CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research study was to describe the roles and skills of the “manager-coach” as needed to optimise the achievement of work-life balance for the women they coach and lead.

This research therefore describes:

- the realities that working women face in achieving work-life balance
- what optimal work-life balance means,
- the manager-coach’s roles and the skills needed to optimise work-life balance, and
- the development areas that can be focused upon in the further development of manager-coaches.

1.2 Context of the study

Within the context of the changing world of work, working women of the 21st century face both opportunities and challenges in defining, structuring and optimising their role within the workplace. This role needs to successfully align with their values and life interests, their desire for work-life balance, their career aspirations and ultimately fulfil their sense of identity and bring meaning and happiness.

However, according to Boninelli (2004), working women in general need to deal with the stereotypes which still exist in the workplace and with the view that they will disrupt their career to care for their children and that they are not prepared to make the sacrifices that a senior level position requires in terms of stress, long hours and a lack of work-life balance.
In addition to coping with these stereotypes and perceptions, women experience intense role conflict and guilt (Gilbert, Holahan and Manning 1981) and are faced with particular challenges in achieving appropriate career advancement and progression, coupled with attaining adequate levels of work-life balance (Muna and Mansour 2009). Gilbert et al (1981) continue by stating that, depending on the working women’s career aspirations and the value she places on her career, aiming to balance a career and one’s maternal role can prove to be highly stressful and the conflict experienced is continual.

Within the context of competing for talent, skills shortages and high levels of unemployment, Peters (2003) refers to women as the best source of talent available for the future. Organisations then need to optimise the contribution of the women currently working within them and ensure that these women are able to achieve a level of work-life balance, if this is what they strive for, whilst meeting all of their role demands.

The roles and skills of the manager-coach in facilitating this process are explored in this research.

Increasing emphasis in organisations is placed on effective manager–employee relationships, the quality of leadership and leadership style, and personal development and growth as key retention techniques (Charan, Drotter and Noel 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2002). The manager-coach has a direct responsibility to the employees reporting to him or her and coaching employees is increasingly becoming a fundamental element of the manager’s role (Buys 2010; Ellinger, Hamlin and Beattie, 2008). In addition to this, the coaching leadership style outlined by Goleman et al (2002) emphasises the value of having robust conversations with employees, with the indication being that this leadership style results in a positive response and enhanced results.

Managing and leading women therefore requires insight and understanding to ensure that potential is optimised and that conflicts in role, time and expectations are addressed in ways that are beneficial to both working women and the organisation.

The question is whether organisations take cognisance of these role pressures. Do organisations put mechanisms in place to try and accommodate working women? Do organisations provide all the support they can to ensure that women are able to have the best career they want whilst still fulfilling their maternal responsibility? If organisations do,
what are the benefits? If organisations do not provide support and guidance, what are the consequences?

In this research, the coaching conversations which take place between the managers and working women in a chosen organisation have been explored with a view to describing the roles and skills of the manager-coach and how the achievement of work-life balance in working women can be optimised through these conversations. This research also provides guidelines for further development of manager-coaches so that the challenges faced by women can be more fully understood and supported in the future.

1.3 Problem statement

Women have an important role to play in the rapidly changing working world of the 21st century. According to Peters (2003), they bring a diversity of view and skill which can be hugely beneficial to the organisations in which they work. However, as reflected by Peens (2003 as cited in Boninelli 2004), women fill just over 10% of executive or senior management positions in South African organisations. Women are often expected to juggle multiple roles which results in conflict and stress and impacts on their work-life balance. As a result, retaining women in organisations is often a challenge. To enable the retention of these valuable resources, the role of the manager-coach is explored in this research. Buys (2010) states that manager-coaching is an essential element of a manager’s role. In this research, emphasis is therefore placed on the role that the manager-coach can take and the skills he or she can use to optimise the work-life balance of the women they work with, manage and lead. Whilst extensive research has been conducted on working women and work-life balance, and an increasingly amount of research into coaching is being done, little emphasis has recently been placed on the manager-coach. There is no research evident which explores the interaction between working women, work-life balance and the manager-coach. It is anticipated that, in exploring and understanding the interaction between these three factors and more fully understanding the development needs of manager-coaches, manager-coaches can then facilitate and optimise the achievement of work-life balance and, ultimately, retention.
1.3.1 Main problem

Based on this context, the problem statement for this research study is to:

Describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women.

1.3.2 Sub-problems

The first sub-problem is to describe the roles and skills of the manager-coach.

The second sub-problem is to describe what optimal work-life balance means.

The third sub-problem is to describe what the working woman’s reality is in attempting to achieve work-life balance.

1.4 Significance of the study

Firstly, the findings are important to the researcher, the academic institution, the researcher’s supervisor and the course director.

The coaching body of knowledge is contributed to as Grant (2010) indicates that whilst coaching was previously viewed as a mechanism of individual change, the role of coaching in enabling organisational change is now also emerging. Grant (2010) indicates that developing coaching skills in managers can facilitate organisational change.

This study places attention on the challenges that women in the workplace face in achieving work-life balance. Doherty (2004) believes that by assisting women achieve improved work-life balance their progression to senior management levels can be enabled.

The study therefore also contributes to the talent management body of knowledge in that women have a pivotal role to play in the leadership of organisations. Women have shown that they have the ability to lead but mechanisms that support workplace diversity must be encouraged and effective support to women leaders has to be provided (Cornish 2007). This is supported by Stout Rostron (2006) who indicates that women are still faced with...
organisations dominated by a male culture and they are required to deal with gender stereotypes and assumptions about their ability to contribute effectively at higher levels of the organisation. She goes on to state that the challenge for coaches is to deal with this gender stereotyping and assist women identify and move towards their career aspirations whilst coping with the problems they are confronted with in organisations.

Balancing the commitments of primary care giver and career is often difficult for women and is characterised by role conflict (Gilbert et al 1981) and a lack of work life balance (Muna and Mansour 2009). As attempts to address this conflict and achieve work-life balance take place within the organisational context and require organisational change, the involvement of the manager-coach in facilitating this process needs to be more fully understood. Understanding the influence of manager-coaching in assisting working women balance these conflicting roles resulting in enhanced organisational involvement would therefore add to the academic body of knowledge.

The study provides guidance to organisations in general and the selected organisation is particular. The findings are particularly important to the leaders and managers of this selected organisation as it enables them to more fully understand their role as coach, as part of their management and leadership style. The findings are also important to the People Development division of the selected organisation as this research will guide the design, implementation and evaluation of the next phase of manager-coach skills development and clarifies the support that must be provided.

Finally, women in the workplace can benefit from the enhanced levels of understanding their manager-coaches develop of the challenges they face in achieving work-life balance. The ideas generated on the manager-coach’s required roles and skills as needed to optimise levels of work-life balance in working women can be put into practice, tested and evaluated to determine their efficacy. The anticipated benefit is the enhanced retention of talented women in the workplace in positions that best suit their needs, values and aspirations.
1.5 Delimitations of the study

This research study is focused on an identified, selected organisation where all managers (junior, middle and senior) were trained as manager-coaches between July 2008 and October 2010. Approximately 60 managers have been trained. The study is therefore based exclusively on the experiences of a selection of these managers and the employees they coach. The focus of the research is on female employees and comparisons to male employees will not be made. The manager-coaches selected were all male, with the exception of one female manager-coach in the focus group.

Coaching within the chosen organisation takes place informally in the form of “Coffee Conversations”. The emphasis of these coaching “coffee” conversations is on individual growth and development, personal development plans, the individual’s aspirations, strengths and development areas, the strategy of the organisation and their division and the challenges they face within this context. Emphasis is also placed on continual constructive developmental and performance feedback. These conversations take place within the context of people development, with people development being a line responsibility.

A particular limitation of the manager-coach approach is the lack of flexibility in selecting a coach. Each manager is responsible for coaching his/her direct reports and any difficulties experienced in this relationship need to be addressed by the individuals involved. In rare instances a senior manager may be called upon to address difficulties.

A longitudinal approach was not adopted in this study.

1.6 Definition of terms

The following definitions are pertinent to this research study.

1.6.1 Manager-coach

Within the context of this research study, the term manager-coach refers to the coaching role that managers assume as part of their managerial role. In other words, the term makes
reference to the coaching relationship which exists between a manager and his/her direct reports/employees. Grant (2010:62 as adapted from Kilburg 1996) defines workplace coaching as “a helping relationship formed between an individual who has managerial or supervisory responsibility in an organisation and an employee, in which the manager or supervisor uses a wide variety of cognitive and behavioural techniques to enhance communication with the employee in order to help the employee achieve a mutually defined set of goals, with the aim of improving his or her work performance and, consequently, the effectiveness of the organisation.” Grant (2010) emphasises that manager-coaching forms part of the organisational change process.

This research refers to the manager-coach as distinct from the internal coach. The internal coach is described by Frisch (2001) as an employee in the same organisation who coaches colleagues as part of his or her responsibilities, with this coaching focusing on individual development. It is important to note that internal coaches are not the managers of those they coach.

For the purposes of this study, the term manager-coach is used although the literature uses the terms manager-coach and leader-coach interchangeably at times.

1.6.2 Employees

The term, employees, makes reference to the working women who are the coachees (or recipients of coaching) in the manager-coach relationship.

1.6.3 Work-life balance

Within the context of this research study, work-life balance refers to the ability to effectively balance work and personal life with a specific focus on family and career time and the roles and commitments that arise. Emphasis in this research is specifically placed on what can be done to optimise the achievement of work-life balance in working women. Emphasis has not been placed specifically on women leaders or mid-career women, but on women in general which may include women from these two groups but not to the exclusion of working women at other levels and stages of their careers. Emphasis has also not been placed on work-life balance for men. Grady and McCarthy (2008:601) define work-life balance “as a
process for reconciliation of work, family and individual self demands and time.” The focus of this study is not on the practical implementation of flexible policies and work-life balance approaches but rather on the challenges that working women face in achieving what they define as work-life balance.

1.7 Assumptions

- It was assumed that the sample was able and willing to share information on the roles and skills of the manager-coach based on their experiences within the selected organisation.

- It was assumed that the sample was able and willing to share information on the challenges that working women experience in achieving work-life balance and what, in their view, can be done to optimise its achievement.

- It was also assumed that the sample was willing to share their experiences which were likely to be personal in nature.

- The reason these assumptions were made is that the issues discussed were and are openly discussed within the selected sample organisation. Emphasis is placed on the well-being of individuals, their personal aspirations and activities that assist them to grow and develop, both personally and professionally. The issues that were discussed were therefore familiar to the sample. However, should any discomfort or hesitancy have arisen, this would have been explored and discussed with the respondent during the interview. No discomfort or hesitancy in respondents was experienced.

- It was assumed that the sample would understand the concepts of manager-coach and work-life balance. If respondents did not fully understand these concepts or the definitions of these concepts, as used in the research study, this was discussed with them at the onset of the interview. If it was determined by the interviewer that a respondent was not going to be able to respond to the interview questions, he/she would have been provided with the opportunity to excuse themselves from the sample. Whilst explanations were provided when necessary, no-one chose to excuse themselves from the interviews.
1.8 Structure of report

This research report includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduces and contextualises the research and details the purpose, context and significance of the study, whilst also outlining the delimitations, assumptions and definitions pertinent to this research.
- Chapter 2 introduces the literature review and details the contextual framework. Chapter 2 also provides a detailed review of the literature in the areas of manager-coaching, work-life balance and working women and outlines the three research questions to be answered in this research.
- Chapter 3 details the research methodology from a theoretical perspective as well as practically detailing how the research and analysis was carried out.
- Chapter 4 provides a detailed overview of the findings of the research based on the interviews conducted and the session with the focus group. These findings are presented per research question.
- Chapter 5 includes the analysis and discussion of these research findings, aligns the research findings to the literature review, makes inferences based upon this and reflects on the connections between the various results which emerged.
- Finally, chapter 6 concludes the research report, makes recommendations and provides suggestions for further research.
- The reference list can be found after chapter 6.
- The respondent letter, interview questions and transcripts form the appendixes.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The topic of this research study is structured around three core elements, namely the roles and skills of the manager-coach (sub-problem 1), what optimal work-life balance means (sub-problem 2) and the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance (sub-problem 3). There is not extensive literature available on the roles of the manager-coach, although this concept has been referred to often as part of studies on topics such as retention, leadership development, talent development and management, as well as coaching literature in general. The skills of the manager-coach are based upon the skills of the coach and are thus well documented. The concept of work-life balance and the role of the working woman have been extensively researched and are well documented. No studies which focus on these areas together, namely the manager-coach, work-life balance and women, have been found but again the link in the literature is seen when of the role of the manager and leader are discussed. There are however numerous studies on work-life balance and women.

The problem area, based upon the researcher’s workplace experience and the literature, is to describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women. Emanating from this are three sub-problems, namely to describe the roles and skills of the manager-coach, to describe what optimal work-life balance means and to describe what the working woman’s reality is in attempting to achieve work-life balance. These will be dealt with in sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 respectively.

The section will conclude with an overview of the key learning resulting from this literature review.
2.2 Conceptual Framework or Paradigm

The main research problem in this study is to describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women, with this being supported by three sub-problems:

- To describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills
- To describe what optimal work-life balance is
- To describe what the working woman’s realities are in attempting to achieve work-life balance

In order to fully explore each of these sub-problems and address the main research problem, an empirical, constructivist, interpretivist and descriptive conceptual framework was adopted.

In terms of empiricism, the study is based upon the qualitative experiences of working women and their respective manager-coaches. Particular regard was paid to their view of work-life balance, what this means for them, the challenges they experience in achieving work-life balance and what they feel can be done to optimise these work-life balance levels.

The roles and skills of the manager-coach and the relationship that these women have with their manager-coach as a potential optimiser of work-life balance levels were also thoroughly explored. This empirical data was used to develop the researcher’s understanding of what work-life balance means for women in the workplace, the challenges and realities they experience in attempting to achieve work-life balance and what they believe the manager-coach’s roles and skills to optimise this are. This understanding was supported by a review of the literature in understanding the concept, roles and skills of the manager-coach. Through the literature review, a thorough understanding of the concept of work-life balance and the challenges facing working women was also developed.

The study is constructivist and interpretivist in nature in that it is based on the premise that everyone has their own reality and individuals bring their own ideas, perceptions and reality to a situation. In addition to this, individuals’ ideas and perceptions are likely to differ from one another. Phillips (1995:5) indicates that “these days we do not believe that individuals come into the world with their cognitive data banks already pre-stocked with empirical
knowledge....Undoubtedly humans are born with some cognitive or epistemological equipment or potentialities but by and large human knowledge, and the criteria and methods we use in our inquiries, are all constructed.” Wilson and Cole (1991 as cited in Peel, 2005) indicate that constructivism requires that individuals actively direct their own learning as they attempt to deal with real world issues. In support of this, Peel (2005:22) states that “constructivism also argues that learning is affected by the interaction between individuals and their environments.”

As the focus is on describing the realities of a sample of individuals with a view to describing the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women, the research is therefore also descriptive in nature.

As the study is based on the qualitative experiences of the respondents, objectivity and reliability cannot be entirely assured.

2.3 Background discussion

To comprehensively research the main research problem “to describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women” it is necessary to understand the context of the current working world.

It was estimated, as at 2001, that approximately 31 million to 55 million Americans had ‘non-traditional jobs’. Lifetime employment is gone, secure employment with large organisations is no longer an option, the average career will consist of two or three ‘occupations’ with at least six employers and most individuals will be self-employed at some stage in their career. As a result, our relationship with work is changing fundamentally (Peters 2003).

Where previously the employee gave loyalty, conformity and commitment to an organisation and received secure employment and the possibility of promotion in return, the development of a broad range of skills, striving for flexibility and being rewarded for performance is now the focus (Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk 2008). The power in organisations has shifted from employers to employees – employees are now an organisation’s greatest investors, rather than their greatest asset and these individuals will look at what the organisation is worth to them (Gatherer and Craig 2010). Peters (2003)
supports this by indicating that individuals may regard work as a series of ‘gigs’ in which they learn as they go. He goes on to state that the focus for this changing world must be on doing what you excel at and for individuals to find new ways to add value and to become innovative, risk-taking and self-sufficient.

Zeus and Skiffington (2000) support this by stating that the role of management has changed significantly in that organisations have moved towards flatter structures with less resources. They feel that there is benefit to this less hierarchical structure and indicate that “hierarchically based relationships between managers and employees breed fear and resentment, not creativity and empowerment” (Zeus and Skiffington 2000:101).

Based on this context and supported by Stout Rostron (2006) and Peters (2003), organisations are in a state of constant flux and the world is changing. Stout Rostron (2006) states that within this context of flux, adult learning aims to achieve balance between personal and work life, with coaching being regarded as a beneficial mechanism to develop an individual’s ability to learn. Grant (2003) as cited in Grant (2007) supports this by stating that goal-focused coaching is a joint process focused on optimising performance, self-managed learning and individual wellbeing. This is aligned with Zeus and Skiffington’s (2000) view that key employees value opportunities for self-development and want to take responsibility for themselves, emphasising that employees would rather be coached than managed in a traditional way.

The employee, according to Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006), needs to continually develop, perform and deliver results and needs to achieve a level of flexibility to do this. Building on Zeus and Skiffington’s (2000) view that development is the individual’s responsibility, it is Fillery-Davis and Lane’s (2006) view that employees want to work with their organisations to achieve this development. Coaching has thus emerged as a flexible, individualised, person-centred approach to development.

In addition to this, McIntosh (2003) emphasises how clarifying one’s values and setting goals as part of a coaching relationship can assist in achieving a level of balance in one’s life.

It is the role of manager-coaching in optimising work-life balance that is the focus area of this research report.
The manager-coach has to understand these contextual issues and the impact they have on the organisation and the individuals reporting to him/her. He/she needs to consider these contextual issues during manager-coach conversations as they will underpin and drive the conversations. In addition to this, the manager-coach needs to use this contextual information to attempt to seek solutions as to what can be done to optimise the work-life balance levels of working women, thus enabling the process of learning and organisational change and talent retention. As stated by Robertson and Cooper (2010:331), “perhaps the biggest single influence on every employee’s day to day experience of work is his or her line manager. At the operational level the leader or manager is in a uniquely powerful position when it comes to influencing the psychological well-being and engagement of others.” The role of the manager-coach in enabling well-being and engagement is at the core of this research.
2.4 The manager-coach

- To describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills

2.4.1 Research Question 1

What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?

2.4.2 Coaching defined

To lay the foundation for this research, it is important to firstly define coaching. Zeus and Skiffington (2000) identify three characteristics of coaching. It is firstly a conversation aimed at assisting the employee to focus on what they know, prompted by the questions asked and support provided by the coach. Secondly, coaching is focused on learning. Through the use of a wide range of coaching techniques and skills, the coach is able to facilitate learning in the employee. The intended outcome is for the employee to be able to self-correct their behaviour and generate their own responses and solutions to problems. Thirdly, the focus of coaching is not on providing the answers and solutions, but rather on asking the correct questions. These three elements of the definition on coaching all have direct relevance to this research, particularly when the roles and skills of the manager-coach are explored.

Downer (1999 as cited in Palmer and Whybrow 2006:8) defines coaching as “the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another – a facilitation approach.”

According to Grant (2006), coaching is focused on both the personal and professional lives of employees. He defines coaching as “collaborative, individualised, solution-focused, results orientated, systematic, stretching” (2006:13) and adds that coaching can enable self-directed learning.

This leads us to Whitmore’s definition of coaching (2002:18). He indicates that “coaching ….. is a way of managing, a way of treating people, a way of thinking, a way of being.” This aligns directly to the role of manager as coach.
2.4.3 A comparison between external, internal and manager-coaching

Prior to outlining the roles of the manager-coach it is important to make a distinction between the concepts of manager-coach and internal coach. These are both distinct from the executive or external coach.

An executive or external coach is external to the organisation. Rock and Donde (2008) cite one survey that reflected that of 55 organisations surveyed, 100% were using external coaches, but that less than 1% in an organisation had access to an external coach. They go on to state that, despite this, 93% of managers surveyed in the ‘Coaching at Work survey 2002’ feel employees at all levels should have access to coaching. In comparison, a School of Coaching study conducted by Kubicek (2002 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006) states that only 51% of organisations make use of external coaches.

According to Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006), the functions of the external coach are either to coach a senior executive or manager according to their own agenda or alternatively, to coach managers after they have attended training with the purpose of embedding the training and facilitating the transfer of knowledge. The former generally results in a free agenda where a range of issues are explored and the objectives and issues raised are likely to be diverse. The latter is a shorter term interaction and is likely to be strictly structured around an agenda aimed at embedding learning. Kahn (2011) however strongly emphasises the importance of the coaching agenda being systemically aligned and informed by the environment in which the individual performs. Grant and Cavanagh (2004 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006) refer to three levels of coaching engagement for the external coach – these are skills coaching, performance coaching and developmental coaching. It is important to note that the skills and expertise of the coach will increase with the level of interaction and the outcomes required.

Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) also emphasise the role that the external or executive coach can have in training manager-coaches and supervising internal coaches.

Internal coaches are individuals within an organisation who are trained to coach other employees. Internal coaches do not coach their direct reports (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006) and a process of selection and matching takes place. Internal coaches may be HR professionals or business leaders (Frisch 2001; Rock and Donde 2008). The benefits of
internal coaching are highlighted by Rock and Donde (2008) and include cost effectiveness, an integral understanding of the organisation and the cross transfer of skills into other functions and roles. According to Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006), the advantage of using internal coaches is that they do not need to conduct the same sort of assessment as an external coach as they have access to internal documents, information and assessments. The relationship with an internal coach differs from training or consulting as the focus is on the individual, possibly within the context of the organisation, but not exclusively on the organisation. These authors indicate that the internal coach is “a tangible manifestation of the learning organisation.” (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006:28) The role of the internal coach can include coaching employees who are not coached by their managers, training managers to coach, supervising and supporting manager-coaches and coaching senior managers in technical or specialised areas. The coaching agenda for internal coaching is largely driven by the organisational framework within which coaching takes place, but the employee as an individual is also focused upon.

The Coaching at Work survey (Rock and Donde 2008) reflected that 50% of surveyed organisations are using internal coaches with this supported by the School of Coaching study which showed that 41% of organisations use internal coaches (Kubicek 2002 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006).

Rock and Donde (2008) outline a study conducted in New Zealand where an increase in the retention of those trained as coaches was noticed. Interestingly, and very pertinent to this research study, it was also found that the retention of the direct reports of those trained as coaches improved. A 30% decrease in the chance of a direct report leaving was noted. This leads us to the concept of the manager-coach.

Manager-coaching refers to coaching which takes place within the manager/leader – direct report relationship. What is noteworthy is that the School of Coaching study (Kubicek 2002 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006) reflected that 79% of organisations are using manager-coaches, with 74% of the recipients of coaching being middle managers. However, only 38% of organisations had initiatives in place to develop their managers’ coaching skills and these were mainly targeted, again, at middle managers. These authors also indicate that research has shown a perception that manager-coaching is regarded as unsuitable for the most senior managers.
What is emphasised in the literature is that the coaching agenda and the anticipated outcomes of the coaching process will determine the focus of the coaching relationship. This has implications for the role of the manager-coach and is depicted in figure 1 below where the relationship between the coaching role, agenda and supervision is shown (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006)

**Figure 1: Coaching role, agenda and supervision**

As figure 1 depicts, manager-coaching is often skills based, with a fixed agenda, internal coaching becomes less skills-based and the agenda becomes freer and at an external coaching level, the agenda, according to Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006), becomes free and developmental in focus. External coaches would supervise internal coaches who would in turn supervise manager-coaches. The hierarchy also depicts the organisational level at which each band or tier would coach.

It is however important to note that, regardless of the coaching role and the expected outcomes, research has shown the benefits of coaching and that applies to executive/external, internal and manager-coaching (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006).

It is on the area of manager-coaching that this research report focuses, describing both the roles and skills required of manager-coaches while also aiming to highlight the on-going development requirements of these manager-coaches.
2.4.4 The manager-coach defined

It is stated in the literature that coaching is increasingly becoming a key element of the manager and leader’s role (Longnecker 2010; Ladyshewsky 2010; Ellinger et al 2008; Rock and Donde 2008). According to Grant (2003 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006) there is literature on the manager-coach which dates back to the 1930’s, although the focus in recent years has been on executive coaching and not manager-coaching. However, Grant continues by stating that manager-coaching, despite the lack of research and focus in recent decades, has particular relevance due to the increased emphasis on the learning organisation. Pedler et al (1989 as cited in Prewitt 2002:58) defines a learning organisation as “one that facilitates the learning of all its members and transforms itself in order to meet its strategic goals.”

Geber (1992) adds to this by indicating that in the transition from hierarchical to empowered organisations, the role of the manager may evolve into that of coach. This author regards this move from manager to coach as the most difficult transition to be made.

The agenda of the manager-coaching interaction is designed to benefit both the manager and the employee. Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) continue by indicating that the agenda is organisationally focused and is structured around work goals, objectives and performance. The manager requires output from the employee and the employee requires support and input from the manager – Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) refer to this relationship as mutual. The focus of this relationship is therefore performance-based and developmental with the benefits being that the coach is present in the organisation, with intimate organisational knowledge and a clear understanding of the development needs of the employee. These can then be addressed immediately. Performance improvement and enhanced role effectiveness is the expected result. Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) argue that it would probably not be considered ethical for the manager-coaching relationship to focus on intensely personal information. So, the conversation may not be personal in nature but rather developmental in terms of skills and performance. In support of this view, Baron and Morin (2010), in their comparison between executive and supervisory coaching, indicate that the downside of supervisory coaching is that the employee may be reluctant to bring up certain subjects with the manager, mainly because the manager is in authority over him. They continue to state that the relationship between a manager and coach is not truly developmental as there is no clear start and end point to the coaching.
Phillips (1996) reflects that the development of a trusting manager-coach relationship is imperative because of the fact that the employee may feel inferior to the manager, either because they report to the manager-coach or due the manager-coach’s perceived knowledge and experience.

Phillips (1996) also regards the manager-coach as rare due to the obstacles inherent in this relationship. He cites one of these obstacles as being the expectation that the manager-coach is fully knowledgeable in all areas that the employee is to be coached on. As Phillips (1996:32) states “it is central to any understanding of coaching that managers recognise that an effective coach can develop a learner beyond the limits of the coach’s own personal knowledge and experience.” Another obstacle cited is that the skills of a good manager do not necessarily equate to the skills of a good coach. Hankins and Kleiner (1995 as cited in Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller 2005) add to this by indicating that the manager skills of controlling, competing, problem solving and being regarded as the expert need to give way to coaching skills such as giving and receiving feedback, listening, questioning and empowering. Geber (1992), Barry (1994) and Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) support this by acknowledging the difficulties manager-coaches experience in moving from directing and controlling others to influencing, guiding and empowering employees, with Burdett (1998) emphasising that this move is reliant on management’s ability to coach. Waldroop and Butler (1996) differ in their view, stating that many coaching skills are essential to good management.

Barry (1994) and Ellinger et al (2005) emphasise that the manager cannot impose coaching on employees – it needs to be a reciprocal process where they work together and where genuine support is provided. It is imperative that a manager-coach is aware of these differences and difficulties and moves beyond them in order to coach employees effectively.

As indicated previously, the level of engagement and the objectives of the coaching relationship determine the expertise and skills required of the manager. Based on the fact that the manager-coach relationship focuses on development and performance, the skills required of the manager-coach are therefore less specialised than those required of the external coach. However, skills are still essential and it was alarming to note that, according to the Kubicek study (2002 as cited in Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006), 67% of organisations had no plan or strategy for the use of coaching in their organisation. This research also
highlighted the fact that manager-coaches generally only receive approximately 3 days of training. The support which managers need to be provided with as they fulfil this role cannot be overstated. According to Geber (1992:25), and citing Lynn Brown of Corning Incorporated, the task of coaching for the manager “is the most difficult one to perform and requires the biggest paradigm shift of any new system.”

It is the researchers view, based on her organisational experience of the manager-coach process implemented in the selected organisation, that manager-coaching has distinct learning, developmental and performance benefits. Whilst personal issues may not be discussed openly in all relationships, in many instances these personal issues do arise, particularly when difficulties are experienced. At the core is the fact that a sound, trusting relationship is established between the manager and the employee. Managers are trained in coaching skills and interact with their employees on a regular basis. Based on this relationship, the skills in place and the connection time between manager-coach and employee, this research now focuses on the role that the manager-coach can play in optimising work life balance.
2.4.5 The roles of the manager-coach

To explore the skills required of the manager-coach in organisations implementing a manager-coach approach, it is important to firstly clarify what the roles of the manager-coach are. This is based upon the context outlined in the previous section and provides a foundation for describing what the skills of manager-coaches are.

The predominant roles of the manager-coach, which the following literature review will detail, are outlined in summary form in the following table and aligned to the relevant author/researcher. These roles will be detailed thereafter.

Table 1: Summary of the roles of the manager-coach aligned to author, as appearing in the literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of the manager-coach</th>
<th>Author</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifying, managing and developing talent</td>
<td>Bloch (1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triner and Turner (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longnecker (2007b as cited in Longnecker 2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing learning and growth opportunities</td>
<td>Riddle and Ting (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bloch (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longnecker (2007b as cited in Longnecker 2010)</td>
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<td>Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005)</td>
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<td>Phillips (1996)</td>
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<td>Ellinger, Hamlin and Beattie (2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Zeus and Skiffington (2000)</td>
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<td>Wall (2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ladyshewsky (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riddle and Ting (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triner and Turner (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Coaching as a way of being and leading</td>
<td>Barry (1994)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Buys (2007)</td>
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<td>Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005)</td>
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Based on the roles listed above, this research seeks to describe the roles and skills of manager-coaches as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women. In so doing, these women can maximise their organisational contribution, grow, learn and perform optimally, both personally and organisationally and ultimately transform organisations to be geared for the 21st century.

We are confronted with a crisis in that our leaders do not know who the potential leaders in their organisations are - until leaders make the development of their employees their responsibility, Charan (2008 in The key to effective coaching) feels the crisis will not abate. In addition to this, leaders today need to focus not only on their own personal effectiveness and the performance of their employees but also on the development of these employees who will take the lead in the future (Riddle and Ting 2006; Bloch 1995). Coaching is therefore rapidly becoming regarded as one of the ways in which to develop talent (Bloch 1995; Triner and Turner 2005). This is supported by Longnecker (2007b as cited in Longnecker 2010:33), where he states that “a coach is an individual who is in a position to provide feedback, counsel and accountability to another individual with the purpose of helping them improve their performance and develop their talents.”
Furthermore, coaching is about harnessing the skills, abilities, interests and passions of others to achieve organisational goals (Sánchez 2009). Coaching is therefore about skills development where learning is embedded through the coaching process (Triner and Turner 2005). This is consolidated by Ellinger et al’s (2005) view of managerial coaching being key to turning workplace experiences into learning opportunities. Longnecker (2010) states the importance of senior managers assisting junior managers to learn the skills they require by creating personal development plans and by providing the necessary support whilst modelling the desired behaviour. This is supported by Phillips (1996) who indicates that manager-coaches feel that they can contribute meaningfully to the organisation by helping their employees develop, learn and progress, as well as effectively manage change. This can all take place within the manager-coach / employee relationship.

Coaching is also a conversation focused on the enhancement of performance (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Wall 2007; Ladyshewsky 2010). Workplace coaching is therefore critical to performance management, with these conversations firmly embedded in the performance conversation and linked to organisational development, with this being a core management skill (Ladyshewsky 2010). The learning that takes place through coaching can therefore enhance both the performance and further development of the employee (Riddle and Ting 2006). In addition to this, coaching should aim to provide the employee with a sense of responsibility and ownership over his or her job (Barry 1994). According to Ellinger et al (2005), this needs to take place in a context where employees feel valued and respected. The organisational culture also needs to be supportive of employee and manager-coach development as well as the practice of coaching as an integral part of management (Redshaw 2000). As Redshaw (2000:108) states “In these organisations, coaching is as much a culture as it is a skill.”

As Wall (2007:68) indicates, we need to “…remind leaders that if they aren’t coaching on a routine basis, they are failing as leaders…”. Buys (2010) adds to this by stating that as leaders we need to become more effective at empowering and delegating and focus less on controlling. He goes on to mention that coaching, managing and leading will all become more effective if they are founded on effective relationships and conversation. In his view, coaching, as applied to managers and leaders, is not a technique but rather “a way of being” (Buys 2007:6). This is supported by Whitmore (2002) and Ellinger et al (2005) who regard
manager-coaching as part of the daily manager–employee relationship, with coaching being a specific leadership style and not just a list of actions to be completed. Burdett’s (1998) view of coaching as an embedded management philosophy aligns with this.

Burdett (1998) explains this transition and emphasises that the manager’s role of coercing, punishing and organising needs to be transformed to a role characterised by challenging, encouraging, empowering and reinforcing. He states that this transformation is “ultimately dependent upon the ability of those in key leadership roles to coach.” (Burdett 1998:143)

There are varying views on the style and role of the manager-coach. Buys (2010) proposes that managers should take a non-directive stance with their employees, using the estimate of 80% of the time being spent non-directively. He feels that this facilitates the development of the employee’s ability to become self-managed and will ultimately move the employee to a point of self-coaching. Zeus and Skiffington (2000) disagree with this, indicating that they are not proposing that the manager become a coach. They feel that a manager-coach still has to manage, give direction, tell and direct. However, they go on to say that coaching is ultimately about the improvement of performance and they indicate that “the manager’s role also involves guiding, encouraging and enhancing top performers, as well as career coaching at all levels of the organisation.” (Zeus and Skiffington 2000:102) In terms of the coaching relationship generally, Biswas-Diener (2009) states that the coach may often ask for permission to provide feedback and that this goes far beyond non-directiveness as it allows the employee to actively partner with the coach.

Downey (2003) depicts the range of the coach’s role in figure 2. He indicates that the coach either pushes or pulls the employee towards their goals and objectives and can move from being directive to non-directive.
**Figure 2: The spectrum of coaching skills**

It is the researchers view that the level of directness the coach uses is largely dependent on the theoretical model upon which they base their coaching, their level of confidence with coaching, their personality and the relationship that they have with the employee. Stein (2007) however indicates that closely managing and controlling employees no longer has a place in organisations. He indicates that effective leaders need to coach their employees and allow them to set goals and take responsibility for the job to be done. This provides support for the more non-directive techniques on the spectrum, rather than the techniques of advice giving, telling and instructing, all techniques more strongly aligned with a command and control style of leadership than with a coaching one.

An element of this research is to determine where on the spectrum manager-coaches most comfortably operate and the extent to which this impacts on their effectiveness.

Goleman et al (2000 as cited in Ellinger et al 2008) have strongly advocated for the benefits of a coaching leadership style and the concept of the leader as coach is apparent in transformational and situational leadership models (Grant 2007). However, whilst a
coaching leadership style is one of the most impactful, managers who coach are rare (Goleman et al 2000 as cited in Ellinger et al 2008; Phillips 1996) and managers often find the move to an empowering or developmental style challenging (Ellinger et al 2008). In addition to this, managers also often do not have their own coach to guide and supervise their coaching (Kets de Vries et al as cited in Longnecker 2010) and many avoid coaching as it is not comfortable and they lack adequate training and a framework from which to work (Wall 2007; Rock and Donde 2008; Cunningham 2007). A study by BlessingWhite consulting (as stated by Rice (2008) in The key to effective coaching) found that although managers believe in the benefit and value of coaching, they probably do not do enough of it to impact levels of employee engagement and organisational results. Managers may resist taking on the role of coach as they feel it impacts their ability to achieve the bottom line and feel it to be too time-consuming. There is a paradigm shift that these managers need to make (Ladyshewsky 2010).

However, a study on the practice of coaching as viewed by managers reveals that 82% of the surveyed managers agree that coaching is very important to a managers’ success, 68% of managers stated that knowing their people was imperative to their role as coach and 93% of managers acknowledge that employees want and require feedback and coaching to enhance their performance. A further 74% of managers reveal that they feel employees do not receive adequate coaching to impact their performance (Longnecker 2010). This shows the value that managers in particular place on coaching although they may not always fulfil this role.

Additional roles, as outlined by Triner and Turner (2005), which coaches and coaching can fill are around processing feedback and being a sounding board. Coaches can assist employees to work through feedback received and to gain insight into their strengths and development areas.

Coaching has also been identified as particularly beneficial in helping women meet their full potential (Bloch 1995), an area that it pivotal to this research.

In the following section, the skills required of the manager-coach are explored.
**2.4.6 Manager-coach skills**

The predominant skills of the manager-coach, which the following literature review will detail, are outlined in summary form in table 2 and aligned to the relevant author/researcher who made reference to that skill. These skills will be detailed thereafter.

**Table 2: Summary of the skills of the manager-coach aligned to author, as appearing in the literature review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills of the manager-coach</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goleman (1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riddle and Ting (2006)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ability to create a safe, trusting space</td>
<td>Riddle and Ting (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellinger and Bostrom (1999)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Buys (2010)</td>
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<td>Buys (2007)</td>
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<td>Sanchez (2009)</td>
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<td>Ulrich (2008)</td>
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<td>Zeus and Skiffington (2000)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critchley (2010)</td>
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<td>Ulrich (2008)</td>
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<td>Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001)</td>
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<td>Wall (2007)</td>
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<td>Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005)</td>
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<td>Peterson and Little (2005 as cited in Ellinger, Hamlin and Beattie 2008)</td>
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<td>Phillips (1996)</td>
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<td>Longnecker (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3(a) Listening | Rogers (1957 as cited in de Haan, Culpin and Curd 2011)  
Orth, Wilkinson and Benfari (1990)  
Bolton (1998)  
Biswa-Diener (2009)  
Knight (2002 as cited in Murray 2004)  
De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011) |
| 3(b) Communicating / handling conversations | Bolton (1998)  
Siegel (1999 as cited in Rock and Page 2009)  
Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001)  
Byron (2007)  
Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005) |
| 3(c) Providing feedback, praise and recognition | Ulrich (2008)  
Wall (2007)  
Sheldon (2008 as cited in Biswas-Diener 2009)  
Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001)  
Liphosa, 2010  
Burdett, 1998  
Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005)  
De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011) |
| 3(d) Questioning | Zeus and Skiffington (2000)  
Ulrich (2008)  
Biswa-Diener (2009) |
| 3(e) Becoming emotionally intelligent | Ladyshewsky (2010)  
Goleman (1998)  
Wall (2007)  
Byron (2007) |
| 3(f) Showing empathy | Goleman (1998)  
Ellinger, Ellinger and Keller (2005)  
De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011) |
| 3(g) Understanding others | Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002)  
Longnecker (2010) |
The skills listed in this summary are explored in more depth below.

Grant (2007) states that coaching skills have a critical place in today’s workplace. Goleman et al (2002), supported by Longnecker (2010), agree that coaching is a powerful tool and one that managers and leaders have to develop and make use of. To be an effective coach, Phillips (1996) emphasises that a coach needs to be aware of his/her own values as well of the values of the employees he/she coaches. They also need to display a non-judgemental attitude towards the values of their employees, as well as understand their goals and motivations. In addition to this, manager-coaches must want to coach. Without this foundation, manager-coaching will not be successful.

In addition to this, Riddle and Ting (2006) emphasise that to achieve successful manager-coaching, the underpinning principles which need to be in place include the development of a safe, challenging environment that encourages learning and maintains the employees’ sense of worth, the ability to work according to the employees goals, being able to avoid being directive, as supported by Buys (2010), encouraging self-awareness, as supported by
Goleman (1998), encouraging continuous learning through experiences and modelling what you coach. Phillips (1996:29) consolidates this by emphasising that coaching is about the “learner learning rather than the coach teaching”. This is supported further by Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) who indicate that coaching viewed in this way is learner-centred and collaborative. This aligns with Siegel’s view (1999 as cited in Rock and Page 2009:423) of “collaborative, contingent conversations” which have been found to enhance wellbeing and mental capabilities. It is thought by these authors that coaching conversations should be viewed as contingent and collaborative.

In creating this safe but challenging environment, it is commonly emphasised that the manager-coach relationship with employees is paramount in that it provides the opportunity for growth, both professionally and personally (Buys 2010 and 2007; Sanchez 2009; Ulrich 2008; Zeus and Skiffington 2000). It is therefore through personal conversations with employees that managers are able to develop a relationship characterised by trust (Goleman et al 2002; Critchley 2010).

In developing this relationship and through these personal conversations, Goleman et al (2002) state that a true interest in one’s employees as individuals is shown. Coaches enable employees to identify their individual strengths and development areas whilst aligning these to the individual’s personal and career aspirations. They facilitate the process of goal setting and support the development of action plans to achieve these goals (Goleman et al 2002; Ulrich 2008).

Therefore, to facilitate performance and effectiveness in an organisation, the interpersonal skills and emotional competencies required by managers are key (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Peterson and Little 2005 as cited in Ellinger et al 2008). Zeus and Skiffington (2000) add to this by stating that managers are increasingly expected to have strong people skills and to develop both the organisation and their people. Longnecker (2010) confirms this by stating that for a manager to produce long term results for the organisation, they need to be able to show real skills in coaching their employees. According to Bolton (1998:234), “it is the quality of speaking and listening in an organisation which makes the organisation effective, or not, as the case may be.” He supports this by indicating that it through the ability to hold better conversations that coaching occurs. Healy, Ehrich, Hansford and Stewart (2001) indicate that conversations allow individuals to share their ideas and thoughts on a given
topic and can be used to enable learning and development. Coaching takes place within conversations between managers and employees. These are not the informal conversations we have every day – coaching conversations are professional dialogues and discussions with a clear purpose and desired outcome. This aligns with Bolton’s (1998) conversations for action.

De Haan, Culpin and Curd (2011) emphasise that the use of a broad range of techniques are regarded as helpful to coaches. They indicate that “it is not the preference for a specific technique that makes a difference, but rather the ability to employ many techniques, to use them well and at the right moment.” (2011:40) This is supported by Kahn (2011).

De Haan et al (2011) also state that the coaching attributes viewed as most impactful include availability, kindness, flexibility and openness with support found for Carl Rogers’ view (1957 as cited in de Haan et al 2011:40) that the characteristics of “support, encouragement, listening and understanding” are valued in coaches.

Manager-coach skills include the establishment of a relationship based on care (Boyatzis, Smith and Blaize (2008) in The key to effective coaching) and trust (Goleman et al 2002; Critchley 2010; Ulrich 2008; Healy 2001); developing a personal connection (Wall 2007); providing feedback which allows for self-discovery (Ulrich 2008; Wall 2007); giving praise and acknowledgement, which in itself is a key organisational retention factor (Wall 2007); probing through the skilful use of questioning that encourages self-reflection (Ulrich 2008); becoming emotionally intelligent (Ladyshewsky 2010; Goleman 1998; Wall 2007) and showing empathy (Goleman 1998). In addition to this, Byron (2007) states that recent research indicates that managers need to be more attuned to the emotions and non-verbal cues of their employees.

In addition to this, Goleman et al (2002) and Longnecker (2010) emphasise that managers need to fully understand where employees’ strengths lie, where they aspire to be, and what they identify with so that these can be aligned to the employees long term goals and ultimately their job, resulting in increased workplace happiness and retention. This can be done within the realms of the manager-coach role.
According to Biswas-Diener (2009), coaching techniques and tools which are regularly used in coaching sessions include:

- Active listening – focusing on the choice of words, what the employee says and the emotions which underlie what is said
- Powerful questions – the use of open-ended questions which aim to direct the employee’s focus and increase awareness
- Cognitive tools – these are used to “reframe negative interpretations and self-talk” (2009:545)
- Encouragement – reinforcing and acknowledging, but focused on effort and process rather than personal qualities (Sheldon 2008 as cited in Biswar-Diener 2009)
- Accountability – the employee takes accountability for the coaching process

In addition to the skills listed above, the following skills also emerge from the literature:

- Knight (2002 as cited in Murray 2004:205) refers to “whole body listening” where she regards listening with one’s soul and not one’s ego as highly respectful. She indicates that this form of listening can generate the development of insight, the ability to find solutions and use those solutions to solve one’s own problems. She further states that most managers in business do not listen skilfully and with care, but that the benefits, in terms of respect and influence, that such behaviours would generate are significant.
- Non-verbal communication – Bryon’s (2007) research indicates that managers who are able to read non-verbal cues are regarded as more supportive
- Emotional perceptiveness – Byron (2007) indicates that emotional perceptiveness is useful to managers provided they respond appropriately to these emotions
- Enabling conversations that focus thinking on challenging beliefs and assumptions (Healy et al 2001)
- Enabling conversations for relatedness, conversations for possibility, conversations for action – if we continue to believe in the past, we will not be able to change how we view the future in terms of the possibilities (Bolton, 1998)
- Challenging and supporting employees – enable them to define their problems, explore solutions and manage progress (Healy et al 2001)
Show a real interest in the well-being of employees (Healy et al 2001)
Modelling desired behaviour (Healy et al 2001)
To push employees without controlling them or being autocratic (Liphosa 2010)
To facilitate the process of others taking ownership (Liphosa 2010)
Providing constructive feedback (Liphosa 2010) that is specific, sensitive and honest (Burdett 1998)
Flexibility - using a range of techniques and approaches where applicable to the individual needs to the employee being coached (Phillips 1996; Kahn 2011)
Respond spontaneously to what the employee is thinking and saying (Rogers 2000)

Ellinger et al (2005) add to this outline by emphasising the importance of:

- Obtaining feedback from employees on their work progress
- Sharing ideas and discussing issues to generate possible solutions
- Showing empathy
- Using creative and dynamic techniques to facilitate the learning process
- Facilitate the employees’ ability to draw on their own knowledge to respond to questions and to generate ideas and solutions

Phillips (1996) goes as far as indicating that the manager-coach skills above can be split into interpersonal and mental skills, whilst Orth, Wilkinson and Benfari (1990) state that managers need to be developed into coaches and the skills required can be categorised into observational skills, analytical skills, interviewing skills and feedback skills. These authors state that these are management skills that need to be integrated into the manager’s management style.

Other key characteristics of coaching, as outlined by Biswar-Diener (2009), are that the employee sets the agenda and defines the goals and outcomes of the process. This is thought to be the key success of coaching. Coaches are viewed as the facilitators of the change process. The positive is emphasised in coaching, particularly if a positive coaching psychology approach is used, with emphasis placed on individual strengths, growth and success. Coaching is holistic in its approach and both satisfaction with the coaching process and the progress the employee makes are measured.
Listening, understanding and encouragement are regarded as the most helpful coaching behaviours according to de Haan et al (2011), with these followed by knowledge, empathy, authenticity and involvement. These authors also found a correlation between the employees’ learning style and the coaching style of the coach, especially in terms of how directive or non-directive they were. Their findings indicated that more theoretical learning styles prefer supportive coaching, whilst employees with more action orientated learning styles prefer a more directive coaching approach. However, according to Heron (1975 as cited in De Haan et al 2011), directing is seen as less of a coaching behaviour than supporting.

Finally, delegation forms a core part of the manager-coach’s skills repertoire. According to Phillips (1996), manager-coaching enables the manager to delegate a task to an employee who is not able to do the work. The focus is then on coaching the employee to develop the skills required to do the work. This then frees up the manager-coach to do the work that they should be doing. However, Ellinger et al (2005) emphasise that for this to take place, the organisational culture needs to be receptive to employees learning from their mistakes.

This section on the roles and skills of the manager-coach forms the core of this research. However to answer the research questions, we need to understand what optimal work-life balance is and what the working woman’s realities are in attempting to achieve work-life balance. These aspects will provide the context for determining and describing the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women.
2.5 Understanding work-life balance

To understand what optimal work-life balance means.

2.5.1 Research Question 2

What does optimal work-life balance mean?

2.5.2 Work-life balance

To answer the question “What does optimal work-life balance mean?” it is necessary to review the literature and explore the wide range of often opposing views and present these objectively. This review follows, preceded by a summary table outlining the main themes emerging from the literature on work-life balance.

Table 3: Summary of the themes emerging from the literature on work-life balance and aligned to author, as appearing in the literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key work-life balance themes</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doherty (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joshi et al (2002 in Grady and McCarthy 2008)</td>
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<td>Warren (2004)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton (2003)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hughes (2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Muna and Mansour (2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunshild (2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lewis and Humbert (2010)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tomlinson and Durbin (2010)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grady and McCarthy (2008)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Flexibility and working hours</td>
<td>Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunshild (2007)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>McIntosh (2003)</td>
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<td>Hughes (2007)</td>
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Muna and Mansour (2009)
Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow (2010)
Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001)
Tomlinson and Durbin (2010)
Lewis et al (2009 as cited in Lewis and Humbert 2010)
Hewlett and Luce (2005)
Hewlett (2007)
Lewis and Humbert (2010)
White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton (2003)
Friedland (2008)
Grady and McCarthy (2008)
Powell and Mainiero (1999 as cited in Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman 2001)

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<tr>
<th>3. Organisational culture</th>
<th>Hewlett and Luce (2005)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow (2010)</td>
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<td>Lewis and Humbert (2010)</td>
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4. Family responsibilities and spillover

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<th>Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow (2010)</th>
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<td>Gambles et al (2006 as cited in Muna and Mansour 2009)</td>
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Below is a detailed explanation of each of the themes listed in the table.

The origins of work-life balance, according to Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunshild (2007) emanated from the need to recruit and retain women who had to fit their work around their care obligations.
Central to the achievement of effective work-life balance policies and practices is the development of an organisational culture that is supportive of the need for work-life balance and that understands and embraces its relevance to organisations. (Hewlett and Luce 2005)

McIntosh (2003:182) indicates that Employers for Work-life Balance regard work-life balance as being “about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work, leading them to be able to enjoy an optimal quality of life. Work-life balance is achieved when an individual’s right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.”

According to UK Department of Education and Employment, as cited in Doherty (2004:439), work-life balance is not only about balancing work and family responsibilities – it is also about enabling all individuals to “find a rhythm” that allows them to combine work with other activities and aspirations.

Joshi et al (2002 as cited in Grady and McCarthy 2008) indicate that work-life balance is based on the concept that work is important to individuals and society but that taking pleasure from day-to-day activities and having a sense of achievement is critical to well-being.

In addition to this, Warren (2004) emphasises the importance of taking leisure time and financial balance into account when reviewing work-life balance. She argues that work-life balance should not comprise of trying to balance the two components of paid employment and family commitments only. Building on this and according to White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton (2003), it should be possible to achieve work-life balance without the economic stability of either the employee or the organisation being threatened.

Taking these definitions into account, Eikhof et al (2007) question whether work and life can be separated. They indicate that some individuals view work and life as separate, whilst others see these them as interconnected and they cannot and do not want to separate them. Grady et al (2008) use the terms integration and balance interchangeably and also make reference to the term ‘merge’ whilst Warren (2004) uses the term ‘equilibrium’, stating that a more holistic approach to balance needs to be taken. Contrary to this, Barsh and Cranston (2009:8) refer to “managed disequilibrium – a fluid and dynamic approach” and regard work-life balance as not being attainable.
Muna and Mansour (2009) indicate that there is a rapidly changing demand by employees for more work-life balance and it is required that organisations are supportive of this.

Hughes (2007) thus defines work-life balance as:

- knowing what the different demands on time and energy are
- making choices about the use of this time and energy, and
- being able to align one’s values to these choices

McIntosh (2003) supports this by indicating that one’s core values relate to every part of one’s life and that when these core values are not considered, stress can result.

Building on this, Eikhof et al (2007) indicate that, in terms of the work-life balance debate, work is viewed as negative, debilitating, with long working hours being particularly problematic. Life, on the other hand, is aligned with caring obligations, with women being the predominant focus. They argue that this is not necessarily accurate as work can be positive, desired and a source of fulfilment and life does not necessarily equate to caring only. According to Eikhof et al (2007:327), work-life balance programmes “ignore the possibility that work can be a source of satisfaction and self-fulfilment”.

The concept of long working hours dominates the work-life balance literature, although Eikhof et al (2007) argue that this is overemphasised and cannot be regarded as the main obstacle to work-life balance. They feel that the rapid growth in consumerism needs to be more fully explored as individuals now need to work more to meet their consumerism needs. In addition to this, and perhaps more important to the working woman than dissatisfaction with long working hours, might be the working woman’s dissatisfaction with the extent to which her male partner contributes to household tasks. They argue that enhanced work-life balance may be achieved, not through flexible working practices, but in having men take on more of the household responsibilities, a view supported by Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow (2010). This is added to by Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001) who indicate that although it is commonly thought that men do not assist sufficiently in the household,
recent research reflects that men are taking on more responsibility at home. They add that people are not actually working longer hours, but that the pace of work has quickened.

With increased numbers of women entering the workplace, McIntosh (2003) emphasises that employees are increasingly going to feel “squeezed” (2003:183) between home and work demands. This is supported by Hughes (2007) who anticipates that there will be a rise in non-traditional employment over the next 10 years, with increased numbers of women entering the workforce. To address this, Muna and Mansour (2009) indicate that schemes such as flexible hours, extended maternity leave, home working, job sharing, part-time working or career breaks need to be incorporated into a work-life balance policy.

Several countries and organisations have therefore implemented flexible work arrangement policies to address this need, with Burnett et al (2010:539) indicating that “organisations have become increasingly attuned to the identification and alleviation of stress through addressing employee’s work-life balance”. In the UK, according to Tomlinson and Durbin (2010), all those who care for a child under 17 years of age or who are responsible for the care of an adult have the right to request flexible working arrangements, with the most popular being reduced hours and part-time work as well as, according to Burnett et al (2010), flexible hours, working remotely and job sharing. Tomlinson and Durbin (2010) indicate that such requests need to be presented to and approved by the employees’ immediate managers. These authors indicate that, in the group researched, 73% of women had their requests approved. Despite this, these authors do state that although legislation supports work-life balance, they wonder whether this support of work-life balance is actually seen in organisations.

In support of this query, Lewis et al (2009 in Lewis and Humbert 2010) state that the benefits of these policies are often negated by managers who are not supportive of such flexible work arrangements.

Lewis and Humbert (2010) continue by stating that organisations believe that the workplace takes precedence over families and employees’ personal lives. As a result, any flexible work arrangements that are put in place are targeted at those viewed as being unable or unprepared to commit long hours to the organisation. Where long hours equate to
commitment, women who take up the offer of flexible working arrangements pay a career penalty in that they are perceived as less committed than those who do not take up these flexible arrangements and are often not eligible for promotion as a result (Hewlett and Luce 2005). This is supported by Hewlett (2007) who indicates that organisations could optimise the talents of women through flexible arrangements and understanding that women are prepared to work hard, accept pressure and take responsibility for their work, but that they are not able to offer long hours.

Lewis and Humbert (2010) also refer to visibility, which also has a direct bearing on the use of flexible work arrangements. In addition to being viewed as an indicator of commitment, a lack of visibility also has consequences for career advancement and progression. If an employee is not visible, they are not seen as committed and are therefore not considered for promotion.

This is contributed to by Eikhof et al (2007) who emphasise that employers are aware of the importance of attracting women back into the workplace. They state that employers deal with the work-life balance issue by offering family-friendly practices, flexibility in hours or part-time working as this suits the 24/7 economy, although reduced hours are often not offered, whilst Hughes (2007) emphasises that the focus is not on the hours that employees work but rather the work they put into the hours.

Lewis and Humbert (2010) differ from Eikhof et al (2007) where they report that women are provided with the opportunity to fit their workload into four days, sacrificing a day’s salary per week whilst doing the same work. In other words, according to Lewis and Humbert (2010), women literally pay a price for their flexibility –not only do they earn less for the job they are doing as productively as before, but they are viewed as less committed. As they contribute less hours and are unavailable during hours that are not family friendly, and, because they are working flexible hours, they are also less visible which results in less development, growth and promotion. Tomlinson and Durbin (2010) state that, despite part-time arrangements, women are still expected to work outside of their agreed to hours when necessary. This often results in working almost full-time for a part-time salary on occasion.

Employers, according to Eikhof et al (2007), thus seem to be family-friendly but at the same time, business needs are met and employees are drawn into the workplace. These authors
strongly state that flexible practices are for the benefit of the employer rather than the employee.

This view is counteracted by the following view expressed by Hill et al (2001:49) where they state that “flexibility in work arrangements, which enables individuals to integrate and overlap work and family responsibilities in time and space, is associated with positive spillover and is instrumental in achieving a healthy work and family balance”.

However, Tomlinson and Durbin (2010) found that, even when flexible arrangements were in place, women still experience work to family spillover, long working hours and a level of frustration, exacerbated by their partner’s working hours and career commitment. This is supported by White et al (2003) who found a direct correlation between increased working hours and negative work to home spillover.

White et al (2003) reflect that negative work to home spillover is reduced when the employee experiences a measure of choice and flexibility, with this supported by Lewis and Humbert (2010) who emphasise the importance of women having the choice to decide where to focus their time and attention, within the context of the workplace. The difficulty however, as stated by Tomlinson and Durbin (2010) is that, due to the scarcity of reduced hour, part-time or flexible positions, women feel tied to the organisation. This applies even though their development and career growth needs and expectations may not be met. In addition to this, flexible work, according to Burnett et al (2010) results in the underutilisation of women’s skills, whilst men, who seldom take up flexible work options because of the impact on career progression, experience frustration at their limited family role.

Stresses from combining work and family demands can result in ill health (Muna and Mansour 2009; Friedland 2008) and the suggestion of the ‘Whitehall II study’ (as cited in Muna and Mansour 2009) to address these stresses is to increase the time spent at home through flexible working hours, to provide improved leave arrangements for the care of children and the elderly and to reduce commuting by enabling working from home. The price of trying to balance work and life are escalating in terms of productivity, mistakes at work, retention and employee satisfaction (Glinskey et al as cited by Muna and Mansour 2009) and a sense of feeling overworked or stressed carries over into one’s personal life (Muna and Mansour 2009). This is supported by Hill et al (2001:49) where they indicate the detrimental
effects of “negative work-to-family spillover”. The value of a healthy work-family connection is stressed.

Muna and Mansour (2009) continue by stating that attention needs to be paid to the following areas, amongst others, in order to facilitate increased work-life balance:

- Acknowledge that balancing work and personal life is an individualised process and it should be treated as such.
- Flexible recruitment practices, career development and advancement opportunities and fair compensation packages should be aimed at those who prefer more flexibility.
- There needs to be a supportive organisational culture in place.

In line with this, Hill et al (2001) state that employees who perceive more flexibility in when and where they work are able to work for longer before they experience challenges in work-life balance. Grady and McCarthy (2008) also indicate that some women opt for self-employment so that they have flexibility in working around the needs of their children. For those who are employed, flexibility is a mutual process agreed between the employer and the employee. They also indicate that employee commitment increases with flexibility offered by employers. Powell and Mainiero (1999 in Hill et al 2001) support Grady and McCarthy’s view by indicating that the extent to which flexible work options are available to employees is dependent on the individual manager. Again, this is supported by White et al (2003) who emphasise the role of the supervisor in reducing negative spillover. However, these authors also report that 43% of employees felt their managers did not treat all employees equitably. This aligns with the role of the manager-coach and is crucial to this research.

Hughes (2007:284) adds to this by stating that “coaching and training helps employees to analyse what work-life balance means to them, to create a personal work-life balance plan and most importantly, to successfully implement their plan.”

According to Hewlett and Luce (2005), a main workplace driver for women is to have flexibility in their work schedule. However, Tomlinson and Durbin (2010) strongly state that
while traditional perceptions of part-time workers persist, the benefits of flexible working arrangements will not be fully optimised. In addition to this, Burnett et al (2010) emphasise that, whilst it would appear that work-life balance policies are in place to assist working parents better manage their family and work commitments, in reality random flexible working practices are utilised, with the aims usually being to enable women to care for their families and support their partners’ careers.

In summary, Gambles et al (2006 as cited in Muna and Mansour 2009) indicates that the problems experienced by men and women in combining paid work with other areas of their lives has become a global challenge and much attention has been placed on the challenges that parents face in raising their children and working (Hughes 2007). Ultimately, according to Hewlett (2007), offering a range of flexible arrangements decreases employee turnover and increases the retention of talent, with this supported by McIntosh (2003) who indicates that the achievement of work-life balance enables retention.

To explore the research problem of describing the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women, it is necessary that this work-life balance context underpins the research process. Overlaid with this are the working woman’s experiences and the reality she faces in attempting to achieve work-life balance. It is these realities that are discussed in the next section.
2.6 Understanding the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance

To understand what the working woman’s reality is in attempting to achieve work-life balance.

2.6.1 Research Question 3

What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?

2.6.2 Working woman’s reality

To describe the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise work-life balance in working women, the working woman’s reality needs to be understood and the challenges that they face in the workplace must to be identified.

This review follows, preceded by a summary table outlining the main themes emerging from the literature on the realities faced by working women.

Table 4: Summary of the themes emerging from the literature on the working woman’s realities and aligned to author, as appearing in the literature review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key themes relating to the working woman’s realities in attempting to achieve work-life balance</th>
<th>Author</th>
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</table>
| 1. Family and career | Friedland (2008)  
Grady and McCarthy (2008)  
Farber (1996)  
Poduval and Poduval (2009)  
Barsh and Cranston (2009)  
Gilbert, Holahan and Manning (1981)  
Liu and Wilson (2001) |
| 2. Guilt                     | Farber (1996)  
                             | Carr (2002)  
                             | Gilbert, Holahan and Manning (1981) |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 3. A culture of women in the workplace | Poduval and Poduval (2009)  
                             | Cormier (2007)  
                             | Peters (2003)  
                             | Boninelli (2004)  
                             | Carr (2002)  
                             | Wentling (2003)  
                             | Doherty (2004)  
                             | Lewis and Humbert (2010)  
                             | Hewlett and Luce (2005)  
                             | Allen (2001 as cited in Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry and Gordon 2007)  
                             | Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry and Gordon (2007)  
                             | Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunshild (2007) |
| 4. The need for flexibility and time | Lewis and Humbert (2010)  
                             | Burnett, Gatrell, Cooper and Sparrow (2010)  
                             | Hewlett and Luce (2005)  
                             | Doherty (2004)  
                             | Poduval and Poduval (2009)  
                             | Lui and Wilson (2001) |
These themes are detailed below.

Working women want it all – a fulfilling career or meaningful work, well-adjusted and happy children, being able to effectively manage the demands of home life whilst feeling good and achieving a sense of meaning in what they do – in the face of these competing priorities the question is whether it is possible to have it all. (Friedland 2008; Grady and McCarthy 2008; Farber 1996)

Farber (1996) indicates that whereas young men envisage a career, young women envisage both a career and a family. Farber (1996) continues by reflecting that the mother is the traditional core in a family and the extent to which a women seeks to progress her career or not is governed by her relationships, her need for financial independence, her ability to cope with the guilt often attached to spending time away from the family and the manner in which family members cope with this, either positively or negatively. Ultimately, balance which meets the needs of the family must be achieved.

Poduval and Poduval (2009) add to this by stating that workplace perceptions of both men and women often change once employees become parents, with this being particularly applicable to women. Stereotypes and assumptions abound, governed by the belief that motherhood and parenting are natural and therefore easy roles, whereas employment is less natural and therefore likely to be more demanding. This is supported by Barsh and Cranston (2009) who state that it is believed that time at work is draining whilst time at home is energising. In fact, the converse is true in that work can be particularly energising and negative family time can be detrimental.

As Poduval and Poduval (2009) state, the propensity for women to effectively manage both roles is often questioned. In a hostile work environment, managing dual responsibilities can result in lowered productivity.
However, research has also shown that organisations with the most women in senior leadership positions had a return on equity 35% higher than those with the least women in these positions and the inclusion of women is viewed as so important in Norway that they have introduced a 40% quota in terms of female representation on organisation’s boards (Cormier 2007).

Therefore, although a growing number of women are trying to combine a career with marriage and parenting (Gilbert et al 1981), statistics reflect that, of the 37% of jobs in SA filled by women, only 12% of top management positions are filled by women (Peens 2003 as cited in Boninelli 2004). According to Cormier (2007), in the USA, women fill over 50% of management and professional positions, women outnumber men in most graduate schools worldwide and it is anticipated that the number of women with graduate and professional degrees will grow 16% in the next 10 years, compared with an estimated 1.3% growth for men. Women evidently have a contribution to make.

It is reflected by Carr (2002) that women often reach the peak of their careers at the time they are ready to have children and often feel forced into making a choice between childrearing and their career. These two choices complete with one another and the result, according to this author, is a strong sense of guilt.

Cormier (2007) however also states that women are exiting their positions for reasons of dissatisfaction and not family pressures. This is supported by Peters (2003) who indicates that high performing women leave organisations because the organisational culture is too male dominated, a woman’s progress is blocked and because assumptions about women are made. Cormier (2007) continues to state that women want to be regarded as equal to their male colleagues but experience intense isolation even though they would like to feel fully integrated. This sense of isolation is exacerbated by the working mother’s lack of freedom to socialise and interact with colleagues and they were thus often not part of the informal social network (Liu and Wilson 2001).

Doherty (2004) feels that the overriding explanation for women’s failure to move up to senior levels in organisations is the long hours required at these levels, a lack of flexibility offered to employees at these levels and the dual role that women carry.
The result, according to Wentling (2003), is that women experience barriers that prevent them from moving into senior level and executive positions. According to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995 as cited in Wentling 2003), the societal barriers which women face are focused on the perception that women are not completely committed to their careers or jobs.

Of critical importance here is the concept ‘commitment’, which, according to Doherty (2004) often means long working hours and acting as if work takes precedence over family. She states that often it is a woman’s commitment as defined above that is questioned. The result is that women often predominantly fill part-time, lower level and poorly paid positions, with their absence from senior management being noticeable. According to Grady and McCarthy (2008) women may place a self-imposed barrier on their careers having weighed up the costs and benefits of a career at a certain level. The concern that a promotion would impact negatively on family life also emerges from the literature (Grady and McCarthy 2008; Doherty 2004; Boninelli 2004; Hewlett and Luce 2005). The issue of long working hours equating to commitment appears consistently in the literature (Hill et al 2001; White et al 2003; Doherty 2004; Grady and Mccarthy 2008; Lewis and Humbert 2010).

This is supported by Lewis and Humbert (2010) and Burnett et al (2010) who indicate that the assumption underpinning a woman’s choice to work reduced hours for less pay is that women are the primary caregivers whilst men are the breadwinners. As a result, money is less of a motivator for women, with this supported by Hewlett and Luce (2005) who indicate that flexible work arrangements are significantly more of a motivator to women than money.

Women, according to Lewis and Humbert (2010) do however feel immense pressure to be the best mother they can be and to effectively care for their families. The decision to work reduced hours is often made at the expense of progressing their career and the result is that women are either viewed as not being able to focus on both of these areas of their life concurrently, or that they lack ambition, focus and drive (Tomlinson and Durbin 2010). An organisation may, as a result of this, be unable to retain this talent as their skills are possibly not recognised or fully developed.
So, whilst women are regarded as the next high potential leaders (Cormier 2007; Peters 2003) neither the statistics nor the reality experienced by working women in organisations align with this view. Retention strategies are therefore critical to prevent these high performing women from ‘opting out through the revolving door’ (Cormier 2007:263), a practice also known as a ‘leaky pipeline’ (European Commission 2006 as cited in Lewis and Humbert 2010) or the ‘opt out revolution’ (Lisa Belkin of the New York Times as cited by Hewlett and Luce 2005 and Cormier 2007). This is especially important in light of Peters’ (2003) view that we must look to women as the solution to the talent problem, particularly because their strengths and attributes match the needs of the changing world. As stated by Hewlett and Luce (2005), organisations that are able to put policies and practices in place to optimise the continued involvement of female talent will have a distinct advantage.

Hewlett and Luce (2005) also explore the reasons for women to onramp and offramp from their careers. They suggest that there are factors that push and factors that pull women from the workplace. They regard pull factors as including the care of children, eldercare, personal wellness as well as domestic and home responsibilities. Push factors, they indicate, include a lack of meaningful, satisfying or stimulating work. These authors also state that when women feel pushed up against the glass ceiling (a push factor) then family pull is easier to yield to. Of the women who ‘offramped’, 93% intended to return to work. The reasons cited for these onramps included financial security in certain instances, but more importantly, focused on the fact that women want to work, in that their work provides them with a sense of fulfilment and identity and that they derive pleasure and satisfaction from working. Offers of flexibility, increased recognition and the possibility of telecommuting are also cited as factors encouraging an onramp. However, only 74% of those surveyed manage to onramp. As this research indicates, offramps have significant career progression and financial repercussions. Of those who manage to onramp, over 30% return to work on a part-time or self-employed basis. This is referred to in Hewlett and Luce’s (2005) research as the ‘scenic route’ and is usually part of a plan to more effectively balance work and family commitments.

A group that especially needs to be retained is those women in midlife or mid-career, who, according to Marcinkus, Whelan-berry and Gordon (2007), are likely to face even greater challenges in terms of elder care, the care of older children and showing their continued
competence in careers that may become less stimulating and more routine. As stated by Marcinkus et al (2007:88) “losing these women from the work force because balancing work and family has become too difficult has significant consequences for the availability of sufficient and productive human capital in organisations.” They emphasise the role that managers and organisations need to play in understanding, supporting and retaining this group of women. In fact, Allen (2001 as cited in Marcinkus et al 2007) indicates that when organisations are seen as less supportive of family, greater levels of work dissatisfaction, higher work-family conflict and reduced workplace commitment were evidenced.

As stated in Marcinkus et al (2007), research has shown that a supportive workplace coupled with supportive relationships enhances the work outcomes of employees and results in improved work-life balance. This research provides support for the concept that relationships across the employees’ network, organisational and personal, play a critical role in enabling the individual employee to achieve work satisfaction and career progression. As stated by these authors (2007:104) “organisations should continue to offer supportive organisational policies and train managers and other employees to identify and implement ways they can support midlife women’s efforts in balancing work and family.” It is anticipated that the manager-coach has an important role to play here.

This is especially true as Marcinkus et al (2007) indicate that women are often unlikely to request support from an organisation as this may be perceived as a lack of commitment. However, the support provided by managers and the organisation that showed an understanding of the pressures faced in balancing family and work commitments was viewed very positively.

Adding to this, and in light of the challenges of retaining women in organisations, Hewlett and Luce (2005) argue that organisations need to accept that committed, competent women are likely to choose to offramp at some stage in their career. They emphasise the importance of maintaining a connection with these women so that when they choose to onramp again, they are able to, without detriment to their career. They feel that this can be done through reduced hour roles, flexibility during the day, flexible careers and removing the stigma attached to working flexibly, factors outlined in the preceding section on work-life balance.
As Hewlett and Luce (2005) indicate, to retain women, organisations need to be more accommodating of these alternate ways of working.

The literature review has so far shown that coaching optimises employee learning and learning enables personal and work balance (Stout Rostron 2006). Coaching also optimises organisational change (Grant 2010), talent development and retention (Cormier 2007) whilst work-life balance can also be viewed as a retention strategy (Eikhof et al 2007; Hewlett 2007; McIntosh 2003). The link between coaching and work-life balance as a means of talent retention is thus apparent and women need to be retained in organisations for the contribution they can make.

Whilst this section has explored the realities of the woman in terms of career achievement, the role of the working woman as mother is also critical to the optimisation of work-life balance.

Gilbert et al (1981) indicate that the conflict career women who are mothers experience is due to the fact that they derive a high level of satisfaction out of both their professional and their maternal lives. This is supported by Sieber (1974 as cited in Gilbert et al 1981) who indicates that the role conflict experienced by professional women and caused by their multiple roles is more than balanced by the resources and benefits as well as the improved sense of self-worth that a professional role brings. The integration of these roles brings meaning and each one alone would not bring this meaning (Grady and McCarthy 2008; Friedland 2008).

Poduval and Poduval (2008:64) regard the working mother as “an institution in her own right” with this referring to her ability to effectively balance the demands of a career which brings financial freedom and flexibility with the responsibilities of caring for a family, particularly children. These authors reflect on the demands of this dual role and the pressures which are exerted in attempting at manage both effectively.

A woman’s choice to work, according to Poduval and Poduval (2009), may be due to material and financial needs or it may be driven by career aspirations. It is widely accepted that women are the primary caregivers. As a result, it is often the career of the woman that is impacted upon. Regardless of the reasons for working, these authors emphasise the need to
support working women and for an active support system to be in place. This aligns to this research and the role that the manager-coach can play in either providing this support themselves or in enabling the provision of it.

It is however important to bear in mind that not all women aspire to leadership positions or careers. Grady and McCarthy (2008) define three categories of working mothers:

- Women who reach top management positions (20%)
- Women who do not want to reach more senior levels and have achieved self-actualisation at the job level they entered on (10%)
- Women who have their own personal aspirations of promotion and have achieved some of these but have declined many due to the impact on the family (70%)

Different stresses are therefore experienced by women who are committed to both their career and their maternal role; as opposed to those working women who are either less committed to their work, or those who do not combine work with a maternal role.

The demands of commitment to a career and motherhood are simultaneous and continuous (Gilbert et al 1981) and exacerbated if the working woman (and her spouse) still holds traditional views of the maternal role (Lott 1973 as cited in Gilbert et al 1981). This is emphasised by Poduval and Poduval (2009) where they state that societal expectations often demand that women place their family responsibilities before their work or career. Gilbert et al (1981) continues by stating that feelings of guilt which appear to emanate from an internal value system are then experienced and may increase the role conflict felt. Unrealistic self-expectations of the maternal role may also place more pressure on the working woman than the children themselves.

It is important to therefore assist working women to develop a better understanding of their role conflicts. These are very individual and need to be viewed in light of the organisation’s views on flexibility, the working women’s degree of career commitment and the beliefs she has about life roles (Gilbert et al 1981). This is supported by Carr (2002) who emphasises the value of coaching for women. She indicates that coaching can assist women understand what they are doing and why with a view to achieving their optimal potential. Coaching also
provides women with the opportunity to search for answers to the questions which confront them and to understand and address the realities which are obstacles to their success. As Carr (2002:19) states “with the stress related work/home issues resolved through coaching women are able to focus on their work and their mission and they will find imaginative and creative ways to fulfil their differing roles.”

Wentling (2003) supports this by indicating that having a mentor enabled women to succeed as managers themselves, whilst having a manager who did not support career progression, being a woman and having family obligations were viewed as obstacles.

Other challenges that working women experience, as outlined by Poduval and Poduval (2009), include the high costs of childcare, high stress levels, lack of time, nutritional deficiencies, high levels of fatigue, the pressures of taking time off work to care for sick children and domestic responsibilities. These responsibilities are all in addition to the workplace and job responsibilities carried out by the working woman.

Grady and McCarthy (2008) add to this by stating that women take responsibility for the well-being of the family and are the primary caregiver, regardless of their work role. They continue by reinforcing the reality that, when forced to make a choice, working women regard their children as their top priority. However, they also value their career and the meaning they derive from this. Poduval and Poduval (2009), citing Wilson (2006), indicate that women often have to defend their choice to return to work. When the woman has to work, it appears to be more readily accepted than if the woman chooses to work. Ultimately, working for the benefit of the family, is deemed acceptable, whilst working for personal reasons and a sense of meaning is questioned. Societal pressures increase when success at work is achieved at the expense of home and family responsibilities. These authors do however also indicate that research reflects that mothers working can have a positive impact on children in terms of levels of depression, aggression and anxiety, although the converse is true for obesity levels in children. According to Poduval and Poduval (2008:76) “a working mother can, in fact, be a better mother.”

It is also stated by Grady and McCarthy (2008) that in addition to integrating the areas of work and family, women are increasingly looking at time for self-development. This is particularly apparent once child care responsibilities lessen (Grady and McCarthy 2008).
They emphasise that women can find meaning in choosing a career that best suits their needs and brings them meaning and balance, regardless of the level of this position. When women are able to successfully merge both of these areas, “work-life enrichment” results (Grady and McCarthy 2008:615). If working women receive workplace support assisting them to balance their work and time across their priority areas, then they can find meaning and purpose in all their roles which can benefit both the working woman and the organisation (Auster 2001 and Drew et al 2003 as cited in Grady and McCarthy 2008). However, they may need to accept that there are likely to be some areas that will not be perfect or ideal (Friedland 2008). The benefits of coaching for the working women, particularly those in leadership positions, is emphasised (Cormier 2007; Boninelli 2004).

Working women therefore face complex organisational and personal dynamics which shape the meaning they make and compete for priority. Balance within a family can only be achieved when personal and family lives are planned and organised in partnership with a supportive network and flexible workplace. Grady and McCarthy (2008:611) continue by stating that it is women’s “sense of meaning and fulfilment about motherhood that motivates them to successfully merge their family and work.”

According to Lui and Wilson (2001), women have become very competent at juggling their family and work lives and through this juggling and balancing, have learnt valuable skills applicable to the workplace. They regard women as being more likely than men to fulfil the participative style of leadership regarded as so critical to the success of 21st century organisations. These authors do however indicate that there needs to be a change in how men think of women in the workplace in order to fully optimise performance and business success. The manager-coach has a vital role to play in this process.
2.7 Conclusion of Literature Review

There are a number of women who choose to put their careers on hold, who attempt to achieve work-life balance by leaving the workplace for a time or choosing not to be optimally involved and engaged at work. Some women strive for flexible working practices, others strive for reduced hours or self-employment. Still others aim for fulfilment and meaning and try and merge work and family. There are other women who choose to focus on their career and make the decision to share their caring responsibilities with a family member or paid support. Regardless of the side of the equation the woman sits on, guilt, stress and uncertainty often result from this quest for work-life balance and the result is that both the working woman and the organisation suffer the consequences. Organisations need to retain talented individuals and they need to find creative ways to do so.

Research has shown that the percentage of women reaching senior and top management is small. Attempts must be made to encourage these talented women to increase their contribution to organisations in a way that meets their aspirations and goals, provides them with a sense of meaning and identity and enables them to fulfil their familial responsibilities and retain work-life balance.

The role of the manager-coach as a facilitator of learning and change has been emphasised in the literature and the fact that coaching is a key leadership responsibility means that there is a ready pool of (potential) coaches in organisations to facilitate the process of enhancing and optimising women’s involvement in the workplace in a way that meets their needs and those of the organisation. The role of the manager-coach is on-going and continual – due to the constant state of flux in organisations and the consistent family pressures faced by all parents but particularly working women, arrangements and ways of working need to be reviewed and adapted regularly to ensure optimum benefit to both the organisation and the working woman.

We therefore need to use this research to find ways to harness the potential of the women we have in the workplace. We need to know what they mean by optimal work-life balance, we need to understand the difficulties they face in achieving work-life balance and identify ways to provide adequate support so that they can continue to grow whilst fulfilling their
career and familial responsibilities. In this way, they will hopefully be able to achieve a measure of work-life balance coupled with meaning and fulfilment.

In addition to this, this research will assist in identifying what roles the manager-coach does and can play in this process and what skills manager-coaches require to optimise the work-life balance of the women they work with, lead and coach on an on-going basis.

2.7.1 Research Question 1:

What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?

2.7.2 Research Question 2:

What does optimal work-life balance mean?

2.7.3 Research Question 3:

What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that underpinned this research. The methodology is discussed and the research design, sampling techniques and research instrument are outlined. The methods of data collection that were used are outlined, in line with the relevant research methodology and the methods of data analysis that are pertinent to this research study are detailed.

3.1 Research methodology

This research study used an empirical, interpretivist and descriptive methodology to answer the three research questions. According to Remenyi and Money (2004), empirical research relies on that which is experienced or observed as the predominant source of evidence. The interpretivist or qualitative approach seeks non-numerical information. This approach thus applies directly to the research being conducted as the data will result from the expressed experiences of selected manager-coaches and working women in an organisation that has implemented the manager-coach approach. This research therefore follows a constructivist approach where ideas are important, everyone has their own reality and they bring to the research their own ideas and experiences. The research is descriptive in that the findings are analysed and described.

According to Remenyi and Money (2004), defining factors of a qualitative research approach include the fact that the researcher is not objective; the purpose of the research is to gain a detailed understanding of the research respondents’ views; small samples that are specifically selected are used; direct contact with respondents is required; the evidence gathered is comprehensive and detailed; and the analysis is open to new ideas.

All of these factors were fulfilled in this research study, supporting the choice of qualitative research as the research methodology.
3.2 Research Design

The research design comprised of two components. Firstly, the data was collected by means of in-depth, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with each of the respondents. Each interview took between 60 and 90 minutes and was guided by a series of open-ended questions designed to explore the research questions provided in Appendix B of this research report. Secondly, the findings resulting from the analysis of the data captured during the interview process was presented to and discussed with a focus group. Their responses to the findings were also captured and analysed.

Extensive qualitative data was required and the advantage of the chosen methodology, as applied to this research study, is that there was opportunity to explore further when appropriate, probing the responses received from the respondents. This provided a more robust and comprehensive response to the questions than a structured questionnaire or a survey would have provided. The researcher also had the opportunity to adjust questions as the interviews progressed when she felt that the data being collected was not appropriate or applicable to the research questions.

The interview questions were pre-tested and field-tested prior to the commencement of the research. This ensured that the questions were relevant and understandable.

The disadvantages were that the interview process generated a significant amount of data that needed to be transcribed and analysed. This was a time-consuming, detailed process but was factored into the research timetable.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

The research was carried out in a small Financial Services organisation who has implemented the manager-coach process. There are 150 employees in this organisation and approximately 60 managers at all levels have been trained in the fundamental principles of coaching. These managers are responsible for conducting coaching conversations with the
individuals who report directly to them. It is recommended that these conversations take place no less than once every two months. They have been applying their coaching skills for almost 3 years and this process has been formally evaluated once but is informally evaluated on an ongoing basis.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

A purposive sample was used, with respondents representing both manager-coaches and the working women who report to them. The manager-coaches were male as this is representative of the manager population within the selected organisation. The working women worked full-time or part-time, and were not necessarily mothers. No specific qualifications, position or career path was taken into account when selecting the sample, but every effort was made to ensure that the sample was demographically representative, as well as representative of the various levels within the organisation. This sampling method was appropriate to the specific information required and there was the risk that if a random sample was used, manager-coaches or working women would not form part of the sample resulting in invalid data.

Table 5: Profile of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of respondent type</th>
<th>Number sampled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager-coaches</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working women</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The working women respondents were drawn from administrator, junior, middle and senior management levels within the chosen organisation. The manager-coaches selected represented the middle, senior and executive management levels of the organisation. Manager-coaches and the individuals he/she coaches made up the sample. There were no instances in which the working woman but not their manager-coach, or vice versa, were interviewed. Both parties were interviewed in every instance. The reason the number of manager-coaches and number of working women interviewed are not equal is because 3 women reported to the same manager-coach. Two working women respondents were also
manager-coaches but these individuals were only interviewed once from the perspective of the working woman. One working woman respondent represented the focus group as a senior female manager-coach.

Table 6: Role/level of management of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of role/management level of respondents</th>
<th>Number sampled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working women</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Junior manager</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Middle manager</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manager-coaches</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Middle manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Executive manager</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The research instrument

A letter to the respondents outlining the research is included as Appendix A. This letter was sent to each possible respondent prior to their interview with the purpose being to inform them of the research and to request their participation. This letter was preceded by a short, face to face discussion with each respondent where the research was explained to them and their participation was personally requested.

The Interview questions are included as Appendix B. These questions were pre-tested and field tested but were also adjusted during the interviews to ensure accurate data collection and clarity during the interview process. These interview questions therefore served as a guideline to the interview. As the interviews were semi-structured, these questions were not strictly adhered to and when additional relevant information emerged, this was explored.
3.5 Procedure for data collection

The data was collected through the use of open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews. Probing was carried out, when required, in an open-ended manner as well.

The interviews were scheduled and carried out at the selected organisation’s premises. Detailed notes of the interviews were taken and all interviews were audiotaped. All interviews took place on a one-on-one basis during office hours. Each interview was then transcribed into a verbatim transcript (included as Appendix C – CD enclosed).

A second round of data collection took place once the initial results from the qualitative interviews were analysed. These findings were presented to and discussed with a focus group.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The data collected from the interviews conducted was analysed by means of descriptive analysis, qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis.

A conventional content analysis approach was used as the existing theory or literature on the area being researched is limited and pre-conceived categories were avoided (Hseish and Shannon 2005). According to these authors, the categories and names of categories therefore result from the data. Mayring (2000) refers to this as inductive category development.

Thematic analysis can be described as searching across a range of data to find meaning patterns that have been repeated (Braun and Clark 2006). The approach used in this research study was that of latent thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clark (2006:13), in that the “development of the themes themselves involves interpretative work, and the analysis that is produced is not just described but is already theorised.” It is stated by these authors that research using this approach aligns to the constructivist approach, which aligns with the stated paradigm for this research study.

Hseish and Shannon (2005) suggest that the following content analysis steps be followed:
- All data is thoroughly read to ensure complete understanding of the data as a whole
- Data is then read thoroughly to determine codes – this is done by identifying words which match a core or important concept
- The researcher makes notes of thoughts, ideas and initial analysis
- Codes that align to more than one key thought become apparent in this reading process and an initial coding system is identified
- Codes are then combined to form categories
- Categories are then grouped into relevant clusters
- 10 – 15 clusters can be identified

The steps and guidelines for thematic analysis are outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) as follows:

- Transcribe all data and check the transcripts back against the audiotapes
- Read through all data at least once before the coding process begins as patterns begin emerging
- Ensure familiarity with both the breadth and depth of the data, reading the data actively and repeatedly
- Once familiar with the data, an initial set of codes can be developed. As stated by Braun and Clark (2008:18) “the process of coding is part of the analysis as you are organising your data into meaningful groups.”
- Code as broadly as possible, systematically working through all of the data
- Data can be coded into as many different themes as are applicable to that data
- Data can also be left uncoded
- Combine codes into larger themes
- Reflect on and refine the themes
- Compile a thematic map, define and refine the themes by returning to the collated extracts of data for each theme
- A detailed analysis of each theme can be written
In combining a content analysis and thematic analysis approach, the following steps were followed in this research process:

- All transcripts were read to ensure understanding
- All transcripts were checked against the audio and reflected upon
- All transcripts were read again, with each passage or statement reflected upon to determine the general code that applied to it
- The relevant passages or statements from each transcript were extracted from the transcripts and placed in a spreadsheet per research question and split according to working women with children, working women without children and manager-coaches.
- Each research question in each transcript was dissected in this way, resulting in in series of spreadsheets containing data extracts/verbatim passages
- Each passage was then reviewed and coded based on what emerged from that extract
- Codes where then clustered together into themes
- Statements were coded into as many themes as they fitted and some statements were not coded
- Each passage was then colour-coded according to theme, with decisions made regarding which codes to include in each theme
- Each colour-coded passage was then grouped together in a separate document, thus combining the various research questions but separating the responses on theme
- These spreadsheets were used to inform the process of writing up the findings
- Once decisions on which themes to cluster together had been reviewed again, each statement pertaining to each theme was manually counted, re-reading each statement to ensure context was maintained
- Where a number of codes and themes were clustered together, the statements per code and theme were separately counted to provide a depth of detail that was reflected in the findings
- The data pertaining to each theme was reflected upon in the findings and described per research question
• The transcripts of the focus group were analysed according to the themes which had emerged from the interviews but not according to the clusters of themes
• The information obtained from the focus group was used to either corroborate or compare with the findings that emerged from the interviews
• Numerical, demographic data that emerged from the research was tabulated and described

This process resulted in a total of 1527 statements that were analysed and reflected upon in the findings.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this research study are that:

• Sampling was limited to one, selected organisation who has implemented a manager-coach process and the results may therefore not be readily transferable to organisations that have not followed such an approach
• The researcher is responsible for people development in the selected organisation and this may have limited the extent to which respondents expressed negative views about their role as manager-coach
• The researcher was responsible for interpreting the results of the study

3.8 Validity and reliability

Graneheim and Lundman (2003) state that research findings need to be trustworthy. These authors continue by stating that the terms validity and reliability are largely used for quantitative research, but are still broadly used for qualitative research as well. However, they suggest the use of the terms credibility and dependability as alternative ways to describe trustworthiness.
3.8.1 Validity

Credibility refers to the focus of the research study and makes reference to how well the data and the analysis focus on what has been intended. This can be measured through the respondent selection techniques used and the data gathering process, including how much data to collect. These authors suggest selecting participants with a range of experiences.

Focus was placed on applied research in that the results from the research were discussed in a focus group with a group of manager-coaches and working women who did not participate in the research study, except one participant who participated as a working woman in the interviews and a manager-coach in the focus group. Their responses were also analysed using thematic analysis. The results of the content and thematic analyses carried out were compared with and supported by the literature reviewed.

3.8.2 Reliability

As this research study follows a constructivist, interpretivist research methodology, the requirement for dependability was not met. Dependability refers to the extent to which data changes over time and as the interviewing process is an evolving one (Graneheim and Lundman, 2003) new insights were obtained and interpretations made which impacted on the following interviews. Each interview could therefore not be replicated and this impacted on the reliability or dependability of the research.
Chapter 4: Research findings

4.1 Introduction to the research findings

The findings of this research will be presented as follows:

- Respondent demographics
- Research question 1: What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?
- Research question 2: What does optimal work-life balance mean?
- Research question 3: What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?
- Organisational culture as applied to manager-coaching and work-life balance

4.2 Interview questions

To provide evidence on the research topic “The manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women” approximately 25 questions were asked of working women and their manager coaches. The questions were adapted slightly for each group of respondents.

The interview questions were structured around the three research questions, namely

1) What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?
2) What does optimal work-life balance mean?
3) What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?

The interviews began with questions on work-life balance, which aimed to explore what work-life balance means to the respondents, whether they regard work-life balance as important as well as the challenges they experience in achieving work-life balance.

To explore the realities faced by working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance, the questions focused on what those realities are, how the realities impact on their work-life balance as well as what provides them with a sense of meaning and fulfilment. Questions around the achievement of work-life balance within the context of these realities were then asked and emphasis was placed on what support could be provided to working women.
The questions on the roles and skills of the manager-coach were firstly structured around the role of the manager-coach, the role of the manager-coach in optimising work-life balance, the role that manager-coaching conversations can have organisationally as well as the skills a manager-coach does, and should, have.

4.3  Respondent demographics

To obtain a broad view and a representative range of data, 9 working women and their 7 respective manager-coaches were interviewed. All respondents were employees of the selected organisation.

The demographic information of the respondents is presented in table 7 on the following page.

The demographic information of the focus group is also presented.
## Table 7: Respondent demographic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Level in organisation</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Years in organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B. Commerce</td>
<td>4 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hotel School Diploma</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Junior manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>Honours Degree</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Middle manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BA LLB</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Manager-coaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Level in organisation</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Years in organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BComm LLB</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Middle Manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Executive manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post-graduate (Masters)</td>
<td>17 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Executive Manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Post-graduate (Masters)</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Executive manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>CA.SA</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Focus group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Level in organisation</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Years in organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>MBA, BSc, BCom</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Middle manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>CA. SA</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Junior manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Pregnant</td>
<td>Tertiary qualification</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Middle manager</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Matric &amp; Diploma</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Senior manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Junior manager</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Honours degree</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Matric</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Findings for research question 1: The roles and skills of the manager-coach

What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?

4.4.1 The roles of the manager-coach

In response to the interview questions aligned to the research question “What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?”, the following graph provides an overview of the results. These will be detailed in the following sub-sections.

The roles of the manager-coach

Graph 1 - Number of statements pertaining to the roles of the manager-coach
4.4.1.1 Communicating

A key aspect to emerge in terms of the role of the manager-coach was communicating, with the term ‘open’ being used 25 times in the contexts of open to sharing; open door policy; open to possibilities; open to suggestions; opening up; open channels of communication and open conversations. Communicating, as a key role of the manager-coach, comprises:

- Communication
- Being present and showing interest
- Directing and collaborating

The 108 statements regarding communicating as a key manager-coach role and as reflected in graph 1, are therefore made up of:

![Communication Pie Chart]

*Graph 2 - Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in communicating*

4.4.1.1.1 Communication

The role of the manager-coach in enabling communication was reflected upon in 67 statements.

Within this, there were 22 statements made by working women and manager-coaches indicating comfort in discussing personal issues compared with 2 statements by working women reflecting that personal issues are not discussed. One manager expressed a
measure of discomfort in discussing personal issues during manager-coaching conversations, although the same manager indicated that he does so if the situation requires it.

**Communication - discussing personal issues**

![Graph 3 - Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in communicating about personal issues in manager-coaching conversations](image)

The focus group supported the relevance of open communication.

4.4.1.1.2 **Being present and showing interest**

The importance of the manager-coach expressing interest in employees, being approachable, attuned, paying attention and showing presence was reflected upon in 17 statements. One respondent indicated that managers need to be trained in how to fulfil these requirements.

The relevance of a manager-coach being present is reflected in the following statement

“because my style has been to rather be available whenever you want to come and talk to me, but then you can only have five minutes, and what I am learning is that what is much more valuable is for dedicated blocks of time for people to sit down in front of me with completely undivided attention and to actually talk through stuff which may seem trivial to me, but is important to them.” (Respondent 16; Executive manager)

The focus group supported the importance of showing interest and presence.
4.4.1.3 Directing and collaborating

The degree to which the manager-coach is expected to be directive in their approach was mentioned **10 times**. The statements regarding being directive referred to manager-coaches being a sounding board, helping employees work through their personal issues, actively assisting employees in dealing with work issues and providing solutions, options and advice.

In contrast, **14 statements** were made about the importance of the manager-coach taking a collaborative approach and working with employees to solve any difficulties.

**Role of the manager-coach in directing and collaborating**

![Graph 4 - Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in directing and collaborating](image)

Support for a collaborative style is shown in the statement below

"Women are more communicative and want a more communicative and interactive management style and my view is that they resolve issues and find fulfilment in communication and kind of bonding, and feeling a kind of self-worth through communication, so it seems, to me anyway, that it is a natural way to manage women instead of ‘you do this because I am the boss.’” (Respondent 14; executive manager)

The focus group felt that the need to be either directive or collaborative would depend on the level of those being coached, their experience and their performance.
4.4.1.2 Optimising flexibility and choice

The role of the manager-coach in optimising flexibility and choice for working women emerged strongly, with **75 statements** made regarding this. This was detailed as follows. The manager-coach:

**Graph 5 - Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager coach in enabling flexibility and choice**

Within this, **12 statements** were made by working women reflecting that the manager-coach is the person who enables flexibility in their job, and that it is up to the working woman to establish that arrangement with their manager-coach and tailor-make a solution. This is reflected in the following statement:

“...achieving this is sort of trial and error – we try things and if it doesn’t work, then we try something else, so being open to suggestions and honest as well, so if it is not working, tell me and we will come up with another solution.” (Respondent 9; junior manager)

However, the focus group felt that too much pressure is placed on the manager-coach to find and implement a solution. They strongly felt that the working woman has to be more
empowered and proactive in achieving her own work-life balance and in taking responsibility regarding it.

Within this, there were also 11 statements reflecting that the role manager-coaches take in optimising flexibility should take the needs of each woman and job into account and should be individualised for each employee.

The focus group also felt that a ‘one size fits all solution’ would not work and that an individualised approach would need to be taken, although the lack of consistency may then become problematic. They also felt that getting to an individualised solution for each person would be time-consuming.

4.4.1.3 Facilitating growth and development

There were 47 statements made regarding the role the manager-coach takes in facilitating growth, learning and development. These statements referred to skills development, career growth, career pathing and on-going training.

This is reflected in the following statement

“I always come out of coffee conversations looking at ‘what have I learnt from this conversation, what can I do better?’” (Respondent 5; junior manager)

The focus group strongly indicated that employees need to be more empowered and take responsibility for their own development, stating that expecting a manager-coach to be responsible for the employees’ development is a very traditional approach.

In addition to this, the development of the manager-coach was referred to in 5 statements as is evident in the following statement

“It is continual learning, especially for me, it is still pretty new to me, so every day is something different and something new.” (Respondent 6; middle manager)

In line with this, the focus group suggested an individualised learning solution for each manager-coach.
4.4.1.4 Enabling performance and providing recognition

The role of the manager-coach was linked to performance, feedback and recognition, particularly by working women. Working women made 32 statements regarding the role of the manager-coach in managing performance, providing feedback and/or recognition, in comparison to 12 statements by manager-coaches.

A total of 44 statements regarding performance, feedback and recognition were noted. Within this, 4 statements were made regarding output-based versus input-based performance in the context of the manager-coach’s role in optimising performance, with it being felt that it is easier to manage the performance of those who are output-based.

The focus group felt that performance should determine who is allowed flexibility and indicated that

“That is where flexibility comes with a caveat of performance and output.” (Focus group)
4.4.1.5 Understanding the working woman

The role that the manager-coach plays in understanding the working woman’s personal problems and circumstances was apparent, with 42 statements made regarding the importance of the manager-coach’s awareness and understanding of working women, the choices they may have to make and the issues they may be confronted with.

This is supported by the following statement:

“It is important for a manager and coach to understand each of their employees, what drives them, what their goals are, what gets them to work every morning, what fulfils them and what their challenges are.” (Respondent 13; middle manager)

Statements about understanding pertained to:

- Understanding the working woman holistically (13)
- Ad hoc statements regarding understanding (8)
- Understanding the issues faced by working women (7)
- Understanding the working woman’s family life and responsibilities (5)
- Understanding the woman’s goals and priorities (5)
- Understanding the woman at work (4)

*Graph 7 - Number of statements pertaining to the role of the manager-coach in understanding working women*
Understanding the woman holistically is summarised in this statement

“the whole conversation is about understanding what issues the person has, you talk about their future, where they want to go and how they can get there and whether you support them or not, how you can support them and that for me is what would give them that idea of belonging within the organisation.” (Respondent 8; senior manager)

It was stated that regular, open conversations and understanding form the basis on which to have difficult conversations or raise work-life balance issues.

However, the focus group felt that, although understanding is important, the manager-coach is never going to understand the employee 100%. They also felt it is important that the manager-coach does not get pulled into a therapeutic or parental role.

4.4.1.6 Goal setting, planning and aligning expectations

The role of manager-coaching conversations in setting goals, planning and aligning expectations in the workplace was reflected in 39 statements.

4.4.1.7 Providing support

The role of the manager coach in providing support to working women was reflected upon in 34 statements. This is reflected in the following statement

“I think it is a very supportive role because, if you know it’s fine to be achieving your work-life balance and doing what you need to do to get there, and if your manager supports you then you have won the battle because they are on your side.” (Respondent 9; junior manager)

4.4.1.8 The regularity and informality of manager-coaching conversations

The importance of manager-coaching conversations taking place on a regular and informal basis emerged in 22 statements by both manager-coaches and working women.
4.4.1.9 Building relationships and trust

The concept of relationships, as part of the manager-coach role, emerged from both manager-coach’s and working women’s responses, however only 9 statements about relationships were made.

Trust emerged as part of the relationship the working women has with the manager-coach although it was only mentioned in 6 statements. As one working women reflected,

“...it is all about trusting him, I mean there are some things you just can’t share with anyone but if there is going to be coaching, he is going to listen to you and he is going to be able to give you some advice or coach you on how to cope with that situation. Then it improves productivity.” (Respondent 7; administrator)

The focus group did however refer to the importance of trust and endorsed the importance of sound relationships.
4.4.2 Manager-coach’s skills

The manager-coach skills were explored in terms of the skills felt to be in place, important and required, skills to be developed and finally, ways to develop these skills. The responses are outlined in the next sections.

4.4.2.1 Required manager-coach skills

There were a broad range of manager-coach skills which emerged as being important and required, as reflected in the graph below.

The skills of the manager-coach

Graph 8 - Number of statements pertaining to the skills of the manager-coach
The skill of taking a holistic view and understanding is reflected in this statement:

“I do seek to spend time on understanding and, to an appropriate extent, getting to know the woman, the whole woman, which means understanding her non-work context and showing a concern for her challenges, to the extent again that she meets those challenges.” (Respondent 10; executive manager)

Emphasis was placed on the level of skills required in a manager-coach, with the reflection being made that this is linked to the level of those being coached.

4.4.2.2 Skills to develop further

A range of skills that require further development emerged from both the manager-coaches’ and working women’s responses. These were all ad hoc responses made by individual manager-coaches or working women and included:

- being more clear on the organisation’s expectations
- providing more critical feedback
- being more prepared

This is reflected in this statement

“nothing demonstrates being caring like a well prepared discussion.” (Respondent 10; executive manager)

- developing deep probing skills
- providing more structure
- developing listening and soft skills further
- exploring uncomfortable issues
- addressing underperformance issues
- shifting from giving advice

This is demonstrated in the following statement

“Sometimes I have a tendency to have my own view and I feel as though I end up giving advice, and hearing what I want to hear instead of listening with a sort of balanced ear, so it is maybe something I just have to consciously work on.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)
• being present
• developing a better understanding of the requirements of the day-to-day role and the time tasks take
• to more fully understand the views of women in the workplace

The focus group felt that it was imperative that manager-coaches learn to empower others.

To further develop their skills, the need for manager-coaches to experience coaching was expressed.

4.4.2.3 Development approaches

In terms of ways to further develop their skills, the following ad hoc responses were made by manager-coaches. They felt that they could:

• ask working women for feedback on what they feel is working well for them and not working
• receive leadership development training
• receive coaching
• receive manager-coaching
• receive mentoring
• work on developing relationships further so that understanding can be enhanced
• continually develop technical knowledge
• enable thoughtfulness
• improve preparedness
• build coaching techniques

It emerged from respondents that the interaction that the manager-coach has with their own manager-coach provides a model on how to coach. A respondent reflected that one is not able to develop one’s own skills and filter them down if one is not also having manager-coaching conversations.
4.5  Findings for research question 2: Optimal work-life balance

What does optimal work-life balance mean?

4.5.1  Optimal work-life balance

In response to the interview questions aligned to the research question “What does optimal work-life balance mean?”, the following graph provides an overview of the results. These will be detailed in the following sub-sections. Optimal work-life balance means:

**Optimal work-life balance**

- Support (93) (section 4.5.1.1)
- Choices (73) (section 4.5.1.2)
- Time (46) (section 4.5.1.3)
- Flexibility (42) (section 4.5.1.4)
- Balancing dual roles (40) (section 4.5.1.5)
- Achieving happiness (34) (section 4.5.1.6)
- Income and organisational level (31) (section 4.5.1.7)

*Graph 9 - Number of statements pertaining to what optimal work-life balance means*
4.5.1.1 Support

Emphasis was placed on the support systems required to optimise work-life balance, with 93 statements made regarding this (including the 34 statements regarding manager-coach support which were included in the preceding section on the role of the manager-coach).

Support was broken down as follows:

**Support as a factor of work-life balance**

- Manager-coach support (34)
- Organisational support (13)
- People support (maid, driver, au pair, friend, parents) (10)
- Practical support (facilities at work) (9)
- Overall support (8)
- Support through technology (5)
- Team support (5)
- Professional support (3)
- Spousal support (3)
- Management support (2)
- Emotional support (1)

*Graph 10 - Number of statements pertaining to support as a factor of optimal work-life balance*

The concept of manager-coach support is illustrated by the extract below:

“You want to have a relationship with your boss where he understands if there are any pressures in your life and how you plan on addressing them, so it doesn’t need to be anything major, just an understanding so that the support is there.” (Respondent 13; middle manager)
4.5.1.2 Choices

It was strongly stated in 73 statements that work-life balance is about having options and choices, as shown in this statement

“Work-life balance means that neither your work nor your life is detrimentally affected by one or the other in my view; so optimal work-life balance I guess means – in my mind – options, so flexibility.” (Respondent 15; senior manager)

These options relate to choosing when to come to work, how to structure one’s work day, choosing when to take time off and whether to work at all, for example. This was strongly supported by the focus group.

4.5.1.3 Time

The concept of time being integral to work-life balance emerged in 46 statements. This is reflected in this statement

“I think work-life balance for me is just being happy that I have been able to spend the adequate amount of time on everything that is important to me - and work is as important to me as my personal life” (Respondent 13; middle manager)

4.5.1.4 Flexibility

Work-life balance was also regarded as being about having flexibility. The terms flexible, flexible options and alternatives were used, with the concept flexibility emerging in 42 statements.

Flexibility applies to logistical and time flexibility but also to creating an environment conducive to flexibility, as shown in this statement

“It’s about creating an environment that gives enough opportunity and flexibility to minimise that tug of war that happens, without demeaning the professional side of the role, or in fact, being so rigid that they can’t deal with the demands of family and work and their role outside of work.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)
4.5.1.5 Balancing dual roles

There were 40 statements made about the need for women to balance their dual roles (work and family responsibilities) in order to achieve work-life balance. This is reflected in the following statement

“I would ideally like to be able to say, this and this is what I need, this is what the job entails and would I be able to get that balance right and have the time with my child and get my job done?” (Respondent 9; junior manager)

4.5.1.6 Achieving happiness

The relevance of positive emotions such as happiness and well-being emerged in 34 responses in terms of the achievement of work-life balance, meaning and fulfilment.

Happiness was spoken of with regards to being happy splitting one’s time between work and family, being happy about going to work and obtaining fulfilment from work.

When asked what work-life balance would look like and feel like, a respondent described it as follows:

“It would feel like summer all of the time... you know, a lazy warm comfortable happy summer’s day, that is the perfect balance!” (Respondent 8; senior manager)

4.5.1.7 Income and organisational level

In terms of the optimal work-life balance and the achievement thereof, the issue of income emerged in 27 statements.

The focus group agreed that achieving work-life balance is a lot easier if one earns more money and stated

“It has to be a lot easier for a woman earning a lot more money, you can afford to have a maid, maybe a driver. It might not take the guilt away but certainly takes the stress away”. (Focus group)
Income was linked to organisational level with 4 statements reflecting that your level at work can make it harder or easier to achieve work-life balance.

“I think level within the organisation around remuneration and earning power, although money doesn’t make you happy, the bigger your earning power the more options and flexibility you have got around achieving work-life balance.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)

The focus group agreed that achieving work-life balance is easier when one is at a higher level in the organisation and if one is a manager, rather than responsible for work tasks.
4.6 Findings for research question 3: Realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance

What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?

4.6.1 Realities facing working women

In response to the interview questions aligned to the research question “What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?”, the following graph provides an overview of the results. These will be detailed in the following sub-sections. The realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance are:

The realities facing working women in attempting to achieving work-life balance

- Conflict (95) (section 4.6.1.1)
- The need for achievement (56) (section 4.6.1.2)
- The need for fulfilment and a sense of meaning (35) (section 4.6.1.3)
- Guilt and sacrifice (35) (section 4.6.1.4)
- Lack of time (28) (section 4.6.1.5)
- The need to belong (25) (section 4.6.1.6)
- Commitment to family (21) (section 4.6.1.7)
- Switching off from work (14) (section 4.6.1.8)

Graph 11 - Number of statements pertaining to the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance
4.6.1.1 Conflict

Conflict emerged very strongly from the responses, with 95 statements made regarding the conflict working women experience, and reflected as follows:

Conflict as a reality facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance

- Role conflict, sacrifice and the pull of family versus career (58)
- Guilt at having flexible work arrangements (10)
- Spousal conflict (9)
- Work to family and family to work spillover (6)
- Feeling like one is never giving or achieving enough (6)
- Ad hoc statements regarding conflict (6)

Graph 12 - Number of statements pertaining to conflict as a reality facing working women attempting to achieve work-life balance

The role conflict referred to in the 58 statements indicated above is captured by the following extract,

“So that continual pull – your basic needs in terms of mothering or in terms of family, those are my pull – that internal pull, to want to go and have time to do those things and then not have the time to actually do them. You continually feel inadequate that, if you are doing them at work, then you are not doing your work properly, and then at home you are thinking, well, I should be at work. It’s a ridiculous situation.”

(Respondent 12; middle manager)
4.6.1.2 Need for Achievement

The need for achievement and achieving dominated the results. There were 56 statements made regarding achievement.

In the responses, emphasis on achievement applied to careers and family. The focus group however expressed concern with this and the fact that achievement was not more broadly applied in the responses, in other words, the lack of mention of achievement in social activities and sport for instance.

4.6.1.3 Need for fulfilment and a sense of meaning

With regards to the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance, the need for fulfilment and a sense of meaning was reflected upon in 35 statements and is shown in the statement below

“...it’s about me being many things; it’s about being a career woman, it’s about being a mother, it’s about being a wife, it’s about being a daughter, being a sister - all these different roles which we play in life, and there’s a certain fulfilment that you get out each of those relationships.” (Respondent 1; senior manager)

4.6.1.4 Guilt and sacrifice

There were also 35 statements made regarding feelings of guilt and sacrifice. These responses were supported by the focus group, as is reflected in this statement

“I think it [guilt] has got to be there, I can’t see it not being there, because at the end of the day you are not doing any one of the two at 100%. So you are giving up something and the moment you are giving up something there has got to be guilt attached to it.” (Focus group)

The notion of sacrifice, in achieving work-life balance, is evident in the statement below,

“It’s like their conscience – I want to get ahead in the company but in order to do that I need to sacrifice certain things and is it alright if I sacrifice it? Do I sacrifice my work to be with my family or do I sacrifice time with my family to get ahead at work? And then your conscience pricks you because you are neglecting your family.” (Respondent 11; senior manager)
In support of these statements, some members of the focus group felt that achieving balance is not possible due to the constant conflict experienced and they felt that something always needs to be sacrificed. However, other members of the focus group felt that if one is focusing on what one wants to focus on, then it is not a sacrifice but rather a choice. They did however agree that money would be sacrificed if one chooses to work less hours. They indicated that the impact of that is less promotional possibility, with that being the cause of tremendous conflict.

4.6.1.5 Lack of time

The lack of time, in terms of a reality experienced by working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance, was expressed 28 times, with 22 of those statements coming from working women with children and 5 statements coming from working women without children. One manager-coach made mention of limited time. This is reflected in the diagram to follow.

(These 28 statements exclude the 46 statements made regarding time from the perspective of what optimal work-life balance means.)

![Lack of time Graph](Diagram)

Difficulties around finding the time to juggle what needs to be done were consistently expressed by these working women. A sense of urgency was reflected, with it being stated that
“Every minute of every day does count; it feels like every minute of every day is a constant timeline with no freedom to slip up.” (Respondent 1; senior manager)

4.6.1.6 The need to belong

There were 13 statements made regarding the need to belong as a reality faced in attempts to achieve work-life balance and as enabled by manager-coaching conversations, and, in addition to this, 12 statements referred to the importance of being connected to and within the organisation and the impact of not being able to socialise at work, due to family responsibilities. This was strongly supported by the focus group. The focus group indicated that by not being involved in those social events, the woman is the outsider, even when she is not. They did however feel that the involvement of both men and women in social events is improving.

4.6.1.7 Commitment to family

The commitment to family, with family and children being regarded as a priority in a woman’s life, was evident in 21 statements.

This is reflected in the following statement,

“I think the reality is, family is the most important thing in women’s lives and taking care of that family as best as we possibly can, that is a big part of motivation.” (Respondent 13; middle manager)
4.6.1.8 Switching off from work

Difficulties in being able to switch off from work were expressed in 14 responses, with 12 of those responses coming from working women without children. This was strongly supported by the focus group. The men in the focus group felt that they were able to switch off as were most of the women with children, but the women without children found it difficult to do.

Difficulties in switching off from work

- Difficulties in switching off from work according to working women without children (12)
- Difficulties in switching off from work according to working women with children (2)

**Graph 14 - Number of statements pertaining to the difficulties experienced in switching off from work as a reality facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance**

Issues regarding switching off that were reflected included thinking about work, stressing about work, needing to sort out difficulties after hours, and finding it difficult to let go and delegate to team members and trusting them to deliver. The issue of switching off is summarised by these statements,

“It is not only to leave work behind, but the pressure and the stress, and not having this guilt or nagging feeling and being emotionally absent at home because you are thinking about work. It is quite difficult to cut off from thinking about the ten things you need to do tomorrow, when you are with your family.” (Respondent 1; senior manager)

“I am thinking about it (a work problem/email) the whole time (after hours), so my biggest challenge is I can’t switch off.” (Respondent 13; middle manager)
4.7 Organisational culture as applied to manager-coaching and work-life balance

In addition to the findings presented in sections 4.4; 4.5 and 4.6, **170 statements** pertaining to organisational culture became apparent and a summary of these findings has been included as well. These responses emerged from the interview questions relating to all three research questions as well as the focus group.

A summary of these findings is presented below.

Organisational culture, manager-coaching and work-life balance

- **Creating a culture of work-life balance** (71) (section 4.7.1)
- **The value of manager-coaching within the organisational context** (63) (Section 4.7.2)
- **Male-dominated environment** (20) (section 4.7.3)
- **The perceptions of women and their traditional role** (16) (section 4.7.4)

*Graph 15 - Number of statements pertaining to organisational culture, manager-coaching and work-life balance*
4.7.1 Creating a culture of work-life balance

The relevance of creating and maintaining a culture that enables work-life balance was reflected on in 71 statements, as summarised in the graph below:

Creating a culture of work-life balance

![Graph 16 - Number of statements pertaining to creating a culture of work-life balance](image)

Creating a culture of work-life balance is captured in the following statement

“Part of our thing is that we need to have a work-life balance; it's part of our daily culture and then it needs to be managed across the organisation to all levels.”

(Respondent 12; middle manager)

4.7.2 The value of manager-coaching within the organisational context

A total of 63 statements were made regarding the value of manager-coaching.

Within this, the role of the manager-coach and manager-coaching conversations in optimising the employee’s organisational understanding as well as providing a holistic view of the individual’s job was shown in 25 statements. This is reflected in the statement below

“I have never seen this working in organisations, so I think it’s such a fantastic tool to get to know your staff and to – whatever you want to do – it’s a lovely informal way of facilitating pretty much anything. So it’s whatever the organisation wants.”

(Respondent 12; middle manager)
In addition to this, **10 statements** were made regarding the value of manager-coaching conversations to the organisation.

The role of manager-coaching conversations in assisting in the retention of employees was also reflected in **28 statements** made by both working women and manager-coaches.

These statements are reflected in the graph below:

### The value of manager-coaching in the organisational context

- **25** statements: Optimising organisational understanding and providing a holistic view
- **10** statements: Value of manager-coaching conversations
- **28** statements: Retention of employees

**Graph 17 - Number of statements pertaining to the value of manager-coaching**

The focus group felt flexibility was used to aid retention and reflected on the relevance of an appropriate management style to aid work-life balance, emphasising the importance of respect for one’s manager.

In terms of the disadvantages of manager-coaching conversations, it was stated by one respondent that poor manager-coaching conversations were linked to poor organisational decisions. However, on the positive side, another respondent indicated that manager-coaching conversations enable an understanding that, within constraints, a working woman has the freedom to choose. In support of the latter, the focus group indicated that achieving balance was indicative of the success of the manager-coaching relationship.

As a manager-coach reflected,

> “They (manager-coaching conversations) are very, very important and they are essential – but I am only learning that now.” (Respondent 16; executive manager)
4.7.3 Male-dominated environment

It was consistently and strongly stated in 20 statements by 6 of the 7 manager-coaches interviewed that they feel women have to prove themselves in a male-dominated environment, especially if they are at a management level.

The realities facing women are summed up by this statement,

“...so the realities facing women are that they earn less, they have to prove themselves far more often to get anywhere, they are often overlooked for promotions, I think they are often expected to fulfil support roles, rather than allowed to fulfil managerial roles, they are not given the flexibility which allows them to achieve a work-life balance.” (Respondent 16; executive manager)

The focus group found the notion of a male-dominated environment very interesting and commented that it seems as if men see it as an obstacle whereas women do not.

4.7.4 The perceptions of women and their traditional role

The traditional role and perceptions of women in the workplace was referred to in 16 statements, with 4 statements indicating that this traditional role is changing. The focus group felt that traditional roles and responsibilities have changed, driven largely out of the financial necessity of both partners needing to earn an income.

In Chapter 5, these findings will be analysed and discussed, with corresponding links made to the relevant literature, as presented in the literature review detailed in Chapter 2.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and discussion chapter of this research report focuses on analysing the results of the findings presented in Chapter 4, placing these findings in context with the literature presented in Chapter 2, making inferences and then discussing these inferences. The chapter will be presented according to the three research questions and will conclude with an overall findings summary on the outcome of the research. This chapter will be followed by a final chapter which will conclude the report and make recommendations for further research.

A total of 1527 statements made by respondents were analysed. In this analysis chapter, focus is placed on the most prevalent findings. This is not to say that the other findings are not relevant – they are key to the research but brevity does not allow for all of these statements to be commented on in this analysis and discussion. The focus will therefore be on the statements which accounted for over 10% of the statements made in each section of each research question.

As part of these 1527 statements, 170 statements were made regarding organisational culture. As these findings extend beyond the scope of this research report, the analysis will not focus on these findings except to say that organisational culture is integrally linked to both the concepts of work-life balance and the role of the manager-coach. The role of the manager-coach takes place within an organisational context and there needs to be an awareness of the systemic factors at play. The extent to which the organisational culture promotes and encourages the achievement of work-life balance by working women and the role of the manager-coach is an area that would greatly benefit from further research.
5.1 The roles and skills of the manager-coach

The first research question is “What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?”

To answer this question, the roles of the manager-coach are analysed and discussed first, followed by the skills of the manager-coach.

5.1.1 The roles of the manager-coach

The findings of this research showed a total of 426 statements made regarding the roles of the manager-coach. All roles comprising over 10% of the total statements made are reflected in this analysis. Therefore, the primary roles that a manager-coach assumes, as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women, are as follows:

As indicated in the graph, the two primary roles of the manager-coach which have emerged are communicating; and optimising flexibility and choice which account for 53% of the responses. These are then supported by the role of facilitating growth and development.
The role of ‘understanding the working woman’ comprised 10% of the responses and on analysis, the researcher felt that understanding aligned with communication and this has therefore been combined with the communication role and the resulting score. Each of these findings are analysed and discussed below.

5.1.1.1 Communicating

The findings of this research reflected that the primary role that a manager-coach fulfils, within the context of optimising the work-life balance of working women, is one of communicating, with this accounting for 35% of the statements made on the role of the manager-coach. Communicating included four elements:

- Communication
- Being present and showing interest
- Directing and collaborating
- Understanding

It was stated in the literature that coaching should be a collaborative conversation (Rock and Page 2009) and the value of communicating was continually referred to by the respondents. Communicating as a key manager-coach role is therefore at the very heart of manager-coaching.

5.1.1.1.1 Communication

Communication, the first component of the communicating role, included the ability of the manager-coach to communicate openly and effectively with the women reporting to them, as well as to understand the working woman holistically and communicate regarding this. This is reflected in the following statement,

“(the role of the manager-coach)...just to be a sounding board in terms of your job and things that you are involved in and your personal complexities, and help you work through a lot of your personal issues that impact on your working life and outside – to have a manager that you are able to chat to; and to facilitate your career within the organisation, either up or laterally.” (Respondent 12; middle manager)
This finding aligns with the literature although the literature does not strongly emphasise communication specifically as a role, rather inferring that communication is a crucial part of coaching, with coaching being a conversation (Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Wall 2007; Ladyshewsky 2010; Goleman et al 2002). Communication as a skill emerged strongly in both the literature and findings and will be dealt with under manager-coach skills.

Of the statements made regarding whether personal issues are communicated on, 92% of statements reflected that manager-coaches and working women alike were comfortable discussing personal issues. This is in contradiction to the literature, which indicated that, due to the boundary sensitivities of the manager-coach role, the focus is generally not on intensely personal issues (Fillery-Travis and Lane 2006; Baron and Morin 2010). This finding is however in line with the researcher’s experience of the selected organisation and the inference can be made that the willingness to discuss personal issues can possibly be attributed to pre-existing, long term relationships which exist as well as the possibility that the organisational culture encourages employee connectedness, sharing and having crucial and robust conversations. This is an area that could be researched further.

5.1.1.1.2 Being present and showing interest

The importance of the manager-coach being present and showing interest in employees was apparent in the findings. The value of showing interest in one’s employees is emphasised by Goleman et al (2002) where he states that through developing a relationship and holding conversations with one’s employees, true interest is shown. This possibly aligns with the previous findings on the disclosure and discussion of personal issues. If a strong foundational relationship is developed, interest is shown and the employee is viewed holistically, it is likely that communication between the two will be enhanced and increased sharing will result. It is the researcher’s view that being present and showing interest also greatly enhances understanding.

5.1.1.1.3 Directing and collaborating

The role that the manager-coach takes in either directing or collaborating during manager-coach conversations emerged from the findings and is extensively discussed in the literature.
The findings showed a relatively even split in views between whether manager-coaches should be and are directive or collaborative in their approach, with it also being stated that at times a combined approach is called for. It also appears that being directive or collaborative are not mutually exclusive in that most manager-coaches seem to move between the two, depending on the demands of the situation.

Both manager-coaches and working women reflected that the manager-coach is often expected to provide advice on how to cope with a situation, to provide ideas on how to overcome obstacles and to provide the employee with focus and direction. Some manager-coaches acknowledged that they need to become more enabling and empowering of their employees, rather than doing what is required. It was still felt that advice would be given but that this was preferable to actually carrying out the task. This is supported by Zeus and Skiffington’s view (2000), where they feel that a manager-coach must still tell, give advice and direct, coupled with the ability to empower and develop the performance of one’s employees. This blended view is supported by the following statement

“...so the role of the manager-coach is to give you guidance but when there is a clear inability, then step in and try and get involved.” (Respondent 15; senior manager)

In contrast, the findings also reflected on the value of the manager-coach taking a collaborative approach, with the importance of give and take being emphasised. The collaborative approach referred to working together to find alternatives and suggestions, working through options and exploring solutions, based on a thorough understanding of the situation and the use of a partnership approach. This is in line with the views expressed in the literature review, where the benefits of the manager-coach being non-directive in approach are strongly emphasised by Buys (2010).

In support of this continuum of directing to collaborating, the literature refers to Downey’s (2003) model “The spectrum of coaching skills” which highlights the range of skills the coach can use to move from being directive to non-directive.

Based upon the findings and the literature, it would appear that the leadership style of the manager-coach and the performance levels of the employee impact on the extent to which the manager-coach directs and collaborates. As one moves towards using the
more collaborative, coaching leadership style that is highlighted as being more effective in today’s workplace (Goleman et al 2002; Stein 2007; Ladyshewsky 2010; Wall 2007; Buys 2010), so the manager-coach learns to become more non-directive and participative. However, it is also the researcher’s view that the stance taken on this continuum would be a function of the time available to the manager-coach as well as the manager-coach’s stress levels and personality coupled with the organisational culture within which manager-coaching is taking place. It is felt that this is an area of future research.

5.1.1.1.4 Understanding the working woman

Understanding is cited in the literature as a key coaching skill (Goleman et al 2002; Longnecker 2010; Healy et al 2001; Rogers (1957) as cited in de Haan et al), although not specifically as a manager-coach role. Understanding however emerges noticeably in the findings. In terms of coaching, it seems that understanding is regarded as an inherent coaching competency and almost ‘taken for granted’ and part of the coaching ‘way of being and leading’ referred to by Buys (2007), Whitmore (2002) and Barry (1994). The true intricacies of manager-coaching are that the manager-coach is both manager and coach and, as reflected in the literature (Phillips 2006; Geber 1992; Barry 1994; Ellinger and Bostrum 1999), this role does pose challenges. As the skills of management have traditionally been around controlling, directing, being the expert and giving advice, understanding may not always have emerged as a core management skill (Ellinger et al 2005; Ellinger and Bostrum 1999). As the manager-coach makes the transition to a coaching style and understanding is shown, this may be noticed by the employees who report to that manager-coach, hence it’s emergence in these findings.

The decision was therefore made to combine the role ‘understanding the working woman’ with the role ‘communicating’ as it is the researcher’s view that, through communication, being present, taking an interest and being collaborative, the manager-coach is therefore able to develop an understanding of the working woman. It was apparent from the responses received that understanding is key to effective manager-coaching relationships and was regarded as being aligned to the achievement of work-life balance. Most prominent in this is the ability of the manager-coach to understand the working woman holistically and, based on this understanding, to agree on an
individualised solution that best meets her needs. This is expanded upon in the role that
the manager-coach plays in optimising flexibility and choice.

5.1.1.2 Optimising flexibility and choice

The findings reflect that the manager-coach plays an important role in optimising the flexibility and choice of working women, with this accounting for 18% of the statements made on the role of the manager-coach. Specifically, the role that the manager-coach plays in maintaining a flexible approach when interacting with employees was most apparent in the findings. Allied to this, it was also reflected that the manager-coach is open to suggestions and requests for increased flexibility, whether it be time to fetch children from school, flexi-time or reduced working hours, but that this has to be negotiated with each manager and driven by the working women making the request. Ultimately, it emerged that the manager-coach is responsible for approving flexible work arrangements, with this supported by the literature on work-life balance where it is stated that flexible work options are dependent on the manager involved (Tomlinson and Durbin 2010; Grady and McCarthy 2008; Powell and Mainiero 1999 as cited in Hill et al 2001).

In addition to this, the role of the manager-coach in encouraging personal choice emerged, with it being stated that women need to be encouraged to determine what they want to achieve, both in terms of their role at work and work-life balance. This was coupled with the openness to working towards individualised solutions with employees in terms of flexibility and work-life balance.

This role of the manager-coach, in terms of optimising flexibility and choice and in creating individualised solutions, is reflected on in the following statement

“there is no one size fits all because everyone is going to have a different view to them of what is work-life balance, to them what is success, what brings them meaning, so I suppose that says – that is the role of coffee conversations can have in the workplace of the 21st century – to understand what the touch points are and what are value and meaning creators in each person’s psyche and what are their expectations of work-life balance and how do you explore that in a coffee conversation.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)
The above statement aligns with the primary role the manager-coach plays – that of maintaining open communication with the women they manage so that work-life balance can be optimised. In maintaining an open, communicative relationship, the forum in which to address issues, as they arise, is provided.

It was reflected that, without such communication, a standardised work-life balance policy which would not meet anyone’s needs would need to be put in place.

The literature mentioned that employee commitment increases with flexibility offered by employers. Grady and McCarthy (2008) and Hewlett (2007) stated that offering a range of flexible arrangements decreases employee turnover and increases talent retention. In support of this, the findings showed a direct correlation between the retention of employees and the value of manager-coaching (28 statements made supporting this). It can therefore be inferred that the manager-coach role of optimising choice and flexibility can be seen as an important retention strategy.

Finally, the role of the manager-coach in optimising flexibility and choice was not directly reflected on in the coaching literature with this possibly being due to the fact that no research seems to have been conducted in the area of the manager-coach’s role in optimising work-life balance. However, the role of the manager in enabling flexibility and choice was reflected on in the work-life balance literature. As will be seen in the following section, choice and flexibility are key components of work-life balance.

5.1.1.3 Facilitating growth and development

The role of the manager-coach in facilitating growth and development emerged from the findings, representing 11% of all statements made on the role of the manager-coach and is strongly supported by the literature (Triner and Turner 2005; Riddle and Ting 2006; Bloch 1995; Longnecker 2007b as cited in Longnecker 2010; Longnecker 2010; Ellinger et al 2005; Phillips 1996; Ellinger et al 2008).

In terms of facilitating growth and development, the findings referred to the manager-coach’s role in the development of employees in the context of developing skills and filling competency gaps, planning for career growth, building a career path and providing on-going
training. Emphasis was also placed on the benefits of learning through debate and
discussion with one’s manager-coach.

As both the findings and literature reflect, growth, development and learning in the
employee is a fundamental part of coaching (Grant 2003 as cited in Grant 2007; Stout
Rostron 2006) and it is in achieving this growth and development that another key coaching
role, that of identifying and developing talent, can be achieved (Bloch 1995; Triner and
Turner 2005; Longnecker 2007b as cited in Longnecker 2010). Through enabling the growth
and development of employees through manager-coaching, performance can also be
optimised, another key coaching role (Riddle and Ting 2006; Ladyshewsky 2010). The role of
the manager-coach in facilitating growth and development therefore aligns strongly with the
other key manager-coach roles identified in the literature, namely identifying and developing
talent and optimising performance. Whilst the development of talent was not apparent in
the findings, optimising performance emerged, with 44 statements made regarding this.

In addition to this, the role that the manager-coach plays in working towards an
individualised development solution was again reflected upon. As part of this, emphasis was
placed on the need for employees to be empowered and proactive and to take responsibility
for their own development.

It was also shown in the findings that the development of the manager-coach is regarded as
important, with focus being placed on the need to develop the manager-coach’s skills so that
they can more fully develop those who report to them. This is supported by the literature
where Redshaw (2000) indicated that the organisation needs to be supportive of manager-
coach development. The development needs of the manager-coach are reflected upon in
both the findings and in the next section on manager-coach skills.

5.1.2 The skills of the manager-coach

The findings of this research showed a total of 263 statements made regarding the skills of
the manager-coach. All skills comprising over 10% of the total statements made are
reflected in this analysis. Therefore, the primary skills of a manager-coach, as needed to
optimise the work-life balance of working women, are as follows:
As indicated in the graph, the two primary skills of the manager-coach which have emerged are **communicating, listening and questioning**, and **showing empathy, care, understanding and interest** which account for 46% of the responses. These are then supported by the skills of **providing support, feedback and training; being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction**; and **showing openness, honesty and trust**. Each of these findings are analysed and discussed below.

**5.1.2.1 Communicating, listening and questioning**

The coaching skills of **communicating, listening and questioning** emerged strongly from the findings as key skills which the manager-coach requires to optimise work-life balance in working women, with this accounting for 24% of all statements made regarding manager-coach skills. This is supported by the literature which identifies the skills of communicating,
questioning and listening as core interpersonal competencies for coaches (Zeus and Skiffington 2000, Bolton 1998, Ellinger et al 2005, de Haan et al 2011). It is the researcher’s view that there is significant integration between the various skills. Communication requires understanding, empathy requires listening and providing support requires communication.

The art of communicating and handling conversations was referred to by Bolton (1998), Siegel (1999 as cited in Rock and Page 2009), Healy et al (2001), Byron (2007) and Ellinger et al (2005). In the research responses, emphasis was placed on the manager-coach being able to communicate openly and effectively, as stated by this respondent

“It really does come down to communication and understanding.” (Respondent 10; executive manager)

Listening was extensively referred to in the responses and viewed as an imperative to successful manager-coaching. This view is endorsed by the literature (Bolton 1998; Biswas-Diener 2009; Knight 2002 as cited in Murray 2004; De Haan et al 2011). The value of listening, as well as the interplay between listening and understanding, is shown in this respondent statement

“I think just being there to listen to someone is already a big help to a lot of people; as soon as they know you understand their circumstances, it already improves their work environment.” (Respondent 3; senior manager)

The third component, namely questioning, also emerged as an important manager-coaching skill and included being able to encourage the asking of questions, asking questions and probing.

Questioning is also reflected on in the literature presented by Ulrich (2008), Biswas-Diener (2009) and Zeus and Skiffington (2000). The use of questions also aligns to how directive or collaborative a manager-coach is in that a more collaborative style tends to involve more questioning and less telling. This is reflected in the following statement

“I know we have had some training on how you ask questions and how you push back, so not giving the answer but asking the question that kind of leads the person to the answer, that is a key skill in conversation discussion.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)
The strong correlation shown between the research findings and the literature reflect that effective communication skills form an essential platform for, and integral part of, manager-coaching.

It should be noted that the most prevalent manager-coach role and skill to emerge from the findings is communicating. It is inferred that communicating is at the heart of Siegel’s (1999 as cited by Rock and Page 2009) contingent, collaborative conversations. It has already been stated that coaching should be a contingent, collaborative conversation and that these conversations have been shown to enhance mental and well-being capabilities. Based on this, it is inferred that by participating in a manager-coaching conversation structured around and grounded in effective communication, a sense of well-being will result. With communicating therefore being the key role and skill in optimising work-life balance for working women, this respondent’s comment has relevance

“Balance is well-being” (Respondent 16; executive manager).

The value of communication was also reflected on in the literature by Bolton (1998) where he indicates that the effectiveness of listening and speaking in an organisation determines organisational effectiveness. This aligns to the role the organisation plays in creating a culture conducive to manager-coaching. This would benefit from further research. This is reflected in the statement below

“I think for me that (manager-coaching conversations) will be like the new style of management which will ensure successful companies going forward. So when we read the books in 20 years time about companies that succeeded in the early 2000’s it will be the companies that got those manager-coach sessions right.” (Respondent 16; executive manager)

5.1.2.2 Showing empathy, care, understanding and interest

The skills of showing empathy, care, understanding and interest were also clearly apparent in the findings and accounted for 22% of the statements made and can be seen as strongly allied to effective communicating. Empathy and understanding, as specific words, were used most regularly, with understanding being regarding by de Haan et al (2011) as one of the three most helpful coaching behaviours, alongside listening and encouragement. Other
descriptors included showing care and compassion, showing a real interest in people, giving respect, being genuine and showing responsiveness.

The literature also refers extensively to the relevance of these skills (Goleman 1998; Ellinger et al 2005; De Haan et al 2011; Goleman et al 2002; Longnecker 2010; Healy et al 2001; Rogers 2000)

As the core manager-coach role and skill to emerge from this research is communicating, it is surmised that this role and skill is enhanced by the deeper insight that understanding and empathy bring.

5.1.2.3 Providing support, feedback and training

The skills of providing support, feedback and training comprised 13% of the statements made regarding manager-coaching skills. This aligns to the manager-coach roles of facilitating growth and development, enabling performance feedback and providing recognition; and providing support, with the latter being especially important in terms of work-life balance. The skill of providing feedback aligns to the literature (Ulrich 2008; Wall 2007; Sheldon 2008 as cited in Biswas-Diener 2009; Healy et al 2001; Liphosa 2010; Burdett 1998; Ellinger et al 2005; De Haan et al 2011), whilst support is referred to by Carl Rogers (1957 as cited by de Haan et al 2011), as a key characteristic valued in coaches.

5.1.2.4 Being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction

The skills of the manager-coach being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction comprised 12% of statements made regarding skills, with this also including technical and industry competence. It is stated in the literature that the expectation for the manager-coach to be the expert is largely aligned to their use of managerial skills and that these need to give way to coaching skills and supportiveness, as opposed to directness (Ellinger et al 2005; de Haan et al 2011). Being the expert is also regarded as an obstacle to manager-coaching (Phillips 1996). The findings reflected that it does however appear to be the employees’ expectation that manager-coaches provide solutions, with this aligning to the manager-coach role of directing vs collaborating. This is shown in the following statement

“I think a big skill from a manager’s point of view is offering solutions and looking out for possibilities and suggesting things and also just challenging you a bit, not just
It is the researcher’s view that manager-coaches need to view the use of this skill (being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction) with caution. It was been indicated that one of the primary goals of coaching is to facilitate growth and development, and this has been supported by these findings in terms of the role of the manager-coach. If the manager-coach is to move away from traditional managerial skills towards a coaching style, as has been suggested, then solution-giving is not the optimal way of developing one’s employees. In so doing, both the transition to a coaching style and the development of one’s employees will be detrimentally affected.

5.1.2.5 Showing openness, honesty and trust

Showing openness, trust and honesty emerged from the results as being another important manager-coach skill. In line with this, the skill of showing openness, honesty and trust was reflected on extensively in the literature in terms of the ability of the coach to create a safe and trusting space (Riddle and Ting 2006; Ellinger and Bostrom 1999; Buys 2010; Buys 2007; Ulrich 2008; Zeus and Skiffington 2000; Goleman et al 2002; Critchley 2010; Ulrich 2008; Healy et al 2001; Wall 2007 and Ellinger et al 2005).

It was however interesting to note that whilst the emphasis placed on trust and the establishment of a trusting relationship in the literature was significant, the research findings reflect other skills as being more important.

It is the researcher’s view that the need for manager-coaches to show openness, honesty and trust aligns strongly with communication, as is evident in this statement

“Having open and honest communication makes a huge difference.” (Respondent 11; senior manager)

In addition to this, it can be surmised that the regular use of the word open, as emerging in the responses, can be inferred to mean honest, with this concept being central to creating a trusting relationship.
5.1.3 The development of manager-coaches

The findings reflected a range of ad hoc responses with regards to the development of manager-coaches, but it should be noted that the predominant areas identified for further development align with the primary skills identified as important in the findings. These are to:

- enhance communication through developing deeper probing skills and being able to listen more effectively;
- enhance empathy and understanding by more fully understanding the views of women in the workplace, and to focus on being present;
- be able to provide more critical feedback and manage poor performance;
- shift from giving advice.

It is therefore deduced that the identification of these development areas shows support for the skills identified as being important to the manager-coach, both in the findings and the literature.

The primary development mechanisms identified by manager-coaches include coaching, mentoring, the manager-coach’s own manager-coaching conversations and leadership development. This aligns to the value Fillery-Travis and Lane (2006) place on supervision for manager-coaches.

5.1.4 Overview – Research question 1

“What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?”

The roles of the manager-coach are to enable communication; optimise flexibility and choice; and facilitate growth and development using the skills of effective communication, listening and questioning; displaying empathy and understanding; providing support and feedback; and encouraging openness and trust; whilst encouraging a solution-focused approach.
5.2 Optimal work-life balance

The second research question is “What does optimal work-life balance mean?”

The findings of this research showed a total of 359 statements made regarding optimal work-life balance. All aspects comprising over 10% of the total statements made are reflected in this analysis. Therefore, emanating from this research, it has been found that optimal work-life balance is about:

![Graph 20 - Percentage of statements made pertaining to optimal work-life balance (includes statements comprising over 10% of total statements)](image)

As indicated in the graph, the two primary views on optimal work-life balance are around having support, as well as time and flexibility which account for 51% of the statements. These are supported by the ability to make choices as well as the need to balance dual roles. Each of these findings are analysed and discussed in this section.

Generally, in terms of the responses to questions on work-life balance, work-life balance was regarded as being about ‘having it all’ or ‘the best of both worlds.’ This is reflected in the literature on the realities facing working women in achieving work-life balance where
Friedland (2008) asks whether it is possible to have it all. This question seems to be at the core of the work-life balance debate.

The findings showed work-life balance as being about wanting to meet the needs of one’s family whilst at the same time achieving in one’s career. This dual role is reflected on later in this section, while the resulting guilt, sacrifice and conflict experienced from trying to balance these demands will be analysed in the next section on the realities facing working women.

It was reflected in the literature that whilst work is often viewed as a negative reality (Eikhof et al 2007), this is not so in that work can be a source of fulfilment. This opposing view was supported by these research findings in that it emerged that work is not the negative reality it is made out to be, but that rather it is the woman’s responsibilities at home which challenge her work-life balance. This view is supported by Barsh and Cranston (2009). It was also felt that increased work-life balance could actually be gained by spending more time at work when the reality at home is negative. This is reflected in the statement below

“if I get certain aspects of home life right, then a work-life balance will be much more easily achievable, even to the point maybe where I might be able to stay at work an hour later than I possibly am.” (Respondent 4; administrator)

This view was not apparent in the literature. It can therefore be inferred that work-life balance does not always mean an equal split of time between work and home. There seems to be an alignment to fulfilment, in that balance is experienced in the areas in which we are fulfilled and again, where we have a sense of well-being.

In addition to this, it was stated that if your needs are being fulfilled both at home and at work, and you have work-life balance, you are likely to remain in the organisation.

“I think it is a no brainer, the organisation must try and be proactive in optimising work-life balance because we are all about happy, fulfilled, productive people and getting the best out of people, so there can be no doubt in my mind that unless you have a reasonable work-life balance, you can’t be functioning at an optimum level.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)
The figure below, represented graphically by the researcher, depicts the connections between work-life balance, retention and coaching which have emerged from the literature and the research findings.

![Diagram](image)

*(Gouveia 2012)*

**Figure 3: The inferred connections between coaching, work-life balance and retention**

Figure 3 is explained as follows. Based upon the findings and the literature, it appears that work-life balance contributes to retention (Eikhof et al 2007; McIntosh 2003). These research findings also reflected that manager-coaching conversations enable retention, with this supported by Cormier (2007). Hughes (2007) reflected that coaching enables the achievement of work-life balance, whilst Hewlett (2007) reflected that flexible working practices, a key component of work-life balance, also contribute to employee retention. We can therefore surmise that work-life balance can be optimised by coaching; that optimising work-life balance for working women can contribute to employee retention and that this process can be enabled by the manager-coach.
5.2.1 Support

The concept of support, as a key factor in optimal work-life balance, was strongly evident in the findings and accounted for 26% of the statements made on work-life balance. Of primary importance is the support which manager-coaches are able to provide the working women who report to them, coupled with organisational support such as flexible working hours or flexibility within the working day. In addition to this, support from family, friends and paid support seems to play a vital role in the optimisation of work-life balance. It should be noted that practical support at work is not included in organisational support as this refers to workplace facilities that enable work-life balance such as on-site facilities. It was also stated by one respondent that

"Your paid support needs to understand the complexities of your work-life."

(Respondent 12; middle manager)

Having paid support aligns to the concept of income, reflected in the findings as a factor in work-life balance. It raises the question of whether work-life balance is the pursuit of those who can afford to pursue it. This is an area that would benefit from additional research as it was indicated in the responses that it is often those most senior in organisations, and those earning the most, who have the most control over their work-life balance.

The benefits of a supportive workplace and supportive relationships, as contributing to work-life balance, was referred to by Marcinkus et al (2007), Poduval and Poduval (2009), Auster (2001) and Drew et al (2003) as cited in Grady and McCarthy (2008) and Grady and McCarthy (2008). Marcinkus et al (2007) also reflected on the importance of manager support. In addition to this, support is inferred in terms of the provision of flexible work arrangements referred to in the literature (Lewis and Humbert 2010; Burnett et al 2010; Hewlett and Luce 2005; Doherty 2004). Eikhof et al (2007) and Lewis and Humbert (2010) however argue that the primary purpose of providing these flexible working arrangements is to meet business objectives.

It is the researcher’s view that without adequate support, work-life balance may not be achieved due to the demands and realities facing working women. These realities will be detailed in the section on the realities facing working women.
5.2.2 Time and flexibility

The concept of time is dealt with in the literature within the context of flexibility and working hours, with emphasis placed on flexible working hours to enable more time availability, thus reducing the spillover from work to family and the stress levels experienced. **Time and flexibility** are therefore be combined in this analysis and accounted for 25% of all statements made on work-life balance.

In the literature, emphasis is also placed on understanding the time we have available and making choices regarding the use of this time (Hughes 2007).

Flexibility in the literature is viewed from the perspective of flexible working hours, reducing long working hours and increasing the possibility of retaining employees by offering flexibility (Eikhof et al 2007; McIntosh 2003; Hughes 2007; Muna and Mansour 2009; Burnett et al 2010; Hill et al 2001; Tomlinson and Durbin 2010; Lewis et al 2009 as cited in Lewis and Humbert 2010; Hewlett and Luce 2005; Hewlett 2007; Lewis and Humbert 2010; White et al 2003; Friedland 2008; Grady and McCarthy 2008; Powell and Mainiero 1999 as cited in Hill et al 2001).

The findings showed a desire for more flexibility, flexi-time, and the opportunity to work from home or to have core hours coupled with flexibility. A greater use of technology was also thought to enable flexibility. However, the findings also indicated that flexibility cannot be a one-way street and it was felt that there needs to be consistency with how flexibility is applied. In line with this, it was felt that work-life balance and flexibility would be easier to achieve in an output-generating role and should link to the employee’s performance. This finding was not apparent in the literature, but it can be inferred that offering flexibility can be regarded as a mechanism to recognise performance and provide reward, rather than flexibility being a right as stated by Tomlinson and Durbin (2010).

Both the findings and the literature (Hughes 2007; Friedland 2008) infer that achieving work-life balance and a measure of flexibility results in more time being available to pursue other activities.

Based on this summary, it can be inferred that enhanced use of time as a result of increased flexibility is directly related to optimal work-life balance.
5.2.3 Choice

Choice was reflected to be a key factor in optimal work-life balance, with the statements regarding choice accounting for 20% of all statements made on work-life balance.

The concept of choices, as an element of work-life balance, is covered in the literature from the perspective of the working women making choices about when to work and not work, making choices about how to work and how to meet the needs of their families as well as making choices on how to use their time and energy, for example (McIntosh 2003; Doherty 2004; Joshi et al 2002 in Grady and McCarthy 2008; Warren 2004; Muna and Mansour 2009; Hughes 2007; Lewis and Humbert 2010; Tomlinson and Durbin 2010; Hill et al 2001 and Grady and McCarthy 2008). The literature also focuses on the working woman’s ability to reduce negative home to work and work to home spillover (White et al 2003; Hill et al 2001) through greater choice and flexibility.

In support of this, the findings reflected that working women value the opportunity of being able to decide how and when they work, to structure their working hours around their required work outputs and to maintain a level of flexibility so that they are able to use the additional time in other areas. The concept of choice thus aligns with flexibility and time. The findings also reflected that a greater sense of well-being and fulfilment is experienced when one is able to choose. This is reflected in the statement below

...so I think it (work-life balance) is important for their well-being, I think it is important that they are able to choose what is their life and what is their work and that they are then able to balance those two (Respondent 16; Executive manager)

However, in deciding on balance, the findings reflected that a sacrifice or compromise is often perceived. This will be covered in the section on the realities facing working women in achieving work-life balance.

Again the findings reflected a leaning towards the creation of individualised solutions for working women based on their choices. This aligns to the role of the manager-coach in optimising choice and flexibility, in that each manager has a role to play in the creation of unique solutions for the women they coach, based on those women’s specific needs.
5.2.4 Balancing dual roles

**Balancing dual roles** was also regarded as an element of optimal work-life balance and accounted for 11% of all statements made regarding work-life balance.

The literature and findings make reference to the woman’s role at work and their role and responsibilities within the family. It can therefore be inferred that balancing the needs and demands of these dual roles is central to work-life balance and aligns to the choices women make as well as their need for support, time and flexibility. However, these choices often result in home to work and work to home spillover, guilt, sacrifice and conflict. The concepts of spillover and family responsibilities are highlighted in the literature (Burnett et al 2010; Hill et al 2001; White et al 2003; Hughes 2007; Gambles et al (2006) as cited in Muna and Mansour 2009), whilst the concepts of conflict, guilt and sacrifice will be dealt with in the following section.

5.2.5 Overview – Research question 2

“What is optimal work-life balance?”

Optimal work-life balance is about having support, time and flexibility, choices and the ability to balance dual roles.
5.3 Understanding the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance

The third research question is “What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?”

The findings of this research showed a total of 309 statements made regarding the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance. All aspects comprising over 10% of the total statements made are reflected in this analysis. Therefore, emanating from this research, it has been found that the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance are:

The realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance

Graph 21 - Percentage of statements made pertaining to the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance (includes statements comprising over 10% of total statements)

As indicated in the graph, the two primary realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance are conflict, guilt and sacrifice; and the need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning, with these accounting for 71% of the statements. Each of these findings are analysed and discussed in this section.
5.3.1 Conflict, guilt and sacrifice

Conflict, guilt and sacrifice emerged strongly as a reality that working women experience in attempting to achieve work-life balance. Statements regarding conflict accounted for 31% of all statements made regarding the realities facing working women, whilst guilt and sacrifice accounted for 11%. Due to the interconnectedness of these concepts they have been combined in this analysis.

The findings reflected that the conflict experienced is primarily applied to role conflict, sacrifice and the pull of family and work (61% of all statements on conflict). It was indicated in the responses that women are under pressure to meet the expectations of their children, of a possibly demanding spouse, a deadline driven job and a manager who expects a certain level of performance. The stress of managing multiple roles was also reflected upon and in line with this, the sense of being pulled, torn or rushed and the continual struggle and internal conflict experienced in juggling work and family was emphasised. This is strongly supported by the literature (Friedland 2008; Grady and McCarthy 2008; Farber 1996; Poduval and Poduval 2009; Barsh and Cranston 2009; Gilbert et al 1981; Liu and Wilson 2001; Doherty 2004; Boninelli 2004; Hewlett and Luce 2005; Lewis and Humbert 2010; Burnett et al 2010; Tomlinson and Durbin 2010; Marcinkus et al 2007; Sieber (1974) as cited in Gilbert, Holahan and Manning 1981). These realities should be viewed in parallel with the key concepts required for optimal work-life balance, namely support, time and flexibility, choice and needing to balance dual roles to fully understand the impact these realities may have on the achievement of work-life balance.

It was also evident that, even when choices have been made, priorities can change and it was indicated that even when one decides on one’s priorities, the pull to get more involved at work is felt and one continually needs to remember the choices made and the scope of the role chosen. This reflects the issues faced by women in the workplace in terms of role growth and progression and is again strongly supported by the literature (Poduval and Poduval 2009; Cormier 2007; Boninelli 2004; Wentling 2003; Doherty 2004; Lewis and Humbert 2010; Hewlett and Luce 2005; Allen 2001 as cited in Marcinkus et al 2007; Marcinkus et al 2007; Eikhof et al 2007). The scope of this research does not allow for further exploration of this area and it would therefore be a critical aspect for future research.
The role of the spouse and the split in responsibilities also emerged from the responses. It was stated that there needs to be agreement on the roles and responsibilities, with it being shown that it is very difficult for a woman to achieve work-life balance if her spouse is not supportive of that. Conflicting views were expressed with regards to the spouse’s domestic involvement, the financial responsibilities of men and women and societal expectations of both men and women. This discussion is also reflected on in the literature (Eikhof et al 2007; Burnett et al 2010; Hill et al 2001; Lewis and Humbert 2010).

Work to family and family to work spill-over was also strongly evident in the responses with it being stated that when one is happy at work and has the balance right, stress is reduced and one’s children are happier. This view is supported by Hill et al (2001) where they align the provision of flexibility with positive spillover and increased balance in the family. This is also supported by White et al (2003) where they indicate that negative spillover is reduced with increased flexibility and choice. Building on this, the value of manager-coaching conversations in reducing spillover was indicated in the responses, as below

“I think that the effect these conversations have and for me personally, if I can sort out the things that are bothering me at work then I don’t have to take it home with me later on.” (Respondent 13; middle manager)

In addition to this and as stated by a manager-coach, it is not the manager-coach’s responsibility to manage a woman’s home life, but it was felt that if one is able to manage their work life, this will manage the impact on their home life. These findings therefore reflect the valuable role a manager-coach can play in reducing spillover and enhancing balance as a result. This in turn can be informed by the ability of the manager-coach to communicate, understand and empathise.

In terms of guilt and sacrifices, the responses referred to being able to achieve what one wants to achieve without having to sacrifice too much personally to achieve those objectives, as stated below

“...and I think that is always a dilemma, for most people they have to work, they need to work, some want to work but they also want to have a family. But that is almost obligated – to look after your family. Sometimes people think, because of that
obligation, you need to sacrifice your career over that.” (Respondent 11; senior manager)

This is supported by the belief expressed in the findings that family is more important than career (supported by Grady and McCarthy 2008) and that if you sacrifice your family for a career, there is something wrong.

The concept of guilt was mentioned consistently in the responses and it was reflected that the reality, as a working woman, is a great amount of guilt. As the literature suggests, when a working woman is forced to make a choice between career and family, guilt results (Carr 2002). Guilt is also referred to in the literature as resulting from being away from one’s family (Farber 1996), whilst Gilbert (1981) refers to the guilt experienced at times of internal role conflict.

Based on the research responses and the literature, guilt and sacrifice, in the researcher’s view, are often the result of not feeling as if one is able to make a choice, a key factor in work-life balance. This area would benefit from further research.

5.3.2 The need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning

The need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning accounted for 29% of the statements made on work-life balance. This was evident in the findings and the literature, particularly in terms of the search for meaning and identity through effectively balancing dual roles and finding meaning in these roles (Wilson (2006) as cited in Poduval and Poduval 2009; Grady and McCarthy 2008; Auster (2001) as cited in Grady and McCarthy 2008; Drew et al (2003) as cited in Grady and McCarthy 2008).

The findings reflected that working women obtain a sense of meaning and fulfilment through achievement. (This is supported by Auster (2001) and Drew et al (2003) as cited in Grady and McCarthy 2008). The findings also reflected that achieving at work is a strong contributor to a sense of fulfilment (and supported by Eikhof et al 2007) although this also contributes to conflict, guilt and sacrifice (Gilbert et al 1981) as reflected in the previous section. Being a good mother emerged from the responses as being essential to fulfilment but this did not emerge from the literature, although it was inferred and it can be surmised that a woman’s need to be a good mother often goes unsaid.
The responses also reflected that being in a position to make choices and achieve the goals one sets also results in a sense of achievement and fulfilment.

It was stated in the responses that having a happy home life and achieving what they want at work were regarded as the primary factors that enable fulfilment in women. This is the essence of work-life balance and is reflected in the following statement

“...at a certain level fulfilment has got to come from being able to achieve that work-life balance or being able to make a meaningful contribution and to have input and meaningful relationships at a work and professional level, without significantly compromising their personal and family relationships outside of work.” (Respondent 14; executive manager)

However, it was also commented on that there is always a danger that the woman is not able to find fulfilment and is caught between not doing a good job as a wife and mother but at the same time not living up to her workplace potential or committing as much as she could. It was felt that the result would be a lack of sense of meaning and feeling wasted. This is an area which could benefit from further research.

5.3.3 Overview – Research question 3

“What are the realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance?”

The realities facing working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance are conflict, guilt and sacrifice coupled with the need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning.
5.4 Summary of findings

The research findings, as presented in Chapter 4 and analysed and discussed in Chapter 5 are summarised by the researcher in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: The inferred connections between the research focus areas and the themes evident in the findings

Figure 4 can be explained as follows.

Three primary roles of the manager-coach emerged as being important to optimising work-life balance, namely communicating (including being present and showing interest; directing and collaborating; and understanding); optimising flexibility and choice; and facilitating growth and development.

When the manager-coach communicates openly, collaborates, shows interest and presence as well as a level of understanding, their ability to more fully understand and empathise with
the working women who report to them, and whom they coach, is enhanced. Communicating in this way also enables a strong and collaborative working relationship to grow and provides the basis on which to deal with difficulties when they arise. The foundation of open communication is therefore a strong support mechanism.

The manager-coach also has a vital role to play in optimising flexibility and choice. This is based on the premise that the working woman needs to be able to choose what she would like to achieve, based on her goals, family responsibilities and what fulfils her, with this being strongly apparent in the work-life balance findings. The manager-coach can enable this process by understanding the choices made and taking these into consideration when making workplace decisions that impact on the working woman. In addition to this, it is the manager-coach who approves flexible working arrangements or reduced hour roles. It is therefore imperative that the manager-coach has a thorough understanding of the working woman and the realities that she, as an individual, faces. Women are also more likely to remain with an organisation when they have the flexibility they desire and the ability to make their own choices.

The third key role to emerge for the manager-coach is that of facilitating growth and development. If the manager-coach fully understands the needs of the women they coach and works collaboratively with them, individualised solutions which meet each woman’s unique needs can be created. In this way, working women can be developed in a way that best suits them and the choices they have made. As growth and development are also key retention strategies, a focus on development will encourage working women to stay within the organisation. Manager-coaching is also an important development mechanism and therefore assists in developing organisational talent.

These manager-coach roles are supported by a range of skills which are generic to coaching but have been shown to also apply specifically to manager-coaches. The utilisation of these skills can enable the manager-coach to be more effective in the roles highlighted above. These skills include communicating, listening and questioning; empathy, care, understanding and interest; providing support, feedback and training; being solution-focused, knowledgeable, giving advice and direction and finally openness, honesty and trust. There is strong alignment between the roles and skills of the manager-coach which have emerged from this research thus supporting the credibility of the findings.
Work-life balance formed the context for this research as the focus was on understanding the roles and skills needed by the manager-coach to optimise work-life balance. Emphasis was thus placed on understanding what optimal work-life balance means, with four factors emerging. Work-life balance is about the need for support, choices, time and flexibility and needing to balance dual roles. It is interesting to note again the strong alignment between what optimal work-life balance means and the role the manager-coach needs to play in its optimisation. By communicating, being present, showing interest and assuming a collaborative role the manager-coach will provide the working woman with support. Through the manager-coach optimising choices and flexibility, the working woman will experience greater freedom to make choices both within and outside of the workplace, as well as to negotiate for increased flexibility and time, based on the choices she has made, thus achieving aspects of work-life balance. As choices are made, so solutions can be found and time can be maximised through enhanced flexibility. Based on the choices that the working woman makes, coupled with increased flexibility and time as well as more support, she should be able to more effective balance her dual roles, achieve a greater sense of achievement, fulfilment and sense of meaning and ultimately be retained in the organisation.

However, the realities faced by working women in attempting to achieve work-life balance seem to limit the ability of women to achieve work-life balance. These realities are feelings of conflict, guilt and sacrifice, as well as the need for achievement, fulfilment and a sense of meaning. The conflict, guilt and sacrifice often stems from the dual roles which women fulfil and a sense of feeling torn between achieving in a career versus raising one’s family in the best way possible. These feelings are exacerbated by a lack of time and flexibility to fulfil both roles effectively. The need to achieve seems to drive women strongly, providing fulfilment but is also coupled with guilt if they achieve in their career at the expense of time with their family. Communication regarding these realities needs to take place, the realities need to be understood and mechanisms to alleviate the conflict, whilst enhancing achievement and fulfilment, need to be sought. These conversations must form part of manager-coaching.

Finally, the development areas for manager-coaches are the roles and skills highlighted in this analysis with the primary development mechanisms being coaching and manager support for manager-coaches.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This research set out to describe:

- the realities that working women face in achieving work-life balance
- what work-life balance means,
- the manager-coach’s roles and the skills needed to optimise work-life balance, and
- the development areas that can be focused upon in the further development of manager-coaches.

Based on this and the research topic “The manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women” three research questions were formulated, as follows:

1. What are the roles and skills of the manager-coach?
2. What does optimal work-life balance mean?
3. What is the working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance?

The findings and analysis have been detailed in chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

In addition to more fully understanding manager-coaching roles and skills, a secondary purpose for wanting to optimise work-life balance for working women is to find a way of retaining these key resources in organisations. Whilst this extends beyond the scope of this research report, the link to retention has been made. This will be reflected on further under areas for further research.

This chapter concludes this research and provides recommendations on future areas of research emanating from this research study, as well as the applicability and use of the research.
The focus of this research is on working women but a number of respondents indicated that work-life balance applies to men as well.

In conclusion therefore, working women strive to have it all – a happy family, a successful career and a sense of achievement and fulfilment in all aspects of their lives. The attempt to balance multiple roles and numerous responsibilities on limited time places continual pressure and stress on the working woman and results in internal conflict and spillover. Based on this, the findings showed guilt, conflict and sacrifice are regularly experienced realities. Whilst women also want to achieve, and obtain meaning and fulfilment from achieving, they often feel torn between whether they can and should achieve, work, succeed and progress in their roles at work or not, especially if they feel that this is at the expense of their family. They often do not realise, or feel as if, they have a choice in what they decide to do and how they decide to do it.

For working women to have a sense that they are achieving at home and work, as well as obtaining a sense of meaning and fulfilment from this achievement, a level of work-life balance therefore needs to be achieved. In wanting to achieve optimal work-life balance, women acknowledge that they need support, time and flexibility, choices and the ability to balance dual roles.

Whilst the working woman often receives a great deal of support from her spouse, family or friends, her manager-coach plays a critical role here. Providing support emerged as part of the manager-coach’s role and was the key finding to emerge on what work-life balance means. Therefore, when working women are provided with the sense that their manager-coaches support them, have an interest in them and understand their lives, they are more likely to openly communicate with their manager-coach. In so doing, they are able to share the realities of their role with their manager-coach. This open communication provides a platform from which to address a broad range of issues. Almost all manager-coaches and working women indicated that they are comfortable sharing both professional and personal issues and it seems that this open communication enables the development of deep rapport, trust and a strong working relationship. The ongoing nature of manager-coaching conversations also ensures continuity in both the relationship and the issues discussed.
As a result of this close working relationship, working women are more likely to approach their manager-coach with a work-life balance issue. If they need to fetch their children from school, or a child or elderly family member is ill, it is likely that the manager-coach will know about the commitments the woman juggles because of their manager-coaching conversations. It then becomes more comfortable for the woman to approach the manager-coach and make requests for flexibility, support and further development, for instance. If this communication, in the form of manager-coaching conversations, is not taking place and the woman is not comfortable communicating with her manager-coach, the issue will go unresolved and stress and spillover may result.

The manager-coach therefore plays an essential role in supporting, guiding, developing and communicating with the women who report to him/her, whilst also optimising the opportunity for choice and the achievement of flexibility.

Women are increasingly seeking greater flexibility in how they structure their working day – pressures from home, work and the schools are continually increasing and mechanisms need to be found to use time more effectively so that multiple roles can be fulfilled. Whether this is a reduced hour role, flexibility within a role, staggered working times or part-time work will depend on the unique needs of the woman involved and what she seeks to achieve. If working women know that manager-coaches are open to such discussions and will optimise the woman’s ability to choose and achieve flexibility, they are more likely to communicate openly about their needs. As managers are the ones who approve such requests, such openness, coupled with sound communication skills, empathy and understanding is paramount. In this way, individualised solutions can be crafted.

If greater flexibility is achieved, women are then able to more effectively balance their roles and meet the needs and demands of their families, their careers and the organisation in which they work. The achievement of work-life balance has been shown to increase the working woman’s sense of well-being and fulfilment and is has also been reflected that greater flexibility and work-life balance enables the retention of employees. So, working women are less likely to leave an organisation that is providing them with open communication, flexibility, choices, support and opportunities to grow and develop. The manager-coach therefore has a critical role to play in optimising work-life balance for
working women and it is essential that their skills are fully developed to enable them to fulfil this role.

In this way, working women will be retained in organisations and will find the flexibility and freedom to fully contribute, in a way that best suits their needs and choices. They will achieve a sense of meaning, fulfilment and well-being, but ultimately, the organisation will benefit in that it will retain women instead of losing them because the pressures of trying to achieve balance become too much.

6.2 Areas for future research

There were a number of areas for future research that became apparent during this research process. A number of these were touched on by this research but the scope did not allow for a full exploration of these allied areas. These possible areas for future research are detailed below.

- Manager-coaching and work-life balance both occur within an organisational context and are therefore impacted upon by systemic factors. The extent to which the organisational culture promotes and encourages the working women’s achievement of work-life balance and the role that the manager-coach plays in enabling this is an area that would greatly benefit from further research.

- It was shown in the results that both manager-coaches and working women are comfortable discussing personal issues during their manager-coaching conversations. This is in contradiction to the literature which indicates that personal issues generally should not be and are not discussed during manager-coaching. An area for research would be to understand why this openness to discuss personal issues is apparent and whether it is aligned to the organisational culture of the selected organisation.

- The extent to which a manager-coach is directive or collaborative was extensively discussed in the literature and was apparent in the findings. Whilst a coaching and collaborative leadership style is suggested as being more appropriate in the 21st century world of work, it would be beneficial to explore the extent to which the time available to the manager-coach, their personality profile, their stress levels and the
organisational culture contributes to their use of a directive or collaborative style of manager-coaching.

- It was reflected by Bolton (1998) that the effectiveness of the listening and speaking taking place in the organisation determines the effectiveness of that organisation. As manager-coaching takes place organisationally, it would be beneficial to understand the type of organisational culture that is most conducive to communication and manager-coaching.

- The findings showed that income if a factor in work-life balance. The question of whether work-life balance is the pursuit of higher income earners and those more senior in organisations requires further exploration.

- The literature has shown that women face numerous difficulties in terms of role progression and growth within the workplace and it would be beneficial to understand the organisational factors and processes that contribute to and inhibit women’s progression.

- The findings showed the importance of working women having a choice, but also of the guilt and sacrifice they experience, often as a result of the dual roles that they fulfil. The extent to which guilt and sacrifice are a result of either not having a choice or feeling as if one does not have a choice could be an area of future research.

- The findings reflected that women experience a sense of fulfilment through both their family and their career, but that there is always the risk that they do not find fulfilment in either area as a result of the dual roles and responsibilities, and the conflict this brings. The extent to which this is a reality and what can be done to mitigate against it would benefit from further research.

- Finally, optimising work-life balance for working women has emerged from this research and the literature as a means of retaining women in organisations. Further research to fully understand the extent of this relationship needs to be carried out.
6.3 Recommendations

This research has reflected that manager-coaching takes place within the organisational context. Whilst manager-coaching brings some challenges due to the complexity of the role, it also holds tremendous benefits for organisations, particularly because of close, supportive, communicative relationships which can develop characterised by understanding and insight into the challenges faced by women. This puts manager-coaches in a unique position to really understand the needs of women who work with them. By understanding and addressing these needs and enabling choice, flexibility and further development, the levels of engagement, fulfilment and well-being amongst working women are likely to increase with the result that their work performance will be positively impacted upon and they are likely to be retained in the organisation, with their progression upwards supported and encouraged.

Therefore, it is recommended that this research be used by organisations planning, designing and implementing a manager-coaching programme. The research provides guidelines on the role the manager-coach can play, particularly with regards to optimising the work-life balance of working women. However, certain of these roles can be applied more broadly as well. For organisations implementing a manager-coach approach, the development of manager-coaches can be guided by the skills that have been defined.

The research is of particular interest to the selected organisation. Work-life balance and flexibility is high on the strategic agenda, as is talent management, retention, engagement and succession planning and this research impacts on all of these areas. It will therefore provide the executive committee and management with vital insight into the realities facing working women and what employees regard as optimal work-life balance. The research also provides valuable guidelines on how flexibility and work-life balance can be structured and the factors that need to be taken into consideration.

In the selected organisation, the role that manager-coaches are and should be fulfilling is a strategic imperative, as manager-coaching is part of every manager’s role and they are regarded as ‘not doing their jobs’ if they are not coaching. The guidelines provided in this research in terms of the role manager-coaches fulfil will be of interest to all manager-coaches in the organisation and conversations to explore this will be facilitated.
The skills identified both in the literature review and in the research findings provide important guidance in terms of the next stage of manager-coach development. Based on this, plans are already in place to take all manager-coaches through a skills refresher where their questioning and probing skills are enhanced, with emphasis also being placed on active listening and focusing on being fully present.

Finally, the role that the organisational culture plays in manager-coaching and work-life balance emerged from this research although it was beyond the scope of this study to explore and analyse these findings fully. This has been identified as a critical area of future research. Manager-coaching occurs within a systemic paradigm and its strategic value needs to be harnessed.
REFERENCES


Stein, S (2007) *Make your workplace great – The seven keys to an emotionally intelligent organisation*, First edition, John Wiley and sons, Canada


APPENDIX A

Letter to respondents

University of the Witwatersrand
2 St David’s Place
Parktown
Date

Dear respondent,

Research study

I am completing my Masters in Management in Business and Executive Coaching (MMBEC) through the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits Business School campus). My research study is aimed at describing the manager-coach’s roles and skills as needed to optimise the work-life balance of working women. To explore this research topic, I will be collecting data by means of one-on-one interviews with selected respondents. It would be helpful if you would be willing to participate in one such interview.

During this interview I would ask you a range of questions on your view of the roles and skills of the manager-coach in our organisation. In addition to this, questions on what, in your view, constitutes optimal work-life balance and what the realities are that women face in attempting to achieve work-life balance will be discussed. The interview will remain confidential and the results will be analysed, collated and reported on in a final research report.

I would be most grateful if you could assist in this research. I am available to meet with you at your convenience.

Many thanks

Lynda Gouveia
083 326 1756
APPENDIX B

Actual Research Instrument

Interview questions

Questions for working women

The meaning of work-life balance

1. Explain what you think are the similarities and differences between work-life balance and work-life integration. Are they the same or different?

2. What does work-life balance mean to you?

3. In what way is work-life balance important to you and why?

4. Describe your current levels of work-life balance.

5. Do you experience any challenges in achieving work-life balance?

6. What are the challenges you experience?

7. To what extent do you think work-life balance is achievable for you?

8. What changes would you notice – what would work-life balance look like and feel like?

The working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance

1. What are your realities as a working woman?

2. How do these realities impact on your ability to achieve work-life balance?

3. How do you achieve a sense of meaning?

4. What brings you fulfilment?
5. What support could be provided to you to optimise your levels of work-life balance?

6. What should the organisation’s role be in optimising work-life balance?

**The roles and skills of the manager-coach**

1. Describe the role of the manager-coach.

2. What do you think the manager-coach does that helps working women?

3. What could your manager-coach do to assist working women?

4. What role does the manager-coach play in optimising work-life balance?

5. What role could your manager-coach play in optimising work-life balance?

6. What effect do you think your manager-coaching conversations have on your work-life balance?

7. What effect do you think your manager-coaching conversations could have on your work-life balance?

8. What role do you think these manager coaching conversations could play in the future?

9. Describe if there is any connection between manager-coaching conversations and the retention of women in the workplace.

10. What skills does your manager-coach display?

11. What skills would you expect your manager-coach to display?

12. What could he/she do more of /less of to support you more?
Questions for manager-coaches

The meaning of work-life balance

1. Explain what you think the similarities and differences are between work-life balance and work-life integration. Are they the same or different?

2. What does work-life balance for women mean to you as a manager-coach?

3. In what way is work-life balance important to women?

4. What are the challenges you think women experience in achieving work-life balance?

The working woman’s reality in attempting to achieve work-life balance

1. What do you think the realities are facing women in the workplace today?

2. How do these realities impact the achievement of work-life balance?

3. What do you think provides working women with a sense of meaning?

4. What do you think brings them fulfilment?

5. What support could be provided to optimise levels of work-life balance for working women?

6. What do you think the organisation’s role is in optimising work-life balance, specifically for women?

The roles and skills of the manager-coach

1. What do you do that helps working women?

2. What can you do to help working women?

3. What relevance do your manager-coaching conversations have to the women who report to you?
4. What role could your manager-coaching (coffee) conversations have in the working world of the 21st century?

5. What effect do you think your manager-coaching (coffee) conversations have on the work-life balance of the women who report to you, if any?

6. What could you do more of / less of to support working women in achieving work-life balance?

7. What could you do, that you generally not do, which could optimise work-life balance?

8. What support do you think you, as a manager-coach, could provide in the achievement and optimisation of work-life balance?

9. Describe if there is any connection between manager-coaching conversations and the retention of women in the workplace.

10. What skills do you utilise well?

11. What skills do you need to display to optimise this role?

12. What skills do you believe you need to develop further?

13. What would help you become a better coach?
APPENDIX C

Transcripts

Transcripts available on Compact Disc (attached)

Respondent 1
Respondent 2
Respondent 3
Respondent 4
Respondent 5
Respondent 6
Respondent 7
Respondent 8
Respondent 9
Respondent 10
Respondent 11
Respondent 12
Respondent 13
Respondent 14
Respondent 15
Respondent 16
Focus group