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THE EXPERIENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF

THE WORK-FAMILY BALANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

Johannesburg, 2007

ABSTRACT

Business people face ongoing challenges in managing their family and work demands; while organisations assume that their employees will contribute significantly to organisational goals by managing these demands. Organisations have been slow to progress to meet the needs of their employees who have adapted roles, beliefs and actions to accommodate a work-family balance. This research explores the experience and management of the work-family balance in South Africa.

By employing 4 focus groups in a sample of 36 participants, the research sought to explore the personal, family and work experiences of business people in South Africa within the context of the work-family balance. It further aimed to provide suggestive evidence of the differences between men and women in their experiences of work-family balance; and to offer insights to organisations based on these multiple experiences. The investigation was descriptive in nature as it allowed participants to share their stories to derive the research data. A combination of content and conversational analysis was utilised to collate the data.

The main findings of the research suggest that work-family roles have a significant effect on individuals who experience time pressures, stress and personal crisis juxtaposed with emotions of fulfilment. It provides evidence of the complex experiences in the family unit as a result of these multiple roles including effects on family functioning, increased marital conflict and lifestyle. This study illustrates how individuals employ skills acquired through work to facilitate solutions in the family environment and vice-versa. It also indicates the importance of balanced leaders and business action to create an organisational culture supporting work-family balance. It suggests differences between men and women in what they believe and how they respond to work-family balance. Primarily however, this research suggests that a significant portion of the experiences hinge on intrinsic factors such as emotional intelligence, beliefs and personality that underpin personal choices to facilitate work-family balance.

DECLARATION

I, Louise Hendey, declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.



Louise Hendey

February 2007

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience and management of the work-family balance in South Africa.

1.2 Background to the problem

1.2.1 Family as social capital

Bubolz (2001:129) argues that family plays a vital role in society by "building human capital, investing in the health, education, values and skills of its members to enable them to play productive roles in society". She suggests that family is the foundation that creates core values such as human trust and reciprocity. It is argued that the family system is the pivotal structure in which human beings learn to operate independently and interdependently. It provides the learning ground for people to function in larger systems in society. It is argued that while social capital is built through a complex web of social systems, it would seem that families are the bedrock of all economic and social capital. Therefore it can be argued that issues that threaten this microcosmic social structure should be afforded significant importance.

1.2.2 The effect of work on the family

The role of work is an important factor affecting the family unit simply through the demands it places on human capital and the potential negative consequences it has for individuals trying to balance work and family (Smith *et al*, 1993). Worldwide polices such as the Generally Accepted Accounting Practices and Sarbanes-Oxley have put pressure on organisations to account for their impact on the environment and their contribution to social capital

through triple bottom line reporting (Adams and Evans, 2004). However, if one takes the view of the family unit as the cornerstone of social capital, it is arguable that companies have even begun to make significant inroads into addressing or reporting on the impacts they have on the family. As Reiter (1997) suggests, many companies are still operating in the paradigm of a code of justice, which revolves around sticking to the prescribed rules. She suggests that rather they should be working within the ethic of care, which revolves around responsibility and relationships. This could and perhaps should apply to staff managing a principle of care for employees managing a work-family balance.

1.2.3 The nature of the workforce

Higgins and Duxbury (1992) suggest that little is still understood about the effects of a changed workforce on both men and women. They claim that in 1988, 54% of married women with children under the age of 6 were back in the workforce, compared to only 17% in 1960. Thus, it is contended that this norm of a dual-income home creates a significant shift in the dynamics for families, spousal relationships and work relationships.

1.2.4 Need for deeper understanding

It is proposed that the increasing entrance of women into the workplace, the change that phenomenon demands on family roles and the subsequent impact on the balance between work and family provides opportunity for further exploration through research. In addition, it is suggested that the role of the organisation as a stakeholder in this balance is of significance; particularly as organisations incorporate an understanding that their managers and leaders are dynamic individuals who participate and contribute as integrated rather than compartmentalised beings. In the context of the literature on the subject, this research aims to explore the subject further.

1.3 Problem Statement

1.3.1 Research problem

The main research problem is to explore the experience and management of the work-family balance in South Africa.

1.3.2 Sub problems

The first sub-problem is to explore the *personal* experiences of the work-family balance.

The second sub-problem is to explore the *work* experiences of the work-family balance; and provide insights for organisations based on the reported experiences.

The third sub-problem is to explore the *family* experiences of the work-family balance.

The fourth sub-problem is to understand any differences that may exist between men and women in how they experience and manage the work-family balance.

1.4 Significance of this study

This research seeks to deepen understanding for business people on the experience of the work-family balance. While there has been extensive study on the topic of the work-family balance, it is suggested that the depth of understanding around how the work-family balance is experienced is still relatively superficial as it is not supported by anecdotal evidence. Bruner (1990) describes the importance of storytelling as a means of deriving meaning in research. This research aims to contribute to a depth of understanding of the experience of the work-family balance by allowing these personal experiences to be revealed.

This research seeks to offer insights to organisations on the issue. Business has the challenge of trying to empower women who still hold a limited capacity in the formal business sector (Strachan and Burgess, 1998). As Worldbusiness (1996:20) states, “In no country do women represent half, or even close to half of the corporate managers”. While the purpose of the research is not to explore the role of women in the workplace, it is proposed that the phenomenon of women entering the workplace provides an important context for the discussion on work-family issues. Strachan and Burgess (1998) demonstrate that organisations in the western world are starting to take cognissance of the need for family friendly workplaces; however, they still cast doubts as to whether these initiatives are feasible in ever difficult economies. The experiences and management of this work-family balance for business managers may provide insights for corporations into the type of support that may be required to minimise the impact to the organisation and contribute to more fulfilled staff members.

This research seeks to contextualise the issue in a South African setting. Through a multitude of initiatives such as Black Economic Empowerment and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to name a few, South Africa has a focus on providing restitution for historical injustice (van den Berg, 2003). As Trevor Manuel, the Minister of Finance (2003) noted in a public speech, the RDP comprises 5 pillars, namely: meeting basic needs, developing human resources, building the economy, democratising the State and society, and implementing the RDP. It is contended that this unique South African setting, in conjunction with the increasing emergence of women in the workplace offers a distinctive paradigm for the work-family balance. (It is not the purpose of this research to explore political or gender related issues within South Africa, however it is suggested that work-family balance would have a unique interpretation in the South African setting).

1.5 Delimitations and limitations

1.5.1 Delimitations

1) This research only investigates skilled business managers in the formal sector of the economy. This delimitation is for methodological reasons. Skilled and unskilled staff would require different research approaches because of the inherent difference in education levels. Furthermore, anticipated differences in socio-economic circumstances may well have produced disparate data. This would have made the scope of this research too broad.
2) Only business people with children who live at home are included in the sample. It is inevitable that work-family issues would come into play with business people who have sick relatives or aged parents for whom they have to care; however for convenience purposes, they are excluded from the sample. Inferences may still be deduced to other types of work-family situations, but this may have validity issues as the factors at play might be different.
3) Women and men who have opted out of work to take care of their families have been excluded as it is assumed that they do not experience work-family balance issues to the same extent as families that are either dual-career or single-parent homes.
4) This study does not investigate the organisational perspective. That is, the effects of organisational policies are only explored as part of the experience of the employees; they are not validated by organisational representatives.
5) The scope of the research is defined as "the experience" of the work-family balance. The word "*experience"* is used as an all encompassing term to unravel all encounters deemed relevant by the sample participants.
6) As work and family can be all-encompassing terms, care has been taken to limit the scope of the literature to topics that specially have a bearing on the balance between work and family.

1.5.2 Limitations

1) As this research does not employ probability sampling (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001), the generalisability of the sample to all groups of the South African population is limited. This is particularly relevant in the South African context where there are disparate socio-economic groups.
2) This study does not provide definitive answers for organisations on the merits of implementing particular policies to deal with the work-family balance phenomenon.
3) As the study is interpretive in nature it does not provide definitive answers for individuals on how to manage the work-family balance. It merely aims to provide insight.

1.5.3 Assumptions

1) This study employs the term "work-family balance". This term does not presuppose the achievement of balance. Rather it is used as a neutral term to describe the relationship between work and family, as it has been employed in other research.
2) This research relies on perceptions. It assumes that the data derived are the perceptions of the sample participants, and therefore, as would be the case with most interpretive research, does not represent an absolute truth, but a subjective one.
3) The study assumes that individuals participating in this research have a level of insight into the work-family issue; and that they have considered some of the factors as they relate to their own lives.
4) The study assumes a level of accurate openness and honesty in the discussion; particularly given the personal nature of the topic.

1.6 Subsequent chapters of the research report

The chapters of the research report are structured as follows:

Chapter 2 incorporates a detailed review of literature on the work-family balance.

Chapter 3 presents the research questions related to the research problem and its sub-problems. In addition, it provides an overview of the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach.

Chapter 4 describes the qualitative research methodology employed in this study. It expands on chapter 3. The detail in Chapter 4 includes sampling methods, research instruments and the processes that were used to collect, analyse and interpret the data.

Chapter 5 presents and interprets the results of the study, relating them to the literature and evaluating them with respect to the research questions.

Chapter 6 presents the main findings of the study in summary format, accompanied by recommendations. It further discusses the validity and reliability of the results. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature used to derive the questions that form the basis of the research. It sets out to describe various definitions and constructs related to the work-family balance. It then explores topics pertinent to the experience. As the topic itself relates to individuals in their work and family roles, care has been taken to ensure that literature provided in this chapter is specifically relevant to the balance between work and family. It is not an exhaustive literature review of all matters broadly relating to individuals in their work and / or family spheres.

The literature has been grouped as best as possible to align to the sub-problems. These categories could not always be clearly delineated precisely because of the complex interplay between the components. The main sections are:

1) Work-family balance constructs and definitions
2) Personal experiences of the work-family balance
3) Work experiences of the work-family balance and implications for organisations
4) Family experiences of the work-family balance
5) Differences between men and women in how they experience the work-family balance.

2.2 Work-family balance: constructs and definitions

2.2.1 Introduction

This section provides both context and theory on key constructs within the work-family balance. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) suggest work-family definitions

require more consistent measurement and more refined construct development. This section provides various definitions and constructs as evidenced in the literature and it also serves as a glossary of key concepts pertinent to the work-family discussion. It provides a contextual overview of concepts and does not explore the relationships or theories beyond this definitive purpose.

2.2.2 Role balance definitions

Carmeli (2003) defines the work-family conflict as a mutually incompatible discord between roles. That is, participation in the work role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role. Greenhaus *et al* (2002) suggest that work-family balance is constructed of both inputs and outputs. As depicted in Figure 1, inputs are the actual time, energy and involvement put into each role. Outputs are the satisfaction with each role. Kirchmeyer (2000:81) describes the terminology of positive role balance and negative role balance. Positive role balance is described as, “achieving satisfying experiences…in all domains of life”. Negative role balance on the other hand describes a disengagement from and dissatisfaction with both roles. Thus, the work-family balance can be defined overall as, “The extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role”. (Greenhaus *et al*, 2002:513).

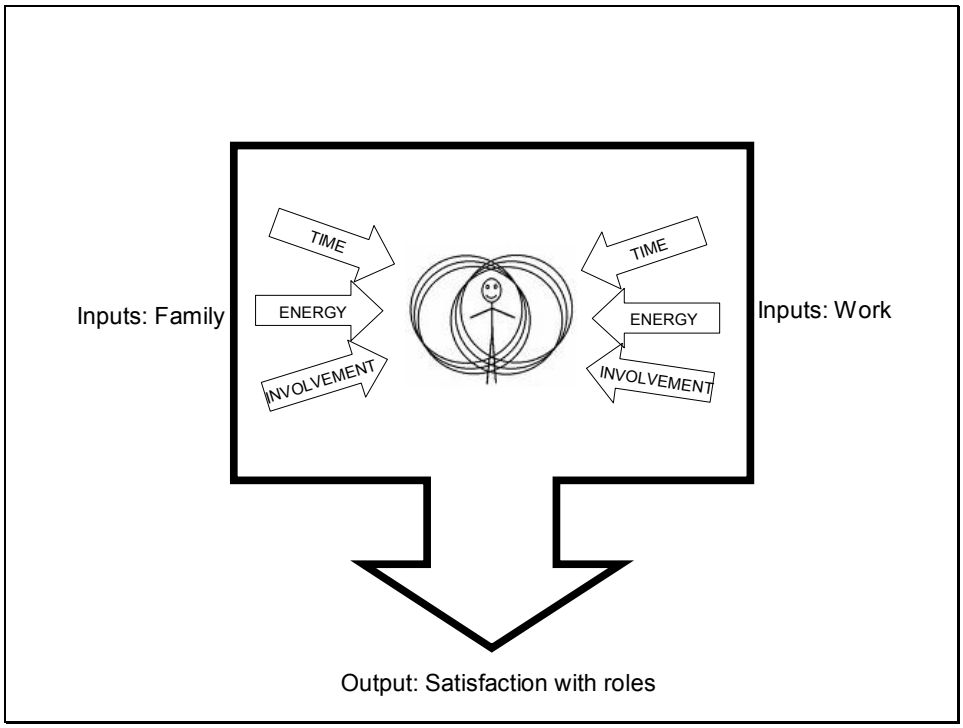


Figure 1: Role-based definitions based on inputs and output

2.2.3 Spillover definition

The work of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) expands on a role-based definition by stating that conflict arises when the demands of one role impact on the expectations of the other role and spillover into the experience of the other role. They explain that the exposure to stress in the one domain leads to tension, fatigue and irritability which affect the person's ability to operate effectively in the other domain. As depicted in Figure 2, they also propose a bidirectional conflict. Work-family conflict (WFC) is the impact of the work role on the family; while Family-work conflict (FWC) is the intrusion of the family role on the work domain. This also has been termed work to family spillover and family to work spillover respectively.

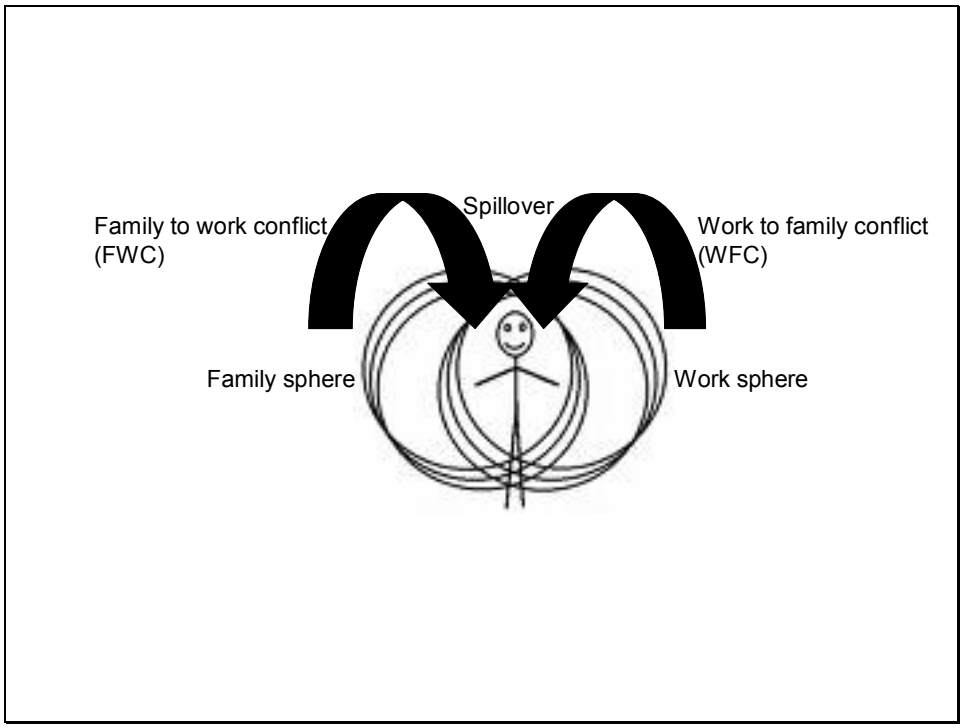


Figure 2: Spillover definitions of the work-family conflict

2.2.4. Positive impacts: definition of work-family facilitation

Other theorists have described the work-family balance more on a continuum that positions it either as a conflict between or the facilitation of the two roles (Pleck, 1977; Gill, 2000; Sieber, 1974; Thoits, 1986; Wayne *et al*, 2002). Work-family conflict has been extensively discussed in the literature, but more recent studies have started focusing on the work-family facilitation concept (Wayne *et al*, 2002). Pleck (1977) was one of the first proponents of the concept of work-family conflict[1] by suggesting that work and family responsibilities impact each other in both a positive and a negative manner. Authors such as Gill (2001) quote Sieber (1974) and Thoits (1986) who argue that multiple roles may increase opportunities for social interaction and personal development; as well as create a sense of purpose in life, enhance self-esteem and buffer against

[1] Pleck (1977) used the term conflict although his research also described positive overflows from one sphere to another.

role failure. Barnett and Hyde (1998) also conclude that there are significant benefits to engaging in both work and family roles in terms of mental, physical and relationship health. Barnett (1999) goes as far as to postulate that the rewards of combining personal and professional lives may outweigh the costs of the work-family conflict.

Wayne *et al* (2002) expand on this idea by defining a concept called work-family facilitation. This is described as occurring when participation in one role enhances the participation or functioning in another role. It is apparent that the processes around how this occurs have not been thoroughly researched. However, as indicated in Figure 3, Stephens *et al* (1997) give some suggestions that the activities in one role are rewarding and therefore enhance the individual's mood in the other role. Similarly, skills and attitudes acquired in one role can be applied positively in the other role (Crouter, 1984).

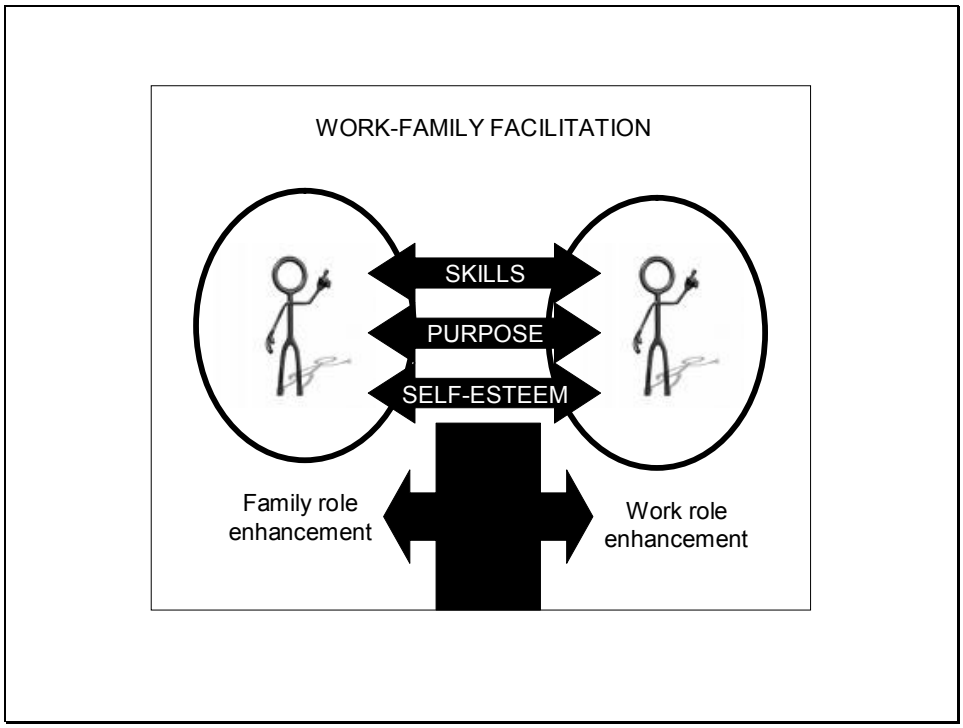


Figure 3: Work-family facilitation

2.2.5 Conclusion

The literature presents multiple definitions of terms and constructs on the work-family balance (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998). These include definitions of work-family conflict (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), role balance definitions (Carmeli, 2003; Greenhaus *et al*, 2002; Kirchmeyer, 2000); as well as the more recent concept of work-family facilitation (Wayne *et al*, 2002). The detailed definitions of these constructs provide an essential 'glossary' for the exploration into the work-family balance. This research aims to incorporate these concepts into an interpretation of the portrayed experiences of work and family issues.

2.3 Personal experiences of the work-family balance

2.3.1 Introduction

This section offers detail on the documented inner or personal experiences related to the work-family balance as they are described in the literature. It is structured to discuss the concepts of time constraints, stress, personality, belief systems and emotional intelligence; all of which have a bearing on the experience of the work-family balance.

2.3.2 An age of time and convenience

Brown (1989) argues that we are in an age of convenience where people are money rich and time poor. It is suggested that this is a factor of the industrial revolution; when people ceased to manufacture cloth and began to buy it; ceased to manufacture candles and instead, bought kerosene…ceased to butcher their own meat, but instead bought the products of the meat packers. Ultimately it can be argued that the development of technology through the past few centuries has sought to reorganise and save work. This western fascination with saving time is evident in a multitude of day to day conveniences. Brown and McEnally (1993) and Kaufman (1986) all argue that

convenience has several components, namely: saving time, physical energy and / or mental energy.

Cohen and Wills (1985) argue that surveys have demonstrated that people in the United States generally experience being time-poor, with employed mothers feeling the most time-poor. Day and Chamberlain (2005) contend that time-based demands can create conflict between work and family particularly where those time demands are incompatible. Bohen and Viveros Long (1981) demonstrate that more time spent on child and house-related activities leads to family to work conflict, while Judge *et al* (1994) argue that increased hours at work cause work to family conflict. Expanding on this, Major *et al* (2002) establish a positive relationship between long working-hours and psychological distress. It is asserted that almost all studies on the work-family balance assume a time-constraint as an underpinning theme, yet very few studies address it as a primary factor in the work-family balance literature. Thus there is no evidence to suggest that individuals who manage their time better or worse experience a greater of lesser degree of work-family conflict. While people may perceive being time-poor because they have fewer coping skills, less family support, a more demanding job or family; as well as planning and organisational skills could be contributing factors.

2.3.3 Stress and satisfaction

There is extensive discussion in literature that elucidates on the negative consequences of the work-family balance for working individuals. Impacts include increased levels of stress, decreased performance at home and at work, and decreased life and work satisfaction (Rotondo *et al*, 2003).

Dean (1992) argues that women engaged in paid employment have fewer health problems than women not engaged in paid employment. However women with young children experience twice as many health problems largely attributable to the stress of the extra workload. Brown and Bifulco (1990) find that full-time working mothers are at high risk of depression; potentially related to the increased stress of managing multiple roles. Research seems to indicate

that stress plays a major role in affecting people's health and ability to function (Le Fevre *et al*, 2003). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports that "inefficiencies arising from occupational stress may cost up to 10 per cent of a country's Gross National Product and it is estimated that, in the UK, over 60 per cent of all workplace absences are due to stress, and although it is difficult to measure the total cost of occupational stress, estimates in the USA range from 200 to 300 billion dollars per year" (Le Fevre *et al*, 2003: 726).

The theory on stress provides an interesting perspective for the work-family balance and its impacts on the individual. While the research of Le Fevre *et al* (2003) specifically deals with the concept of occupational stress; it would seem inevitable that stress is a multi-faceted construct, which would not be induced only by work-related circumstances. Rather, it is argued, stress would be stimulated by a combination of personal and work-related triggers.

Dua (1994) contends that there is still little agreement on exactly what stress is. He suggests that it has been defined as a response to challenging events, as an event that places demands on the individual, as an environmental characteristic which poses a threat to the individual and as a realisation by the individual that he is unable to deal adequately with the demands placed upon him. Seyle (1956) was the first proponent of different types of stress. He suggests that eustress is "good" stress and distress is "bad" stress. He uses the concept of demand to describe whether a person is experiencing eustress or distress. Thus, if an individual has either too little or too much demand she experiences this as being unpleasant, and therefore distress. Yerkes Dodson Law in Dua (1994:727) defines the concept of optimal stress, whereby "increasing stress is beneficial to performance until some optimum level is reached, after which performance will decline". By implication, this suggests that stress is perhaps a factor of the inherent skills and coping mechanisms of the individual combined with the environmental stressors.

Edwards *et al* (1998) expand on this concept by describing the Person-Environment (P-E) theory. They postulate that stress is not about the individual or the environment, but rather a fit or misfit between the two. Thus they suggest

that this misfit between person and environment leads to stress in two sets of circumstances. The first is when the person's skills and attributes are insufficient to meet the environmental demands. The second occurs when the person's psychological and physiological needs (such as recognition, good health, reward and praise) are not met by the environment.

It is contended that the stress theory provides interesting insights into the potential reasons for either positive or negative experiences of work-family balance. It would seem by deduction that work-family conflict would have a direct and positive relationship to distress; while work-family facilitation would have a direct and positive relationship to eustress. Continuing this argument, if one assumes these relationships, there may be two specific reasons accounting for the differences in individual experiences of the work-family balance. Thus, if the individual does not have sufficient skills to meet environmental demands this would lead to distress and work-family conflict or if the individual does not receive the psychological and physiological rewards in terms of work or family appreciation, it could lead to distress and work-family conflict. Greenhaus *et al* (2002) put forward an alternative explanation. They propose that individuals with a high total dissatisfaction measure overall are likely to experience work-family conflict more. Thus, work-family conflict could also be more a function of unhappiness in an individual which is transported to each role the person engages in.

Parasuraman *et al* (1992) discuss the importance of further research into stressors encountered in the intersection of work and family. They suggest that individuals in two-career relationships can be broken down into stressors that remain within each sphere and stressors that extend between spheres. Contrary to the findings on work-family spillover and vice versa, their research demonstrates the containment of stress within a particular sphere. Thus work-role stressors are more related to job dissatisfaction and family stressors to family satisfaction. No significant between-domain stressors are suggested. They propose that a key reason for this may be that partners adopt a

compartmentalising strategy which enables them to contain the stress to specific roles. Higgins and Duxbury (1992) adopt an alternative view by proposing a model that positions the inter-relationships between various satisfaction measures. It suggests that the relationships between roles are not easily compartmentalised.

The model in Figure 4 shows the relationship between conflict and strain experienced at work or in the family causing work-family conflict. This in turn affects quality of work life and quality of family life which they postulate influences overall life satisfaction (Kline and Cowan, 1989).

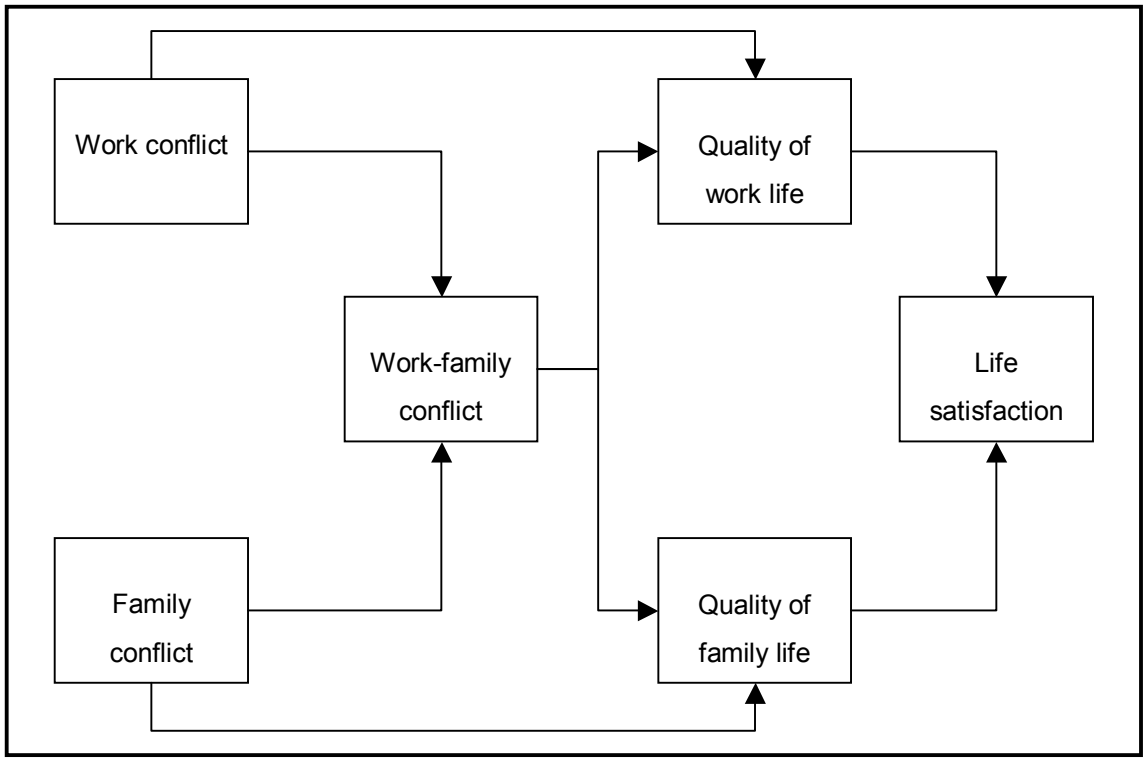


Figure 4: Higgins and Duxbury (1992) Model of work-family conflict

Benin and Nienstadt (1985) explore the impact of dual-career families on men using role theory. They conclude that households with two working parents create pressure on men to perform more functions at home. This, in turn induces greater conflict at work which increases conflict at home; hence work-

family conflict. Where roles are complementary as in traditional gender ideology of the male only working, this occurrence does not take place.

It is suggested that the research has limitations in its ability to describe effectiveness in roles. Thus, it can be argued that while satisfaction in a role relates to an individual's own perceived happiness with and levels of stress within that role, it does not provide any direct measure of the level of functioning in that role. It does not account for role strain which is defined as the difficulty in performing the obligations of one's role (Voydanoff, 1988). It is suggested that while no crossover effect in satisfaction, there may be a crossover effect in level of functioning or role strain. Thus individuals may either have formally adjusted their roles and expectations to alleviate the stress across roles. Alternatively, their performance in one role may be reduced owing to stress in the other role, while still maintaining a level of satisfaction by reducing their expectations of their performance in that role.

It is further postulated that the literature presents complex and sometimes contradictory findings on the relationships between stress, satisfaction and work-family conflict. The effects cannot necessarily be contained to neat relationships of work to family spillover or family to work spillover. Rather the relationships are complex and not necessarily causal. It is contended however that the experience of the work-family balance is intricately linked to the concept of stress and satisfaction. As depicted in Figure 5, there may be a positive relationship between dissatisfaction, distress and work-family conflict as well as satisfaction, eustress and work-family facilitation. Indeed, it may suggest that the relationships are not linear but cyclical. Thus, the presence of one of these factors irrespective of its genealogy may trigger a cyclical reaction of the other factors, creating an upward or downward spiral.

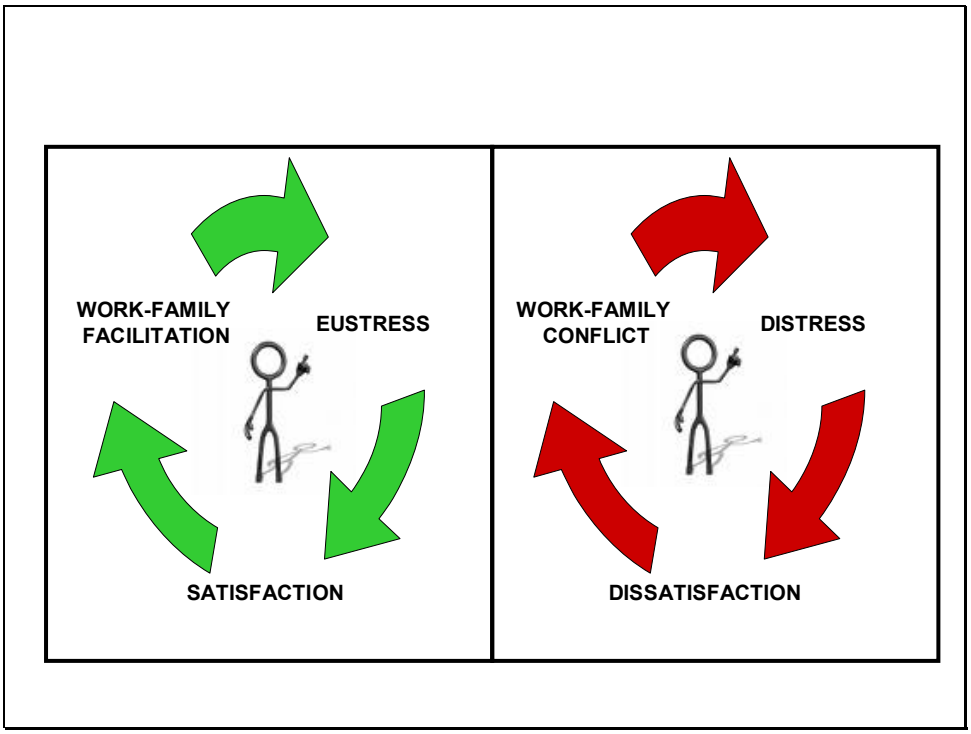


Figure 5: Relationships between work-family, stress and satisfaction

2.3.4 Attitudes and belief structures

Gender Ideology

Greenstein (2002) describes the concept of gender-ideology as the deepest beliefs that individuals have about what their particular gender means. He suggests that gender identities are definitions such as male and female; while gender ideologies relate to a person's sense of what being male or female entails. Traditional gender ideologies are described as people who believe in the role of women as child-bearers and men as breadwinners; while egalitarian gender ideologies are held by individuals who hold less specific concepts of the roles and tasks of each gender (Blair and Johnson, 1992). Thus, it is suggested that the concept of gender ideology is a pertinent one to the debate on the work-family balance. As this belief structure seems to drive behaviour at home and at work, it could be argued to impact the experience of conflict or facilitation in the work-family balance. Greenstein (2002) refers to various studies that implicitly support this notion. He alludes to research that demonstrates that men

with traditional gender ideologies do less housework and care-taking of children than men with more egalitarian ideologies.

Researched beliefs about work-family

In their study of the beliefs about work and family, Barnett and Rivers (1996) establish the following change in dynamics:

1) Men and women believe that they share equal responsibility for maintaining the home. This is represented by men and women reporting that they would like to spend more time at home and less at work; as well as reports that men do about 45% of the housework.
2) Men and women believe they have equal responsibility for breadwinning. Barnett (1999) quotes the Families and Works Institute (1995) who find that women contribute approximately 48% of household income.
3) Men and women believe that the mother to child bond is no stronger than the father to child bond.
4) Men and women believe that fathers should play a major role in child care and that their relationships with their children are fundamental to their physical and psychological well-being.

While this research was conducted amongst professionals in the United States of America, it is contended that it marks a change in the attitudes and beliefs of working people about their roles at work and at home. It is proposed that these beliefs would affect responses to work-family balance.

Relationship between beliefs, attitudes and work-family issues

Attitude is defined as a psychological tendency to evaluate a particular target either favourably or disfavourably (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). These attitudes are often determined by past experiences with a particular object that are then carried forward to an experience with a similar object. According to Arnold *et al* (1995:67), “Attitudes reflect a person’s tendency to feel, think or behave in a positive or negative manner towards the object of the attitude”. Attitudes would seem to be derived from inherent beliefs about a certain object. Ichheiser

(1943) presents the foundations of this thought by describing how attitudes are dependent and inextricably linked to images in relationships. By this he concludes that many attitudes towards other people or entities are constructed by distorted images (or beliefs) about the other. Thus, in order to rationalise killing the enemy, it is important to uphold the belief that the enemy is bad, irrespective of the truth about this perception. Without upholding this image or belief, the human conscience would not be able to live with the consequences of the action (Ichheiser, 1943). Subsequent theory development on attitude expands on this concept by linking attitudes to beliefs. As Locander and Locander and Spivey (1978) suggest, belief structures are critical in driving attitude change.

In the context of the work-family balance, attitudes and beliefs would play a vital role in either underpinning an experience of work-family conflict or in mitigating the effects of work-family conflict. The relevance of these theories is explained by way of two work-family examples:

1) *Attitude and beliefs as source*: A male father believes it is the mother's role to take care of the children. He marries a woman who has egalitarian gender ideology and places emphasis on her career. His belief that it is the mother's role to take care of the children results in his continued focus on his career without any increase in effort at home. Any problems incurred at home with the children may induce an attitude of resentment in him towards his wife because she is not taking responsibility for the children. This may lead to an experience of excessive home conflict in her, spilling over to her career; as well as increased resentment towards him because she believes he should be taking equal responsibility. Furthermore, he perceives the problems and conflict at home as intruding on his work and ability to provide, so he focuses more intently on work, exacerbating the problem at home.
2) *Attitudes and beliefs as mediators of work-family conflict:* Female A believes it is her husband's role to be the main provider. She enjoys her career but fundamentally believes that she would be more responsible for her children than her husband would. When children at home cause work-

family conflict for both spouses, she adopts a supportive attitude towards her husband's experience of family interfering with his work, because she believes this is his primary role. Her attitude and beliefs would cause her to consider either structural role changes in her career so that she can stay at home to deal with the family, also because she believes this is her primary responsibility.

Thus, it is contended that if individuals reconcile their conflict through an attitude that attributes fault to one sphere of their lives, then this potentially could indicate a lack of desire to achieve balance; and would exacerbate their conflict experience. In turn this perspective may induce a completely different set of perceived alternatives. Thus coping strategies may be more drastic aiming to alleviate the stress from the entity to which fault is attributed. This may mean completely exiting either the family relationship or work commitment. Alternatively, as Greenhaus *et al* (2002) suggest, it could result in imbalance where the person disengages almost completely from one sphere. These are potential explanations for socially common events such as divorce, resignation from a job to stay at home or "absent parents". On the opposite end of the spectrum, individuals who tend to have more positive attitudes and beliefs about their circumstances may not blame the stress they are experiencing on any particular entity. Rather, it is plausible that they may seek to alleviate the conflict more systematically by adjusting circumstances without blaming or viewing anyone disfavourably.

2.3.5 Link between body and mind

Hayes and Ross (1986) re-establish the link between body and mind. Their research replicates past findings that good physical health affects psychological well-being. Their cross-sectional analysis demonstrates that exercise has a positive effect on psychological well-being. However, it has the least effect on high income groups who they postulate have fewer stressors, better coping mechanisms and higher well-being initially. Their study further concludes that the effects of exercise are not regulated by the social interaction, but by internal mechanisms such as increase in nor epinephrine (decrease in feelings of being

run down) and endorphins which improve mood. Other research shows different causal links between exercise and psychological well-being. While all studies seem to demonstrate that exercise and physical health have a positive effect on psychological well-being, it is suggested that the direction of the relationship is not clear. That is, does good psychological well-being result in someone being able to perform physical exercise or does physical exercise aid good psychological health? Nonetheless, it is argued that there is sufficient evidence in the literature to suggest a direct and positive relationship between physical exercise and psychological well-being (Hayes and Ross, 1986). No specific research has been conducted demonstrating the effects of physical exercise on reducing work-family conflict. However, it seems fair to suggest that exercise may well have a similar effect in mediating the effects of stress on psychological well-being in the context of the work-family balance.

2.3.6 Personality and personality hardiness

Personality Traits

Vakola *et al* (2004) conducted research into the role of personality variables on the attitudes towards organisational change. They describe the Big Five factor model on personality developed by Goldberg (1990) and McCrae and John (1992). The five factors are listed and described in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Personality factors and definitions adapted from discussion by Vakola, Tsaousis and Nikolaou (2004)

PERSONALITY FACTOR	FACTOR DEFINITION
Neuroticism	The tendency to experience negative affect, such as anxiety, insecurity and psychological distress
Extraversion	The quantity an intensity of interpersonal interaction and activity level
Openness to experience	The proactive seeking and appreciation of new experiences
Agreeableness	The quality of one's interpersonal interaction along a continuum from compassion to antagonism
Conscientiousness	The amount of persistence, organisation and motivation in goal-directed behaviours

McCrae and Costa (1986) established a positive relationship between the personality factor of openness to experience and the utilisation of effective coping strategies to deal with stressful life events. Thus, it may be a dimension

that would have an extended relationship to an individual's ability to implement effective mechanisms to cope with the work-family balance.

In their study on the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and work-family balance, Wayne *et al* (2002) confirm this theory. Their research demonstrates that conflict between work and family is related to personality traits, and by different ones. Neuroticism and conscientiousness are the primary traits related to conflict with negative and positive correlations respectively. Neurotic people (unaccompanied by other extenuating personality traits) would be less effective at managing the work-family balance because of their negative disposition and helplessness which would prevent constructive action to resolve any conflict. On the contrary, conscientious people would be expected to manage the work-family balance effectively as these people are generally self-disciplined, ambitious and competent (McCrae and Costa, 1992). Extroversion also is correlated with work-family facilitation. It is postulated that this could be explained by extraverts being more willing to seek external help and/or negotiate the necessary structural changes without enormous personal sacrifice.

Wayne *et al*'s research (2002) proposes that work-family conflict and work-family facilitation are not exact opposites. This finding emerged as a result of their study on the relationship between personality traits and work to family conflict/facilitation. While personality traits of conscientiousness and neuroticism are related to the conflict construct, extraversion was related to the facilitation construct. This suggests that the constructs are indeed orthogonal (not opposite) and thus, individuals can experience levels of both conflict and facilitation simultaneously. This phenomenon poses an almost paradoxical debate. If, as Wayne *et al* (2002) suggest, the two constructs can co-exist, surely this in itself would cause a discord within the individual? Thus it is postulated that individuals experiencing both conflict and facilitation simultaneously may be in a regular state of psychological confusion about their ambiguity on the issue; irrespective of their personality types.

Control and personality hardiness

Voydanoff (1988) postulates that work-family conflict is buffered by an individual's ability to exert control over the circumstances of that conflict. For example, individuals who have an element of control over their working hours and stress factors would be able to wield influence over these factors to reduce levels of stress. Karasek (1979) also describes this phenomenon by concluding that high demands of time and energy on individuals only elicits conflict if the individual has no means of controlling or coping with the demands. Thus it is suggested that while it is not plausible for organisations to reschedule work deadlines around individuals, it puts forward the notion that if individuals are provided with a means of controlling their time at the office to some extent, this would mediate any work-family conflict, even in high-demand jobs.

MacEwan and Barling (1988) address this idea in an alternative manner through the concept of personality hardiness. They suggest that personality hardiness is comprised of a commitment to all aspects of one's life, a sense of control over the events in one's life and a perception of change as a challenge rather than a threat. Hence, it plays a significant mediation role in work-family conflict.

Thus, it is suggested that the literature on the role of personality and an individual's control over her environment provides an interesting perspective on factors that may be at play in the personal experiences of the work-family balance.

2.3.7 Emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence and coping with change

Mayer and Salovey (1997) describe emotional intelligence as "the ability of an individual to perceive accurately, express emotion; the ability to access and / or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Vakola *et al,* 2004: 91). Goleman (1995)

expands on the concept of emotional intelligence by categorising 6 basic traits or skills. These are:

1) Self-awareness, which includes an individual's ability to be honest with herself, understand her emotions and display a self-deprecating sense of humour;
2) Self-regulation, which includes an ability to channel negativity in a positive way, reduce mood swings and display good impulse control;
3) Motivation, which includes a desire to achieve for personal reasons, keeping the score and continual attempts to 'raise the bar' on performance;
4) Empathy, which includes thoughtfulness, understanding of the meaning beneath the meaning and tolerance of people's differences;
5) Social skill, which includes friendliness, a wide circle of friends and interests.

The research on emotional intelligence suggests that individuals who score highly on the construct are better at coping with more stressful events and at putting in coping strategies; which undoubtedly would apply to managing the work-family conflict (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). Self-knowledge may also be a key emotional intelligence mechanism that individuals may employ to recognise the factors of their lives either contributing to or blocking their ability to cope with multiple roles. However, it is suggested that self-knowledge alone would be insufficient to mitigate the impacts of work-family conflict; as individuals may well understand and introspect on their circumstances without being able to employ other emotional intelligence factors to alter their situation.

The study of Cole *et al* (1980) expands the notion of the importance of emotional intelligence and maturity in the marital relationship. Their study concludes that emotional maturity in men and women is positively related to their experience of marital adjustment. As a corollary to this finding, the study by Lee (1978) provides evidence for the effects of positive marital adjustment on general emotional well-being of spouses. Thus in the context of the work-family balance one might expect to find emotional maturity as a buffer to work-family conflict in so much as it enables a good marital relationship which in turn mitigates stresses on the division of labour. Furthermore, it can be argued that

the relationship may well be reciprocal in that a good marital relationship may then contribute to a sense of emotional well-being, perhaps creating an upward spiral of better coping and thus more and more success. Conversely it is plausible that couples in a perceived poor marriage may experience the reverse cycle.

Within the work sphere, Goleman (2000) establishes the importance of emotional intelligence in the work environment. He demonstrates that emotional intelligence is twice as important as IQ and technical skills for leaders. McClelland (1961) also establishes that senior managers who score high on emotional intelligence repeatedly outperform their divisional targets by twenty percent.

Thus, the literature on emotional intelligence suggests its importance for individuals in their personal capacity; as well as in their working lives.

Emotional Intelligence and change

Huy (1999) reflects on the importance of emotional intelligence factors in driving change at a personal and an organisational level. She describes the drivers of personal change, as demonstrated in Figure 6. Receptivity involves the willingness to consider change. Mobilisation refers to the individual's willingness to act in the direction of the change. Lastly individuals then learn from their actions and use this as a feedback loop to adjust their belief systems. It is suggested that this entire loop is guided by positive emotions which assumes a level of emotional intelligence. Thus, less emotionally astute individuals may experience this change dynamic as a doom loop rather than experiencing the positive benefits of the change. This theory may provide insights into decisions that individuals make to mediate any effects that work-family balance has on their lives. It is suggested that it elucidates on the reasons that certain individuals are able to induce appropriate change in their lives to adjust to their work-family issues.

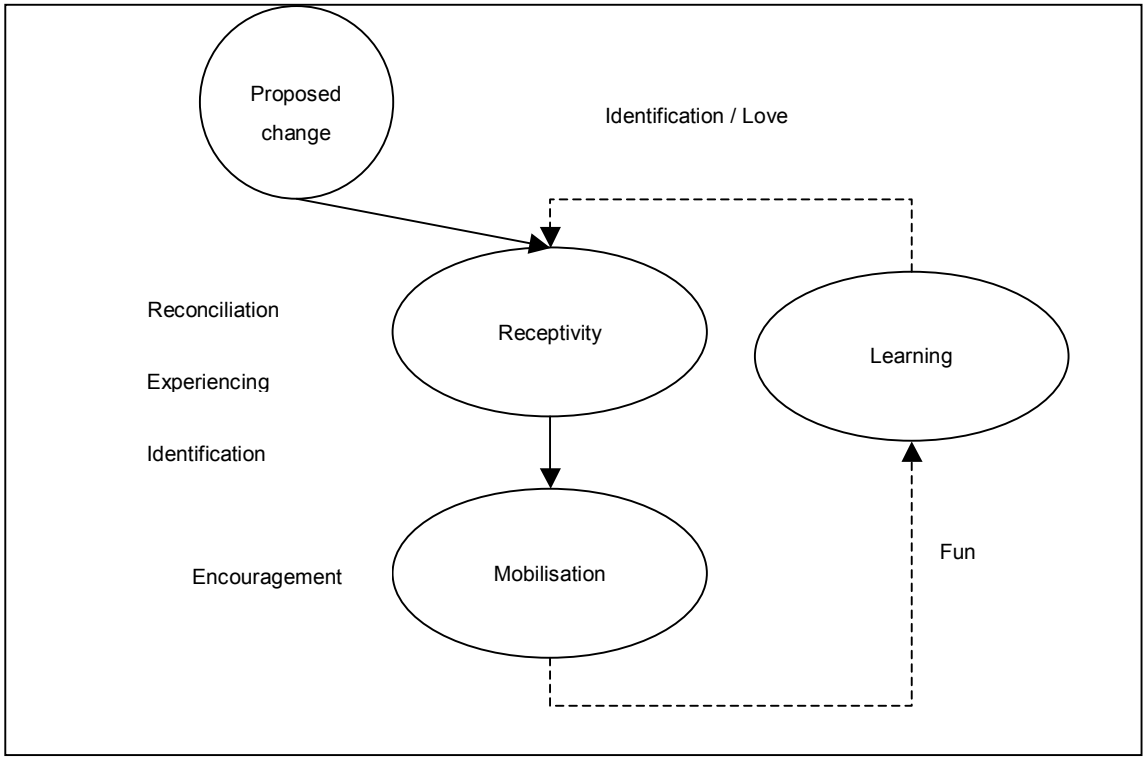


Figure 6: Adaptation of Huy's emotional dynamics influencing change dynamics (Huy, 1999)

While the relationship between work-family balance and emotional intelligence has not been researched specifically, it is contended that there is an inevitable link. It seems that emotional intelligence attributes would act as mediators of any conflict in work-family balance.

2.3.8 Role adjustment behaviours

Newell (1996:39) suggests that the labour market "is still structured around the male norm. It is not structured around the need to allow employees to reconcile productive and reproductive work". This has led women in particular to find inventive ways of coping with the dual roles. Hall (1972) identifies three types of coping strategies:

Structural role redefinition involves altering external expectations relative to one's role (Matsui *et al*, 1995). Examples of this type of coping strategy would

be adjusting working hours to meet the demands of the family, or accepting a lower position at work.

Personal role redefinition involves altering one's own expectations in a given role (Matsui *et al*, 1995). Examples of this type of coping strategy would be accepting that the house is more untidy because of time-constraints, or accepting that promotion at work is unlikely given family circumstances.

Reactive role definition entails attempting to find ways to meet the demands of all roles (Matsui *et al,* 1995). Examples of this type of coping strategy would be trying to do everything all the time, despite feeling dissatisfied in life.

Hall (1972) and Kaitz (1985) suggest that structural role definition is the most time effective way of dealing with work-family balance and is associated with career satisfaction, in women in particular.

The literature suggests that individuals use various role-based mechanisms to cope with the work-family balance (Matsui *et al*, 1995). It is conceivable that the manner in which the individual defines that role plays a significant factor in contributing to the experience of work-family balance as conflict or facilitation; thereby creating an indivisible link between beliefs and behaviours. It is postulated that if there is any conflict between the belief structure and the behaviour, conflict would be delayed not averted. As a hypothetical example, a father may decide to make a structural role change in order to cope with the demands of the family. Let's suggest that this role change involves reducing his working hours so that he is home by 4pm everyday to spend time with his children. With this decision he may incur the undesirable consequences of having to remain in a less challenging position at work for many years, leaving him feeling conflicted about his role change. Thus, it is feasible that in this example, the structural role change may only have shifted the conflict – not alleviated it. It is suggested that it would require the father to draw on other coping mechanisms to alleviate the internal conflict, such as emotional intelligence or personality. Irrespective, it would seem that role changes

perhaps contribute as moderators of any potential conflict, but perhaps need to be combined with other factors to achieve a balance effect.

2.3.9 Conclusion

The literature describes various personal attributes and experiences of the work-family balance. These factors include the role of time pressures and stress; as well as the factors of belief structures, personality, role change behaviours and emotional intelligence that contribute to the overall experience of work-family balance. It suggests that some of these factors may mediate the experience of work-family conflict, while other factors may be sub-constructs (Dua, 1994). It is argued that while the literature suggests possible relationships between these various intrinsic factors and the experience of work-family conflict or facilitation, this has not been clearly established and is worthy of further research to expand on the understanding. Thus, it drives the research question: *What are the personal experiences of the work-family balance?*

2.4 Work experiences of work-family balance

2.4.1 Introduction

This section provides detail on the literature relating to the individual's role at work and how this potentially impacts the experience of the work-family balance. It is structured to include discussion on the role of women in the workplace, the changing dynamics of the organisation; as well as the researched effects of family spillover to work.

2.4.2 Women in the workplace

The literature suggests that part of the individual's experience of time pressures can be traced to women going into the workplace, creating new time challenges for the family unit in general (Loscocco, 1997). Newell (1996) uses Denmark as one example of a country that has focused on the emancipation of women by

implementing policies to encourage women to work for personal and broader economic gain. Indeed, she contends that the culture has become pervasive in that Scandinavian mothers who do not work are looked down upon in society. Global trends over the century suggest that an increasing number of women have entered the workplace. As Joseph (2006) reports, in the UK approximately half the workforce is represented by women compared to less than 25% in the 1970's. In addition, numerous research studies have indicated the absence of women in fulfilling certain opportune roles in organisations. Harris (2004), for example, notes that women are almost nonexistent in international assignments and that corporations provide various reasons for this, such as international objections to women in the work place; and family constraints. Thus, the literature suggests that the entrance of women into the workplace has brought about dynamic change in particular, policies designed to deal with their presence in the workplace (Strachan and Burgess, 1998).

Winn (2004) suggests that despite increased gender parity in the workforce, women are struggling to balance the responsibilities of their families with the demands of their careers. Loscocco (1997) alludes to a reason for this. She quotes various sources to suggest that work and family spheres have been slow to change, leaving women bearing the brunt of the work-family balance. Hence, it is argued that the literature seems divided on the importance and the impact of women's increased participation in the workforce. While some literature suggests modernised beliefs on the role of men and women at home (Barnett and Rivers, 1996), other research (Loscocco, 1997) alludes to differences in actual role enactment between men and women at work and home. It can be purported then that the discrepancies perhaps are not contradictory; but rather, indicative of transitioning social norms as a result of the increasing role of women in the workplace.

2.4.3 Dynamic change and the impact on the individual

Crouter and Manke (1994) suggest that the nature of the workplace is changing dramatically. They describe the reasons for these changes as follows:

1) Organisations are downsizing almost constantly to be as efficient as possible in the face of growing global competition;
2) Technology and telecommunication are having a constant impact on the way in which work is done and organised. Zuboff (1988) suggests that technology advancements require workers to improve constantly and change how they work. In addition it provides easy access to information which blurs the lines between roles and levels.
3) Organisations are changing their work approaches to be high team-involvement processes aimed at skill transfer and more effective problem-solving / delivery in the face of global competition.

Thus, they argue that the growing changes in the workplace create additional stress for employees. As an extension of this debate, it is suggested that the exponential change facing organisations and their employees may have an exacerbating effect on the experience of the work-family.

2.4.4 Impact of work role characteristics

Work schedule

Staines and Pleck (1983) report on the impact of work schedule on the experience of work-family conflict. They conclude that working non-day shifts and any shift work is related to high levels of work conflict. Working weekends or variable days does not seem to have a causal relationship to work-family conflict. In addition, several studies (Burke *et al*, 1980; Keith and Schafer, 1980; Mortimer, 1980; Staines and Pleck, 1983; Voydanoff and Kelly, 1984) conclude that working long hours, after hours and / or moonlighting have strong relationships with work-family conflict. In addition, several authors present findings that employees want to work fewer hours in order to balance the demands of their work and family (Bond *et al*, 1998).

Work demands

Voydanoff (1988) reports that role ambiguity, role conflict, intellectual and physical effort, rapid rate of change and quantitative overload all lead to an

experience of work to family spillover. On the contrary, she reports that job variety and enriching work appear to be negatively related to work-family incompatibility.

2.4.5 Family to work spillover

Dua (1994:69) reveals, "Researchers have presented evidence to show that general stress and work-related stress lead to poor physical health, poor emotional or mental health, absenteeism, low morale, and job dissatisfaction". Matsui *et al* (1995) endorse these findings by suggesting through their own literary research that working mothers experience the work-family conflict in the form of absenteeism, tardiness, energy deficiency, preoccupation with family-related matters, and reluctance to accept work-related responsibilities that conflict with family time and activities.

Voydanoff (1988) concludes that family to work spillover is attributed to one main factor: children in the house. There is no evidence to suggest that the family to work spillover is any more significant with the presence of younger children in the house. Her studies do not trace any relationship between other family factors such as spousal hours, number of children or age of children that may contribute to work-family conflict. In addition the findings suggest complex relationships between male roles at home and the experience of work-family conflict. Voydanoff (1988: 759) notes: "While work role characteristics are generally related to work-family conflict in the expected direction, relationships between family structure demands…are complex and poorly understood processes that influence these relationships".

Thus, the research suggests that high work-family conflict would seem to reduce efficiency in individuals perhaps rendering them less able or willing to operate at a level in their careers commensurate with their capabilities. By implication, high work-family conflict is a risk issue for organisations in that it purportedly reduces productivity levels, which may translate to diminished financial returns for the organisation.

2.4.6 Conclusion

The literature demonstrates that there are significant changes in the workplace in today's world including the increasing participation of women in the workplace (Strachan and Burgess, 1998). It suggests that family factors as well as organisational dynamics impact employees' stress levels (Dua, 1994). These contexts create interesting questions about how business people experience these factors as they relate to the work-family balance. In particular, it is of importance to this research question to understand how business people describe their experiences and the associated impacts of the modern day workplace on their work roles. It drives the research question: *What are the work experiences of the work-family balance?*

2.5 Organisational interventions

2.5.1 Introduction

This section details the research on the organisation's role in the work-family balance. It covers the topics on the importance of family friendly policies to employees and the significance of work-family issues to organisations. In addition, it presents literature suggesting what organisations have done to address the work-family balance; as well as suggested reasons for corporations responding at a slow rate to the need.

2.5.2 The importance of family friendly policies to employees

A poll conducted in the USA in the early 1990's demonstrates that parents (50% female and 26% male) consider family responsive policies more important than pay in the organisations they work for (Glass and Estes, 1997). Strachan and Burgess (1998) describe a family friendly workplace as one that "recognises the non-workplace family responsibilities of its employees and develops and implements policies that allow employees to simultaneously fulfil work and family responsibilities". They contend that balancing these family friendly

policies is often complex. For example, offering more casual labour may be family friendly but ultimately leads to less job security and benefits, which is not family friendly. Furthermore Kossek (1990) alludes to the complexity of implementing family friendly policies, in that parents with children in different life stages would result in unique demands from the parents. Thus as Glass and Estes (1997:302) encapsulate it: “Policies that are optimal for one class of employees at one point in time may have little or no effect in reducing work-family conflict for another class, or even for the same employee at a different point in time”.

Glass and Estes (1997) continue by describing three different types of policies that organisations can implement to address the work-family balance. These include:

1) Policies that allow for leave and time to cater for child-rearing responsibilities;
2) Policies designed to give workers greater flexibility on when and where they do their work;
3) Policies designed to create work support systems for children and parents.

While the cited research demonstrates the importance of these policies to employees, it is suggested that there is little research demonstrating the benefits to employers. Accordingly, Glass and Estes (1997) put forward that further research into the family and work benefits of policies would be beneficial.

2.5.3 The significance to organisations

Staff attitude

Foote *et al* (2005) discuss attitude as a key factor at play in organisational commitment. Their numerous studies suggest that personal variables, role states and work environment variables impact organisational commitment. Thus, it can be argued that unless an individual is able to ensure facilitation between roles by drawing on personal skills, adapting roles or changing his working environment, it would seem inevitable that organisational commitment

would be affected detrimentally. Schweiger and DeNisi (1991) demonstrate that uncertainty about personal changes through mergers and acquisitions lead to negative attitudes towards change which in turn has undesirable outcomes for the organisation such as low job satisfaction, stress and low trust in the organisation. Their research suggests a potential parallel on the work-family paradigm. It is contended that if individuals in the organisation perceive a lack of commitment on the organisation's part to assist in mitigating the stresses of work-family conflict, this may well result in negative attitudes towards the organisation with the associated undesirable outcomes.

Reduced productivity

Spillover from work to family takes the form of lower productivity, absenteeism and greater turnover (Glass and Estes, 1997). In addition, they suggest that work-family conflict can also result in reduced career aspirations for individuals struggling to cope with the demands. Furthermore, they argue that the work-family conflict prevalence is a topic that extends beyond the female role. They suggest that by the increase in female involvement in the workplace men are adopting greater roles at home and thus have the same level of interest in work-family issues. As an extension, it is postulated that males are often the partners of women who may be experiencing work-family conflict and as such it is a broad organisational issue to be addressed; not specific to the female population alone.

In addition, a multitude of studies suggest that the relationship between various organisational policies and work-family conflict have compound dimensions. As described in Glass and Estes (1997):

1) Increased working hours have been demonstrated to reduce family time, increase drinking and smoking of employed mothers and serves to diminish a child's well-being;
2) Studies suggest that there is a link between physical distresses in women owing to more rigid work schedules;

3) A study by Galinsky (1994) suggests negative effects on families where mothers exist in working conditions that are unsupportive of their family demands and where discrimination is prevalent.

These studies allude to the significance of organisational policies around over-time and working hours in general. It also points to the importance of organisational culture when it comes to creating family friendly workplaces.

2.5.4 The corporate dilemma and the slowness of response

How corporations have responded

Barnett (1999,144) argues, "The staggeringly rapid changes in the demographics of the labor force, in family patterns, in male and female sex roles, and in career expectations have far outpaced workplace responses". She proposes three models that demonstrate the history of organisational responses to the changing demands. These are:

The separate spheres model: In this model, Barnett (1999) suggests that organisations hold to old beliefs of the mutual exclusivity of the work and family spheres. The assumptions that underpin this model are that work is a priority over family and should not be affected by family issues, managing the demands of the two roles is a woman's role and each sphere has its own mutually exclusive demands. Thus, organisations' responses to these primary beliefs are non-existent.

The overlapping spheres model: In this model Barnett (1999) assumes interdependence between roles as well as an appreciation of the positive effects of dual-roles for the organisation. Furthermore, it presumes a significant overlap between the roles and that both women and men have to integrate these roles. Organisational responses to this model have shifted only marginally from the separate spheres model and include parental leave, flexi-time and childcare services.

The work-family experience: This model assumes the equal importance of men and women's careers. Fundamentally, individuals focus on the net gain of participating in multiple roles, particularly the work role, which produces remuneration rewards. The benefits also include improved self-esteem, social relationships and the means to delegate onerous role obligations (Barnett and Baruch, 1985). Barnett (1999) suggests that organisations again have been slow to respond with only large corporations implementing policies around additional family leave, unpaid leave and vouchers for childcare.

Powers (2004) uses Ernst and Young and The Lancaster Group of hotels as case study examples of companies that have implemented policies to remove the pressures of the work-family conflict. However, these programmes only include initiatives such as day-care on the premises and flexitime.

Glass and Estes (1997) report findings of various polls on the response of organisations in the United States. While outdated information, the statistics in Table 2 offer an illustrative view of the response of organisations. No similar studies have been conducted in South Africa.

Table 2: Summary of organisational response rates to work-family demands in America

Response	% Implemented	Survey	Year
Maternity leave benefits	40%	Bureau of Labor Statistic of Employee Benefits	1989
Parent leave benefits	56%	Hewitt Associates Survey of Large Companies	1991
Flexible work hours	11%	Bureau of Labor Statistic of Employee Benefits	1989
Flexible work hours	71%[2]	Hewitt Associates Survey of Large Companies	1995
Social support (day care, pre-tax options, etc)	23%	Bureau of Labor Statistic of Employee Benefits	1990

[2] This survey only included large organisations. The number is anticipated to be significantly lower when small companies are included in the sample; based on similar previous research.

Reasons for a slow response

Several authors discuss the reasons that organisations have been slow to respond to the need and demand for work-family issues. Konrad and Linnehan (1999) put forward that the implementation of "family friendly" policies have been met with less than positive reactions in the workplace because of the perceived favour being bestowed on a select group. Colwill and Temple (1988) encapsulate the corporate assumption by stating that work and management demands do not change simply because the individual exists within a dual-family home. They assume unhampered availability. However, it is proposed that the dilemma for organisations hinges around the fact that if cultures do not take cognissance of the altered dynamics of family structures, they effectively contribute silently to work-family conflict and potentially reduced performance of key human capital. Alternatively, organisations hold onto the traditional belief that work and family roles can be compartmentalised; and therefore the issue need not be addressed. As Higgins and Duxbury (1992:403) encapsulate it, "Kanter (1977) coined the phrase 'myth of separate worlds' to describe the myopic view of many organisations that work and family domains are mutually exclusive". Glass and Estes (1997) further suggest that one of the key reasons for this is that companies have had little knowledge on the best policies to implement.

However, Barnett (1999) suggests that organisations need to adapt quickly to the demands of their employees. She notes that the changes to implement are relatively painless for organisations; however they require a shift from a corporate-convenient strategy to an employee-centred strategy. This in turn, she argues, will require changes in deeply rooted cultural beliefs, and release "traditional notions of masculinity and femininity and move beyond its fixation with face time rather than on productivity and output" (Barnett, 1999: 156).

2.5.5 Conclusion

The literature demonstrates a mixed interpretation of the response of organisations to work-family issues, although it is generally proposed that it has

been slow (Barnett, 1999). The reasons for organisations to respond are clear. Not only will this attract talent, but is likely to retain their human capital based on ever increasing employee needs to have a work environment conducive to family life. More recent information suggests a move by corporates to address the reality of permeable work-family boundaries. However, the research that has been depicted has all happened within an American context. Thus, it would seem pertinent to understand some of the issues on this topic within the South African context. Particularly, within the scope of this research, it would be beneficial to understand how employees perceive their organisations' responses, what their expectations are and how they experience this impact on their lives. This drives the research question: *What insights can organisations derive from the experiences of the work-family balance?*

2.6 Family experiences of work-family balance

2.6.1 Introduction

This section provides detail from the literature on the family-related issues in the work-family balance. It discusses the concept of the division of labour and the impacts of work to family spillover, including marital conflict and family functioning. It also addresses the issues of lifestyle choices and the role of support.

2.6.2 The Division of Labour

Historically women have always taken on the role of the "housekeeper", while men have adopted the role of "breadwinner" (Matsui *et al*, 1995). Arguably, these roles have become less delineated over the past few decades. As Matsui *et al* (1995) determine in their study, in Japanese society, the roles have started to change. However, it is argued that stereotypical role playing may still be accounting for women taking on more ownership for the running of the household, while still pursuing careers. It is suggested that the consequences may be profound for the work-family debate. If women are seeking careers

either to improve themselves or to substitute the household income, and still taking on the role of “housekeeper”, then the burden of responsibility on women in society has not shifted, it has increased. Newell (1996) supports this argument by stating that women are expanding their roles to encompass paid employment but men are not expanding their roles to encompass the child-care and domestic work. Conversely then it is reasoned that if men are taking on equitable roles at home and at work, then the work-family balance may be a phenomenon experienced similarly across the gender lines and may be causing similar effects on men as it would be on women.

Newell’s study (1996) demonstrates that while men in Denmark spend more time at home than they did historically, women still spend twice as much time on responsibilities at home than men. Matsui *et al* (1995) also quote an international survey (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 1994) which indicates that Japanese husbands only average 1.5% engaging in after-dinner household tasks and 0.6% of child-care tasks compared to women who take on the remainder of the responsibility.

No research could be traced in a South African context to establish what the division of labour is between skilled or professional men and women as it relates specifically to the work-family balance. Intuitively, there would seem no reason for South Africa to differ in anyway from these international trends, other than perhaps the presence of domestic workers who may alleviate this for either or both parties (Hetherington, 2003).

Furthermore, the literature on the division of labour refers to the actual task completion. It does not address the question of ownership. Thus, it is maintained that while household and family ‘tasks’ may be evenly divided, the level of ownership may differ. It is suggested that the significance of this gap in the literature revolves around the potential for added stress if there is a difference in ownership. Accordingly while the literature refers to division of labour in terms of task completion, it is purported that this is a narrow view. Accountability and leadership in each sphere also need to be considered.

2.6.3 Family functioning

Bernstein and Borchardt (1996) describe psychometric instruments that measure family functioning. The Family Assessment Measure III (FAM) is a model of family dynamics that emphasises a variety of factors (intra-psychic or environmental) that may influence basic family processes. There are seven subscales on the FAM which measure family functioning. It is suggested that all of the subscales may be influenced to some degree by the presence of a work-family conflict by either or both parents. Table 3 below details these sub-scales.

Table 3: Family Assessment Measure sub-scales (Adapted from text in Bernstein and Borchardt, 1996)

FAM SUB-SCALE	DESCRIPTION OF SUB-SCALE
Task-accomplishment	Evaluates a family's ability to identify tasks, problem-solve and respond to crises.
Role performance	Assesses role definition and integration and family members' adaptation to new roles through the life cycle
Communication	Evaluates mutual understanding and ability to seek clarification in case of misunderstanding
Affective expression	Describes appropriateness, intensity, timing and inhibition of affective communication
Affective involvement	Assesses the quality and degree of family member's involvement with one another
Control	Assess patterns of flexibility and influence
Values and norms	Measures the degree of concordance among components of the family's value system and the degree of agreement with the values of the culture in which the family lives.

Interestingly, the research from this perspective is very limited. Studies such as Matsui *et al* (1995) report perceptions by mothers indicating that work to family spillover affects their energy levels to do household chores. Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1986) discuss the impacts of job changes, job fatigue and career disappointments affecting general mood and energy levels at home. Certain studies correlate the developmental, learning and cognitive processes in children to reduced time with parents (Parcel and Menaghan, 1994). However, it is proposed that the research is limited and no in depth research seems to explore the impact of time constraints, energy levels and general parental well-being as a result of the work-family conflict on the functioning of the family. For example it is suggested that there may be significant emotional impacts on children as a result of less time with parents, increased parent-child conflict; as

well as potential broader family stresses. Werbel and Walter (2002:297) suggest that research needs to focus on the family-based outcomes of the work-family conflict, such as “divorce rates, quality of life, or child development issues”.

Conversely, they suggest that working parents that are facilitating a work-family balance may be having positive effects on the family. Plausibly, good role-modelling for children, enriched family relationships and personal skills acquired at work could all be contributing to family functioning. Werbel and Walter (2002) also contend that families undoubtedly benefit from parental involvement in work simply because they derive financial income to provide for family needs.

Hence it seems inevitable that work-family conflict would have a relationship with family functioning. In a causal chain of work-family conflict leading to parental stress and life-strain, it is intuitive to assume that there would be some impact on the family functioning.

2.6.4 Marital impacts

Research demonstrates that the impact of work-family conflict reduces marital companionship and increases marital tension (Glass and Estes, 1997). Parasuraman *et al* (1992) conducted research to determine whether stressors experienced by one partner in a two-career relationship affected the experience of the other partner. Their findings conclude that family role stressors of wives detract from the family satisfaction of the husbands and not vice versa. They postulate several potential reasons for this:

1) Husbands may be unwilling to increase their involvement at home in response to their wives’ stress;
2) The causal relationship may be reversed in that husbands’ dissatisfaction with their family life actually contributes to their wives’ stress.

Argyle and Furnman (1983:492) state, “Marriage is a uniquely intense relationship…high levels of conflict is normal and satisfaction is greater for males and for older subjects”. Their findings support their own hypothesis that

conflict in marriage needs to be worked through as younger couples reported higher levels of conflict and less satisfaction. Within the vast array of research on the work-family conflict, few studies demonstrate the nature of the conflict in the marital relationship owing to work-family balance issues. For example, it is contended that the nature of the conflict, the effects it has on the marital relationship and broader family and how those conflicts are resolved may all provide valuable insights into the work-family balance. It may also account for difference in marital outcomes with couples managing the work-family balance. As Argyle and Furnman (1983) suggest, a closer relationship having deeper commitment often requires working through rather than avoiding conflicts and high levels of interdependence are likely to lead to greater levels of conflict but have a greater chance for satisfaction if resolved.

2.6.5 Family support

Cohen and Wills (1985) developed a model to define coping behaviour in terms of support provided by significant others. The two types of support he describes are:

Emotional support, which is when acceptance or esteem is provided by a significant other. This kind of coping mechanism points to the importance of connected family relationships or friendships.

Instrumental support is when a significant other contributes to the actual activities that will mitigate the conflict (Matsui *et al*, 1995). It is suggested that in the South African setting, domestic workers may well be providing this kind of instrumental support by cleaning the home and looking after the children.

Matsui *et al* (1995) propose that husband support is a significant buffer between parental demands and work-family conflict for women. MacEwan and Barling's (1988) previous findings contradict these by suggesting a reverse buffering effect. Their study concludes that women with high work-family conflict and high family emotional support experience deterioration in their conflict. They conclude that this may suggest that emotional support in fact does little to help resolve the conflict. Furthermore, it is argued that perhaps

entrenched family encouragement could offer such 'blind support' that it exacerbates the person's negative perceptions of their conflict. It may indeed encourage ineffective coping and dependency.

Parasuraman *et al* (1992) don't establish any buffering role of support in alleviating work-family conflict or general well-being. However they suggest that one of the reasons for this is that their study did not look at the effects of instrumental support. Thus, it could be hypothesised that work-family conflict and general well-being may only be alleviated by practical instrumental support by either the partner or alternative parties. The relationships are not clearly established and thus further research into the nature and effect of the social support on alleviating work-family conflict and overall stress would be valuable. Furthermore, research could be conducted into the category of instrumental support that provides the most significant buffering effect. This kind of research would be particularly useful in providing a basis for organisations to prioritise the nature of the interventions they adopt.

2.6.6 Lifestyle and nutrition

Devine *et al (2003)* conducted research into the spill over of food choices based on gender and work. The results demonstrate that working people, particularly women, find that their jobs with long hours and inflexible schedules leave them feeling that they do not have the necessary resources to prepare meals that meet their own ideals. Their findings conclude that most women are the dominant managers of food in the household and caretakers of family nutrition yet admit to having no time or energy to prepare or purchase healthy foods. Their research also presents findings that show that working-wife families purchase more meals prepared away from home and extra money is being spent on fast-food restaurants. They continue by suggesting that the emotional consequences of this seem to be evident in women, who also mentioned that weight and health concerns for their children are a source of guilt. Figure 7 demonstrates Devine *et al*'s findings (2003) about the spill-over between work, family and food; as well as the emotions at play in this paradigm.

Of particular interest are the findings about women who have careers they perceive to be demanding but manageable, rather than limiting. These women have time to manage food strategies better and thus experience fewer negative emotions on the issue. Arguably the difference between "manageable" and "limiting" speaks to the core of the debate. Is manageability a factor of intrinsic or extrinsic factors? Women who experience their roles as demanding but manageable may well have the intrinsic skills to influence their environment so that it is manageable. Alternatively, they may work in an environment that is naturally less limiting in its approach. Either way, based on the literary evidence, it would seem intuitive to expect some kind of positive relationship between food choices in the home and the experience of positive or negative work-family balance.

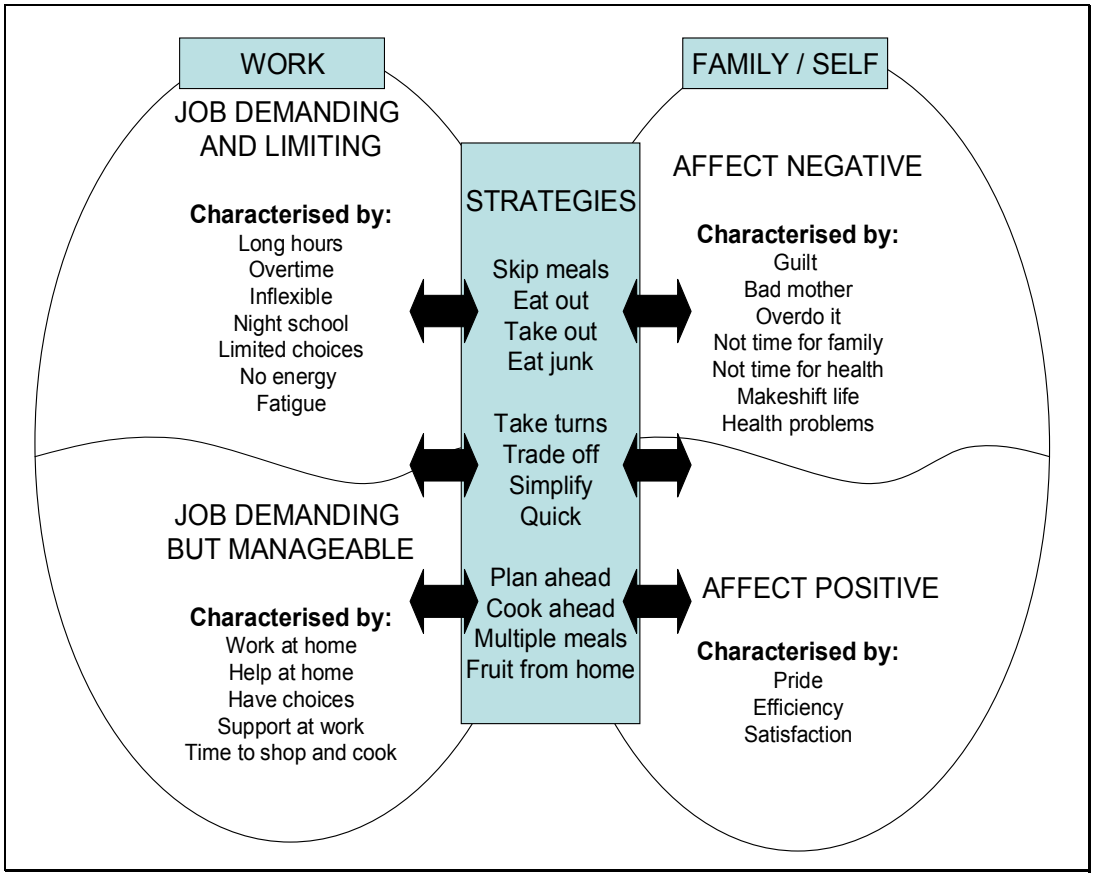


Figure 7: Food and Guilt Spill-over model adapted from Devine et al. (2003:24)

Extending the food debate, Devine *et al*'s findings (2003) raise an interesting perspective on the work-family balance, as it would seem to indicate a

significant effect for individuals and the family when it comes to preserving their health. Although limited to low to moderate income groups in the United States, it is conceivable that the same phenomenon may be occurring in other socio-economic groups as the factors are described as a lack of time and energy, not financial resources.

2.6.7 Conclusion

The literature explores the family experience within the work-family balance. It alludes to the importance of good marital relationships and the impact thereon (Glass and Estes, 1997); as well as various types of support in mediating any conflict in the work-family balance (Matsui *et al*, 1995). It also describes factors such as family functioning and nutrition (Devine *et al*, 2003) that may be influenced by the work-family balance. This literature drives the research question: *What are the family experiences of the work-family balance?*

2.7 Differences between men and women

2.7.1 Introduction

Werbel and Walter (2002) suggest that the interest in the work-family balance stems from feminist theories that postulate that biological and social roles differ between men and women, thereby impeding workforce involvement and participation by women. This section reviews the literature on the differences between men and women and how they experience the work-family balance.

2.7.2 Men prioritise work and women prioritise family

Pleck (1977) concludes in his research that work responsibilities are allowed to intrude on family for men; while family responsibilities are allowed to intrude on work for women. Marks' research (1977) would seem to substantiate Pleck's conclusion of asymmetrical boundaries to some extent. He suggests that men do not experience work-family conflict as a result of family demands because

they use scarcity excuses to avoid family responsibilities. In turn, women in the family are then compelled to provide more support at home creating work-family conflict as a result of family demands (Voydanoff, 1988). Extending this concept, Keith and Schaefer (1980) conclude that women experience more family demands impacting their work-family conflict scores than men. Voydanoff (1988) also demonstrates that work role characteristics have a greater impact on men's work-family conflict while family role characteristics a greater impact on women's work-family conflict. In addition, she suggests that, "there is a tendency for women to engage in extensive coping strategies designed to coordinate the demands with work and family roles" (Voydanoff, 1988: 759). Further research on the differences between men and women on the spillover of work-family confirms that men are more likely to allow work to spillover to family while women are more likely to allow family to spillover to work (Hall and Richter, 1988; Higgins and Duxbury, 1992).

2.7.3 Stress impact differences

Parasuraman *et al* (1992) establish that work role stressors and work-family conflict impacted overall well-being for men; while work stressors and family stressors impact overall well-being for women. They suggest, "These findings highlight the high salience of work role for members of two-career relationships, and also imply the greater salience of the family role for women than for men" (Parasuraman *et al*, 1992: 352). Lim and Teo's research (1996) finds otherwise. They conclude that gender differences on stress originating from the home-work interface do not reach statistical significance.

Lim and Teo's findings do not necessarily imply that women have less work-family conflict – they may have better coping mechanisms than men or may be accepting of the consequences of this dual role thereby reducing their experience of the stress relating to this factor. Alternatively, Gill and Davidson (2001) suggest that mothers may choose less stressful employment in order to avoid the exhaustion which might otherwise result from their multiple roles.

2.7.4 Conclusion

The literature provides some insights into the differences between men and women and their associated experiences on the work-family balance. The main differences seem to occur on the priorities and stress impacts that men and women experience in the work-family balance. The differences seem to have changed over time and also do not appear to have clear definition within the literature. Thus it drives the research question: *What are the differences between men and women in their experiences of the work-family balance?*

2.8 South African considerations

2.8.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the socio-economic conditions in South Africa. It contextualises the role and history of the domestic worker in South Africa, as it is suggested that this has distinctive relevance to the support structure in operation within the work-family balance. The purpose of this section is not to provide an exhaustive or even comprehensive description of South African circumstances. Rather it seeks to provide an overview that gives sufficient context to the issue of the work-family balance.

2.8.2 Socio-economic conditions

In discussing transitions to democracy, Diamond asserts that political transitions alone will not sustain new democracies unless these are closely aligned with economic transitions (van den Berg, 2003). It is suggested that it is to this end that the South African government has placed extensive effort on economic reforms to provide restitution for the legacies of Apartheid. Van den Berg (2003) describes this socio-economic history as a factor of mobilisation against Apartheid. He continues to explain that this resulted in a 15% per capita decrease in earnings in fifteen years, social unrest, crime, violence, no foreign investment and encouraged a low economic growth. Thus, van den Berg (2003)

claims that the government is under severe pressure to deliver visible results in a limited time-frame, which requires reconciling high black expectations of material gains…and balancing these against the interests of the white population, among whom skills and capital are concentrated.

It is asserted that the effects of these policies on business people within South Africa potentially are relevant extraneous factors that may exacerbate the experience of the work-family balance and / or render the experiences unique within the South African setting.

2.8.3 Crime

Steinberg (2001) reports that crime in South Africa has reached epic proportions with more than 2 million serious crimes reported every year consistently between 1994 and 2001. Stultz (2002) quotes Shaw as stating that South Africa is one of the world's most crime-ridden countries, attributed to unemployment, poverty, institutional racism, the breakdown of family, a culture of violence, the criminal justice system, availability of firearms and disappointments after the democratisation of the country. It is proposed that the impact of this consistent crime wave amidst other socio-economic conditions has been a mass exodus of skilled and professional resources. Beinart (1996) provides a common example of this. He notes that over fifty thousand South African Jews emigrated to Australia, Canada and the United States in a matter of ten years. Furthermore, studies on crime have focused attention on the impacts that it has on individuals' overall well-being. As Wright and Steinbach (2001:1085) suggest, "Violence exposure may contribute to environmental demands that tax both the individual and the communities in which they live". Hence, crime can be categorised as a socio-economic issue that undoubtedly would impact on the well-being of those in South Africa and may contribute positively or negatively to experiences in the work-family balance.

2.8.4 Domestic workers

Pei-chia (2003) describes domestic labour as the household chores conducted in the house by the service of non family workers as unpaid labour by the

female, usually minority groups, for minimal wages. Hetherington (1993) suggests that South Africa is unique in the vastness of the use of the latter form of domestic service and that this phenomenon can be attributed to the legacy of Apartheid which resulted in a privileged white minority exploiting the impoverishment of black women. Hetherington (1993) continues to describe the context of the domestic worker in South Africa by stating that historically, almost all white South Africans were in a position to afford domestic workers, whose responsibility it was to look after children and clean the house. She purports that traditionally most of these domestic workers lived on the premises and thus were exploited in a sense by being expected to work long hours to support family demands. As Hetherington (1993) quotes the work on Maids and Madams, a survey of 800,000 domestic workers in South Africa 'maids and madams' are both victims of discrimination in this society – discrimination which maintains them in subordinate and dependent positions. This statement suggests that South Africa's fairly unique social history of domestic workers provides opportunity and support for dual-income households. At least, it would suggest that domestic workers are a potential mitigation for work-family conflict by enabling dual-income households. On the contrary, Bakan and Stasiulis (1995) suggest the reverse relationship in that a need for families to earn two incomes drives a demand for more domestic service. Whatever the causal relationship, it is proposed that the role of the domestic worker is potentially a significant one within the South African context in the work-family balance.

2.8.5 Conclusion

The literature indicates that South Africa has a unique environment and set of circumstances that potentially impact on the experience of work and family. These situations include a legislative environment aimed at redressing the historical injustices of Apartheid (van den Berg, 2003); a social experience of domestic workers within upper echelon houses (Hetherington, 2003) and the crime rates (van den Berg, 2003). It is suggested that these factors could all play an important role in individuals' experiences of their own well-being, roles at work and at home. This research explores the work-family balance within

South Africa and thus hopes to understand any unique environmental contributions to this balance.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature on the work-family balance raises an interesting, yet not surprising phenomenon. Similar to the concept of the hermeneutic circle; the experience of the work-family balance is a complex balance of relationships. The idea of the hermeneutic circle is that we understand the concept of the whole by understanding the meaning of the individual parts and their relationships (Joseph, 2006). Thus, it is not always possible to segregate the experience of the work-family balance from the effects, the mediators and / or the underlying themes related to the work-family balance. Furthermore, a review of the literature does not necessarily derive causal or clear relationships. The concepts are relatively indistinct, making it difficult to construct a logical chain of events or story of how work-family balance either is or isn't achieved.

While this research does not purport to unravel the complexity of the work-family balance, it does aim to understand the experience more deeply. Hence the primary research question:

How do business people in South Africa experience and manage the work-family balance?

Following from the literary themes explored in this research, this study further aims to unpack the experience of the work-family balance by also posing the following sub-questions within the broader experience question. The sub-questions are:

1) What are the personal experiences of the work-family balance?
2) What are the work-related experiences of the work-family balance and what insights do these derive for organisations?
3) What are the family experiences of the work-family balance?

4) What are the differences that exist between men and women in their experiences of the work-family balance?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the research questions. As a precursor to Chapter 4 on the employed research methodology it also provides detail on the considerations taken in moving towards a qualitative methodology. It addresses the quantitative versus qualitative options and provides rationale for adopting a qualitative approach.

3.2 Research questions

3.2.1 Introduction

To facilitate meaningful data on the experience of the work-family balance, it was more appropriate to structure research questions, rather than propositions. These questions aim to find answers to the problems by eliciting data in an open-ended manner, thereby obtaining the real and unsolicited experiences. As Gummesson (2003:483) suggests, all research is interpretive. The world is "filled with complexity, ambiguity, chaos, uncertainty, fuzzy boundaries and continuous change…research methodologies have to adapt to this reality". The "fuzzy boundaries" that Gummesson describes represent the constructs established in the literature on the work-family balance. Hence, the research questions are structured in a manner that attempts to understand their presence and nature better. They seek to expand and deepen the findings in the academic literature on the work-family balance. The research questions mirror the sub-problems and are as follows:

3.2.2 Research question 1

The literature review contributes to an overall understanding of the definition of the work-family balance and the associated experience thereof based on international research. It directs the research question:

How do business people in South Africa experience and manage the work-family balance?

3.2.3 Research question 1a

The literature on the work-family balance provides evidence of the intrapersonal effects of stress and overall well-being on individuals. It directs the first sub-question:

What are the personal experiences of the work-family balance?

3.2.4 Research question 1b

The literature on the work-family balance points to the significant impacts on individuals in their workplace and the associated considerations for organisations. This directs the second sub-question:

What are the work-related experiences of the work-family balance and what insights do these derive for organisations?

3.2.5 Research question 1c

The literature on the work-family balance discusses the vast relationship between family structures and experiences; and the experience of work-family conflict. Hence the research question:

What are the family-related experiences of the work-family balance?

3.2.6 Research question 1d

The literature provides evidence of certain differences between men and women; and their experience of the work-family balance. It directs the fourth sub-question:

What are the differences that exist between men and women in their experiences of the work-family balance?

3.3 Towards a research methodology

3.3.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the various research methodology matters that were considered in deriving the approach employed in this study. It provides an overview of the quantitative versus qualitative debate as it pertains to this research; as well as a view on the methodological gaps in the research on work-family balance.

3.3.2 Quantitative versus qualitative

Jarratt (1996) quotes numerous critics of quantitative research who argue that researchers who are preoccupied with quantitative processes lose the opportunity to produce quality data. In parallel, researchers such as Strauss (1987) suggest that qualitative methods are valuable in really developing theory through their coding and interpretive procedures. Strauss and Corbin (1990:19) state that qualitative methods can be used for two main purposes, namely, "to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known, or to gain novel and fresh slants on things about which quite a bit is already known''.

Stainback and Stainback (1988:8) also provide a useful tabular overview of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research, as depicted in Table 4.

Table 4 : Summary of differences in quantitative and qualitative research (Stainbeck and Stainbeck, 1988: 8)

DIMENSIONS	**QUANTITATIVE PARADIGM**	QUALITATIVE PARADIGM
Purpose	Prediction and control	**Understanding**
Reliability	Stable – reality is made up of facts that do not change	**Dynamic – reality changes win people's perceptions**
Viewpoint	Outsider – reality is what quantifiable data indicate it to be	**Insider – reality is what people perceive it to be**
Values	Value free – values can be controlled	**Value bound – values will impact on understanding the phenomena**
Focus	Particularistic – defined by variables studied	**Holistic**
Orientation	Verification	**Discovery**
Data	Objective	**Subjective**
Instrumentation	Non-human	**Human**
Conditions	Controlled	**Naturalistic**
Results	**Reliable**	**Valid – the focus is on design and procedures to gain real, rich and deep data.**

When the research is exploratory, qualitative methods are usually employed because, as Babbie (1998) advocates, this kind of research in particular is also used to develop methods to be employed in any subsequent studies. Of greater relevance to the nature of this research is perhaps the restriction that quantitative research would place on the depth of knowledge required. Cahill (1996: 18) suggests, "Quantitative techniques do not have universal applicability either…although these techniques may be used to measure 'reality' rather precisely, they often suffer from a lack of good descriptive material of the type which brings the information to life".

Notwithstanding the depth limitations of quantitative methods, for the purposes of this research it seems evident that either qualitative or quantitative methods could have been utilised to derive some meaningful data. In particular, on the quantitative side, a factor analysis could be used to determine the underlying constructs in the work-family balance, as well as to narrow down the disparate array of variables at play in this phenomenon. As Crawford and Lomas (1980) reveal, factor analysis is a data reduction technique, which takes a number of

different variables and tries to note any underlying relationships which may be present.

It is suggested that there is a need for better organisation and structure of the work-family balance concept through a mechanism such as factor analysis, however, as a first stage it seems as though benefit would be gained from attaining clarity through depth of understanding of the factors in the South African context. Karatepe and Sokmen (2004) support this view on one level by suggesting that using in-depth interviews as an alternative approach could provide richer insights into understanding the job-related consequences associated with work role and family role variables. Jarratt (1996) also suggests that qualitative research can be used when the research is exploratory and unfamiliar to the researcher. Thus, it is concurred that qualitative methods would provide insights into some of the more entrenched psychosocial dynamics at play. In turn, as Simon (1994) contends, the data produced through the qualitative process can ensure that emerging issues, as well as those suggested through previous research are captured for further quantitative testing.

3.3.3 Gaps in methodology on work-family balance

Methodologies on the work-family balance appear to be mainly quantitative, as demonstrated in Figure 8. The research on the subject employs pre-existing measures to correlate variables, derive factors and explain relationships. The absence of descriptive research is considered to be an obvious gap.

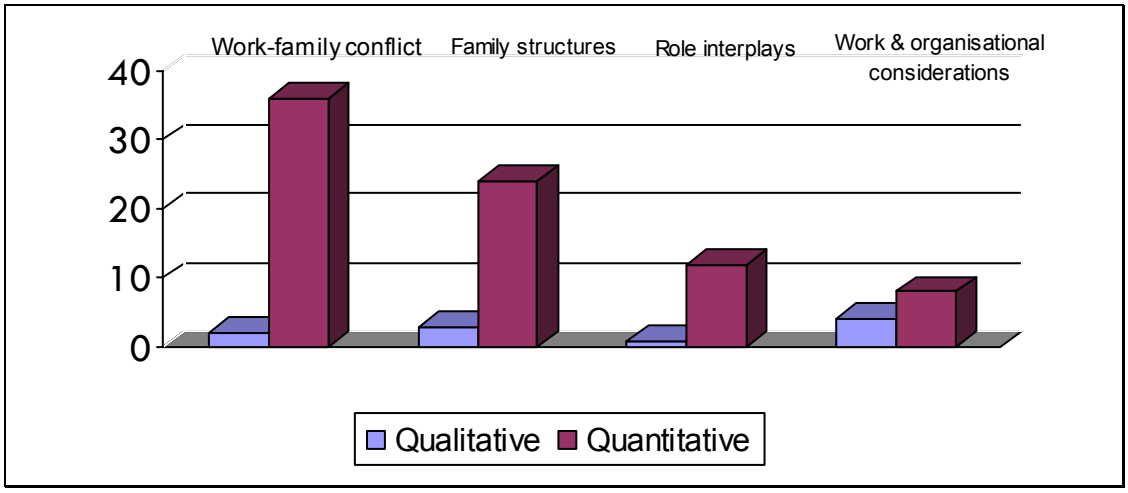


Figure 8: Qualitative versus quantitative research on work-family

3.3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research questions defined for this study. The main research question and its sub-questions are aimed at understanding the overall experience of the work-family balance by business people in South Africa. This chapter has also provided an overview of methodological considerations which were taken into account when defining a qualitative methodology. It leads into Chapter 4 which provides further detail on the selected methodology and its components.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

There are several reasons for conducting management research. Kode (2001) describes the main purposes as being exploration, description and explanation, although "these purposes overlap to a large extent and are often carried out simultaneously or necessarily as part of the same research" (Kode 2001:7).

This section aims to provide a detailed explanation of the methodology that was employed in this research. It expands on the discussion in Chapter 3. It details the selected methodology; its rationale and approach. Furthermore, it provides details on the sampling, data analysis and the end-to-end process employed in this study.

4.2 Refining the research approach

4.2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of the key qualitative options that were considered and the reasons they are either included or excluded as part of the research design.

4.2.2 Consideration 1: The phenomenological approach

Phenomenological research aims to explore the subjective experience of the participant, which takes precedence over the interpretation of the researcher (Goulding, 2003). It thus sits squarely in the interpretive rather than the positivist paradigm, as it seeks to interpret subjective experiences, beliefs and perspectives. Furthermore, phenomenology as a methodology is used "to develop an understanding of complex issues that may not be immediately implicit in surface responses" (Goulding, 2003:301). There are several

assumptions embedded in the phenomenological approach as suggested by numerous authors and these were considered. They are:

1) Language is the medium for gaining information. Phenomenology assumes that knowledge is transposed via language and that words have a common meaning to the participant and the researcher (Thompson, 1996).
2) There is a degree of commonality of experience between individuals (Goulding, 2003).
3) The participant's view is taken as fact as this is the only source of information (Goulding, 2003).
4) Phenomenology should be direct descriptions of experiences without taking account of their psychological origins (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Hence, the assumptions of phenomenology would be stifling for the psychosocial nature of this research. As the literature review demonstrates, the factors in the work-family balance include experiential and psychological elements. While the suppositions stated above are not always followed by researchers to the letter of phenomenological law, this research would need to move beyond the immediate realm of language in order to surface more profound perspectives. Thus, a less language-bound and prescriptive methodology was sought to tap into the deeper interpersonal issues.

4.2.3 Consideration 2: Interviewing techniques

According to Sampson (1972), in-depth interviews may be either non-directive or semi-structured. In non-directive interviews, unexpected attitudes or facts can be explored, while in semi-structured interviews, the researcher ensures that certain key questions are positioned and answers provided by the participants. All interview processes, however, rely heavily on the manner in which the data is gathered. Ericsson and Simon (1984:4) state, "Accuracy of verbal reports depends on the procedures used to elicit them and the relationship between the requested information and the actual sequence of heeded information". Extending their concept, it would seem evident that the

mechanisms used to extract the information should be appropriate for the nature and depth of information sought. Thus, in pursuing deep psychosocial information from individuals, techniques would be required to enable a surfacing of issues.

Laddering is one such process (Jarratt, 1996). It is a qualitative interviewing process used extensively in the psychological field. The process is described as enabling respondents to answer more with emotions than opinions, and building on their responses to issues as they surface (Jarratt, 1996). As Reynolds and Gutman (1988) elaborate, the objective of laddering is to probe respondents to identify key linkages between attributes, values and consequences. There are several critical success factors to consider before employing this methodology. These are:

1) Respondents need to feel relaxed and non-defensive, requiring expert facilitation skills and careful planning (Jarratt, 1996).
2) Respondents need to feel confident that the researcher is only recording and reflecting information, not judging it. This ensures that the issues can be explored deeper and deeper (Gutman and Reynolds, 1988).

Owing to its flexible nature, it is contended that certain customised procedures can be incorporated into the laddering method in order to achieve a safe environment for participants and/or to elicit more meaningful responses. Jarratt's research on out-shopping (1996) demonstrates that laddering combined with visualisation is significantly more effective at obtaining information on inner conflicts and expectations than semi-structured interviews. Thus, the laddering technique is deemed to be beneficial in extracting the real issues at play in the work-family balance. It directs the use of emotional responses in the workbooks and as a facilitation technique.

4.2.4 Consideration 3: Focus groups

Focus group techniques were first developed by Merton and Larasfeld who created the procedure to assess war-related communications conducted by radio (Merton, 1987). Boddy (2005:251) describes a focus group interview as a

"group of people brought together to participate in a group interview concerning an area of interest". As opposed to focus group discussions, a focus group interview is closely controlled and structured by the facilitator or researcher. Respondents can discuss concepts and ideas; however responses are mainly directed at the facilitator. In addition, participants can complete mini-questionnaires relating to certain issues, respond to stimuli and a host of other techniques. Focus group discussions require less intense facilitation as the idea is to generate observed data via discussion, argument and ideas generated in the group. The facilitator simply ensures that the conversation remains on the relevant topic.

Hines (2000) describes the different types of focus groups and their associated purposes. These are:

1) Phenomenological focus groups aim to research the interactions between the members of the focus groups in order to elicit the "true" feelings of the group.
2) Clinical focus groups aim to obtain deeper understanding of individual behaviour, thoughts and feelings. They can use multiple techniques such as visualisation, word association and a host of creative means to derive understanding.
3) Exploratory focus groups aim to identify quick issues swiftly before conducting quantitative analysis.

Owing to the latitude of the focus group, this methodology is considered to be of significant value in approaching the subject. It directs the core design of the methodology in this study.

4.2.5 Consideration 4: Telling the stories

Bruner (1990) describes the importance of storytelling as a means of deriving meaning in research. Orbuch, Veroff and Holmberg (1993) contend that people use 'stories' to organise their world view, to depict themselves and their lives. Asking people to tell their narrative is a critical source of meaning. Goulding (2003) contends that these kinds of descriptive techniques enable new and

deeper interpretations of previously established constructs. Thus, 'anecdotes' and experiential descriptions are viewed as vital means of obtaining a level of depth in the research and they direct the open-ended questions in this research design.

4.2.6 Consideration 5: Written records

Berg (2006) suggests that for qualitative research all kinds of personal documents can be used, whether created by the participant for the express purposes of the research or for personal use. Examples of these kinds of documents include diaries, confessions for prisoners, letters and other artefacts. Berg (2006) describes the purpose of employing such artefacts. He states that they provide the researcher with a deep and personal view into the participant's world including emotional insights, psychological state of mind, attitudes and beliefs. For the purposes of achieving a deeper experiential understanding of the participants' work-family balance, this research tactic is considered to be particularly useful. It directs the use of a workbook (Appendix B) to support the verbal data in the focus groups.

4.3 Selected methodology

4.3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the methodology employed in this study. It explains the rationale further and the detailed process of setting up and conducting the focus groups.

4.3.2 Rationale for using focus groups

In line with the theoretical context provided above, qualitative focus groups were selected as the most appropriate methodology to achieve the purposes of the research. Stycos (1981:449) discusses the benefits of focus group discussion in its ability to derive richer information than single interviews by stating, "A group

discussion…evokes information related to emotional processes, inner reasons and less overt determinants of behaviour".

Conversely, there are potential negative issues in selecting focus groups as the chosen mechanism, leading to reliability and validity concerns. Hines (2000) summarises the advantages and disadvantages of using focus group sessions as summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Advantages and disadvantages of focus group research
(Adapted from Hines, 2000)

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Relatively inexpensive to conduct research	Dependent on the skills of the interviewer
Data-rich	Can deteriorate into an unfocused group with poor interviewer, poor planning or dominance of strong individuals
Flexible	It may be difficult to research sensitive issues in a group
Stimulating to respondents	Group think[3] may mislead individuals in the group and the researcher
Allows accumulation of responses from all participants	Access to appropriate people denied in an organisational setting, e.g. on holiday, off sick, too busy, away on business
It is possible to ask open-ended questions allowing the experience of participants to emerge	

For the purposes of this research, clinical focus group interviews were determined to be the most appropriate and worthwhile option in that they allow the latitude of using alternative more creative methods of obtaining in-depth information.

4.3.3 Focus group design

In addition to using focus groups as the structural means of obtaining the data, techniques from other qualitative frameworks were selected as a means to achieving a deeper understanding on the work-family balance. These are described in more detail.

[3] Hines (2000) incorrectly uses the term 'group think' to denote the tendency of people in a group to portray similar views and conform to the dominant theme.

Visualisation (Jarratt, 1996; Hines, 2000; Goulding, 2003)

As a starting exercise, participants were taken through a visualisation exercise which took them through a journey of their lives before they were juggling work and family to now. They were asked to experience what their lives were like then and now, what their dreams were then and now, how they felt about their lives then and now. The purpose of this visualisation was three-fold:

a. It aimed to relax participants who were attending the focus groups in the middle of busy schedules;
b. It aimed to get the participants within the context of the research;
c. It hoped to elicit deeper and more real emotional responses to the experience of their lives managing work and family.

Storytelling view (Bruner, 1990)

In the nature of the conversational construction, participants effectively 'told their stories' in a group setting, thereby relaying their experiences.

The discussion sections of the focus groups were opened with generic questions as depicted in Table 6 on the agenda. The discussion was then left mainly to direct itself through the multiple experiences. The facilitator aimed not to direct the conversation too intently unless the topic specifically moved off course. This allowed participants to determine the relevance and importance of certain experiences.

Participants were asked if they had any objections to having the discussion recorded. Confidentiality was assured. All focus groups were recorded using a digital recorder.

The following table depicts an overview of the agenda of the focus groups.

Table 6: Agenda for focus groups

Topic	Time	Instructions[4]
Introduction	10 minutes	o Welcome and thank you o Reason for selection o Summary of research purpose o Overview of agenda
Front page completion	5 minutes	o Please complete your information in your workbooks, asking you some background details. o Please do not put your name in your workbook[5].
Visualisation	10 minutes	o Cast your mind back to a time in your life before you had children. Go back to a time in that phase of your life when you were not married with children;. Now… ▪ Picture in your mind what you looked like ▪ Who were your friends and relationships with? What did they think of you? ▪ Remember what you were doing every day? Working, studying…how was your days and nights filled? ▪ What motivated you to get out of bed in the morning? ▪ What were your thoughts about your future…what would you be doing in year older years, what was your dream for your life? ▪ Remember all that you were feeling about life, thinking, experiencing. o Now keeping that experience in your mind, cast your mind forward to your life today. Think of an average day in your life now with your work and your family. ▪ Picture in your mind what you look like now? ▪ With whom are your closest relationships? ▪ What is your day like when you go to work? How do you feel about work? ▪ What are you doing in the evening? How does it make you feel? ▪ What is the rest of your family doing? ▪ What do you think about your future now? o Now absorb that entire experience, relax and open your eyes
Family depiction	10 minutes	o Now, in your workbooks, on page 3 and 4 respectively, there is a summary table asking you key questions about your experience of your life then and now. o Take time to depict your experience of your life

[4] The instructions described in this section are an abridged description of the actual instructions given by the researcher.
[5] Participants were asked not to provide their names. This was done deliberately to ensure that they felt a level of anonymity for the work to be completed in the workbooks.

Topic	Time	Instructions[4]
		then and now.
Work-family interplay discussion	90 minutes	o The next while we will dedicate to having a discussion around your experiences. o Having just gone through this exercise which gives you a picture in your mind of your life as it is now and what you feel about it now, how would you describe your experience of your work-family balance? o ***Key prompts (if necessary):*** ▪ Positive relationship effects (spouse, family, work, other) ▪ Negative relationship effects (spouse, family, work, other) ▪ Division of labour ▪ Coping mechanisms: • Family • Personal resources • Beliefs and attitudes ▪ Personal effects (emotional, behavioural, physical)
Written exercises	20 minutes	o In your workbooks, there are several exercises related to your experience of work and family. Please spend 20 minutes completing them.
Conclusion	5 minutes	Questions, comments and thanks.

Laddering technique (Jarratt, 1996)

A workbook given to participants used the laddering technique by getting them to explore emotional responses. In addition, though the focus groups were conversational in their nature, laddering was utilised by the facilitator to unravel deeper experiences.

Workbook completion (Berg, 2006)

Owing to the highly personal nature of the experiences being described, the workbook option was also used to provide participants with an anonymous and thus safe depiction of the emotions, activities and thoughts related to the experience. See Appendix B. Furthermore, as discussed by Berg (2006) on the value of written artefacts, this study employed a workbook as a means of

attaining a written record from the participants. This was viewed as particularly important to offset any validity issues that may have been incurred through the convergence of group thought in the discussion. Thus, by providing a workbook, participants could give personal views and insights without being swayed by the views of the group. The design of the questions in the workbook was aimed at achieving complementary data to the discussion in the interview sections of the focus groups. In essence its content was derived from an adaptation of Harville Hendrix's work (2003) on Imago Relationship Therapy. This type of therapy focuses intensely on the emotional responses that exist in relationships. It seeks to remove defensive boundaries such as rationalisation and argument by dealing with the personal experiences of the individuals at a deep emotional level. In its academic context, it is referred to as the relational paradigm (Hendrix *et al*, 2005). This methodology was deemed to be of great value to such research in achieving a depth of perspective not previously reported in other types of research into the work-family balance.

4.3.4 Focus group design matrix to research questions

Section in focus group	**Research question(s)**	**Explanation / Discussion**
Section 1: Personal details completion (See Appendix B)	Demographics Q1d: Differences between men and women	Life circumstances Sampling details
Exercises 2a & b: Visualisation and diagrammatic depiction	Q1a,b,c: Experience of work-family balance	Sets the tone of the focus group; Enables overall representation; Calming effect of visualisation allowing depth of perspective.
Exercise 3a: Time division breakdown	Q1a,b,c,d: Experiences and differences between men and women	Gives participants a mental focus on their time allocation, leading into the discussion on responsibilities.
Section 3: Discussion on experience of work-family balance	Q 1a,b,c: Experience of the work-family balance (personal, family, work)	Allows participants to determine the content of the experience but broad question aims to obtain answers to the main question and its sub-components
Section 4: Sentence construction	Q1a,b,c,d: Experiences in specific roles and any differences between men and women	Uses open-ended questions to obtain a different perspective on experiences at a role level.
Section 5: Emotive responses	Q1b &c: Emotive experiences in work and family roles	Assists in laddering to core emotive responses on each role; Aims to elicit positive and negative emotive responses at a role level.

Section in focus group	Research question(s)	Explanation / Discussion
Section 6: Role specific rewards and responses	Q1,a,b,c: Emotive responses at work and family	Assists to uncover emotional responses and potentially behaviours in response to conflict or facilitation in various roles.
Section 7: Coping mechanisms	Q1a,b,c,d.	Aims to discuss the experience of things that "help" and things that "don't help" in this experience which relates to the topic of mediation, organisational considerations, differences between men and women.

4.3.5 Focus group phases and co-ordination

Four focus groups were conducted over a period of a month. The research was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 pilot study: The first focus group was established as a pilot group, although participants were not informed that they were in a pilot group; as there were concerns that this may influence attendance or prevent participants from engaging fully. The purpose of this pilot group was to test the flow, responses and outcomes of the process to ensure that it was aligned to the research questions.

As the pilot did not introduce any significant problems with the research design, the data from the pilot was used as part of the sample. Minor errors that were picked up by the participants in the workbook were noted and amended. In particular, the time allocation was amended to ensure that appropriate time was given to allow discussion on the participants' experiences.

Phase 2 focus groups: The three main focus groups were conducted at different times of the day to allow for variances in individual schedules. Each focus group contained between 7 and 12 participants.

All participants provided feedback in their workbooks at the end of each focus group, enabling the direction of the next focus groups to be improved where appropriate. See Figure 36 and Figure 37.

Preparation for the workshops was conducted as follows:

Step 1: A presentation of introduction (Appendix A) was sent initially to the purposeful sample chosen. This presentation introduced the subject of study, its objectives and it invited the participants to elect one of five focus groups to get involved in. It also asked the participants to forward the invitation to relevant individuals who may be interested in participating.

Step 2: On acceptance, each participant was sent a meeting request by e-mail and confirmations were tracked.

Step 3: Confirmation sms's were sent to each participant two days prior to their workshop confirming time and venue of the focus group.

Focus groups were conducted in various training rooms and boardrooms at First National Bank. Permission was granted by First National Bank for this purpose. These rooms were laid out in a manner that enabled candidates to feel part of a group. Thus, they were positioned in a square or a circular format. The format of the seating enabled the following:

1) People could hear each other clearly;
2) The digital recorder could pick up all voices as it was placed near the middle. (There were concerns that certain comments would be lost based on poor seating arrangements.)
3) It is suggested that it assisted as some level to prevent fraction discussions from happening as everyone felt part of the same discussion.

4.3.6 The role of the researcher

This section provides an overview on the role of the researcher and its relation to the research design.

The significance of the researcher's context

Deborah Dillon in Alvermann *et al*, 1996:116) comments that, "Qualitative researchers can never overlook the fact that they are gendered, multiculturally situated, and theoretically inclined to view phenomena in ways that influence what questions get asked and what methodology is used to answer those questions…incorporating this information into a written report is critical to the reader's understanding of the research". This research will do what all heuristic approaches aim to do and "emphasize the unique and personal voice of the individual researcher…and give a universal voice and character to the research findings" (Braud and Anderson, 1998:75). As Moffitt (1979: 149) implies, the researcher needs to play an integral role to truly understand and interpret the experience. He captures this in a poem 'To Look at Any Thing'.

> "*To look at any thing*
> *If you would know that thing,*
> *You must look at it long:*
> *To look at this green and say*
> *'I have seen spring in these*
> *Woods,' will not do – you must*
> *Be the thing you see:*
> *You must be the dark snakes of*
> *Stems and ferry plumes of leaves*
> *You must enter in*
> *To the small silences between*
> *The leaves,*
> *You must take your time*
> *And touch the very place*
> *They issue from"*

Kleinsasser (2000) summarises the importance of the context of the researcher in being able to draw on her own personal subjectivity and utilise a process of self-reflection constructively to enhance the value of the research. This context provided the seed for the research topic and the insight for interpretation. It also potentially introduces bias concerns which have been addressed through careful structuring of the research report to delineate observations from interpretations, thereby allowing the reader to discern the difference.

4.3.7 Sampling

Sampling technique

Sampling was done using a combination of purposive and snowballing sampling. Hagan (2006) refers to purposive sampling as judgemental sampling and in this method the researcher elects a group of individuals she already knows will fulfil the sampling criteria. An initial group of individuals known through work, school and social interactions was selected. Candidates were invited by e-mail. Pre-selection was on the following criteria:

Gender: All attempts were made to obtain an equal number of men and women in the sample in order to obtain insights into question 1d on the differences in experiences between men and women. The end result was fortuitous in that 18 females and 18 males participated.

Education / work status: Only skilled participants were selected to participate, for reasons described in the sections on delimitations.

Relationship to researcher: For convenience purposes, participants were invited from a host of network sources. Work associates, friends in similar circumstances, study colleagues and parents at schools were invited.

Work-family circumstances: Only participants engaged in both work and family roles participated. This happened in a manner of automatic pre-selection, in that individuals who were not involved in both work and family roles did not identify with the research and thus failed to volunteer to participate.

The sampling technique then moved into a snowballing technique whereby the invited participants were asked to forward the invitation to all people who were relevant to a discussion on work-family balance. This generated several referrals. This bias this potentially introduced into the research is discussed in the section on sampling limitations. Appendix A contains the invitation letter.

Sample size

There is a debate about the relevant size of a sample when a focus group methodology is employed. This is largely owing to the debate around the quality of the data that emerges from focus group discussions. Fern (1982) establishes that focus groups produce equivalent data to individual research interviews, while Sussman *et al* (1991) suggests that focus groups only produce about 70% of the original ideas generated in individual interviews. With this context, a sample of 50 participants was targeted, thereby hoping to exceed what would normally be a significant sample of 30 participants (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). However, this proved to be problematic owing to the duration of the focus groups being 2 ½ hours. This issue points to one of the key dilemma's of this research: it aims to seek understanding by engaging time-strapped individuals for a lot of time.

Sample data

A sample of 36 candidates participated in the research. This sample represented the population of skilled business people in South Africa engaged in both work and family roles. The focus groups emerged out of a broader sample of a known[6] 147 individuals who were invited to participate in the 2 ½ hour workshops. The descriptive data on the makeup of the sample is provided in Figures 9 to 15 below.

[6] As a snowballing technique (Berg, 2006) was used, it is likely that more people were invited without the researcher's knowledge

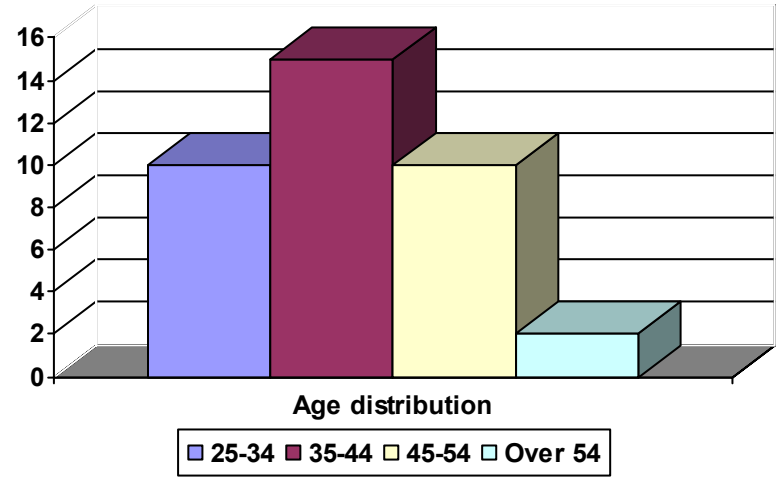


Figure 9: Age distribution of sample

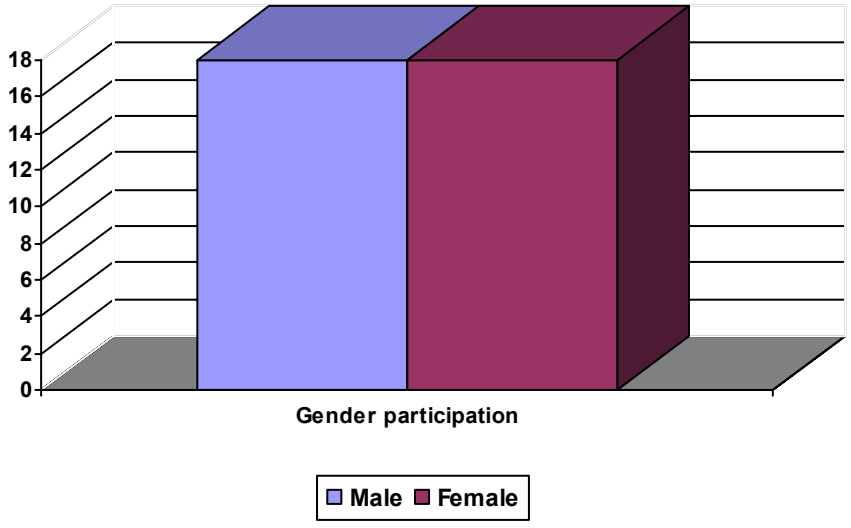


Figure 10: Sample distribution by gender

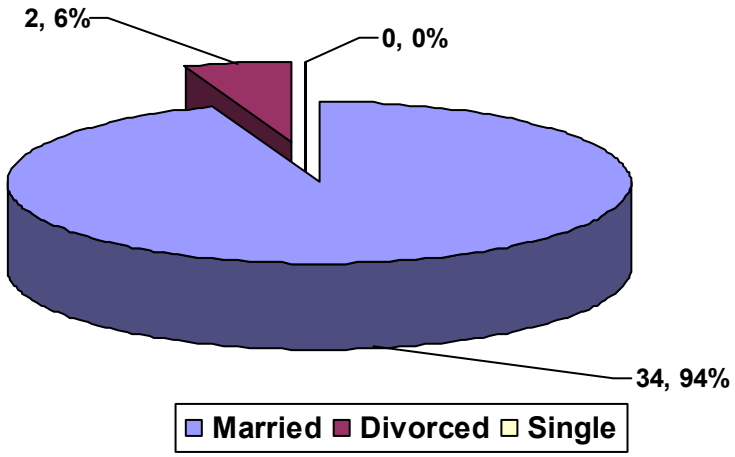


Figure 11: Marital status of sample

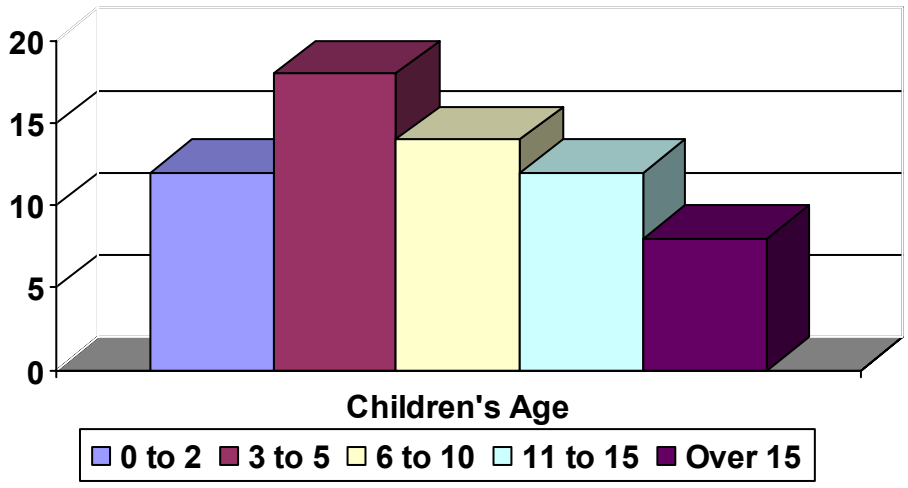


Figure 12: Distribution of number of children per age category

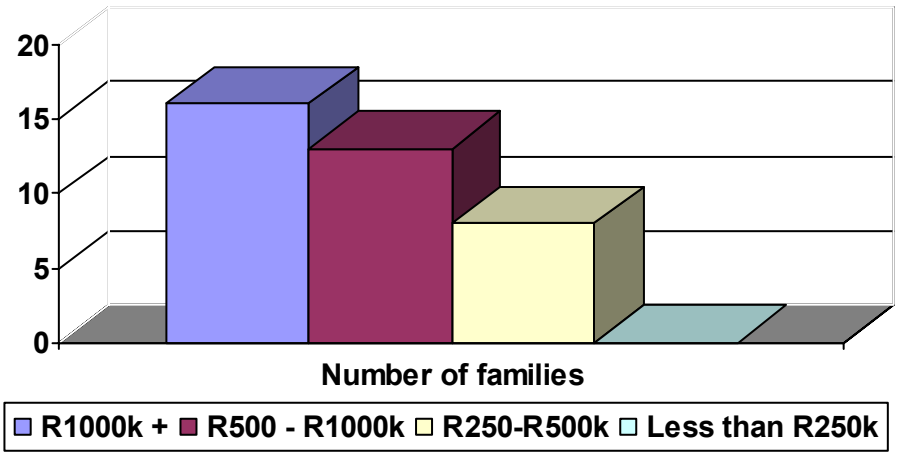


Figure 13: Income distribution of families in sample

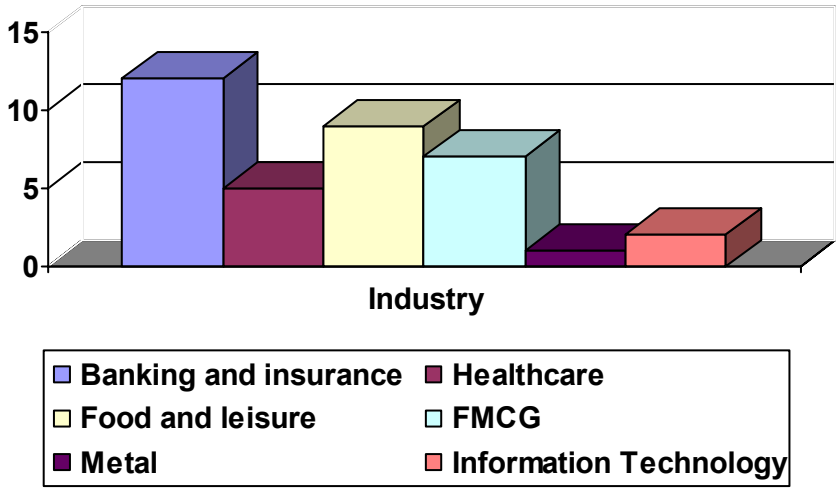


Figure 14: Distribution of industries the sample participants work for

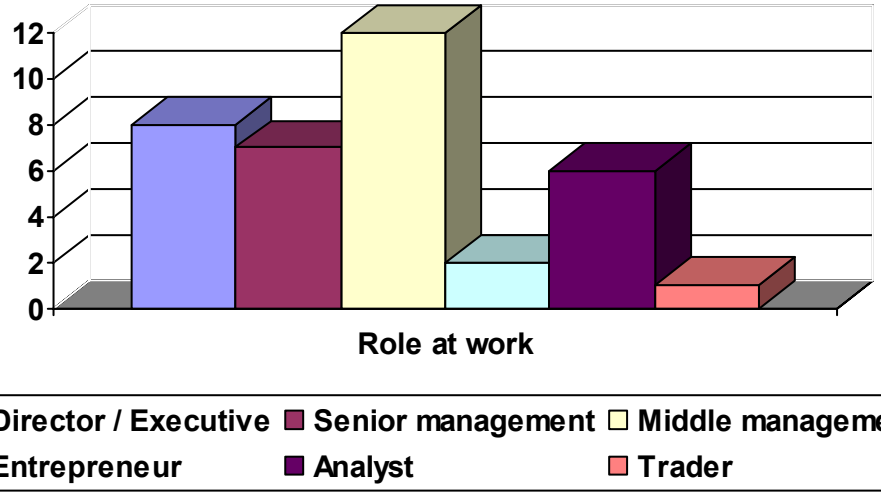


Figure 15: Role at work as described by sample participants

4.3.8 Sampling constraints

Identification

It is conceivable that individuals who agreed to participate had personal agendas of wanting "help" to deal with their work-family balance difficulties. This would bias the results. It is suggested that this was not a main theme that surfaced in the focus groups. While it was evident that 2 specific individuals were struggling with the balance, it did not appear to be an overriding problem and thus largely is discounted as a sampling constraint. Similarly it may be concluded that individuals may have agreed to participate because they were conscious of the work-family balance issue in their own lives – and have previously thought about it. Thus, the sample potentially excluded a group of individuals who have never framed the issue in their lives. Figure 16 provides a break-down of the reasons that participants gave for participating in the research.

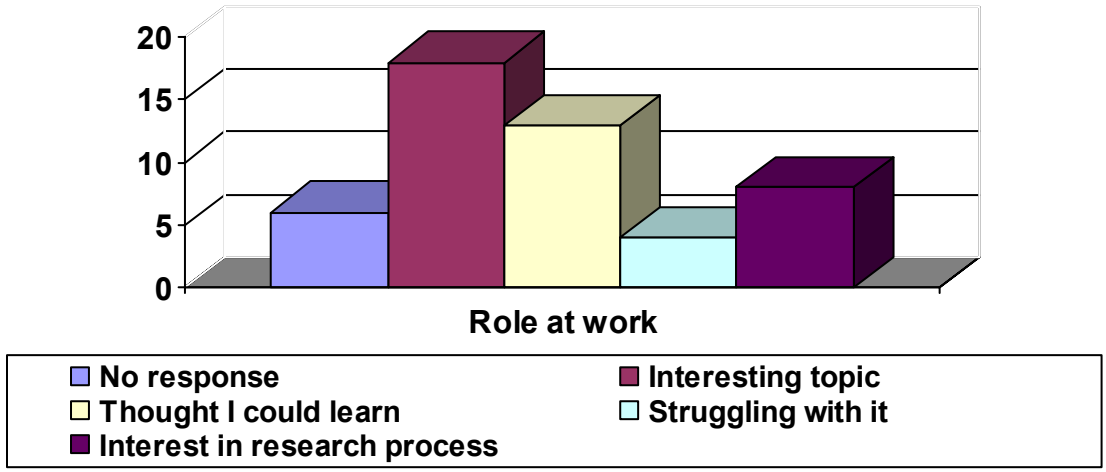


Figure 16: Reasons provided for participating in research process

Sample size

The research aimed to include 50 participants in the focus groups. However, owing to the time commitment required by each participant of 2 ½ hours, only 36 candidates participated. This is still considered to be a significant sample given the richness of data obtained. As Calder (2001: 153) states, "Conventional wisdom falls into the trap of simply assuming that understanding increases with the amount of data available…This fixation on data in general and sample size in particular is, unfortunately, misplaced. Understanding is not just a matter of data. It is first and foremost a matter of explanation".

Sampling technique

The non-probability sampling technique employed potentially would bias the results (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). In particular, the snowballing technique used restricts the randomness of the sampling because the nature of its process attracts similar people (Berg, 2006). While this would affect the generalisability of the research, it is not a particular concern for the nature of this research as it specifically aims to attract people in the same circumstances.

4.3.9 Conclusion

This section has presented a detailed account of the selected methodology of clinical focus groups combined with multiple focus group techniques such as visualisation (Jarratt,1996; Hines,2000), storytelling (Bruner,1990), workbooks (Berg, 2006) and laddering (Reynolds and Gutman,1988). It has elucidated on how the focus groups were co-ordinated, sampling techniques and constraints. In addition, it has described the specific context and role of the researcher as being integral to the research process.

4.4 Data collection and analysis

4.4.1 Introduction

This section provides detail on the manner in which data was collected and analysed from the focus groups. It describes the challenges that were experienced in collecting this data. It then proceeds to outline the various options for analysis and the rationale for employing the relevant techniques.

4.4.2 Focus group challenges

This sub-section outlines the challenges that were experienced in the focus group data collection process and steps that were taken to address these challenges. The descriptions of these challenges aim to circumvent or at least create an awareness of such issues for future research.

Personal issues

Two individuals in different focus groups presented with significant personal problems that were identified early in the discussion. Both individuals clearly were grappling with major issues at work and particularly in their home lives. Their reasons for attending the focus groups seemed to be a combination of

wanting peer validation for their experiences and potentially seeking counsel. Their presence had both positive and negative effects on the group. The first impact was on the researcher who had to employ skilled facilitation to ensure that the topic of conversation remained focussed on the research questions. The second impact was on the group. On the positive side, these two individuals were so open with their issues that it seemed to generate a deeper level of openness in the group about the topic. On the negative side, the presenting individuals did seem to generate a frustration in certain respondents who also identified their issues as problematic. This challenge was addressed in the following ways:

1) Transcripts were reviewed carefully and certain comments were excluded as irrelevant to the research based on the individual context in which they were made.
2) Where appropriate, participants were advised that they could obtain a referral to a counsellor should they believe that they might want to continue exploring any challenges this focus group opened up for them. One of the individuals presenting with major problems in the research did seek a referral.

Group participation

As Berg (2006) notes, focus groups can be influenced by dominant personalities. In all focus groups, dominant personalities emerged fairly quickly in the process. This presented as individuals who spoke more than other participants. In addition, it was noted that they also seemed to redirect the conversation when they were "unhappy" with the nature of the discussion. The positive effect of these dominant personalities was that they also seemed to pick up on problem discussions and aided the facilitator by redirecting conversation. In one of the focus groups the dominant personality was more problematic as she tended to speak irrespective of the quality or relevance of her contribution. This challenge was facilitated as follows:

1) Less dominant personalities were asked specific questions;

2) Rambling was interjected and redirected.

Non-attendance

Attendance of the focus groups was generally good. However, in certain instances, people cancelled at the last minute or arrived late for the focus groups. The cancellation rate (within 24 hours prior to the research) was approximately 10%. Eight percent of participants arrived after the focus groups started; while 5% left early. While not ideal, this was not considered to have negatively impacted the research. However, for future research it should be noted as a potential risk of focus group research. Despite personal sms reminders and e-mails with commitment clauses, individuals still perceive they have less personal accountability in a group setting and are thus more likely to cancel.

Openness and honesty

The group setting seemed to elicit two almost opposite responses in individuals. Certain individuals opened up and were comfortable divulging information of a personal nature in the group setting without any fear of group recrimination. In other instances, a phenomenon of seeking group acceptance seemed present. In this latter instance, three individuals seemed to make regular, self-inflated comments that were incongruent with previous statements they had made. These comments were attributed to a positive group discussion that perhaps required them to "cover up" previously stated vulnerabilities by making more acceptable group statements. Again, this points to a vulnerability of group research. Nonetheless, sufficiently individual data was gained in the research to assume a level of reliability therein.

4.4.3 Data analysis considerations

The research content consisted to two elements, namely, the research workbooks and the discussion transcripts. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:290) state that "to display data is certainly important, but … the interpretation of the data is the essence of research". Clearly in this kind of interpretive research, analysis

of the content is imperative to the validity of the research findings. Within the context of the interpretive paradigm, there were various options that could have been employed to analyse the content.

In constructing a methodology that would allow participants to tell their stories, the evaluation of stories proved to be complex. As Barone (1992:144) suggests, “At the outset of the storytelling excursion, the qualitative inquirer may feel anxious and adrift as phenomena flicker without discernible pattern, like phosphorent jellyfish in the sea around him. I have learnt to stay calm and paddle onwards”.

To this end, various options of analysing the content were explored. These are detailed as follows:

Option 1: content analysis

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) describe content analysis as the systematic examination of a body of material in an effort to identify themes, biases, and meanings. In this analysis, the meaning can be captured in a set of predefined content variables. The focus of this analysis is on fixed meanings and how many people express those ideas. Holsti (1968) suggests that content analysis is being used anytime a researcher is systematically and objectively identifying characteristics of messages, provided these messages have been converted to text.

The ideas are analysed statistically in order to quantify qualitative data; hence there is debate about whether content analysis is a qualitative or quantitative technique. However, as Berg (2006) goes on to argue, while reducing text to counts is positivist in nature, it still provides a useful manner in which to understand, organise and retrieve qualitative data.

Carley (1993:79) does warn about the dangers of adhering to a traditional content analysis process. She says, “The focus on concepts implicit to traditional content analysis often is an overestimation of the similarity of texts because meaning is lost”. Hence the spirit of content analysis is aimed to be

included while still employing conversational analysis which allows for greater interpretation of meaning.

Option 2: discourse and conversation analysis

In this analysis language is viewed as a means of constructing a social world in order to gain power or validation (Elliot, 1996). It uses a more interpretive paradigm in that fixed meanings cannot be assumed; words have different meanings depending on the context of the individual. It thus requires significant reading on the part of the researcher who is required to contextualise a particular response within a broader understanding of who that individual is and what her particular circumstances are. Thus, it focuses on the social psychology of the language rather than the linguistics. Discourse and conversation analysis can also be incorporated into the debate between manifest and latent content. Berg (2006) describes manifest analysis as the examination of only observable and countable information. Latent analysis, on the other hand, is the interpretation by the researcher of hidden constructs and meanings. The risk for the researcher in employing the analysis is personal bias and incorrect attribution. Thus, Holsti (1968) suggests that interpretive discourse analysis can be presented in the research provided it is corroborated and stated as interpretive by the researcher.

4.4.4 Employed data analysis

A combination of content and conversational analysis has been employed in this research. As Berg (2006) suggests, perhaps the best solution to the debate of manifest (content) versus latent (conversational) analysis is to use both whenever possible. Thus, for the purposes of this research, the two methodologies were deemed to be complementary, rather than incompatible. Content analysis techniques provided a systematic way in which to review and organise the data, while conversation analysis provided a means to overcome the depth limitations of content analysis by allowing the context and hidden

interpretations to surface. The topic is both sensitive and has implied deeper meanings so it would be imperative to understand the context of the individual to elucidate on their portrayed experiences. Furthermore, the research tactics such as picture portrayals and sentence construction also required a more flexible method for interpretation and depiction.

To overcome the associated risks of both methodologies, the following mitigating actions were taken:

1) Quantitative content analysis has been used only for descriptive and interest purposes. The frequency of responses is not taken into account to demonstrate any greater or lesser significance; it is illustrative.
2) Observations and interpretations have been separated as far as possible. All portrayed experiences are noted as such and wherever possible the actual words of the person have been quoted to assist the reader in making this distinction.

The following steps were taken to analyse the data:

1) Output from the focus groups was digitally recorded and then converted into typed transcripts. During this transcription process, the following was noted: tone, content, individual context, group dynamic, researcher's view on the point of discussion.
2) The transcripts then were manually analysed for key content, tone and themes. Themes were colour coded and sub-coded alphabetically for sub-categories in the content (e.g. anger).
3) The content data was reviewed again to become familiar with the individual responses and their associated contexts; as well as familiar with the overall thematic responses.
4) Using open coding, responses were grouped into data / theme categories. Similarly, workbooks were analysed for data and themes.
5) Themes were quantified and presented.

4.4.5 Conclusion

This section has provided a detailed view of the data analysis process employed. It includes analytical options that could have been employed and narrows down the data analysis methodology to a combination of conversational and content analysis. Furthermore, the challenges incurred in collecting the data through the analysis process are presented.

4.5 Data validity and reliability

4.5.1 Introduction

This section discusses the issues around data validity and reliability taken into consideration as part of this research. The validity and reliability issues are discussed at a conceptual level in anticipation of the research. The specific validity and reliability issues with the findings are outlined in Chapter 6.

4.5.2 Data validity

Leedy (2001) suggests that validity is concerned with the soundness and effectiveness of the measuring instrument and would raise such questions as: What does the test measure? Does it, in fact, measure what it is supposed to measure? How well, how comprehensively, how accurately does it measure it? The internal and external validity of the research determines the overall validity of the research. Lau (2003:16) states, "Valid arguments play a very important role in reasoning, because if we start with true assumptions, and use only valid arguments to establish new conclusions, then our conclusions must also be true". Owing to the interpretive nature of this research, validity issues are expected and as such are discussed further.

External validity

This refers to generalisability of the research to the external world (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). In this study, the external validity is quite limited because the sample is very specific, drawing only from skilled business people and people with children. This implies that the experiences depicted cannot be extrapolated to other population groups in different socio-economic circumstances and with different skill levels. Owing to the non-probability sampling of this research, findings cannot be generalised to the broader South African or international population. Rather, it is suggested that the research results can be generalised to skilled corporates and entrepreneurs with families. Furthermore, within the South African context, the sample did not contain sufficient diversity to represent all racial and ethnic groups; which is a factor of its non-randomness. This constraint potentially can be attributed to the snowball sampling technique. However, as the research was not seeking differences between ethnic or racial groups, this was not deemed to be too much of a limiting constraint. In future studies, perhaps extending the findings from this research to quantitative analysis, care could be taken to ensure that a broader and more representative sample is tested.

Internal validity

Leedy and Ormrod state that, “Internal validity refers to the extent to which the instrument allows inferences about the causal relationships between data elements. Therefore, internal validity is more relevant in studies that try to establish a causal relationship and not as relevant in most observational or descriptive studies” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001:60). While this research will look for relationships, these are not necessarily causal in nature. In addition, the nature of the research aims to allow issues, relationships and variables to materialise. It is suggested that causal relationships would be better explored through correlation and/or factor analysis subsequent to this qualitative research.

Content validity

This is the degree to which items in an instrument reflects the content universe to which it will be generalised (Boudreau, 2001). As previously stated, most of the research on issues relating to the work-family balance has been conducted using quantitative research using different sample groups. The specific content validity issues with this research emanate from the focus group and experiential design, which are discussed further.

Experiential view and storytelling: The role of intuition and the subjective experience is worthy of mentioning within the context of this research. The methodology of this study relies heavily on the subjective experience of the sample participants. The work of Clore and Parrot (1991) and Salovey and Mayer (1989) illustrate the importance of emotional intuition as an important supplement to cognition. Turkkan (2001) provides an overview of the concept of this intuition and its potential relevance to research. He describes intuition as 'not knowing how we know'. This concept is further substantiated by the authors of 'Rethinking Intuition' (DePaul and Ramsay, 1998) who suggest that even the simplest of tasks often require intuition; characterised as the entire history of our behavioural and cognitive processes without knowing why we know. For the purposes of this study, the validity of the subjective experience is valued as a means of achieving a depth of understanding. Thus it is anticipated that participants will describe experiences, interpretations and phenomena without knowing how they know it and that this method will represent the subjective truth of experiences of the work-family balance.

Group convergence of thought: Hines (2000) suggests that there may be validity issues with the focus group approach because it may encourage a group response as opposed to individual responses. This, he postulates, occurs through a process of domination of one or many members of the group. Alternatively he suggests that people want to be seen as part of the collective group and therefore they choose not to diverge from the main themes or opinions expressed. Countering to this potential flaw, Stycos (1981) suggests that group processes can have the opposite effect, whereby members are less

on guard and therefore more likely to express strong opinions, views and truths. He proposes that people get caught in the momentum of the conversation and this allows for greater depth, although exaggeration is a possibility. Thus, it is contended that the criterion validity of this research may be impacted to some extent by the group dynamics. This risk has been mitigated to some extent by the introduction of the personal workbook.

Personal topic: Content validity will be difficult to establish because of the personal nature of the questions. While people in the focus groups will be encouraged to be honest based on the fact that their workbook responses are anonymous, there is still a possibility that participants contrived half-truth answers to questions and / or responded with socially desirable answers. This would mean that the data gathered would not be accurate and therefore lacking in content validity. As suggested previously, however, a significant part of this research would be placing the participants at ease and creating an environment of trust by merely reflecting the feedback, not judging it.

4.5.3 Data Reliability

Reliability is defined as the extent to which similar research conducted in future will result in similar outcomes…it deals with the accuracy of the measurement (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Despite being an open-ended discussion focus group forum, the structure was carefully designed to ensure that the role of the researcher as well as extraneous factors did not influence the outcome of the research in a significant manner. However, as the research is in the interpretive paradigm, the role and interpretations of the researcher cannot be ignored and hence it is likely that similar research by another researcher might lead to slightly different conclusions. This is not viewed as prohibitive. The research has an emergent quality and aims to explore a depth of issues in the work-family balance. Thus, any new constructs or variables that emerge may well need to be verified through quantitative analysis in subsequent research.

Reliability is a particular concern when it comes to the nature of the focus groups combined with the personal nature of the topic. Socially desirable

responses are a strong probability. It is for this reason that the focus groups contain a large section of personal and private work in workbooks. In this way, there is the benefit of working in the comfort of a group while responding personally (without having to share the information).

4.6 Conclusion

The detailed research methodology employed has been described, including a breakdown on the challenges, planning, methods and execution. This section also has provided key considerations on reliability and validity for this research. The key challenges experienced with the focus groups have been presented along with steps that were taken to minimise the impact on the quality of the data.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The results acquired in this study are presented and the findings interpreted in this chapter. The chapter begins with an overview of the key themes in the findings with some metrics on the dominance of the themes. The findings are then presented in their key "experience" themes and the analysis is provided in each theme. The chapter is structured as closely as possible to the research questions. It is important to note that this method of categorising the experiences is not necessarily neatly demarcated. Personal experiences often relate to roles as a father or a breadwinner and the relationship with work. Thus a level of cross-pollination in the discussion points is inevitable.

This chapter is structured as follows:

1) Personal experiences: Question 1a
2) Work experiences and insights for organisations: Question 1b
3) Family experiences: Question 1c
4) Differences between men and women: Question 1d

Within each section, discussion and interpretation is included. The purpose of the discussion and interpretation is cross-referencing the findings with previous literature; as well as to demarcate specific interpretations by the researcher.

5.2 Personal experiences

5.2.1 Introduction

This section describes the experiences that individuals perceived as affecting them personally at an emotional, psychological or behavioural level. It also reports the experiences that could not be attributed to specific roles, but to the individual across multiple roles. It is divided into the following sub-sections:

1) Theme summary
2) Experience of time
3) Change in personal ideals
4) Physical health
5) Emotional state
6) Personal crisis

Following the observations, the section on discussion and interpretation provides cross-reference to the literature and further interpretations. The section concludes with a summary of the findings.

5.2.2 Theme summary

Figure 17 presents a diagrammatic overview of the themes raised on the personal experiences of the work-family balance. This themed summary provides an overview for the reader to gauge the intensity and count of the themes discussed in this section. It provides a count of the number of participants who referred to or spoke about each theme (irrespective of the number of times the topic was mentioned). It also gives the interpretation of the emotional tone in which the majority of respondents spoke about that particular theme. This overview is supported by the detailed discussions which provide the descriptive evidence within each theme.

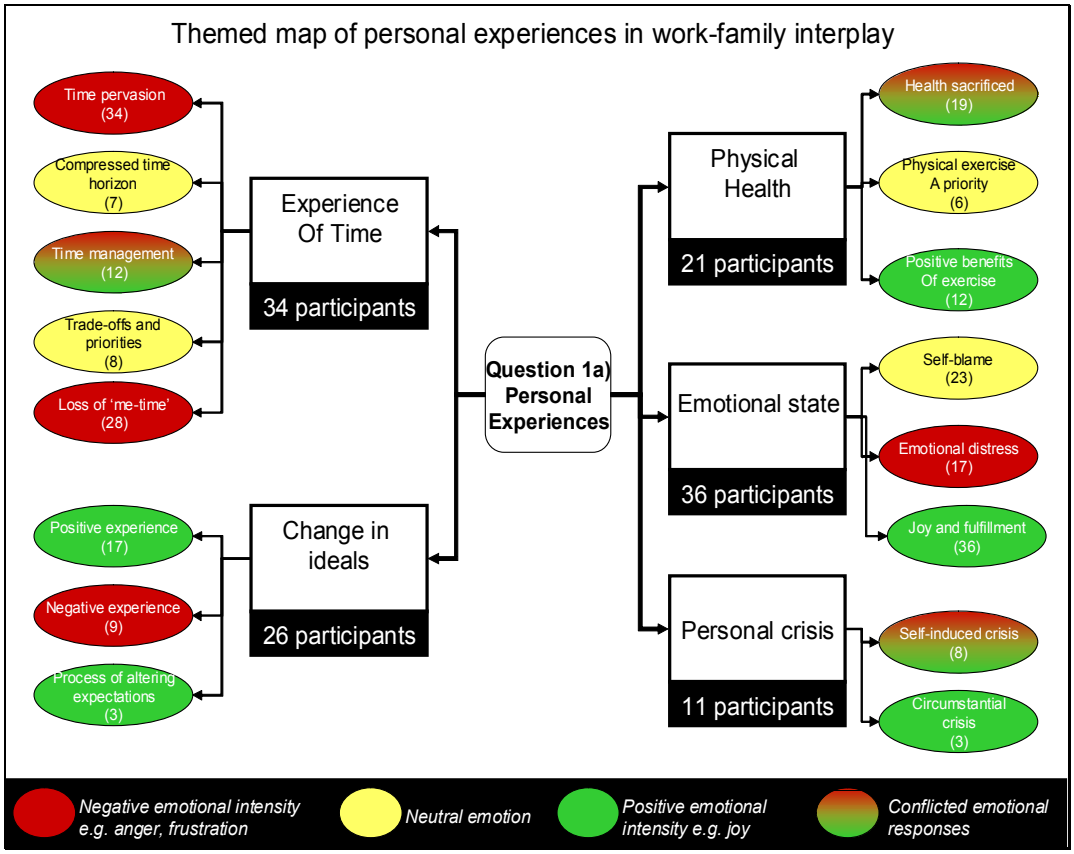


Figure 17: Summary of themes on personal experiences with emotional intensity and count indicators

5.2.3 Experience of time

A central theme that emerged in each focus group was the experience of continual time pressures and the effect that these time pressures have on personal choices. Thirty four out of 36 participants raised the topic of time, participated in a conversation and / or reported on the concept of time in their workbooks. Within the broader theme of a lack of time, several secondary patterns and subject matters materialised. These are discussed in detail. This section is structured to include a breakdown of the 'self-reports' on time, the experience of time as a deficiency and the utilisation of time.

Self-reported allocation of time

Participants completed a self-report on how they spend their time on a weekly "aggregated" basis. They were also asked to indicate in which areas they felt they were spending too much time and in which areas they were not spending enough time.

Figure 18 represents the average number of hours spent by participants on each category on a weekly basis.

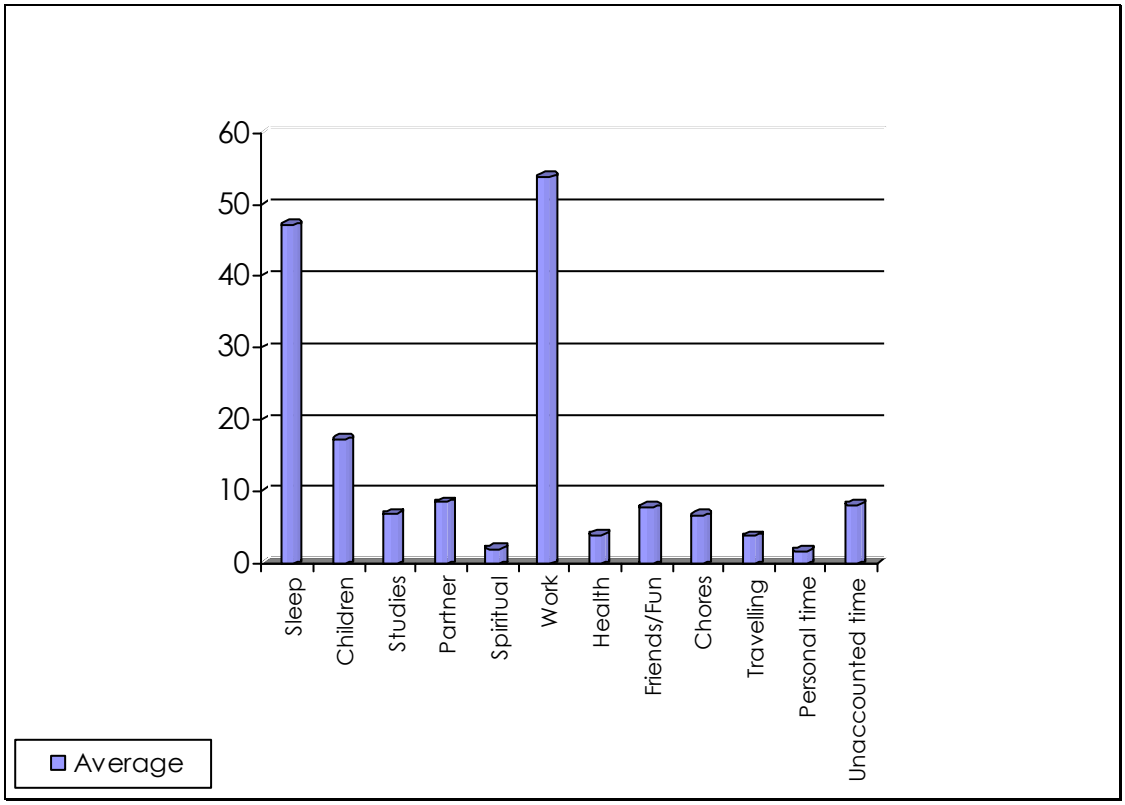


Figure 18: Average hours reported per week

Table 7 displays a count of the number of ticks or crosses participants marked against categories to illustrate they want to increase or decrease the time allocated to a particular category.

Table 7: Count of reported desire to change time allocation

Category	Would like to spend more time on category	Would like to spend less time on category
TOTAL COUNT	**91**[7]	**18**
Partner	18	0
Children	15	0
Health	14	0
Friends	12	0
Spiritual	9	1
Sleeping	4	3
Studies	4	2
Chores	3	1
Personal time	2	0
Work	0	9
Travelling	0	2

Table 8 displays the data in Table 7 in ranked format. The relative strength of the ranking is stated in brackets as a percentage of the overall counts.

Table 8: Ranking of time allocation categories

Ranking	Ranking of categories that candidates would like to spend more time on	Ranking of categories that participants would like to spend less time on
1	Partner (16.5%)	Work (8.3%)
2	Children (13.8%)	Sleeping (2.8%)
3	Health (12.8%)	Studies (1.8%)
4	Friends / fun (11%)	Travelling (1.8%)
5	Spiritual (8.3%)	Chores (1%)
6	Studies (3.7%)	Spiritual (1%)
7	Chores (3.7%)	
8	Personal time (1.8%)	
OVERALL	**83.4%**	**16.7%**

Time pervasion

Time emerged as an almost obsessive debate in each focus group to the point that it was evident that the individuals in the focus groups spend a lot of time

[7] Note: not all participants marked all categories. The count will therefore not correspond directly or multiplicatively to the number of participants in the sample.

thinking about and managing time. As one individual described it, “I never used to care about time. Now, I am obsessed with it. I went to the airport this morning to fetch a friend and she took 2 hours to get through passport control. All I could do was think that I could have gone to work and come back later to fetch her. Then I was having a dialogue with myself as to why I had taken the whole day’s leave just to fetch her when I could have taken a few hours”. Respondents framed almost every debate in terms of a lack of time or a fixation with finding more time. With determination a male with two children said, “I don’t allow myself to fall into stupid patterns now of wasting time. I must remember to do all the things that I need to do and to apply my time”.

Compressed time horizon

The time deficiency experience also presented with a change in perspective on the time horizon. Many candidates reported having a long-term visionary outlook when they were younger and experiencing a compressed view of time in their current lives. This emerged in the self-depiction portraits as well where individuals described their lives before work-family and their lives now. This female director of a company and mother of two depicts her life before as very idealistic, dreamy and with a long-term view of the future; while her picture after is filled with year planners and tools that focus on managing her short-term plans.

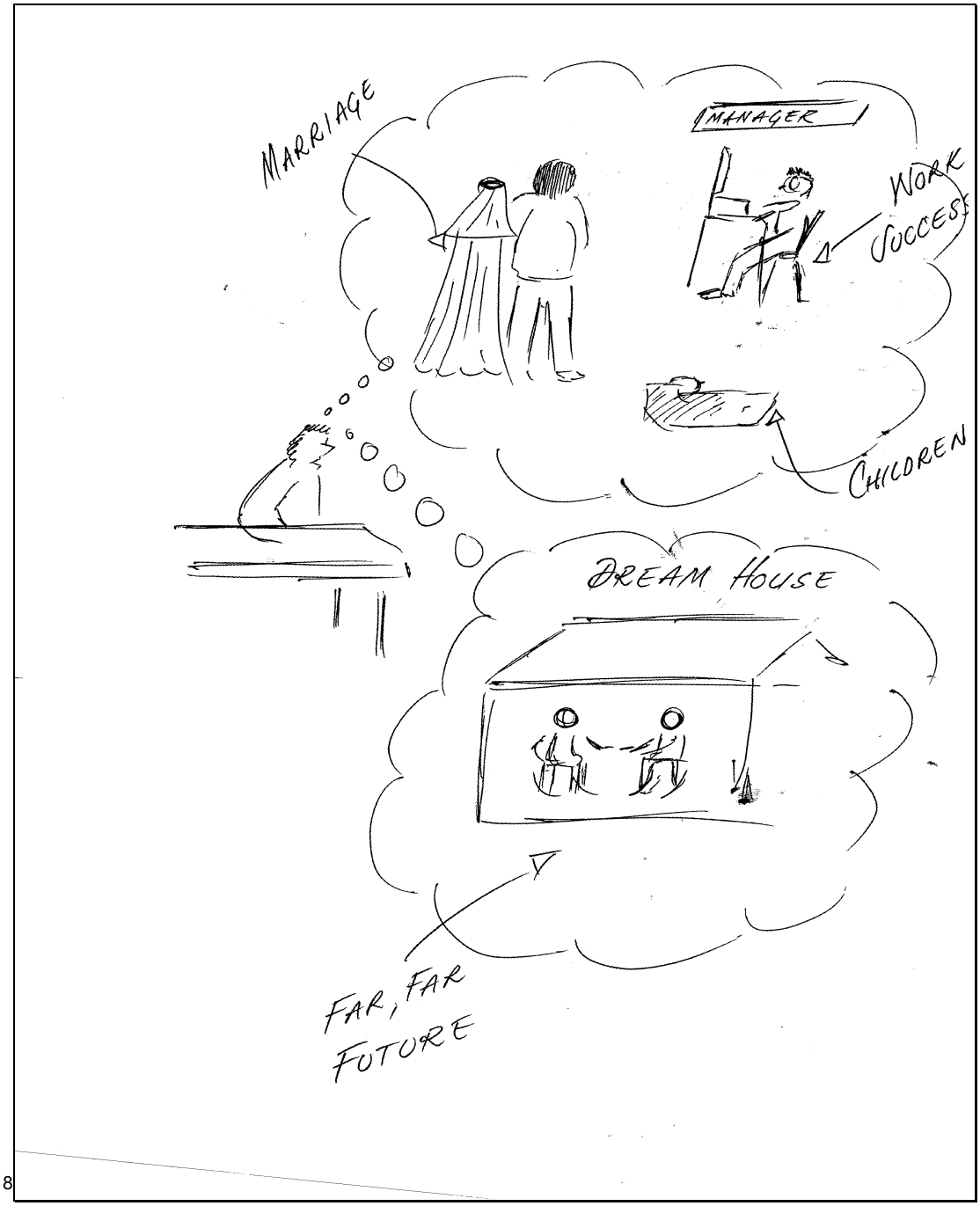


Figure 19: Life before diagram with long-term horizons

[8] All drawings by participants have been redrawn using a tracing method. This was done to improve the quality of the images for inclusion in this report. The hand-writing is not the participants' hand-writing, but words have been copied and inserted verbatim.

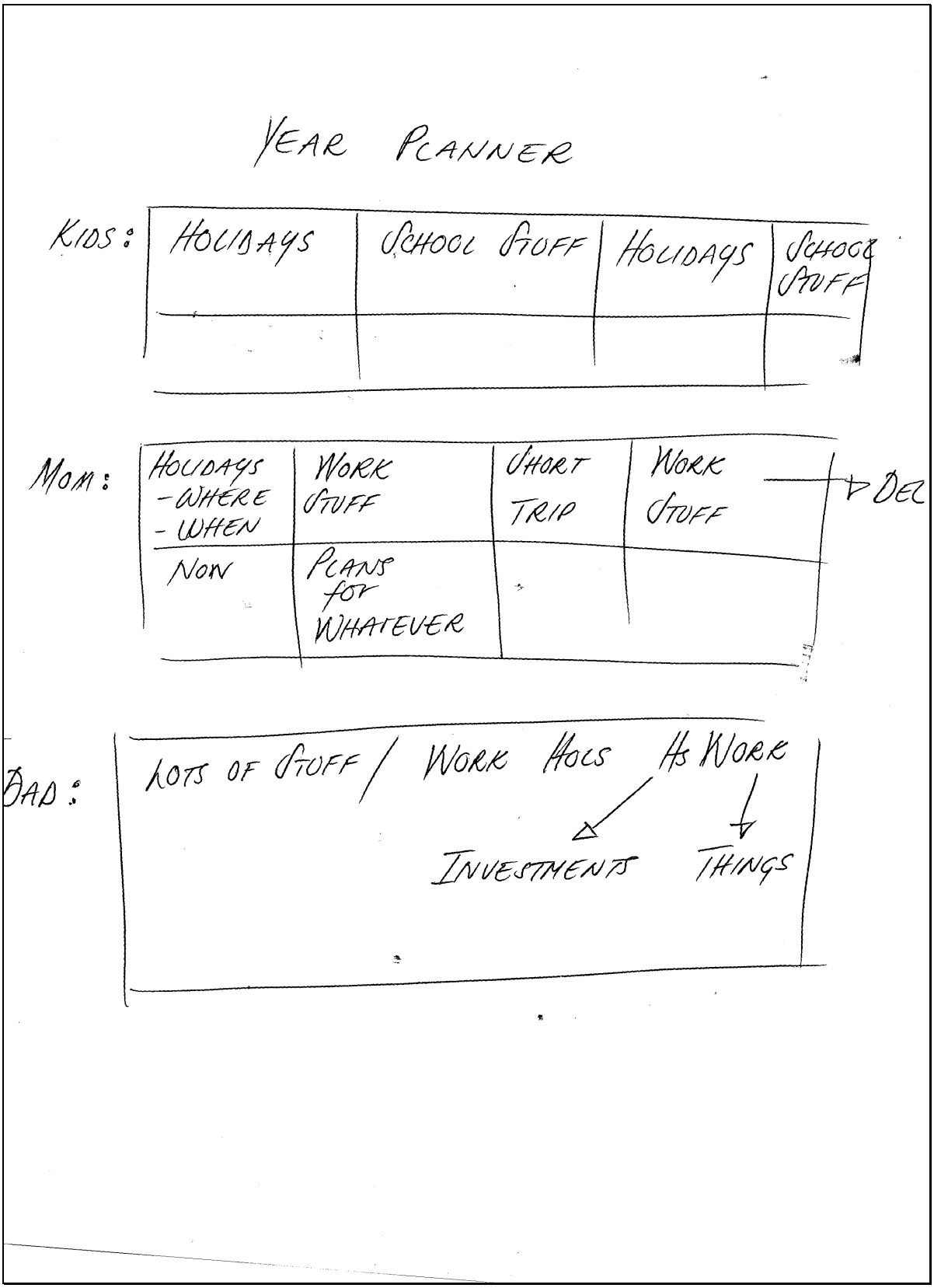


Figure 20: Life-now diagram with short-term horizons

Other respondents also described their change in perspective on time as an experience of a compression of time. Twelve diagrams demonstrated this as individuals depicted their lives in futuristic and idealistic terms before their work-family balance. With the onset of time pressures, their pictures seemed to demonstrate a shorter outlook and a fixation with short-term activities. As a mother of older boys said, "Now your time is limited and your view is all compressed into 2 years. When I was younger I had my whole life ahead of me – now I just look at the immediate future". Another mother echoed this view by saying, "The picture for me now is very different because suddenly time is compressed. The future is not as far away as it was when I was in my 20's. There's possibly not as much energy and excitement".

Time Management

Respondents stated that they are able to accomplish more in less time as a result of their busy lives and multiple roles. As a forty year old mother said, "When I was younger, I seemed to spend a lot of time going out at night and just reading, lying around. Now, even though I have a lot less time I seem to be able to do a lot more". While many participants described that they are better masters of their time than they used to be, several anecdotes throughout the focus groups pointed to a pattern of speed in the utilisation of time. Many activities seemed to be done quickly and in gap moments. A male respondent in his mid-thirties described his relationship with his partner as follows, "You can't start a conversation now because you know you only have two minutes…so you end up not saying a lot of things". Other participants described this frenzy of activity as cutting corners. As a 34 year old mother of two boys described, "We are always trying to find ways to cut corners even if it means that I need to do some of my boys' homework…this is not teaching our children good lessons". Respondents attributed this perception of being more effective at managing time to two different strategies. The first group of people (8 different participants) suggested that they have learned to compartmentalise their activities to ensure greater effectiveness within each role. As one participant reflected, "I have always compartmentalised. I switch off home when I get to work and work when I get to home". This respondent suggested that this

strategy enables her to focus on what she is doing at the time. In the family context several fathers alluded to a learning experience in this regard with their children. One father described it as such, “When I get home I sit with my kids and I turn my back on the TV so that they don’t have to compete with the TV. So I give them undivided attention. Then after 45 minutes they are completely happy…ready to go on their own. I learnt when I used to come home and do other things then they would start slapping me or hitting me…anything to get my attention because they know they are competing”. The second group of individuals (4 participants) suggested that they employ the opposite strategy to manage their time: multi-tasking. One mother said, “I always seem to be doing two things at once. While the kids are doing their homework, I am cooking supper. I am always scrambling for time in this way”.

Trade-offs and priorities

Individuals in the focus groups often discussed their experience of a lack of time closely followed by a discussion on the manner in which they experience the process of allocating their time. Individuals described the shortage of time as an experience of being in a constant trade-off state. They encounter the trade-offs happening on a daily and even hourly basis between what they describe as equal priority needs. Where respondents had not consciously prioritised one demand higher than another, they described their responses to these needs as being based on a sense of urgency. As one participant described it, “You end up putting out fires, giving the attention to the wheel that squeaks the most”. The second main reason for giving one equal priority demand attention over another was described as energy levels of the participant. One participant mother described this as follows, “If I have had a hectic day at work and I am feeling tired, I am more likely to hang around work for awhile, because I don’t have the energy to go home and deal with the kids when I am so tired. I wait for just before bed-time so there is less time to spend with them”. Participants alluded to balance occurring over a longer period of time. This happened as part of what they described as a “cyclical balance”; whereby they focus on work extensively one week and then family the next depending on the urgency of the demand. No specific mention was made of how long the cycles are. A 38 year

old executive and father of two suggested that his lack of time has forced him to think about what counts and prioritise what he gives his attention to. He therefore is able to give time to the things that matter most to him. Only four individuals alluded or directly stated that they realigned their allocation of duties based on their importance, not their urgency.

The loss of "me-time"

Twenty eight participants mentioned the lack of personal time in their work-family balance. A father of two described it literally as, "The trade off is giving up personal time. In my old job I would be at work until 10pm. Now all I'm doing is trading personal time. When my daughter is asleep and my wife has fallen asleep on the couch, I would actually like to watch the show on TV but I can't because I have work to do. It's always the 'me-time' that goes". The reported lack of time seemed to be echoed in the breakdown of time. Very few participants allocated any time to personal activities that are for their sole benefit or purpose. The average time allocated to personal activities is less than 2 hours per week. Although 24 participants have an average of 8 hours unallocated time, this was not perceived to be personal time; and may have been calculation errors. Certain respondents suggested that this lack of personal time drove a lot of their decision-making. As a young professional mother said, "That's why I decided not to finish my studies, because there is just no time once I have got the kids to bed. I need my 'doing-nothing' time". Another mother described the effect of her lack of personal time as permanent exhaustion. She said, "What I have given up is my personal time. I just spend my time doing things for work and for family. On the weekends I do the shopping. The effect is that I am permanently exhausted". Twelve individuals reflected this by insinuating in similar ways that they can never relax.

5.2.4 A change in ideals and expectations

Twenty six participants referred to the concept of their change in ideals and experience of adjusting expectations. This experience was reported with both positive and negative impacts on the individual which appeared to be mutually

exclusive. That is, individuals are either content with their change in ideals or frustrated with it.

Positive experience of ideal changes

Seventeen participants described their change in ideals in positive terms. They described their ambition and dreams to conquer the world when they were in their early twenties, and subsequently they have adjusted their ideals. As one father senior manager said, “I totally enjoy my days now. It’s not about the future anymore and chasing, chasing, chasing”. Certain respondents described the change in their ideals as particularly enlightening. A father of teenage children summarised the change as follows, “One of the big changes is when you are 20 you want to get as much as you can and you go go go in your career. Then there is a very big change. You go from an immature way to realising that you are a provider and a giver for your family. This is a positive experience moving from a taker to a giver. You get the joy of watching them grow”. These participants did not frame the change as a sacrifice. Rather they viewed it as a natural and positive change. As this father of two young children noted, “I don’t think I have given up on my dreams. It’s just that I have decided what is important and what not. I went from clueless to now where it’s more natural. In my twenties I was so stressed about what I was doing and now I just seem to do things more naturally and enjoy them more”.

Negative experiences of ideal changes

The second response pattern suggested that certain individuals are still grappling with a means of rekindling dreams for themselves amidst the frenzy of other responsibilities. A single mother of two stated, “I have two kids and I have a dream for them to be educated and go to school so my big question is how I am going to fulfil that for them and still find some kind of dream for myself. We all trade off and at this stage we do what we have to do…we spend our lives running on a treadmill doing what you have to do until it’s too late”. Other individuals expressed similar levels of dissatisfaction with their perception of their own ideals not being fulfilled. An older man described his extreme sense

of disappointment by saying, “I’ve had a lot of dreams shattered along the way because of my family circumstances and now it’s getting to a point where I am willing to give up a lot just to chase my dream”. In a less extreme manner another mother commented that she has given up on her studies completely. Similarly, the graphics in Figure 21 and Figure 22 represent how a person expressed a level of discontent with what she perceives are failed expectations.

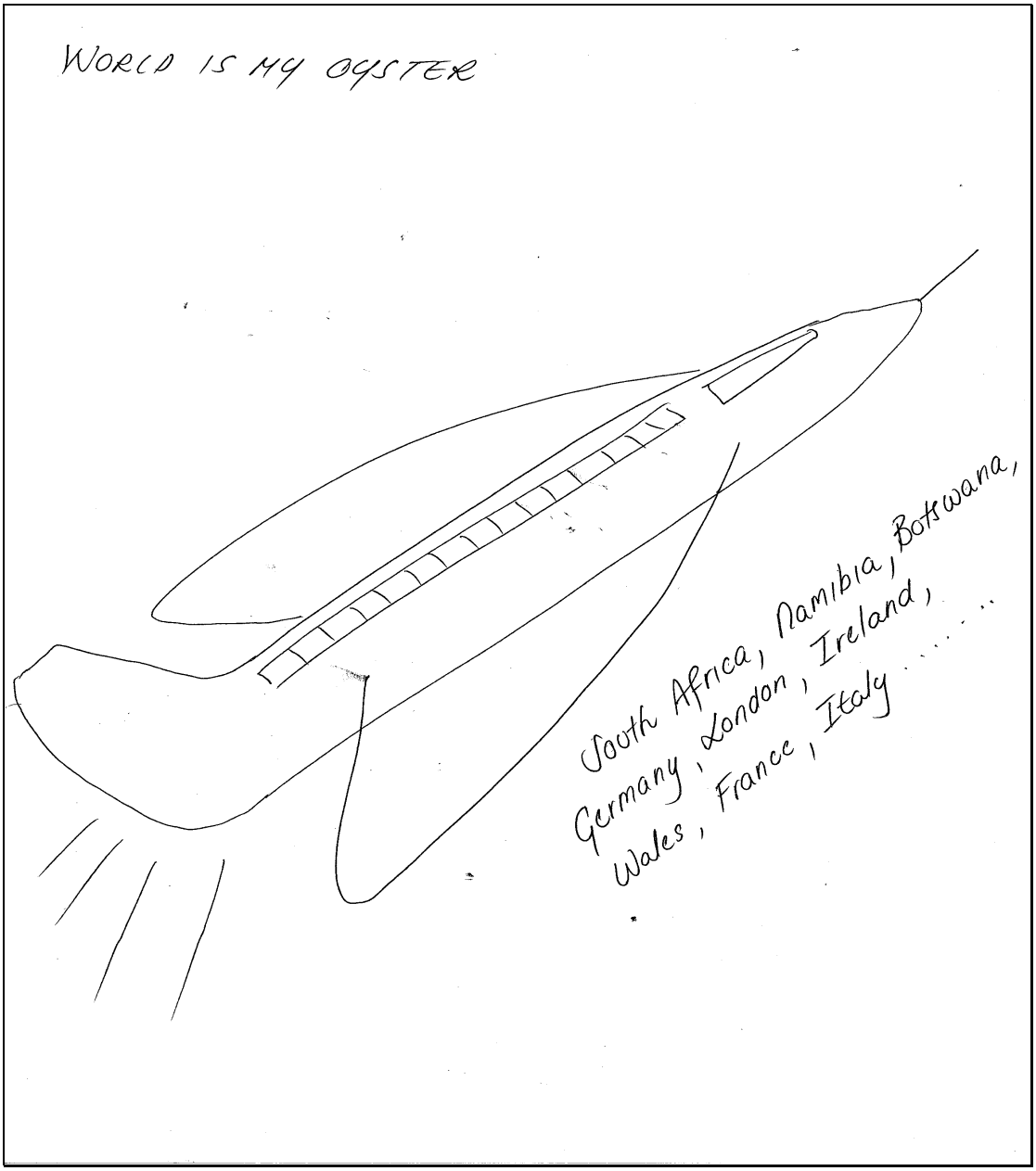


Figure 21: Before depiction of grand ideals

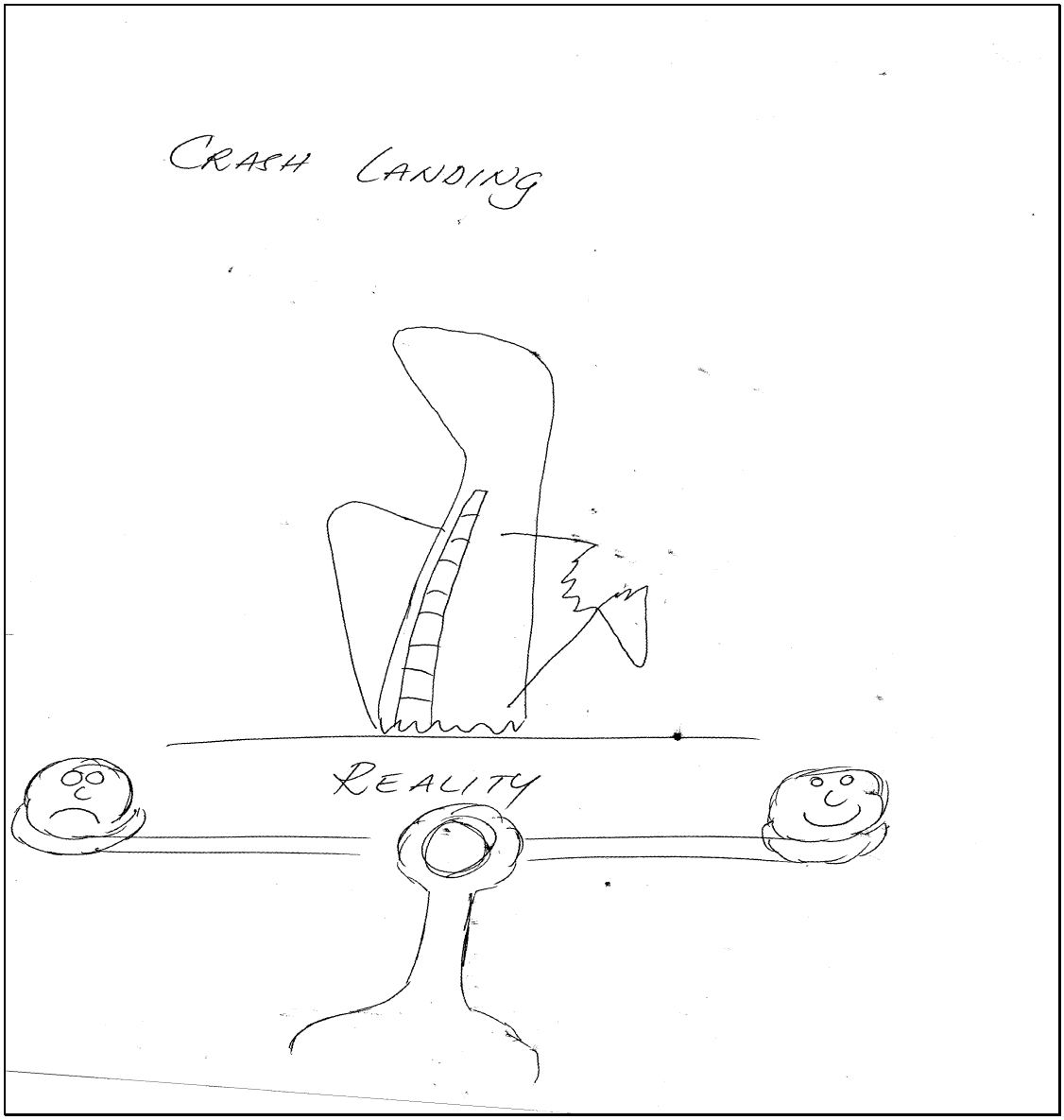


Figure 22: Depiction of life now battling to adjust to new reality

Similarly, a mother of two older boys reflected dissatisfaction with what she perceived the sacrifices are that she has made, by stating, "When I was small I never dreamed about being married and having kids. My dreams were about my career and making money…it becomes about the family and not you anymore''.

Process of altering expectations

Participants often described the process of altering their expectations. A female participant and mother of two young children suggested that coping is a forced process. She said, "I think we develop coping skills, definitely. You lower your expectations; you become kinder to yourself. People create their own stress by having these high ideals of themselves. When I had my first child I was resentful of my husband because I was doing everything and then I felt guilty because I wasn't being a good wife or a good mother. And then I learnt to realise that you don't have to do everything yourself, you don't have to be perfect". Without always explaining the process they have gone through, respondents suggested that they have established more realistic goals for themselves in the context of their lives. One participant encapsulated this by saying, "I don't want to be the CEO anymore. I just want to do well in my job". A father of two and executive in a large organisation described his process as follows, "Before the kids were born I was very career oriented. I was focused on making money; quite independent, focused on getting to know my wife. One of the processes we have gone through is to realise that you are getting on and you feel more fallible than you did five years ago. Suddenly I have questions about whether I am in the right career. I'm not doing as well as I used to. Did I choose incorrectly, am I trying to balance too much? Some of the decisions we made fairly recently: we sold a big house, we don't have to travel, but now I can pick up the kids for lunch. Now I feel comfortable with the balance. I don't do as well as I could with my studies. I compromise a lot and it's been difficult because we are both black and white people. If you're not top of your game you might as well be at the bottom. It's a very sad mindset, but we've realised through a process of bumping our heads a thousand times that either you carry

on trying by lowering your expectations from the sky or you just give up. I've realised that I'm trying to juggle work, family, studies and it is ok to be in the middle. I'll live with a 12 handicap when I could be a 2". Figure 23 below depicts this participant's contentment with the added dimensions in his life including adjusted expectations in his multiple roles.

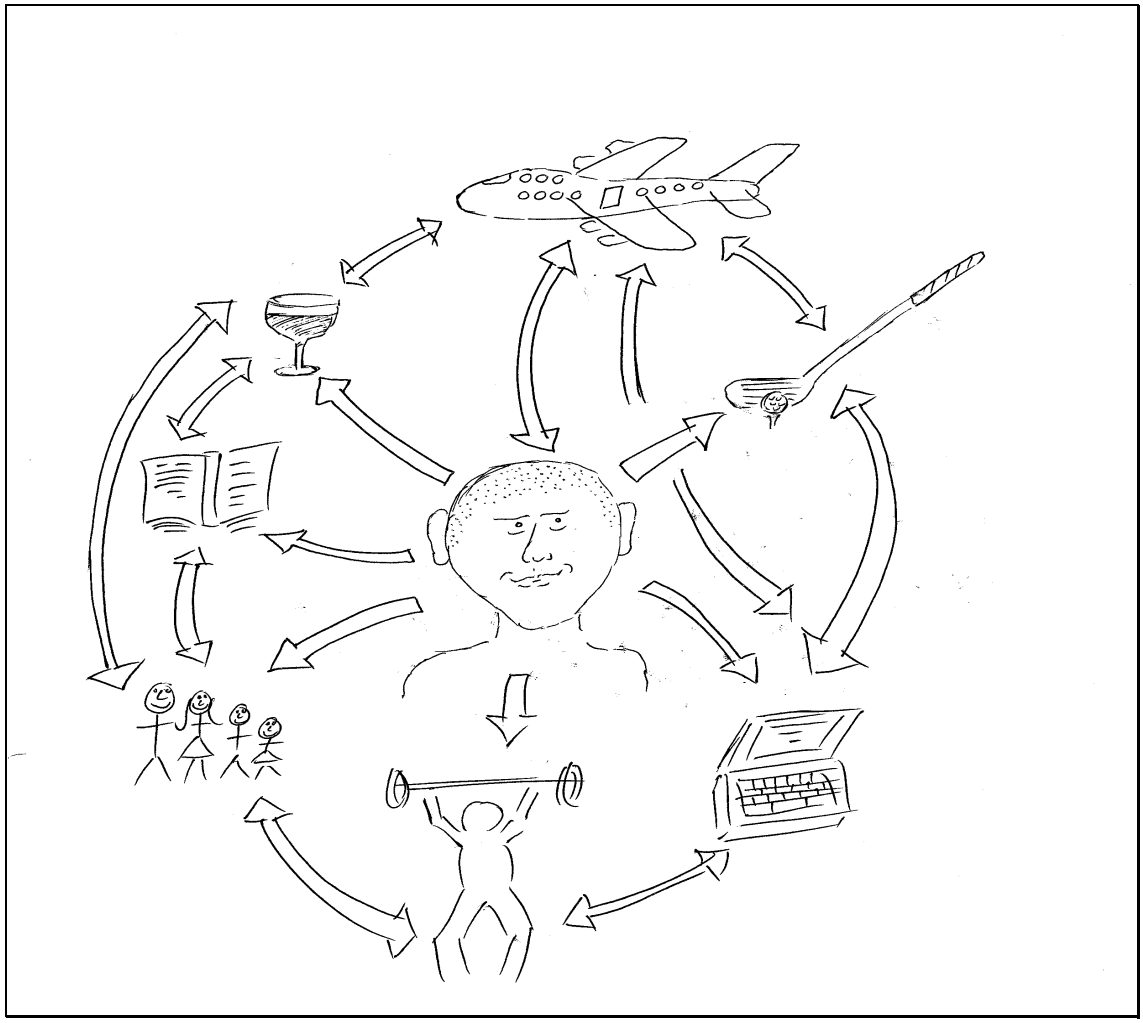


Figure 23: Added complexity, adjusted expectations and contentment with multiple roles

5.2.5 Physical Health

Participants reported discontent with the effect of reduced personal time on their health. Some individuals expressed this as dissatisfaction with their self-image

and thus health. As a male respondent in his early 40's noted, "I am not too happy with what I see in the mirror. I was not this way when I was younger…I have gained a lot of weight and I am not the healthy guy I used to be". The response seemed to be evident as more than just a natural reaction to the ageing process. More than 50% of the respondents noted in their sentence construction exercise that the thing they have sacrificed the most is their health. Women attributed their lack of action to guilt about spending time away from the family. As a mother of younger children noted, "I haven't seen the inside of a gym for 6 years. It's a guilt thing because that's time with the kids. My husband doesn't feel it. He goes running three times a week and feels good about it. I can't come home and go to gym…I feel terrible. I feel better being with them than worrying about my health, so I don't do it". Consistently, men attributed this to prioritising work over physical activity. As a male executive stated, "I go through these cycles where I am exercising every day and then something will happen at work and I'll consciously not go to gym for that week and then suddenly I haven't been for two or three weeks". He continues to explain the dilemma of this cycle in his life, "The problem is that something like your health and gym is a cumulative thing…you can't allow it to be derailed for 3 weeks. If you do it all the time you see the benefits". A few exceptions emerged to this consistent theme. One participant stated that she would never sacrifice gym as it is a priority in her life and she gets up at 5am to go before her 2 year old daughter wakes up. The importance of exercise was mentioned by several participants who do regular exercise. One father suggested, "If I don't do gym, I start to become irritable and frustrated in a lot of what I do. I know that I cope better with my life when I am exercising and I feel so much better about myself. So, no, I don't ever sacrifice this, even when I am overwhelmed with things and just tempted to turn left to work instead of right to gym". Eighteen participants, however, fell into the category of this father and executive who summed it up by saying, "Definitely my health has suffered. I am just too tired to contemplate any form of exercise. I am getting two hours of sleep at any one time. I know that I should get fit and it does have a psychological effect on me. I know I could get up an hour earlier, but I just can't".

5.2.6 Emotional state

All 36 participants described the effect of the work-family balance on their emotional experiences. Throughout the focus groups every participant expressed positive and negative affect towards their experience of the work-family balance. However, in almost half the respondents, there was evidence of strong negative emotions. This section describes the presented emotions and the reported impacts these have.

Self-blame

Twenty-three participants reflected negative emotions within themselves relating to their perceived inability to manage their multiple roles effectively. The emotions that surfaced varied, but were underpinned by a sense of self-questioning or doubt. Guilt emerged constantly. A mother of a young child commented about the balance between her constant exhaustion at managing multiple roles and her daughter's needs. She said, "I get home and I have a chatterbox of a daughter who wants to tell me everything from her day. And I get home and I just want to relax for 5 minutes. She takes this as I don't want to talk to her…shame and she couldn't wait for me to get home and then I feel guilty. Similarly another mother described the cycle of guilt she finds herself in as a result of her tiredness. She notes, "I spend my time apologising. Everything just bubbles over…I drive in the car and I say to myself that I am not going to do this but when I get home it just starts boiling over. It is uncontrollable emotion…and I am constantly in that state". Participants also expressed the negative emotions during the sessions by commenting on how relieved they were that other members of the focus group were going through the same thing. "It takes away a lot of the self-blame I have been feeling all the time" encapsulated one of the female participants. In certain instances, participants acknowledged the importance of paying attention to these negative emotions as they acted as a vehicle of personal improvement. A mother of two and director of a medium-sized organisation said, "I was appalled at how I could shut out everything while I was at work. I thought the whole world could fall

apart and I wouldn't know about it. So I made the change and bought into the business to get the flexibility".

Emotional distress

Seventeen participants presented with elements of distress as a result of their work-family circumstances. In certain instances this was presented in humour. As one mother noted, "You don't even have time to drink a glass of wine. If I had the time to open it we would just drink the whole bottle". A father of two young children in a senior position spoke humorously of his fallibilities in this regard by saying, "I know that I could get up an hour earlier but that's what makes it hard, is that I can't…if I were a better person it would be easier. So I am in this constant self accusation about how pathetic I am". Seven participants described the negative effects on their moods. One mother stated, "My mood is terrible. Every little thing that they do I react to…so there is a lot of irritation, frustration, and emotions that you try to keep under control but they just come up".

Joy and fulfilment

While the pattern of emotions expressed in the focus group discussions had a significant amount of negative innuendo; this did not emerge in the exercise on emotional responses. On the contrary, most candidates portrayed only positive emotions towards themselves and their specific roles. Table 9 below depicts a count of the emotional responses provided by candidates in the exercise. These emotional responses were grouped by synonymous terms and then categorised as being either positively, neutrally or negatively cued. While it is inevitable that different words may conjure different meanings to the individuals using them, generally this exercise was aimed at being indicative rather than completely accurate.

Table 9: Count of positive, negative and neutral emotions towards self

Emotion	Total	Male response	Female	Emotional Cue
Dissatisfied	4	2	2	Negative
Fear	1	1	0	Negative
Self-doubt	5	1	4	Negative
Stressed	7	5	2	Negative
Impatient	2	1	1	Negative
Guilt	8	2	6	Negative
	27			
Emotional	1	1	0	Neutral
Humble	2	0	2	Neutral
Responsible	11	3	8	Neutral
	14			
Attractive	1	1	0	Positive
Blessed	9	4	7	Positive
Committed	4	0	4	Positive
Creative	1	0	1	Positive
Fun	1	1	0	Positive
Happy	1	1	0	Positive
Inspired	5	2	3	Positive
Patient	1	0	1	Positive
Proud	7	2	5	Positive
Trusting	6	1	5	Positive
	36			

The positive emotions expressed in this exercise were mirrored by discussions held directly after the visualisation exercise. Most candidates reflected in their drawings and their discussions a level of serenity and personal acceptance of their lives. A mother of two contextualised this by saying, “I am far more at one with who I am. I have to deal with the reality of my life; as the kids grow older it gets harder…work is what it is, but I am at peace with who I am”. Another female respondent described her personal satisfaction as, “Now I’m living my dream so I don’t think that much about the future…I’m living now”. Other positive expressions included strong expressions of love, happiness and contentment with themselves and their lives. This male respondent encapsulated his warm feelings for his life despite his frustrations with certain aspects of his life by depicting himself as fat, happy and in love in Figure 24.



Figure 24: Positive emotional expression of life in spite of short-comings

5.2.7 Personal crisis

This section provides an overview of the experiences portrayed by sample participants of the role that personal crisis has played in facilitating solutions to their work-family conflicts.

Self-induced crisis

Generating out of the debate on personal emotions regarding their roles and their lives, all focus groups led to a discussion about actions that are taken to decompress their lives. Eleven participants described a process of either inducing a crisis or at some level self-sabotaging. While this only represented

less than 30% of the sample, it has been included because of the extreme nature of its content. A female manager in the financial services industry described her process as follows, “I created a crisis by asking my husband for a divorce. I didn’t know how he was going to react but I had to manufacture the crisis and I did it consciously. We were spending a lot of time together but not quality time. We were in this rut of not being able to have a conversation”. Another female participant in the same group took this lead and described how she sabotaged her career. She said, “I knew it was something that I wouldn’t do myself so I made it difficult for myself, for those around me, for my manager…I made an issue at work about going to see my 85 year old father-in-law knowing that this would have implications for my career”. As part of the discussions on the induced crises, participants very rarely displayed negative emotions towards the crisis in hindsight. As one woman commented, “The crisis I created has opened doors. We tend to hang on to stability…making sure that I have enough money for education, house. And actually if you let go of that, it comes with so much more”. Another male respondent of two children commented, “You look at how it was before the crisis and you know it had to change and thankfully the crisis made it better”. An analytical father of two attributed the reasons for himself (and others) creating a crisis as follows, “We need crisis…that’s what drives change. Sometimes things need that jolt before you really change. Maybe we are subconsciously creating a crisis because we know that change has to happen. You may not even have the answers or know what will come out of the crisis, but you create a situation that will force you to ask and answer those questions”.

Circumstantial crisis

A second and less dramatic theme emerged on the point of crisis. One of the more mature mothers commented that sometimes unforeseen circumstances also induce a crisis. She relayed her story about her child who was diagnosed with significant hearing problems when younger. She felt guilt that she had not picked this up. As a result she described how she negotiated six month’s unpaid leave and made a conscious effort to work on the home problem. Another male respondent in his fifties described how a restructure at work that

left him retrenched enabled him to make decisions that he had wanted to make for a long time, but did not have the courage. He said, “I knew that I wanted to start my own business so that I could spend time with my children and wife. I just never had the balls to do it. When I was retrenched, I thought I had no choice, so I just did it and I’ve never looked back. My life has been so much more fulfilled since”.

5.2.8 Discussion and analysis

Time and priorities

This research shows evidence to support the findings of Cohen and Wills (1985) that most people in the work-family balance experience a feeling of being time poor. Moreover, the findings support the work of Glass and Estes (1997) and Barnett (1999) on the importance of reduced working hours to employees in order to meet their family demands. In this study, participants indicated a desire to spend less time at work and more time on their partners, children, health and friends. This research extends the discussion by highlighting the priority-dilemma. Thus, ninety-one counts are allocated to “would like to spend more time on this category” versus only 18 counts allocated to “would like to spend less time on this category”. The pattern seems to suggest that participants are not certain of where to trade-off time. Thus, they expressed a strong need to find more time however, they do not have clear ideas about where to find that time. This is supported by their discussion on priorities. This may suggest a stalemate psychological state in which they constantly believe they are under allocating time to certain activities but they are either unwilling or unable to free up time from other areas to allocate to those activities. Hence, participants indicated that they are in a constant state of trade-offs, even at an hourly basis. These reports may be explained through some of the literature on work to family spillover theory (Burke *et al*, 1980; Keith and Schafer, 1980; Mortimer, 1980; Staines and Pleck, 1983; Voydanoff and Kelly, 1983; Voydanoff, 1988; Dua, 1994; Matsui *et al*, 1995; Bernstein and Borchardt, 1996). These authors provide spillover theories that explain to some extent how competing demands in varying roles cause conflict. However, they do not completely explain the

phenomenon that seems to emerge in this study. Participants reported that they are in a constant state of internal conflict over what to prioritise. Spillover theory assumes a level of understanding of priority and importance to the actor. It is suggested that it presupposes clarity of vision as to why the conflict is occurring because the actor feels trapped by the less favourable demands in one sphere impinging on the more favourable sphere. However, this study would suggest that participants to some extent are not clear which is more important. Alternatively they view the competing demands as equally important. Hence they are constantly in a state of anxiety, self-analysis and conflict over what is more important (or more urgent) in a given moment. This does not seem to be attributable to conflict in a specific role that spills over to another role. Where participants indicated they had gone through a process of self-evaluation and change to implement personal priorities, they reported a sense of control and benefit to having less time in that they are able to focus on things that are more important. Undoubtedly this would support Huy's model (1999) suggesting that individuals employ emotional resources to mobilise themselves to change what they acknowledge are problematic areas. It is interpreted that only when participants reported not having made conscious choices through a process of self-evaluation on personal priorities, that they also reported being in this constant state of conflict. Thus where individuals have not prioritised, they are in reactive role definitions (Matsui *et al*, 1995) whereby they employ techniques such as multi-tasking just to cope because they have not made structural role changes. Multi-tasking, while aimed at mediating time pressures and thus work-family conflict, actually appears to exacerbate the experience. Participants acknowledged that it depletes the quality of the multiple interactions and results in negative emotions. The reasons individuals try to multi-task seems to have a link with distressed feelings of being out of time because the individual has not been able to prioritise one domain over the other. Furthermore, the anecdotes on personal crisis allude to the ineffectiveness of reactive role definition (Matsui *et al*, 1995). Thus, as individuals try to manage all areas of their lives, they experience growing pressure and dissatisfaction. They then reactively induce a crisis to bring about the change. In certain instances this crisis may induce the change that the

individual actually wanted. However, it is also conceivable that the crisis may present at a time when the problem has extended beyond reasonable repair and thus brings on undesirable outcomes for the individual. Along these lines, the study suggests that prioritisation is an important process in adjusting expectations and roles. It requires elements of emotional intelligence and is integral as a mediator of work-family conflict. It is not specifically discussed in the literature, although it may be implied in the structural role changes theory of Matsui *et al* (1995). Furthermore, one may assume that within the emotional intelligence literature (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 1998; Huy, 1999) priorities are assumed in the constructs of self-awareness and ability to change.

Belief structures and sticky limiting beliefs

It was noted that an underlying theme of belief structures is evident in the discussions about time deprivation and personal choices. Thus, it is suggested that individuals reflect belief systems that are either contributing or exacerbating their experience of balance in the work-family balance. Hence, on the one end certain individuals displayed a profound sense of meaning in their expression about the importance of work and family. They valued each role individually and equally for its contribution to fulfilment in their lives. More importantly many of these individuals seemed to have gone through a process of adjusting their belief systems to reach a point where their lives and their beliefs are in sync, supporting the findings of Locander and Spivey (1978). Other individuals, who appeared more conflicted in their work-family balance, in most instances, expressed what might be termed sticky beliefs. Thus it is suggested that these individuals hold onto belief systems that at their core appear to be immovable (sticky) despite the evident conflict that they derive. This would support some of the concepts on beliefs postulated by Ichheiser (1943). In this study, often the sticky beliefs seemed to revolve around gender ideology issues and reasons for being in a particular role thereby preventing the participant from alleviating the conflict. The reasons that the beliefs are sticky are perhaps more complex. A process of changing belief structures would seem to rely on elements of emotional intelligence for the individuals to become aware of, reflect on their impact and modify any limiting beliefs.

Role of emotional intelligence

Individuals reported being in a conflicted emotional state as they tried to achieve work-family balance. It is suggested that for some individuals work and family may be equally important and thus they may remain trapped in a constant state of conflict, unwilling to make change (Huy, 1999) or sacrifice one over the other; living with the hourly and daily states of anxiety in making choices. This phenomenon may require even deeper understanding of the personal motivations that individuals have for not trading off to some extent. However, it is suggested that making profound personal choices where there is no clear priority probably is precisely the time when emotional intelligence factors are most needed. True self-awareness, motivation and empathy for the lives being impacted (Goleman, 1995) undoubtedly would play a significant role in enabling an individual to make a choice between two equally important needs. It is suggested that an individual's ability to introspect, empathise and contextualise his own beliefs are key emotional intelligence attributes and accordingly would play an important role in triggering a process of expectation adjustment.

On the other hand, self-deprecating humour proved more problematic in the work-family balance. While it is an acknowledged factor of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), in this study it seemed to reflect a level of learned helplessness in the work-family debate. One father of two in the insurance industry commented, "This time thing is a problem I have to solve. I have a mind to solve it but I can't solve it so do I have a mind…?" Eight similar comments were made in the focus groups. It is suggested that these individuals seemed to have given up trying to manage their time more effectively. They simply laughed and made jokes about their experiences. While the humour is clearly a mitigating factor enabling a level of coping, on reflection it is considered to be an ineffective mediator. As described by Locander and Spivey (1978) attitudes are changed only through a change in belief structure. Thus the sense of humour may well be serving as a mechanism to entrench beliefs about a helplessness to deal with the issue. Further research would be required to establish causal relationships between sense of humour

and mediation in the work-family experience; as well as the relationship link between humour and underlying belief structures.

Work-family facilitation and conflict

There is evidence that supports the view that participation in multiple roles leads to a sense of well-being (Sieber, 1974; Pleck, 1977; Crouter, 1984; Thoits, 1986; Barnett and Hyde, 1998; Barnett, 1999; Gill, 2000; Wayne *et al*, 2002). Certainly, participants who had worked through their personal role redefinitions described a sense of gratification at their role adjustment which spilled into their multiple roles, creating an overall sense of satisfaction. On the contrary, certain participants displayed significant distress and potential work-family conflict in the focus groups (Dua, 1994). The impact of the load clearly reflected in their reports of mood at home and ability to function optimally in the home environment, thereby supporting work to family spillover theories (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus *et al*, 2002). Furthermore, this study seems to concur with the findings of Wayne *et al* (2002) that work-family conflict and facilitation are orthogonal. Thus, participants reported levels of conflict between roles, negative emotions and various distress symptoms while simultaneously acknowledging the benefits and fulfilment of participating in multiple roles.

Satisfaction, Expectation and Conflict

This study demonstrates support for the notion of an intricate relationship between satisfaction, expectation and conflict, without providing any clear indication of the direction of the relationship. Thus participants who expressed dissatisfaction with their lives similarly expressed a gap in their expectation fulfilment and more conflict in the work-family balance. This provides moderate support for Greenhaus *et al* (2002) who relate life dissatisfaction to experience of work-family conflict. However, it possibly expands on this theory by suggesting that individuals may be in this state of conflict and dissatisfaction because they have not gone through a process of adjusting their personal expectations. As a fourth dimension in the interaction, it is contended that personality theory may provide some of the answers. This study provides

suggestive evidence for Wayne *et al*'s findings (2002) that the personality traits of neuroticism (tendency to experience negative affect) and conscientiousness (persistence, motivation towards goal-directed behaviour) (Vakola *et al*, 2004) are linked to work-family conflict. While this study does not purport to be an empirical study into the relationship between personality and expectation adjustment, it does suggest that there may be a link between personality types and ability to adjust expectations. In turn this may have a relational effect on satisfaction and work-family conflict.

Health choices

The general pattern that emerged (19 participants) seemed to reflect that participants are aware of and unhappy with the state of their physical health but have a sense of paralysis to do anything about it. Even though this emerged as a consistent theme with strong dissatisfaction being experienced, very few people (other than 6 observed participants) appeared willing or able to put action in place to address it. This pattern could be explained in the following ways:

Emotional link between health choices, work and family: Devine *et al*'s findings (2003) suggest the relationship between work-family conflict and food choices. A similar experience is being reported by some of the sample participants who indicate that there is guilt at play in choosing a perceived alternative between children or work and physical exercise. Thus guilt feelings arise from obligations to other roles, which invokes participants to make less beneficial personal choices; which reduces the ability to cope with stress. This is supported somewhat by Seyle (1956) and Dua (1994) who discuss the impacts of distress on mood and energy levels. However, while at face value it seems intuitive that work and family overload would lead to exhaustion thereby disabling motivation for physical exercise; more evidence is required into the effects of physical exercise as a moderator of work-family conflict. It is possible that the chosen response of guilt serves conveniently to support feelings of tiredness and general exhaustion. It would be difficult to discern when exhaustion is an

excuse or a legitimate reason for a lack of physical exercise and other poor health choices. However, it seems that there is a positive relationship between guilt, exhaustion and negative health choices in the work-family conflict.

Personality hardiness: This experience by participants points to the importance of personality hardiness that as Macewan and Barling (1988) and Voydanoff (1998) suggest is the ability to maintain commitment to all aspects of life and have a sense of control over them. Clearly those participants who demonstrated this level of personality hardiness appeared to be less conflicted about their role balances as they made repeat commitments to allocate sufficient time to their personal activities, including physical health.

Emotional Intelligence: The work by Mayer and Salovey (1985) and Goleman (1995) would feature in a discussion of mitigating factors in managing personal time within the work-family balance. Thus, certain participants reflected that they had introspected on the negative impact on their lives of no physical exercise, poor food choices and had effected change. Others were aware of the problem and yet reported being "trapped" by their circumstances. While Huy (1999) provides some explanation for this through the concept of receptivity to change, in general the literature on emotional intelligence does not provide sufficient explanation for the key factor that differentiates those who know and do; from those who just know. This seems to be a critical unanswered question, particularly as it relates to the stress and negative impacts experienced within the work-family balance.

5.2.9 Interpreted summary of relationships

Table 10 provides an overview of the relationships established in this section[9]. It matches intrinsic emotional factors to general experiences (actions, beliefs and external factors). Relationships are only suggestive based on the

[9] The "summary of relationship" tables used throughout this research report have been derived and adapted from the work of Kosko (1986) on fuzzy cognitive maps. This research does not purport to adopt fuzzy cognitive mapping as a methodology. However, the manner in which fuzzy cognitive mapping depicts relationships as either positive or negative is a useful tool for this research; and consequently has been adapted for this purpose.

descriptive evidence provided by the participants. No indication is provided on the causal nature of the relationship, but a suggested direction of the relationship is provided. For example:

1) Participants described an emotional experience of guilt associated with physical exercise. This suggests a positive relationship between guilt and physical exercise and thus is marked with + in the matrix.
2) Participants who have sticky beliefs are interpreted and observed as demonstrating a lack of empathy for the impact their actions are having on those around them. This suggests a negative relationship between empathy and sticky beliefs and thus is marked with a – in the matrix.
3) Participants describing a self-induced crisis did not report any feelings of irritability. This suggests no relationship between self-induced crisis and irritability and thus is marked with 0 in the matrix.

Table 10: Summary of suggested relationships between intrinsic emotional factors and general experiences including actions, beliefs and external factors

		INTRINSIC EMOTIONAL FACTORS (including emotional experiences and emotional intelligence factors)													
GENERAL EXPERIENCES (Including actions, beliefs and external factors)		Guilt	Self-blame	Self-awareness	Joy and fulfilment	Resentment	Frustration	Commitment	Satisfaction	Empathy	Distress	Love	Appreciation	Irritability	Ambivalent
	Compressed time horizon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
	Loss of me-time	+	+	0	-	+	+	0	-	0	+	0	0	+	0
	Prioritisation	-	-	+	+	0	0	0	-	-	+	0	0	+	0
	Altering expectations	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	-	0	0	0	0
	Physical exercise	-	-	+	0	0	-	+	+	0	-	0	0	-	-
	Self-induced crisis	0	+	-	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	0	0	0	+
	Circumstantial crisis	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+
	Sticky belief structures	+	+	0	-	+	+	0	-	-	+	0	0	+	+
	Physical exhaustion	+	+	0	-	+	+	0	-	0	+	-	-	+	-
	Time pervasion	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	-	0	0	0	0	+	+
	Multi-tasking	0	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	-	+	0	0	+	0
	Compartmentalising	0	0	+	-	-	-	0	+	+	-	0	0	-	0
	Role adjustment	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	-	+	0	-	0

KEY There is no indication on the causal effect of the relationship. This only suggests the presence of a positive or negative relationship between factors.	Positive relationship	+	Negative relationship	-	No specific relationship	0

5.2.10 Conclusion on personal experiences

This section has provided an in-depth view of the individual and deeply personal experiences of the work-family balance. It has given insights to question 1a of

this research on the personal experiences of the work-family balance. It has described the experiences of time as being pervasive; the experience of the change in ideals; as well as dealing with positive and negative emotions. It further has illustrated how participants experience the effects on their health and their lives through induced crisis as a mode of change in their work-family experiences. The findings support literature on work-family spillover, conflict and facilitation (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus *et al*, 2002). It also has emphasised key literary texts on stress (Dua, 1994). It has suggested that emotional intelligence, personality, physical exercise, the competency of prioritisation and role redefinition are critical in playing a mediating role in the work-family balance. On the contrary, negative emotions as well as the actions of multi-tasking are reported as exacerbating the overall experience of work-family conflict.

5.3 Work experiences and insights for organisations

5.3.1 Introduction

This section provides insights into the experiences of participants in their roles at work. It address question 1b on the individual experiences in the work environment and the insights that these experiences provide for organisations. It is structured to include the following topics:

1) Theme overview
2) Women in the workplace
3) Work salience
4) Face-time, flexibility and organisational culture
5) Value of balanced individuals in the workplace
6) Instability in the work environment.

5.3.2 Thematic overview

Figure 25 presents a diagrammatic overview of the themes raised on the work experiences of the work-family balance. This themed summary provides an overview for the reader to gauge the intensity and count of the themes discussed in this section. It provides a count of the number of participants who referred to or spoke about each theme (irrespective of the number of times the topic was mentioned). It also gives the interpretation of the emotional tone in which the majority of respondents spoke about that particular theme. This overview is supported by the detailed discussions that follow which provide the descriptive evidence within each theme.

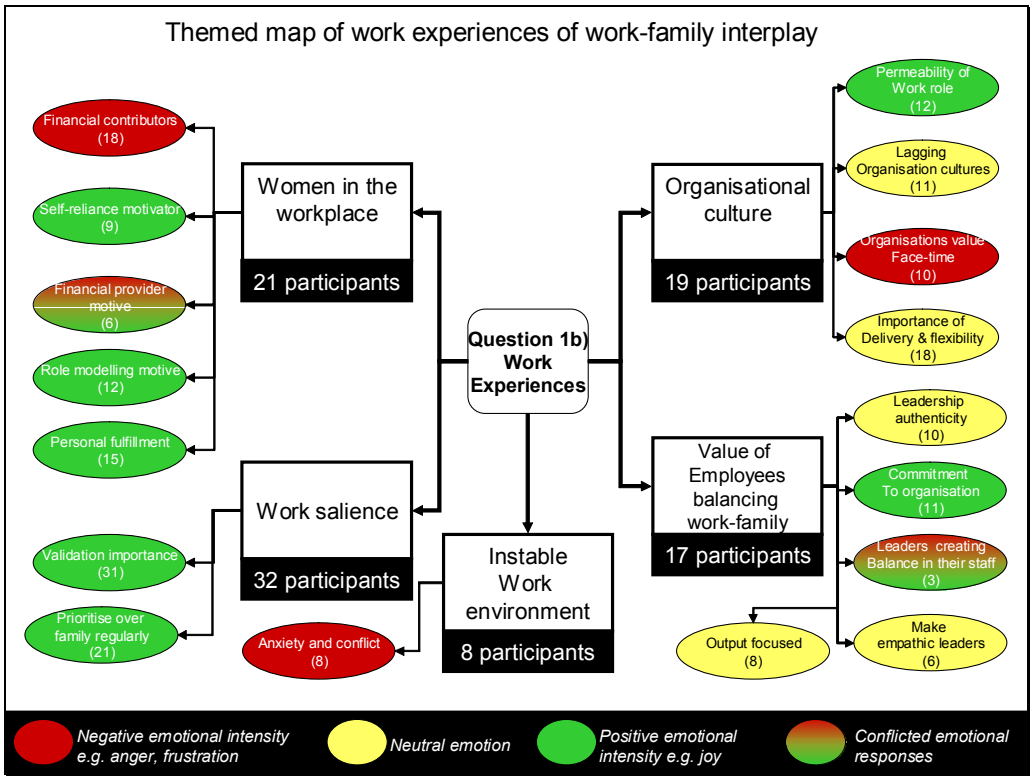


Figure 25: Summary of themes on work experiences with emotional intensity and count indicators

5.3.3 Women in the workplace

Eighteen women participated in the research, all of whom are significant financial contributors in their families. As demonstrated in Figure 26, 58% of the

sample reported that the main reasons women in their households work is that they want to work. Thirty six percent of the participants reported that women work because their family relies on the income. There were more single income provider men than women. The single provider men were all married, while the single provider women were all divorced (2 participants).

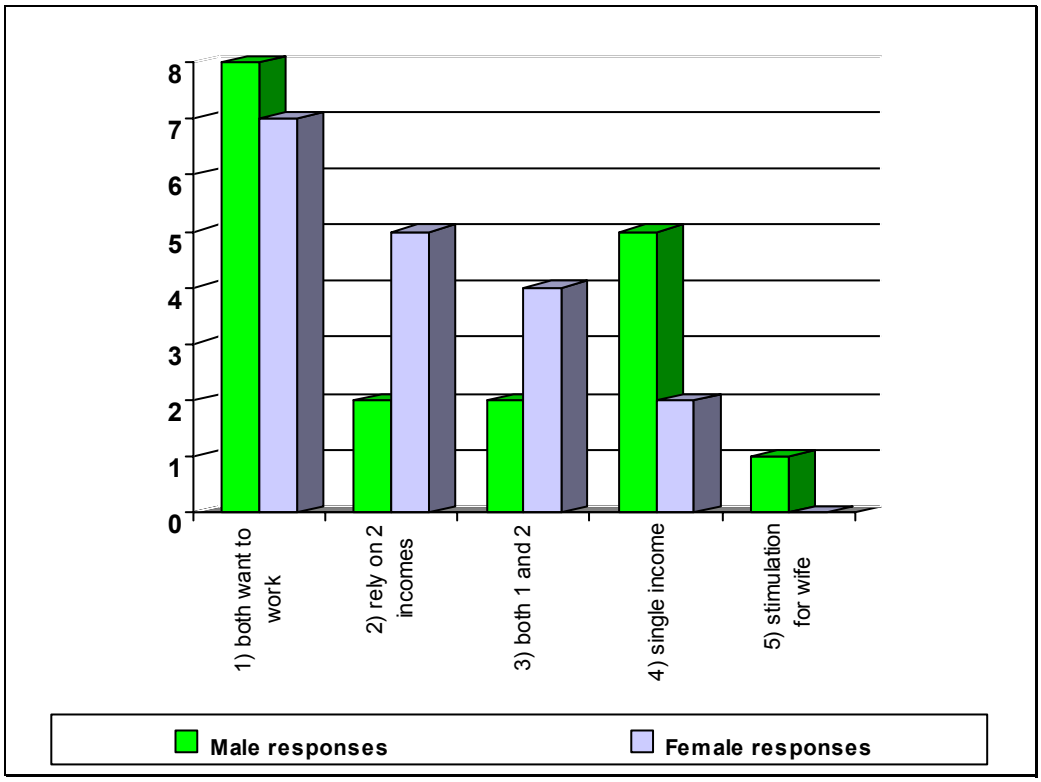


Figure 26: Reasons provided for breakdown of household income

Several themes emerged suggesting the reasons that women participate in the workplace.

Self-reliance

Nine women in the study group spoke openly about their motivations for working as being derived from a need for self-reliance. One 34 year old married woman reported, “My mother said, ‘you must always be independent of a man. Never, never, never be dependent on a man.’” Similarly, certain men in the study group reported on the experience of the difference in how they grew up with their mothers compared to their wives. A thirty year old married man of

one young child commented, “When I grew up, my mother just stayed at home and looked after me…it was quite a shock for me when my wife insisted that her career was as important as mine”. In parallel to this, many of the male participants mentioned how their wives have equal or similar qualifications to them but had elected to stay at home to look after the children.

Providers

Six women in the focus groups discussed their responsibility as financial providers for their children irrespective of whether this is their primary role or not. One mother described how she is determined to work hard in order to be a good provider for her daughter. She noted that her husband does not take the burden of financial responsibility and she therefore needs to ensure that her daughter is well provided for. This statement was echoed by both divorced mothers who described a profound sense of financial responsibility for their children. For somewhat different reasons, another participant stated that she worked hard at her career because her father could only afford to send her brother to university. She had to pay her way for all her own studies and this has made her determined to make a success of her life and to contribute financially so that her daughter doesn’t have to go through the same difficulties.

Role modelling

Twelve women participants reported a need to act as role models for their children by following their own dreams. As one mother of two stated, “I work hard because I know that if I don’t my daughters will believe that it’s ok to behave like their father. I need to teach them responsibility as they won’t get this from him”. Another mother summarised her work responsibilities differently, “I believe that following my own dreams is more important in raising my children than spending every minute with them. If they see a mother who is working and fulfilling her own goals, this will teach them something far more important”.

Personal fulfilment

Fifteen out of 18 women participants alluded to the importance of work in their lives as a vehicle of self-fulfilment. They see it as enriching their lives. One mother of two teenage boys described it as follows, “I find a lot of fulfilment in my work. If I don’t do my work I am less fulfilled at home and less able to provide quality care at home. My children experience it this way as well. I am so much better at my home because I work”.

5.3.4 Work salience

Thirty two participants reported directly and indirectly on the importance of work in their lives. Their engagement at work was depicted as being central to their lives. Certain participants described their involvement at work as a magnetic attraction that they almost always prioritised over other activities. One male in his mid thirties described it as follows, “I think career becomes too much of a driver and I get caught up in the rat race. In certain aspects career becomes too involved and my family has taken a beating over the last year”. The essence of this description surfaced in the sentence construction as well with 16 participants stating that their families would criticise them for working too hard. Individuals in the sample seemed to suggest that they derive a sense of personal validation and self-worth from their involvement in their careers. The nature of their involvement at work appeared to be all-consuming for 29 participants (19 male and 10 female), who indicated that they do let it impact family time. As a father of two described it, “I am engrossed in work and then you think you’ll get home just in time to give my son a good night kiss and then you can touch base in the morning and see how he is doing. But then you get home and after you’ve kissed him good night you take out the laptop and start working again”. A mother of two young children suggested that her involvement at work is as a result of the level of demands that are placed on her there which she described as “louder” than the level of demands placed on her by her family. This view was supported by another male respondent at a middle management level who commented, “Family will just take it and take it until the volcano erupts; work won’t”.

5.3.5 Face-time, flexibility and organisational culture

On the discussion of their involvement at work, 19 participants raised the issue of work flexibility. The experience was divided. One participant described his environment as being more flexible. He said, "There's more flexibility in an environment than in the past. The people I work with I enjoy working with as they don't stab you in the back when you leave at 6pm. You must be working when you want to work". Within the same focus group, several participants vocally pointed out that their experiences are different. As a mother of two suggested, "There is some flexibility but I'm not sure that organisations have moved that far yet. Otherwise people would just be told what to do and the clock would not matter. I think the perceptions of me will be very different if I pack my bags and leave at 7 [pm] than if I pack my bags and leave at 2 [pm][10], even if in the balance of the day we do the same work. People are still in the mindset where they say, 'gosh look at her, she's working hard' when they see you there at 7[pm]". Participants appeared to be in a state of discontent with the pace at which organisational cultures have changed to accommodate their multiple roles. One executive in the insurance industry stated, "I naively hope that the model for success in the past was an absolute obsession with work. But I believe that you can succeed and this time-model for success is wrong". His continued suggestion was, "That's where I believe that if we could just swing everything to a project mode and that people are measured on deliverables. Then we start to reward the 8-hour effective deliverer as opposed to the 15-hour killer-timer". The theme was almost unanimous that flexibility in working hours is vital. A father of two described his working hours as follows, "Having a child, there are many nights when I come home at 5pm, play with my daughter until she goes to bed at about seven and then out comes the laptop". Similarly another mother explained the enmeshment of her time by saying, "I take out my laptop and work while my kids are there. Sometimes things happen at home or at work and you need to spend time on the opposite thing. It's all

[10] Brackets inserted by author

about finding time to do what you have to do at the right time so that you don't feel guilty". Participants viewed this flexibility as both essential to themselves and beneficial to the organisation. As a mother of two director explained it, "I went to gym during the working day and I came up with a solution to a problem…I solved it. I saved myself hours of time. I would never have come up with it had I not taken the time out to go to gym. And we often feel so guilty about doing that because of the organisational culture but actually we are always thinking about work problems anyway…even in different environments".

5.3.6 Value of balanced individuals in an organisation

Participants reported frequently that their experience of how work-family issues are dealt with is dependent on the leaders and particularly the managers they work for. An executive in the financial services industry commented, "The culture of the organisation is so important. I can see at the top that it [work-family balance] is not being lived. I need to feel aligned with the organisation". This leader also suggested that he takes personal steps to create a more balanced culture in his area when it comes to work-family balance. He noted, "I know the value of giving all my people laptops. Some of them will spend too much time at home working on laptops. They will think they always have to do more. I know what I was thinking at that age. I want them to be focusing on the value of what they are doing, not the quantity of what they are doing". As an individual on the receiving end of leadership values on work-family, a father of young children described his experience as such, "Our parents live far away, so we have to deal with our kids. I can't phone a friend so I have to be very rigid about my hours at work. This puts enormous pressure, especially when you are dealing with people who don't have children. I think it is almost impossible for people who don't have children to understand. It makes it difficult to explain why you are leaving at five; and for them still to think you are doing your best at work". Participants suggested the negative impact it has on their commitment when their managers do not understand. One mother and full-time employee said, "I think it's important to work for someone who understands. There are times when I have to work late. If I say I need to take some time off he will give it. In the end the company wins. If they treat you well; you give more". Another

mother of young children supported this comment strongly by stating, “Yes, because I have a company that understands my situation, I make a point of not making personal calls at work. I specifically make personal calls in the car on the way to or from work. If they don’t give me the time I needed, I would not be worried”.

Extending from the discussion on the importance of the leaders and managers having authentic concern for the work-family balance, participants described the value of their work-family experiences for their own leadership skills. One male manager described his experience as follows, “Before I used to think, ‘oh, she’s pregnant, now I have to find someone to fill that space’. Now, I am more interested in the person. The experience of juggling all these different balls has made me willing to listen because you have been through it and you can give advice. And by being there, you are able to get more out of that individual in a shorter space of time. They want to be there because the fact that you care gets more out of them. Before I would have walked in there like a steam roller and totally lost half of them…these three years of adjusting to fatherhood has made a big difference to my leadership skills”. Another male respondent suggested that individuals who are balancing work and family are “some of the best people to have in the organisation. You are prepared to still push the barrier, but you have picked up the experience to channel it in the right direction”. Supporting this view in a different context, a mother of two children hypothesised as part of her experience, “These people bring maturity to the organisation. We don’t get involved in politics. We focus on the important things…you don’t have time to waffle about on unimportant issues for the organisation”. Another mother of two encapsulated this view by saying, “You do need variety in your workforce; the 25 year olds who are prepared to work 20 hours a day. But my experience has been that when you talk about leaders in an organisation, they have to be individuals who really live the work-family dilemma. My experience has been that the leaders who have no meaningful personal lives to go home to are impossible to work for. They spend their nights creating work for themselves by getting too involved in your accountabilities…they cause havoc. Added to that,

they usually measure on the clock because that's what they do and this just doesn't make people happy to work for them". Extending this point, a theme emerged that suggested that leader's who balance multiple roles are better at managing the time and outputs of the team. As an alternative director commented, "I will ask my people why you were at that meeting and what came out of it. When you go into a forum, challenge the agenda and make sure you are only there for the time you need to be there. Make sure you know what the purpose of the meeting is. You don't need to sit there for the sake of it. This is called proactively managing your time".

5.3.7 Instability in the work environment

Eight respondents alluded to their regular state of anxiety about the constant changes at work. As one mother and breadwinner said, "When they start talking about restructures I really start to worry and look at the financial aspects, whereas my husband seems more relaxed on these issues". These sentiments were expressed several times in almost all focus groups. In particular, they tended to emanate from individuals who also reported being the primary breadwinners. Moreover, participants suggested it has an impact on family relationships as a result of the stress and conflict caused and induced by instable work environments.

5.3.8 Discussion and Interpretation

Work-family facilitation

As per the research of Wayne *et al* (2002), the experiential evidence suggests that having a meaningful family role contributes positively to abilities and experiences in the work role. It is suggested, however, that the experiences depicted provide greater descriptive support for this phenomenon and perhaps even extend the work-family facilitation theory to its sub-components of work to family facilitation. Thus, it describes how individuals who have experience in family roles at home make for better leaders and managers because they have authentic empathy for their staff. The importance of empathy and genuine care

is discussed in the plethora of leadership theory. Robbins (1999) suggests that leadership interactions need to be filled with genuine care for the developmental needs and the concerns of the employee. While the literature discusses the importance of empathy and care, nothing is specifically addressed in terms of the role that family plays as a key contributor to developing these leadership skills. This research suggests that it plays a role to some extent. As an added dimension to the family-to-work facilitation concept, this study illustrates how managers and leaders with multiple roles provide value to the organisation not by their involvement in one or other role, but by their involvement in multiple roles. Thus, those managers who have successfully negotiated their own multiple roles reported having acquired a skill of prioritisation and time-management that they transfer to their followers.

Slowness of organisational response

The evidence from this research would support the findings of Temple (1988); Higgins and Duxbury (1992); Glass and Estes (1997) and Konrad and Linnehan (1999) and that organisations have been slow to respond to the work-family balance of their business people. The experiences reported in this study allude to a slowness of response by organisations in both policy decisions around work and family; as well as organisational culture driven by leaders and managers. While Glass and Estes (1997) suggest that the lagging organisational response may be a factor of 'not knowing what to do', an alternative view is supported that perhaps South African organisations have not yet realised the relevance of this issue for their employees and as Barnett (1999) suggests are deeply rooted in old cultural beliefs that still fixate on face-time.

Impact of flexibility on organisational commitment

Without question this study provides experiential evidence that working hours are a big consideration for managers, supporting similar findings by Glass and Estes (1997). A first group consisting of 12 individuals actively spoke of how they changed careers and organisations to allow for more flexible hours. The

second group of individuals representing 7 participants enforce flexibility themselves by structuring their days where their jobs allow it. A third group of 5 participants alluded to directly opposing organisational cultures and managerial attitudes by refusing to comply with stipulated hours. The last group of 3 individuals appeared overtly to comply with the organisational culture but performed sabotaging acts like leaving early, making personal phone calls deliberately and sneaking out when they could because they feel they are being cheated by the organisational culture. In all scenarios it was evident that there is a significant level of importance being placed on this factor. Furthermore, the suggestive evidence provides support for the work of Foote *et al* (2005) that various attitudes and role states affect organisational commitment. In this instance it suggests that an organisation's policies and culture around flexibility are dominant forces that affect employees' commitment and perceptions of the organisation. As a further interpretation, an interesting insight for organisations emerged that suggested the benefits of allowing flexibility for the organisation. Employees viewed themselves as knowledge workers with fluid roles at work. In experiential terms they suggested that knowledge workers such as themselves don't switch off their brains when they leave work – an assumption they believe organisations are still holding to. This would imply that it is within the organisation's best interests to encourage as much flexibility and healthy lifestyles to best illicit the knowledge of their human capital. Encouraging people to be the masters of their own schedules was evaluated as critical to deriving the best intellectual benefit from them. As participants reported, often the break to gym or golf is needed to clarify thoughts and find solutions to complex problems. Thus, enforcing a culture of 'face-time' (Barnett, 1999) would seem to have unintended consequences for the organisation.

Work salience

The research demonstrates a level of support for Barnett and Rivers (1996) who postulate the changing beliefs about work-family roles. It confirms that most women view their role as being equal breadwinner. This study also extends on theories posed by Newell (1996) on the economic motives for women entering

the workplace. Rather it suggests that women's work is salient in their lives for deeply personal reasons such as self-fulfilment, need for self-reliance and role modelling for their children.

Family to work spillover

Extensive evidence of family to work spillover did not present itself in this research. Five participants noted the intrusion of their family lives on their working hours providing very mild support for family to work spillover (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). However, the effect of family on work was discussed mostly in the context of the need for organisational change; or was framed as a need for the individual to adjust roles accordingly. Hence, the participants who had already implemented structural role changes at work to manage their work-family balance better. This is explained in the context of Barnett and Rivers research (1996) which demonstrates the change in beliefs around work-family balance. Thus individuals assume the importance of family and when it impacts on work, either role adjustments are made or a level of ownership is assumed on the organisation. As an alternative explanation, given the group of high achievement individuals it is conceivable that such individuals may never allow family to intrude on their career aspirations to a point of interference. All of these explanations may have some relevance.

Relationship of work stability and work salience

The findings in this research provide moderate support for the work of Zuboff (1988) and Crouter and Manke (1994) that constant organisational change induces stress in the individual which impacts their experiences at work and at home. In this research, the nature of that change was reported as structural change. Thus, it is suggested that the dynamic change of the organisation may be placing additional pressure on individuals to perform in an increasingly competitive environment. This potentially would explain how individuals are more psychologically engaged in their work; not necessarily out of passion, but out of fear for losing their jobs or being sidelined. Particularly in the South

African context, the ever present threat of a less stable work environment (Carmody, 2003) may be driving more engagement. This explanation would seem even more likely considering the type of personalities involved in the focus groups. Arguably participants could all be categorised as high achievement orientated and thus a combination of internal achievement needs combined with external threats may well combine to a predisposition for obsessive involvement in the work role.

This places emphasis for organisations on the importance of handling change appropriately so that people's fears are mitigated. As Kotter (1990) suggests, without lots of credible communication, the hearts and minds of the troops are never captured and they often sabotage the process through their own fears. Furthermore while more work involvement may be perceived as a benefit to the organisation, it is suggested that this is likely to drive the wrong commitment from individuals based on fear and self-preservation. Rather, organisations should be looking to drive behaviour from its employees that are founded on authentic commitment to the organisational goals through a mutually beneficial relationship.

5.3.9 Key considerations for organisations

Figure 27 provides a diagrammatic summary of organisational inputs, the potential experiences these illicit for their employees and the possible outcomes for the organisation. The diagram is structured around proposed positive, neutral and negative inputs. Both neutral and negative inputs derive negative outputs for the organisation, suggesting the importance for organisations to take proactive steps to address the work-family balance.

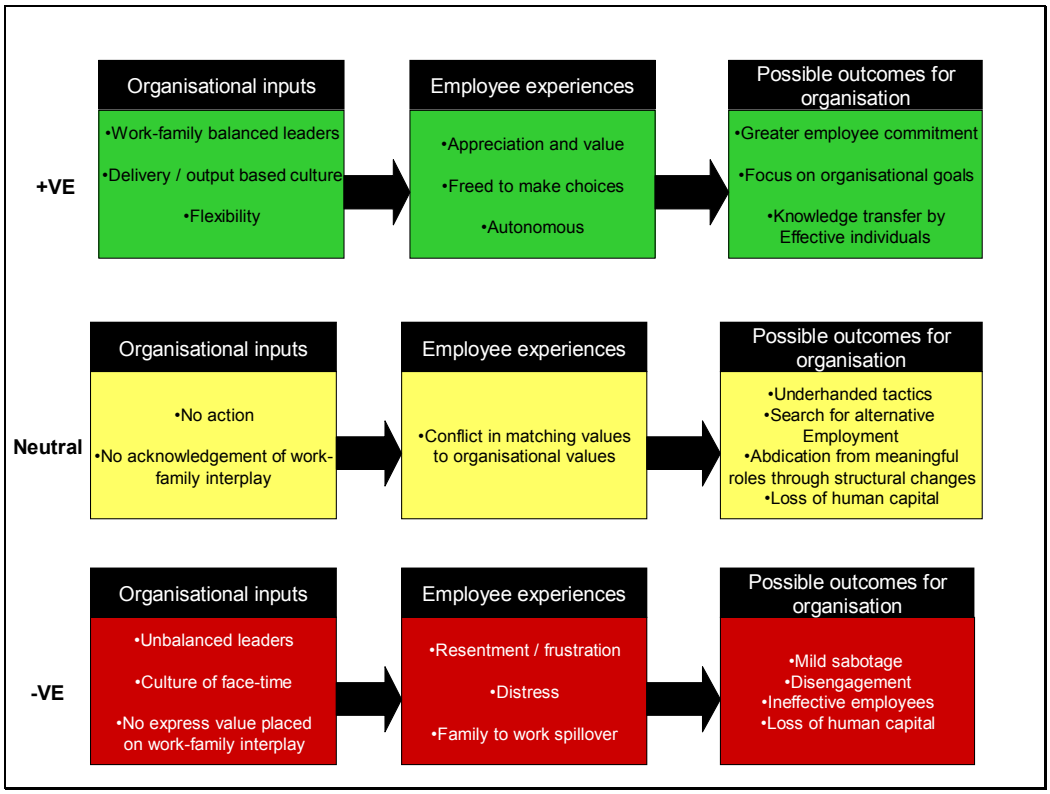


Figure 27: Summary of insights and considerations for organisations based on the work experiences of individuals in the context of the work-family balance

5.3.10 Interpreted summary of relationships

Table 11 provides an overview of the relationships established in this section. It matches intrinsic emotional factors to general experiences (actions, beliefs and external factors). Relationships are only suggestive based on the descriptive evidence provided by the participants. No indication is provided on the causal nature of the relationship, but a suggested direction of the relationship is provided.

Table 11: Work experiences: summary of suggested relationships between emotional factors and general experiences

		INTRINSIC EMOTIONAL FACTORS (including emotional experiences and emotional intelligence factors)													
GENERAL EXPERIENCES (Including actions, beliefs and external factors)		Guilt	Self-blame	Self-awareness	Self-fulfilment	Resentment	Frustration	Commitment	Satisfaction	Empathy	Distress	Love	Appreciation	Irritability	Ambivalent
	Women working	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0
	Work salience	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	-	0	0	0	0	+
	Face-time culture at work	+	0	0	0	+	+	-	-	0	+	0	-	-	0
	No culture of balance	+	0	0	0	+	+	-	-	0	+	0	-	0	0
	Flexible work environment	-	0	0	+	-	-	+	+	0	-	0	0	0	0
	Leaders without work-family balance	+	+	0	-	+	+	-	-	0	+	0	-	+	-
	Instability at work	0	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	0	+	0	-	0	0

KEY There is no indication on the causal effect of the relationship. This only suggests the presence of a positive or negative relationship between factors.	Positive relationship	+	Negative relationship	-	No specific relationship	0

5.3.11 Conclusion on work experiences

This section has provided answers to question 1b of this research on the individual work experiences related to work-family balance. It has depicted the particular insights for organisations as portrayed by the participants. The findings suggest that business people have a strong attachment to their work. For organisations, participants have suggested that family friendly policies, organisational culture; as well as managers and leaders are vital in creating a context in which family and work can co-exist happily. Furthermore, additional descriptive evidence has been presented to suggest certain benefits of family to work facilitation. It has also suggested that instability in the workplace

particularly around restructures and general change management are areas of concern for organisations to alleviate this exacerbating experience in the work-family balance.

5.4 Family experiences

5.4.1 Introduction

This section addresses the participants' experiences as parents, spouses and in their broader family circles. It focuses on question 1c on the individual's experiences in the family role in the work-family balance. It is structured to include the following themes:

1) Thematic overview
2) The division of labour
3) Men's involvement at home
4) Marital relationships
5) Relationships with children

The section continues with discussion and interpretation; as well as a summary matrix on the suggested relationships between experiences and emotional factors.

5.4.2 Thematic overview

Figure 28 presents a diagrammatic overview of the themes raised on the family experiences in the work-family balance. This themed summary provides an overview for the reader to gauge the intensity and count of the themes discussed in this section. It provides a count of the number of participants who referred to or spoke about each theme (irrespective of the number of times the topic was mentioned). It also gives interpretation on the emotional tone in which the majority of respondents spoke about that particular theme. This

overview is supported by the detailed discussions which provide the descriptive evidence within each theme.

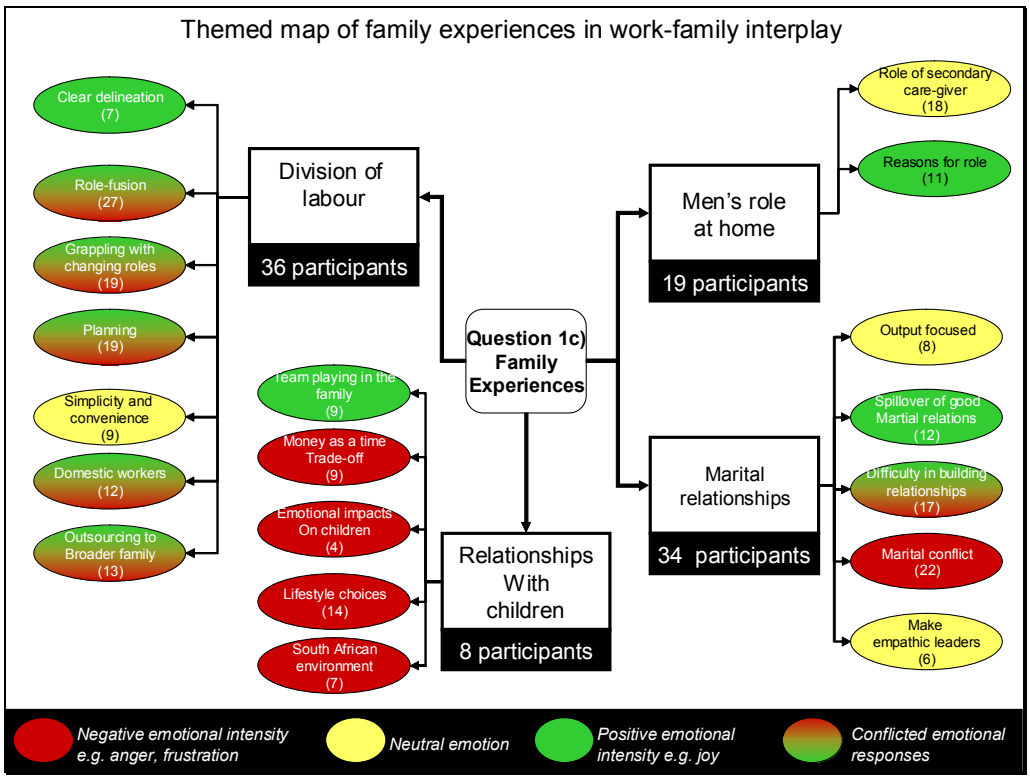


Figure 28: Summary of themes on family experiences with emotional intensity and count indicators

5.4.3 Division of labour

Workbook reports

Participants completed a self-report questionnaire in the focus groups which provides some insights into the division of labour. Participants were asked who took responsibility for their children; as well as questions on who participates in work and family roles.

Table 12 provides a count of responses while Table 13 provides the same descriptive data in ranked order.

Table 12: Self-reported division of labour

	Women (mom)	Man (dad)	School	Domestic worker	Other family
FAMILY					
Total counts	**76**				
Responsibility for children	18	7	1	2	3
Time with children	13	6	7	16	3
WORK					
Full-time work self	17	18			
Part-time work self	0	0			
Flexi-time work self	1	0			
Full-time work partner	7	11			
Part-time work partner	3	3			
Flexi-time work partner	0	4			
No work	6	0			
Work	0	9			
Travelling	0	2			

Table 13: Ranking of time and responsibility for children as reported by participants

Ranking	Ranking of most time spent with children	Ranking of taking responsibility for children
1	Domestic worker (21.5%)	Mother (23.7%)
2	Mother (17%)	Father (9.2%)
3	School (9.2%)	Other (3.9%)
4	Father (7.9%)	Domestic worker (2.6%)
5	Other (3.9%)	School (1.3%)

These descriptive statistics indicate the following observations:

1) *Responsibility for and time with children:* The sample reported that mothers take predominant responsibility for the children followed by fathers. Participants reported that domestic workers spend the most time with their children, even though they do not take responsibility for them.
2) *Work:* Thirty five out of 36 participants work on a full-time basis; while 1 works on a flexi-time basis. Their partners are made up of 6 people who do not work, 18 who work on a full-time basis, 9 on a part-time basis and 3 on a flexi-time basis. The breakdown of the total family division can thus be summarised in graph format as follows:

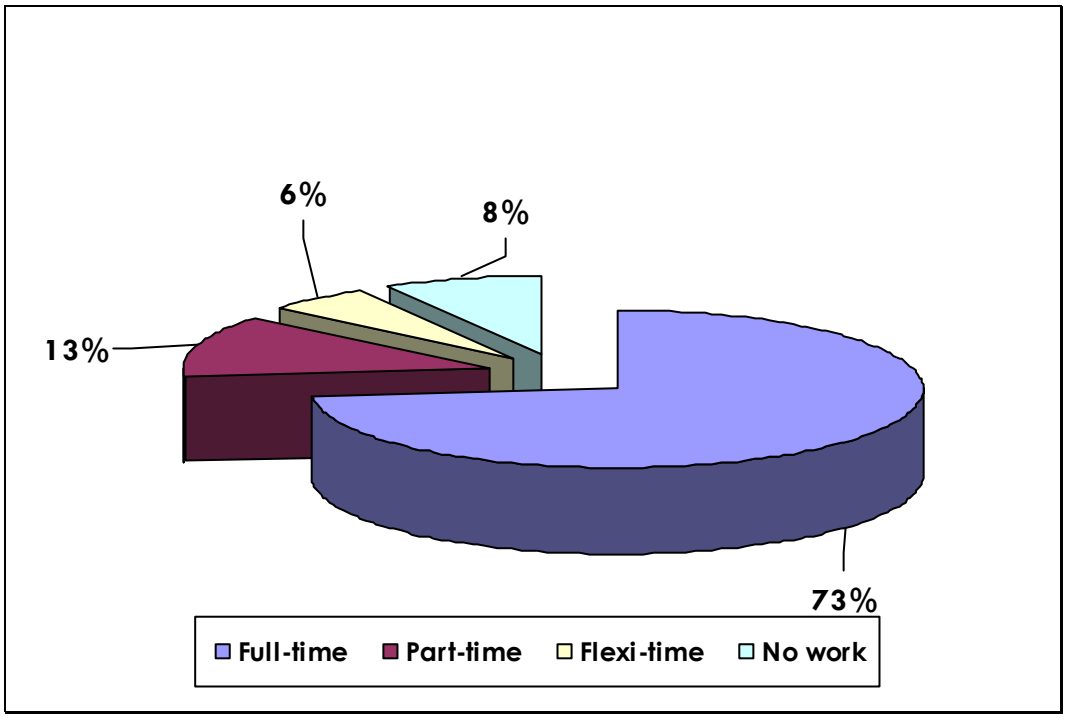


Figure 29: Breakdown of employment category for participants and partners

Delineation of responsibilities

Two patterns emerged in the division of labour. The first group comprised 7 participants who have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities in their work-family dynamics; and there is a fair degree of rigidity around these roles. The second group comprised 27 participants in which roles are less clearly defined and there is in fact what could be termed role fusion[11]. (Four participants made no real indication of the nature of their division of labour.) The experiences of these groups are discussed separately as the pattern of discussion seemed to indicate that the experiences are different.

Clear delineation of responsibilities

This group of 7 participants are individuals who described having clearly delineated responsibilities at work and at home; and they usually adopted

[11] The term "role fusion" has been created by the researcher and was not a term that used by the research participants.

traditional roles. This delineation seemed to take place at a macro level across roles and little cross-pollination between roles occurs. As examples of this, participants described their own role as either the caregiver or the breadwinner in the family. They take full ownership for the designated role and all the associated responsibilities. Respondents expressed a level of burden in taking on sole accountability for individual roles. A father of two young children expressed this load, “I don’t have a backup if I am out of a job…I’m pretty stuffed. If push comes to shove she will have to work…however, our actual decision is for her to stay at home”. Another mother of two expressed the same concept by acknowledging, “Sometimes I wish my husband would just offer to take or fetch the kids once or twice…even on the weekends he believes that this is not his responsibility so he only does it begrudgingly”.

Role fusion

Role fusion could be described loosely as both parties taking ownership for all responsibilities. Thus fathers and mothers often participate in the care-giving role. This was the most prevalent arrangement (with 27 participants indicating this pattern). A mother of two older boys explained this scenario as follows: “We have an equal balance of who does what. The other day I was just saying that I need to get someone to help me with the cooking at night time – it’s just becoming too much; so the two oldest children said that they could help with this if I just tell them what to prepare in the morning…my husband does a lot more running around with the children than me; because his job allows him more flexibility”. Participants often attributed the allocation of responsibilities for the children to practical reasons. Thus, if one parent has greater job flexibility or proximity to the required task, it would be delegated to that person. In these families, both parents seem to take equal responsibility for income generation in the household as well. This was reflected in phrases such as, “We have built our lifestyle around two incomes…we like what that gives us”.

Grappling with changing roles

Participants described how they sometimes battle to adjust to the notion and practical evidence of women in the workplace and the associated egalitarian role division that results. A 48 year old man with two older children and a stay at home wife noted, “I don’t know how the families work of the women in our office. Who looks after those children? I’m lucky, my wife and my roles are clearly defined. She looks after the children and I bring home the money – it works”. Another male participant commented that as a result of his wife working it added complexity to the decisions in the house. He said, “We spend time arguing over who does what. I wanted to move to the country because I grew up there and I wanted that for my kids. Then the debate came up around who would have to travel further and what this would mean for each of us. If I was the sole breadwinner, and she stayed at home, this would not have been an issue”. Another woman made a comment about the slowness that she perceived her husband’s role changing. She noted, “I think the model has changed whereby women do go out and work because they want fulfilment but the mindset of men at home has not changed that much. I am still expected to give at home plus plus plus”. The grappling with a change in family dynamics and more egalitarian roles extended to the broader family. A mother of two teenage boys commented on how her parents-in-law battle to understand why she works and doesn’t spend that much time with her children. “They are very uncomfortable with my work. We share in our roles. They are somewhat critical; they frown upon the arrangement we have,” she noted.

Planning in the division of labour

A theme emerged from 19 participants suggesting the importance of planning and learning the skill of being organised. Ten individuals referred consistently to being more in control of their work-family balance, while 9 individuals who alluded to a lack of skill in this area, reported feeling disappointed in various aspects of their lives. This is illustrated through the encounters described by the participants. A mother executive described her experience of planning and co-ordinating everything to the last detail. She said, “I organise the meals. I

buy for one week. I have the au pair do other shopping on the Friday. We eat at home from Monday to Thursday. In the morning, I write a note book for her. I ensure that I spend no more than half an hour cooking in the evenings. I have time tables of the extra murals. My husband and I take turns taking the kids to school and fetching them in the afternoons". This mother also described her process of learning to become more organised; not only for herself but to ensure that she delegates responsibilities to the family. She recorded, "I used to do everything myself, plan everything. Then I realised what an absolute idiot I was because my husband is an insurance broker and he could it. He used to say, 'just tell me what do and I'll do it.' So now I've had to get a lot more organised. I employ an aupair and make sure that she knows what needs to be done". On the contrary a mother suggested that her bad planning affected her personal life to a large extent. She said, "I plan badly so I spend so much time focusing on work that I don't make time to phone friends to arrange activities on the weekend. The weekend then arrives and I find I would have loved to see someone. So now I sometimes wonder if I have any friends".

Simplicity and convenience

Nine individuals mentioned the importance of convenience and seeking third parties to assist in managing their responsibilities. A mother of two encapsulated this experience by stating, "I believe in outsourcing. If someone else can do it, then outsource it". Another mother echoed this by saying, "Now my life is driven by simplicity and convenience. Every possible vehicle I can use to make my life easier I use. My mother, online shopping, my nanny…". In similar ways, individuals spoke of the importance of delegating where possible in order to create time. There are different types of outsourcing options that are described and employed in the division of labour.

A mother spoke about getting an accountant to do the work on her husband's books which she has always done. Another mother of young children said that she spent several years fetching and carrying her children from school. She then realised that this is not value-added time with them, so she discussed it with them and then hired an au pair to do these "menial tasks". Several other

mothers described how they outsourced their children to holiday programmes over the school breaks and friends in the afternoon. They described these facilities as important mechanisms to handle their responsibilities as parents. One mother expressed concern at the level of outsourcing that she and her friends do with their children. She said, "If you think about it there are a lot of other people who take responsibility for your kids…".

Domestic workers

By their own reports, the primary outsourcing is done to domestic workers. It was evident that almost all participants rely heavily on domestic workers, although they acknowledged the limitations of this outsourcing option. One mother commented on this by saying, "The problem with relying on your domestic worker only starts when the kids go to school. They need me. Only you can give it to them. You can't have the 'girl'[12] at home doing the homework". Another mother alluded to the impacts that outsourcing to the domestic worker has. She said, "When my son started talking, he spoke in a clear Zulu accent. That's when I realised that I was letting him spend too much time with the maid". Seven mothers in particular commented on how the relationship between their domestic workers and their children are very strong. One mother suggested, "My younger child is very bonded with my maid; and I am not sure that this is always a good thing. She listens to her more than she listens to me; like I'm the surrogate mother. The problem is that while I love and respect my maid for the great care she imparts to my child, she does not always share the same basic life values and habits as us. So I spend quite some time undoing habits like eating with fingers and eating mieliepap[13] all the time!" The effect of allowing their children to spend a significant amount of time with their domestic workers presented 3 parents with crisis point choices that they depicted in their stories. As one mother commented, "I decided to give up my

[12] 'girl' is a traditional and derogatory term referring to domestic workers in South Africa
[13] 'Mieliepap' is a staple food for a large portion of the South African population. It is made of corn, cooked and served in a solid porridge texture.

full-time career and start a business…I didn't care about the financial implications. I just wasn't going to let my maid raise my children anymore".

Grannies and broader family networks

Thirteen participants described the importance of using broader family networks to create personal and couple time. Individuals suggested, "We use our parents to babysit regularly. We then go out by ourselves. We even have an annual holiday as a couple when the kids stay with their grannies. They love it and I believe it is a win-win situation. The children benefit from spending time with other parental figures and we really get to focus on our relationship outside of the chaos of our daily lives". On the other hand, certain individuals alluded to finding it difficult to make use of these broader family support structures either because they are not available or their accessible family are not willing to do it.

5.4.4 Men's involvement at home

This section provides a role-based view of men's involvement at home. It suggests that there are different models being applied but that there is evidence to suggest a shift from historical gender based role casting at home.

Care giving role

Two participants noted that the father in the family takes predominant responsibility for the children. In addition, there was sufficient evidence in the conversational analysis to suggest that men in general adopt a bigger role at home than would have been the case historically. One manager in financial services commented, "My husband does a lot more of the fetching and carrying, taking to the doctor and what-not". Another male in his early thirties in a managerial position said, "I am the one who does the taking and fetching. I made the decision that I work hard during work hours and there has to be a very valid reason for me to stay beyond that". The predominant pattern that emerged in this sample was that men leave the primary care-giving role to their female partners and they provide varying degrees of support as the secondary caregiver. This represented 16 male participants. Twelve female participants

reported a similar pattern in their homes. There were several reasons given to explain the role of the father as a supporting role. Firstly, men suggested that their wives want to be the primary caregiver. A participant stated that his wife was always the caregiver and that she wanted to be the caregiver so they agreed to this. Another male in his early thirties explained that his role as the breadwinner was allocated because, "We thought bonding was very important between mother and child…there is no way you can breast feed if you are going back to work…and so we decided that she would stay at home and look after the children". Secondly, men experienced difficulties in being the caregiver because of the strong bond between the mother and children. As a male in his early thirties said, "I struggle with the fact that the relationship my wife has with my son is very strong. When I want to read him a story at night, he wants mom…so I get wrapped up in work because that's where I'm most comfortable''.

Reasons given for greater paternal involvement

Several male participants alluded to the reasons for their participation at home. A male manager father of two continued to say, "I grew up with a father that I never saw and I would not want my child to grow up like that. In my life I play the provider and the caregiver. I am the one who teaches him the colours. If I don't do it, no one is going to do it". Two older participants with children in their late teens supported this sentiment with hindsight experience. They both said that they have made decisions to get more involved with their children's lives because of the negative effects they had witnessed in not getting involved. A forty-eight year old father of two summarised this by saying, "I made a decision to spend more time with the family. I used to go away and never see my kids and the damage that did to my kids…". Another father of three stated that he had decided to get out of the corporate world and become an entrepreneur so that he could have the flexibility to spend more time with his family.

5.4.5 Marital relationship

This section provides an in-depth view of the experiences portrayed on marital relationships in the family. It describes the positive and negative experiences of marital relationships in the family and consequently at work. It also addresses some of the emotional impacts on the children as illustrated by the participants.

Positive spillover of good marital relationships

Twelve participants alluded to the positive impact that good partner relationships have on their lives and their ability to cope with work and family. One husband and father of two described this experience as such, "In my mid 20's I took a bad path as I was in a bad relationship for 5 years that I should have ended ages ago. Only when I turned 30 did I change that. I ended my relationship, changed my job, moved house…everything. Everything then started falling into place. Now my life is not so much about ideas as it is about people and it's quite comfortable. I am in a good relationship and my life is in a good space. And for me it was about finding out what kind of impact my personal relationships have on me". Similarly, another mother suggested the positive impact her marital relationship has on her life by saying, "My life began when I met my husband. I'm living my dream now and I love my work and my family because of it". Supporting this notion with the counter experience, a mother of two described how her bad marriage had impacted her ability to manage her work and her family. She noted, "…I existed for that relationship; but I did not exist for myself…I was getting angrier and angrier and I could see it in my dealings with people at work and my relationship with my children…I lost myself". The drawings in Figure 30 and Figure 31 depict the positive emotional changes that participants have experienced as a result of their involvement in happy marriages and family lives.



Figure 30: Life before happy marriage and family

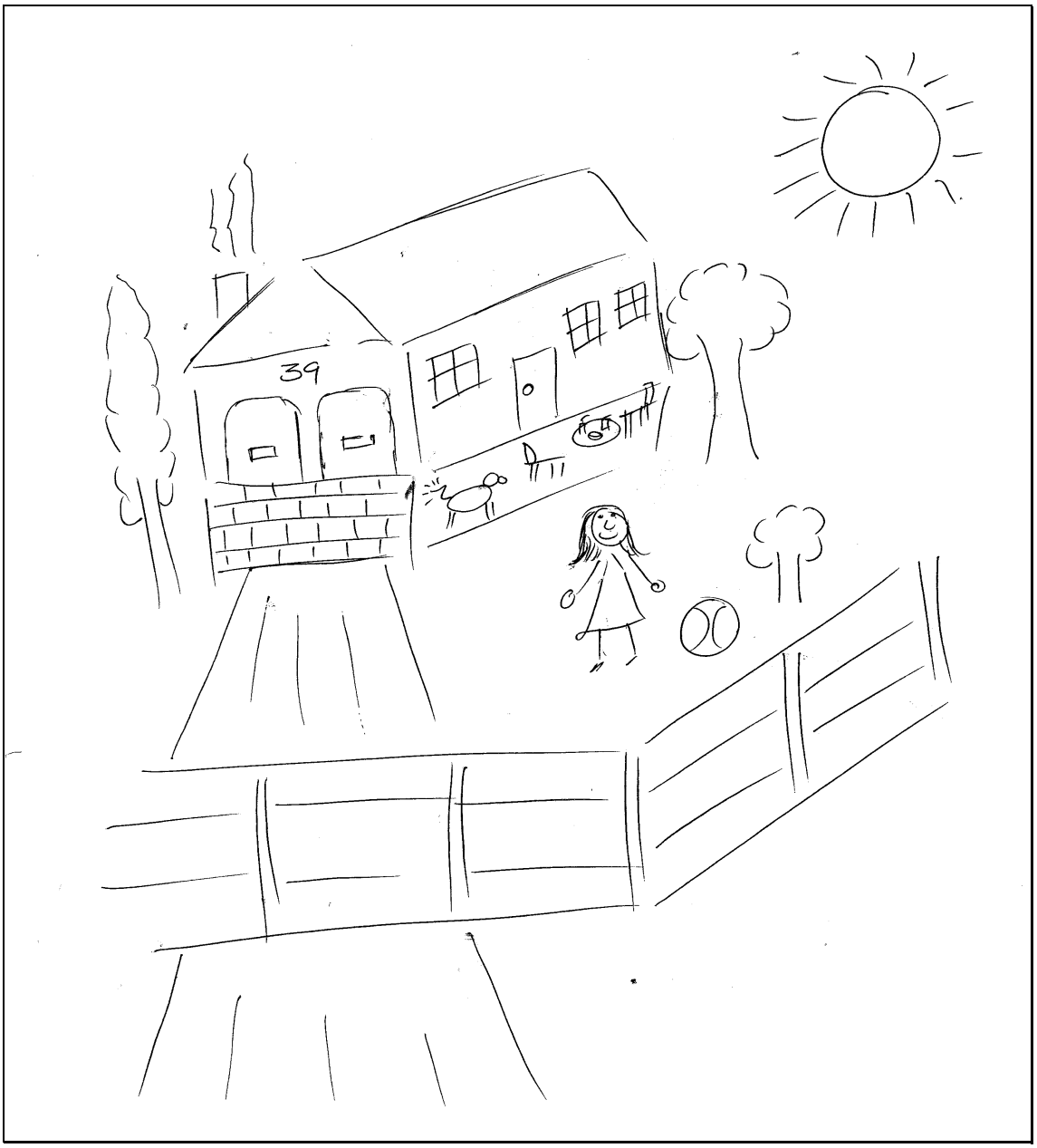


Figure 31: Life now with happy marriage and family relationships

Difficulty of sustaining marital relationships

Seventeen participants described the importance of building their personal relationships with their significant others however, they simultaneously described how difficult it is to do amidst all the other priorities in their lives. A mother of three older children described how the only time she and her husband

get to communicate is when they are cooking dinner together and in the privacy of their room. "We are not very good at getting away by ourselves," she commented, "but I think this is something that we need to do in order to build on our relationship". A father of two explained that he often does not start conversations with his wife because he knows he only has 10 or 20 minutes and that would not give sufficient time. He concluded this experience by saying, "…so a lot of things are just not said, which I guess is not good for our relationship". Similarly, a mother of younger children expressed concern over her relationship with her husband because of their lack of time together. She said, "People get divorced when their kids get older and they don't know each other anymore". A father of younger children suggested that his relationship with his wife is no longer a one-to-one relationship because of their son. He noted, "My son doesn't understand that this is mom and dad's time; so we end up always doing things with him, rather than making the difficult decision to deal with his response when leaving him with his grand parents". A father of two suggested that it is important for him not to make his wife the "dumping ground" of all his stress. He suggested, "Everyday on the way home, I phone my mom and vice versa. I don't blow off at my wife. You have to put on this face day and night to keep it together. I feel better when I get home, so I don't have to go home and kill the dog or argue with my wife…ultimately we can have rational conversations".

Marital conflict

Most participants alluded to the importance of their spousal relationship in engendering a positive outlook on work and their lives in general. However, this positive experience does not seem to disqualify conflict as 22 participants described their marital conflict. A father of two described this process as a vicious cycle pressure cooker. He noted, "Because of the balancing act, my wife focused on my son. She was engrossed in him. I would not go home because I was engrossed in work…with my wife, she keeps quiet for a longer period and when it does come out it's a volcano…and by that point the damage has been done…it's definitely had a big impact on our personal relationship". Another mother of two discussed her conflict with her husband openly by

saying, “My husband and I are always fighting over who does what, when there is time for each other, what he is doing at social work functions when he should be with me. Ultimately, this is a factor of a shortage of time and the fact that we don’t have clear cut roles. We both work, play ‘mom’, do the house…you name it…he always says to me, ‘just tell me what to do’ and I always say, ‘why are you so reactive; take some ownership.’” Another consultant in the financial services echoed this type of conflicting experience by saying, “We spent so much time scrambling for time and arguing over who was doing what, that I eventually made a decision to take on less responsibility at work so that I could take this on properly”. A further mother commented by saying, “My husband blows because he says he has to do everything, so I say, ‘what do you want me to do? Give up work.’ When I’m not working he’s not happy and when I am working he’s not happy”.

5.4.6 Relationships with children

Team playing in the family

The effect of positive and negative experiences at home seemed to extend to the whole family. A mother in the financial services industry commented on this by saying, “It’s the connectiveness of the family group. We have a common dream and that makes it quite different. There is sacrifice but it’s exciting. There are different challenges with the kids than when they were younger. The responsibility as a parent is huge and you have to work as a team”. Nine participants used this concept of a family team to describe how they tried to work together to derive personal satisfaction and better family functioning.

Emotional impacts on the children

A few parents provided courageous stories of the impact of their working lives on their children and families at large. One mother described how her daughter started bed-wetting when she was going through extensive periods of long hours at work. She said, “I denied it to myself at the time, but in hindsight, I knew that my daughter was trying to tell me that I was not spending enough time with her”. Another father suggested that the impact it has on his family was

that his sons are not particularly socially adept. He commented, “Look they are still young, but I can tell you that we don’t have the same time to sit at the dinner table and chat, so often, they sit and eat their suppers in front of the TV. This gives them less opportunity to learn how to interact through role-modelling. They learn more from their peers and this is not always a good thing”. While there were not significant volumes of such stories, the few that were depicted portrayed a picture that was often not refuted by anyone in the group. The picture seemed to include problems with emotional and social insecurities in younger children in particular.

Money as a time trade-off

Individuals commented on the experiences they have with growing children, suggesting that parents are using money as a trade-off for their time. One father of older children noted, “I think the peer pressure is taking over parental influences. This is as a result of absent parenting. The stories I have heard about what my kids did in their high school years were scary. And that was with my wife being at home. My son and his friend have more money in their wallets than I ever had. When he matriculated, he was given a 180 Mercedes compressor. So parents are over compensating. Parents will go and give their kids R1000 to spend time to live at Menlyn[14] for the weekend. I honestly believe that this is getting worse because people are earning more and are buying their personal time. They just want their kids out of their hair”. Other parents suggested that they could not cope with their younger children’s constant demands for material possessions. They attributed this to a combination of the material world in which the children are growing up, and parental guilt. As one mother noted, “It never ends…I am expected to buy Levi jeans, Nike takkies[15] and every brand name under the sun. I have created my own monster because I always used to give her gifts…I guess as a compensation for the lack of time I spent with her”. Several parents commented

[14] Menlyn is a large shopping centre in eastern Pretoria, Gauteng.
[15] ‘’Takkies’ is a colloquial South African term for sports shoes

on using material things as compensation gifts. One mother encapsulated this by saying, "I really am in constant battle with my children over this. They just see gifts as a commodity. They are ungrateful and demanding. Every time they see a sparkle of guilt in my eye, they ask what they can get. I am breeding children who will have no concept of what it is to work for what you have…because they just get everything and I know it's because I just haven't made the decision that time cannot be traded with money".

Lifestyle choices

Extending from the experience of money and the influence it has on the family unit, 14 parents alluded to the impact of time deprivation on their choice of food for the family. This extended to general lifestyle. One mother said, "When I have had a hard day at work, I often phone home and ask where I can buy take-aways. My kids have often gone for a week without a home cooked meal. This is not good for their health". Other parents suggested that they use going out as a way of combining 'escape-time' for themselves with compensation for their children. A father of two young children commented, "We are sometimes so tired that we just say, 'oh let's take the kids to the Spur[16]'. It's easier because they go off and play, we get some peace and we don't have to worry about cooking". These stories were supported by other anecdotes suggesting that parents use tuck-shop money, sweet snacks and fast foods as a means of saving time and energy in preparing food for their children. This phenomenon extended beyond food. One mother of two young children and executive stated, "I don't spend enough time encouraging my children to play outdoors. It's easier for me to let them park in front of the TV for two hours because it gives me some breathing space. I know I should rather take them to the park where they can get exercise and fresh air, but when I get home at a reasonable hour, I often just want to lie on the bed and watch some TV myself". The evidence for the experience of children leading sedentary lives was supported by 16 reported accounts of children wanting to spend time playing Playstation,

[16] Spur is a franchise food chain in South Africa catering to the family market

computer games and watching TV rather than going outdoors to play. In commenting on the effects of this paradigm, one mother suggested, "I really believe that this is the reason every second child in my boy's class needs occupational therapy, including my own. They just don't spend enough time rough-housing with dad and climbing trees the way we used to because we parents are all so exhausted; so kids' motor skills are poorly developed''.

South African living

Seven participants described the pace of city living to be a contributing experience. An older father of grown-up children encapsulated this by saying, "There is a lot of chaos because we live in the city. The guys in the smaller towns don't feel the same pressure as we do". One participant described living in the city as follows, "Everyone here is what area do you live in. It's very material. People constantly move towards the next material goal…this is stressful". Three participants mentioned the high crime in South Africa as having an impact on their internal and cross-role balance. This mother of two children noted, "More important than balancing our many roles is how we stay balanced in this country. If you've been out there where there isn't such violence then suddenly you start to ask yourself questions. Am I in the right place? Am I doing the right thing for my children by staying here? We don't have enough input on how to manage the added stress. We manage to ignore it. It takes me completely out of balance. My neighbour gets attacked, I'm in a smash and grab. I don't even want to know what the rand/dollar exchange rate is anymore…it makes me so unsettled…and we are dealing with this all the time".

5.4.7 Discussion and analysis

Division of Labour

The findings in this study support Matsui *et al* (1995); Newell (1996); Loscocco (1997) and Winn (2004) who establish that women's roles in Japan are evolving faster than men's roles. It does not necessarily corroborate the findings of Barnett and Rivers (1996) that men believe they are equally responsible for the

children. Thus, in this research there is evidence that women have taken ownership for the breadwinning role and believe this role to be as important as their care-giving role. However, the men still believe (and act accordingly) that the role of the mother is more significant in the parent-child relationship. Sixteen fathers contextualised the importance of their role as father as a much stronger supporting actor role than the main acting role. Thus, they have made changes in their work lives to cater for this strong supporting role. This particular finding does not support the work of Benin and Nienstadt (1985) who suggest that greater demands at home would place more pressure on men at work. On the contrary, certain men make structural role changes to accommodate the family demands. The reason why men reported playing a secondary role at home may lie in the evidence that emerged around the dominance that women take in the care-giving role. That is, potentially mothers do not create space for this to happen by holding on relentlessly to the role as primary caregiver. The reasons for this are not clear; although they could be hypothesised as emanating from traditional gender ideologies or belief structures on the importance of the role of the mother (Greenstein, 1996).

Traditional versus egalitarian roles

There is moderate support for Blair and Johnson (1992) and Greenstein (2002) regarding gender ideology in South Africa. However, this has not completely shifted to a mode of egalitarian roles as suggested in Barnett and Rivers' research (1996). Furthermore, the experiences depicted by the participants in this research illustrate the difficulty that the transition to more egalitarian roles incurs for the belief structures of the individuals with more traditional homes and belief structures. It would be interesting to understand how the clash of these role perspectives influences dynamics in the corporate world. Thus, does the juxtaposition of traditional and egalitarian mindsets in the organisation in anyway influence the interactions and decisions within the organisation? It may, as suggested by Strachan and Burgess (1998) be accounting for a level of discrimination in the workplace.

Role entrenchment

Four anecdotes provided in the observations suggest a potential pattern of the ease with which primary roles become entrenched; as well as the potential consequences of this pattern. The stories suggest a cycle of validation that reinforces primary roles. This was presented in 4 examples in the study but will be explored through one particular example. A mother took on her gender ideology and built strong bonds with her children. The father, in the meantime, built a strong attachment to work as primary breadwinner. When the father was home, his bond with his children was far less attached than the mother-child bond. The children thus wanted to spend less time with him, which resulted in a level of rejection for him at home (or internal conflict). In turn, he started spending more time at work because that was his primary source of validation. The less and less time he spent at home, the weaker his bonds there became, the more conflict it caused, the less time he wanted to spend at home. Thus, it became a doom loop of role entrenchment. It is suggested that the likely consequences of this pattern are work-family conflict which in turn may lead to the experience of personal crisis described. This provides evidence for the studies of Kirchmeyer (2000) on disengagement from one or both roles as a result of negative role balance.

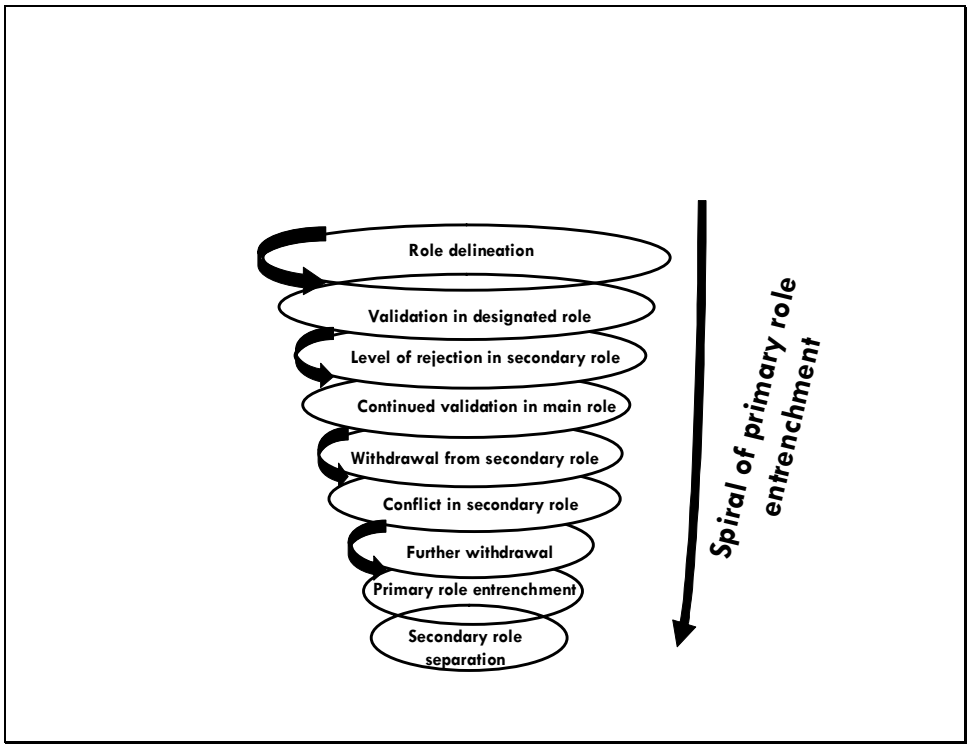


Figure 32: Doom loop of primary role entrenchment

Work-family facilitation

The evidence in this research on family experiences suggests that involvement in the family role enhances the effects of the involvement in the work role and vice versa as described by Sieber (1974), Pleck (1977), Barnett and Hyde (1998), Gill (2001) and Wayne *et al* (2002). The descriptive evidence does suggest however, that the quality of the involvement in the family role is pivotal in determining if the spillover effects are conflict or facilitation. Thus, merely participating in the family role is not sufficient. The involvement needs to be functional and fulfilling before it seems to prompt any positive effects spilling over into the work role. At another level, positive family interactions were sometimes described in "corporate jargon". As an example, the discussion about teaming, collaboration and mutual respect all have distinct business flavour. Furthermore the regular reference to planning, organising, and co-ordinating provides strong support for work-family facilitation, in that individuals appear to be applying skills learnt in their business environments to their home environment.

Thus, it is suggested that there is a contribution to the family life of parents working in a work environment and being exposed to new ways of thinking. In addition, skills and knowledge at work do seem to be applied to home challenges.

Family functioning

The anecdotal evidence in this research supports the notion that work-family balance has a bearing on certain family functions (Bernstein and Borchardt, 1996). Interference was reported on the following family functioning sub-scales:

1) Task accomplishment: participants described task identification and problem-solving issues;
2) Role performance: participants described difficulty in adapting to changes in roles and the associated consequences for the family;
3) Communication: various patterns of communication interruption were reported. In extreme cases, participants reported a level of communication shut-down.
4) Affective expression: participants suggested a level of histrionic interaction interspersed with no interaction;
5) Affective involvement: certain disruptions to the quality of the involvement were reported at different times.

Furthermore, this research provides anecdotal support for the research of Parcel and Menaghan (1994) of potential developmental problems incurring in children where less time is spent with the children. There was little or marked difference in the reports of family functioning depending on the life stage of the individuals; although the participants with younger children reported more stories of exhaustion. In general, each life stage presented with unique anecdotes that seemed to derive their own modes of conflict and / or facilitation. Thus, only moderate support is obtained for Argyle and Furnman's theory (1983) of increased conflict and less satisfaction in younger couples.

The effect of the work-family balance on the family needs further verification by quantitative measures. While the descriptive evidence suggests a level of

interference, by the nature of the research it cannot correlate these relationships statistically. It merely provides suggestive evidence that even in families where there are no specific reports of work-family conflict; the mere participation in multiple roles may have an impact on the ability of families to function optimally owing to time constraints and role strain (Dua, 1994).

On the contrary, the undertone of the stories presents a suggested level of commitment and personal tenacity to sustain marital and family relationships. The manner in which participants described their involvement insinuates how difficult it is for them. It is suggested that perhaps this difficulty plays some role in cementing family relationships, providing support for Wayne *et al* (2002) on the benefits of participating in multiple roles. Furthermore, the observation supports some of the evidence presented by Argyle and Furnman (1983) that sustainable relationships require the working through rather than the avoidance of conflict; which it may be argued, applies to work and family relationships. The detailed dynamics and reasons for 'working through the conflict' were not always expressed or explored in the research; however, the dynamic suggests an avenue for further interesting research.

Lifestyle and emotional intelligence

There is strong descriptive support for the findings of Devine *et al* (2003) suggesting the spillover effect of work-family onto food choices. While it is evident that certain individuals in the focus groups have become conscious of the effect that their time deprivation is having on family food choices, in general the findings suggest that despite being aware of the impacts, parents often continued the habit as a basic means of attaining time. The evidence also would seem to support the findings of Devine *et al* (2003) who establish that more money is spent on meals away from home than historically. They suggest that food choices are related to intrinsic coping skills combined with a relative priority placed on health. Thus parents that expressed health as being paramount stated that they would not allow time deprivation to affect their family eating patterns, pointing to the concepts of priority and emotional intelligence in understanding the impact of choices on the family (Goleman, 1995).

A similar interpretation can be made on the issue of money being used as a substitute for time. A father and executive encapsulated this by saying, “But surely no matter how busy you are, you should always take time-out to reflect on the choices you are making for your family; and the impact that is having on them. Then when you understand it, you need to do something about it”. While this statement was met with divided response of acknowledgement and resentment, it does encapsulate the importance of parents adopting strong leadership skills at home to understand the impact their decisions are having on their family members. This naturally requires the emotional intelligence skills of self-awareness and empathy described by Goleman (1995) and Huy (1999).

Contextual environment

The findings suggest support for the conclusions of Wright and Steinbach (2001) that violence exposure may tax individuals and communities. The descriptions in the study point to the impact that crime and socio-economic conditions are having on people coping with work-family issues. Indeed, it seems to exacerbate their experiences by placing added conflict on the appropriateness of the environment for themselves and their families. This feeling is further supported by the Person-Environment theory of Edwards *et al* (1998). Thus, the misfit between individual’s needs for safety for their family and the perceived inability of the environment to provide this seems to induce a level of stress which exacerbates any work-family balance conflicts they are already experiencing.

Instrumental support and outsourced parenting

Participants’ depictions of the involvement of the extended family provide support for the importance of instrumental support (Matsui *et al*, 1995). The nature of the instrumental support has varying degrees of benefit to the participants. It ranges from providing space for married couples to spend time alone and ‘build their marriage’ as they described it. In other instances it was described as playing even more of an instrumental support role in that individuals used their parents to assist with child-related tasks. The strongest

suggestive theme of instrumental support is the role of the domestic worker. The literature on the work-family balance does not specifically address this factor as a mediator or exacerbation of work-family conflict. This study illustrates a strong presence of the domestic worker in playing a role in the division of labour, supporting a level of interdependence as described by Hetherington (1993). Through participants' self reports, there is a strong prevalence of domestic workers spending the most time with the children. However, parents do not acknowledge that domestic workers are taking responsibility for the children. This gap in reasoning potentially is explained as follows:

1) Parents may well be engaged in some level of self-justification by undermining the role of the domestic worker.
2) Domestic workers often have low levels of education (Ehrenreich ad Hochschild, 2002) and thus parents may be leaving their children with them during times that do not require high levels of academic involvement such as homework. They then compensate when they are home by getting involved in these activities.

Only in certain anecdotal evidence, were the impacts of leaving children with domestic workers expressed. The effect of the role of the domestic worker seems to be a large source of internal conflict for some parents, particularly mothers, in that it induced guilt, which then drove behaviour. Other parents (and even the same parents) acknowledged how important this role is for them; and the benefits that their children received from spending time with their domestic workers. It points to the importance of using instrumental support only as a supporting role, not as a surrogate.

Emotional support

This research brought forward very little support for the concept of emotional support (Matsui *et al*, 1995). Only two specific examples were mentioned suggesting the mediating role of emotional support. However, it is contended that the evidence in this research provides more support for the concept of

MacEwan and Barling (1988) on emotional support as an ineffective coping mechanism. The examples quoted suggest that emotional support being provided by extended family or even marital partners serves as an emotional crutch which prevents real action to solving the dilemmas in the problem. Thus as one male executive reported, “We spend a lot of time going out to have a glass of wine and we talk about the challenges we have juggling this all…we never come up with any real answers, but it is good that we can just reflect on it”. Contrarily, it may be assumed in the benefits of their good marriages described by participants that this relationship may be serving as a deep and functional emotional support. Thus it is suggested that the benefits of emotional support rest in the pattern that develops around it. It may be beneficial provided it does not develop into patterns of self-pity (MacEwan and Barling, 1988), escapism or other such models that support a lack of action to resolve challenges.

5.4.8 Summary of relationships

Table 14 provides an overview of the relationships established in this section. It matches intrinsic emotional factors to general experiences (actions, beliefs and external factors). Relationships are only suggestive based on the descriptive evidence provided by the participants. No indication is provided on the causal nature of the relationship, but a suggested direction of the relationship is provided.

Table 14: Family experiences: summary of suggested relationships between emotional factors and general experiences

		INTRINSIC EMOTIONAL FACTORS (including emotional experiences and emotional intelligence factors)													
GENERAL EXPERIENCES (Including actions, beliefs and external factors)		Guilt	Self-blame	Self-awareness	Self-fulfilment	Resentment	Frustration	Commitment	Satisfaction	Empathy	Distress	Love	Appreciation	Irritability	Ambivalent
	Clear delineation of responsibilities	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+
	Role fusion	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+
	Egalitarian roles	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	+	0	0
	Planning and organisational skills	-	-	0	+	-	-	0	+	+	-	0	0	-	0
	Simplicity and convenience	-	-	+	+	-	+	0	+	0	-	0	0	0	0
	Domestic workers	+	+	0	0	+	+	0	-	+	+	0	+	0	+
	Grannies and broader family networks	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	+	+	-	0	+	-	0
	Men's involvement at home	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	-	+
	Good marital relationships	0	0	0	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	0
	Difficulty in sustaining marital relationships	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	-	0	0	0	0	+	+
	Marital conflicts	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+
	Team playing in family	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	0	0
	Emotional impacts on children	+	+	+	-	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	0	0	+
	Money as a time trade-off	+	+	+	0	+	+	0	-	-	0	0	0	0	+
	Lifestyle choices	+	+	+	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	0	+

KEY There is no indication on the causal effect of the relationship. This only suggests the presence of a positive or negative relationship between factors.	Positive relationship	+	Negative relationship	-	No specific relationship	0

5.4.9 Conclusion

This section has presented the family experiences of individuals in their work-family balance in answering question 1c on the family experiences of the work-family balance. It has discussed the division of labour having multiple models that families adopt; the relationship dynamics in the family as well as the experiences on lifestyle and nutrition within the family unit. The interpretations have suggested that families can get drawn into a downward spiral of role entrenchment which has the possibility of leading to disengagement from the secondary role. In addition, evidence has been provided that shows support for previous findings on the impact of work roles on family functioning, including negative impacts on children's emotional well-being and development.

5.5 Differences between men and women

5.5.1 Introduction

This section encapsulates the differences between men and women in the experiences reported on the work-family balance in answer to the research question 1d. In addition, it produces interpretive evidence that may suggest differences between men and women in how they experience and respond to the work-family balance. This section serves largely as a summary of previous discussions and evidence; only limited new findings are introduced. The differences are discussed under the following headings:

1) The division of labour and allocation of time
2) Gender ideology and belief structures

5.5.2 The division of labour and allocation of time

Self-reported time allocation

Figure 33 below depicts the differences between men and women in their self-reported allocation of time. This graph demonstrates relative differences in percentages between men and women. The self-reports would seem to indicate key differences in allocation of time on the following items which are provided in ranked order:

1) Personal time (men report spending more time on personal activities than women at a 100:0 ratio).
2) Unallocated time (women have more time unallocated than men at a 78:22 ratio).
3) Children (women reported spending more time with the children than men at a 64:36 ratio).
4) Chores (women reported spending more time on chores than men at a 68:32 ratio).
5) Health (men reported spending more time on their health than women at a 60:40 ratio).
6) Partner (men reported spending more time on their partners than women at a 60:40 ratio).
7) Work (men reported spending more time on their work than women at a 56:44 ratio).
8) Studies (men reported spending more time on their studies than women at a 56:44 ratio).

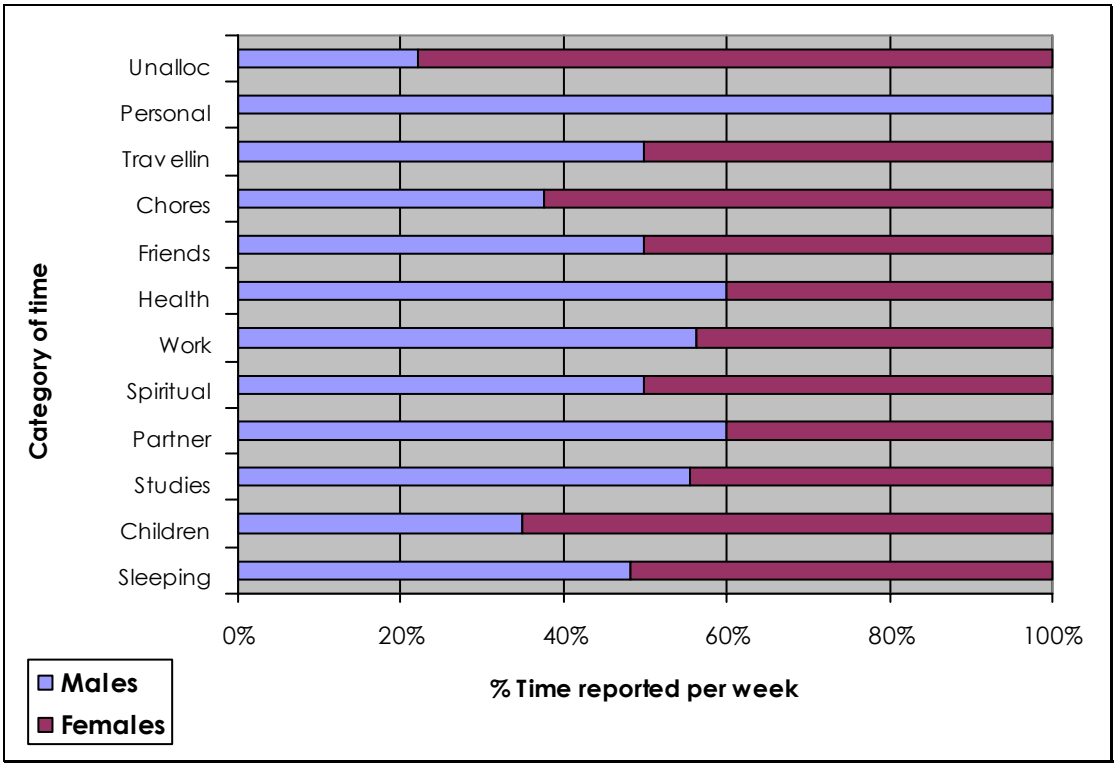


Figure 33: Differences between men and women on self-reported allocation of time

Table 15 depicts the differences between men and women in what they expressed they would like to spend more or less time doing. Men and women seemed to express similar interests in spending more time with their children, partners and friends; and less time on their work. There appeared to be key differences in their perspectives on spiritual activities (with women predominantly expressing a need to spend more time on this activity) and health (with women predominantly expressing a need to spend more time on this, but several men also reporting a need in this area.)

Table 15: Differences in reports between men and women on where they would like to spend more or less time

Category	Would like to spend more time	Would like to spend less time
Sleeping	2 Men; 2 women	3 men
Children	8 men; 7 women	None
Studies	2 Men; 2 women	1 man; 1 women
Partner	9 men; 9 women	None
Spiritual	2 men; 7 women	1 man
Work		5 men; 4 women
Health	5 men; 9 women	
Friends	5 men; 7 women	
Chores	1 man; 2 women	1 woman
Travelling		2 men
Personal time	1 man; 1 women	

Differences in experiences on the division of labour

There were several reports by women participants that they take on more responsibility at home than they do at work. (This is supported by their self-allocation of time.) No such reports were made by men.

Three reports by women suggested that their husbands would not get involved in any domestic labour even though she worked. No such reports were made by men about their wives.

Sixteen women reported that they took the primary responsibility for the children. Two men reported that they took the primary responsibility for the children.

Fourteen women implied that their children take precedence over their careers. Three men implied this.

Ten women reported having made significant structural changes to their careers to allow for more time with their children. Four men implied that they have imposed structural role changes to spend more time with their children.

Eight women reported taking full responsibility for co-ordinating the division of labour within the family by planning and co-ordinating. No men reported taking ownership for this.

5.5.3 Gender ideology and belief structures

This section provides a summary overview of the differences between men and women in their gender ideology. Participants were asked to respond to various open-ended sentences to describe how they feel and think about certain topics related to work and family. Two sentences aimed to elicit participants' gender ideology (views about the role of the mother and father at home). The graph below depicts a breakdown of how individuals perceived their own roles and those of their counterparts at home. The data provided is merely descriptive and specific conclusions cannot be drawn based on this data. The data would seem to indicate at some level that the men in the sample operate in a traditional roles paradigm while the women have a disposition to viewing roles in a more egalitarian manner.

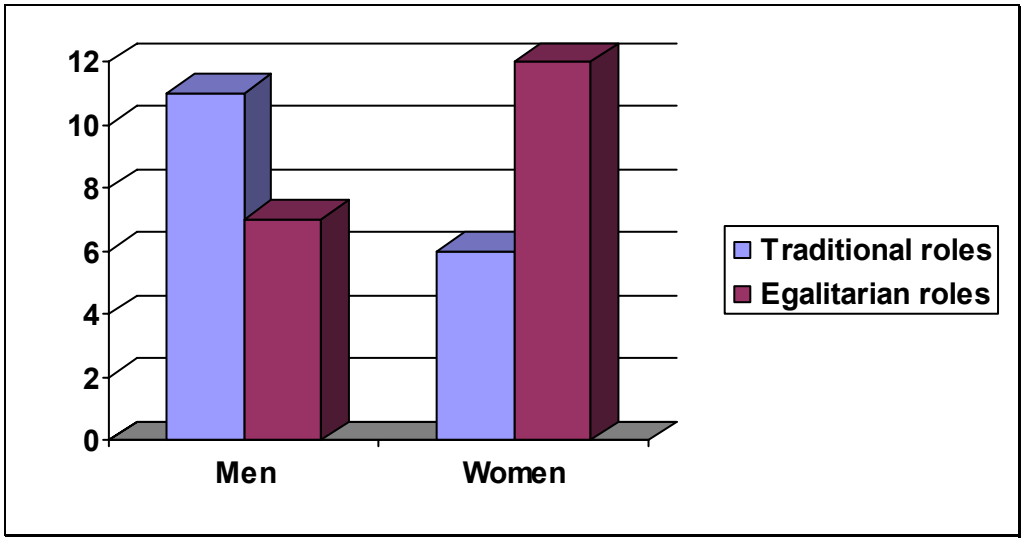


Figure 34: Gender ideology of sample

The descriptive evidence provided throughout the research does not support the findings or Barnett and Rivers (1996) on egalitarian belief structures in men and women. It suggests the following inherent belief structures:

1) Men and women believe that the primary care-giver in the family is the women.
2) Men believe that the primary breadwinner in the family is the man; women believe they share this role.
3) Men and women believe that the women's career is as important as the man's for her own fulfilment, even if she is not the primary breadwinner.
4) Men and women believe that fathers play an important supporting role to the mother in care-giving and responsibilities around the house.
5) Men and women believe that it is the women's responsibility to play the role of organiser in the family.

These belief structures are supported only by the most consistently reflected accounts provided by participants and as reflected previously in this research. There are limitations to these findings which are discussed in Chapter 6 on the specific validity and reliability issues of this research.

5.5.4 Conclusion on differences between men and women

This section has provided summary evidence for the differences in experiences between men and women in the work-family balance. The encounters suggest that men and women have differing belief structures on gender ideology and that there are behavioural and role differences between men and women in the division of labour, which are derived also from different beliefs about their work and family roles.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter encapsulates the main findings of this research. Owing to the nature of the research, the findings are complex and intricately interrelated. Thus, this section aims to structure the conclusions in alternative views and models; as well as to provide the reader with a summary view of the main findings. Furthermore, it discusses the specific validity and reliability issues of the findings. It then concludes with suggestions for further research.

6.2 Main Findings

6.2.1 Personal Experiences

The research findings suggest that individuals experience significant personal responses owing to their roles at work and within the family. These experiences occur at various levels. The depicted experiences are summarised in Table 16.

Table 16 : Summary matrix of personal experiences and their suggested effects on work-family balance

		Likely contribution to work-family balance based on experiential and interpretive evidence of this research		
		Moderator	**Neutral**	**Exacerbation**
PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL LEVEL	**Emotional**	• Self-awareness and self-reflection • Empathy (understanding impacts on self and others) • Openness to change • Motivation to change • Joy and fulfilment in multiple roles • Pride in multiple roles	• Anxiety about choices and balance (trade-off state) • Contradictory emotional experiences	• Guilt • Irritable mood
	Cognitive / Beliefs	• Importance of balance and value of roles • Personal ideal / expectation adjustment	• Compressed time horizon	• Time obsession • Sticky limiting beliefs
	Physical	• Physical exercise • Continued focus on health		• Exhaustion • No personal time
	Behavioural / Competencies	• Structural role changes • Prioritisation • Time management	• Self-deprecating sense of humour	• Role entrenchment • Role adherence • Multi-tasking • Learned helplessness

6.2.2 Experiences in working roles

The research findings suggest evidence for the experiences of individuals in their working roles and the associated insights for organisations. These experiences are indicative of the balance between their work and family roles and are depicted in their various experiential levels. The depicted experiences are indicated in Table 17.

Table 17: Summary matrix of work experiences and their suggested effects on work-family balance

		Likely contribution to work-family balance based on experiential and interpretive evidence of this research		
		Moderator	**Neutral**	**Exacerbation**
WORK EXPERIENTIAL LEVELS	**Emotional experiences**	• Fulfilment of work role		• Anxiety at changes in workplace • Contempt for organisation with no work-family balance
	Cognitive / Beliefs	• Responsibility as providers • Importance of the work role • Women's motivation to work as role model for children • Value of balanced individuals at work	• Gender ideology about work role	• Work intrusion (all-encompassing) • Traditional roles conflicting with egalitarian partner
	Behavioural / Competencies	• Structural role changes • Influence organisational culture		• Sabotage of career
	Organisational inputs	• Flexibility		• Need for face-time versus delivery • Leaders with no work-life balance • Slowness of response to work-family balance

6.2.3 Experiences in family roles

The research findings suggest that individuals have complex experiences within their family lives owing to their multiple roles in work and the family. Again, it

can be said that these experiences occur at multiple levels, which are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18: Summary matrix of family experiences and their suggested effects on work-family balance

		Likely contribution to work-family balance based on experiential and interpretive evidence of this research		
		Moderator	**Neutral**	**Exacerbation**
FAMILY EXPERIENTIAL LEVEL	**Emotional**	• Courage to give time when needed • Happy marriage		• Guilt about children • Irritable mood at home
	Cognitive / Beliefs			• Grappling with egalitarian roles
	Physical			• Reduced physical activity for children – poor health • Poor food choices
	Behavioural / Competencies	• Planning and organisational skills • Equal distribution of labour • Process of working on marital relationship • Team playing skill in the family	• Role fusion • Role delineation	• Role entrenchment • Role adherence • Multi-tasking • Learned helplessness • Money as compensator for lost time • Traditional role based division of labour • Mothers not making space • Reduced communication time
	Environmental	• Convenience • Domestic workers • Broader family involvement		• City living • South African environment / crime

6.2.4 Differences between men and women

This section highlights and summarises the differences between men and women as described in this study and interpreted by the researcher. These differences and similarities are determined by the descriptive evidence established in the research and are summarised in Table 19. They have not been statistically concluded.

Table 19: Summary matrix of differences between men and women in their reported experiences in the work-family balance

		DIFFERENCES	SIMILARITIES
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN	**Division of Labour**	• Men spend more time at work; women with children and on household chores. • Men spend more time on health	• Both would like to spend less time at work
	Beliefs	• Men tend to have more traditional gender ideology; whereas women reported more egalitarian beliefs on gender ideology	• Salience of work role • Both view the mother as the primary leader at home • Both value the role of mother and father in raising children but see them as differently weighted roles. • Both view the women's role as important in breadwinning
	Emotions	• Women experience more guilt, anxiety and negative emotions about family role; men experience more guilt, anxiety and negative emotions about work role	• Both anxious to create personal time • Both have positive and negative emotions towards both roles
	Actions	• Women take leadership for family role; men follow in this role	• Both prepared to make structural changes to accommodate family roles

6.2.5 Mediators and Exacerbations

This section highlights and summarises the mediators and exacerbations of the work-family balance, as indicated in Table 20. This table serves to encapsulate the findings in an alternative view based on the descriptions already provided in this report.

Table 20: Summary matrix of reported mediators and exacerbations of the work-family balance

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT MEDIATORS AND EXACERBATIONS		
	MEDIATORS	**EXACERBATIONS**
Emotional	Self-awareness	Guilt
	Motivation to act	
	Empathy for those impacted	
	Personal courage to make decisions	
Skills and competencies	Prioritisation	
	Time management	
Behavioural	Sense of humour (short-term)	Multi-tasking
	Compartmentalising	
	Process of expectation adjustment	
	Role redefinition	Reactive role redefinition
	Physical exercise	No personal time
	Personal crisis	
Beliefs	Similar belief structures between husband and wife	High ideals
		Difference in rate of change between male and female beliefs.
Family	Strong father supporting role	Emotional support (creating ineffective coping mechanisms)
	Good martial relationship	Rate of change between men and women's roles
	Instrumental support of family	Role entrenchment doom loop
	Domestic worker (to a point)	Money as a substitute for time.
Personality	Personality hardiness (commitment to all aspects of life)	High achievements needs
Work	Reduced working hours	Instability in work environment
	Leaders balancing work and family	
	Flexible working hours	

6.3 Summary of findings

This section provides a summation map of the findings as illustrated in the descriptive evidence of the participants in this study. The map provides a high-level overview of the potential relationships between the experiences and processes as they emerged in the findings. The map demonstrates the interconnectivity between all family, work and personal experiences. It further suggests that a significant portion of the experiences in the work-family conflict are personal experiences that are either ameliorated or exacerbated by intrinsic factors such as emotional intelligence, beliefs and the resultant choices that are made.

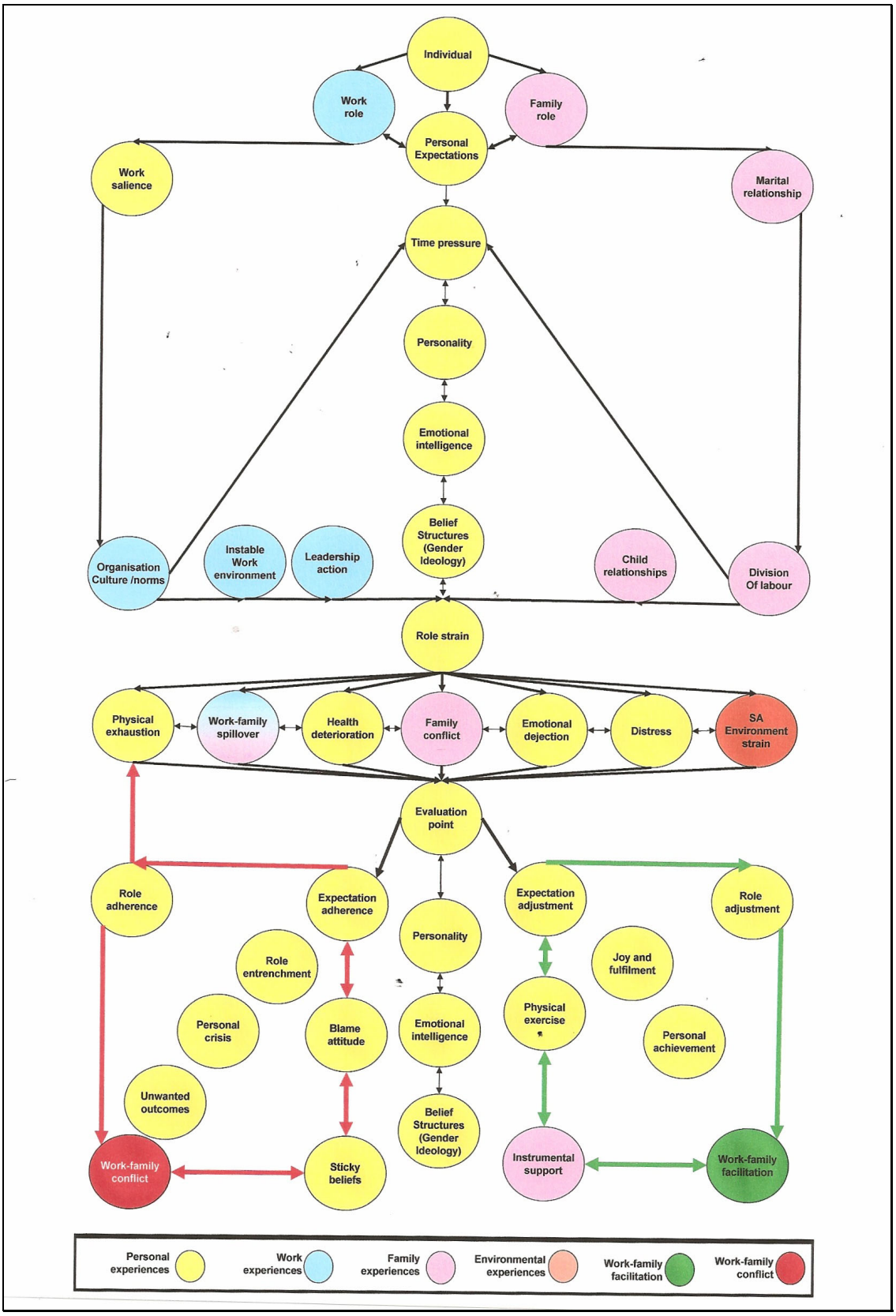


Figure 35: Summation relationship map of work-family balance experiences with suggested relationships

6.4 Validity and Reliability of this data

This section adopts a post-fact perspective on the findings in the research and grapples with the issues of validity and reliability of the findings. It does not aim to repeat discussions in Chapter 4 on general validity and reliability issues. Rather it seeks to contextualise the findings within key validity and reliability frameworks, offering specific insights based on the data.

6.4.1 Validity concerns on the role of the researcher

Alvermann *et al* (1996) suggest that qualitative research of this nature poses challenges in that researchers don't merely "mirror those experiences. We create them…there can never be a final, accurate representation of what was said, only different textual representations of different experiences". In this statement, Alvermann alludes to the role of the researcher in potentially contributing to (and contaminating) the veracity of the research findings. This research is no exception in its process as it relied heavily on the facilitation and interpretation of the researcher. Nonetheless, while validity of the findings may be questionable for this reason, it is the researcher's hope that the body of the research report is sufficiently delineated to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the experiences depicted by the research subjects and the interpretations made by the researcher. In this way, the reader is left either to agree with the conclusions on the topic; or derive alternative theories on the relationships between the various experiences. In addition, Braud and Anderson (1998) suggest that the personal involvement of the researcher can have validity benefits by providing the investigator with personal learning and allowing the readers to engage in a process of transformation through the representation of the results.

6.4.2 Validity of focus groups in collecting data

Wilson (1997:221) comments, "My own belief is that group sessions have various effects – they inhibit some respondents, draw out others, and

encourage exaggeration on the part of still others, depending on the topic, the composition of the group, the personality of the individual…thus, while we should not be surprised if group interviews produce results different from individual interviews, there are no reasons for assuming a priori that the results are more valid…". The data gained in this research is affected by the focus group methodology. It explains to some extent the lack of depth in the findings of family to work spillover; in that participants perhaps felt too vulnerable in a group setting to divulge issues around failings in a work environment as a result of their family commitments. In other ways, however, it certainly helped to derive deeper insights on issues around the family which seemed less intimidating to discuss in a group and the shared experience seemed to contribute to a comforting environment enabling participants to reveal information that perhaps would have been more threatening in a one-to-one setting.

6.4.3 Validity of personal experiences

The findings on the personal experiences of the work-family balance relies on the accuracy of the self-reports by the participants. It is suggested that validity of these particular experiences may have been compromised in the following ways:

1) Participants did seem to present inflated views of coping mechanisms and experiences in order to uphold socially desirable images. As the groups comprised successful individuals they quickly became aware of 'status' in the group. Thus it is anticipated that validity of the results, especially in the personal experiences, has been impacted by an element of socially desirable answers.
2) Time allocation relied on individual's calculations and interpretations of time spent on various activities. Their reported allocation of time may not correlate with the actual time expended. Furthermore, the findings on the experience of time pressures may not be unique to individuals experiencing the work-family balance. They may be indicative of an ever-

changing environment, the pace of which drives constant time pressures in all people engaged in careers. The research concludes that the findings on time demands are not likely to be unique to work-family balance. Rather, however, their validity lies in the impact that they have on family and work roles; as well as the associated impact on the individual. Thus readers should be mindful of drawing conclusions on the aspect of time and stress as being unique to this group. They are not likely to be unique in their definitive form; only in the impacts they have.

3) Emotional responses were captured in the workbooks and these seemed biased in their positive slant. It is suggested that the validity of these outputs may have been affected by a pre-defined list which participants could refer to. This may have prompted idealistic ideas. Greater validity may have been obtained by allowing participants to self select emotional responses without a list.

6.4.4 Validity of differences between men and women

The section on the differences between men and women relies on conversational counts, descriptive analysis of self-reports and interpretations. Its validity lies in the suggestive evidence it presents. It does not purport to present statistically significant differences. The indicative difference depicted may also be impacted by the following factors:

1) Only one married couple participated in the focus groups. Thus, the men reporting on gender ideology issues were not married to the women in the group reporting on the same gender ideology issues. This may explain the difference in that more of the men in the group may be married to stay at home wives. This alone could distort the suggestive findings.
2) The size of the sample was small and the research design not aimed at eliciting or confirming belief structures. Thus the suggestive experiences may be misrepresented.
3) The differences may also be accounted for by the national environment. Thus behaviours and attitudes in South Africa may be behind those in

America (as per the findings of previous researchers such as Barnett and Rivers, 1996).

6.4.5 Criterion validity of experiential view

Braud and Anderson (1998) suggest that aspects of validity can be verified through the emotional responses involved in the research. Thus, they contend, that feelings of aliveness contribute to a level of validity in the research merely through the resonance they generate, thereby suggesting that the research has achieved a level of importance and meaning in its results. The level of emotional involvement and resonance experienced by the readers is evidenced in their feedback comments, which are included in the figures below. The participant feedback suggests an element of resonance with the discussion. Furthermore, participants suggest that their involvement has to some extent helped them within their own life contexts, as indicated in Figure 36 and Figure 37.

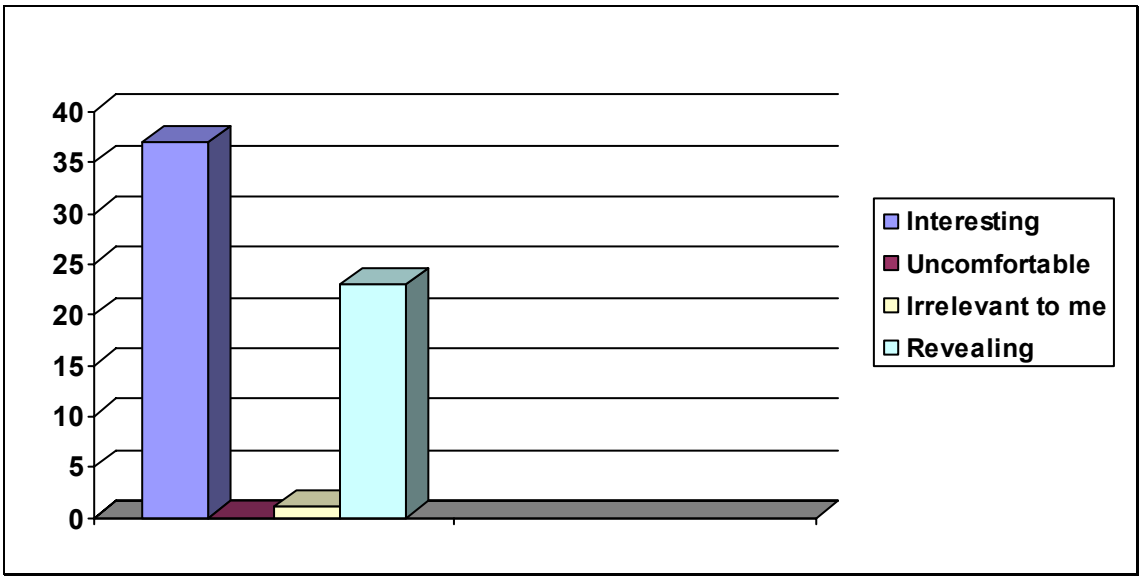


Figure 36: Participant response to involvement in research

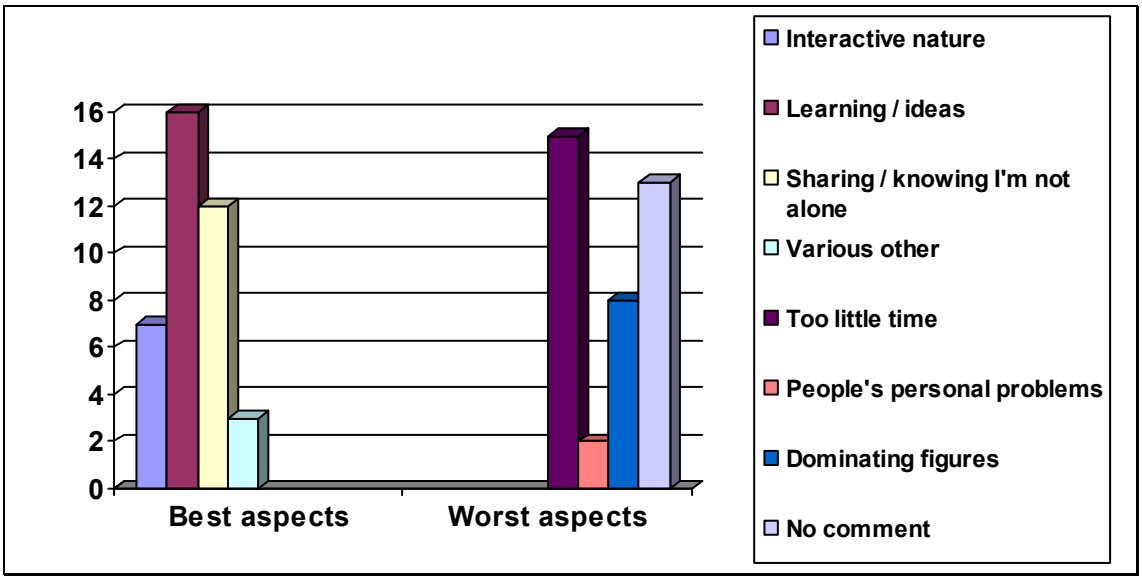


Figure 37: Participant comments on best and worst aspects of focus groups

6.4.6 Validity of descriptive statistics

The following validity concerns are noted as part of the descriptive statistics provided in this research.

1) The evidence is descriptive and thus conclusions about the factors have not been verified statistically.
2) While assertions have been made about the potential relationships between variables and experiences, these are interpretive and have not been verified through quantitative methods. Accordingly their use is limited to providing suggestive evidence for further research.

6.5 Recommendations for further research

As this research has been exploratory in nature, it provides multiple opportunities for further research, both in quantitative and qualitative avenues. These opportunities for further research are listed and described in Table 21.

Table 21: Recommendations for further research

Topic	Potential research topic	Possible methodology
Personal experiences of work-family	The role of adjusting expectations in mediating personal and role conflict.	Qualitative in depth and quantitative regression analysis
	Causal relationships between belief structures and experience of work-conflict or facilitation.	Quantitative regression analysis
	Causal relationship between personality hardiness and experience of work-family conflict.	Quantitative regression analysis
	Humour and what it says about underlying beliefs.	Qualitative exploration
	Factors of emotional intelligence that mediate work-family conflict.	Quantitative factor analysis and regression analysis
	Effects of physical exercise and food choices on work-family conflict.	Quantitative regression analysis
Family experiences of work-family conflict	Marital conflict and outcomes owing to work-family balance.	Qualitative in depth understanding of factors followed by factor analysis
	Family functions affected by work-family balance.	Longitudinal study
	Experiences of children with their fathers: historical and current views.	
	Egalitarian and traditional gender ideology: a comparative view of work-family conflict.	Quantitative analysis
	The role of the domestic worker in raising children not their own.	Qualitative exploration
	Work-family facilitation: an exploration of the skills learned at work applied at home and vice versa.	Qualitative exploration
	Conflict: working through, avoidance and outcomes.	Qualitative exploration
	Food choices in high income families balancing work and family.	Qualitative exploration
	Differences between divorced and married couples in their experience of work-family conflict.	Qualitative exploration
Work experiences of work-family conflict	Latest organisational attitudes to work-family issues.	Qualitative analysis
	Employee perceptions of work-family policies and their associated benefits.	Longitudinal study
	Effects of training leaders and managers on dealing with work-family issues.	Experimental design
	Prevalence of work interference as a result of family.	Factor and regression analysis
	Quantifying the intellectual capital loss owing to work-family capital.	Quantitative analysis into human capital loss to organisations owing to work-family conflict
	Work environments that mitigate work-family conflict.	Factor analysis

Topic	Potential research topic	Possible methodology
	Mothers and fathers who opt out of the workforce to raise their families.	Qualitative exploration
	Role prejudice in the workplace: experiences of career women.	Quantitative analysis
	Work salience in South Africa: reasons for the obsession.	Qualitative exploration and quantitative verification
Differences between men and women	Men, women and work-family conflict: an analysis of differences in beliefs, emotions and actions.	Quantitative analysis
General	Factor analysis of work-family conflict.	Quantitative factor analysis
	Conflict resolution principles: a framework for resolving work-family conflict.	Qualitative
	Fuzzy cognitive mapping of work-family conflict.	Fuzzy cognitive mapping

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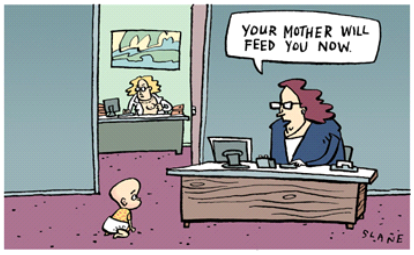
APPENDIX A: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

INVITATION...

You have been selected to participate in academic research on work-life balance.

Please read on…

CONTEXT...



"Family is the foundation that creates core values such as human trust and reciprocity. The role of business is an important factor affecting the family unit simply through the demands it places on human capital. Hence there is an important need to understand the nature, effects and management of the work-family conflict."

INFORMATION...

The research will be conducted through workshops that will be facilitated by Louise Hendey. The findings will be published by Wits Business School as partial completion of a Masters of Business Administration Degree.
The research topic is:

The Experience of the Work-family interplay by business managers in South Africa

The workshop will take you on a personal journey exploring the effects of managing a career and a family. It will explore ways that business people and professionals manage this balance and furthermore identify if there are any differences between men and women in how they experience and respond to this balance.

**** Workshop discussions and notes are treated confidentially and no names will be published.***

CALL TO ACTION...

1. **Please select one workshop time that would best suit you.**
   Please advise me by e-mail (lhendey@fnb.co.za) when you would like to attend by Friday, 14 July 2006.
   I will send you a confirmation with full details by e-mail.

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 19 July	14h30 to 17h00	Bank City, Johannesburg
Saturday, 22 July	09h00 to 11h30	Sandown, Johannesburg
Monday, 24 July	16h00 to 18h30	Sandown, Johannesburg
Wednesday, 26 July	08h30 to 11h00	Bank City, Johannesburg
Saturday, 29 July	11h00 to 13h30	Sandown, Johannesburg
Thursday, 3 August	15h00 – 17h30	Sandown, Johannesburg

THANK YOU...

Should you know of other business men or women who balance work and family, please send me their details so that I can invite them to participate.

In appreciation of your time, each participant will be given a gift voucher "treat".

Thank you in advance and I look forward to hearing about your experiences at one of the workshops.



APPENDIX B: WORKBOOK

WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

FOCUS GROUP WORKBOOK

Introduction and Instructions (10 minutes)

Thank you for participating in this research on the work-family balance. You are assisting in our understanding of the work-family balance in South Africa.

Please read these 3 **cardinal rules** for this micro journey we will take:

1. Kindly only turn each page when you are asked to do so. The process has been designed carefully to explore your experiences in a particular order.
2. Honesty and openness are key to understanding this issue. Please be as frank as possible as far as appropriate.
3. Confidentiality is important: What is discussed in this room should remain within the room. To aid confidentiality, no names will be published and kindly do not put your name on your workbook.

Please keep these **housekeeping rules**:

1. Please switch off all cell phones completely.
2. Please remain part of the workshop until its conclusion. We will run on time and appropriate "body breaks" will be provided.

EXERCISE 1: Personal Information (5 minutes)

Please spend 5 minutes completing this personal information. Tick the appropriate box or fill in the answer to the question.

Your Age:	Younger than 25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Older than 55
Marital Status:	Single	Married	Divorced	Committed relationship	Specify other
Gender:	Male	Female			
Number of children:	1	2	3	4	5+
Ages of children:	0-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16-20
Who has the primary responsibility for your children?	Husband	Wife	Granny	Domestic worker	Specify other
Who spends the most significant time with your children?	Domestic worker	Mom	Dad	Grandparent	Specify other
Your role at work:					
What industry is your company in?					
Type of employment:	Full-time	Contract	Part-time	Flexi-time	Temporary

If applicable, your partner's role at work:					
Your partner's type of employment:	Full-time	Contract	Part-time	Flexi-time	Temporary
Gross Annual Family Income:	<R120k	R120 – R250k	R250 – R500k	R500-R1000k	>R1m
How is your family income made up? (Tick as many as appropriate)	My income	Partner Income	Family assistance	Investments	Loans
If you are a 2 income household, is this because:	You rely on both incomes	You both want to work	Specify other:		
Why are you participating in this research?					

Exercise 2a (10 minutes)

Self depiction before:

In the space provided below, draw a picture representing yourself and your life before you had your own family. Use the images you experienced in the visualisation exercise.

Exercise 2b: (10 minutes)

Self depiction after (5 minutes):

In the space provided below, draw a picture representing your life now. Use the images you experienced in the visualisation exercise.

Exercise 3a: Time Division (10 minutes)

Step 1a: Indicate how many hours you spend on each of the following activities an average week.

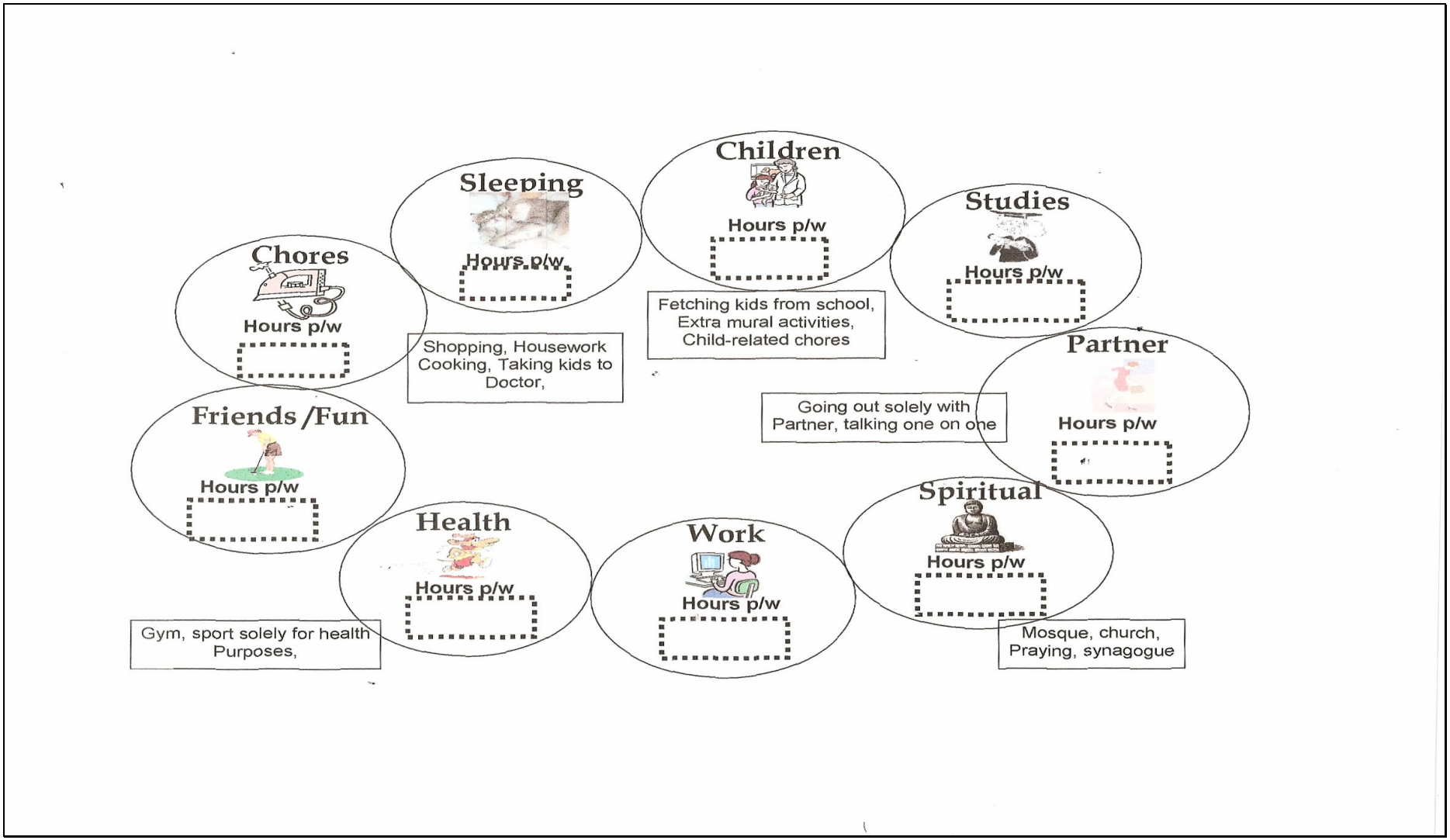
Step 1b: Please make sure that you indicate how much time you actually spend; not how much time you would like to spend.

Step 1c: There are 168 hours in a week. Do all the categories first and if you cannot account for some of the time, just leave these hours out. Do not go and re-adjust your original estimates to make up 168 hours.

Step 2a: Look at the time breakdown and indicate with a X next to any areas where you feel that you are spending too much time on this activity relative to how important it is to you.

Step 2b: Where you feel you are not spending enough time on a particular activity put a ✔ next to it.

Time Division Diagram



Exercise 3b: Experience Discussion (30 minutes)

Discussion:

How do you experience the work-family balance in your life?

Your family relationships?

Your work?

Your social life?

Your health?

Your spirituality?

Your children?

Your friends?

Your general well-being?

10 MINUTE BODY BREAK

Exercise 4: Work-family sentence construction (10 minutes):

Complete the sentences below to reflect how you feel and think as honestly as possible:

One day my children will criticise me for…	
When I get home from work I…	
As far as family goes, my company…	
My main role at home is…	
My partner's main role at home is…	
The issue that causes the most tension or conflict at home is…	
I work hardest to achieve success in…	
The thing I have neglected the most is…	
When family and work are in conflict I…	
I never get time to…	
My family thinks I…	
The person(s) who keep our family together is/ are…	
The mother in the family should…	
The father in the family should…	

Exercise 5: Emotive responses (10 minutes):

In the blocks provided, use single words to describe the most common feelings you have about each of the following:

MY PARTNER	MY CHILDREN
MY SELF	**MY WORK**

Adjectives for emotive responses:

You may use other words provided they describe an emotion.

Anger	Discouraged	Hopeless	Hurt
Cheated	**Helpless**	**Humiliated**	**Cowardly**
Animosity	**Remorseful**	**Uneasy**	**Rejected**
Repelled	**Sad**	**Insecure**	**Sorry**
Cold	**Inadequate**	**Lonely**	**Revulsion**
Indifferent	**Anxious**	**Trapped**	**Sorrow**
Hated	**Tense**	**Repulsion**	**Sad**
Distrustful	**Annoyed**	**Mad**	**Ashamed**
Nervous	**Loved**	**Fearful**	**Nervous**
Annoyed	**Blessed**	**Enriched**	**Proud**
Despair	**Alienated**	**Withdrawn**	**Disappointed**
Depressed	**Guilty**	**Self-loathing**	**Unattractive**
Joyous	**Inspired**	**Appreciated**	**Passion**
Cowardly	**Excited**	**Overwhelmed**	**Rage**
Fear	**Challenged**	**Worthless**	**Grumpy**
Supported	**Safe**	**Loyal**	**Tolerant**
Disinterested	**Bored**	**Jealous**	**Connected**
Impatient	**Patient**	**Mature**	**Childish**
Tense	**Kind**	**Creative**	**Responsible**
Assured	**Silly**	**Humble**	**Contempt**
Insecure	**Unforgiving**	**Trusting**	**Committed**

Exercise 6: Work-family frustrations and rewarding behaviours (10 minutes):

Frustrating or Rewarding Behaviours with respect to work-family	Feelings	Attribution	Reaction
When you….you always…never…	**I feel…**	**Because…**	**Then I react by…**
1) When my boss asks me why I am late	So annoyed	She has no appreciation of my life	Looking for a new job.
When my boss / work:			
When my partner:			

When my kids:			

Adapted from: Hendrix, H (2003): Getting the love you want, *Imago The institute for Relationship Building*

Exercise 7: Coping Mechanisms (15 minutes):

Discussion:

How would you describe the coping mechanisms or the “things that help” or “don’t help” you in your work-family balance.

Feedback Form

Please complete these feedback questions to help improve the research methodology.

I found this research exercise to be: **(tick as many as appropriate)**	Interesting	Uncomfortable	Irrelevant to me	Revealing
The best aspects of this research exercise were:				
The worst aspects of this research exercise were:				
This research could be improved by:				
The pace of the research was:	Too slow	Appropriate	Too rushed	Specify other
Other discussions / issues that could be included as part of this research are:				
Other general comments:				