the trend of marketisation of HE (Thomas and Davies, 2002; Parker and Jary, 1995). Through probing in the interview, participants revealed details that were important to their experiences, adding richness to the description of data. A social-constructionist methodology presents the participants' construction of their experiences (Shotter, 1995). This approach is congruent with the constructivist-interpretive paradigm of Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.21) where words "such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity." The voices of women academic and teaching staff also "represent the views of those traditionally marginalized in the university" (Thomas and Davies, 2002, p.378).

3.4.2 Limitations of the Research Method

Since participants' views might change over time, and in response to changes in HE (Halford et al., 1997), the data collected from interviews may change. To address this shortcoming, participants were provided with the researcher's contact details and asked to contact her if they wanted to supplement additional ideas. Only two provided additional information regarding their work duties and more information about other aspects of life.

Qualitative studies tend to have limitations in terms of their breath and scope. This kind of research is useful for description, interpretation and explanation but it is not generalisable (Lee et al., 1999). Robson (2002, p.93) refers to generalisability as "the extent to which findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied." It is indisputable that research that can be generalised is useful (Bryman, 1988). Since my sample was drawn from just two HE institutions, the findings are not generalisable across all HE institutions in HK. These two institutions are UGC publicly-funded and are similar in terms of their focus on research, teaching and service and knowledge transfer; teaching staff are required to teach at least 17 hours per week while academic staff are

required to teach at least 6 hours a week. What is different is that one institution is liberal-arts focused with programmes focusing on arts, social sciences, and business whereas the other is arts-, science- and service-based with a wider range of disciplines such as engineering as well as liberal arts ones. My sample of 15 was also not representative of all working women in HE. The fact that I work in HE and was the researcher of this topic further supports the claim that this research is not generalisable. I did not intend to generalise the findings to all women in HE but rather contended that an in-depth study of HE could provide a better understanding and shed some insights into the issue of work and life. Multiple interpretations emerge in qualitative studies, shed light on meaning and help build knowledge (Creswell, 2013). My study reveals the themes that highlight women's experiences of how the changes in HE produced tensions in their work and life outside work experiences.

3.4.3 Work Log/Weekly Diary

All 15 participants were also asked to keep work logs or diaries of what activities they had completed over a period of one week. They were asked to record all 'work' and 'non-work' activities particularly if work tasks were performed at home, as is often the case for most academics. The work log Excel sheet was given to participants in a soft and hard copy and comprised 7 days over a 24-hour timeframe (see Appendix A). Participants were free to record what they wanted. This work log/diary allowed the researcher to obtain useful information about what 'work' in HE involved in addition to the data obtained from the interviews. Of the 15 participants, only 10 kept the work logs and the five did not do so as they thought it involved considerable effort. The researcher was able to probe for information in interviews based on the work logs while the logs made participants more aware of how they had spent their time on both work and life outside work. Participants who kept the work logs could use it as a memory aid and during the interview, they were asked to provide details of their activities as listed in the work logs. Part of the discussion in the interviews revolved around how they perceived the work and other activities and what decisions they had made to work on certain activities. For those who had not completed the logs, I had to probe into questions about the time spent on work and life outside work activities and what activities constituted 'work' versus 'life outside work.'

3.5 Pilot Study

Pilot interviews were conducted with three female teaching staff from one of the studied institutions from 11-22 June, 2018 to identify if the work log required improvement and whether the interview questions were clearly worded.

One participant suggested that more clear examples of what categories of items had to be indicated in the work log/diary should be given, so the following information was added to the Participant Information Sheet.

In the 7-day diary/work log, participants should record activities such as the following:
a). work activities (e.g. writing a journal paper, designing materials, writing a grant proposal);
b). personal activities (e.g. hiking with friends, watching a movie);
c). family duties (e.g. cooking);
d). community activities (e.g. going to the church, raising money for charity, helping people);
e). others (e.g. sleeping, relaxing at home)

In addition, all participants suggested that two questions asked about other aspects of life that overlapped with three other questions, so these two questions were removed. Two participants commented that two questions on 'work' were not clearly worded so they were reworded. Participants also made an important observation that their summer duties did not involve teaching 17 hours a week since most of them did not have to teach or only teach short courses, and since these pilot interviews were held in summer, I thought that it would be ideal to include a question on what a typical day consisted of during the semester for participants in the actual interviews. A revised topic guide (see Appendix B) was then constructed taking into account these changes. The data from the pilot interviews were used for the final data analysis.

3.6 Research Procedure

My research was informed by my own experiences in HE. The semi-structured interview method adopted was informed by the way researchers studied different aspects of work and life experiences through semi-structured interviews in HE in other countries as mentioned in the literature review (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Santos, 2015; Toffoletti and Starr, 2016), while I explored this in a contemporary HK context.

Participants were reminded of their consent and told the conversations would be recorded, transcribed and analysed for research purposes. Participants were first asked basic questions about themselves, their job and family so as to establish rapport with them. This enabled me to obtain basic demographic information and whether they had childcare/eldercare or other responsibilities. Please refer to the Topic Guide in Appendix B. I probed for more information within all questions.

Interview questions 5-10 were informed by views on work and life and marketisation of HE based on prior research. Based on Gill's (2014), Parker and Jary's (1995), Parker's (2010) and Warhurst et al.'s (2008) findings that time pressure, long working hours, increased workload, the insecurity of jobs, surveillance and use of mobile technology have made academic work in neo-liberal universities more demanding and Warhurst et al.'s (2008) view that workplace practices and structural constraints affect work-life patterns and subsequently work-life experiences, I framed questions 5-10 regarding HE.

Drawing on studies that the nature of academic work can be fulfilling (Barcan, 2018; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000) and stimulating, whereby academics could make creative discoveries in knowledge (Gill, 2009); and one's conception of work and lifestyle impacts one's work-life patterns and work and life experiences (Fangel and Aalokke, 2008; Warhurst et al., 2008), questions 12 to 16 were developed.

In light of previous studies that one's life outside work can include individual priorities that one places emphasis on (Peng et al., 2011), and life is not necessarily equated with childcare but includes other roles (Eikhof et al., 2007), and whether there are perceived conflicts

between work and other life roles or enrichment (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Perlow, 1999), questions 18-26 were posed.

3.7 Data Analysis

The interpretivist reading of the data from the interviews was employed to construct meaning, contributing to the identification of four main themes with their corresponding sub-themes. Interviews were transcribed and notes were kept. Indexing was done to highlight frequently recurring phrases and words. The notes that had been written were also reviewed, indexed and categorised. I examined data that was inconsistent with the emerging themes as this contributed to validity and because there was a likelihood that all participants would not have the same views on the topic of work and life experiences. As noted by Tellis (1997), robust analysis is achieved by searching for 'disconfirming data' because this shows that the researcher has thoroughly reflected on the issues.

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

The interview data were subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is concerned with identifying, analysing and reporting themes or patterns in the data obtained, and it organises and describes the data in rich detail and interprets different aspects of the research topic (Botyatzis, 1998). While thematic analysis is frequently used by researchers, clarity is lacking regarding how it should be conducted (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Tuckett, 2005). It is often not perceived as favourably as other types of analyses like grounded theory (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, it is important for researchers to clearly explain their research paradigm and how they analysed their data.

I performed a thematic analysis within a social constructivist epistemology (i.e. work and life experiences are identified as socially produced). The topics covered in the interview questions formed the main thematic categories for analysis. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), a six-stage thematic analysis of the data was conducted. A transcription of interviews was done and pseudonyms were used for participants. Each transcript was read and reread so that the researcher was familiar with the data and key ideas were jotted down. Then, interesting features of the data were coded and data relevant to each code were marked with a highlighter pen to ensure that the data were organised into meaningful groups. The codes

were organised into potential themes and the coded data extracts were collated into these themes. A theme captures something vital to the data based on the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes were reviewed and carefully checked to ensure that each theme accurately captured the coded extracts and the data set. A name was assigned to each theme that showed the key feature of each theme (see Appendix C for the Coding Tree).

I first used thematic analysis to encode qualitative information and develop appropriate codes (Boyatzis, 1998). Data-driven codes were constructed inductively from the raw data. I selected a subsample (two to three people) from each of the two samples -T1-3 (teaching track staff) and T4-5 (academic staff) and the raw information collected from these two subsamples served as the basis for developing the code. A good thematic code should have a label (a name), a definition of what the theme is concerned with (i.e. the issue that makes up the theme), a description of how to know when the theme occurs (i.e. indicators on how to identify the theme), a description of any exclusions with regard to the identification of the theme, and examples (i.e. positive and negative ones) to reduce confusion when identifying the themes (Boyatzis, 1998). The following illustrates the coding of one main theme that was identified from the data. For details on the coding of other themes, please refer to Appendix D.

Table 2: Exemplification of a Coded Theme

1. Label: Experiences of Paid Work

Definition:
The way female teaching and academic staff view work either positively or negatively.
Indicators:
Mentioning that work is part of their professional identity; work is part of their calling; work helps build relationships with colleagues; work involves developing professional networks and engagement in the community; work allows flexibility; work involves earning a paycheck only.
Exclusion:
Experiences in family and other aspects of life are not coded.
Examples:

"I think work is part of my identity… I want to be useful to my students and my job gives me that feeling" - (work as part of one's professional identity)

"I am religious and God wants me to be useful to society. My job is a calling from God" – (work as a calling)

"I'd define work as doing something in most cases which I enjoy in return for a salary and also for socialising with other colleagues... A good work experience I think is interacting with colleagues and these sorts of interactions especially humorous interactions are important to me. I like this compared to some people who like to go out to eat food in HK while I'm quite happy to sit and chat with people over a cup of coffee" – (work allowing one to build relationships with colleagues)

"Work helps me get to know other journalists and interesting people…this is meaningful and fulfilling" – (work as helping one develop professional networks)

"If we don't have classes, we don't have to come back. This gives me more time for my kids" – (work allowing flexibility)

"My workload is crazy and there is no recognition from management. We are treated like machines and language teachers are looked down on. I just do the job for the money…there is no satisfaction" - (work as earning a paycheck only)

Differentiation:
T1 and 5 showed it; T2, 3, and 4 did not.
(T1-3 – teaching staff)
(T4-5 – academic staff)

3.8 Ethical Issues

In terms of qualitative data collection, the purpose of the study has to be communicated clearly. The researcher should avoid having biases and providing deceptive information, and should show respect for the culture and all participants (Creswell, 2014). The researcher should also not disclose sensitive personal information and ensure that the identities of participants are kept confidential and be aware of power issues in data collection (Creswell, 2014). Ethical approval through the University of Leicester's Ethics Committee and the

institution's ethics committee was obtained (please refer to Appendix G for the ethics approval letter from the ethics application system).

The major ethical issues I needed to address were as follows. The first issue was highlighting the study aims to participants in an honest way so that they were willing to commit themselves to the study. The second was minimising harm to participants (Creswell, 2014). As I was interviewing participants and asking them to keep a work log, they might have been unwilling to reveal sensitive information or might have wished to withhold information, perceiving it as harming their interests or causing embarrassment. Thirdly, some participants might not trust the researcher or respond in ways that makes it difficult for the researcher to continue with the interview. Fourthly, obtaining consent from the gatekeepers (Creswell, 2014) might pose a difficulty as work and life are explored in this study, which involve sensitive issues pertaining to trust. The gatekeepers might not agree to allow the participants to take part in the study if they do not trust the researcher. Fifthly, the gatekeepers might ask for a copy of the detailed findings of the study but there would likely be some sensitive information that could not be sent to them.

In addition, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) highlighted the impact of a male or female interviewer in interviewing and it might seem that my study is sexist since it focuses on working women only with I myself being a woman. However, as long as I was aware of this and made an effort to avoid any bias, I believe that this problem was minimised. As Howarth (2002) notes, there is no consensus on whether researchers have to be a member of the participants that they investigate.

To minimise harm for participants, I protected the confidentiality of data by ensuring that participants could not be identified from the interviews and work logs (Creswell, 2014). Pseudonyms were used and coding was employed for the processing of the interview notes/transcripts. I tried to be more reflexive so as to reduce the use of biased wording and leading questions when I asked questions or probe participants during interviews. Covert methods were not employed in my research. Participants were given a choice as to where interviews could take place since this had implications for confidentiality, so some interviews took place in my office, while others were held in participants' offices or at a coffee shop.

Regarding the semi-structured interviews and work logs, participants were asked for their consent before the interviews were recorded and were asked to keep work logs (Creswell, 2014). Please refer to Appendix E for the Informed Consent Statement for Participant and Appendix F for the Participation Information Sheet. The Participation Information Sheet clearly stated the procedures that had to be followed by the researcher. Trust was established by building rapport with the participants, explaining the purpose of the study, and clarifying any concerns they might have. The process of interviews was relaxing and participants were not put under stress.

Ethical clearance was sought from my institution and the University of Leicester Ethics Committee, and I ensured that I complied with their ethical guidelines and requirements (Punch, 1998). Informed consent was obtained from the gatekeepers of my institution to gain access to participants. The gatekeepers who were administrators were reassured that the data were collected and analysed with the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants safeguarded (Creswell, 2014). I informed them about the benefits of conducting this study including that it might shed some light on the work-life issue in HE. To safeguard the confidentiality of participants' responses, the gatekeepers were only to be given a summary of the findings without any personal information of participants. Recorded interviews, work logs, notes and transcripts are to be destroyed within five years after the completion of the study.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants in the study (Creswell, 2014). The consent was documented (Creswell, 2014) and a copy of the consent form was provided to participants. The consent form included information about the purpose of the study, what was required of participants, how the data were used, participants' rights, and any risks/harm and benefits entailed (Creswell, 2014). Participants were given the name and number of the researcher should they have questions about the study. Participants were informed that although they had agreed to participate, they could withdraw from it anytime (Creswell, 2014). Relationships, which might affect the research, had to be acknowledged too. The researcher works in a HE institution, which enabled greater access to interviewees, but this

had implications for trust and confidentiality of data, which had to be mentioned in the interviews and consent form. Participants were informed in the consent form and during interviews that all details would be kept strictly confidential.

This chapter has covered the methodological issues pertaining to the exploration of working women's work-life issues in HE. The aim of this study was not to generalise the findings but rather to explore the rich depth of interview data and then to add knowledge to the growing body of studies on this topic. Participants make sense of their experiences and in doing this, they create their own worlds (Silverman, 2001) and my study reflects participants' accounts of their experiences and beliefs, offering insights into the complex meanings revolving around work and life, the interplay between them and how they used this understanding to manage their experiences.

The findings and analysis are presented in the following chapter based on the four themes of participants' experiences of work, work culture in HE, the importance of the support network, and experiences outside of work. These themes will be elaborated with an illustration using quotes from the interview data and interpretation of participants' experiences by drawing on the literature in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

There were four key themes emerging from the data (see Table 3 below). Theme 1 is related to my RQ1 on how women and teaching staff view the notion of work in HK HE, while Themes 2, 3 and 4 addressed RQ2 on the experiences of work and life outside work under the trend of marketisation of education in HK. In particular, theme two is related to work practices (e.g. work intensification and extensification) while lifestyle is exhibited in theme 4 (i.e. other important aspects of life) and theme 1 (i.e. views related to work). Structural constraints (i.e. employment relationships; HE industry sector; flexible working; social and economic resources) imposed by HE and socio-cultural gendered role expectations are exhibited in themes 1e, 2, 3 and 4b. In particular, the precarious nature of contracts for untenured/contract staff instilled job insecurity in participants, affecting their work and other experiences outside of work.

Table 3: Key Themes Identified

1. Experiences of paid work which comprised:	2. Work culture/practices in HE including:	3. The importance of the support network that included:	4. Experiences outside of work which consisted of:
a. a professional work identity; b. the enduring role of work as a calling; c. interpersonal relationships with colleagues;	a. an increase in workload; b. a rise in staff monitoring; c. less job security; d. longer working hours; and e. higher expectations.	a. paid domestic helpers; b. the husband/partner; and c. superiors/bosses/ leaders.	a. hobbies/interests; b. childcare, eldercare and household roles; c. personal and professional development; and

d. establishment of professional networks and community engagement; and e. flexibility at work.			d. socializing with friends.

The four key themes listed are elaborated below with an illustration and interpretation of participants' experiences by drawing on the literature to support the findings or highlighting which aspects the literature has shortcomings.

4.1 Theme One: Experiences of Work

4.1.1 Professional Work as an Occupational Identity

The most common theme was a positive experience/notion of work. Professional occupational identity of working as a teacher or as an academic was shared by participants and loomed large in their individual accounts. Work was integrated into participants' identity of who they were and they expressed pride in what they did. There were a number of subsidiary aspects to this professional identity. Professional identity meant that participants were attached to their jobs and HE and work defined part or most of their identity; they spent a large amount of time on work and their work and family life boundaries were permeable.

For example, Francoise mentioned that work gave her a sense of identity:

> Work is part of my life; you know it gives me my identity. Obviously I know that work is a series of tasks that I have to do in order to get a salary but because I do like teaching and I do like research, so in a way I don't set a boundary as to what time I do work and what time I don't do work. (academic staff, tenured, single, no children)

The boundaries between work and life were more blurred particularly for academic staff who are required to do research, requiring commitment on weekends. For example, Julie said:

Academic work - it seems that there's no ending. They are not like 8 hours. For the front-liners working in the hospital, they normally work 8 hours. When they finish work, they finish. Then they go home and can enjoy whatever they are doing. So for us, as academic workers, somehow, you go home and you still have to read some articles; it's endless. To make it more enjoyable, I think work becomes part of life. (academic staff, tenured, married with children)

Doris also said: "Research is my top priority…I work on manuscripts at night, on holidays and weekends. My mind never shuts off…I try to think of new interesting topics and ways to do more rigorous research" (academic staff, untenured, married with children). While for teaching staff, the boundaries between work and life were more distinct. The findings resonate with Gill (2009), Kinman and Wray (2013), and McInnis (2000) who noted that despite the blurring of boundaries between work and life in HE, academic work tended to be stimulating, whereby academics could make creative discoveries in knowledge. The majority of participants' accounts reflected this professional identity and my findings are consistent with Barcan (2018) and Bryson (2004), who noted that professional identity among academic staff was high despite work intensification and extensification in HE. Qualitative studies on female academics done in several countries by Beninger (2010) noted that academics viewed work as integral to their identity and many did not separate their work and family lives.

Professional identity can be defined as a "self-definition as a member of a profession" (Chreim et al., 2007, p.6) and is created when individuals are taught the norms of their profession in HE. These norms are then reinforced by peers and superiors (Ladge et al., 2011) and individuals then start to form an identity of who they are and desire to be professionally (Ibarra, 1999). This professional identity in my study included three aspects with the first one being the contribution made to students (i.e. being useful to students and helping and educating students through sharing knowledge and wisdom with them). Students were part of participants' stories and lives. This identity brought meaning to their lives and satisfaction through the contributions that they made to HE. This quote from Francoise reflects this:

Helping students and doing research makes me a useful person. Work gives me a sense of identity. I do a lot of administrative work and serve as the Associate Head

without relief hours but my job gives me meaning especially when I teach students. (academic staff, tenured, single, no children)

The importance of gaining a sense of satisfaction, fulfillment and meaning from teaching students through inspiring, guiding and helping them, were tied to this theme. The participants felt that HE was changing and they were expected to do more tasks. Nevertheless, their roles brought them fulfillment. The following quote illustrates that Julie had to work on weekends but still found her job meaningful: "I hope to contribute to academia and find my job rewarding. I work on weekends and have long hours …I meet students for consultations and have many meetings…but that does not bother me because I like my job" (academic staff, tenured, married with children). This is consistent with Eikhof and Haunschild's (2006) findings, in that when work and life are intertwined and bring satisfaction, most people often spend a lot of time on work but still enjoy it. My study suggests that participants who made work and life boundaries permeable had better work-life experiences, similar to Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) Danish case studies, which found that it was employees' conception of work that led to better work and life experiences and those who mixed both spheres and viewed work as consisting of 'real work' and interaction, meetings and collaboration with others, had better overall experiences.

The second aspect of this professional identity included advances in knowledge (i.e. making original contributions to knowledge) in that academic staff expressed that making contributions to knowledge and research brought them satisfaction and affirmed their identity. This quote illustrates this point: "Work gives me meaning… I can contribute to the linguistics field… make discoveries in knowledge" (Rachel, academic staff, untenured, married, no children). Katie, an untenured, married academic, also said: "One of the reasons why I choose to work in academia is it's something that I like; I can be creative. It's really fulfilling to see that I can publish something where I can discover something". This intellectual discovery of knowledge resonates with Davies and Peterson's (2005a) research. Other studies (e.g. Bryson, 2004; Gill, 2009; McInnis, 2000) have confirmed that academic work brings satisfaction and is stimulating because academics can find new knowledge.

The third aspect of this professional identity was framed as work giving one a sense of achievement and ownership and this was particularly mentioned by academic staff who noted

that their research publications, grants and presentations gave them a sense of ownership of their achievements and made them feel they were building their resume. For example, Doris said: "Research is your own work; it always follows you; you can change your job but it is still your own work" (academic staff, untenured, with children). Francoise also said, "the good part of the job is the research I do…I get credit for it and like doing it. Not just others recognise my work but I feel as though I have achieved something" (academic staff, tenured, single).

Seven teaching staff pointed out that they gained a sense of achievement when students appreciated their teaching or when their boss recognised them for their performance but the ownership aspect was absent. Nonetheless, other responses of a few teaching staff indicated that work was not perceived as part of their professional identity because they just thought of it as a job that allowed them to earn a living. On probing, it was found that initially, they had a strong commitment to their job but after being given an excessive workload, subjected to long working hours and without any appreciation for their work, their sense of professional identity had waned. They perceived that the institutional culture did not value teaching and they experienced immense pressure because they had a teaching load of 18-22 contact hours a week, and taught five-six different subjects and large classes of students (up to 80 students per class) coupled with the fact that they had no job security nor recognition from managers.

For example: Claire said:

> I am doing this job just for the salary. There is no satisfaction and teaching is not valued. I am treated like a machine – teaching 18 hours a week, big classes and marking theses in detail. If I find a better job, I would quit…I don't earn a big salary so it is easy for me to find another job. (teaching staff, single, no children)

Claire had worked in this HE institution for 20 years and mentioned it was easy to obtain a teaching job in other institutions. The socio-economic conditions whereby the labour market is booming with many jobs available and cultural resources (e.g. the qualifications of having a PhD and extensive teaching experience) made it easy for her to get a similar job. Whitney also said: "I don't have time to take a hobby, do exercise or meet my friends in this job… I often skip meals because I'm always working due to the heavy teaching load" (teaching staff,

single, no children). She had worked in her institution for four years and similar to Claire, she perceived that it was easy to secure a teaching job elsewhere.

These participants felt that the institution focused heavily on research and downplayed the importance of teaching, thereby undermining their morale. Given that they worked long working hours and had an excessive workload, they felt they hardly had time to engage in leisure activities, thus feeling trapped in their job. They indicated resistance against the institution in that they disliked the work intensification and perceived the ease with which they could secure a new job in other institutions, so leaving was an option. They just thought of leaving that institution rather than leaving the teaching sector entirely. Barcan's (2018) research indicated that academics found it difficult to quit their jobs because they could not imagine themselves doing another job and similarly, academic staff in my study did not mention about quitting but rather only some teaching staff mentioned quitting their jobs. Thus, work intensification, long working hours and a lack of recognition can impact staff as has been found in other studies (e.g. Doherty and Manfredi, 2006; Woodward, 2007).

4.1.2 Work as a Calling or a Life Goal

Six participants expressed that academic work or teaching was their calling in life. They specifically used this phrase: "a calling in life." Participants framed this calling in a way that illustrated work as the main purpose of their life that they were destined to do (i.e. serve others, educate others) which gave them meaning and fulfillment. For example, Katie said succinctly: "I entered this profession not because of the money but it was more a desire to serve others...educate students…discover new ideas…this job was my calling" (academic staff, untenured, married).

Some participants integrated it with their religious faith, saying that it was God's calling for them to make a difference in students' lives and research, and ultimately, this gave them meaning in life. For example, Christy said: "God wants me to be useful in society…My job is a calling from God" (teaching staff, married, no children). As Barcan (2018) notes, the vocation of academics gives them a sense of purpose, meaning and satisfaction and this was mentioned by both teaching and academic staff. A sense of vocation refers to a connection between work and emotions (e.g. passion), values (e.g. duty), and a responsibility to

something larger than oneself (Barcan, 2018). This sense of vocation fosters a personal and social identity, and is associated with psychological well-being, meaning, and life satisfaction (Bunderson and Thompson, 2009; Duffy and Dik, 2013; Hagmaier and Abele, 2015). Participants connected this vocation with their affective experiences because they described that they 'loved' what they did and some even used the word 'passion' to describe their work, consistent with Holland et al.'s (2016) study. Dobrow (2004) identified seven features of calling: compassion, identification, experiencing meaning, need to complete one's work, longevity, encompassing one's consciousness and self-esteem. Participants seemed to exhibit the first five components and also intricately linked personal satisfaction with a duty/service to students/HE. For example, Yvonne said: "I can make a difference in students' lives and…I feel good about this" (teaching staff, single, no children). This duty to serve others in HE could have been shaped by Confucianism which places importance on collectivism, working hard and endurance (Lu et al., 2015), and is the essence of Chinese culture, setting standards for the family, community and social behaviour (Yim et al., 2011). Studies investigating work as a calling in academia hardly exist with the exception of Gill (2009) who found that for academics, academic work is a 'noble' calling and even when they overwork, they are likely to enjoy it (p.233), so my findings make a contribution to the literature in this aspect.

4.1.3 Interpersonal Relationships with Colleagues

Participants made reference to interactions with colleagues over the course of their careers and that they would seek the advice of these colleagues. The interactions brought satisfaction, fulfillment and purpose and added to the positive experiences of work. Such interaction could be in the form of casual chit-chat, banter or serious talk about work-related or study-related matters. For example, Polly said:

> I'd define work as doing something in most cases which I enjoy in return for a salary and also for socialising with other colleagues and teaching involves interacting with students and our colleagues so it's very people orientated. A good work experience I think is interacting with colleagues and these sorts of interactions especially humorous interactions are important to me. I like this compared to some people who

like to go out to eat food in HK while I'm quite happy to sit and chat with people over a cup of coffee. (teaching staff, married with children)

This sub-theme also included mentoring/coaching of colleagues, which could possibly take up a substantial amount of one's time but it brought fulfillment and satisfaction to one's work. For example, Francoise said:

> The head has assigned me to take care of the part-time teachers which means it includes the recruitment and talking to them about the courses. That happens every semester. Whenever they have any problems during the semester, they just contact me. I enjoy doing that and seeing them learn and grow…but at the same time, there's a lack of recognition. (academic staff, tenured, single)

Women academics are often assigned to perform small administrative tasks such as pastoral care (Bryon, 2005; Fenton, 2003; Thomas and Davies, 2002; Trowler, 1997), which takes away time from important duties such as research and teaching and this could marginalize their status in academia. My study's results are partially consistent with this since participants enjoyed the pastoral care and social interaction with colleagues which brought them positive experiences of work despite taking up their time, though not necessarily marginalizing their status. It is possible that this alludes to conceptions or expectations of femininity held by the interviewees. As has been found elsewhere (e.g. Fangel and Aalokke, 2008; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2006), participants' conceptions of work affect their experiences of work, thereby increasing the likelihood that conceptions of femininity in the workplace could have made the interviewees more amenable to coaching their colleagues.

Although most participants were willing to coach colleagues when requested by their superiors, a few did mention that they minded being assigned these duties and would have preferred if they were allocated to other colleagues. For example, Doris said: "Mentoring other colleagues eats into my time and my time could have been better spent on research… My boss just expects me to take on this role" (academic staff, untenured, with children), and Agnes said: "I help colleagues but it just kinda takes away my time without getting any recognition…" (teaching staff, married with children). This shows that participants still took

on mentoring roles without resisting them, suggesting that the assumed high regard for the teaching/academic profession in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016) outweighed obligations seen as a burden.

4.1.4 Interpersonal Relationships - Professional Networks and Community Engagement

Participants, especially academic staff, mentioned the importance of networking with people in their field while some mentioned the importance of community engagement. For example, for Maya, associated contacts with journalists working for top newspapers in HK was viewed as important in bringing about positive experiences of work. This not only enabled her to access industry standards but also provided collaborative opportunities such as inviting journalists to deliver talks to students. The following illustrates the importance of this:

> Work helps me get to know other journalists and interesting people… this is meaningful and fulfilling. I can invite them to give talks to students and provide opportunities for students to work with them for their final year project. I also learn useful skills… and know what's really going on in the field. (academic staff, untenured, single, no children)

Similarly, for Julie (an academic tenured staff), networking with nurses and doctors in hospitals and patients and subsequently, collaborating with them at hospitals and conducting research on problems experienced by patients suffering from musculoskeletal problems and their integration into the community were viewed as positive experiences of work. Participants demonstrated the characteristics of an occupational community (Hyman and Baldry, 2011; Salaman, 1974) whereby a sense of collective identity existed in and beyond the workplace and social context and this network performed a functional role in helping to disseminate the latest information in the community. It is also likely that participants viewed the opportunities to network with others as ways to achieve their goals of personal fulfillment because they could gain useful skills, or collaborate with others as co-authors on research projects, or apply their knowledge in practice. As suggested by Jahoda (1982), work is integral for positive mental well-being and performs a function in personal and social life. As was found in prior studies (e.g. Byron, 2005; Fangel and Aalokke, 2008), participants'

conceptions of work often influence their work experiences, and networking with practitioners is one of the perks of the job and relevant to participants' job nature, and thus, this finding contributes to the growing body of knowledge on how participants view the notion of 'work' in HK HE.

Participants attached strong importance to serving the community and what is distinctive about HK's culture is that most people tend to be collectivistic on the spectrum of collectivism versus individualism (Hofstede, 1997; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2008). Relationships (Hofstede, 1980) and harmony with others (Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Triandis, 1995) are stressed in collectivist cultures. Collectivism is regarded as the main characteristic of Confucian Asian cultures (Hofstede and Bond, 1988) and China and HK tend to be medium to high on measures of collectivism (Oyserman et al., 2002). Although some scholars argue that Hofstede's (1980; 1997) research promotes cultural over-generalisations (Loukianenko, 2008), Guillen (2009) argues that Hofstede offers the most comprehensive investigation into how cultural values affect the workplace. The collectivist orientation could have made participants more amenable to having a sense of community but they meshed these roles with their affective experiences and a sense of duty to society/their profession, thereby perceiving that these roles engendered satisfaction and meaning.

These community engagement roles were served in the church or society and involved, for example, translating at a church, leading a bible group study, helping a Buddhist organisation, providing counselling, visiting the elderly/disabled in care homes and helping exploited domestic helpers in HK society. Participants felt that these roles helped them manage their work and other aspects of life better by becoming more well-organised and efficient with a sense of purpose, and more meaning derived in their lives. This suggests that benefits gained from one sphere in life can trickle into another sphere and may serve participants well, fitting in with the work enrichment perspective (Crosby, 1991; Rothbard, 2001). For example, Christy said: "I used to do a lot of translation work at church …I feel that I can help others" (teaching staff, married). Polly said:

> I've been involved with helping domestic helpers who were ill and that did take up
> an enormous amount of time but I was happy to do it and of course it did give me

more work because I have to help them and carry out my work at the same time. A specific example is that a domestic helper was thrown out at just after midnight by her employer because she had stage III cancer, deep-vein thrombosis and five other related ailments. Because of this and the fact that she did not know really any people in HK, my domestic helper and I decided to help her and she came to stay at my home. We managed to get her to finish her radiotherapy treatments…I had to stop with my studies but I felt that trying to save a life was really more important than doing my studies… This experience has also made me a more well-organised person. (teaching staff, married with children)

What Polly did might be related to the attitudes of the occupational community (Hyman and Baldry, 2011) she is in whereby teachers serve students and this in turn could have been transferred to society, or as Aiston (2014) articulates, women academics tend to have a professional duty to apply their skills to society in comparison with their male counterparts.

4.1.5 Flexibility at Work

Most participants explained that they liked their job and despite the pressure they felt brought by the increased workload, they could still exercise some flexibility to allocate their time. Academic staff, who only needed to teach 6-9 hours per week, could have a compressed work week, coming to the office two to three days a week during the semester although they would be working from home the rest of the week. Grzywacz et al. (2008) noted that a compressed workweek is linked to less stress and burnout. For example, Rachel mentioned: "I like the flexibility – hours are flexible and for the work I do…research, flexibility is really, really important" (academic staff, untenured, married). For teaching staff, it was more difficult to have as much flexibility since they had to teach 17-22 hours a week but during breaks and summer (e.g. from mid-May-Aug), they could stay home. For example, Annie said:

> There is more flexibility at university. If we don't have classes, we don't have to come back. This gives me more time for my kids. I can pick them up from school and do some activities with them. (teaching staff, married with children)

Flexible working hours and locations (e.g. at home) are integral for staff who need to manage work and family commitments (Currie and Eveline, 2011; Nikunen, 2012). Temporal workplace flexibility means that one can choose when and how long one can work and this can be viewed as resources to allow employees to better handle the demands of work and life (Hill et al., 2011; Rapoport et al., 2002). As Currie and Eveline (2011) found, workers with autonomy and flexibility tend to work longer hours, often cannot separate work from non-work, and demonstrate higher commitment to work. Research suggests that work and life spheres are often integrated for academics (Kinman and Wray, 2013), while a study done by Kinman and Jones (2009) shows that academic employees often worked at home to raise their research productivity, to use their time efficiently and to manage work and other tasks effectively. The flexibility offered was perhaps even more important to participants in the HK cultural context given that they are often expected by their family/husbands to undertake unpaid household duties such as cooking and looking after children (Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012). A study of American academics by Shockley and Allen (2007) indicated that both women and men used flexible working policies to navigate the demands of work-life but women tended to use flexibility more than men. Hill et al. (2008) noted that women tended to use flextime twice as much as that of men when they had a child under five years old and Lo (2003), who conducted a study on professional women in HK, found that schedule flexibility was the second most important criteria of a good job after salary. For example, Ivy pointed out that in summer, she had time to cook and do household chores since she did not have to go to the office every day, while during the semester, she hardly had any time but had to order takeaway. This is what she said:

> Home-cooked meals are really important in my culture and in summer, I can cook regularly. But when I am busy marking in the semester, my boyfriend and I order from Deliveroo. (teaching staff, single, no children)

Christy said: "Although my husband helps me grocery shop, I do most of the work – preparing the grocery list, cooking, washing up" (teaching staff, married). Participants were expected to work and also perform household duties, which is like a 'second shift', and even when their husbands helped with family duties, they felt more responsible for household duties and children, similar to Hochschild's (1990) study. In addition, participants perceived

that the flexibility offered meant that managing different tasks involved a personal management task within their control (Jacobs and Gerson, 2005), similar to Toffoletti and Starr's (2016) findings, and because most had a strong attachment to HE, they perceived they could capitalise on their flexibility, social and economic resources such as domestic helpers and their spouse/partner, and work more efficiently and prioritise tasks to manage all tasks well. Hence, they drew attention away from the role of the HE institution in establishing demanding conditions that affected their experiences. Doris commented: "You've made a choice to work in universities, so you have to persist even if that means working many hours and on holidays" (academic staff, untenured, with children). Some participants mentioned that with the flexibility, they had learnt to prioritise tasks and use their time effectively to manage all tasks well and this was particularly noted in the accounts of those with children. For example, Annie said:

> I try to come to work earlier… before 7:30 am and finish all work by 4:30 pm…I can then get back home and teach my kids and look after them. Once they are asleep, I get back to marking. (teaching staff, married with children)

Agnes said:

> I think that what I've done at work and also the types of jobs of looking after a baby at home - they do help in your performance and I think as a mother, you have to become organised and take on more responsibility and you have to learn to do the important and urgent things first and prioritise tasks so I think that's one of the main things - knowing how to do things quickly in the right order and urgency. (teaching staff, married with children)

A surprising finding which diverged from former studies was that the frequent usage of technology such as being accessible to students and colleagues and responding to their emails after work was not considered as encroaching on participants' lives. Contrary to Currie and Eveline's (2011) and Prasopoulou and Pouloudi's (2006) research, participants adhered more to the work-family enrichment model (Crosby, 1991) whereby they learnt to become more efficient, multi-task and prioritise tasks similar to what Peng et al. (2011) found in work-life integration among professionals. However, this practice of being accessible raises the

expectation that staff are available after work, further resulting in work encroaching on family life (Major and Germano, 2006).

Overall, the findings suggest that most participants believed that work gave them a sense of professional identity and was their calling as well as helping them build relationships with colleagues and professional networks, giving them a sense of achievement and ownership, and allowing them to exercise flexibility. These participants had a maximum teaching load of 17 hours a week and fewer types of courses and believed they had more job security in terms of either being tenured or having automatic renewal of their contracts as long as they performed satisfactorily. For participants (i.e. teaching staff) who had a teaching load of 18-22 contact hours per week, a wider range of courses and larger class sizes, they tended to have less flexibility and felt that the institutional culture would hint that they could be easily replaced with a lack of recognition for their contributions, leading to negative experiences of work whereby work was not associated with professional identity. The excessive workload, long working hours and lack of job security undermined their sense of professional identity. Work was just a means to afford a living. This highlights the importance of workload, nature of contract and HE culture that could have a significant impact on teaching staff's experiences of work. Given the precarious nature of contracts in HE, it seems that this situation is likely to worsen. Most participants retained their faith in HE but there was a feeling that their confidence was diminishing due to the increased workload, job insecurity and higher expectations of staff. Barcan (2018) highlights this by noting that academics in her study felt that their calling was unmet and were disillusioned because of insufficient opportunities for promotion to permanent staff and the management of universities. This HE culture as described by participants is analysed next.

4.2 Theme Two: Work Culture in HK Higher Education

4.2.1 Increase in Workload

All participants expressed that they had experienced a considerable increase in workload in terms of having more responsibilities. Regarding participants on the teaching track, they were required to do teaching and service in the past but research beyond their duties such as obtaining a teaching development grant or presenting at conferences had become increasingly 'preferred' especially if they wanted a promotion. For example, Yvonne noted: "I heard that we need to get a TDG to get promoted, so it's not just our teaching evaluations and service" (teaching staff, single). More service duties were assigned to staff such as writing reports, serving on university committees, conducting focus group interviews with students, double marking assignments, and organising activities. The bureaucracy was also mentioned whereby management would impose some arbitrary rules on staff to change the syllabus of certain core courses without even providing a justification, which led to frustration and a heavier workload since changes needed to be made within a short time. Polly said this succinctly:

> Since 2008, there has been a dramatic increase in workload because of the change in management and the new head expected people to do a significant amount of work and therefore I'm pressured by time …in addition to teaching 17 hours a week and although I was the coordinator of …courses, workshops, and services and activities, I was also required to undertake a six-year project involving our 300 students and I was only given 21 hours of relief per semester for a very demanding project which meant that compared to other staff members, I had to work hard during this semester and during the breaks because I had to do a lot of report writing and administrative duties. (teaching staff, married with children)

Claire, an unmarried teaching staff, who had a heavy workload, said the following:

> I'm considering if I should quit this job. There might be 9-10 courses within 18 hours of teaching a week. Every class has different homework. It takes so much time

marking students' work and there are also many theses to mark. However, those students aren't taught by me so it might be an additional thing that is excluded in those 18 working hours... for each semester there are 4-5 writing assignments in each class. It's alright if I have only 4-5 classes. But the truth is I taught 9 classes last semester, and the workload for 9 classes is very heavy. The university might think that 18 hours is 18 hours. But it isn't like that. Also, the subjects are of a large variety. 9 classes and 5 different subjects! It's becoming very difficult.

For untenured academic staff, the workload was even heavier as they were required to publish in top-tier journals in order for their contracts to be renewed and teach courses and perform administrative duties. For example: Rachel said: "The RAE increases everyone's workload" (academic staff, untenured, married). It is well-documented in the U.K. that in 2008, a survey of 844 UK academics found heavy workload/overwork and psychological distress among academics although they said that they were moderately satisfied with their work (Kinman and Jones, 2008b). In the 2016 Times Higher Education Supplement workplace survey (cited in Times Higher Education Supplement, 2017), approximately 39% of academics wanted to leave their job because the time spent working negatively affected their health. In HK, statistics on this aspect in HE are not available but the responses of participants showed that they overworked and most of their time was spent on work. Eleven participants mentioned feeling tired, falling sick more easily, being depressed and anxious because of the heavy workload and this emerged in both teaching and academic staff's accounts. For example, Whitney (an unmarried teaching staff) said: "In my first year, I came back to work at 7am and left at 10pm. I felt almost depressed. I cried in my office. I felt like it has been a long time since I hadn't looked at the sun and gone out for a walk. This situation was maintained for two semesters." The majority of participants stated that they skipped lunch as they had to continue working on administrative tasks or research. Bureaucratic procedures were highlighted too whereby management would expect staff to adopt a new policy without giving ample justification within a tight timeframe, leading to increased workload. For example, Elsa noted:

Micro management from a bureaucratic level is seen. The Knowledge Transfer Office expects us to follow some arbitrary rules…Bureaucracy's growing…this increases our workload. (teaching staff, single, no children)

Overall, in HK HE, output, ranking, efficiency and accountability take precedence over other aspects, which have in turn resulted in an increased workload. The emphasis on individual performance and output (Parker and Jary, 1995; Waring, 2013) has led to increased focus being placed on staff to deliver results (Bal et al., 2014). Eight participants mentioned that they felt they had to hurry everything and work faster similar to what Spurling (2015) had noted about academics, and sometimes, they would get upset when they were not fast enough. For example, Doris said:

I'm always on the go…briefing part-time teachers on the course..cos I manage a programme, and even booking the classroom for them…doing research…supervising students …I wish I had more hours in a day. I feel hurried and have so many things on my mind. Sometimes I get cranky for not using my time more efficiently or unnecessary things like handling trivial complaints from staff and students that squeeze my time. (academic staff, untenured, married with children)

Based on the above, participants concurred that their workload was heavy, resulting in stress, tiredness and feeling pushed for time. Woodward (2007) found that a heavy workload and long working hours made staff unable to fulfil other life roles, and this seemed to hold true in my study too, especially for untenured academic staff. As has been found in studies (Choi, 2008; Redding, 1993; Xiao and Cooke, 2012), participants might have been willing to tolerate the increased workload due to the Chinese work ethic whereby work takes precedence over family life. The Confucian work value, which places importance on endurance, long-term orientation, and working hard (Lu et al., 2015), could possibly explain participants' perceived tolerance of the demanding work culture.

4.2.2 Increased Monitoring of Staff's Performance

There was increased staff monitoring in HE as confirmed by all participants. Teaching staff were required to document everything, detailing what they had done in summer to justify why the institution should pay them a salary for the three summer months when they were

not required to teach. Yvonne described the situation: "I guess I just never had this experience where teachers need to document every single little thing they are doing. And I think the university recently wants to have teachers do some time stamp…writing everything that we've done…" (teaching staff, single).

In addition, participants' performance was subject to constant monitoring. Some participants raised a concern that the teaching scores given by students might not reflect their teaching effectiveness because students might give a higher score to teachers for personal reasons rather than the teaching quality. They suggested that the institution should consider other measures such as peer observation of teaching or curriculum design but they noted that the institution hardly considered other aspects of teaching. Ivy succinctly explained:

> We are evaluated based on teaching evaluation scores, but if one or two students give you a rating of 1-2 over 5 …5 is the total score, your overall score is greatly affected. The senior managers at university just look at the scores …not looking at other things like contribution to curriculum development. (teaching staff, single)

Julie summarized the monitoring trend clearly:

> Those requirements – they do monitor them. Like they will send you an email saying that your impact factor is not that high. Every year we have appraisal; we'll look at your research grant, publications, and student evaluations. I am tenured, so it's still okay. But sometimes I talk to colleagues. They are on contract. They feel very stressful. It seems that they feel they will be kicked out anytime. That really affects their personal life. (academic staff, tenured, with children)

For untenured academic staff, the need for research output and grants was even more crucial. For example, Katie said: "Appraisal is done every 2 years and staff have to obtain grants and publish in high-impact journals. I need to work harder…and adjust my emotions…" (academic staff, untenured, married). As noted in previous research (e.g. Gill, 2014; Parker and Jary, 1995), participants mentioned that work intensification is brought by increasing pressure to obtain research funding, to publish and to excel in teaching. The situation in HK is similar to studies done in other contexts (e.g. Harvie and Angelis; 2009; Gill, 2014; Gornall

and Salisbury, 2012; Kyvik, 2013). With the focus on outputs, auditing and accountability, this has been viewed as "McDonaldization" of universities (Parker and Jary, 1995).

4.2.3 Reduced Job Security

Almost all participants perceived that their jobs were insecure except for two tenured academic staff. Participants indicated that there was a constant fear of not getting their contracts renewed, making them feel stressed. This had an impact on their experiences outside work such as their plans to buy a property, travel, hobbies/interests or how to spend their money. This fear was exacerbated by the fact that the HE institution administration would constantly adopt new policies of appraisal or change its strategic plan, thereby affecting how participants were appraised and their job security. Polly communicated:

> I've been at the University for 21 years. For the first five years there was a continual of what I could call threat of having to gain excellent teaching evaluations and service in order to get my contract renewed. After being employed for six years I was then promoted to … but job security was always an issue. And from time to time the University indicated that they could change the annual 12-month contracts to 10-month contracts which would mean that we would lose medical benefits. This situation has affected my life experiences because when I decided to buy an apartment I chose one which was at a certain price range which I knew I could pay off if I lost my job. So there was always uncertainty of not having your contract renewed even though I nearly always received excellent teaching results… (teaching staff, married with children)

Annie, who used to work at a secondary school, mentioned that contracts were always renewed in schools but at university, she was aware that contracts may not be renewed. New academics from top universities worldwide were being hired to raise the global ranking of the studied institutions, which put pressure on existing staff to work harder. For example, Francoise said:

> The… hiring at our university has put a lot of pressure on staff to publish more; they're getting more worried. I see some colleagues actually depressed. Colleagues will ask me to have lunch, saying that, 'I'm so worried about not being able to renew

my contract.' …I do see announcements from higher up, saying, 'you have to fulfill this requirement and that requirement,' And because I was also on some panels, actually witnessing how the process is played out. So they look at numbers and say, 'this colleague has not met the requirements, so no promotion.' It's real. The standards are getting higher and higher, unreasonably high. (academic staff, tenured, single)

Appraisals were done once every two to three years at the faculty level for academic staff, and the pressure was enormous because if staff could not get promoted to Associate Professor within six years, their contracts would not be renewed. Some academic staff pointed out that they preferred to work on low-risk projects rather than following their passion for research. For example, Katie said:

You probably will not be able to work on things that you want to do because discoveries need time. So if you spend two or three years on one project, then you only publish one paper…then probably you will be in trouble. So what you would be doing is … You work on projects that have low risk. You can probably finish it within one or two years. So that means you probably won't discover a really innovative, creative research…Now I have to publish twenty papers before I can really do something creative. (academic staff, untenured, married)

Concerning teaching staff, participants explained that appraisals were done once a year at the departmental level and once every two years at the faculty level, and again this put pressure on them as they had to showcase their teaching and service contributions, and especially at the faculty level, it would be better if they could show they had done some research. Overall, the insecure nature of jobs and surveillance in the form of monitoring academics' performance through research output resulted in anxiety among participants, as had been found in studies (e.g. Bal et al., 2014; Gill, 2014; Loveday, 2018). The audit culture (Loveday, 2018; Strathern, 2000) instilled insecurity in both untenured academic and teaching staff, particularly the former and it is likely that this culture will pervade HK HE in the future.

4.2.4 Longer Working Hours

All participants concurred that they worked long hours and very often, they had to work on weekends, in the evenings and on holidays grading students' assignments and conducting their own research such as applying for grants, writing proposals and journal papers. Some participants had evening classes or Saturday morning classes, so their working hours were extended. For teaching staff, participants explained that assignments had to be returned to students usually within two-three weeks from the date of submission, so they had to meet tight deadlines. For example, Elsa commented:

> During the semester, life is hectic. I have to mark assignments in two weeks and sometimes have consultations with students. I have to sacrifice time spent with my family… and sometimes I get grumpy. (teaching staff, single)

Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) time and strain based work-family conflict is evident in this context given that time spent on work reduces the time devoted to the family and results in some negative emotions (e.g. feeling cranky). Kinman and Wray (2013) studied 8000 women academics in the U.K. and noted a high level of time and strain-based work-life conflict and 63% of the sampled 7000 academics worked more than 40 hours a week while 24% worked over 50 hours. Whitney even said her long working hours affected her mental well-being:

> I teach M.A. courses as well as General Education courses. However, these courses are usually scheduled in the evening. Because I sleep very early, the class time always disturbed my rhythm of daily life. I had insomnia, and I even felt depressed. It is due to the unreasonable working hours. My class finished at 9:30pm, and I had my next lesson starting at 8:30am on the following day. I felt very emotionally disrupted. I had many nightmares at that time. It was very stressful. (teaching staff, single)

Eleven participants also mentioned that the use of emails and technology such as Whatsapp groups with students made them work longer hours because they had to check their emails regularly and respond to students and other staff (e.g. boss) in time. For instance, Yvonne said:

I often check my emails on my phone and I think it's good to give a timely response to students and colleagues. It makes me more efficient…Of course, it means I have less personal time. (teaching staff, single)

This suggests that participants made themselves more accessible to others through intrusion of mobile technology into their home lives. Mobile technology impacted participants' work boundaries since they were expected by students and colleagues to be available after work (Major and Germano, 2006; Valcour and Hunter, 2005), resulting in blurred boundaries between work and life. As noted by Prasopoulou and Pouloudi (2006), mobile technology can adversely impact professionals who do not have a clear boundary between their work and non-work life. However, my findings depart from Currie and Eveline's (2011) study who found that work intensification and the increased use of technology invaded academic staff's family lives, as my study found evidence that participants derived benefits from responding to emails such as becoming more efficient in other areas of their lives, providing support for the work-life enrichment perspective. My findings were more congruent with Towers et al. (2006) who found that government employees enhanced their efficiency, flexibility and gave increased accessibility to colleagues/superiors and family through the use of mobile technology.

Overall, the findings suggest that work intensification and the increased use of technology exerted an impact on participants' work and life experiences. Yet the increased work hours were observed in certain periods of time only such as during the semester for teaching staff, whereas for untenured academic staff, the increased hours were evident throughout the year. This indicates that the type of contract had an impact on academic staff's work experiences. However, it is a personal choice made by academics who want to achieve their career goals in life (i.e. obtaining a promotion). As my study shows, for academic staff, work could help fulfill career aspirations, so the long hours were not viewed negatively. Although work seemed to have encroached on non-work life, the ideal academic is viewed as one who spends a large amount of time on research (Heijstra et al., 2013; Raddon, 2002). Teaching staff, particularly those with young children (two in total), mentioned that work and family life were distinct and they completed all work in the office and did not do office work at home. This suggests that domestic situations had an impact on the separation of work and family

spheres in line with Murphy and Doherty's (2011) study. These teaching staff noted that their office space enabled them to concentrate and complete work but with young children like toddlers at home, they were distracted. In sum, the findings suggest that longer working hours are the norm in HK HE and there might not be a cultural aspect linked to it, contrary to what Cooper (2015) suggested.

4.2.5 Higher Expectations of Staff

Most participants expressed that they were expected by their managers to take on more responsibilities such as teaching different courses, doing more service, publishing more than the necessary amount required, and applying for more than one research grant. Participants were also expected by their managers to be involved in service learning and internationalisation initiatives. Elsa said: "I've been involved in volunteering for years and I enjoy it, but now, my boss expects me to incorporate service learning into a course" (teaching staff, single). Christy said: "at the annual review meeting, I was asked if I have any plans to present at international conferences. Of course I said yes, but I think I'm more genuinely interested in teaching rather than research" (teaching staff, married). Academic staff participants mentioned that collaboration with other researchers on publications was marked down in performance appraisals, which meant HE institutions expected staff to publish on their own. For example, Doris said:

> I don't prefer collaborators. I am marked down for an A-grade publication even though I am the first author and have one co-author. … But I can't produce so many papers myself and collaboration is useful. (academic staff, untenured, with children)

Julie also said: "They expect me to get a research grant; they look at high impact factor journals – not just journal publications" (academic staff, tenured, with children). This suggests that participants were evaluated based on increasingly more demanding requirements. Participants were also expected to attend university seminars and conferences but their performance was not evaluated based on this. The top-down management directives put stress on participants since they needed to do much more but they did not gain recognition for tasks. The additional responsibilities took up their time, thereby making them have less time for important academic work or other aspects of life. Also, some participants expressed

that their teaching load was heavy but their teaching was not valued by the university, which made them feel unhappy. For example, Claire said:

> I am not hoping to get promoted. It's just a job for me to earn my living. I have been doing this job for 20 years. It has changed in these years. More things to do and more new subjects. I need more time to prepare and I do not have any negotiation power. I feel hopeless and …the changing requirements, and higher demands. Teaching is not valued; all programmes are practical in our university... (teaching staff, single)

A salient finding was that some participants, especially academic staff, mentioned that although the expectations of staff were high and they had to work long hours, they enjoyed the creativity that they could demonstrate in their work, allowing them to discover novel ideas. Katie said: "Research is intellectually stimulating and you can try out different ideas and analyse things from different perspectives" (academic staff, untenured, married). Rachel also said: "I work on weekends and holidays too… but I get fulfillment from operationalising concepts, testing theories and coming up with significant contributions to my field…" (academic staff, untenured, married).

Overall, my findings illuminate HK HE's context as competitive with participants having an increased workload, being subject to monitoring, with less job security, longer working hours and higher expectations. All these changes are consistent with Harvie and Angelis' (2009), Gill's (2014), and Thomas and Davies' (2002) findings. This "McDonaldization" of universities (Parker and Jary, 1995) has been well-documented in many countries. The fact that e-technology is increasingly used in universities alongside intensification which refers to 'the increased speed and amount of work demanded in many jobs' (Currie and Eveline, 2011, p.535; Gill, 2014), had an impact on participants' work-life experiences. Work and life boundaries were blurred due to changes in the academic nature of work but even then, most of them still had positive experiences of work.

Nonetheless, teaching staff who had a teaching load of 18-22 contact hours per week felt stressed, thereby making them have very negative experiences of work with work only enabling them to make ends meet. Their accounts were largely negative due to the high

number of different courses they had to teach alongside the large classes of students and the insecurity they felt about not getting their contracts renewed. The workload was affecting their health and mental well-being. For example, Whitney said:

> I suffer back pain and anxiety because of the long hours and no career growth and recognition… We teach almost 20 hours a week and the job nature is getting more difficult… (teaching staff, single)

While Agnes said: "I feel fatigue all the time…. Sometimes, I do not feel like going to work but just force myself to go in" (teaching staff, married with children). Maya also said: "I have no time to exercise and hardly eat lunch" (academic staff, untenured, single). These findings suggest that the heavy workload and higher expectations affected participants' health and the implications are far-reaching. The findings also lend support to the argument that the type of contract offered to staff impacted their work experiences such that a tenured position for academic staff facilitated more positive experiences of work while untenured academic and teaching staff felt a sense of insecurity and this in turn produced comparatively more negative experiences of work.

Teaching staff who felt insecure with over 18 teaching contact hours a week to deliver a wide range of courses with large student numbers experienced work most disadvantageously, suggesting that the contract coupled with workload beyond a certain limit and a lack of recognition from management were intricately intertwined in impacting work experiences. My study makes a contribution to the literature by highlighting how the kind of contract in HE could affect one's work experiences. My study is partially consistent with Woodward's (2007) U.K. study of 16 women managers of academic and non-academic university aspects whereby a heavy workload and long working hours adversely affected their management of work and life roles, but my study found interesting data that the precarious nature of contracts and lower value placed on teaching jobs also impacted teaching staff's work experiences.

4.3 Theme Three: A Support Network

4.3.1 Domestic Helpers (paid help)

Participants mentioned that having a support network of domestic helpers, whether part-time or full-time, helped them manage work and other aspects of life well. A domestic helper was particularly important for participants that had young children since the helper could cook for the children, clean the home and look after them. For example, Annie said: "It makes a huge difference to have a helper…she cooks and cleans and picks up the kids from school" (teaching staff, with children). Agnes said: "I have a Philippine helper that helps with the housework, cooking, shopping and … that is how I managed to organise my work and non-work roles" (teaching staff, with children).

One distinct feature in HK is that hiring full-time domestic helpers is relatively inexpensive (UK$450 pounds) (GovHK, Hiring Foreign Domestic Helpers, 2018), enabling greater management or control over career work, and women do not need to sacrifice their careers to accommodate their other half's careers, which diverges from Hyman and Baldry's (2011) study, who found that women software professionals in five Scottish companies were more likely to engage in part-time work, or view their career as less important when compared to women with no children. It is suggested that men in HK prefer their wives to work full-time because financial well-being is of integral importance (Lu et al., 2012; Westwood et al., 1999) and there is a perception that full-time jobs are more prestigious than part-time jobs in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016). Academic and teaching staff in HK have the economic resources to hire a domestic helper, freeing more time for other aspects of life. My study is one of few to explore the importance of paid domestic support in helping female academics navigate their work and life outside work experiences.

However, four out of five participants with children acknowledged that they were often expected by their family and husbands to shoulder the main responsibility of looking after children, which is aligned with the findings of Charles and Harris (2007), so therefore, with a domestic helper, relief was provided for physically demanding household chores such as cleaning, washing, laundry, and grocery shopping. Participants spent a considerable amount of time with their children, offering them emotional support, teaching and bonding with them

when compared with their husbands. This is consistent with the literature (e.g. Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012) that women in HK tend to look after children due to gender-based notions whereby women are expected to do more for the household as opposed to men, and women who focus too much on their career might be criticised for not taking care of their children (Gutek, 1993). For participants who were untenured academic staff with young children, it was more stressful to manage different roles effectively. Doris commented:

> I feel so tired having to look after my daughter when I am home. I can't really focus on my research because she keeps interrupting me but I don't want to turn her away… (academic staff, untenured, with children)

Annie said: "I often have to leave office early cos I need to look after the kids and … usually cut back on my sleeping time to save time...and my interests." Doris also said: "Since I had my child, I stopped going to conferences to present my research – I don't want to be away from my daughter". This resonates with Pocock's (2005) and Thomas and Davies' (2002) studies that managing work and life was difficult for women and imposed a huge cost on women who took time to focus on home-caring responsibilities. This finding also aligns with Warren's (2010) study that women reduce their time spent on leisure so that they can focus more on childcare/caring.

An interesting finding was that the emphasis on teaching children by participants reflected the focus placed on learning and education in Chinese culture. The Confucian ideology underpins the education system in Hong Kong and an individual should serve as an ideal role model (Ngai and Singh, 2018). Important virtues such as compassion and respect have to be fostered through self-reflection and practice (Luk Fong, 2001) while the role of education is to help cultivate moral values (Li, 2005). This could have made participants more willing to spend time with their children, teaching them values. As mentioned by Doris, Agnes and Annie, who had children under six years of age, instilling important values through interacting and reading with children, and teaching them social behaviour were of utmost importance while skills like English language, science and math could be learnt later.

Domestic help reduced participants' routine household duties such as grocery shopping, washing, laundry and cleaning but participants prioritised tasks such as training the domestic helper and childcare including teaching. Husbands often withdrew from these duties of teaching children and supervising helpers. Thus, the impact of domestic help on the gendered division of housework tended to perpetuate existing gender inequalities whereby participants had to do the bulk of domestic duties (see also Cheung and Choi, 2013). Anderson (2000) also suggests that poor, working-class women from third world countries hired as domestic helpers are given the cleaning and caring work and this reinforces the gendered, class and racial inequalities. Lee (2002) adds that traditional gender ideology in HK and a patriarchal family structure impact the allocation of childcare and household duties. For participants without children, they explained that a domestic helper could help with household chores including cleaning and cooking, which saved time and put less stress on them. Christy said: "My helper comes once a week and cleans the whole place…otherwise, it is in a mess and my husband gets upset" (teaching staff, married).

4.3.2 Role of the Husband/Partner

Participants, who were married or cohabited, highlighted the important role played by their husbands/partners in helping them fulfill their work and life outside work roles. Their husbands/partners, professionals in different fields, partly performed the feminised role of gender by looking after children, playing with them, doing grocery shopping and some household chores like vacuuming the floor, when needed. For example, Annie commented: "My husband does a lot for the family – he works and also looks after the children, and taking them to hospital" (teaching staff, with children). Julie said:

> I remember when I studied PhD, the kids were still small. But I still had to finish the thesis…at that time, I did have some struggles and negotiations with my husband. But luckily, he's quite supportive. So he will take them out to the park or go somewhere for a few hours and give me some quiet time to do my work. (academic staff, tenured, with children)

Polly said:

> The main difficulties I had occurred when my daughter was younger and I would have to rely a lot on my husband and full-time domestic helper to take care of her … My husband had a job which only involved working possibly 12 hours a week so we managed and he managed to keep everything going smoothly. (teaching staff, with children)

It appears that there is a changing role performed by the husbands of professional women which is inconsistent with studies on the masculine notion of a man as a traditional breadwinner (Byron, 2005; Pocock, 2005), since the husbands/partners of participants were more willing to help them take care of children. Care was described as negotiated. Although women had to shoulder the bulk of these responsibilities, men were often willing to help, when asked to do so although they did not proactively help. However, it has to be stressed that men needed to be nudged by their wives before they helped, and they often just performed one or two duties rather than the whole set of duties involved in the task. For example, fathers might play with their children but women were expected to look after children when they were sick and teach them. The husbands also needed to be given details (e.g. what to say to the doctor). The illuminating finding that men were willing to help might be attributed to changes in people's mindset in HK culture which tends to be pragmatic, and that work could be perceived as important for the family's financial security (Lu et al., 2012; Westwood et al., 1999), and men might not want their wives to quit their jobs due to domestic responsibilities. Westwood et al. (1999) add that work in HK is viewed as instrumental as it offers the means to contribute to the family's material needs and making an economic contribution is viewed as important. From my participants' accounts, it seemed that men shouldered some domestic responsibilities although their involvement was much less than their wives.

4.3.3 Role of Superiors/Leaders

The support from the superior/leader in the workplace was highlighted by participants in helping them have positive experiences of work and life outside work. The role performed by the boss ranged from reducing the administrative workload of staff, giving extra leave or time off from work for staff to attend school functions of children or looking after children when necessary, taking care of family matters, and offering moral support. For example, Polly mentioned:

> When my daughter was small, my head allowed me to leave early on Fridays, and when my parents died, he supported me and told me to put my family first and he took care of everything else so I think when you're working in a supportive environment that does make all the difference…(teaching staff, with children)

Annie mentioned: *"I had to miss the markers' meeting to attend my son's Christmas party at school – it was his first party and I didn't want to miss it… I'm really grateful to my boss"* (teaching staff, with children). The findings suggest that a supportive boss who accommodated staff was likely to bring about positive experiences of work and life. French et al. (2018) distinguish organisational support in the form of a supportive supervisor as significant in reducing work-family conflict. My findings resonate with Pocock et al.'s (2008) study, who found that high-salaried male employees on a secure contract with domestic support and a good boss who accommodates workers, are likely to have more positive work and life experiences, in comparison to low-paid workers on a temporary contract with an unsympathetic boss. Although Pocock et al. (2008) studied male employees, my study suggests that supervisory support helped to reduce the impact of gender on work practices such that women academic and teaching staff were better able to have more positive experiences of work and life outside work.

In summary, regarding the support network, paid domestic help allowed participants to manage multiple roles more effectively. Forster's (2001) study, which relied on interviews with married academic women at a U.K. university, found women's primary responsibility of childcare duties was a barrier to their career prospects. As such, domestic help serves an

important function in the HK context in particular for untenured academic staff with children who have to constantly conduct research to have career progression. Having a supportive superior also enabled participants in this respect because the superior could alleviate the workload when necessary. However, untenured academic staff participants mentioned that child-caring duties reduced their time spent on research to a certain extent, thereby confirming that the nature of contract impacted participants' experiences of work and life. A similar finding was noted in Misra et al.'s (2012) study at a North American university which found that mothers with children spent less time on research to fulfill other commitments such as teaching, service to the university and family tasks, but these researchers did not specify the nature of the contract.

4.4. Theme Four: Experiences Outside of Work

4.4.1 Personal Hobbies/Interests

With regard to experiences outside of work, participants pointed out a variety of leisure experiences that were important. Firstly, they mentioned about taking up a hobby or interest that allowed them to relax and subsequently manage work and other aspects of life better. For example, participants played video and board games and handball, went hiking, diving or to the gym, and did yoga so as to relax. Some played a musical instrument such as violin, performed in Cantonese opera or wrote stories to relax. Participants reflected that when they were busy such as during peak marking times or grant application periods, they sacrificed the time spent on hobbies. Ivy said:

> I love playing board games and video games to relax…. Exercising is one thing that I really like to do and really I'm only able to do that two or three times a week… I tell myself I have to exercise or else I'll fall sick easily. (teaching staff, single)

As Pocock (2005) argues, in the Australian context, work intensification and long working hours have impacted personal life including leisure activities. In a similar vein, participants in my study indicated that they often spent less time than expected on their hobbies/interests due to the increased workload. For example, Agnes said:

I do still have yoga once a week but find it too difficult to get to the gym. I did go to the gym for several years twice a week but sometimes I was too busy with work to go, so decided that it was better to end the membership... (teaching staff, with children)

Claire said: "I lost many of my interests like playing the guzheng (i.e. a traditional Chinese plucked string musical instrument), reading books…because of the workload. The workload will only be heavier and heavier" (teaching staff, single). Katie also mentioned: "I have to give up on my own hobbies and personal interests. I'll just wait until I get older to pick up some hobbies again. Right now work is taking up most of my time. Even if you don't want to work that much, you have to. Others are working to death" (academic staff, untenured, married).

People in HK tend to adhere to a diffuse culture, consistent with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's (2012) study in which life roles are integrated/mixed instead of separated and thus, people in HK often regard work as more important than leisure and contributing to family well-being (Westwood et al., 1999). This could explain why leisure activities such as hobbies were given a lower priority. Overall, the findings suggest that the work culture in HE impacted participants' life outside work experiences.

4.4.2 Childcare, Eldercare and Household Roles

Participants with children and elderly parents mentioned that care roles were critical in life outside work. For example, Annie said:

I take care of my kids – I do arts and crafts with them and read stories to them… My kids are my top priority. I teach them to do homework and revise with them. (teaching staff, with children)

Doris said:

I have a helper but she just cooks and does the cleaning and a bit of looking after my daughter. I have the flexibility of staying home four days a week and take care of my kid. I play with her, teach her and take her out. My husband is busy with his job and just watches TV with my daughter in the evening. This is hardly educational! He's

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too tired. I have to do most of the caring… Other people with kids can also be successful in their careers so I should work harder…(academic staff, untenured, with children)

Participants with children expressed unhappiness or guilt when they were unable to spend as much time as they had desired with their children. For example, Doris said, "My workload is so heavy…the meetings are endless. I feel bad for not being there for my kid"; Polly said: "I felt that I missed out a lot of typical mother-daughter activities because I was busy with work"; Annie said: "I feel bad …not taking my son to the school bus and getting him ready in the morning because I need to go to work." Doris also said: *"I cut back on my leisure time, socialising and sleep time to do everything…I work harder too."* These findings resonate with other studies (e.g. Acker and Armenti, 2004; Collins, 2019; Groves and Lui, 2012; Santos, 2015). Westwood and Leung's (1999) study of HK women managers also recognised their guilt when they spent less time with children. As Warren (2010) notes, the second, third and fourth shifts (Hochschild, 1997; Venn et al., 2008) were performed by women, reducing their time spent on leisure.

Concerning eldercare, most participants with part-time or full-time paid domestic help said that their parents could manage on their own thereby limiting need in this respect. However, there is a cultural expectation that children should look after parents and the elderly in Chinese culture (Liu and Cheung, 2015; Yim et al., 2011), so participants spent time with their parents such as visiting them on weekends, taking them out, doing activities like hiking with them, and accompanying them for follow-up medical appointments. For example, Elsa said: "I take my parents on a holiday trip in summer and try to spend more time with them…they're getting old" (teaching staff, single). Six participants expressed that their parents were aware that they were very much immersed in their work, so they were accommodating of their daughters. For example, Julie said:

My parents know I have to look after my children, collaborate with other universities, do community work and my research…, so they never complain I don't spend enough time with them…(academic staff, tenured, with children)

Participants also mentioned the importance of household chores, particularly cooking. They felt that home-cooked meals were not only more nutritious but enhanced family bonding and relationships. They felt that they should do some household duties even though their spouses were willing to help and underlying this, was a social expectation by their spouses/partners that they should perform these roles. The role of cooking and planning the grocery list of what to buy often fell on participants although their spouses helped with household chores such as grocery shopping. For example, Christy said: "my husband really enjoys home-cooked meals but he doesn't like to cook himself and then if I have time, I'd cook" (teaching staff, married). It is found in Cheung and Lui's (2017) and Groves and Lui's (2012) research that women are often responsible for most housework duties and parenting but my study reveals a novel finding whereby men were willing to help their professional wives even in HK, and this could have fostered better life outside work experiences.

Overall, participants with children had to bear most duties involved in the parenting role rather than their spouses and this resonates with Cheung and Lui's (2017) and Xiao and Cooke's (2012) studies. Paid domestic help was useful for childcare but participants' roles as mothers led to guilt for not devoting enough time to their children when they prioritised academic work. Time spent on eldercare was relatively less as the elderly parents had the availability of at least part-time domestic help while they were accommodating of participants' work, which saved the latter's time. The findings underscore the role played by paid domestic help and accommodating elderly parents in enabling participants to have positive experiences of life outside work. The findings suggest that participants were expected to be a good wife, a cook, a mother, a daughter and a career-minded teacher/academic or a 'superwoman' similar to Francesco and Shaffer's (2009) view of successful working women in HK and Lee's (2003) study on women lawyers in HK who managed their career and family well and tolerated everything rather than viewing their workplace as oppressive. When participants with part-time domestic help were unable to fulfill any household roles, they felt that it was their individual failure to prioritise the tasks well rather than blaming it on the institutional expectations. This finding is partially consistent with Toffoletti and Starr's (2016) study on women academics in an Australian university, who viewed that managing their work and life was their own responsibility without putting the blame on the institution although in their study, the notion of choice was

important. Yet in my study, participants' choices were constrained by the traditional cultural gender notions of unpaid domestic work, particularly childcare and cooking, that rested on women's shoulders.

4.4.3 Personal and Professional Development

Participants noted that they enjoyed professional development that helped them improve their skills in teaching and research and further their career prospects by undertaking a PhD. Elsa said: "I do see myself as a teacher and that's why I'm very keen on professional development" (teaching staff, single). Participants joined teacher development workshops and conferences in summer or when they were less busy, wrote and were published. The workshops and conferences enabled them to exchange ideas with others and keep abreast of the latest developments in their fields. Research done also made participants feel that they were useful to society and students. Since professional development was often relevant to the job nature of participants, they believed that it helped them manage their work and life experiences more effectively.

Three teaching staff participants mentioned that because of the heavy workload, they relinquished the thought of studying a doctorate degree. They thought that the degree would benefit their career but could not afford the time with their workload and family responsibilities. As Ivy said: *"I'm thinking of getting married…having kids…I feel stressed …I don't possibly think I can do my PhD study..."* (teaching staff, single). Both teaching staff Yvonne and Elsa also said that it would be beneficial to obtain a PhD so that they could obtain a promotion since they felt that their jobs were becoming more demanding and insecure, but they mentioned that they did not have the time to undertake PhD studies. Polly, a married teaching staff, who was undertaking her doctorate said, "ever since I started this research project… at work, I have not been able to really finish my doctorate because of the amount of work that I've had to put into it…"

This reflects that the heavy workload was impacting participants' life outside work experiences. Five participants engaged in personal development by learning new skills through taking courses in music (e.g. violin), painting, calligraphy and Cantonese. Yet it was found that tenured academic staff were more likely and better able to undertake personal and

professional development as they did not have to keep producing research output, similar to a study showing that tenured staff had better family life outside work (O'Laughlin and Bischoff, 2005), whereas research occupied untenured academic staff's full time. This again shows that the nature of contract for academic staff had a significant impact on their life outside work experiences. Teaching staff were able to undertake personal and professional development especially in summer. However, those with children preferred to spend more time with their children than opting for personal development. For example, Annie said: "I need to look after my children after work…I don't have time for personal development …but that's fine…" (teaching staff, with children).

4.4.4 Socialising with Friends

Participants mentioned the importance of socialising with friends as a means of allowing them to take their minds off work and relax on weekends. This included shopping, going to the cinema with friends, attending concerts and sports functions or just meeting them for a meal. However, participants referred to sacrificing time spent with their friends during heavy workload periods. For example, they chose not to attend a friend reunion, dinner or party rather than face work distraction. Furthermore, not only can workload be attributed as affecting life outside work experiences but participants with children and eldercare duties reduced leisure time, in conjunction with prioritising such commitments alongside their contracts (Granrose, 2010; Warren, 2004).

Six participants also indicated that their friends' circle was expanded to include people in their teaching and research field and practitioners in the workplace, which is aligned with Jahoda's (1982) view that work performs a function in personal and social life. For example, Maya, an untenured academic staff, indicated that socialising with journalists in the community gave her meaningful and new experiences, which helped her improve her work performance. Doris presented a similar view:

> Some public relations practitioners in companies have become my friends and we
> have a mutually beneficial relationship …they're invited to give lectures to our
> students and promote our programme... (academic staff, untenured, with children)

This could be explained by the diffuse culture (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012) of HK whereby work and life roles are mixed rather than separated and therefore, participants tended to consider work as partially connected with life. In general, for the theme of experiences outside of work, engaging in a hobby, undertaking professional development in the form of attending courses, and socialising with friends allowed participants to relax, derive personal fulfillment and satisfaction, and bring meaning to their lives.

In summarising all the findings, a sense of strong professional identity was evident in the interviews and the blurring of work and life domains was not a source of significant distress given the flexibility in participants' jobs, and the interpersonal relationships cultivated in the workplace were appreciated. In addition, work intensification in HK HE was confirmed from participants' accounts with large workloads (e.g. Woodward, 2007), long work hours (e.g. Doherty and Manfredi, 2006; Gill, 2012; Kinman and Jones, 2008b), and insecure contracts (e.g. Loveday, 2018; Waters and Bardoel, 2006) outlined. Academic staff showed a willingness to tolerate the worsening conditions because of the respect and social status accorded to the teaching/academic profession (Ren and Caudle, 2016), the sense of ownership and personal achievement tied to research work as well as the autonomy and creativity offered in their jobs, but for a few teaching staff, work intensification and extensification and a lack of recognition for their contributions had a detrimental impact on their work identity and they thought of quitting their job.

A noteworthy finding was the importance of paid domestic help in the HK context in helping participants navigate work and other commitments, particularly for those with children and elderly parents. Yet women were still expected to assume some family duties such as looking after children and teaching them when they had time. The support provided by spouses/partners and superiors (French et al., 2018) played a crucial role in affecting life outside work experiences.

Another pertinent finding was that the precarious nature of contracts for academic and teaching staff had a major impact on participants' life outside work experiences. Tenured academic staff felt that they had positive life outside work experiences because they had more time for hobbies, whereas untenured academic staff described themselves as tirelessly working on their research almost every day to have better career prospects, undermining their

life outside work experiences in the process. Teaching staff, who taught longer hours, more students and a larger number of different courses, expressed very negative experiences of life outside work. This suggests that a certain level of workload imposed on staff beyond a reasonable amount would negatively impact staff's experiences. Lastly, participants noted that life experiences such as professional development and childcare facilitated better organisation, efficiency and multi-tasking (Peng et al., 2011), permitting improved productivity and leisure opportunities.

In the next chapter, a summary of the salient themes is presented and linked with the literature. This is followed by the contributions of my study, practical implications for the HE sector in HK, and the limitations of my study with suggestions for further research.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter aims to interpret participants' experiences through an exploration of the salient themes that were embedded in their accounts. The aim is to obtain a rich understanding of participants' work and life outside work experiences and identify any unknown factors that were related to these experiences.

My study, based on a thematic analysis of qualitative in-depth interviews held with women academic and teaching staff in HK HE, is concerned with these two research questions:

1). "How do women academic and teaching staff in HE institutions in HK view the notion of 'work'?

2) "What are their experiences of work and life outside work under the trend of marketisation of education in HK?"

In answering research question one, it was found that five key themes permeated participants' responses. Work was not viewed in one particular way but rather all academic staff and most teaching staff viewed it in a positive light, enabling them to have a professional work identity, a sense of calling, opportunities for interpersonal relationships with colleagues, establishment of professional networks, engagement in the community, and flexibility. Warhurst et al. (2008) indicated that work can bring self-fulfillment and satisfaction, and my study expanded on their idea as to how work is viewed by women academic and teaching staff in the HK HE context. Work was not just viewed as paid work but included aspects such as community engagement and interpersonal relationships, which brought satisfaction. Participants who viewed work as comprising of these themes had more positive experiences of work and even though this involved working long hours, they found their work to be fulfilling. These findings contribute to Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) emphasis on examining individuals' conception of work which affects their work-life

experiences in that for these researchers, they found that those who viewed work as consisting of not just individual work but meetings/collaboration had more positive experiences of work. Representing work and life boundaries as blurred where different roles intruded into other spheres of life/work and portraying this as not a significant concern for the HK HE participants was also found in my study, which could be explained by the strong professional identity of participants, the nature of academic work, and their attitudes to education in Chinese culture that will be explained in section 5.1.3. The implications are that given that work encompasses a number of aspects, it could potentially further increase the workload of participants, giving them less time for other areas of life. This will also be elaborated in the implications section.

Regarding research question two, it was found that the HK HE culture is characterised by a considerable rise in workload, less job security, longer work hours, increased monitoring, and higher expectations of staff. Work intensification and the way work is organised as suggested by Warhurst et al. (2008) has impacted academic and teaching staff's life outside work experiences in my study in that they are constantly under pressure to produce more publications and perform more service respectively. With a two-tiered approach to staffing which consists of tenured staff and untenured/short-term contract staff, a strong sense of job insecurity is instilled in untenured/contract staff participants which they address by sacrificing time spent on other areas in life such as childcare/eldercare and domestic duties, personal development, socialising, and hobbies/interests so that they could spend more time on research and service. The structural context is crucial as noted by Warhurst et al. (2008) and my findings build on their work by suggesting that the precarious nature of contracts considerably affected untenured staff's other areas of life, the implications of which will be elaborated in section 5.2. My study also adds to Warhurst et al.'s (2008) views in that it was found that structural constraints such as socio-cultural and traditional gendered role expectations affected participants' work and life outside work experiences. Untenured/contract participants persisted despite the adverse work conditions due to the Confucian cultural values underpinning Chinese culture that place emphasis on work, persistence and long-term orientation (Lu et al., 2015; Xiao and Cooke, 2012). However, an over-emphasis on work with little time for leisure and other aspects of life could have implications for health as well as adversely affect satisfaction with life. Some participants in

my study mentioned that they felt tired, stressed and had illnesses, which were related to their heavy workloads and job insecurity. This aligns with studies that have found that academics with fixed term contracts experienced anxiety about not meeting the required performance standards (Leathwood and Read, 2013; Loveday, 2018; Read and Leathwood, 2018).

Resources allowed participants to hire paid domestic help to help them manage their experiences but participants were still expected by their husbands/partners to shoulder domestic responsibilities such as childcare. Tenured staff tended to have a variety of life outside work experiences. My study adds to Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) emphasis on exploring employees' work attitudes since cultural values seemed to influence participants' work and life outside work experiences, while a support network of paid domestic help, a supportive husband/partner and superior/leader fostered more positive experiences of work and life outside work. My contribution to the body of knowledge on work-life experiences lies in the fact that I had these delved into life outside work experiences as consisting of not only childcare/eldercare, but rather other important aspects, and separated teaching and tenured/untenured(contract) academic staff, exploring their varied experiences. With this refined classification, it is seen that the HE culture has affected them in slightly different ways.

Since my study was underpinned by Warhurst et al.'s (2008) ideas on work-life patterns shaped by work practices, structural constraints and lifestyles, I was able to add to a detailed understanding of these aspects for academic and teaching staff. In particular, theme two that emerged from my data is related to work practices (e.g. heavier workloads; job insecurity) while lifestyle is exhibited in theme 4 (other areas of life) and theme 1 (views towards work). Structural constraints (e.g. employment relationships; gendered role expectations; economic and social resources) are exhibited in themes 1e, 2, 3 and 4b. As for Fangel and Aalokke (2008) who suggested that individuals' view towards work should be explored, my study did so and these views towards work are exhibited in theme 1, underpinned by socio-cultural expectations. My study elucidated the ideas proposed by the above scholars and the relationships between work practices, structural constraints and views towards work. My study also contributes to the literature on work and life outside work experiences by finding

that traditional gendered role expectations and Confucian values affected participants' work and life experiences. In this chapter, an interpretation of the salient themes followed by the contributions and the implications for HK HE will be presented. Then, the limitations and suggestions for future research will be explained.

5.1 Salient Themes

5.1.1 The Notion of 'Work' Experiences and Manifestations of Professional Identity

My study provides rich data on the 'work' experiences of academic and teaching staff with some pertinent differences between these groups. Participants with academic rank viewed work as defining their identity professionally and consisting of the contribution made to students and knowledge, with a sense of personal achievement and ownership related to research output. This brought them purpose, meaning and satisfaction. The intellectual novel discovery and professionalism aligned with the core values that Davies and Peterson (2005a) had found. Job insecurity was mentioned particularly by untenured academic staff, who felt they had to keep publishing to earn a promotion. Yet the precariousness of contracts and the fact that it was almost impossible to attain a tenured job did not undermine most participants' professional identity. They spoke of being deeply attached to their jobs. The results are consistent with studies that confirmed the professional identity of academic staff was strong among U.K. research and teaching staff (Bryson, 2004) and Australian academics (McInnis, 2000) even with higher job insecurity and work intensification.

However, teaching staff who taught 18-22 contact hours per week without recognition from their superiors, lacked this professional identity. They detested HE culture and thought of quitting their jobs; in fact, one quit her job two months after I had interviewed her. They had worked in the HE institution for over four years and perceived that the culture was worsening with work intensification and extensification and believed they could easily obtain teaching jobs in other institutions given the good labour market conditions. This supports Warhurst et al.'s (2008) view that the workplace and structural constraints have to be examined and work intensification beyond a certain limit can demoralize staff. Research has shown that work intensification, long working hours, limited resources, poor leadership and lack of recognition generate stress and anxiety in academics (e.g. Currie et al., 2002; Doherty and

Manfredi, 2006; Loveday, 2018; Woodward, 2007). This has implications for HE since the heavy workloads induce stress and prompt withdrawal from the university, resulting in talent loss and ultimately, higher costs in recruitment and training. Unless workload intensification is resolved, it is unlikely that staff, especially teaching staff, will have a strong professional identity. Also, excessive attachment to work with few opportunities for detachment from work could have health implications (Kinman, 2016).

Six out of fifteen participants thought academic work also gave them a life purpose, was a noble calling and a call to serve god, congruent with Barcan's (2018) and Gill's (2009) studies. A sense of calling arises from a religious context and is a process through which God destines that a person should do a job that suits his/her talent (Luther, 1883, cited in Hagmeier and Abele, 2012) while some scholars (e.g. Hall and Chandler, 2005) view calling as a subjective experience or how work is related to one's purpose in life. My participants adhered to these notions but it has to be acknowledged that 'a calling' is a multifaceted term as indicated by Hagmaier and Abele (2012), giving grounds for greater clarification. My findings, however, diverged from Barcan's (2018) study of academics from different countries since most participants did not feel disillusioned amid the changes in HE (e.g. work intensification); only a few teaching staff who had an excessively heavy workload, long working hours and insecure contracts felt disillusioned. Most participants just tolerated the changes, and thought that since they had chosen their profession, they had to persist. The teaching/academic profession is viewed as prestigious in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016) and Confucian values permeate the Chinese culture, stressing the importance of endurance and hard work (Lu et al., 2015). In this case, academic staff repeatedly exhibited their dedication to research in their accounts. However, as Hogan et al. (2002) and Davies and Peterson (2005a) found, heavy involvement in work with little disengagement from the job has health implications in terms of affecting one's psychological well-being and resulting in illness.

A salient finding was that helping students and the community was embedded in many participants' accounts. As Aiston (2014) found, women academics are more likely to have a professional duty to apply their knowledge to problems in society as opposed to male academics in HK HE. Obligation to serve others in their profession, by which teachers are

viewed highly in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016), may explain the determination communicated in the interviews. Female academics in my study were also willing to mentor colleagues; it is well-documented in research that female staff are likely to offer pastoral care in HE institutions (Bryon, 2005; Fenton, 2003). Successful academics spend their time researching instead of administrative, mentoring and teaching work (Ylijoki, 2013) and interview responses showed pastoral care was not always embraced as productive. It is likely though that HK conforms to traditional gender roles assuming women academics as performing the feminised role of mentoring their colleagues. This could also be explained by participants' notion of work as has been found in studies (e.g. Bryon, 2005; Fangel and Aalokke, 2008), which means that participants' conceptions of work could be rooted in their femininity which made them more likely to undertake pastoral care. Participants framed this in a way that it was linked positively to their affective experiences and community service.

The results that academic work for women in HK is fulfilling despite blurring of work and life boundaries are consistent with research in other countries (Barcan, 2018; Bryson, 2004; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006; Gill, 2009; Loveday, 2018). Participants with positive experiences of work and life integrated the two spheres well and viewed work as including not just teaching and research but also interaction and collaboration with others, similar to Fangel and Aalokke's (2008) studies. Previous research studies ascertain that work and life domains of academics are often integrated (Kinman and Jones, 2009; Kinman and Wray, 2013). Likewise, qualitative research of women academics from other countries by Beninger (2010) found that academics regarded work as crucial to their identity and did not make a distinction between their work and family life. However, a lack of distinction between work and personal life brought by being accessible to others through technology after work, can generate feelings of guilt and stress, as highlighted by Araujo (2008). Having discussed the theme of work, I now turn my attention to the second theme underpinning my study: work culture in HK's HE.

5.1.2 Work Culture in HK Higher Education

The HE sector in Asia is competitive with research performance measured and funding allocated accordingly (Deem et al., 2008). The situation is similar in HK especially after the introduction of the RAE (Aiston, 2014; Postiglione and Wang, 2009). Through my participants' accounts, it is evident that the HE culture involves long working hours, an increased workload, higher expectations of staff, a stronger audit culture, and very little job security, in accordance with research by scholars in other contexts (e.g. Barcan, 2013; Baron, 2014; Gill, 2014; Pereira, 2017). Work intensification and increased pressure to perform have an effect on life quality and well-being of employees (Kaiser et al., 2011; Roberts, 2007; Warhurst et al., 2008). Research has also shown that auditing has a detrimental effect on academic identity and morale (Archer, 2008) and found a negative impact of RAE on teaching and motivation (e.g. Henkel, 2000; Sikes, 2005), while overload and stress lead to depression, reduced morale, productivity, turnover intention and absenteeism (Duxbury and Higgins, 1994). Loveday (2018) found that academics experienced anxiety particularly due to the insecure nature of contracts.

Prior research has confirmed that long working hours is the norm in HE for academics (Menzies and Newson, 2007) and academics experience increasing work demands (e.g. Acker and Armenti, 2004; Deem, 2003a; 2003b; Kinman and Jones, 2008b; Ylijoki, 2008). This has been found in the U.K. (Gornall and Salisbury, 2012), Norway (Kyvik, 2013), Australia (McInnis, 2000) and Canada (Acker and Armenti, 2004). Ylijoki and Mantyla (2003) contend that new criteria for funding and from management puts additional pressure on academics while Acker and Armenti (2004) argue that the main strategy of female academics with children is sacrificing sleep in order to complete work. Other researchers (e.g. Gill, 2014; Waring, 2013) have suggested that the audit, output and monitoring culture place pressure on academics while Warhurst et al. (2008) found that work intensification affected work and life experiences.

All participants' accounts revealed that they are required to do more service, teach more classes, publish more and gain more grants. The situation is more worrisome for untenured

academic staff who have to publish in top-tier journals and obtain grants before their contracts are renewed, which sometimes is beyond their control as research ideas take time to come to fruition, resulting in heavy stress. Aiston and Jung (2015) add that academic women spent 10-17% more time on teaching compared with their male counterparts in HK and thus, they were disadvantaged in terms of research output, but research is imperative over administration, pastoral care and teaching in HE in HK, similar to the U.K. (Heijstra et al., 2013). As Ylijoki (2013) revealed, real work is considered as research and teaching while unnecessary work such as competing for grants and paperwork imposed by management creates undue stress. In Currie et al.'s (2000) research on Australian academics, it was found they made sacrifices in their family, social activities, and leisure to survive in HE. Similarly, participants did this by cutting back on interests, socializing, personal development, and domestic duties.

A noteworthy finding is that the precarious nature of contracts (e.g. see Bal et al., 2014; Gill, 2014; Loveday, 2018) made participants feel insecure except for two tenured participants. Tenureship in HK HE academic posts is difficult to attain and relies on promotion to professorial roles. Obtaining a regular or continuous contract which was not tenureship was also demanding in terms of criteria. All teaching staff are contractually employed and higher expectations are imposed by management. The far-reaching implications for the HE sector are that these contracts induce stress in staff and may reduce productivity and increase absenteeism. Prior studies of academics in Australia show that long hours and increased work demands have a negative impact on health and absenteeism in families (Pocock, 2003) and on workers (Probert et al., 2000). Staff turnover intentions may rise, resulting in a loss of talent and a generalised perception among the public that HE is not worth entering as a profession because it is a stressful and insecure field. In the Times Higher Education 2016 University Workplace survey (cited in Times Higher Education Supplement, 2017), 64% of about 1400 academics thought of their job as fulfilling but 39% wanted to quit their job due to adverse health effects and spending too much time on work. In fact, participants on the teaching track with an excessive teaching load of 18-22 contact hours a week coupled with a lack of recognition from management had very negative experiences of work and HE culture, and mentioned they would resign. Should turnover intentions among academics rise,

HE institutions' sustainable knowledge production would be harmed (Times Higher Education Supplement, 2017).

All participants recognised adverse conditions in their jobs but their work culture described can be labelled as one of persistence. They persisted and given the strong sense of ownership and achievement associated with research work, participants, who were academic staff, tolerated these changes. Participants did feel anxious and under pressure of failing to meet the quantified targets for performance of their institution (Leathwood and Read, 2013) but continued regardless. As Bagilhole (1994) found, women academics in the U.K. used strategies to cope with the workload: working harder, identifying with male academics, and collective action. In my study, women worked harder by getting up earlier and going to bed late and reducing their time spent on hobbies and socialising. They also prearranged tasks similar to Billot's (2010) view that academics have some autonomy to manage their roles through prioritising. Collective action was not evident due to the competitive culture in HE and lack of a tradition of strong labour unions in HK. This persistence and tolerance among participants can also be explained by the prestigious nature of academic/teaching jobs in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016) and Chinese values that are underpinned by Confucianism, which emphasises the importance of perseverance (Lu et al., 2015; Yim et al., 2011). This is further explained in the following section.

5.1.3 Attitudes to Education in Chinese Culture

There is a strong association between perceived status and types of employment in Chinese culture with academics and teaching staff being viewed as holding high-status jobs (Ren and Caudle, 2016). HK's economic and educational systems are based on western principles (Fu and Shaffer, 2001) but HK is also heavily influenced by Confucianism (King and Bond, 1985) which stresses conflict-free social relations or harmony and the observance of position in the social hierarchy while people view work as more important to the family financial well-being than leisure (Redding, 1993). This has implications for participants who were willing to tolerate the increased workload and worsening conditions with associated adverse health (Kaiser et al., 2011; Warhurst et al., 2008) in view of long-term career benefits.

It is suggested that cultural factors need to be taken into account in explaining work and life issues in the Chinese context (Ling and Powell, 2001; Ren and Foster, 2011). Chinese staff at universities downplay work-life conflict and view work as more important than family as this reflects the culturally instilled work ethic (Choi, 2008; Cooke and Jing, 2009; Redding, 1993; Xiao and Cooke, 2012). Confucian work values have a significant influence on Chinese employees' work attitudes (Xie et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2014). Confucianism is embedded in the HK education system and six out of eight UGC-funded universities have embodied values such as *ren* (humanity and compassion) into their mottos (Ngai and Singh, 2018). Lu et al. (2015) put forward the Chinese work value (CWV) as a Confucian value which comprises long-term orientation, collectivism, hard work, persistence, authoritarianism, reputation and guanxi (i.e. importance placed on relationships) and this CWV came about from the Chinese Values Survey (Hofstede and Bond, 1988), and those with higher CWV work harder to show their superiors that work is most important to them (Lu et al., 2015). The precariousness of employment contracts could have made participants more focused on work performance and take on more work too (Davis, 1999). Participants might also have taken responsibility for their research outputs and performance by associating it with "academic survival" (Sullivan and Simon, 2014, p.206). Prior research (e.g. Spector et al., 2007) found that the Chinese focus more on their family than work, and in my study, participants managed various work and life tasks in such a way that they prioritised them and created extra time for tasks they regarded as valuable such as teaching their children and cooking, while other physically laborious tasks like cleaning and laundry were outsourced to domestic helpers. Evidence of this was given in my participants' responses.

A distinct finding that participants prioritised their tasks by spending more time on teaching children further shows the importance of education and learning in Chinese culture. Confucianism forms the core of Chinese culture and influences all aspects of social life (Yim et al., 2011). Chinese parents believe that skills in life have to be developed along with moral and personal virtues to enable one to transform into an ideal person (Bond, 2010; Hue, 2007; Li, 2005). Participants very often spent time instilling values and confidence in children and teaching them social behaviour rather than subjects like math. As Lawler (2000) also noted,

a mother should develop her child's self-identity and participants seemed to be focusing more on this.

5.1.4 Availability of Affordable Domestic Help in HK

A unique theme that emerged was the availability of paid domestic help, either part-time or full-time, to assist participants in performing household chores and looking after children and elderly parents, thereby allowing participants to work full-time. For such full-time employees in HK, a live-in domestic helper is affordable (Groves and Lui, 2012). Despite the availability of paid domestic help, it was mainly used for physically demanding work like cleaning and washing, similar to what Choi and Ting (2009) and Anderson (2000) had found. Participants thought of domestic helpers as just providing basic childcare - taking the child to school and bathing him/her with extensive care still needed from the mother (Groves and Lui, 2012; Xiao and Cooke, 2012). They taught the domestic helpers how to look after their children. The socio-cultural norm in HK is that women are expected to bear the major responsibility for childcare and domestic work (Cheung and Choi, 2013; Cheung and Lui, 2017; Groves and Lui, 2012; Lui, 2013). The gendered division of household labour in the household is apparent in HK and most families do not have egalitarian household duties (Cheung and Lui, 2017). Anderson (2000) even suggested that hiring domestic helpers reinforces gendered, classed and racialised roles since these helpers often come from poor, working-class families.

Participants, especially untenured academic staff, who could afford to work from home due to higher flexibility, expressed that childcare meant that they had to sacrifice their leisure, sleep, conferences, socializing with friends, and sometimes even their research. Some had to do research at odd hours at night when their children were asleep. This is consistent with Granrose's (2010) finding that women reduce time spent on leisure to create more time for their family. Aiston's (2014) research on academic women in HK HE found that although they were less likely to be tenured, published less, obtained less external funding, and spent more time on teaching, care duties did not adversely impact their research output, so this suggests that domestic help and spouse/partner support or the way participants managed various roles could have only alleviated their care obligations to a small extent. The tension that participants faced between work and taking care of children (Chan, 2005) was more

salient for those with younger children (i.e. three participants) because more time had to be spent looking after them. When they could not spend as much time as they would have desired with their children, they felt guilty or upset, which aligns with studies (e.g. Collins, 2019; Groves and Lui, 2012; Pocock, 2003; Santos, 2015).

5.1.5 A Support Network of Husband/Partner and Superiors/Leaders

Notably, my study provides an illuminating finding that all husbands/partners were willing to help participants with childcare and household chores when requested and given clear instructions on what to do. This departs from the literature on the traditional masculine conception of men as mainly providing for their family without performing other roles (Bryon, 2005; Pocock, 2005; Thomas and Davies, 2002). This can be attributed to men preferring their wives to work full-time as financial security and a good living standard are vital in HK (Lu et al., 2012; Westwood et al., 1999) and the perception that full-time work is viewed as more valuable than part-time work in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016). Yet participants still had to do the lion's share of work regarding childcare although their husbands were willing to or kind enough to help. This implies that it is women's responsibility to look after children and perform domestic labour and most men do not view these duties as their responsibility. This resonates with Charles and Harris' (2007) and Charles and James' (2005) study that women's choices are constrained by gendered role expectations.

The importance of superiors'/leaders' support in the form of giving participants time off from work allowed them to manage various roles better and subsequently have better work and life outside work experiences. This is consistent with studies (e.g. French et al., 2018; Pocock et al., 2008) that a supportive boss is likely to bring about better work and life experiences.

5.1.6 Notion of Life Experiences Outside of Work

Most prior studies on experiences outside work just focus on caring or childcare as determined by Eikhof et al. (2007). Ungerson and Yeandle (2005) classify sleep, relationships, leisure and self-care as personal time that should be separated from caring and work responsibilities. Life experiences outside work were framed by participants as important experiences which brought meaning and fulfillment to their lives. My study

expands our understanding of the notion of 'life outside work experiences' by including aspects such as childcare, housework, eldercare, taking up a hobby/interest, undertaking professional and personal development, and socialising with friends. Warren (2010) believes leisure should be studied in work-life issues since it can enhance understanding of what 'life' in reality constitutes. Isles (2004) and Eikhof et al. (2007) stressed that the reason men and women in the U.K. desire fewer work hours was not to spend more time with their children and friends (each at 21%) but rather to have an increased amount of leisure time (45%).

However, work intensification meant that participants were spending less time on such activities when they were busy with research, administration and teaching. Participants' accounts reflected both the work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) and work-family enrichment perspectives (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) in that for the former, they described remorse that conducting research or marking limited time spent on their hobbies, household duties, and personal development, reflecting the presence of both time- and strain-based conflict. Participants with children spent more time on childcare, resulting in a significant loss of leisure. This is consistent with Warren (2010) who found that part-time working women in 12 countries in Europe and Britain used non-paid time to perform caring and childcare. The second, third and fourth shifts of work were done by these women (Hochschild, 1997; Venn et al., 2008) which affected their time spent on leisure and lowered their satisfaction with the leisure time they had. On the other hand, ten participants expressed that by performing multiple roles such as work, family, childcare and eldercare, they had become more well-organised and productive, thus lending support to the work-family enrichment perspective whereby one work role enhances performance in another family or life outside work role (Crosby, 1991; Rothbard, 2001). Participants mentioned that they had learnt to multi-task and be efficient through managing work and other aspects of life (Peng et al., 2011).

Studies have shown that women and men spend their free time differently (e.g. Rafnsdottir and Heijstra, 2013) and this freedom to spend time is linked with health, productivity, and stress outcomes. Women tend to spend more time on family duties as opposed to men and this reduces their time for leisure activities (Granrose, 2010; Rafnsdottir and Heijstra, 2013). This indeed resonates with my findings. In Warren's (2004) study, women included childcare

or domestic duties in leisure, thereby lowering their satisfaction with leisure. As Warren (2004, p.115) notes, "[f]eeling financially comfortable, and then having no children, were the most important and consistent ingredients of a satisfactory leisure domain", which in turn affected one's quality of life, and this view seems to hold true in my study.

Untenured academic participants spoke of not undertaking personal and professional development as most time was spent on producing research output (see also Acker and Armenti, 2004; Caretta et al., 2018; Gill, 2012). This precariousness of contracts hinders career progression (Berg et al., 2016). Career insecurity is high in HE because academics have little control over the achievements that are required for their careers and it takes time for a research idea to blossom into a journal article (Fox et al., 2011). The career insecurity makes academics unable to have good life outside work experiences since they work tirelessly, and other tasks in life such as socialising with friends are often relegated to a lower priority. Tenured academic staff were more likely to attend conferences. These staff seemed to have integrated their work with lifestyle as suggested by Murger (1988, cited in Warhurst et al., 2008) since they engaged in practices such as community service and personal development that were intertwined with their beliefs of the importance of their work, thus bringing them satisfaction. My research is also consistent with findings that those with tenure can be more engaged with their families outside work (e.g. O'Laughlin and Bischoff, 2005). Mixed responses were gleaned from the teaching staff interviewees who expressed both improved life outside work experiences as well as detriments from their jobs. For example, a few teaching staff with an excessively heavy workload and a lack of support from management hardly had any time to engage in life outside work experiences.

5.1.7 Persistence of Traditional Gender Roles: Women's Multiple Roles (Expectations of a 'Superwoman')

It is documented that "cultural expectations about what is appropriate gender-specific behavior can limit the range of options available to women and how they negotiate those options" (Damaske, 2011, p.170). Such expectations refer to rules that women are expected to follow in society. Although HK is a modern society with many women working full-time and contributing financially to their family, childcare and home responsibilities continue to fall mainly on women based on Cheung and Lui's (2017) and Groves and Lui's (2012)

studies whereby traditional gender division of labour notions are maintained. Ren and Caudle (2006) found that Chinese male academics focused more on work than their family whereas Chinese female academics placed more emphasis on their family. This has resulted in a career gap as women fall behind their male counterparts in research output given their family duties (Acker and Armenti, 2004; Currie et al., 2000; Zhang et al., 2001).

Notably, almost all participants were expected by their family/spouse/partner/boss to perform multiple roles flawlessly including being a wife/partner, a mother, a homemaker, and a successful academic/teaching staff. This expectation of them to be a 'superwoman' (Lee, 2003) means that the various roles they perform will necessarily conflict with each other (Raddon, 2002) in terms of allocation of time or encroaching of one role on another role (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). They can only perform the roles of paid and unpaid worker by increasing their overall working hours or cutting back on sleep (Acker and Armenti, 2004). These women feel guilty and upset for not prioritising their children first when they work long hours (Raddon, 2002), which is expected under the HE culture. Yet participants still persist and tolerate this due to traditional gender expectations with respect to division of labour in the household in HK (Westwood and Leung, 1999) and the high status accorded to teaching/academic jobs in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016).

The above section has critically reviewed the salient findings and integrated them with the literature. In the following section, the contributions of my study and practical implications are elaborated.

5.2 Contributions and Practical Implications

This study contributes to our understanding of the research literature on women academic and teaching staff's work and life outside work experiences by way of an in-depth exploration. The study is novel since it is one of few to provide insights into the above in HK HE and the findings are informative. Prior research on work-life issues in HE has been conducted mainly in Anglo-American (e.g. Fox et al., 2011; Kinman and Jones, 2008a, 2008b) and Australian (e.g. Bell et al., 2012) contexts. The transferability of the results of such studies to the HK context is limited because the academic systems in various cultures vary greatly, for example, with respect to the number of tenured positions, career mobility,

and teaching loads. The socio-cultural conditions vary too, which constrain the choices that women can make. My study suggests that cultural, familial and gender role expectations affect participants' work and life experiences. My research provides evidence that the HE sector is competitive and this is impinging on women academic and teaching staff's work and life outside work experiences.

In particular, the precarious nature of contracts is a major issue but despite this, eleven participants had a strong professional work identity, and tolerated the changes and did not think of quitting their jobs. The high status of academic/teaching jobs in Chinese culture (Ren and Caudle, 2016), the importance of financial security for the well-being of the family (Lu et al., 2012; Westwood et al., 1999), and the value placed on persistence which is rooted in Confucianism (Lu et al., 2015) have been outlined as reasons for participants' views of work. A sense of security is important when planning for the future (Bourdieu, 2000) and this may have shaped the work and life outside experiences of participants particularly those with children, who were expected to perform multiple 'superwomen' roles by managing home, work, life and children well (Lee, 2003). Although they were often aided by their spouses/partners or paid domestic help, the women in this study constructed themselves as successful academics in the ideal of the masculine worker model (Leathwood, 2013) fulfilling the requirements of long working hours while also managing household duties and childcare efficiently. This research took a unique approach in using thematic analysis to explore the work and life outside work experiences of female staff. From a pragmatic perspective, I have offered an in-depth understanding of the possible construction of a professional identity among women. Extended value is therefore given to academic and teaching staff and senior management.

Research has shown that work-family conflict can affect employees and has been associated with a lack of commitment, absenteeism and turnover (Eby et al., 2005; Wayne et al., 2013), and reduced job performance (Odle-Dusseau, et al., 2012). This conflict can result in psychological distress, job dissatisfaction, deterioration of health and human resource problems in HE (Currie et al., 2000; Kinman and Jones, 2009; Sallee and Lester, 2017; Wayne et al., 2013). Some participants in my study mentioned that they felt tired, anxious, and stressed and had illnesses, which were related to their heavy workload. Loveday's (2018)

study found that academics working on fixed-term contracts in U.K. higher education institutions were anxious that their effort to build their academic career might be in vain due to their inability to adapt to the demanding work environment. The anxiety brought by the highly performance-oriented culture affects staff's self-confidence and professional identity, leading to anxiety about not meeting the performance requirements set by the institution (Leathwood and Read, 2013; Loveday, 2018; Read and Leathwood, 2018), and this anxiety was also evident in participants' accounts in my study. Further, heavy attachment to work hinders detachment from work achieved by engaging in family life and leisure (Querstret and Cropley, 2012).

With regard to implications for practice and policy, at the HE sector level, insights are needed into how academic work creates conflicts between work and other aspects of life and how this impacts recovery as well as the implications for personal functioning (Kinman, 2016). The knowledge obtained regarding this could allow the adoption of certain working conditions that will help staff better manage work and life (Kinman, 2016). At the institutional level, HE institutions should set up committees to examine the work culture and how it is impacting staff (Kinman, 2016), and provide some measures such as more teaching relief and holidays for staff. Policies are needed to help women academics balance the demands of their work and lives so as to improve retention. More in-depth knowledge needs to be collected and examined on the culture of individual institutions such as the policies available and their acceptability to staff. The work culture should be supportive for staff to be willing to use these policies as research found that an unsupportive work culture discourages staff from doing so (e.g. Raabe, 1997; Thompson et al., 1999). Also, superiors' support is crucial in helping staff manage their work and life and the research suggests that autonomy, fair treatment and respect from superiors can reduce the negative impacts brought by a heavy workload on academics' lives (Kinman, 2014), so HE institutions should create a culture like this. Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2003, p.113) also warn of the impacts that HE practices might have on women due to "the simple logistics of age, the biological clock, the tenure clock, the physical demands of pregnancy and childbirth, the gendered expectations of family obligations", which means much more support should be provided to women.

In terms of practical implications, to attract and retain women academic and teaching staff, who bring a competitive advantage to HE (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006), HE institutions are advised to offer more career mobility in the form of more tenure-track positions or longer-term contracts with more positions of a higher rank. Improved transparency of the routes towards tenure with details stating the number of publications and grants required (Armenti, 2004) would facilitate competence, limit resource waste and instability. Accurate, effective assessments of performance based on teaching, research and service rather than focusing predominantly on research could lead to higher rates of job satisfaction or positive work views. As Park (1996) notes, research is often valued while teaching and service are undervalued, but teaching and service can help build the university's reputation in the community. The constant need to publish can hinder creative endeavours and lead to short-term thinking and instrumental knowledge (Hassan, 2003; Read and Leathwood, 2018). HE institutions uphold advancement of knowledge, so putting pressure on staff to publish a lot within a short time stifles their creativity. In addition, in line with Hewlett and Luce's (2006) study showing that appreciation of professionals' work is important, teaching staff should be recognised for their contribution. With excessive workload, turnover intentions may increase, posing a threat to HE institutions' sustainable knowledge production in the future (Times Higher Education Supplement, 2017).

HE institutions should also allocate mentoring and pastoral care duties to both male and female academics to foster a more equitable work environment. Without properly supporting pastoral care, the quality of student university experiences will be undermined (Haynes and Fearfull, 2008). Based on Aiston and Jung's study (2015), women academics in HK spent 10-17% more time on teaching than men and combined with the current findings, recommendations that institutions should aim to allocate teaching workloads more fairly in order not to disadvantage certain groups are justified. More transparency in the allocation of workloads is needed and committees should be set up to resist "increasingly marketised, metric-driven, masculine academic culture" (Haynes and Fearfull, 2008, p.198). Staff should be provided with a mentor who can guide them to progress in their careers and the work done by the mentor should be counted in performance appraisals.

The challenges for women who need to perform childcare and the gendered nature of HE institutions as observed in this study imply an equitable workplace is lacking (Sallee and Lester, 2017). As such, HE institutions should provide childcare services/options such as a daycare nursery or an onsite child care centre and the Human Resources Department should adopt a variety of flexible arrangements to help staff have better work and life experiences. They can establish policies such as paid family leave for looking after children when they are sick. Caring responsibilities involve many emergencies such as children falling sick (Woodward, 2007), so institutions should try to accommodate staff with such duties. Incentives such as paternity leave (Tam, 1999) would encourage men to be more involved with childcare. At the individual level, HE staff should be provided with more flexibility regarding how integrated they want their work and home lives to be and what policies they prefer to use to meet their individual needs (Kinman, 2016). Outcomes of policies such as paid parental leave, a reduction in teaching load and tenure clock extensions should be measured to determine whether they are effective (Sallee and Lester, 2017).

If there are to be meaningful changes in paid work, there will also need to be changes in the cultures and gendering of parenting. The home, leisure and family lives remain gendered, so changes in the roles that men play at home are important, particularly the role of men in parenting. The implications are that husbands should shoulder more responsibility for family duties such as childcare and support their wives to supplement the help provided by domestic helpers. Eikhof et al.'s (2007) assertion that men share an equal number of responsibilities with women might take many years to materialise in HK but this study has shown husbands/partners are willing to help when asked. Men's shouldering of childcare would enable women to have more leisure, which is important according to Warren (2004).

My study would benefit senior management and policy-makers in HE studying work and life outside work experiences such that their awareness could be raised with regards to how staff view the HE culture and how this impacts their work-life experiences. Senior management can connect with female staff to identify their needs and listen to their concerns genuinely so as to retain talent, enhance productivity, and minimise stress and anxiety in staff. Managing work and life outside work is a fluid concept requiring negotiation between the employer and the spouse/family (Woodward, 2007). There is indeed no fixed solution to enabling all

women academic and teaching staff to have the best work and life experiences.

5.3 Conclusion, Limitations and Further Research

My study shows that the dynamics of work and life are complex and inter-related including many aspects such as attitudes towards work, different life outside work experiences and the support network, underpinned by socio-cultural factors and gendered role expectations, and affected by workplace practices and structural constraints. The existing research on work-life has primarily focused on work-life conflict and separated work and life into distinct domains, assuming that work does not necessarily reap positive benefits in life (Eikhof et al., 2007). With regard to theoretical contributions, my study filled this gap by illustrating that for academic and teaching staff, this view is unrealistic since the boundaries between work and life outside work are porous due to their nature of work, career ambitions and the high status accorded to the academic/teaching profession in Chinese culture; work is also tied to a professional identity, giving them fulfillment. Williams (2000a) argues that the ideal worker who works over 40 hours a week excludes most mothers, but my study found that women in HK are able to take on different roles such as being a mother, a career-minded academic/teacher, a dutiful daughter, and a wife/partner and still do well due to the support network of paid domestic help, their spouse/partner and their ability to prioritise tasks, multi-task and persist. The negative experiences of work and life outside work of some teaching staff were brought by the organisation of work (e.g. work intensification and extensification), lack of recognition and the precarious nature of contracts.

Given the scarcity of research on work and life experiences and the notion of work in HK HE with most research conducted in the U.K., U.S.A., Sweden, and Australia, my study provides unique insights into this topic. In addition, existing studies on HE in other countries (i.e. Barcan, 2018; Bergman and Gardiner, 2007; Bryson, 2004; McInnis, 2000; Read and Leathwood, 2018; Santos, 2015) have not explored a wide range of factors in combination including social (e.g. a support network of domestic helpers), workplace practices (e.g. workloads; working hours), structural constraints (e.g. individuals' social and cultural resources; expectations imposed by the workplace; employment relationship; flexibility offered), and individual factors (i.e. views towards work and other aspects of life) that can impact work and life experiences. By exploring different aspects, my study offers a holistic

understanding of the complex interplay between work and life outside work experiences, the diverse ways in which such experiences are defined, and other factors that enable management of multiple experiences. Extant literature has defined work and life issues as complex encompassing different meanings for different people (e.g. Barcan, 2018; Santos, 2015). Individuals' perceptions of work and life outside work are contingent on many factors including their personal attitudes, family responsibilities, professional identity, and social, and cultural factors (Warhurst et al., 2008). In drawing attention to the view of work by participants in HK, underpinned by their social-cultural expectations related to gendered division of labour, the importance placed on teaching children and holding a teaching/academic job as well as financial security in Chinese culture, my study contributes to the literature and sheds light on the various factors linked to work and life outside work experiences in the HK HE context.

My research makes distinctive contributions to the body of knowledge on work and life experiences of women academic and teaching staff by providing insights and data to support the finding that HE in HK is witnessing work intensification, extensification and considerable job insecurity and is, therefore, timely. Second, it expands the notion of life outside work experiences to include other aspects beyond parenting/childcare. Third, it contributes to the body of knowledge on the different ways in which work is viewed or attitudes towards work, and thus has moved beyond WLB conceptualisations that view work as generating conflict with family roles. The notion of work encompasses other aspects such as professional networks, interpersonal relationships and community engagement rather than just being viewed as salaried work. My study highlights variations in terms of the way tenured and untenured academic and contract teaching female staff view these changes in HE. Fourth, my study shows which other factors (e.g. support network) facilitate or hinder the management of various experiences, underpinned by socio-cultural expectations. Women still adhere to traditional gender-defined roles although they are assisted by their husband/partner and can easily rely on paid domestic help. When conflicts between the performance of multiple roles occurred, women would adopt coping strategies such as reducing sleep, time spent on eldercare, leisure activities, socialising, and personal development. The challenges faced by women academic and teaching staff are delineated in my study showing the importance of exploring individual work and life outside work

experiences. With this knowledge, more effective work practices, interventions and support systems can be adopted by HE institutions to enable staff to better manage multiple roles.

As Eby et al. (2005) claim, an objective characteristic of work and life outside work roles cannot capture the range of inherent complexity. I have endeavoured to pinpoint the influences of work practices and structural constraints (Warhurst et al., 2008), together with individuals' attitudes and values towards work (Fangel and Aalokke, 2008). My thesis contribution lies in being able to expand on the ideas suggested by these researchers by exploring the variety of work-life experiences and their interrelationships and how participants navigated work and other areas of life with the use of paid domestic help, their spouses/partners, and working more efficiently. I was able to add to and elucidate these researchers' ideas and how they are manifested in the workplace. My conclusion is that a holistic grasp of the workplace, structural constraints, labour market, socio-cultural and gendered role expectations, as well as individual notions of work is required to understand the work-life experiences of professionals in different occupations.

In terms of the limitations of my study, since it was based on a relatively small sample of 15 participants from two HE institutions, caution should be exercised in generalising the findings to other HE institutions in HK or elsewhere. A longitudinal study would be helpful with regards to offering a more in-depth understanding of the various variables examined in this study. Also, as an insider of the research, participants may have withheld information from me or not expressed their genuine thoughts in interviews. The interpretation and analysis of the qualitative data could be a subjective process because I had to sift through the data by employing a personal lens (Creswell, 2014), but I used the six steps of thematic analysis to guide my analysis and reduce bias.

Concerning further research, because my study explores only views towards work rather than the whole range of factors subsumed under lifestyles, future studies could examine lifestyle preferences, and consumption patterns and views on standards of living (Eikhof et al., 2007; Ransome, 2005) to provide more insights into life outside work experiences. It might be worth exploring the work-life issues of staff from different faculties in HK HE as Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2015) and Sallee (2014) found disciplinary differences related to nature of work in that staff from humanities could manage work and other aspects of life better

through not being confined to a job location while those focusing on STEM were place-bound because they needed to work in the lab. More research into the work-life experiences of different staff members according to race, ethnic groups, religion, and sexuality could be conducted (Sallee and Lester, 2017) in HK since most participants in my study were HK Chinese. Other methodologies such as discourse analysis could be used to obtain the nuances of a small number of participants' lives and examine the use of language regarding work and life (Sallee and Lester, 2017). Moreover, the theoretical implications of the findings are that future studies should offer a theoretical framework on how to incorporate various aspects of work and life to facilitate the interpretation of findings. To do so, concepts such as workplace practices, structural constraints and views towards work would need to be operationalised. Indeed, HE research can benefit from theory building rather than solely theory application (Eisenhardt, 1989). In sum, my study serves as a springboard for studies and theory building on the interplay between work and life outside work in the future. My study also paves the way to scrutinise the work and life outside work experiences in the form of a qualitative study involving a cross-comparison of a larger number of HE institutions from a variety of countries. A study could be done on how the employment of women from third world countries to perform paid domestic help reinforces the gendered role expectations and inequalities in terms of class and race.

To conclude, my study provides rich, qualitative evidence to enhance understanding of the complex range referred to in work and life outside work experiences of women academic and teaching staff. Greater understanding of work and life issues in HE could help reduce the stress experienced by academics, thereby stimulating their productivity and satisfaction as well as reducing staff turnover. My study contributes to the body of knowledge on work and life outside work experiences by elucidating and explicating the ideas of researchers such as Warhurst et al. (2008) and Fangel and Aalokke (2008), the contractual inter-relationships as well as other socio-cultural (e.g. gendered role expectations and Confucian values) and

support network factors that enable or restrain women academic and teaching staff from managing their experiences in the HK HE sector.

Appendix A

Work Log/Weekly Diary

WEEKLY DIARY

Please record all tasks that you completed for 7 days.
(e.g. attending a meeting; teaching; conducting research; attending a conference; marking assignments; invigilating, having consultations with students, looking after children/parents;

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
8:00 AM	Sample: 1. Attending a meeting 2. Teaching 3. Conducing research						
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
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9:00 PM							
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11:00 PM							
12:00 AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							

Appendix B

Topic Guide

The following questions will guide the data-gathering process and please note that there are no right or wrong answers. Probing questions and other more in-depth questions will be asked throughout the interview to solicit answers.

Opening Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
2. Can you tell me about your job?
3. Can you tell me a bit about your family?
4. Tell me more about…(probing questions)

Interview Questions about Higher Education

5. Did you experience any changes in working hours? Have you ever felt that you were pressured by time? What is the impact on you? How do you manage it?
6. What changes have you observed with respect to the security of jobs at the university? How does this affect your work and life outside work experiences? How do you want this to be different?
7. What changes have you observed in terms of monitoring of staff performance at the university (e.g. focus on obtaining research funding, league tables, student evaluations)? How does this affect your work and life outside work experiences?
8. How has your workload (e.g. heavy or light) affected your work and life outside work experiences? How do you want this to be different?
9. How has the increased use of mobile technology (e.g. smartphones) affected your work and life outside work experiences? How do you want this to be different?
10. How do other work practices at the university affect your work and life outside work experiences?
11. Tell me more about…(probing questions)

Interview Questions about Work

12. How do you define 'work'?

13. Can you tell me what a typical 'work day' involves now?

14. Can you tell me how different a typical work day is during semester time?

15. How often is work fulfilling apart from allowing you to make a living? How does this affect your work and life outside work experiences?

16. What are you aspiring to in terms of your career/work? Why?

17. Tell me more about…(probing questions)

Interview Questions about Other Aspects of Life

18. Do you have childcare or other care responsibilities? How does this affect your work and life outside work experiences?

19. What are your other roles in life apart from work and family roles (e.g. community role, social role)? How often do these roles conflict with each other? What is your experience of reconciling these different roles? How do you manage these roles? Give a specific example.

20. Many people often talk about work-life balance. What does work-life balance mean to you? Give a specific example.

21. How important is work-life balance to you?

22. What are your priorities or goals in life? How does this affect your work and life outside work experiences?

23. How do you deal with work and life outside work experiences clashes?

24. Have you ever not been able to fulfill work responsibilities?

Can you tell me about a time when you were not able to fulfill work responsibilities due to interference with family and other duties?

25. Have you ever not been able to fulfill family duties?

Can you tell me about a time when you were not able to fulfill family and other responsibilities due to interference with work duties?

26. Do you feel that your work duties help you in the performance of family and other duties and vice versa? Give a specific example.

Coding Tree

Four Main Themes

1. **Experiences of Paid Work**
    i. work as a professional identity
    ii. work as a calling
    iii. interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students
    iv. establishing professional networks and community engagement
    v. flexibility

2. **Work Culture/Practices in Hong Kong Higher Education**
    a. Workload
        i. Teaching
        ii. Research
        iii. Administrative/Service duties
    b. staff monitoring
    c. job security
    d. working hours
    e. expectations of staff

3. **Support Network**

    a. Family

        i. Domestic helpers (paid help)

        ii. Husband/Partner

    b. Work

   i. Superiors/Leaders

4. Experiences Outside of Work
  a. personal hobbies/interests
  b. childcare, eldercare and household roles
  c. personal and professional development
  d. socialising with friends

Appendix D

Exemplifications of the Three Other Themes

1. Label: Work Culture in HK Higher Education

Definition:
The way female teaching and academic staff think about the HE culture.
Indicators:
Mentioning anything about workload (e.g. providing more service and doing more administrative work); monitoring of staff; insecurity of jobs or the precarious nature of contracts; working hours; expectations of staff (e.g. obtaining higher teaching evaluations).
Exclusion:
Experiences in family and unpaid work are not coded.
Examples:
"there has been a dramatic increase in workload" – (increased/heavy workload)
"I was surprised that we had to document all our tasks done in detail in the annual activity report to show what we had done in summer" - (increased monitoring of staff)
"Job security was always an issue – we are sometimes told that our contracts will not be renewed" – (insecurity of jobs)
"During the semester, life is hectic. I have to mark assignments within three weeks…I have to work on weekends…I have to sacrifice time spent with my family" – (long working hours)
"My boss expects me to teach, do research and take on lots of administrative tasks. Actually, I am a researcher but I still need to do plenty of admin work" - (higher expectations of staff)
Differentiation:
T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 showed it.

2a. Label: Support Network: Role of Domestic Helpers (Paid Help)

Definition: The way female teaching and academic staff think about how domestic helpers can/cannot ease their workload/save their time for household chores or looking after children.
Indicators: Mentioning that domestic helpers assist them in managing their work and life better because the helpers perform household chores or look after children.
Exclusion: Experiences of paid work are not coded.
Examples: "I get a domestic helper to clean my apartment once a week…this saves me time" "When my daughter was younger, we always had a Philippine domestic helper and have always had a helper in our home."
Differentiation: T1, 3 and 4 mentioned it; T2 and 5 did not.

2b. Label: Support Network: Role of the Husband/Partner

Definition: The way female teaching and academic staff perceive how their spouse/partner can or cannot ease their workload at home.
Indicators: Mentioning that the husband/partner helps or does not help with household chores/cooking/childcare or does not expect much from staff members.
Exclusion: Experiences of paid work are not coded.
Examples: "My husband would help with household chores and cooking." "My husband has recently retired so he is also assigned certain duties to do at home."
Differentiation: T1, 2, 3, 5 showed it; T4 did not.

2c. Label: Support Network: Role of a Supportive Boss/Superior/Leader

Definition:
The way female teaching and academic staff perceive how their bosses/superiors support or do not support them at work and hence give them more/less time for other aspects of life.
Indicators:
Mentioning that the boss/superior provides or does not provide support when there is a need to focus on other aspects of life.
Exclusion:
Experiences of paid work are not coded.
Examples:
"My boss has been very sympathetic towards our colleagues especially when my parents died and he really just supported me and told me to put my family first and he took care of everything else, so I think when you're working in a supportive environment, then that does make all the difference."
Differentiation: T1 and T4 showed it; T2, 3 and 5 did not.

3. Label: Experiences Outside of Work

Definition:
The way female teaching and academic staff think about important experiences in life that are personally fulfilling and spend time on them.
Indicators:
Taking up a hobby that is fulfilling (e.g. playing video games); performing household roles voluntarily (e.g. cooking, etc.) and childcare and eldercare; engaging in personal and professional development; socialising with friends.
Exclusion:
Anything related to paid work.
Examples:
"I love playing board games and video games to relax" – (taking up an interest or a hobby)

"I would love to do more cooking at home and kind of share the home responsibilities with my husband but because I'm so busy at work, I don't have time to do that" – (performing household roles voluntarily)
"I look after my kids and teach them arts and crafts" - (performing childcare)
"I meet some friends on Friday evenings and Saturdays just to chill out" – (socialising with friends)
"I am a researcher and keep up with research in my field by attending conferences and signing up for workshops" – (professional development)
Differentiation: T1, 2, 3, 4 showed it; T5 did not.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR PARTICIPANT

Full Title of Doctorate of Social Sciences Research Project:

The conceptions of work life experiences of academic and teaching female staff in higher education in Hong Kong

Name and Position of Researcher:

Rita Singh, Doctorate of Social Sciences student

University of Leicester

Please circle your answer:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.   YES   NO

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.   YES   NO

3. I agree to participate in the above study.   YES   NO

4. I agree to keeping a diary of activities that I complete for a week.   YES   NO

5. I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.   YES   NO

6. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in the write-up of the results in the thesis.   YES   NO

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name of Researcher: Rita Singh

Signature: _____

Participation Information Sheet

Full Title of Doctorate of Social Sciences Research Project:

The conceptions of work life experiences of academic and teaching female staff in higher education in Hong Kong

Name, Position and Address of Researcher:

Rita Singh, Doctorate of Social Sciences student

University of Leicester

You are invited to take part in the above research study. Before deciding whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it involves. Please do take the time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of my study is to uncover the process of the conception of work and its influence on the work life experiences of academic and teaching female staff in higher education (HE) in Hong Kong. This research will shed more light on the conceptions of work and life experiences in HE in Hong Kong. This will be done by asking participants to keep a diary for a week as to how they spend their time on work and other tasks and this will be followed by interviews with participants to probe into the details as revealed by the diary. The interviews will be audio-taped with participants' consent. If participants do not want to be audio-taped, notes will be jotted down during the interviews only.

In the 7-day diary, participants should record activities such as the following:

a). work activities (e.g. writing a journal paper, designing materials, writing a grant proposal);

b). personal activities (e.g. hiking with friends, watching a movie);

c). family duties (e.g. cooking, household chores);

d). community activities (e.g. going to the church, raising money for charity);

e). others (e.g. sleeping, relaxing at home)

What will happen if you take part?

You can decide on whether to take part in the study or not. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form and you will be invited to keep a diary of activities that you complete in a week as well as take part in a one-to-one interview. The interview will be audio-taped. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving any reason.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The primary benefit for you will be an opportunity for you to reflect in detail on your experiences of work and life in HE and the findings of the study have considerable implications for personal and professional development. While there will be a time commitment required from you, it is believed that the benefits resulting from your involvement in the study will outweigh the costs. A more in-depth understanding of the work and life experiences of female teaching and academic staff in HE is important for policy-makers, administrators and researchers in the HE sector. The research may help administrators and policy-makers adopt some policies or provide more support for staff members.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

There will be a time commitment involved on your behalf with regard to keeping a diary and the interview might last between 1 and 1.5 hours. Of course, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Will the information you provide be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept strictly confidential. To protect the anonymity of each participant, pseudonyms will be used to ensure that the participants cannot be identified. All

electronic data will be kept securely in password protected files on a non-shared computer and all paper documentation will be kept in locked cabinets. Data obtained through the study will be retained in accordance with the institution's policy on Academic Integrity and, therefore, will be kept safely in paper or electronic form for a period of five years after the completion of the research study. The audio-recording of the interviews will be used for transcription purpose only, and all data will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms, and all data will be destroyed within five years after the completion of the study.

What will happen to the results of the research?

All interview data will be transcribed and subject to participant validation where each participant will be provided with the transcription and account of the findings in order to check that the participant agrees with the researcher's interpretation of their work and life experiences. This data will then be used in a Doctorate of Social Sciences submission and may also be used for conference presentations. All participants will be able to have access to a copy of the published research on request.

Yours sincerely,

Rita Singh

Ethics Approval Letter

University Ethics Sub-Committee for School of Business

30/07/2018

Ethics Reference: 15831-rgs21-ss/bu:management&organisation

TO:

Name of Researcher Applicant: Rita Singh

Research Project Title: The conceptualization of work life experiences by teaching and academic staff at a university in Hong Kong

Dear Rita Singh,

RE: Ethics review of Research Study application

The University Ethics Sub-Committee for School of Business has reviewed and discussed the above application.

1.   Ethical opinion

The Sub-Committee grants ethical approval to the above research project on the basis described in the application form and supporting documentation, subject to the conditions specified below.

2.   Summary of ethics review discussion

The Committee noted the following issues:

Thank you for your application, which we can now approve. Please note that if your research design changes substantively you will need to revisit your ethical approval.

3.   General conditions of the ethical approval

The ethics approval is subject to the following general conditions being met prior to the start of the project:

As the Principal Investigator, you are expected to deliver the research project in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, which includes the University's Research Code of Conduct and the University's Research Ethics Policy.

If relevant, management permission or approval (gate keeper role) must be obtained from host organisation prior to the start of the study at the site concerned.

4.   Reporting requirements after ethical approval

You are expected to notify the Sub-Committee about:

- Significant amendments to the project
- Serious breaches of the protocol
- Annual progress reports
- Notifying the end of the study

5.   Use of application information

Details from your ethics application will be stored on the University Ethics Online System. With your permission, the Sub-Committee may wish to use parts of the application in an anonymised format for training or sharing best practice. Please let me know if you do not want the application details to be used in this manner.

Best wishes for the success of this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Chris Grocott

Chair

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