WORK-LIFE CONFLICT EXPERIENCES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

by

MAMOLOKO FLORAH RANGONGO

THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree

DOCTOR OF COMMERCE

in

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

in the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND LAW

(School of Economics and Management)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Supervisor: Prof. T.S. Setati

Co-supervisor: Prof. M.P. Sebola

2021

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beloved late father who motivated me by believing in me and supporting me in so many ways.

Also, to my beloved late sister, a praying, loving and often misunderstood daughter, sister and mother. She was a pillar of strength for me and supported me spiritually.

DECLARATION

I, Mamoloko Rangongo**,** declare that the thesis "Work-life conflict experiences and cultural expectations of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province", hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree Doctor of Commerce in Human Resource Management, has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

SIGNATURE **DATE**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to many people who have supported me and encouraged me in many ways throughout this journey. I would like to specifically thank the following people:

I am extremely grateful to my supervisors Prof TS Setati and Prof MP Sebola for their invaluable advice, guidance, continuous support, commitment and overall insights in this field of work as well as in research throughout this journey.

All the women who took their time to complete my questionnaires, as well as those who agreed to be interviewed for purposes of this study. Without all of these women's cooperation, this study would not have been possible. I cannot thank you enough ladies.

My colleagues at work who supported me in their own different ways and afforded me space to work on my studies

My family and friends who have always been there for me. I appreciate your support and encouragement, taking the time to listen to me, as well as your prayers that sustained me throughout this journey. To my parents who have always believed in me. My husband and children also for believing in me, supporting me and encouraging me during this and other life's journeys. This journey took the time I could have and should have spent with you!

Finally, and most importantly, to the Almighty God who gives me hope, sustains and preserves me. "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." 1 Chronicles 16:34 (NKJV).

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses work-life conflict, a topical phenomenon for the career progression and wellbeing of women. Notwithstanding a lot of interest in the topic, as well as various endeavours after treaties and legislation to support women in the workplace it continues to be a subject of research interest since work-life balance has not been achieved yet. The current study intended to explore what the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand by work-life conflict, as well as their experiences and to proffer a framework for understanding the work-life conflict of women managers. The study highlights that numerous working women are still inundated with non-work responsibilities, which results in conflict with the expected responsibilities in the work environment. The resultant work-life conflict continues to have career-limiting effects on women. The study employed a mixed-methods design to collect data. The quantitative part of the study used questionnaires to collect data and a total of 68 usable questionnaires were returned. For the qualitative part individual interviews were conducted with a total of 16 women. Given the mixed nature of the data, the research applied two genres of analytical techniques, viz. thematic analysis and non-parametric relational analysis. The findings of the study indicate that most of the women managers in the study understand work-life conflict to mean work-to-life interference. The women managers conceptualise life-to-work interference as a normal phenomenon, which serves as a function of maintaining homeostasis in their social structure. The results further suggested that only the workplace has to be changed for them to attain work-life balance. The women managers in the study also appear to experience physical and psychological health problems due to not coping with work-life conflict. The research results deliver invaluable information that can be employed in strategies that attempt to alleviate the negative experiences of work-life conflict by women managers. This study has developed an integrative framework for understanding the work-life conflict of women managers in the public sector. None of the existing theories has propounded any integrative framework for understanding the work-life conflict of women managers in the public sector. The current findings add to the knowledge on addressing the work-life conflict of women managers by delivering context-specific recommendations of what organisations can do to attain work-life balance.

Key words: work-life conflict; coping strategies; public sector; women managers; work-life balance; Integrated work-life conflict framework

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women is a topic that is on the development agenda of most countries. Globally, more and more women have entered the workplace and with this, changes in the dynamics of their work and non-work experiences have been noted (Agarwala, Arizkuren-Eleta, Del Castillo, Muniz-Ferrer & Gartzia, 2014; French, Dumani, Allen & Shockley, 2018; Van Egdom, 2020). South Africa has entered into treaties, as well as promulgating labour legislation that is meant for supporting women's entry into the workplace and while there to progress to management positions (Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development, OECD, 2019). As a result, more women are slowly moving into higher positions of leadership and management where they can contribute to important decision-making processes. However, not enough progress has been made in terms of empowering women (OECD, 2019; Ajayi, Olawande, Jegede, Amoo, & Olawole-Isaac, 2020). According to an International Labour Organisation Report (ILO, 2019), although women are in the majority and their entry into institutions of higher learning has increased to surpass that of men in some instances, there are still fewer women in management positions. Of the 13,000 companies that were surveyed in 70 countries, it was found that women only held less than 30% of positions in management (ILO, 2019). The lower numbers are partly due to the burden that women still have to carry in terms of household chores than a few of their male counterparts have to carry (OECD, 2019).

In South Africa, the public sector has made remarkable progress in empowering women into decision-making positions. According to Coetzee (2019), by 2016 men were occupying 69.4% of the public sector top management positions and 79.7% of the private sector top management positions. However, as of June 2019 women ministers in cabinet reached about 50% while their deputies increased to about 42.8% (Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities Report, 2019). Unfortunately, the private sector is still lagging where women still make up only 21.2% of top management positions, 20.7% of directorships, 29.4% of executive management and only 11.8% of company CEOs (Business Women's Association of South Africa, BWASA, 2017).

Although some strides have been achieved in empowering women and the demography of the workplace is changing as a result; conventional views on the expected roles of men and women in society have been slower to change (Haines, Deaux & Lofaro, 2016; Sinden, 2017; Akinnusi, Oyewunmi & Sonubi, 2018). Unrelenting maintenance of conventional views on the domestic roles and responsibilities of women do not take into account the fact that not all men are career-driven and more and more women prefer to be in employment and to move higher into positions of management and leadership instead of remaining in the domestic arena (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2015). According to Jackson and Fransman (2020), for organisations to be able to make better progress in achieving gender parity, more effort needs to be exerted through supportive human resource policies among other things. More flexibility is required in the workplace to assist women to balance their careers with their family roles and personal goals, i.e. the issue of work-life conflict (WLC), especially for women needs to be earnestly considered and attended to (Wong, Chan & Teh, 2020). Research has shown that globally WLC is among some of the significant factors that make it difficult for women to make substantive progress into especially positions of leadership in organisations (Ho & Hallman, 2016; Ajayi et al. 2020). South African women's progress into decision-making positions is also affected (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014). As a result of conventional views on the roles of men and women, women who wish to progress in their careers are forced to make various sacrifices in their private/family/social lives while those women who want to raise a family and spend time at home may be expected to make sacrifices in their careers (Broadbridge, 2009; Shah & Shah, 2016; Wong et al., 2020). According to Agarwala, Mishra and Dixit (2015) work-life conflict, i.e. the challenge of balancing roles and responsibilities in the workplace with expectations in the non-work domain is a challenge for especially women.

The rise in the employment of women has brought to the fore several issues that need to be addressed (Bae & Goodman, 2014). One such issue is the question of how to reconcile women's claim to equity and equality in the employment environment with their continuing perceived and expected responsibility for domestic work and family care. There is also the uncertainty about how the unpaid work of caring for children, spouses, the aged and other significant members of the social structure with whom women interact, which is usually assigned to women, will take place given the increased participation of women in paid employment. Additionally, there is also the uncertainly about how women, men, families and societies will adapt to these changing circumstances (Lyonette, Crompton & Wall, 2007; Bae & Goodman, 2014). Accordingly, concerns about the appropriate balance between work and

non-work/family life have intensified as the participation of women in the labour market has both increased and become more intricate (Munn & Chaudhuri, 2015). These concerns include how women manage to balance their family/domestic needs and work demands without one domain suffering, i.e. how women personally navigate their way through these demands and integrate the demands of their different roles and role expectations, both at home and work (Bisschoff, Koen & Ryke, 2018). The type of demands that communities impose on women even though women face increasing demands at work, as well as the fact that these demands in their roles at work are, in turn, dictated by changes in the world of work, is also of concern. It is also crucial to consider the different types of support that working women require to enable them to balance their non-work roles with the need to perform well at work and advance their careers (Agarwala, Arizkuren-Eleta, Del Castillo, Muniz-Ferrer & Gartzia, 2014; Akobo & Stewart, 2020).

Researchers have suggested that the WLC experience of individuals may differ in the context of their different cultural background like their race/ethnicity, religion or language (Henderson, 2014; Lu et al., 2010; Munn & Chaudhuri 2015; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011). Various studies have been conducted comparing different cultural groups across countries. However, the results have been inconsistent. There are those studies that suggest differences in the way in which different groups react when faced with conflicting responsibilities in the work and home domains (Lyonette et al., 2007; Spector et al., 2005). For example, Lu et al. (2010) found culture-specific differences between the Taiwanese and British participants in their study while Liu et al. (2008) found differences between their Chinese and American respondents. A study by Mathis, Brown and Randle (2009) found differing ways of coping and reacting to WLC between Blacks and Whites in the United States. In South Africa, Grzcywacz and Marks (2000) and Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found that White and African groups experienced higher levels of WLC as compared to the Coloured and Indian groups. Furthermore, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found that their respondents who spoke African languages experienced higher levels of WLC (specifically family-to-work interference) as compared to the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking respondents.

Although it is thought that religion, as part of a culture, has some effect on how individuals react to work and life challenges, it seems like there has not been much research on the topic. In India Tsai (2008) found out that the Hindu belief in it being the duty of the man to protect the family from harm plays a role in helping, particularly their women, to cope with life-to-

work conflict. Kulik and Rayyan (2006) found differences in the way in which Muslim and Jewish women react to and cope with work-life challenges. Henderson (2014: 5) found that "religiosity buffered the negative effects of general role overload …". Individual involvement in religious activities has been found to be effective as a significant psychological resource during times of stress and strain thereby helping individuals to cope and manage stressful circumstances. However, Henderson (2014) goes further to say that more research still needs to be done in terms of religion and WLC. Thus, researchers have suggested that it is important to research work-life conflict experiences across different cultures (Lu et al. 2010; Akanji, 2012; Akinnusi, Oyewunmi & Sonubi, 2018).

In South Africa research on work-life conflict and balance has also been ongoing in various sectors and regions of the country. However, no research could be found that has been undertaken in the public sector of Limpopo Province. For instance, Downes & Koekemoer (2011) conducted their study in the private financial sector, Jckson and Fransman (2018) as well as Doubell and Struwig (2014) in the higher education sector. Doubell and Struwig's study had participants who were also from the private sector. Other researchers in the country conducted their studies in the mining sector (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Ruzungunde & Mjoli, 2020). Cotzee and Kluyts (2020) investigated the work-life conflict of doctors from both the public and private sectors. However, their study was not specifically in Limpopo Province and not on women managers. A similar situation is with the study conducted by Bisschoff, Koen and Ryke (2018) on social workers from both sectors but not from the Limpopo Province specifically. Akinnusi et al. (2018) conducted their study in the public sector in the North West Province of South Africa. Their study particularly showed the need to conduct more studies on women as they found out that women were more affected by work-family conflict when compared to their male counterparts. Their study highlights the need to conduct more studies in the public sector, in other areas of the country and on women to clarify the women's experiences further given the need to emancipate them (Akinnusi et al. 2018). The studies in this sector were mostly in the private sector and not in the Limpopo Province. It can be surmised that more work-life conflict studies need to be devoted to different sectors, like the public sector, as well as various other regions of the country. The issue of work-life conflict and balance is crucial for employees in all sectors as contentment at work is important for overall organisational performance (Wolor, Siti, Zahra & Martono 2020).

In sum, this study intended to explore the experiences of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province regarding how they navigate work-life conflict in their cultural context, i.e. the demands from their ethnic and religious groups. The study wanted to explore how these women managers cope with the conflict that emanates from the demands placed on them by their work organisations as employees while simultaneously having to fulfil the role expectations that their families and societies still anticipate of them, i.e. how they navigate the conflict between the work and non-work demands (work-life conflict).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although WLC may have a negative effect on anyone, the problem is that research studies indicate that it affects women more than men (Agarwala, Mishra & Dixit, 2015; Jackson & Fransman, 2020). This higher negative effect on women is due to unrelenting societal expectations of the roles and responsibilities of women especially in the non-work domain (Agarwala et al., 2014; Ngubane, 2010; Afolabi, 2013; Akinnusi et al., 2018). The problem of WLC and its effects has been researched mostly in western societies and researchers have advocated for more research in other cultures (Aryee, 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Akanji, 2012; Lewis and Beauregard, 2018), hence the focus of the current study on the work-life conflict experiences of different cultures.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Complicating the problem of WLC in women is the fact that with increasing roles of women in the workplace, particularly coupled with their progress and empowerment into positions of leadership and management, there is an increase in work-life conflict (Ajayi et al. 2020). Another problem that emanates as a result is that the human resource policies that are in place to help employees with coping with working life are generic, i.e. they do not focus specifically on addressing women issues, especially issues of WLC. Therefore, this study wanted to explore the WLC experiences of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province. Another motivation for the study is to determine what the women managers think can help them in navigating the challenges of WLC.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the Study

This study aimed to explore the work-life conflict experiences of women managers within the public sector of Limpopo Province.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To find out what the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand by work-life conflict.
- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict.
- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict.
- To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict.
- To investigate the kinds of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women managers in their non-work space as well as in their workplace that affect their experiences of work-life conflict.
- To determine whether the women managers perceive the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them as culturally based or not, i.e. as differing according to their different ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations.
- To design a framework that public organisations, specifically in the province of Limpopo may utilise to design programmes that may help women managers, as well as those women who are aspiring to become managers, to navigate the challenges of work-life conflict.

1.4.3 Research Questions

The research questions formulated for the study are:

- What do the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand by work-life conflict?
- Do the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict or not?
- Which one do they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict?

- What are the kinds of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women managers from their non-work space that affect their experiences of work-life-conflict?
- What are the kinds of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women managers from their workplace that affect their experiences of work-life-conflict?
- Do the women managers think that the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them are influenced by their ethnic or religious background, i.e. are they culturally based or not?
- What kind of framework can be designed that public organisations, specifically in the province of Limpopo, may utilise to design programmes that may help women managers, as well as those women who are aspiring to be managers, to navigate the challenges of work-life conflict?

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.5.1 Work-Life Conflict

The concepts of work-life-conflict, work-family conflict or work/non-work conflict have been widely researched and defined in several contexts and frameworks. These terms are often used interchangeably, "representing the interface of employees' professional and personal lives" (Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007, p. 117) and address the tensions/pressures and trade-offs that may be associated with combining paid work with other interests, primarily family (French, Dumani, Allen & Shockley, 2018; Ryan, Ma, Hsiao & Ku, 2015). WLC has also been defined as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Madsen & Hammond, 2005, p. 151). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985, p. 77) define work-life conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in such a way that participation in the work (or family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (or work) role". Although there will also be a tendency to use the concepts interchangeably in the current study, the term work-life-conflict will be preferred. 'Life' in the WLC concept describes factors such as unpaid work role and responsibilities, in particular family commitments, obligations to the community and society, leisure and anything that does not constitute formal employment (Baltes, Clark & Chakrabarti, 2010; Boles, Wong et al., 2020).

The definition of work-life conflict places emphasis on the roles and responsibilities that are expected from individuals from the work and non-work spheres. Thus, WLC is bidirectional,

meaning that the interference can be from work to life or life interfering with work. The bidirectional is defined underneath as either work-to-life conflict or life-to-work conflict.

1.5.2 Work-to-Life Conflict

Work-to-life conflict is when the roles and responsibilities expected of an individual in their work environment make it difficult for them to be effective individuals in the life (non-work) domain (Calvert, Russell, O'Connell & McGinnity, 2009; Zhang, Siu, Hu & Zhang, 2014; Ajala, 2017). For instance, a mother who is working late, after official working hours, may concentrate more on her paying job and thus may neglect to help her child who is struggling academically with their homework. That neglect may end up in even bigger family issues than anticipated.

1.5.3 Life-to-Work Conflict

Life-to-work conflict is when the roles and responsibilities expected from the life space make it difficult for individuals to be effective members and participants in the work environment (Zhang et al., 2014; Ajala, 2017). For instance, worrying about a sick child can make it difficult for a mother to concentrate at work and as a result, performance may be negatively affected.

The intention of the current study, as outlined in the research objectives, was to explore whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict as well as life-to-work conflict. After exploring that, the study aimed to investigate which of the directions of work-life conflict the women in the study experience more.

1.5.4 Public Sector

The public sector includes government as well as public enterprises, which, in South Africa, are called parastatals or state-owned agencies (SOEs) (Fourie, 2014). "The public sector consists of governments and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services" (Institute of Internal Auditors, 2011, p.3). In the South African context, the government's components are listed in Schedule 3 of the Public Service Act 1994 as amended by Act 30 of 2007 while the provincial departments are listed in Schedule 2 of the same act. For purposes of this study, the targeted

participants were from all the Limpopo provincial departments as listed in Schedule 2 of the act.

1.5.5 Culture

Culture is a concept that has been defined by several writers and researchers in a variety of contexts and situations. The term culture is used to describe the values, beliefs and practices of a society, especially where these are seen to be related to either tradition or religion. The culture is the foundation of every society and as such it determines both the way in which daily affairs and activities are conducted, as well as the understanding of the reasons why these daily affairs and activities are conducted in such a way (Schalkwyk, 2000). In addition, culture embraces roles and responsibilities, ways of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, shared value systems, traditions, the customs of a social group and their attitudes and beliefs, as well as including the arts (Tharp, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). Some of the attributes that define culture include the race or ethnicity, language or religion practised by a certain group (Schalkwyk, 2000; Lidzy, 2005). The current study selected to investigate whether the ethnicity and religion of the women managers in the study have any relationship with the roles and responsibilities expected of them in the work and non-work domains.

In most societies that have cultures that still tend to emphasise patriarchal orientations, South Africa included, women are often expected to be home keepers and shoulder almost all family and household responsibilities of e.g. cooking and taking care of their children and all family members, including extended families in some instances (Afolabi, 2012; Eagly & Wood, 2012; Agarwal, 2015; Akobo & Stewart, 2020). In addition to the household responsibilities, women are expected to help to take care of their families' economic needs as a result of the changing economic times that make it important to have two incomes (dual-earner couples) (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Muasya, 2016).

It is these role expectations in both the work and non-work environments that the study intends to explore, particularly in terms of how they relate to the women managers' experiences of WLC.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is imperative upon all researchers to observe ethical principles while conducting research and even after completion of a research project. Ethics can be defined as "the moral principles governing the conduct of an individual, a group or an organisation" (Quinlan, Babin, Carr, Griffin & Zikmund, 2015, pp. 39-40). According to Quinlan et al. (2015) research is about people undertaking their work properly, honestly and ensuring that they do not harm their research participants or anyone that may be an interested party in their research or anything. The following ethical principles were taken into consideration during this study:

Ethical clearance: An application was made to the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) to request for ethical clearance before collecting data from the participants for purposes of this study (Appendix D).

Informed consent: In any research that involves people as participants, those participants should be informed of the nature of the study and be allowed to agree to take part in the study or not (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). In this study, the nature of the research, its purpose and envisaged benefits were explained to the participants to enable them to give their informed consent before they could take part in the study.

Voluntary participation: In addition to seeking informed consent from participants in this study, the participants were also informed that they are not forced to participate, i.e. their participation is on a voluntary basis, that should they feel uncomfortable with any question or discussion during data collection they are free to decline to answer that question or engage in that particular discussion. The participants were also informed that they are free to withdraw from participating in the study at any point should they wish to do so without any dire consequences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Bias: In the context of the current study was addressed as follows:

As the study is utilising mixed-methods design, different sampling methods were used for the quantitative and the qualitative parts of the study used probability sampling. For the qualitative part, purposive sampling was used, applying defined criteria for selection of the participants (Saunders et al. 2019). For the quantitative part all the eligible candidates were including in the study i.e. there was no sub-selection of candidates.

For qualitative data collection, only one researcher was involved in collecting and transcribing the data so that whatever bias and/or subjectivity are brought to the interview sessions remain

the same for all the participants. Besides, the researcher did not ask leading questions. Therefore, this meant that the researcher needed to self-reflect as data were being collected and transcribed to ask him/herself if the information is more from the researcher's preconceptions than from the participant's (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

Feedback was sought from colleagues of the researcher, who are also researchers (Du Preez, 2017). Seeking feedback was meant for them to give input in terms of 1) the information collected, i.e. whether it sounds dominated by the researcher's prejudices and/or personal philosophies; and 2) ask them to each give some input on the themes teased out from the information collected during interviews, i.e. whether they (themes) are not too researcher biased (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, the student-supervisor relationship also assists in checking the data for such bias from the researcher. Some participants, two of them specifically, were requested to read the transcribed data for them to confirm if the results resonate with the information they gave during the interviews. The analysis and results from the quantitative part of the study were used to support the qualitative results, i.e. triangulation (Wium & Wium, 2019).

Anonymity: "An idealised view of anonymity is that a person will never be traceable from data presented about them." (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015, p. 67) This is an ideal notion that should be attempted in order not to harm participants in any way. In this study, no identifying information was required from the participants so that their identity is kept anonymous at all times. However, during interviews, the interviewer still got to know the participants by name. In the current study to keep the participants' identities anonymous the following measures were taken: Firstly, during the data collection phase only audio recordings were utilised (i.e. no video recording) so that the data cannot be attached to the face of the participant; secondly, during the process of transcription and writing down of notes from the interviews, real names were not used, instead pseudonyms were written down; and finally, the exact work portfolio of the participants will not be revealed, - for instance it will not be mentioned that the person is a senior manager of supply chain management department. The reason for this is that there are few women managers in organisations; accordingly, revealing the sub-department they work for may make it easy to know who the participant is.

In addition, during the presentation of the data collected from the participants, in any form, i.e. either in writing or orally, the researcher did not in any way reveal the names of the participant(s), i.e. who said what and gave what information. Accordingly, presentations were

made in such a way that recipients of results from the study will not be able to decipher exactly which participant gave what information.

Confidentiality: In addition to not asking for identifying information, the data collected from the participants are kept confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Recorded raw data are kept in a password-controlled computer and should there be the need to share the information with the supervisor in this case, a password will be sent separately to the supervisor. The information collected will also be kept confidential and, in case of further publication(s), no identifying information of the participants will be revealed.

No harm: The study, because of its nature, will not inflict any physical harm on the participants. The participants in the interviews were treated courteously and respectfully (Arifin, 2018). The questions were phrased and asked in a sensitive way, i.e. in such a way that they did not cause any embarrassment to the participants or put undue stress on them or make them feel worthless as human beings. The way the questions were phrased, the participants were informed that they are free to not answer any question(s) that made them particularly uncomfortable. It is also hoped that the interview process, in and of itself, assisted the participants in being aware of issues that this study is exploring and trying to contribute towards. Through awareness, the women managers can perhaps start thinking about programmes that can help them and aspiring managers to cope better with work-life conflict and progress better within the hierarchies of organisations.

After care: There was a concerted effort to minimise psychological harm to the participants. However, researchers have suggested that the conflict that arises from work and non-work demands can have an impact on the emotional wellbeing of individuals (Panatika, Badria, Rajaba, Rahmana & Shah, 2011; Winefield, 2014; Du Preez, 2017). For that reason, the researcher was cognisant of the fact that this topic for the current research study may perhaps evoke some personal experiences and open psychological reactions that may need to be attended to. The researcher was ready that should such emotional reactions arise the participants could have been given referral options of professionals they could consult.

Dissemination of results: In the end, data collected from the study were collated and written-up with integrity, as well as in an honest manner in the form of a study report. Appropriate credit was given where it should be given in terms of acknowledgement of sources used during the whole research process. The report based on the study will be made accessible and available to interested stakeholders.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study explores the effect of cultural effects, specifically as demanded by their ethnic and religious societies on the work-life conflict experiences of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province. For that reason, this study contributes towards improving overall knowledge of the specific mandates, i.e. roles and responsibilities that are still expected of women from their non-work domain despite their level of employment. South Africa has legislation (Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998) that through Affirmative Action Policies promote the emancipation of women in the workplace. Subsequently, women are empowered and are making progress towards positions of more decision-making at leadership and management levels. At the same time, researchers (Broadbridge, 2009; Duran & DelCampo, 2010; Ashfaq et al., 2013; Doubell & Struwig, 2014) have shown that unfortunately women are still held back from realising success and progress in organisations and their performance is affected by negative issues that include WLC. It has been determined that cultural demands on women affect their overall organisational performance and thus eventual progress in managerial hierarchies (Carikci et al., 2002; Duran & DelCampo, 2010; Ajayi et al. 2020). Unfortunately, those specific cultural demands that form the core of what WLC is about, in specific contexts have not been determined, implying that human resource policies remain generic and not addressing the specific women issues as dictated by the cultural contexts within which they find themselves. Therefore, identifying these specific cultural expectations, how they affect the women managers particularly, will assist in informing human resource policies that deal specifically with women challenges thereby helping women to navigate those challenges as they move up to positions of management and leadership. The specific policy framework will expectantly guide strategies that can enhance the quality of the working lives of women, especially those who are either in management or aspire to become managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province, thereby improving their (women) overall well-being and eventual organisational performance.

It is anticipated that the study will stimulate further research into information that can be utilised for the envisaged policy framework. In addition, the results from the current study will hopefully stimulate academic human resource debates on matters that impact women empowerment and career progress in the workplace.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study is structured into six chapters as follows:

- **Chapter one: Overview of the Study**

  This chapter presents the overview of the study and consists of the following:

  Introduction: outlines the background information to the study and also a way of giving the blueprint of the entire thesis.

  Problem statement: this study highlights the difficulty of employees, especially women, faced with the expected roles and responsibilities in both the work and home domains, resulting in a conflict that they have to navigate in order to remain effective members of both the work and the societal systems. The problem is also the fact that, although research has been conducted about these roles and responsibilities, a lot of research still needs to be conducted in non-western contexts, something that the current study attends to.

  Purpose of the study: to attend to the problem as outlined, the study is guided by research questions and objectives that are outlined in this first chapter.

  Definition of terms: to contextualise the study, key concepts utilised in the study are also defined in this chapter.

  Ethical considerations: when conducting research some ethical concerns have to be taken into consideration. This section in the chapter outlines those ethical issues that were considered in conducting the study, as well as indicating in what way they were considered.

  Significance of the study: the envisaged benefits of the study to organisations, academia and individuals are outlined.

  Summary: the chapter ends with a summary of what was deliberated in the chapter.

- **Chapter two: Theoretical Framework**

  The second chapter discusses the theoretical background upon which the study is grounded. Role theory, with its variants, is discussed and shown how it relates to the current study. The concept of culture is also defined and the link with the objectives of the study is indicated.

- **Chapter three: Empirical Literature**

  This chapter presents research data from previous studies on work-life conflict as well as on culture. The chapter also illustrates the importance of studying the work-life conflict concept for especially women in management positions. Then a summary of the empirical work on work-life conflict is outlined.

- **Chapter four: Research Methodology**

This study uses a mixed-method research design. The chapter gives details about how data were collected and analysed. The validity and reliability of the research methodology are also explained in this chapter.

- **Chapter five: Study Results**

  The findings from the data collected for the study are presented in this chapter. Both qualitative and quantitative data are described and the analysis combined in alignment with the aims of the study as set out in the first chapter. The chapter synthesises and discusses the results and ends with a summary of the results.

- **Chapter six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

  The final chapter of the study outlines the overall conclusions of the study based on the study findings. The chapter then concludes by providing a framework that may be useful in helping women managers navigate the challenges of work-life conflict and suggestions are made for future studies as well. The chapter also shows the potential limitations of the current study. The chapter closes with a summary of the study.

The overall structure of the study is illustrated in figure 1.1 below:

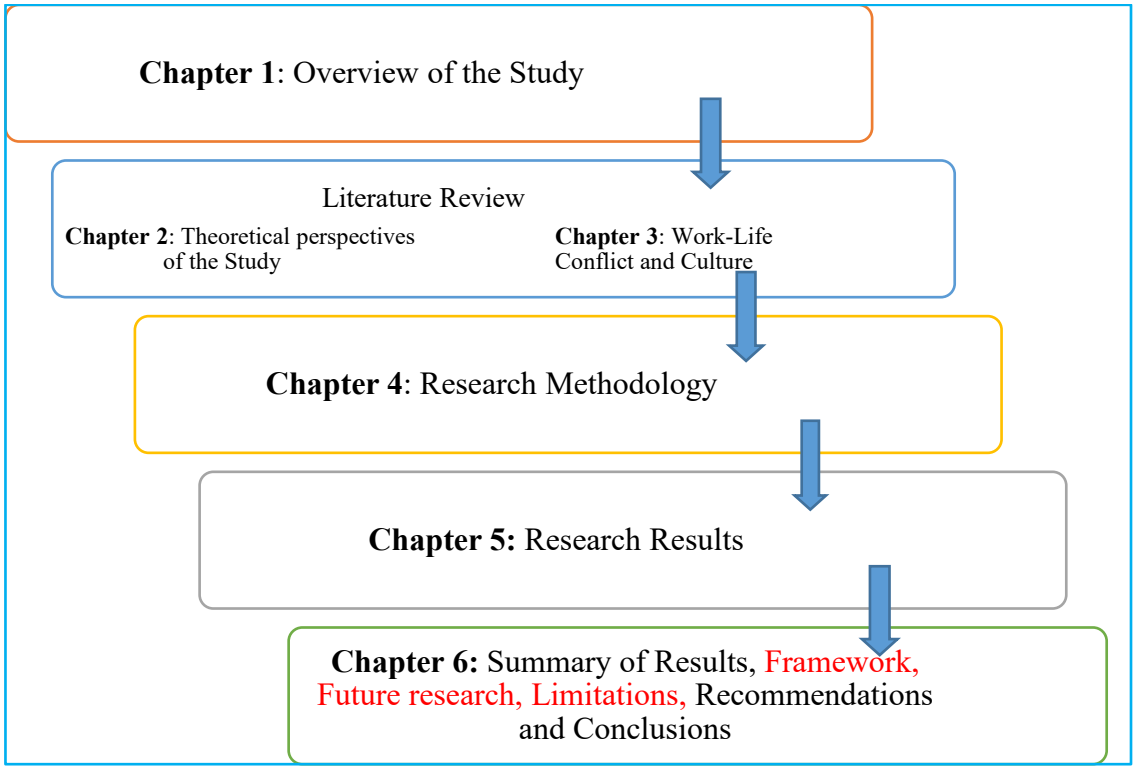


Figure 1.1: Structure of the study

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the entire study. The research problem, objectives of the study as well as research questions are presented in this chapter. The potential significance of the study as well as ethical issues that were considered in conducting the study are also outlined. The chapter ends by displaying how the entire study is structured. The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical background that underpins the current study. Several theories have been employed to describe the work-life conflict concept. The current study has selected the role theory, which is discussed in this chapter. The chapter ends with a summary that also helps to show the link between the described theory and the issue of work-life conflict.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical origin of work and family conflict is grounded in social science (MacDermid, 2005; Lavassani & Movahedi, 2014). However, whereas the social science discipline has been in existence for over a hundred years, work and family conflict have been under discussion for a shorter period (MacDermid, 2005). Several theories have been used to describe the relationship between work and non-work-life. These theories may be categorised according to the three patterns in the ways in which work and non-work-life interact. These patterns are namely, the separate pattern (work and family are two distinct domains that are detached from one another), the mutual pattern (i.e. work and family are linked in that positive and/or negative gains from one domain may spill over into the other domain) and the blending pattern (work and family may be so well merged that there are no borders between the two) (Jain & Nair, 2013). Underlying all these patterns are the types of roles that individuals take and/or perform in either the work or non-work domain, highlighting the role theory that has been used in most cases to explain the phenomenon of work-life conflict or balance/integration. Role theory has many perspectives (Biddle, 1986), some of those perspectives, as well as how they relate to the current study, will now be discussed.

2.2.1 Role Theory

Although the concept 'role theory' has been in use before the 1900s its use has only become common in the 1930s (Van der Horst, 2016). The social role theory simply referred to as role theory, is broad and is at times perceived and described as a collection of theories (Biddle, 1986). However, underlying all the different viewpoints of role theory is the fact that roles are seen largely as important in social structures and roles are seen as central to understanding

individual behaviour within those social structures and organisations (Wang & Niu, 2010; Van der Horst, 2016). The conception of role theory entails the notion that people behave differently depending on their respective social identities and the social system or situation within which they are operating at specific times. Role theory emanates from a dramaturgical metaphor (Wang & Niu, 2010). This theatrical metaphor posits that, as in a theatre, people's social behaviours can be associated with scripts, which are expected roles, which are understood and performed by social actors (Biddle, 1986; Wang & Niu, 2010). A role is simply defined in Biddle (1979, p.18) as "a set of expectations". The basic idea of role theory is that individuals have different roles that are prescribed and these prescriptions determine how individuals should behave (Van der Horst, 2016). As alluded to, role theory has different viewpoints.

2.2.1.1 The Structural Functionalism Role Theory

According to Biddle (1986), although the structural-functional theory was in use much earlier with the work of Linton, it was not until the works of Parsons and colleagues in the 1950s that the theory was formalized and publicized. From the structural-functionalist viewpoint, there is a focus on roles being associated with social structures, i.e. social positions or statuses (Sato, 2011). Social structures can be "conceived as stable organizations of sets of persons (called "social positions" or "statuses") who share the same, patterned behaviors ('roles') that are directed towards other persons in the structure" (Biddle, 1986:73). A socio-cultural structure, or society, is regarded as a complex coordination of structures and processes that have layers of subsystems, traditions, principles, positions, as well as roles that are interconnected. Socio-cultural structures are normative, meaning that they are made up of norms that essentially prescribe how individuals are supposed to feel, think and behave. Roles are perceived to be standards that are shared amongst individuals and prescribe how those individuals behave (Biddle, 1986) There is essentially no individuation as the needs and motivations of individuals within such systems and subsystems are reconciled with the communal desires of the society within which those individuals operate. Expected roles influence the behaviour of individuals (Van der Horst, 2016).

A social position signifies, for instance, a teacher, lawyer, manager, mother, daughter-in-law, all of whom can be identified by their distinctive way in which they behave, as well as the specific roles that they exhibit (Biddle, 1979). Categories such as "gender", "ethnic group" or "groups" in terms of people interacting or networking, as well as "positions" (e.g. manager)

following their roles that they play, are all elements of a socio-cultural structure (Bates & Peacock, 1989, p. 565). The structural-functional theory talks about roles as associated with social structures such as categories, groups or positions. The social structure implies the existence of parts or units within a bigger system, which form networks, relationships and are in interaction. The focus is not necessarily on individuals as independent thinkers but rather on the expected behaviours of categories or groups as governed by shared norms (Biddle, 1986; Van der Horst, 2016).

The structural-functional perspective assumes a stable, well-structured and orderly system made up of units (individual people) who consent and conform (role consensus and role conformity) to the expectations (i.e. normative patterns) that constitute norms for behaviour (Biddle, 1986). This normative pattern is institutionalised into what constitutes the values of the culture of a system, a society. Maintaining stability and equilibrium is of utmost importance and depends on the commitment of individual units to conform and to act in accordance with the normative patterns. Conforming is motivated by either the fact that the normative patterns are internalised by individuals or by the need to avoid tensions or even imposed sanctions on individuals from other members of the system (Sato, 2011). Sanctions and punishments are used as tools to enforce and pressurise individual members into conforming to expected roles or normative patterns. For instance, a woman who chooses to remain childless may be frowned upon or alienated by other women from certain social networks. The internalisation of such expected roles is through the socialisation process (Crisogen, 2015).

Crisogen (2015) defines socialisation as a process that facilitates the transfer of knowledge of the norms from one generation to the next mainly as a way of maintaining the status quo as well as the stability and equilibrium within a socio-cultural structure. The socialisation process is based on the assumption that learning the expected roles and normative patterns, which results in properly socialised individuals, will facilitate maintenance of the socio-cultural structure equilibrium, thereby rendering the structure stable (Bates & Nix, 1964). Therefore, conforming to expected roles serves a stabilising function within the socio-cultural structure. For instance, the previous dominance of men in the working environment was functional because it got rid of competition for status between men and women. Unfortunately, any change or shift within the structure will present new learning opportunities and destabilise it (Parsons, 1991).

Biddle (1986) state that norm roles cannot easily be associated with positions in social structures. Besides, social systems are also not stable and not all individuals within a social structure may agree and conform with the norms that are expected within that system. These dynamics of norms make it difficult to apply the structural-functional approach uniformly to every system. For example, having a child does not always imply that one will take on the nurturing and mothering role. However, this perspective cannot be ignored as the basis for work-life conflict discussions as it is a reminder that people, from within their various categories and positions, do not function independently from their bigger social system (Biddle, 1986). This means that from the perspective of the current study, the theory defines socio-cultural structures within which individuals have to function, both the workplace and non-work domains, with expectations in each of the two structures that may be in conflict or, maybe too much for one person to fullfil satisfactorily. The relationships that people form in each of the two structures (work and non-work), e.g. mother and manager, affect them (people) while the people also affect the outcome of those relationships. Importantly, the theory also talks about expected roles in each social structure that dictate how people should behave (Bates & Peacock, 1989).

2.2.1.2 Symbolic Interactionist Role Theory

According to Van der Horst (2016) the symbolic interactionist perspective on roles was first explained by Mead in the 1930s, and later by Bumer (1937, 1969), followed by works of authors that include Parsons (1951), Goffman (1959), and Stryker (1980). The theory focuses on the roles that individuals play, as well as the way those roles evolve through social interaction. The theory is based on the understanding that humans have the cognitive skills that enable them to interpret their behaviour and other people's behaviour through social interaction with one another. The symbolic interactionist perspective was first developed as a critique of the structural-functionalism notion of stressing the existence of society's consensus and conformity with social norms in a mechanical and deterministic way that maintains the status quo. Unlike the quest for structural equilibrium in structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism acknowledges that humans have cognitive skills that enable them to adapt and behave as they interact with their system (Carter & Fuller, 2015; Stryker, 2008). According to symbolic interactionism "change is a constant social process, as is emergence: the occurrence of new, unpredictable experience that necessitates creative adaptation" (Stryker, 2008, p. 17).

For instance, due to changing economic needs, women had to move from being housewives to the working environment, a phenomenon that was due to the need to adapt.

Serpe and Stryker (2011, p. 226) assert that "the state of human nature is a social state; that society is constituted by communication, social relationships, and interaction based on sociability and sympathy; and that society is a mirror in which people see themselves. The symbolic interactionist frame builds on the premise that in the beginning there is society." In symbolic interactionism norms only serve to stipulate a set of generic obligations that can be utilised by individuals to understand the roles they are expected to play (Biddle, 1986). This means that in any socio-cultural structure, roles only suggest generic expected patterns of behaviour. Individuals may choose to cooperate with those predetermined patterns or they may choose to create their actions or roles depending on the situations within which they find themselves. "Actual roles, then, are thought to reflect norms, attitudes, contextual demands, negotiation and evolving definition as understood by the actors" (Biddle, 1986, p. 71).

Stryker (2008) asserts that from the symbolic interactionist perspective, for instance, a woman is perceived to be a mother as stemming from the imperatives set out by her society about what the roles of a mother are supposed to look like, as well as from her understanding of those imperatives and interpretation of her role in relation to her child(ren); and lastly, as seen from the way she behaves in interaction with her child(ren). How the individual will behave is driven by the internalised understanding and interpretation of what their society expects from them and the subsequent behaviour. People have the cognitive abilities that help them to determine the roles they want to play instead of being conditioned to predetermined and expected roles (as is the case in structural-functionalism) (Stryker, 2008). The theory subscribes to the social constructionist perspective in the sense that there is no objective reality; individuals can create and alter meanings as they also influence society (Serpe & Stryker, 2011; Whelan, 2014).

In essence, according to the symbolic interactionist various factors can affect roles (Stryker, 2008). Those factors include predetermined norms that are expected of individuals within certain social positions, those individuals' attitudes and beliefs and the way they understand and portray themselves. The way individuals decide to portray themselves would also depend on the situations within which they find themselves during their interaction with their society. Therefore, roles will tend to be similar for individuals who find themselves faced with similar challenges (Stryker, 2008; Carter & Fuller, 2015).

The symbolic interactionist theory carries several implications for the current study on work-life conflict of women in that: firstly, the way roles are perceived differs from one individual to another; secondly, the role experiences of individuals are linked, those experiences in the home domain will be linked to those in the work domain; thirdly, it is important to understand how the sub-units of a social structure influence one another because the multiple roles of individuals are played and experienced within a socio-cultural setting; finally, since individuals have multiple roles to fullfil they will choose which of those roles to give priority to, as well as how much time to dedicate to each role (Lee, Zvonkovic & Crawford, 2013). In summation, in the context of work-life conflict for purposes of this study, some expected roles are predetermined by the work domain on the one hand and the non-work domain on the other that individuals can choose to comply with or not. How the women in the study understand, interpret and experience these predetermined, multiple roles will affect how they experience work-life conflict.

2.2.1.3 Cognitive Role Theory

Cognitive role theory (CRT) is grounded "on understanding the relationship between role expectations and behaviour" (Biddle, 1986, p. 74). Human behaviour is embedded in a self-reflective process that involves self-regulation, self-reflection and being proactive. This implies that when human beings perceive behavioural patterns from other humans within their social structure they do not just passively react and conform, they cognitively process what they observe through interactions with others, reflect upon their observations and learn what to do. As individuals learn from people older than themselves, through observation, they also get to know what is expected of them while they also form self-expectations, specifically what to expect of themselves. Besides, through interactions with others and their environment, individuals get to build their self-identity, which can influence their behaviour. In that process, human beings are "producers as well as products of their social systems" (Bandura, 1999:21).

According to Whelan (2014) roles are accepted as mental schema, meaning that they are network systems of ideas and understandings, built and repeated over time, that can be available and accessed when the individual needs to. Schemas are concerned with how individuals structure information and knowledge (Whelan, 2014). A mental schema is organised knowledge that is based on past experience. According to Huitt (2017, p. 76), "a schema is an organized pattern of thought that allows an individual to interact with, and adapt

to, the demands of the environment". A schema can be recovered to guide the way stimuli and new information from the current environment are interpreted, understood and utilised or the way an individual behaves. Accordingly, self-schemata constitute the information that individuals have accumulated over time about themselves through interaction with others. Self-schemata then influence an individual's reactions towards others, their behaviour, as well as for deciding the kind of factors that motivate their behaviour (Pankin, 2013; Huitt, 2017). Self-schemata represent mental processes that explain the self. They are guided by the person's experience and formed by the individual as they interact with others within their social system (Wheeler, Petty & Bizer, 2005:787), acquired through experience and guiding social behaviour. For that reason, presenting an individual with messages or demands that conform to that individual's self-schemata promotes better compliance, while presenting an individual with expectations that are not in line with their self-schemata will not likely be met with obedience (Wheeler et al*.,* 2005). For instance, expecting a woman who believes herself to be a family-oriented person to work late and thereby ignore her non-work roles and responsibilities (e.g. helping her child with homework) will likely not be met with compliance. Therefore, such a person will likely choose her non-work roles and responsibilities over her work expectations.

In addition to self-schemata and self-identity, CRT is also about ways in which individuals recognise what other people expect of them, such as people with whom they interact, as well as the results of those perceptions on the individual's behaviour (Whelan, 2014). The theory also focuses on the effect of perceived expectations on social behaviour. For that reason, individuals can choose which of the expectations from others they comply with and which they do not comply with (Biddle, 1986; Campbell, 2018). For example, if a woman manager expects that not complying with some work demands will result in her not getting a promotion and the added money that comes with that, they may likely elect to comply with those work demands over the non-work demands.

According to Guirguis and Chewning (2005, p. 491) "role expectations can appear as norms, preferences, or beliefs". Within the field of CRT researchers have identified a few subfields that include norms, role-playing, role-taking and anticipatory role expectations. Campbell, (2018) as well as Whelan (2014) state that role-playing was influenced by Moreno's work. Role-playing states that individuals will learn norms, what to do and what is expected of them through observing others, i.e. people make an effort to emulate the roles of significant others (Biddle, 1986). Therefore, the roles and responsibilities that individuals will eventually take (i.e. *role-taking*) will be influenced by the need to be similar to those perceived influential

people that individuals interact with and would like to equate with. Role taking is about the extent to which individuals ascribe opinions that are complicated to other people (Biddle, 1986). Sophistication in this context implies that individuals do not blindly accept roles bestowed upon them or simply imitate others without applying some thinking about what they believe in or would prefer (Guirguis & Chewning, 2005). Thus, individuals, because they can think, can choose what roles to take and which roles they can ignore. It is also because of this sophistication of thought processes of individuals that they can think and choose whether to consent (*role consensus*) to taking roles prescribed by the work domain or those that are expected by the non-work domain. As a result, there may also be an experience of expectations of work role conflicting with those expected in the non-work domain (i.e. *role conflict*). These concepts of role-taking, role-consensus as well a role-conflict form the basis of this study on work-life conflict and are discussed in more detail in a later section in this chapter.

2.2.1.4 Organisational Role Theory

According to Biddle (1986), organisational role theory (ORT) began with the works of Gross et al. (1958) and later Kahn et al. (1964). Subsequent work on ORT included research on role conflict and role conflict resolution. ORT focuses on the roles that individuals portray in "social systems that are pre-planned, task-oriented and hierarchical" (Biddle, 1986, p. 73). In ORT it is believed that roles are determined by normative expectations within any system or social structure, i.e. within any organisation. These norms may differ from one individual to another. Norms may be a reflection of both the official requirements of the workplace, as well as the demands of informal groups that are within both the work environment and the non-work domain (Biddle, 1986). For instance, as a female marketing manager, there are several expectations from several angles. These include: 1) formal expectations from the organisation in terms of roles and responsibilities of a marketing manager as outlined in their job description; 2) non-formal organisational expectations of e.g. greeting colleagues and being friendly or mentoring younger colleagues; as well as 3) expectations from the non-work domain such as cooking and nurturing their family.

Whelan (2014) maintains that in an organisational context achievement of expected roles (formal and non-formal) constitutes an important function in the realisation of organisational goals. In ORT roles are a reflection of organisational culture as well as the norms for expected behavioural patterns for individuals, i.e. employees within organisations (Wickham & Parker,

2007). This means that within an organisational context, the roles of individuals are defined by formal, official prescripts of the organisation (e.g. what roles and responsibilities are officially expected of an employee or manager), as well as informal expectations from other people (e.g. expectations that women are supposed to be subservient and compliant). Therefore, ORT contends that individuals are constantly faced with role conflict since they have to contend with antithetical expectations for their behaviour. For instance, in the workplace, a woman manager is supposed to take charge while socialised stereotypes expect her to be submissive and docile (Moleko, 2018). Accordingly, ORT focuses on how role expectations that are in conflict or in competition (formal vs. non-formal, or work vs non-work) affect the individual as well as the productivity of that individual within an organisation (Gesauldi, 2017).

Just as in structural-functional theory, roles expected of individuals are associated with acknowledged social positions (Whelan, 2014). For example, role expectations include formal requirements that an organisation needs its employees at different levels of the organisational hierarchy to perform for organisational effectiveness and productivity. Organisations assign work-related roles which act as prescripts for the behaviour that is expected for them to be able to achieve organisational duties and tasks effectively. Therefore, an organisation is a social structure, with distinct functional groups of employees, (e.g. manager vs. non-manager) that have prescribed specific work-related roles to perform. The functional groups within organisations describe a role-set for employees and control the exact role-behaviours that the individual employee is anticipated to portray (Wickham & Parker, 2007; Gesaudi, 2017).

Implications of ORT are that an individual employee would take on roles (*role-taking*) after consenting to or accepting those roles (*role-consensus*) that are a reflection of the organisational culture and the organisation's prescriptions of how individuals are expected to behave (Whelan, 2014). Furthermore, the individual employee, after understanding the roles as prescripts, e.g. in a job prescription, would comply with the roles (*role-compliance*) if they (i.e. the individual) are to remain effective members of any organisation, provided that the expected/prescribed roles are communicated to employees and understood. Unfortunately, as already pointed out earlier, the formal roles as prescribed and expected by employees are mostly in conflict or in competition with non-formal roles or expectations (leading to *role conflict*) (Wickham & Parker, 2007). Role conflict can also be a result of non-consensual roles where individuals do not behave as expected by other people like a woman manager who spends long hours at work and does not have time to cook for her family as expected by her society. In short, in light of the preceding discussions, this study presents four assumptions (in

italics in this paragraph), viz. 1) role-taking; 2) role-consensus; 3) role compliance; and 4) role conflict), that underpin role theory (Biddle, 1986; Wickham & Parker, 2007). It is these four assumptions that are used in this study to particularly explain the work-life conflict concept.

a) Role taking

The role-taking notion is believed to have been influenced mainly by the works of Mead (1934) and Piaget (1926) (Biddle, 1986; Campbell, 2018). Role taking emanates from the ability of humans to observe and use language, as well as other fundamental skills of symbolic interaction (Gesauldi, 2017). Role taking also has its underpinning in ORT and CRT where it is believed that successful role-taking means 1) "accuracy of attributed expectations", i.e. role-taking as a process that involves an individual's anticipation of how others are going to behave in particular circumstances and then adjust their action accordingly, - that people take roles better if the expectations that they attribute to others actually correspond with those roles the others actually hold; 2) effective role-taking involves "sophistication of social thought", implying that an individual becomes an effective role taker if they assume that other persons also have anticipations that guide their thoughts (Biddle, 1986, p. 84). Role taking involves the way people interpret their own roles as guided by observing the actions of other people around them, a process called socialisation. The implication within an organisational (ORT) context is that an employee will accept a role that is bestowed upon them. When an individual gets employed they accept a position that comes with a job description (i.e. expectations). This implies acceptance of the expected role behavior patterns within that position. Three factors are involved, viz. 1) organisational, i.e. the structure of the organisation with its formal policies that constitute official anticipations as well as rewards or punishments for not following those expectations; 2) the personal attributes that constitute the individuals' predisposition to behave in certain ways; and 3) interpersonal factors that refer to the quality of the relationship between the individual employees and their work colleagues, who contribute towards the construction of the expected role set (Wickham & Parker, 2007).

For the current study, in the context of work-life conflict, the implication is that within organisations individual employees are faced with increasing roles that are expected of them formally by their organisations as well as informally where they are expected to comply and multi-task. In addition to the work expectations, they still have non-work role expectations that they are expected to take on. Managers have added and increasing responsibilities and job

demands that include expected roles of decision-making, which in most cases involve working long hours (Dishon-Berkovits, 2014). However, in addition to the organisational factors, individuals have their own cognitive and personal attributes that help them to prioritise and thus determine which roles they choose to perform (i.e. take) or satisfy. For instance, do they choose to work long hours and not do homework with their children or do they choose their family over their work. Their choice of which role(s) to take will affect or be affected by the need for rewards or avoidance of punishment (the perceived function of the choice linked to the functionalism idea) from either their organisations or non-work domain and can determine the experience of work-life conflict or balance. The relationships (formal and non-formal, i.e. supervisor vs friend) that individual employees have with their colleagues can help them in their choices and can assist with their coping with navigating the roles expected of them in their workplace as well as in the non-work space. Supportive colleagues and work environments have been known to help employees cope with work-life conflict (Do-Hyung & Zeng, 2013; May & Reynolds, 2018). Role taking is linked to individuals acting and behaving on what they understand others expect of them, on what they expect of themselves following what they understand their role to be following how they were socialised and what they want others to see (Gesauldi, 2017).

b) Role consensus

Role consensus was first explained by structural-functionalists who maintained that individuals, who operate within certain social systems and share an understanding of expected normative roles and behavioural patterns that are associated with specific positions, e.g. a mother with expected nurturing roles (Biddle, 1986). All individuals in a social system know what roles are expected of them, they consent to the norms and adhere to them to maintain equilibrium and harmony within their system (Biddle, 1986; Jackson, 1998). The basic premise within an ORT context is that when individuals are employed, they are presented with expected behavioural patterns in the form of official expectations. They accept (i.e. role consensus) those expectations and perform them accordingly to maintain organisational harmony. However, individuals at times exhibit what may be termed preferential consensus, which constitutes some interpersonal preference of which expectations to conform to at what moment in time. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that at times role consensus is untenable, that either the roles are incompatible or too many to be able to realistically consent to all of them. This

sometimes lack of role consensus brings about role conflict (Biddle, 1986; Wickham & Parker, 2007).

c) Role compliance

Linked to the perspective of role consensus is the belief that in any social structure be it the workplace or non-work domain, if individuals agree with behavioural role expectations (i.e. if there is role consensus) then the individuals within that system will comply with the expectations (Biddle, 1986). In that sense then role conformity is related to role consensus as individuals who know what and understand the normative role patterns that are expected of them, will conform to those demands. As in structural functionalism, conforming also serves to maintain harmony within any social structure. Role learning, socialisation and subsequent internalisation of expected role patterns are primary processes that underline conformity. Individuals may conform if the expected roles are from significant others with some form of power. For instance, from an ORT perspective, an organisation has the power to remunerate or punish an individual who conforms or does not comply with expected organisational role patterns. Conversely, an individual may comply with expectations from a non-work domain for them to be accepted and not be punished by being ostracised for instance or frowned upon (Jackson, 1998). Conformity then in the work domain is for individuals to reap rewards (e.g. salary) or avoid punishment (e.g. no salary or no promotion) while in the non-work domain there are similar expectations of reaping rewards (being liked and accepted by community members) and avoiding punishment (not being ostracised). The conflict between which domain (work or non-work) yields more power or which rewards are appreciated versus the type of punishment that is avoided, i.e. the decision on which role expectations to conform to for what benefits, constitute the experience of work-life conflict. The CRT goes further to explain that it is due to individuals' ability to think and process information that they can choose which roles they comply with and to what end. Therefore, conformity to role expectations is not a given, it depends on the nature of the involved role expectation(s) (Biddle, 1986).

d) Role Conflict

Although researchers and authors emphasise role-consensus and role conformity, which help in social integration and harmony within social systems, it is not always feasible nor practical to have role consensus and/or role conformity (Duxbury, Higgins & Halinski, 2014). Role conflict will result from expectations that are not consensual. There are several reasons why

there may be instances of not fullfiling or not complying with the expected normative role patterns. Such reasons may include: 1) multiple roles, such as when individuals have too many roles that are expected of them resulting in role overload; or 2) the roles are incompatible or there are incompatible role expectations (e.g. roles of being a nurturing mother as expected by the non-work domain, as well as expectations of an assertive, goal-driven manager (Madsen & Hammond, 2005; Wickham & Parker, 2007; Skinner & Pocock, 2008); or 3) when roles are not clearly defined resulting in role ambiguity (Idris, 2011; Duxbury et al., 2014). All the reasons mentioned bring about role conflict and inadequate or lack of compliance with the expected roles. Perceived social tension due to incompatible role expectations or non-compliance with multiple expectations from different domains constitutes role-conflict (Jackson, 1998; Duxbury et al., 2014).

Within an organisational role theory perspective, role conflict theorists suggest that employees may experience conflict between their roles at work and their other roles in the non-work domain, resulting in work-life conflict (Akobo & Stewart, 2020). In other words, there may be tension between work and family roles as well as expectancies surrounding these differing roles, thus resulting in inter-role conflict (Gamor, Amissah & Boakye, 2014). It is suggested that the roles in the work and family domains are incompatible and irreconcilable as a result of their dissimilar norms, rules and responsibilities. For example, a woman who is both an employee and a mother may be expected to spend a lot of time cooking and looking after her family while her job also, at times, demands her attention for long hours (Madsen & Hammond, 2005; MacDermid, 2005; Baltes et al., 2010; Sabil & Marican, 2011; Karimi, Jomehri, Asadzade & Sohrabi, 2012). The role conflict then defines the work-life conflict, which is the core of the current study.

e) Work-life conflict

Work-life role conflict may result from the challenges of the amount of time available and/or involved in fullfiling expected roles and responsibilities in either the workplace or non-work space or both (i.e. time-based conflict); or challenges of the amount of energy expended by an individual or the amount of strain that an individual experiences in fullfiling the expected roles and responsibilities in one or both domains (strain-based conflict); or from the fact that the type of behaviour expected in one domain is not compatible with the role characteristics of the other domain (Akobo & Stewart, 2020) (i.e. behaviour-based conflict, e.g. a woman who is supposed to be soft and submissive at home being a tough manager in the workplace). On this basis, three

types of work-life conflict have been conceptualised. They include time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behaviour-based conflict (MacDermid, 2005; Bazana, 2013).

Time-based conflict is believed to be the most common. It arises in one of two ways, viz.: 1) when the total time demanded by the one role takes away the amount of time available for the other role (e.g. when working overtime results in one not having time to help children with homework); and 2) preoccupation with one role disturbs the proficiency required to perform the other role, regardless of the individual's physical presence (e.g. when being so disturbed and preoccupied with a child's sickness that one cannot concentrate at work and thus being less productive) (Akobo & Stewart, 2020). Time-based conflict also mirrors the scarcity perspective that states that the total amount of time, as well as the energy available to a person is fixed and thus, participating in multiple roles reduces the total time and/or energy available to the individual to be able to meet all the expected role demands, thereby resulting in conflict (Mostert, 2008; Ogbogu, 2013). Time-based conflict can be due to work-related time conflict on the one hand, which is based on the number of hours an employee works per day/week and includes the time physically spent on the job, the time that employees spend in travelling to and from work as well as overtime and shift-work. On the other hand, there is also family-related time conflict, which encompasses the amount of time individuals spend with their family or in dealing with family members and/or issues, thus decreasing the time that could be spent at work (MacDermid, 2005; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010; Ogbogu, 2013).

Strain-based conflict arises when the strain or stressors experienced in one role make it difficult for an individual to perform in the other role (Suter & Kowalski, 2019). Strain-based conflict is grounded in the notion that exhaustion created in one domain affects the performance of activities in the other domain. (e.g. when not sleeping well at night due to taking care of a sick significant other affects one's alertness and concentration at work thereby eventually affecting work performance) (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). The third type of conflict is behaviour-based conflict, which occurs when the behaviour and/or the role that is expected from an individual employee at work (e.g. detachment, aggression) is incompatible with that expected at home (e.g. warmth, emotional sensitivity) (McMillan, Morris & Atchley, 2011; DePasquale, Polenick, Davis, Moen, Hammer & Almeida, 2017).

Zhang et al. (2014) define work-life conflict as bidirectional, i.e. work demands may interfere with non-work demands (work-to-life conflict) and non-work obligations may interfere with performance at work (life-to-work conflict) (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno & Tillemann, 2011;

Zhang et al., 2014). A combination of the bi-directionality of WLC with the types of conflict discussed above describes the following six types of inter-role conflict:

- Time-based work-to-life conflict
- Time-based life-to-work conflict
- Strain-based work-to-life conflict
- Strain-based life-to-work conflict
- Behaviour-based work-to-life conflict
- Behaviour-based life-to-work conflict (Madsen & Hammond, 2005).

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) describe the following propositions where the work and life constructs are in conflict concerning time, role strain, and specific behaviour:

1. Demands should emanate from both the work and the family domains.
2. It is essential that individuals identify personally with their roles.
3. There is a positive relationship between role salience and the level of work-life conflict.
4. When there are negative consequences associated with not complying with the role demands, the level of conflict becomes higher.
5. The direction of the conflict (i.e. whether it is a work-to-family or family-to-work conflict) depends on the source of the conflict.
6. Conflict is associated with the success and stage of the careers of employees.
7. The type of support from others is associated with the level of conflict.

2.2.2 Gender Role Theory

According to Eagly and Wood (2012) one of the critical questions about human life is why the behaviour of males and females differ in some situations while it is similar in others. Several fields of thought have attempted to offer an answer to this question. One such field of thought is the gender role theory, which falls within the broader ambit of the role theory. Gender role theory came about as a result of social pressure that emphasised the role of women in families. According to Colombo and Ghisliery (2008), Major (1993) as well as Hochschild (1997) were amongst the first authors to discuss gender role theory. They stated that "gender deserves a spate discussion" (Colombo & Ghisliery, 2008: 39).

Gender role theory focuses specifically on the roles expected of individuals due to their gender. According to Robinson (2011), gender role theory is explained in terms of three basic assumptions, namely, the biological influences theory, social structural factors in society and childhood socialisation processes. According to the biological influences theory gender variances in attitudes, capabilities and temperaments are inborn and it is these inborn disparities that cause males and females to be differentially fit for specific work and family roles. The biological theory has been expanded to be termed the biosocial approach (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The biosocial approach states that the specialisation of male and female tasks are due to what they (males and females) are better suited for physically within the circumstances that are dictated by their society. This approach asserts that women are expected to be more nurturing and to acquire superior relational skills while men are expected to be assertive and assume the role of economic employment (i.e. they are supposed to be providers). Accordingly, people who do not fulfil roles that are under their biological makeup will experience role conflict and will be frowned upon by society (Harrison & Lynch, 2005; Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Harrison and Lynch (2005), as well as Eagly and Wood (2012) state that the second assumption of gender role theory, the social structure approach, explains gender inequality as originating from patriarchal or capitalist structures or both. From the capitalistic structure women are not supposed to be economically active, a perception that stifles women's attempts to grow within organisational structures to this day (Thobejane, 2014). "Patriarchy arises when the physical attributes of men and women interact with economic and technological development to give men the roles that yield decision-making authority (e.g. in warfare) and access to resources (e.g. through intensive agriculture and trade)" (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 466). Following the beliefs about biological/physical capabilities of women versus men, individuals are socialised to behave in agreement with those factors that they are supposedly only capable of achieving, - the third assumption of socialisation. Therefore, childhood stereotypes of what women and men should or should not do determine how they will behave even when they are employed (Robinson, 2011).

The stereotypes about the division of labour between men and women are explained in terms of two dimensions, i.e. men are said to be agentic or task-oriented (instrumental) while women are regarded as communal or socio-emotional (expressive). Being agentic means "masterful, assertive, competitive and dominant" while communal in women implies "friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive" (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 461). Unfortunately, these beliefs about female versus male traits penetrate the working environment

where women who are competitive and assertive are either not given opportunities to thrive or are frowned upon. The lack of support for women limits their (women) progress into higher organisational levels of leadership/management (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 462).

According to Robinson (2011) the changes in social trends have meant that gender roles have been revised and relearned rendering the gender role conflict even more complex. Increasingly both men and women assume social roles that are not necessarily in line with the traditional gender role norms, e.g. stay at home men, or women entering the labour market and progressing to management positions resulting in gender role conflict (Selvarajan, Slattery & Stringer 2015). "Change in the work and family roles of men and women follow the exigencies of the economy, technology and broader social structure in which these roles are embedded" (Eagly & Wood, 2012: 461). According to Eagly and Wood (2012) women's agency attributes like being assertive and competitive, having freedom, prestige, power and leadership have increased substantially in recent years. These changes, combined with increased educational levels of women, make women qualify for better job opportunities and move higher into leadership positions. However, the transformation has mostly been one-sided (Van Egdom, 2020). According to Eagly and Wood (2012), men remain dominant in leadership roles that are particularly at higher levels. Besides, men have only made a modest increase in their contributions to childcare and domestic work as well as entering into occupations that require more female-communal attributes. Nonetheless, women continue to take charge of the majority of child minding and housework, resulting in more work-to-life interference for women (Ergeneli, Ilsev, & Karapinar, 2010; Selvarajan et al., 2015).

Gender role theory supports the view that gender-specific roles are crucial attributes of human behaviour that help us in making sense of our interactions in the social world (Gesualdi, 2017). This is the basis of this research study, which is focused on women managers' role enactment within organisations as well as encroachment between work and non-work roles. Role theory is of the viewpoint that the enactment of roles in any setting is guided by a set of expectations. Individuals have the cognitive ability to select which of those expectations they are willing to comply with. However, due to the way they were socialised, women tend to comply with the responsibilities of taking care of their families and household chores in order to maintain stability in their non-work environment (Kray, Howland, Russell & Jackman, 2017). Women who are employed then struggle with balancing their work and non-work roles resulting in delays in their careers (van Egdom, 2020) or in physical and psychological ill-health (Young-Mee & Sung-il, 2020) as well as negative social consequences like high divorce rates

(Bisschoff, Koen & Ryke, 2018; Ajayi, Olawande, Jegede, Amoo & Olawole-Isaac, 2020). Women managers have roles and responsibilities that they have to fulfil in their working domain. The need to determine how much their role enactment is determined by dictates from their non-work environment as well as their experiences of the resultant conflict between the work and non-work roles applies to this study.

2.2.3 Conceptualisation for the Current Study

From the theoretical background presented in this chapter, Figure 2.1 exhibits the conceptualisation for the current study.

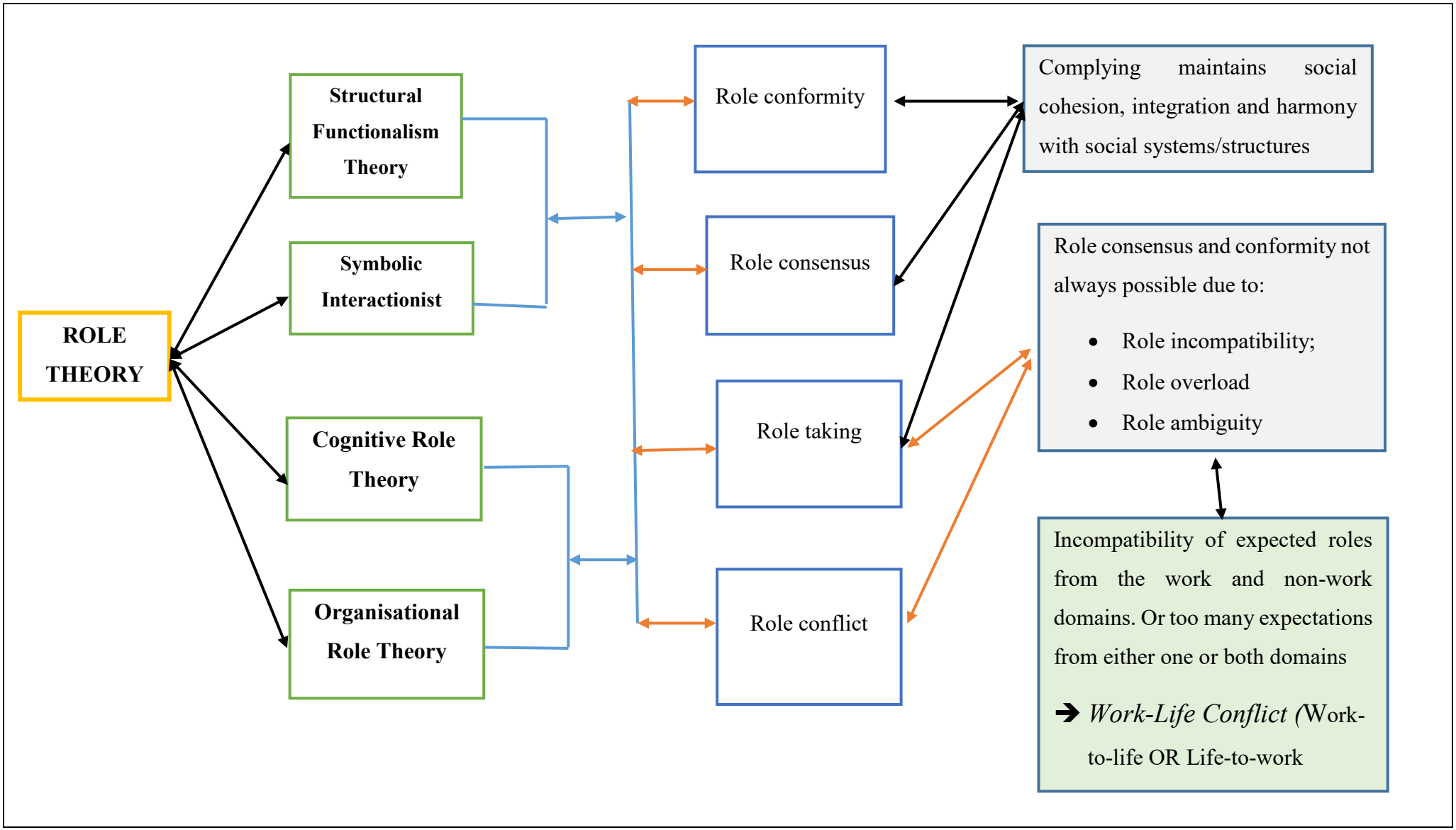


Figure 2.1: Conceptualisation for the Current Study

Source: Author's own design based on literature review

From Fig. 2.1, the structural-functionalism theory states that individuals who hold different positions within different social structures, like a mother in the non-work environment or manager in the workplace, have roles that are expected of them and that they expect of others (Biddle, 1986). Complying with (or taking) these roles serves a certain function, or rather the purpose of maintaining stability, harmony and equilibrium within their system or social structure. According to the symbolic-interactionism theory, it is through interaction with other beings within the social system, also known as socialisation that individuals get to learn the type of behavioural role patterns that they can expect from others, as well as those that are expected of them because of who they are. Additionally, they also get to learn what type of behavioural role patterns they can expect from others. The organisational role theory talks specifically of organisations, which can be the working environment, that have specific behavioural patterns that are expected of individuals due to their position within that organisation or social system (Whelan, 2014). The cognitive role theory will then go further to say that individuals do not blindly accept or take on roles that are expected of them. Instead, they use their sophisticated thoughts to sieve through what role to take to what end. That is, due to circumstances within which individuals operate at specific times or rather the uniqueness of each social structure, individuals do not always consent or comply with the roles they are going to choose to take, resulting in possible role conflict. This role conflict, if between work and non-work expectations, constitutes work-life conflict.

2.3 **CONCLUSION**

In summary, role theory describes how human behaviour and the roles humans fulfil are directed by the expectations of both themselves and other people. These expectations arise from the roles individuals fulfil in the different positions as found in several social structures. The roles and responsibilities that are expected and demanded are defined according to the positions that individuals hold in their respective social structures, e.g. mother or sister in the non-work domain or manager and colleague in the working environment. In the context of an organisation expected roles may be in the form of formal job descriptions that may be defined according to an individual's position within the organisational hierarchy. It is assumed by members of each social structure (e.g. household or an organisation) that most, if not all, individuals within that social system will agree with the roles expected of them (i.e. role consensus) and then take those roles or rather comply with the expectations (i.e. role-taking and role-compliance). However, the various roles that individuals fulfil in each area (work versus non-work) may be

ambiguous, incompatible, or confusing. The roles may also be too many for one individual to fulfil satisfactorily (role overload) or too heavy for one individual (role strain), making it difficult for an individual to comply with the roles. In addition to the load and strain or incompatibility/conflict of roles, individuals have the cognitive ability to choose which of the roles they comply with depending on the gains/rewards or conversely, avoidance of punishment. Therefore, role expectation does not always mean compliance. Non-compliance is linked with role conflict. The role conflict may be due to the roles expected from an individual from the non-work domain clashing with those from the work environment in terms of time available to an individual or roles and expectations from one domain making it difficult to fulfil the expectations from the other area (work-to-life or life-to-work conflict).

Role conflict theory is also based on the scarcity perspective, which suggests that individuals have limited time and energy to devote to the various roles they have to fulfil. Thus, meeting the requirements of one role may, at times, make it difficult or even impossible, to meet the requirements of another role, resulting in inter-role conflict. Role conflict may also be a result of the amount of time required to fulfil a role (time-based conflict), the degree of strain an individual experiences in performing a role (strain-based conflict) and/or the type of behaviour that is required/expected in the one domain as opposed to that required/expected in the other domain (behaviour-based conflict) (e.g. a woman expected to be decisive, commanding and powerful at work versus being submissive, nurturing and warm at home). Therefore, the current study asks the experience of women managers in terms of how they can navigate the different expectations from different angles as they go about their duties daily.

CHAPTER THREE

WORK-LIFE CONFLICT AND CULTURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature review on studies that have been conducted on work-life conflict over the years. The chapter starts by showing why it is important to discuss work-life conflict in scholarly debates, followed by the discussion of culture in the context of work-life conflict. Then demographic factors that may have some influence on work-life conflict are presented. The chapter ends by presenting the research trends in the area of work-life conflict, basically showing what has been done in this area and eventually what needs to be done, i.e. what the current study intended to focus on.

3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK-LIFE CONFLICT IN SCHOLARLY DEBATES

This section shows why it is important for researchers and organisations worldwide to take work-life conflict as a phenomenon that is important enough to put on their agenda. Managers and organisations must be aware of possible negative interference between work and family roles. It is, thus, incumbent on them to focus on the interventions and programmes that may address this challenge. Such programmes and interventions may help to avert crises and assist with the everyday management of employees. According to MacDermid (2005), the issue of conflict between family and work is significant for researchers, employers/managers, workers and their families. In fact, it is sufficiently significant to warrant researchers devoting time and energy to study the phenomenon. Organisational productivity and competitiveness have come to depend greatly on the strengths which families provide to workers (Yang, 2005).

According to Madsen and Hammond (2005), several scholars agree that the concept of WLC is crucial for both organisational management and leadership. Work-life conflict is one of the issues that places both the well-being of employees/managers and organisational performance at risk. For managers, it is assumed that a worker who experiences less conflict will likely be more productive. Leading employers are acknowledging that positive work-life outcomes for workers are important elements of an effective business strategy and thus, employers are designing family-friendly policies and programmes intending to decrease the extent of family-to-work conflict. In many self-report surveys, workers are reporting concern over work-family

conflict to the extent that they are willing to leave their jobs to reduce the conflict. Such reports should be a matter of concern for managers and their organisations. Furthermore, studies have found that conflict resonates throughout families, affecting the happiness of spouses, marriages and relations between parents and children (MacDermid, 2005; Poelmans et al., 2005; Lowe, 2006; McMillan et al., 2011).

Several researchers have shown that conflict between work and family results in negative outcomes (MacDermid, 2005; Spector et al., 2005; Poelmans et al., 2005; Yang 2005; Rantanen et al., 2011; Padhi & Bihar, 2013; Kan & Yu, 2016). These negative outcomes include: 1) work-related effects: job dissatisfaction, poor performance at work, withdrawal behaviour such as absenteeism, tardiness at work, lack of organisational commitment (especially affective commitment), decreased organisational citizenship, turnover intentions, perceived work pressure, and negative effects on career progression especially with regard to women and decreased job performance (Jackson & Fransman, 2020); 2) non-work related effects: lack of satisfaction with life, neglect of caregiver responsibilities, impaired family/social relationships, and poor marital/family relations (including intention to divorce, for example) (Gragnano, Simbula & Miglioretti (2020); and 3) the health-related effects: psychological stress, conflict and uncertainty, depression, anxiety, burnout, sleep disturbances (Rantanen et al., 2011; Young-Mee & Sung-il, 2020). All these outcomes are known to affect job performance and thus negatively affect overall organisational productivity.

In terms of health-related effects for instance, a study on executives and managers conducted in Germany indicate an increased incidence in sleep disturbances that varied from 10% to 50% as a result of job demands (Hämmig & Bauer, 2013). Poor sleep adversely affects concentration, communication skills, decision-making and flexible thinking, all traits that are crucial for productivity at work. Furthermore, sleep deprivation may diminish job motivation leading in turn to decreased job performance. A significant finding from the research is that sleep disturbance was found to be more prevalent in women than in men and was accompanied by higher prevalence rates of depression and anxiety disorders in women as compared to men. This was ascribed partly to the higher role demands on women in the home arena as compared to men (Gadinger et al., 2009). Other researchers also documented the link between stress caused by work-life conflict and ill health of female employees (Zhou, Da, Guo & Zhang, 2018).

One of the most consistent and compelling outcomes of conflict between work and family is the significant association between work-family conflict and stress-related outcomes (Leineweber, Baltzer, Magnusson Hanson & Westerlund, 2012). As a result of stress, it has been found that people resort to increased drinking patterns as well as poor health like increased headaches and high blood pressure. Stress has been found to be more strongly correlated with strain-based conflict than with any other form of conflict. In addition, the stress experienced by employees has been found to be a major contributing factor to adverse organisational performance. Studies have found that 70% of employees reported that they did not have a good balance between their work and personal lives while 90% of employed adults believe that they do not spend sufficient time with their families (Leineweber et al., 2012). The inability to spend enough time at home was also rated as their number one concern by more than 80% of male and female employees (Rantanen et al., 2011).

In terms of work-related effects of WLC, job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been found to be related to both employee motivation and to overall organisational performance (Linh, Jin, Kiong & Fah, 2016). In addition, employees who suffer from health problems mentally, psychologically or otherwise have been found to achieve less at work as compared to those without health issues (Rahman, Ali, Mansor, Jantan, Samuel, Alam & Hosen, 2018). This, in turn, implies that overall organisational performance would also be adversely affected. Problems such as absenteeism as a result of medical reasons or otherwise are also costly for an organisation in terms of medical costs, organisational production and low morale on the part of those employees who have to work harder in the absence of others (Shin & Enoh, 2020). Shin and Enoh (2020) highlight the fact that WLC requires consideration from both managers and employees. As part of the solutions to limit WLC or its effects, research has indicated that general organisational support and informal support from supervisors/managers and colleagues at work (Shin & Enoh, 2020; Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020) as well as support from spouses and family in general at home contribute significantly to the well-being of employees (Rahman et al., 2018). It is, thus, essential that organisations take WLC into consideration. Despite the fact that work-life balance has been ranked fourth in importance for employees, after compensation, benefits and job security, organisational responsiveness to the issue has increased only slightly and work-life balance is still taken for granted (Rahman et al., 2018).

The achievement of balance between work and personal life is one of the leading challenges facing managers today. Typically, work-life issues have fallen under the ambit of Human Resource Management (HRM), which devised the benefit programmes to address these issues (Lazăr, Osoian & Raţiu, 2010; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Igbinomwanhia, Iyayi & Iyayi, 2012). These benefit programmes may be classified into policies on: 1) Parental leave (reduce hours at work, when needed, to ensure sufficient time to deal with family challenges); 2) Flexible work schedules (flexibility in scheduling working hours, e.g. flexi-time, compressed working week, telecommuting, part-time schedules and job sharing); and 3) Employee-support policies (support for employees who are parents, e.g. on-site childcare facilities). Such organisational initiatives have been found to be effective both in reducing work-family conflict and in enhancing family satisfaction. According to Eversole and Crowder (2020) organisations that know and treat work-life balance as not just a perk but as an important part of their overall business strategy have seen several benefits. Such benefits include decreased absenteeism, reduced instances of employees arriving late for work, significant gains in productivity, improved employee retention and prospective employees choosing them as organisations of choice, increased employee job satisfaction, positive customer service evaluation and improved relations among co-workers, and a competitive advantage.

It is as a result essential that organisational work-life initiatives permeate an organisation's culture to ensure that they are effective in helping employees to realise sustainable work-life balance (Shin & Enoh, 2020). More and more organisations report employee work-life balance as central to the profitability of their organisations as well as to their recruitment and retention strategies. It is, therefore, incumbent on management, specifically HRM and Human Resource Development (HRD) to implement and monitor individual and organisational processes that support the employees' need for work-life balance (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). This focus on work-life balance will eventually contribute to the organisation's competitive advantage and overall effectiveness. However, in order to be able to do this managers and organisations need to understand the concepts of WLC, balance and enrichment. They, managers and organisations, also need to understand the experiences and insights of various interested parties, particularly employees, pertaining to WLC (Glubcynski, 2003; Kossek & Lambert, 2003; Baltes et al., 2010; McMillan et al., 2011).

3.3 THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

Culture, organisational or societal, is a system that has prescripts that dictate how its members are expected to behave, thereby describing the expected roles and responsibilities of members of any cultural group (Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). The influential factors within the work and non-work domains highlight the vital role that culture (organisational or societal) plays in the WLC concept (Baltes et al., 2010). Several researchers have suggested that the characteristics of the organisation (i.e. role expectations in terms of employment conditions and contracts along with organisational culture), as well as the characteristics of the family/society (e.g. through their cultural values and traditions) dictate the decisions the employee will take in terms of managing and navigating work and family challenges. Examples of family qualities that affect individuals include care-giving responsibilities, types and ages of dependents, relationships with caregivers and living arrangements. These examples of qualities that have an impact on the individual employee extend beyond the nuclear family to other broader familial and societal ties, which include the wider society in which the individual operates (Ogbogu, 2013; Gamor et al., 2014; Henderson, 2014; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018).

3.3.1 Understanding culture

Culture is a concept that has been defined by several writers and researchers in a variety of contexts and situations. However, it still remains challenging to define partly due to its multiple meanings. According to Spencer-Oatey (2012, p. 1), “Culture is a notoriously difficult term to define.” Birukou, Blanzieri, Giorgini and Giunchiglia (2009, p. 2) state that, “Culture is a slippery and ubiquitous concept.” Culture is most commonly understood to constitute high levels of homogeneity within a social system. This is the kind of homogeneity and balance that the structural-functionalists also strive for. One of the earlier definitions of culture by Tylor in the 1950s describes it as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a member of society” (Tharp, 2006, p. 3). Subsequent definitions of culture built upon this and other earlier definitions, generating common threads that involve three fundamental human actions viz. “what people think, what people do, and what people make” (Tharp, 2006, p. 3). These three fundamental human actions can also be linked to the basic philosophies of CRT. Furthermore, definitions of culture show it as having several features that include: i) the fact that culture is learned, ii) it is linked with groups of people within some social system, iii) it is conveyed from generation

to generation (through acculturation and/or socialisation), and iv) it is “symbolic, adaptive and integrated” (Tharp, 2006, p. 3; Birukou et al., 2009, p. 3; Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 6).

In the work-life context, culture is defined in Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino and Rosner (2005, p. 308) as “the shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the integration to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives”. Talking about culture being a shared concept implies that it is common to a group of people in a social structure. Culture is also dynamic; it adapts its response to different influences, dictates and circumstances. In addition, culture is integrated in that it pervades the entire society and becomes part of the social machinery of that society. It is the ubiquitous standard through which individual members of a society think and act (Tharp, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). The concept of culture being integrated has also been described in terms of homogeneity, "internal coherence" or as a "consistent pattern of thought and action" in human groups or even as the "collective programming of the mind" or schemata (Hansen, Scheffer, Rathje & Schulz, 2009, p. 35).

According to Tharp (2006) culture constitutes the standard in terms of which individuals interpret their experiences and guide their actions. It is thus the foundation of every society, i.e. social structure/system and it guides how societies perceive and think about the world and it is communicated from one generation to another through processes such as socialisation. Culture is an essential element of human existence and shapes the way people experience themselves, the world and their collectives (Schalkwyk, 2000). People from various cultures perceive the world differently and they have different behaviours and ways of doing things. Thus, culture determines an individual’s thoughts and choices as well as the way in which daily affairs and activities are conducted and people’s understanding of why these daily affairs and activities are accomplished in the way in which they are (Schalkwyk, 2000; Tharp, 2006; Smith, Botha & Vrba, 2016;). By the same token, culture determines how an individual employee will behave on a daily basis, including which tasks they are willing to accomplish, i.e. work-related tasks or non-work activities.

Several authors have indicated that culture is recognised at three different layers of depth (Schein, 1984; Tharp, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). In the first instance, for any group of people or social structure there are observable artefacts that distinguish that group like the way the people dress or the way they address one another. However, the observable behaviour may not be easily understood as the observer may not know the underlying logic to reasons why people

behave the way they do. These underlying reasons depend on the second layer, i.e. espoused values. Lastly, the espoused values are themselves influenced by deeper underlying assumptions that are mostly unconscious. Underlying assumptions in fact regulate how members of any group or society perceive, think, analyse and feel (Schein, 1984; Tharp, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). The underlying assumptions are often – firstly, learned by individuals through observation of members of their social system; secondly, then the individual develops schemata and self-schemata, i.e. the observations become ingrained into the system and understanding of the individual. Consequently, these underlying assumptions establish prescripts, consciously or unconsciously, of how an individual believes they are expected to behave and how they expect others to behave.

Quite often organisational culture is discussed as a separate entity from 'societal' culture. Organisational culture can be defined as a configuration of shared beliefs and assumptions, which are learned by a group of people. Those configurations are used to tackle and cope with external challenges. The patterns would be learned so well that they would be taught to new members (Tharp, 2006, p. 5). The definition emphasises the same issues that have been discussed in the discussion of the broader social culture paradigm in paragraphs above, i.e. it involves underlying assumptions, it is shared by individuals in groups, learned, taught to new members through socialisation (i.e. trans-generational), and determines how people perceive, think and feel. This accordingly indicates that the social structure or group that is being referred to in any situation determines whether the discussion is about culture in the workspace (organisational culture) or culture in the non-workspace (Schein, 1984). The definition further highlights the challenges faced by individuals who are employed with specific work-related behavioural and role expectations and still have expected roles to fulfil in their non-work lives. These employed individuals have underlying assumptions, values and expectations from both their work and non-work domains, linking with the concept of work-life conflict. In addition, it is apparent that on the one hand, in terms of ORT, organisations have prescripts that define how individuals within social structures should behave while on the other hand, in keeping with CRT, individuals are also sophisticated enough as they possess cognitive skills that help them in deciding how to behave and/or select which roles and responsibilities to perform under which conditions (Whelan, 2014).

Culture (whether organisational or in the broader social, non-work domain) then consists of three layers that are: underlying assumptions, espoused values and observable artefacts, i.e. observable behaviour, which is a result of the reaction to values either of the self or of other members of the group within which one belongs (Schein, 1984; Tharp, 2006). Culture is a complex concept that encompasses the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional traits that distinguish a society or a social structure. It is a collective system that embraces ways of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, the shared value systems, traditions and customs of a social group, attitudes and beliefs, as well as the arts (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). This collective system is specially related to tradition or religion and it manifests through observed behaviour (Schalkwyk, 2000; Lidzy, 2005; Hansen et al., 2009; Ngubane, 2010). Stereotypical orientations tend to be ascribed to individuals who belong or adhere to a certain cultural group. Culture also shapes the expectations about roles, characteristics and types of behaviours that are deemed appropriate to women or men as well as the expectations about the types of relations between them. Thus, gender identities, gender role stereotypes and relations are also significant attributes of culture. Culture is often described in terms of the grouping together of people, like race, ethnicity, religion and language, i.e. a social structure/system constituting of individuals who have shared beliefs, perceptions, characteristics, practices/traditions and behaviours (Schalkwyk, 2000; Hansen et al*.,* 2009; Ngubane, 2010). It is these types of social groupings that the current study is exploring.

3.3.2 Relationship between culture and work-life conflict

According to Annor (2016, p. 1), "cultural assumptions underpin most of the concepts in the work and family literature such as conflict, role demands and gender roles". Culture dictates the way in which individuals ought to conduct themselves in the community/society or workplace and thus it determines the way in which individuals live their lives on a daily basis in the family and the wider community as well as in the workplace. Features of culture include individuals' ethnicity, which goes together with their language as well as religious practices (Schalkwyk, 2000; Hansen et al., 2009). In most ethnic groups there are still clearly defined and delineated roles (gender role stereotypes) regarding what men or women should or should not do both in the home and in the wider community. These clear definitions of roles results in fender role stereotypes, which have especially been found by some researchers to have a negative impact on women's progress and achievement in the work domain (Doubell & Struwig, 2014; (Moleko, 2018).

With regard to the effect of social structures and culture on the work and non-work role demands on individual employees, numerous studies have been conducted that suggest that culture does have an impact (Aryee, 2005; Karimi, Jomehri, Asadzade and Sohrabi, 2012). However, the few cross-cultural studies that have been conducted are not yet sufficient to enable firm conclusions to be drawn about the parallels and differences between people from diverse cultural contexts (Aryee, 2005; Poelmans, 2005; Yang, 2005; Karimi et al. 2012). As such, more research still needs to be conducted on cultural impacts on work-life experiences.

According to Hutson (2007, p. 83) South African cultures perceive "women as inferior to men". Males and females grow up knowing what roles are expected of them. Boys grow up knowing that they have to be strong for them to take care of their wives and children, while girls grow up with the knowledge that they have to be submissive and work hard for them to be accepted by their husbands and society (Hutson, 2007, p. 83). Moreover, while boys work on their ability to work and provide for their families, girls would perfect their cooking and household competence. In modern-day South Africa opportunities have been presented for women to pursue their skills in the workplace, some of them even leading and/or taking on management positions (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011). Unfortunately, societal expectations of their cooking and household skills are still the same. Thus, they have increased their 'hunting' alongside men, while very few men have entered the cooking and household domain, making that domain still largely the responsibility of women. The result being the increase in WLC (particularly family-to-work conflict) for women. According to Hutson (2007, p. 83) in South Africa this family-to-work conflict is perpetuated by "ethnic traditions of the multi-cultural communities, as well as the compliance of women themselves". Women are still "dependent on their families for the basic well-being" (Hutson, 2007, p. 84). A study by Gamor et al. (2014) indicates that gender role stereotypes in African society still play a major role in WLC.

Most of the researched studies on work-family agreements in organisations have been conducted in Westernised countries that tend to be individualistic in nature, i.e. working parents are encouraged to rely primarily on themselves and their own resources (Den Dulk, 2005; Zhang & Liu, 2011). However, it is essential that more research be conducted in countries in which the societies tend to be more collectivistic in approach. In collectivist societies, people are cohesive in strong, interrelated groups that protect their members in exchange for unwavering trustworthiness and loyalty. According to Lewis and Beauregard (2018), research has been conducted mostly in Westernised societies that are individualistic in nature. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted in other cultural context because in

collectivism there is a sense of and/or emphasis on duty and responsibility towards one's group, group pressure to abide by the values and principles of the cultural group, interdependency with others, and a desire for social coherence and compliance with group norms. The attention of the individual is on the well-being of the family while work is perceived as a means of supporting the family, not as a means of enriching the self. According to the collectivism viewpoint, the behaviour and attitudes of collectivists are defined by the norms or requirements of the in-group such as the extended family or the close-knit community (Van Dyk & De Kock, 2004; Boddy, 2005; Green, Deschamps & Paez, 2005; Lu et al., 2010; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018; Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Therefore, due to the emphasis on the well-being and homeostasis of the community, individuals from collectivistic social structures may want to maintain the expected community harmony and end up experiencing more life-to-work conflict.

In a study that compared 18 countries on the effects of WLC, Spector et al. (2005) found differences in the effects of WLC on job satisfaction and well-being measures. They indicate that the differences may have been the result of a cultural response bias or culture value, particularly as regards individualism versus collectivism. The authors also recommend that more research be conducted on the effect of culture on WLC, specifically in terms of how people spend their time outside of work.

Ngubane (2010) states that although South African women have gained opportunities and substantial rights, these gains have not adequately translated to dealing with gender inequalities that are still prevalent. African culture still promotes patriarchy which perpetuates gender role stereotypes where women are still perceived as insubordinate to men and not as capable outside the home front as men (Lewis, 2019; Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). These patriarchal notions also imply that women are still expected to carry more responsibility in the home front in terms of taking care of their households. It is still largely believed that women belong in the home domain where their duty is to "bear and raise children' (Ngubane, 2010, p. 22). Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020) also affirm that in African culture gender is still defined according to roles and functions that are expected of individuals. Decision-making is still largely believed to be a male entitlement. The African traditional practice of dowry payments (*lobolo*, - where a man or his family pays the woman's family to marry her) is said to contribute towards women feeling obliged to be subservient to their men and keeping the home front as well as expectations of their wider community running against all odds. These are some of the factors

that may be contributing to the high life-to-work conflict of working individuals, predominantly women (Ngubane, 2010).

Not all studies on African as well as other collectivistic societies agree on the effect of their culture on work-life conflict experiences (Zhang & Liu, 2011). Some studies have suggested that although collectivistic societies can have a negative effect on the life-to-work conflict of women they can also serve as a supportive measure that is potentially beneficial for working women (Spector et al., 2005; Lu et al., 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011). On the one hand, collectivist societies emphasise loyalty to the family and society, i.e. they are pro harmony and the good of the family and the wider community where women are especially obliged to comply with the dictates of society despite their work challenges. On the other hand, people from collectivistic societies fall back on their families to provide them with support in their household and childcare responsibilities. The extended family may be a source of support in some instances. For instance, it is not uncommon for grandmothers to assist with the care of newly born babies so that the mothers may return to work. In addition, their (i.e. grandparents') presence helps when young children return from school so that their mothers are able to focus on work without the need for after-school care. If the elderly parents are still strong and/or healthy they may even help with some household chores. Social support has long been recognised as important in terms of alleviating work family conflict (Aryee, 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011). As stated by Hutson (2007), unfortunately the recent tendency towards nuclear families, together with urbanisation, have deprived women of the support they enjoyed from close-knit extended families and the ease with which women would get together to discuss issues that affect them, - thus offering emotional support. The closeness to the extended family facilitated support systems which also helped to relieve women of the strain of taking care of children or the elderly on their own (Aryee, 2005; Spector et al., 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010, Lu et al., 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Akanji, 2012).

With high unemployment levels in sub-Saharan Africa, those individuals who are employed have a responsibility to their unemployed extended family members (Akanji, 2012). This may include having to visit them frequently to ascertain that all is well, thus adding to the strain. In addition, extended family members who are seeking work in urban areas often stay with their relatives for either short to extended periods of time while often needing to be taken care of, especially financially. They may also require time in terms of having to be shown around often unfamiliar urban environments. Such obligations make demands on the time and energy

resources of the employed members of the family, thus contributing to their work-family challenges (Aryee, 2005; Akanji, 2012).

Another attribute of the family situation in sub-Saharan Africa which is linked with the collectivistic nature of the culture in this area is the care of the elderly family members. For some reason, the notion of nursing homes and old age homes remains foreign and adult children are expected to assume the responsibilities of taking care of their elderly, often sickly, parents. For that reason, it is not uncommon to find elderly parents living with their adult children or when living on their own, they often require frequent visits to monitor their condition. This inter-generational caregiving has an effect on the integration of work and family roles (Aryee, 2005) and may cause strain on the working individuals, thereby contributing to their experience of life-to-work conflict.

Research studies have been conducted comparing different racial groups across countries. Several researchers have postulated that, because the family circumstances of people from different racial, ethnic or language groups differ, their experiences of WLC can be expected to also differ. Some studies find no differences between people from differing ethnic or language backgrounds (Lu et al., 2010; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Akanji, 2012). However, the results are inconsistent.

There are those study results that suggest that there are differences in the way in which different racial groups react when faced with conflicting responsibilities in the work and home domains (Spector et al., 2005; Lyonette et al., 2007). A study by Lu et al. (2010) found culture-specific differences between the Taiwanese and British participants in their study while Liu et al. (2008) found differences between their Chinese and American respondents. A study by Mathis, Brown and Randle (2009) found differing ways of coping and reacting to WLC between Blacks and Whites in the United States.

A study reported by Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found that English-speaking respondents in South Africa experienced higher levels of WLC than the respondents who spoke Afrikaans and the African languages. In addition, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) find that their respondents who spoke African languages experienced higher levels of WLC (specifically family-to-work interference) as compared to the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking respondents. One of the plausible explanations for this may be the fact that the African culture tends to be collectivist in nature and thus the informal support Africans receive may act as a buffer against the effects of WLC. Steyl and Koekemoer (2011, p. 4) further established that White and

African groups experienced higher levels of WLC as compared to the Coloured and Indian groups; Marais and Mostert (2008) report that Afrikaans-speaking individuals experienced lower levels of life-to-work conflict compared to their English-speaking and Setswana-speaking counterparts. The findings by Marais and Mostert are consistent with the ones reported by De Klerk and Mostert's (2010) study, Mostert and Oldfield's (2009) as well as Marais and Mostert's (2008) studies, which found that White Afrikaans-speaking participants experienced lower life-to-work conflict as compared to their Black counterparts. Marais and Mostert's (2008) study worked with nurses as participants while Mostert and Oldfield (2009) worked with mineworkers as their research participants, to the fact that Whites in South Africa tend to be individualistic while Blacks tend to be collectivistic. However, only Pieterse and Mostert (2005) do not find any differences in the experiences of the work-life interface when comparing their Black, White, Indian and Coloured participants who worked within the earthmoving industry. Therefore, more research suggests differences in experiences of work-life conflict when different ethnic groups are compared. However, more research still needs to be executed to corroborate data and support research that has been accomplished already.

In terms of research on culture and work-life conflict/balance, several studies have focused primarily on organisational culture, suggesting that a positive organisational culture that encompasses family-friendly services, policies and supportive initiatives and/or programmes, helps employees to cope with their work and non-work obligations (Higgins et al., 2008; MacInnes, 2008; Calvert et al., 2009; Russell et al., 2009; Jang & Zippay, 2011). Organisational commitment to family-friendly programmes may be beneficial to employees as it reflects an organisational culture that acknowledges that employees have commitments outside of the workplace Thus, studies on WLC have tended to concentrate more on organisational culture than on broader socio-cultural issues. Kinnunen, Mauno, Geurts and Dikkers (2005) reviewed several studies that all focused on organisational culture and its effects and on organisational responses that helped with family-to-work interference. Following their research, they suggest that there should be an increased focus on socio-cultural factors (i.e. the role of society at large) in work-life discussions.

In terms of religion and the work-life interface, although it is thought that as part of culture, religion has some effect on the way in which individuals react to work and life challenges. It would appear that there has not been much research on the topic. In India, Tsai (2008) found that the Hindu believes that it is the duty of the man to protect the family from harm plays a role in helping, particularly their women, to cope with life-to-work conflict. This may be

because men would do their utmost to ensure that their women get help. Kulik and Rayyan (2006) found differences in the way in which Muslim and Jewish women react to and cope with work-life challenges. Henderson (2014, p. 5) states that "religiosity buffered the negative effects of general role overload". Individual involvement in religious activities has been found to be effective as a significant psychological resource during times of stress and strain thereby helping individuals to cope and manage stressful circumstances. However, Henderson (2014) goes further to say that more research still needs to be done in terms of religion and WLC. According to Henderson (2014, p. 2), "the scarcity of research on religion and WFC is somewhat surprising given the continued vitality of religion and the renewed scholarly interest in the role of religion in family life specifically". This is also because most religious traditions involve teaching on the importance of the family and what, religiously, is considered appropriate roles and responsibilities of individuals.

In summary, research studies have shown that culture is associated with experiences of WLC, particularly life-to-work conflict of women. Different cultures, to some varying extent, still expect women to carry the bigger load in terms of household responsibilities and chores. African culture is particularly still perceived as patriarchal with women seen as incapable in the world of work, whereas in the home front they are still expected to be subservient. The patriarchal culture also means that women are still expected to run the households with men being breadwinners. Women still to a large extent comply with such expectations despite the fact that their roles and responsibilities in the work domain have increased. Consequently, they bring part of the bread home while they still shoulder the household responsibilities while men have moved very little towards the household responsibilities. As a result, women's WLC affects their progress at work and is still largely affected by cultural mandates among other things (Msholoolo, 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Noge, 2014; Akinyele, Peters & Akinyele, 2016; Plickert & Sterling, 2017; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018; Lewis, 2019).

Culture is defined as a collection of persons with the same belief, norms and practices. It can encompass, but not limited to, religious group, language group or ethnic/racial group (Birukou et al., 2009; Tharp, 2006). Researchers have indicated the need to conduct more WLC research in different cultural contexts. Researchers have tried to offer plausible explanations for the associations between culture and WLC, which include:

Firstly, they suggest that ethnic/racial groups that tend to be collectivistic in nature, like the Asian and African cultures, are characterised by strong expectations for women to comply with

family roles thereby resulting in women experiencing more life-to-work conflict than their male counterparts (Chandra, 2010; Ogbogu, 2013; Segal, 2013; Clark et al., 2015; Akinyele et al., 2016). For example, most Korean women have to stop working either after marriage or, most commonly, immediately after their first child (Tsai, 2008) in order for them to take care of their families. In sub-Saharan Africa women are still expected to be primarily responsible for taking care of their families, i.e. their spouses, children and elderly parents regardless of their employment status (Ogbogu, 2013; Gamor et al., 2014; Ajayi et al., 2020).

Secondly, it has been speculated that both the African and Asian cultures tend to have an authoritarian working culture that may increase job stress and compliance rather than flexibility that is often seen in the westernised cultures. This uncompromising need for compliance would then increase WLC and/or the difficulty of coping with it (Aryee, 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Jang & Zippay, 2011; Bazana & Dodd, 2013; Ogbogu, 2013).

Thirdly, it has been suggested that religion may also play a role in WLC (Tsai, 2008; Henderson, 2014; Rogers & Franzen, 2014; Hassan, Ibrahim, Nor, Sabil & Bandar, 2017). For example, the Hindu belief that fathers should protect their families from negative experiences may actually help women to cope with work-life challenges. Furthermore, Henderson (2014) reports that people who were actively religious coped better with challenges of work-life conflict. It is not that religion necessarily reduced the conflict but rather that religion acted as a buffer to the stress experienced due to work and life issues (Henderson, 2014; Hassan et al., 2017).

Finally, it has been observed that in most regions of sub-Saharan Africa the notion of the extended family is diminishing in favour of the nuclear husband, wife and children phenomenon. This new family dynamic may relieve the strain/burden of taking care of extended family members on the one hand, while depriving the nuclear family of the support that they could or used to get from their extended families. Research has indicated that extended family members can, in some situations, relieve strain of taking care of households from working women (Tsai, 2008; Gamor et al., 2014; Akinyele et al., 2016).

In summing up, studies have shown that culture is associated with levels of WLC, particularly life-to-work conflict of women. Different cultures, to some varying extent, still expect women to carry the bigger load in terms of household responsibilities and chores. African culture is particularly still perceived as patriarchal with women seen as incapable in the world of work, whereas in the home front they are still expected to be subservient. The patriarchal culture also means that women are still expected to run the households with men being breadwinners. Women still to a large extent comply with such expectations despite the fact that their roles

and responsibilities in the work domain have increased. However, they bring part of the bread home while they still shoulder the household responsibilities while men have moved very little towards the household responsibilities. As a result, women's WLC is still largely affected by cultural mandates among other things (Ajayi et al., 2020). Culture is defined as a collective of persons with the same belief, norms and practices. It can encompass, but is not limited to, religious group, language group or ethnic/racial group. Researchers have indicated the need to conduct more WLC research in different cultural contexts (Yang, 2005; Lu et al., 2010; Karimi et al., 2012; Gamor et al., 2014; Annor, 2016).

3.4 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

Work-life issues affect everyone, regardless of their education, sex, income, family, profession, age, job status or rank, age, race or religion. Researchers have indicated that coping with WLC has always been a challenge for employees, employers and societies. Work-life conflict is also a problem for both male and female employees. Factors that have been shown to affect WLC include work overload, the type of job, work time involvement/commitment (i.e. working hours), job involvement (how much energy the individual puts into their job or how dedicated they are), role overload (too many roles to perform at the same time), job flexibility, inadequate working facilities/resources, poor working relationships with colleagues and especially with managers/supervisors (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013; Gamor et al., 2014).

While work-life challenges affect persons across class, gender, age, marital status, educational level, profession and ethnicity, the effects tend to be more marked in single parents, women, low-income families and employees who are responsible for caring for the elderly, children and the chronically ill. Some of the differences in the way individuals react to WLC may be the result of their own home/life or domestic situations, their personalities, traditional beliefs and practices as dictated by expected cultural norms or personal roles and goals (Broadbridge, 2009; Calvert et al., 2009; Gadinger, Fischer, Schneider, Fischer, Frank & Kromm,, 2009; Jang & Zippay, 2011; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013). This section of the study discusses research results on the relationship between work-life conflict and demographical variables, which include gender, age, educational level, marital status and parental status.

3.4.1 Relationship between Work-Life Conflict and Gender

Gender as a predictor of WLC has been studied extensively. The overwhelming majority of studies found that women experience more negative effects of life-to-work conflict and overall WLC as compared to their male counterparts. These differences in the experiences of men and women may be the result of the expected traditional roles of individuals (Poelmans, O'Driscoll, & Beham, 2005; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Agarwala et al, 2015; Clark, Rudolph, Zhdanova, Michel & Baltes, 2015; Gragnano et al., 2020). According to Zhang and Liu (2011), there are some studies on WLC that found no differences between men and women and few ones that found that men reported higher levels of work-to-life conflict than women.

Women tend to experience more WLC, particularly life-to-work conflict than men. Previously the expected traditional role of women was primarily that of parenting and women hardly participated in the work arena. However, as more women are entering the workplace this is causing an increasing clash with their traditional parenting roles, leading to WLC. On the other hand, more men are also taking over some of the parenting roles and responsibilities, especially the younger generation and they are also expected to be emotionally supportive of their families, leading to conflicting role demands on their part (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011). However, in some traditional contexts, including the African context, the situation may still be that the women experience higher levels of work-to-family conflict than the men. This may be due to the fact that, although women are moving into the workplace and moving higher in the ranks of their organisations, their culture still expects them to continue with the traditional home roles while their men and families are not adapting to the changes and are continuing to struggle with accepting the women's new lifestyle of working (Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Akinyele et al., 2016; DePasquale et al., 2017).

Studies suggest that male and female employees may have different experiences in their roles and, as a result, they tend to experience different levels of role conflict and role ambiguity (Boles et al., 2003). Research studies have indicated that women are likely to experience higher levels of family-to-work conflict than their male counterparts (Ergeneli et al., 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013; Agarwala et al., 2015). For example, societal and cultural expectations pertaining to parental obligations tend to be stronger for mothers than for fathers. As a result, such mothers may feel more compelled than fathers to attend to family matters at the expense of their jobs, giving rise to their experiencing greater WLC than men who tend to put their jobs first. A further challenge for women is that work demands tend to be mandatory with distinct deadlines. Thus, trying to meet these obligations despite the burden that society

imposes upon and expects of women (i.e. women continue to shoulder more home and caretaking responsibilities than men) further complicates the work-life of women (Boles et al., 2003; Jang & Zippay, 2011).

Researchers explain that the differences between males and females may also be explained by, firstly, the concept of a physio-biological perspective that maintain that men and women manifest different attributes in the work environment with women seeking work roles that do not interfere with their family roles. The second explanation arose from the socialisation perspective that posits that women are socialised into communal behaviours and men into more instrumental values (Boles et al., 2003). However, with the changing circumstances in the work place, it is no longer easy for women to choose jobs that do not interfere with their family environments as they increasingly move into positions of influence and power. In addition, there are greater numbers of dual couple earners and women are, thus, more instrumental as breadwinners than before (Fellows, Chiu, Hill & Hawkins, 2016).

According to Karkoulian and Halawi (2007), although women's roles in society, especially in the labour market, have changed, they continue to face barriers that impact negatively on both their working life and the progress they make in the workplace. Not only do societies still perceive parenting as fundamentally a female prerogative, but they also perceive the pursuit of a career as a male prerogative. Women are frequently expected to play several roles that may be conflicting. These conflicts are often so intense that, at times, they result in a reduction in the employment of women and this, in turn, leads to lower incomes and a restriction in career opportunities and advancement. The extent to which a woman subordinates her career aspirations to meet her family and societal needs or vice versa depends on such issues as her value systems and priorities, the amount of support she receives from her spouse/partner, the age-based needs of her children, and the support she receives from the organisation for which she works in terms of flexibility and assistance with childcare. Studies have consistently shown that women spend more time on domestic activities and child caregiving than men. The years during which they are involved in child-rearing are usually between 25 and 35 years of age. This also happens to be the decade that is the most critical for career advancement because it is at this age that the experience upon which the career is based is gained. This then results in the underrepresentation of women in senior positions (Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Agarwala et al., 2015; DePasquale, 2017).

Some women sacrifice motherhood in pursuit of a career on the assumption that motherhood would signify the end of their careers and also on the assumption that promotion for women is viewed as synonymous with childlessness. In some instances they are even expected to give up their career progression dreams to support their husbands' dreams (Williams, Berdahl & Vandello, 2015). Other women choose to postpone having children to a later age – a perception that is supported by research that the birth rates for women over 30 years of age have increased since the 1980s and decreased for women younger than 30 years of age (Broadbridge, 2009). In India, Tsai (2008) also reported diminished fertility rates, which were thought to be the result of WLC as well as the economic conditions. In other countries, including Europe and the United Kingdom, it is reported that the total fertility rate (i.e. the number of children born to an 'average' woman) had decreased from 2.8 in the early 1960s to 1.4 by 2005 (MacInnes, 2008). Cheung and Halpern (2010) also reported that in the USA and in China more women in higher levels of management do not have children. It is also interesting to observe that in South Africa there have been similar trends in diminishing birth rates. These may be due to several reasons, including the economic climate and the realisation of the need to feed and take care of smaller families. However, the decrease may also be due to changing roles and role overload as well as caregiver strain, concepts that are linked to WLC. These decreasing birth rates are presented in table 3.1 below. The numbers indicate an average number of children per family.

Table 3.1: Decreasing Birth Rates in South Africa

YEAR	AFRICANS	COLOUREDS	INDIANS/ASIANS	WHITES
1961 – 1966	6.35	6.70	4.66	3.15
1971 – 1976	6.64	5.60	3.81	2.59
1981 – 1986	4.88	3.20	2.88	2.03
1991 – 1996	4.50	2.60	2.29	1.73
2001 – 2006	3.23	2.35	1.93	1.84
2006 – 2011*	3.00	2.17	1.78	1.77
2011 – 2016*	2.77	1.99	1.64	1.71
2016 – 2021*	2.54	1.81	1.49	1.64

*= the figures indicated in these rows are projections (Source: Barker, 2007, p. 18)

In Japan, a Family Policy Act, which required organisations to develop programmes to support employees, especially with childcare, was promulgated following the observation that the birth

rate had declined as a result of women not coping with WLC and then opting to have fewer children (Watai, Nishikido & Murashima, 2008).

In studies conducted in Canada (Higgins et al., 2008), India (Saxena & Bhatnagar, 2009) and in a Lebanese higher education institution (Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007), it was found that women experienced higher levels of stress from WLC as compared to their male counterparts. In addition, women were more likely than men to plan their lives around their family demands and obligations, limit their job involvement to allow time for family and do part-time work that cuts down hours and unfortunately also on income. However, men with family responsibilities were more likely to identify one partner, their spouse, as having the primary responsibility for the family. This, in turn, would further pressurise women and increase their family-to-work conflict. Studies by Broadbridge (2009) on women managers in the United Kingdom and by Lyonette et al. (2007), who compared employees in Britain and Portugal, also pointed to similar issues of women not progressing in the workplace due to the burden of household responsibilities. These findings of the differences between men and women in coping with conflict between work and family roles were postulated to be a result of cultural and traditional expectations and the way in which women were socialised to be nurturing, altruistic and to place the needs of others first, particularly those of the family (Saxena & Bhatnagar, 2009; Karkoulian, Srour & Sinan, 2016).

Higgins et al. (2008) also found that, when faced with WLC, women are more likely to cope by sacrificing their personal needs or obtain support from outside the family in terms of paying for help, implying that they outsource their family responsibilities where possible (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). In addition, women with childcare responsibilities or responsibilities for caring for the elderly were more likely than their male counterparts to leave things undone around the house. Women employees also try to cope by doing with less sleep, having fewer children, taking prescription medicine or drinking, or cutting back on outside/social activities. Unfortunately, however, all these coping strategies tend to increase, rather than decrease, conflict between work and home. They also increase health issues such as hypertension as well as psychological issues, including resentment, insomnia or the more serious psychological problems of depression, anxiety and substance abuse (Higgins et al., 2008; Broadbridge, 2009; Kan & Yu, 2016; Leineweber et al., 2016; DePasquale et al., 2017).

According to Cheung and Halpern (2010), another reported trend, especially for women in managerial positions, is to take children to work or on work-related trips. By so doing they get

to spend time with their children while the children also get an opportunity to appreciate what their mothers get up to when they are not at home. So women redefine their roles, they organise their working lives around their families and children. They try never to miss important events in their children's lives like a sporting event for instance. Those who can would rather take a few hours off work during the day for children's events and then work later in the evening. Redefining roles only means working better around their many responsibilities. It means coping with the strain of household responsibilities as well as that of work-related responsibilities. It does not lessen the load/strain on women (Cheung & Halpern, 2010).

In Hong Kong, it was found that female managers had few expectations that their organisations would be family friendly and those female managers who consciously chose to balance work and family accepted that this would mean fewer promotional chances (Ng & Fosh, 2004, p. 43). According to Ng and Fosh (2004), working women in Hong Kong experience even more work-family conflict than their Western counterparts as a result of the extended family. Their sense of familial responsibility is partly the result of the double standards which Chinese society imposes on women with regard to both the housekeeping and breadwinner roles. Sub-Saharan Africa studies also found that women tend to be more negatively affected by WLC than men, i.e. they experience more life-to-work conflict as a result largely of their culture that still expects women to carry the load of household responsibilities (Aryee, 2005; Ogbogu, 2013; Segal, 2013; Akinyele et al., 2016).

Traditionally organisational employee-related policies and practices have relied on men pursuing careers while their women partners supported them at home (Clark et al., 2015). However, more and more women are now doing jobs that are similar to men's that three to four decades ago would have been perceived as men's work. It is consequently essential that organisational assumptions and practices be revised to become more family-friendly. As a result of social expectations and early-age socialisation, women and men tend to ascribe different meanings to their careers (Wong et al., 2020). Men's careers and progression are linear while, for women, the concept of career is part of the gestalt of their life and includes, besides their work, their family, friends, community as well as the responsibilities of caregiving and nurturing others (Igbinomwanhia et al., 2012; Ajayi et al. 2020).

3.4.2 Relationship between Work-Life-Conflict and Age

Research results on age and WLC also vary from some studies showing no differences between age groups to most of the studies that indicate that the older employees between the ages of 50 and 69 experience less WLC than the younger employees. In addition, those employees who are between 22 and 39 years of age experience the highest levels of WLC (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; Chaudhry, Malik & Ahmadi, 2011). Some of the reasons why older (50 years and above) women experience less work-life conflict include the fact that the older workers may possibly have achieved their career goals and positions/ranks at work and/or with age and maturity they have learned the essential skills required to manage the demands of work and family. These older workers are likely to be in high positions at work and no longer have the need to impress anyone by working extremely long hours. The younger ones, on the other hand, may still need to prove themselves in both their non-work and work lives. In addition, the younger employees may still have younger children whom they need to look after, i.e. more caregiver strain. This last point highlights the issue and challenge of women with younger children rather than the age of the woman herself (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Gragnano et al., 2020).

3.4.3 Relationship between Work-Life Conflict and Educational Level

Research on educational level and WLC is not as abundant as with the other demographic variables. In addition, the research results that are available on the association between WLC and educational level are still inconsistent and confusing. Pieterse and Mostert (2005) found no association between level of qualification and WLC. Conversely, Steyl and Koekemoer, 2011, p. 4) reported that workers with tertiary qualifications experienced lower levels of negative WLC compared to those workers with lower educational levels. Some of the reasons advanced may be that employees with higher qualifications attach more value to their work role, or they may refuse to be dictated to by non-work demands. In addition, employees with higher qualifications know what they are doing at work and do not take too much time struggling to figure out what is required of them. As they are mostly already in higher positions at work they no longer need to work long unreasonable hours to impress others.

Zhang and Liu (2011) reported studies that found varying effects of educational level on WLC. They reported low family-to-work conflict in lower educated females. This was possibly as a result of the fact that these women occupied lower positions at work, which would not be too demanding of their time. Their study highlighted the fact that the higher the educational level,

the higher the chances of advancing in the organisational hierarchies and the higher the work-to-life conflict. The authors also reported that, in the case of males with levels of high education and who were probably occupying high positions at work, family responsibility tended to interfere with work (Zhang & Liu, 2011).

3.4.4 Relationship between Work-life Conflict and Marital Status

Research studies reported varying results with regard to the effect of marital status on WLC. Some studies found than single people, both men and women, experienced less WLC than their married counterparts while others found the opposite results. A study in Steyl and Koekemoer, (2011) reported no significant differences between married and single individuals while Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) and Chaudhry et al. (2011) found that single employees experienced higher levels of WLC as compared to their married counterparts. The reasons suggested included the fact that single people tend to have less positive work-family interaction while they also tend to experience higher levels of depression, anxiety and other psychological hardships as compared to married people. In addition, they have to handle their life challenges without the support of a spouse. This, in turn, implies that the support of one's spouse is an important buttress against job-related stress.

Cheung and Halpern (2010) found that women who were leaders and had succeeded in their marriages had husbands who supported them and were their cheerleaders. However, women whose husbands were not prepared to or were not comfortable breaking away from traditional sex role norms presented problems for women and their marriages would actually be threatened. Unfortunately, some studies have even shown that the career progression of married women is negatively affected as compared to their single counterparts (Doubell & Struwig, 2014) and that married individuals may sometimes deliberately miss or reject career opportunities (including promotions and/or relocations) because of family demands. On a day-to-day basis, married women at times refuse to work the long hours that sometimes come with especially higher positions at work, an action that excludes them from future promotion possibilities. Other researchers actually reported that married individuals tend to experience more family-related conflict than their single counterparts (Agarwala et al., 2015; Adriano & Callaghan, 2020).

3.4.5 Relationship between Parental Status and Work-life Conflict

Having children is one of the basic functions and main responsibilities of a family. However, the responsibilities involved in being a parent in terms of caring for children may be perceived as increasing the demands made on people. In the context of WLC these parental responsibilities contribute remarkably to caregiver strain. According to Zhang and Liu (2011), although childcare obligations increase the likelihood of family-to-work interference. There are still very few empirical studies on this issue. The effect of childcare responsibilities on WLC is interpreted either from the perspective of the number of children one has or the age of those children (Some authors have indicated that women with children tend to experience higher levels of life-to-work conflict than either men or women who do not have children (Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Clark et al., 2015).

Responsibilities that are linked to caring for children disrupt working schedules thereby intensifying chances of WLC. This can also have a negative effect on the career progression of women in organisations. In addition, the more children one has the higher the life-to-work conflict (Spector et al., 2005; Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; McMillan et al., 2011; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013). According to Duxbury and Higgins (2001), parents without children are free to do things, like spend more time at work, as they do not have children to look after. The paradox is that employees who do not have children tend to spend more hours at work than necessary as they do not have to rush to cook for the family for instance, - meaning that their work-to-life conflict is actually higher. However, because they do not have anything or anyone to rush home to, especially if they are also single, the long hours at work do not bother them as these offer them something to occupy themselves with. Research has further shown that large numbers of women who make it to the top in organisational hierarchies do not have children (Cheung & Halpern, 2010). So countries may experience declining birth rates as women choose to have no children or fewer children than before.

In terms of the age of the children, it has been found that those parents, mothers rather than fathers, with younger children experience more life-to-work conflict than those with older children. Mothers with children between 0 – 12 years' experience higher levels of interference than those with older children. In addition, those with children under five years of age were noticed to be worse off as compared to those with older children. However, when the children reach 13 to 18 years of age the WLC, specifically life-to-work conflict, decreases. This is obviously because younger children need more care as they are still extremely dependent (Calvert et al., 2009; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Gamor et al., 2014).

From the above, more research has shown that, - firstly, women with children have more life-to-work conflict and secondly, the younger the age of the children the worse off the women are in terms of their life-to-work conflict. However, Spector et al. (2005) found that, in Hong Kong, having a high number of children was associated with lower work-family pressure. This lower work-to-family interface was thought to be the result of various family support systems including the kinship bonds that may exist in the Chinese culture. In another study conducted in South Africa Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found no significant differences between WLC of employees with children as compared to those without. For that reason, there are still some inconsistencies, with more research showing that having children has a negative correlation with the career progression of women.

3.4.6 Relationship between work-life conflict and position at work

Several researchers have indicated that managers tend to experience higher levels of WLC when compared to their non-managerial counterparts (Kasper, Meyer & Schmidt, 2005; Burke & El-Kot, 2010; Schierman & Glavin, 2016; Wolor et al. 2020). Different reasons have been proffered for managers experiencing high levels of WLC. These reasons include the fact that the higher any employer moves up in the management hierarchy the more job responsibilities they have (Agarwala et al., 2015). In addition, managers have more decision-making responsibilities that involve wider sections of the organisation as well as more and tighter work deadlines to meet (Donald & Linnington, 2008). They also tend to work longer hours due to these increased responsibilities, meetings that either take too long or are organised deliberately after working hours to accommodate all stakeholders. The longer working hours are exacerbated by the access to technology that makes it easy for the managers to access their work at all times (Fujimoto, Azmat & Hartel, 2012; Ross, Intindola & Boje, 2016; Van Zoonen et al., 2020). Michel, Clark and Beiler (2013), Eversole and Crowder (2020) as well as Mihelič (2014) state that managers have a tendency to be more involved/committed to their jobs, further complicating the longer hours and thus experiences of work-to-life conflict. Kasper, Meyer and Schmidt (2005, p. 443) went further to say that managers develop “a kind of dependency on their work” and are “prisoners of their success”. The dependency on their work makes managers to work harder, for long hours, and increase their experience of WLC.

In summation of the factors that influence work-life conflict, research studies have indicated that: females tend to experience higher levels of WLC (in most cases life-to-work conflict) than their male counterparts when work-related and organisational characteristics are controlled

(Poelmans, O'Driscoll & Beham, 2005; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Agarwala et al., 2015; Clark et al., 2015; Plickert & Sterling, 2017); professionals tend to experience higher levels of WLC than the non-professionals. In addition, those employees with higher levels of education, who are also likely to occupy higher positions at work, tend to experience higher levels of WLC than their counterparts with lower levels of education (Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Coetzee & Kluyts, 2020); employees in higher ranks/positions at work (especially in management positions) tend to experience higher levels of WLC than those in lower ranks (Burke & El-Kot, 2010; Schierman & Glavin, 2016); employees, mostly women rather than men, with young children experience the highest levels of WLC.

In addition, the higher the number of children the higher the level of WLC. However, support from collectivistic societies may actually help in acting as a buffer against the effect of life-to-work conflict (Calvert et al., 2009; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Gamor et al., 2014); employees who were married or cohabiting reported higher levels of WLC than single people. Again, this effect is more pronounced in females than males. This may be due to a higher level of family responsibilities of married individuals or due to the fact that as single people, particularly those living on their own do not have anyone to rush home to; they tend not to interpret long hours at work as interference. The long hours are actually a source of keeping them occupied rather than a nuisance (Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; McMillan et al., 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Agarwala et al., 2015); people from different cultural backgrounds, in terms of different religious, language, ethnic or racial groups, may experience WLC differently (Rehman & Roomi, 2012; Karkoulian et al., 2016; May & Reynolds, 2018;). However, researchers have actually suggested that more research needs to be done on the different cultural concepts (of religion, ethnic/racial group or language group) as currently the research results are inconsistent and confusing (Tsai, 2008; Calvert et al., 2009; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Henderson, 2014; Kulik and Rayyan, 2006; Hassan et al., 2017).

3.5 RESEARCH TRENDS ON WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

Over the past two to three decades, there have been increased focus and research on the issue of work-life/home experience. This section presents the line of research and/or trends that researchers have largely followed in this area of work-life conflict. The trends followed point out the area that has been neglected, the area of religion and ethnicity as having a possible influence on the experiences of work-life conflict.

The increased focus on work-life experience has been driven by various challenges that include: 1) the changing nature of both the working environment and the workforce with more women in the workplace, and on top of that, proceeding to management positions (Annor, 2016); 2) advances in technology, which have enabled people to work at any time and from anywhere, thus resulting in blurred lines between the work and non-work domains/spaces and consequent increases in work and non-work interface (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2015); 3) globalisation and competitiveness resulting in the need to be in constant communication with business counterparts (van Zoonen, Sivunen & Rice, 2020); 4) changing working patterns and work schedules, - also linked to both technology advancements and globalisation (Ross et al., 2016); 5) career and talent management; 6) dual-earning couples, single parents; changing gender roles within the work and social settings; 7) stricter and/or a more demanding organisational culture; and 8) inadequate organisational strategies related to assisting employees with work-family balance/integration (Akinyele et al., 2016).

Most of the research has been conducted in more Westernised countries on mostly white people (Henderson, 2014; Akinyele et al., 2016). However, the realisation that this type of focus was limiting to both the definition and the universality of the concept of WLC has motivated other researchers to start conducting work-life research in other countries and cultural contexts. Several researchers have indicated that the major part of the international research has focused on the following: first, studying WLC from an occupational stress perspective, concentrating on work stressors as determinants of WLC and the way in which WLC affects well-being at both work and home; second, the antecedents of work-family conflict, including long working hours, cumbersome expectations and heavy workloads in the work domain, care responsibilities and family traits in the home domain as well as demographic and personality traits; third, the consequences of WLC, including 1) health-related (physical and psychological) consequences (Michel et al. 2013; Young-Mee & Sung-il, 2020); 2) work-related and organisational consequences (e.g. absenteeism, turnover intentions, organisational commitment); as well as 3) non-work-related consequences (satisfaction with life, relations

with spouses) (Huang & Liu, 2017); 4) measuring the conflict that arises when employees experience pressures in both their work and family realms; 5) support for employees in managing their WLC both at work and at home; and lastly, the directionality of the dimensions influencing one another (e.g. whether family is interfering with work or work is interfering with family) (Clark et al., 2015; Shin & Enoh, 2020).

In recent years, following recommendations to expand the definition of WLC to other cultures, more studies have been conducted cross-culturally. For example, studies by Thulasimani, Duraisamy and Rathinasabapathi (2010) and Chandra (2010) in India; Karkoulian and Halawi (2007) in Lebanon; Noor and Maad (2008) as well as Chaudhry et al. (2011) in Pakistan; and Ng and Fosh (2004), Coffey, Anderson, Zhao, Liu and Zhang (2009) as well as Zhang and Liu (2011) in China. Basically, these studies have followed the traditional trend in research of examining the antecedents and outcomes of WLC. However, they have helped to expand an understanding of the work-life concept in different cultures; to confirm gender differences in the experiencing of the concept (women more adversely affected than men and their career progression negatively affected as a result of the negative effects) and to corroborate that life-to-work conflict affects women more than men (Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007; Ajayi et al. 2020). However, Henderson (2014) states that it is remarkable that despite the amount of work done on the work-life conflict that not much attention has been given to the kind of challenges that individuals face due to their cultural practices and expectations from their religious commitments in the context of work and family interface.

In their study on Hispanic women in the United States, Duran and DelCampo (2010) conclude that both cultural beliefs and gender ideology affect the experiences and consequences of work-family conflict. Some studies found that cultures that are collectivist in nature, have a strong sense of family as well as a strong level of commitment to their work and, as a result, the professional women in their study needed help and support from their families/societies as well as their work environments to enable them to cope with both work and non-work obligations (Aryee, 2005; Ngubane, 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011; Akanji, 2012; Akinyele et al., 2016). Duran and DelCampo (2010) further found that support from collectivistic societies may help to alleviate the effects of life-to-work conflict, a feature that is lost in some instances of urbanisation and resultant move towards nuclear families (Zhang & Liu, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013). However, another study on Chinese and American women by Cheung and Halpern (2010) found that whether the women came from a collectivist or individualist culture they were affected and reacted to work and life demands in a similar way. Cheung and Halpern (2010, p.

190) further state that gender role norms and/or stereotypes are pancultural and "create opportunities and constraints for all women leaders". Furthermore, "in every society, gender norms prescribe the roles and behaviors that differentiate the experiences of women" and "across national boundaries, women leaders are exposed to similar stereotypes that form sexist stereotypes that form sexist prejudice in organizations and to the same media that scrutinize their physical appearance, clothing, and family responsibilities with a magnifying glass while portraying their male counterparts as dealing with substantive issues" (Cheung and Halpern, 2010, p. 191).

Studies that compared cultures, primarily according to countries, have also been conducted. For example, Spector et al. (2005) compared 18 countries while Mortazavi, Pedhiwala, Shafiro and Hammer (2009) compared Ukraine, Iran and the United States. Mortazavi et al. (2009) found a negative relationship between collectivistic societies and work-family conflict. This was in direct contrast to the findings of Zhang and Liu (2011) in the study they conducted in Hong Kong, namely, that collectivistic societies may be supportive, thereby reducing the negative effects of WLC. The majority of the cross-cultural studies compared whole nations/countries on experiences of WLC. Several other studies reported that unfortunately the rigid expectations of the need to comply with communal needs in collectivistic societies affect WLC, especially an increase in life-to-work conflict of employed individuals, in particular, women (Aryee, 2005; Spector et al., 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010, Lu et al., 2010; Akanji, 2012).

Studies conducted by Akanji (2012) and Ogbogu (2013) in Nigeria and Aryee (2005) in sub-Saharan Africa also helped in the understanding of WLC and the fact that it is more pronounced in women than men. One of the explanations suggested by Akanji (2012) as Ajayi et al. (2020) well as is the fact that, in view of the patriarchal nature of society in sub-Saharan Africa, women are still expected to carry more family responsibilities despite their increased participation in the labour market. These family commitments then come into significant conflict with their work responsibilities. Akanji (2012) also mentions that informal social support from the extended family and friends may help working mothers to balance their family and work demands. However, it also emerged that, in some cases, social support may also increase psychological stress and role overload. Furthermore, as a result of the collectivistic nature of the culture in sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to the high unemployment levels, working people are still expected to support their unemployed relatives and take care of their aged parents, both financially and otherwise. This, in turn, increases WLC. However, there is very little done

about WLC issues as, unfortunately, individuals, especially women, tend to resign themselves to the fact that this is how things are meant to be and they usually do not complain (Akanji, 2012).

Several studies have been conducted in South Africa on WLC/balance, the majority of which were in the past ten years. The focus of these studies has been on following the international trends (prevalence, antecedents and outcomes of work-life issues and organisational policies designed to help with work-life issues) as discussed above, as well as focus on the prevalence of WLC and the way in which employees define the phenomenon as well as the direction of the work-life conflict (i.e. work-to-life versus life-to-work conflict) (positive or negative) (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003; Whitehead & Kotze, 2003; Koekemoer and Mostert, 2006; Oldfield and Mostert, 2007; Rost and Mostert, 2007; Van Aarde & Mostert, 2008; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011), as well as on the reasons why employees experience positive work-home integration and the strategies they employ to achieve such integration (Oosthuizen & Mostert, 2010; Oosthuizen, Mostert & Koekemoer, 2011).

Other South African studies have focused on demographic differences (e.g. different age groups, males versus females, etc.) and the properties of the psychometric tests used to measure WLC (Rost & Mostert, 2007). A few studies have also concentrated on exploring multiple social roles and role salience while another study explored the interaction between work and all other life spheres in order to gain an insight into the experience and views of work-personal life interaction in South Africa (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, there have been research studies conducted on work-life interaction, primarily in Western societies. However, much work still needs to be carried out in order to develop a thorough understanding of the composite relationships between work and non-work (from a personal, family and/or societal perspective) within diverse cultural contexts and societies, including South Africa. According to Carikci, Antalyali and Oksay (2002), who conducted a study on managers in Turkey, it is becoming increasingly important to try to understand the effects of the interaction between work and non-work activities across cultures and societies, mainly because employees from diverse societies and cultures may experience and interpret their work environments and personal/home domains differently.

In South Africa several studies have been conducted relating to issues of WLC. The sectors in which these studies were conducted include private organisations (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003; Rost & Mostert, 2007; Oosthuizen & Mostert, 2010; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010; Downes &

Koekemoer, 2011); the mining sector (Oldfield & Mostert, 2007; Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; Steyl & Koekemoer, 2011); hospitals (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2006; Mostert, 2009); the police services (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010) and a tertiary institution (Oosthuizen et al., 2011) while Whitehead and Kotze (2003) conducted a study in the public sector and in non-governmental organisations. South Africa has even seen studies that looked at the relationship between different cultures and WLC. Steyl and Koekemoer (2011, p. 4) reported studies that found out that Whites and Africans experienced higher levels of WLC than Indians and Coloureds. In addition, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found in their study that participants who spoke African languages experienced higher levels of WLC, particularly family-to-work interference, than the Afrikaans and English-speaking participants. Therefore, the studies suggest that culture, in the form of racial and ethnic group, may be related to WLC of individuals. However, this area has not been given sufficient attention yet.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The research studies presented in this chapter suggest that progress has been made in terms of research on WLC. However, there is no evidence of work that has been conducted in the public sector of a rural province and focusing especially on the women managers from different religious and ethnic groups. These women managers are supposed to be part of the decision-making processes that may lead to the formulation of family-friendly policies that could help individuals (especially women) to cope with WLC. In addition, very few studies have focused specifically on the cultural dynamics (i.e. religion and/or ethnicity/race) and impacts of work-life issues on women. There are several ethnic groups in South Africa with at least five different ethnic groups in the Limpopo Province. For that reason, it would be interesting to conduct an in-depth study investigating the challenges that may be responsible for the work-life challenges facing employed individuals, in particular those facing women. This, in turn, would help in advocating for and designing family-friendly policies that would take into account the specific context and uniqueness of the individuals involved.

From the literature review outlined in this chapter, the current study contends that the issue of work-life conflict is an important consideration for organisations, especially their human resources department as it affects employees. People in higher positions, managers, tend to experience negative consequences of work-life conflict more than their non-manager counterparts; women tend to experience especially more life-to-work conflict than their male

counterparts and cultural groups may have differential experiences of work-life conflict. More studies have been conducted in Westernised contexts, in private corporations, with not enough consideration of the possible effect of culture on experiences of work-life conflict. Therefore, it makes sense to conduct the study on work-life conflict in a rural province, looking at women managers and comparing the possible effect of their cultural backgrounds, ethnic and religious. The next chapter will present the research methodology that was followed to answer the stated objectives of the current study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an outline of the methodology used to collect data for the study. The research paradigm is presented, followed by an explanation of the methods that were used to collect data. The target population as well as the sample are also explained. Lastly, the study considered ethical issues that are also outlined in this chapter.

4.2 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The presentation of the method that was followed to collect the data for the current study starts with an explanation of the research paradigm.

4.2.1 Research Paradigm

The study followed the mixed-method design. According to Wium and Wium (2018) a newer way of combining quantitative and qualitative research approaches serves the purpose of answering certain questions that either approach by itself may not be sufficient to answer. In a mixed-method study a population needs to be assessed thereby calling "for counting and measuring or comparing, which relies on quantitative inquiries. Qualitative approaches are suitable when "clients' understanding of their problems needs to be determined" (Wium & Wium, 2018, 13). Therefore, the mixed method is suitable for the current study as it (the study) is exploring the women managers' understanding of work-life conflict as well as their experiences. "In terms of the nature of reasoning (ontology), quantitative research is deductive, whereas qualitative research is adductive". Mixed methods design is inductive. In terms of axiology, i.e. the nature of reality, quantitative research assumes a single reality view whereas qualitative research believes in multiple realities. Therefore, using mixed methods is an attempt to draw from both these realities. Concerning the nature of knowing, i.e. epistemology, quantitative research is objective while qualitative research is subjective. Mixed methods approach "takes the middle ground as the nature of knowing is intersubjective (Wium & Wium, 2018, 13).

The kind of paradigm that takes the middle ground, i.e. that applies what Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) call an 'equal status' application of mixed-method research is the pragmatic paradigm. In the pragmatic paradigm, the qualitative and quantitative research methods are accorded equal weight and/or status. In this study, the qualitative and quantitative research methods were given the same weight. The approach employed in this study can be illustrated as in figure 4.1.

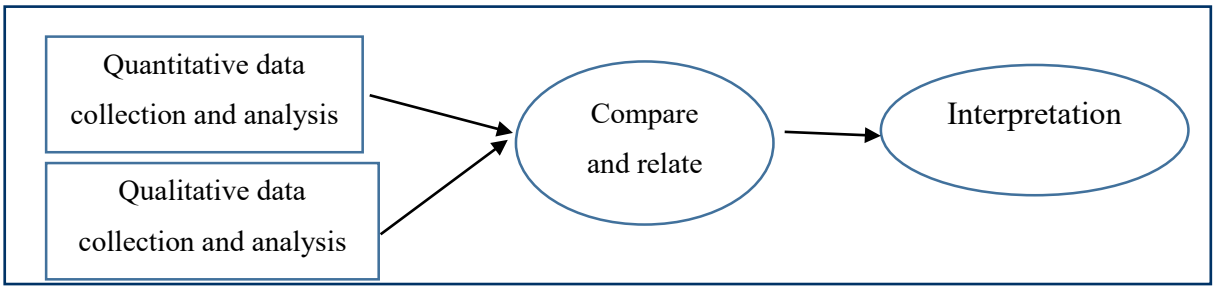


Figure 4.1: Concurrent triangulation mixed-method design

Source: Adapted from de Vos, Strydom. Fouche & Delport, 2011

The pragmatism paradigm is based on the assumption that acquisition of knowledge is on a continuum instead of it being based on two conflicting opposites of either objectivity or subjectivity (Kaushik & Walsh 2019; Maarouf 2019). Pragmatism is "unlike positivistic researchers, who assert an objective knowledge acquired by examining empirical evidences and hypothesis testing, and constructivists, who propose that knowledge is relative and reality is too complex" Kaushik and Walsh (2019, p. 2). Pragmatism research paradigm maintains the plurality of methods (Almpanis, 2016). It is based on the premise that researchers are able to select a distinctive methodological approach that is fitting and functions best for a specific research problem. The approach allows for flexibility in conducting research and is considered to be appropriate for mixed method research (Brierley, 2017; Kelly, Dowling & Miller, 2018). According to Almpanis (2016) pragmatism is the philosophical foundation for the mixed method research paradigm. Pragmatism circumvents the controversial uncertainties of truth and reality; it believes that there are "both singular (positivism/postpositivism) and multiple (interpretivism/constructivism) realities out there that are open to empirical inquiry and focuses on solving practical problems in the real world" (Almpanis, 2016, p.304).

4.2.2 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-method research design (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Niewenhuis, 2016) in order to describe the situation of female managers in the context of their cultural influences/expectations and/or the conventions as regards WLC. A research guide was designed for purposes of collecting qualitative data while a questionnaire was emailed to participants to collect quantitative data. The type of mixed method followed in the study is known as the concurrent triangulation design (Saunders et al. 2016; Wium & Louw, 2018), also known as the parallel mixed method design (Bracio & Szarucki, 2020) According to Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) "when designing a mixed-methods study, it is usually helpful to include the word "concurrent" ("parallel") or "sequential" ("sequenziell") in the title of the study design". In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected at the same time and the two "procedures are used to converge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem" (Wium & Louw, 2018, p.5). The results are integrated during analysis and interpretation to endorse a cohesive conclusion. They entail comparing two strands, showing differences in those strands and synthesising them (Wium & Louw, 2018). The design is as illustrated in figure 4.1.

The idea behind utilising the mixed methods designs is that one method of data collection may not be enough to answer all the questions (Kettles, Creswell & Zhang, 2011), - an idea that supported the decision to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study. This type of mixed methods according to Ivankova, Creswell and Piano Clark (2016, p. 319) is known as "triangulation design" mixed methods design (Kettles, Creswell & Zhang, 2011). In this study, the emphasis is primarily on triangulation which entails the use of more than one method of data collection to explore the same fact (Niewenhuis, 2016). Triangulation in this study involved using more than one method of data collection to study the same phenomenon of WLC experiences of women managers. One of the main purposes of triangulation is to "obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality" (Niewenhuis, 2016, p. 122), a point that fits well with the current study. In a nutshell, this study employed the concurrent triangulation mixed-method design, which is when the "quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently and later compared to determine convergence, differences and combinations" (dos Santos et al. 2017, p.5) is represented as "QUAN + QUAL" (dos Santos et al. 2017; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The representation matches the figure 4.1 illustration.

4.2.3 Target Population

The target population for this study includes all women in management positions, from junior managers to senior managers, in all the organisations in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2008), it was estimated that, of the 429 000 employed women in the Limpopo Province, 20–27% were in managerial positions. Thus, the estimated target population for this study comprises approximately 116 000 people. A target population refers to the total pool of elements about which a researcher wishes to make observations and includes all the persons or elements with the traits that the researcher wishes to understand (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

4.2.4 Sample

Qualitative sampling: For the qualitative part of the study non-probability sampling, i.e. purposive, judgemental sampling was used (Saunders et al. 2019). The participants were accessed from the database of the Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership, which offers management programmes for junior, middle and senior managers. The participants in these programmes are from different parts of the Limpopo Province as well as Mpumalanga Province. Candidates who had registered between the years 2011 and 2017 were on the database. Only records of those candidates who had completed the courses they had registered for were utilised for this study. The criteria used to select participants for the study included the fact that 1) they were from Limpopo Province; 2) females; 3) they are contactable; and 4) they are willing to participate.

Quantitative sampling: From the database, about 260 female managers from Limpopo Province had gone through the managerial programmes offered, only 126 of them were female and they were mostly enrolled in the programmes for middle and junior managers. For the quantitative part of the data collection, emails were sent to all the females (126) identified from the database. Unfortunately, some of the emails bounced back, plus not all of them (participants) responded to the emails. Eventually, 75 questionnaires were returned. Unfortunately, only 60 of them could be used for the final analysis due to the incompleteness of the data.

At the same time that when the questionnaires were sent out, face-to-face interviews were conducted with those women who had recently qualified, and had contact email addresses as

well as telephone/cell numbers to which they responded. Interviews were then conducted with 13 women managers.

4.2.5 Data Collection Method

As explained above, the current study used a mixed-methods design. Therefore, this section of the study presents firstly the qualitative part of the data collection method followed by the quantitative collection of data.

4.2.5.1 Qualitative data collection method

For the qualitative part of the study an interview guide was designed (see Appendix A) for use during the interviews. Interviews are particularly effective regarding collecting in-depth information and discovering the stories that shape a participant's experiences, attitudes and opinions. "Interviewing helped in eliciting 'meaning-making' stories and reflections from those lived experiences and in understanding the rationale behind participants' responses" (Chinyamurindi, 2019). Also, face-to-face interviews have the benefit of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with the respondents and thus to gain their cooperation. If participants are comfortable they can give information more readily particularly if opinions, feelings, or impressions are required. Thus, face-to-face interviews tend to provide quality responses (Ulin et al., 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

An interview guide was designed for data collection for the current study. An interview guide was utilised to ensure that the interviewees were asked similar questions and that the interview remained focused - while at the same time, attempting to ensure that interviewees were able to speak naturally and spontaneously. The interview guide with semi-structured questions had two subsections viz.: 1) the first part asked about the demographic information of the participants and 2) the second part asked about the experiences of participants on WLC in line with the objectives of the study, - i.e. the questions asked the participants about:

a) their understanding of the work-life conflict concept;
b) the roles and responsibilities expected of them from both the home front and the workplace;
c) their thoughts/perceptions on whether the expected roles and responsibilities differ according to their culture as defined specifically by their ethnic group and religion;
d) as well as questions on whether they experience more work-to-life conflict as compared to life-to-work conflict.

Face-to-face, individual interviews were conducted with the respondents with the interviewer seeking in-depth information on the relevant topic. The interview information was recorded on paper as well as with the use of audio recordings, with permission from the participants. Prior to holding these interview sessions with the participants, they (participants) were contacted telephonically and then the research questions were emailed to them to consider before the engagement with the researcher.

4.2.5.2 Quantitative data collection method

The quantitative part of the study was conducted at the same time as the qualitative part. For the quantitative part of the study self-administered questionnaires were designed (see Appendix B) and emailed to the targeted participants. The questionnaires comprised the first section that asked about the demographic information of the participants, followed by the questions from the work-family conflict scale (WAFCS).

According to Herst (2003), several researchers, over the years have worked on this scale (WAFCS), which measures work-family conflict. This is mostly based on the theory of work-family conflict by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). The purpose of and the difficulty in designing such a measure was in capturing the multi-dimensional nature of the work-life conflict construct. As a result, earlier versions of the scale had limitations, especially in terms of the scale not including enough elements that could measure the multi-dimensionality of the WLC concept. Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996) were amongst the first researchers who catered for the bi-directionality of the construct. Further additions to the statements in the questionnaire or exclusions of some of the statements, as well as refinements, especially in terms of the definition of the multi-dimensionality of the construct, continued over the years.

The WAFCS, as is currently used by most researchers is the one eventually refined by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000). The scale has shown internal consistency of the factors contained within it that ranged between .78 and .87, as well as what was defined as acceptable discriminant validity (Herst, 2003). Colombo and Ghislieri (2008), in a sample of Spanish speaking respondents, found reliability correlations that ranged from .65 to .78 for the family-to-work conflict and from .60 to .76 for the work-to-family conflict. Erdamar and Demirel (2013), who used the scale on English-speaking teachers in Turkey, reported reliability of .90 for the sub-dimension of work-to-family conflict and .89 for the sub-dimension of family-to-work conflict. Babalola, Oladipo and Chovwen (2015) used the scale on a sample in Nigeria. However, they were not testing the scale and as such did not report on its validity or reliability.

Therefore, it is apparent that the scale still needs to be tested further and validated. This scale was adopted for the current study because it is the only instrument that was found to be multi-dimensional in the way that the WLC construct is defined. It seemed to cover the issues that this study was investigating. A few more questions that asked specifically about family interfering with work were added to the questionnaire.

Eventually, the research instrument utilised for the quantitative part of this study comprised four main sections (see Appendix B) as follows:

a) The first section asked for biographical information of the participants: the ethnic group and cultural groups are specifically asked for in this section as these are independent variables of the study.
b) The second section consisted of the questions from the WAFCS questionnaire. The second section of the questionnaire is subdivided as follows:

Firstly, the first part has questions that ask about work-to-life conflict. Examples of such questions include: "After work, I come home too tired to do some of the family/non-work things I would like to do"; or "My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work while at home." This section will specifically answer the objective of whether the participants experience work-to-life conflict or not.

Secondly, the second part has questions that ask about life-to-work conflict such as "Tension and anxiety from my family (non-work) often weakens my ability to do my job"; or "When at work, I often try to arrange, schedule, or perform family/non-work related activities, like picking up the kids, eldercare, etc." This section of the questionnaire will specifically answer the question of whether the participants experience the life-to-work conflict or not.

Following analysis of these two sections, the study will be able to analyse which one the participants experience more, i.e. work-to-life versus life-to-work conflict to answer the fifth objective as outlined in the first chapter of the study.

Finally, the last part of the research instrument has open-ended questions that asked about the participants' knowledge, perceptions and experiences of work-life conflict, in line with the research questions as outlined earlier in the study. The open-ended questions also asked the participants about whether the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them are in line with their religious or ethnic expectations in line with the last objective of the study.

4.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The current study used a mixed-method design. The validity and reliability will be outlined first for the quantitative part followed by the qualitative part of the mixed method.

4.3.1 Validity and Reliability for the Qualitative Part of the Study

In terms of a qualitative study, the trustworthiness of the study is of utmost importance in terms of validity and reliability. There are four criteria that can be looked at in order to enhance the trustworthiness of a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013; Niewenhuis, 2016). These criteria were carefully considered in this study:

a) **Credibility:** to ensure that the study and its results are believable in-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the participants. The sessions were extensive, the shortest being 35 minutes long and the longest was an hour and 45 minutes. The participants were engaged and new and relevant themes emerged, especially with the earlier engagements that were then followed-up in subsequent appointments. This prolonged engagement (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Houghton et al., 2013) and detailed data collection (Niewenhuis, 2016) helped in gaining a broad understanding of how the participants construct and interpret their world, to contribute to the findings of the study. Data collection was done through both interviews and quantitative self-administered questionnaires.

   There was also constant consultation with two colleagues who acted as a sounding board and gave advice for the likely approaches, probes and engagements in the planned discussions with the participants. The initial plan was to also have one of the colleagues involved in some of the interview sessions. However, two of the initial sessions with the participants elicited such strong emotional reactions from the participants (with one of them crying bitterly about her overloaded from both her work and non-work environments, and specifically about the lack of support from work when she had a personal loss from her non-work domain), that the researcher felt that perhaps introducing an ‘observer’ in the subsequent interview engagements with participants may result in participants holding back on such reactions. The study, therefore, included the post-interview peer debriefing with two colleagues. One of the colleagues is male while the other is female. Both of them are lecturers who have researched the area of gender issues. Their post-interview feedback, which discussed matters that were missed i.e. that could have been probed further assisted in preparing for follow-up sessions with the participants.

The researcher also decided to utilise member checking, i.e. asking the participants to read the notes from the interview to see if these reflected what was said. Two of the women participants agreed to read the notes while the rest of them said they accepted whatever the researcher had written down, trusting that they would not be misrepresented. The two who agreed to read the notes later indicated that they were mostly satisfied with the content. One of them added more information that was included in the analysis of the data. The study did not include member-checking regarding the final results as at that point the various inputs from different participants would be integrated and it may have been difficult for individuals to recognise their contributions. According to Carlson (2010), it is advisable to limit member checking after the information has been transcribed. The reason is that different usage of words, as well as interpretations and constructions that the researcher may undertake (as has been the case in this current study), may result in misunderstandings between the researcher and the participants. If the participants feel misrepresented they may lose faith in the researcher. So the researcher limited member checking to the immediate field notes and a few participants after transcribing data.

b) **Transferability:** to ensure that the current study can be conducted in another setting that is similar (Niewenhuis, 2016), the participants involved are clearly defined as managers, who are female and from the public sector of Limpopo Province. The participants came from nine of the 12 provincial departments in Limpopo including some of the state-owned entities (parastatals). The wide coverage was to ensure possible transferability to other government departments in the country as well as the private sector (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Houghton et al., 2013; Niewenhuis, 2016). However, for purposes of confidentiality, these provincial departments that these women work for are not named.

c) **Dependability**: According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), special attention to issues of credibility as outlined above also serves to assist with the dependability of the findings from the study. Moreover, there were notes especially on issues that arose during the interviews that were not part of the initial semi-structured guide but were relevant to the study. Furthermore, the decision to continue interviewing, while looking for specific participants was also documented, i.e. the researcher for instance purposefully looked for participants from varied institutions, as well as those of different religious backgrounds, to answer questions of culture. The documentation of decisions made during the research process entails what is known as an audit/inquiry trail (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Houghton

et al., 2013) as it allows other researchers or readers to understand the processes undertaken by the researcher while conducting the study.

The researcher also made attempts to reflect on the document decisions made especially during data analysis. This was a challenge, which proved to be difficult sometimes as it detracted from concentrating on the dialogues during the face-to-face engagements. The self-reflections could only take place after the interviews, with attempts to do so immediately after the interviews in most cases. These self-reflections were sometimes coupled with the peer debriefing sessions.

d) **Confirmability**: confirmability has to do with the bias versus neutrality of the researcher. According to Reiners (2012), researcher bias in an interpretive phenomenological study is not a bad thing as prior knowledge and understanding help the researcher in making constructions and interpretations of what occurs while interacting with participants during the data collection. Besides, following an interpretive phenomenological approach, this current study employed the use of only one interviewer to limit 'many' interviewer biases, i.e. in the hope that the one interviewer brought similar bias to every interview session. Confirmability is also addressed through issues of self-reflection and the audit trail (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Houghton et al., 2013), which are already outlined previously.

4.3.2 Validity and Reliability for the Quantitative Part of the Study

According to Ivankova, Creswell and Piano Clark (2016), reliability of an instrument implies the consistency with which the same test/instrument can yield similar results every time it is used with similar participants under similar kinds of conditions. To ensure the reliability of the instrument used in this study, firstly, a standardised questionnaire that has been used in previous research studies (as indicated in section 4.2.5.2 above) was utilised; secondly, a pilot study was conducted and responses from it (pilot study) were used refine the questionnaire that was used. Various researchers have shown reliability coefficients of the current research instrument that are for instance, between .60 and .76 (Colombo & Ghislieri, 2008), as well as between .89 and .90 (Erdamar & Demirel, 2013). According to Ivankova, Creswell and Piano Clark (2016) and Babbie and Mouton (2001), a reliable instrument can increase the trustworthiness of the study.

Validity is defined in terms of how the study, with the data collection method and measuring instrument, shows the good design and the methodology and is grounded in sound theoretical bases (Mohajan, 2017). The current study has firstly outlined the theoretical background that

underpins the study; secondly, the measuring instrument used in the study is described at length; and finally, the instrument utilised in the current study has already been used by researchers with different population groups and shown to be both valid and reliable. A reasonable size sample has been used to enable some degree of generalisability to similar circumstances as those found in the study (Saunders et al., 2019). The use of a standardised instrument, which has been used by other researchers in earlier studies, as well as in different contexts increases the credibility of the tool as well as results gathered by using that tool. This is in line with what has been suggested as an important element of judging whether the study is credible or not (Mohajan, 2017).

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

This data analysis section will present firstly the method used to analyse qualitative data followed by the method used to analyse the qualitative data.

4.4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis, which involves the identification of common themes, was used as follows:

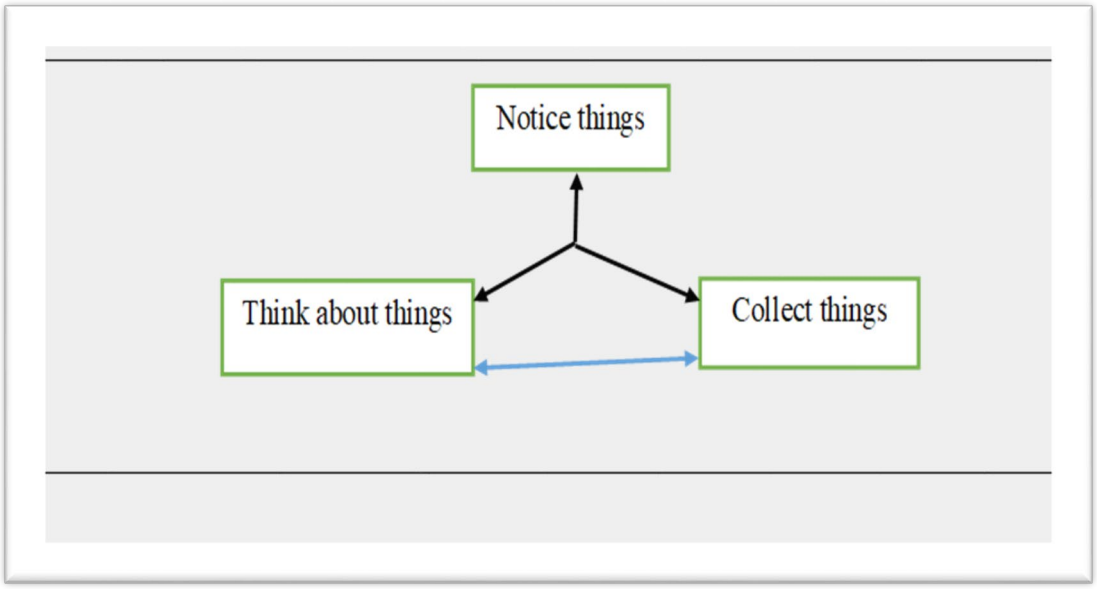


Figure 4.2: The Data Analysis Process Source: Niewenhuis (2016, p. 110)

Figure 4.2 above demonstrates the overall process that this research followed in analysing the data collected. In a qualitative study, it is not necessarily clear when one starts interpreting data as this interpretation is ongoing. During data collection notice was taken of what the

information was saying and what it did not tell, given the research questions. This implies that immediately, the data helped to indicate the gaps and issues that needed to be followed up in the subsequent data collection sessions. These subsequent sessions were also informed by reflections (i.e. thinking about things) during and after the interview sessions.

Data were collected mostly in English. However, those participants who could speak Northern Sotho also explained some issues in their first language. Data collected during the interviews were recorded by means of written notes (which included reflections on the dialogues, as well as on other observations, e.g. where the interview was held, quiet versus noisy interview settings) and audio recorders that were later transcribed word-for-word. The researcher who conducted the interviews also transcribed the data so that as little information as possible was lost in translation. Transcribing the data also allowed the researcher to review the information and become familiar with what was discussed. Data and notes were read at least twice and categorised into thematic ideas. These themes were based largely on the theory and objectives of the study as outlined earlier in this document. Themes that seemed to repeat themselves, even though they were not in line with any pre-set objectives were also put into categories of their own, as they provided a point of reflection and the need for follow-up, either in the subsequent interview sessions during data collection in this study or for future studies. The themes were combined into subcategories that were linked together to make sense of what the data said. The analysis then moved beyond just putting information together to interpreting and collating the results, as categorised into themes and indicating what these mean in the context of the current research questions as well as previous theory and research. As outlined in this paragraph the thematic analysis method followed was guided by Neuendorf (2019: p.213)'s "recursive six-phases process" that is as follows:

1) Familiarising oneself with the data (text; maybe transcriptions) and identifying items of potential interest
2) Generating initial codes that identify important features of the data relevant to answering the research question(s); applying codes to the dataset (segmenting and "tagging") consistently; collating codes across segments of the dataset
3) Searching for themes; examining the codes and collated data to identify broader patterns of meaning
4) Reviewing themes; applying the potential themes to the dataset to determine if they tell a convincing story that answers the research question(s); themes may be refined, split, combined, or discarded

5) Defining and naming themes; developing a detailed analysis of each theme
6) Producing a report; weaving together the analytic narrative and data segments, relating the analysis to extant literature

4.4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

For the quantitative data the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (v24.0) was used to determine frequencies as well as to undertake the correlation analyses. The Pearson Chi-square statistical analysis was used to find out if the women experience work-to-life conflict, whether they experience life-to-work conflict and compare which one they experience more of. The same test was also used to analyse the relationship between religion and ethnic groups (the independent variables) with the work-to-life conflict and with the life-to-work conflict (dependent variables).

The analysis and conclusions drawn from the thematic qualitative analysis were answering the research questions of i) the women managers' understanding of the concept of work-life conflict (=first question) ii) the kind of roles and responsibilities that are still expected from these identified women from the home domain, as well as from the work environment (= the second question); iii) whether the participants felt the expectations were based on their religious and ethnic expectations, their overall experiences of work-life conflict (sixth research question).

The Pearson Chi-square statistical analysis was used to answer objectives three, four and five as outlined in the first chapter of this study.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methods utilised to collect and analyse the data for the current study. The research paradigm of an interpretive phenomenological approach was used for the purposes of this study. This approach was selected as it allowed this study to listen to the women's experiences, as well as their constructions and interpretations of those experiences in their daily interactions with their social world, both in the work and non-work domains. The study collected data both qualitatively and quantitatively. The study employed the use of individual face-to-face interviews for the collection of qualitative data as well as self-administered questionnaires for quantitative data collection. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results from the data that were collected through interviews (i.e. qualitative) and questionnaires (quantitative). The data were collected concurrently, i.e. mixed methods, the concurrent type. The mixed-method design was used to triangulate and corroborate data collected from both the questionnaires and the individual face-to-face interviews. The qualitative results will be presented first, followed by the quantitative results and then the integration of both sets of data. The presentation is in line with the objectives of the study as set out in chapter one. The data were collected with the use of the research guide (see Appendix C), as well as the research questionnaire (Appendix D). The questions on the research guide were aligned to the objectives of the study in a way that would attempt to answer all the research questions. Accordingly, the research objectives are presented again in this section for easy linking with study findings. The research aims are:

- To find out what the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand by work-life conflict.
- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict.
- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict.
- To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict.
- To investigate the kind of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women managers in their non-work space, as well as in their workplace that affect their experiences of work-life conflict.
- To determine whether the women managers perceive the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them as culturally based or not, i.e. as differing according to their different ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations.
- To design a framework that illustrates the experiences of women managers in public organisations, specifically in the province of Limpopo, that organisations may utilise to design programmes that can help women managers, as well as those women who are aspiring to become managers, to navigate the challenges of work-life conflict.

5.2 QUALITATIVE STUDY RESULTS

The qualitative results of the study will now be presented in line with the above study objectives linking with the guiding questions of the research tool (Appendix C). For the last objective of the study, i.e. coming up with a framework that can be utilised to help women navigate work-life conflict challenges, it is anticipated that the suggestions from the same women participants will help. For that reason, the last objective will be presented after all the objectives, including suggestions from the participants that have been described. The presentation of results starts with the biographical information of the participants, followed by the responses in line with the research questions.

5.2.1 Biographical Information of the Participants

The presentation of the qualitative results starts with the data/information about the women who were interviewed for the purposes of the study. For the qualitative part of the study, a total of 16 women managers were engaged in individual, face-to-face interviews. Appointments were made with them and they were interviewed at places that suited them, which happened to be their offices. The presentation starts with the age range of the participants ending with the departments/organisations they were working for at the time of the interviews.

5.2.1.1 **Age range**

The participants' age ranges were from 40 to 56 years of age; the youngest participant was 40 years old while the oldest was 56 years of age. The majority, i.e. 14 (87.5%) were between the ages of 45 and 55. These results show that most women only enter into management positions when they are in their middle age. The question of what delays women in this context is pertinent to the notion of fast-tracking women into positions of leadership. Some authors have documented that despite legislation and policy that support fast-tracking of women into leadership positions in South Africa, women still struggle to attain top positions earlier on in their lives due to gender discrimination and stereotyping (Moyo & Francis, 2010; Bonzet & Flick, 2019). Entering late into leadership and management positions may mean that women have a shorter period to influence decisions that can contribute to the policy that can help empower and support the younger women as they navigate challenges such as work-life conflict.

5.2.1.2 **Marital status**

The results on the marital status of the participants are as presented in Table 5.1. The results show that at the time of data collection 50% of the participants were married while there were equal numbers of those who were divorced and those who were widowed. The lowest number was the single, never married participants while not a single person indicated that they are cohabiting. These results imply that in essence 50% of the women in the study had spouses while the other half did not have spouses

Table 5.1: Marital Status of the Participants

Marital Status	Number	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Married	8	50.0	50.0
Divorced	3	18.8	68.8
Single	2	12.5	81.3
Widowed	3	18.8	100
Total	**16**	**100**	

5.2.1.3 **Ethnic group**

The ethnic group to which the participants in the study belong is portrayed in Table 5.2. The results as exhibited in Table 5.2 show that the majority of the women who were interviewed for the study are Northern Sothos followed by Tsongas. These results are in line with the demographics of Limpopo Province that indicate that the majority of the people in the province are Northern Sotho followed by Xitsonga speaking people (StatsSA, 2011).

Table 5.2: Ethnic Groups of Participants who were interviewed

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
N. Sotho	7	43.8	43.8
Tsonga/Shangaan	2	12.5	56.3
Venda	1	6.3	62.6
S. Sotho	2	12.5	75.1
Indian	2	12.5	87.6
White Afrikaans	2	12.5	100
Total	**16**	**100**	

5.2.1.4 Religion

The majority of the participants who were interviewed for the current study were Christians (13, i.e. 81.2%), then followed by a deliberate, purposeful attempt to look for participants who belonged to different religious groups. Eventually, two participants of the Muslim faith and one who said she is an atheist were interviewed for purposes of the study. This result is in line with the demographics of the country, which show that 86.0% of the overall South African population are Christians, 1.9% are Muslims and 0.9% are Hindu. In the Limpopo Province Christians constitute 79.9% of the population (StatsSA, 2015). Unfortunately for the current study this implies that it will be difficult to generalise the results to other religions.

5.2.1.5 Position at work

Of those women participants who were interviewed, none of them were junior managers, 14 (i.e. 87.5%) were middle-level managers two (12.5%) were senior managers. Unfortunately, this result suggests that the majority of managers in this study are not in positions that have the final say about influential decisions within organisations. The role of the middle manager is to understand the strategic position of the organisation to execute it effectively, make sure that the junior managers also get to understand that strategic position and make it accessible to the senior and executive managers. The final say about the strategic direction an organisation will take rests with the senior managers and executives (Banumathi & Samudhararajakumar, 2015; Lazenby, 2015; Daft & Benson, 2016). Therefore, while these women may have some influence on the strategic position and overall objectives of their organisations, they still do not have the final authority over decisions.

5.2.1.6 **Department participants work for**

The Limpopo Province has ten departments, eight of which are represented in the sample. In addition, there were participants from the office of the premier as well as from the national defence force. Most of the participants were from the Department of Social Development, with equal representation from seven of the departments/organisations. Although there is a representation of many departments, because the sample size in a qualitative study is small generalisability is still not possible. The sample is presented in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: The departments that participants work for			
Department	**Number**	**Percentage (%)**	**Cumulative Percentage (%)**
Social Development	4	25.0	25.0
SA National Defence Force	3	18.8	43.8
Health	2	12.5	56.3
Public Works	1	6.3	62.6
Limpopo Economic Development Agency	1	6.3	68.9
Safety, Security and Liaison	1	6.3	75.2
Agriculture	1	6.3	81.5
Education	1	6.3	87.8
Local Municipality	1	6.3	94.1
Office of the Premier	1	6.3	100.0
TOTAL	**16**	**100**	

After the presentation of the biographical information of the participants in the current study, these subsequent subsections describe the results of the study based on the expressed opinions of the women managers after conducting conversations with them. The presentation starts with the linking of the participants' dialogues with the first objective.

5.2.2 The Women Managers' Understanding of the Concept of Work-Life Conflict

The first objective of the study wanted to find out what the women managers in the study understand by work-life conflict. There are those participants who gave responses that exhibited what can be considered to be an accurate understanding of WLC while others show a lack of understanding of what the concept entails. What can be regarded as correct understating is presented first.

5.2.2.1 Correct understanding of the concept of work-life-conflict

From the participants who showed an acceptable comprehension of the concept of work-life conflict several themes could be identified. The themes are displayed in Figure 5.1 below.

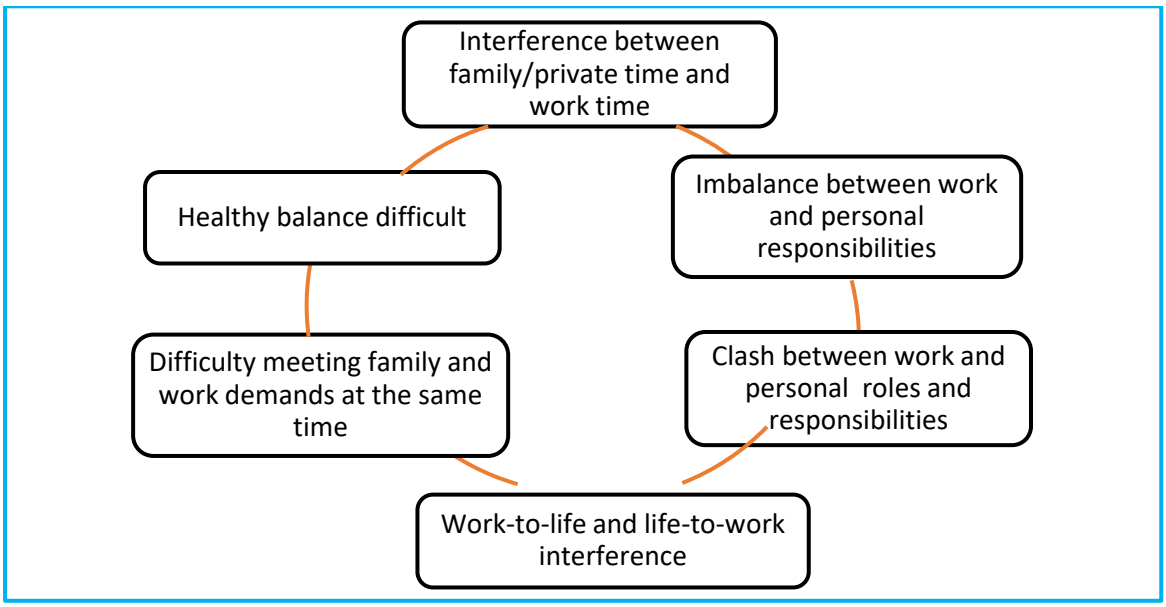


Figure 5.1: Themes identified from the participants who displayed a correct understanding of the WLC concept (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

Elaboration of identified themes and exhibited in Figure 5.1:

1) Clash between work and personal roles and responsibilities

The participants' understanding of WLC can be demonstrated by responses that indicate a clash between roles and responsibilities such as: "*The roles and responsibilities that one has when one is working and also taking care of the family that could conflict with each other because one has to have time for both and not compromise one or the other… One needs to be able to take care of both to achieve balance*"; or as one woman simply put it "… *difficulty in meeting work demands and family demands at the same time*".

Other participants stated that work-life conflict is "*when one's responsibilities to one's self as well as to one's family/society are clashing with one's responsibilities and roles at work*"; it

"*is when your work-life clashes with your personal lifestyle*" and/or "*when personal responsibilities and roles conflict with my work responsibilities*".

2) Difficulty in meeting family demands and work demands at the same time

Women in the study expressed their understanding of WLC in terms of not having enough time in meeting both family and work demands. For instance, some opted to explain their understanding of WLC by giving examples like "*Having to be at work 70% of my time and still having to fullfil responsibilities from other full-time non-work aspects of my life, like being a mother*", or another participant who said, "*... attending a board meeting at six in the evening while you have to attend a school event where your child is performing*". Accordingly, their responses talked about the time needed to fullfil roles and responsibilities both at the work and non-work domains, thus describing the time-based interference. Another participant also said, "*...the effort you put in your work and the effort you put in your personal life competing for your time"*.

3) Imbalance between work and personal responsibilities

Some of them went further to explain how work interferes with their lives. For example, one of the participants indicated that "*Work-life conflict is the imbalance between life responsibilities and commitments, especially related to family and expectations at work. Maybe I can relate it to the fact that as manager's work expects you to be there 24/7, for no particular reason actually. So it is not easy to attend to family things like attending to school calling you about your child. Although the family comes first, it is difficult. Sometimes I cancel my leave as I get called back to work. At times I take my child with me to work if the nanny is not available because I am mostly on my own with the child*".

4) Interference between family/private time and work time

One of the participants summed this interference by saying, *"it* (WLC) *can present itself in several ways, - life off the job may interfere with work responsibilities or work responsibilities may interfere with life off the job. Conditions at work may positively or negatively affect your personal life or vice versa*". Her understanding included both the positive and negative spillover effect. Other women managers expressed that work-life conflict involves *"a situation where you cannot differentiate between work time and family time or private time"*; or "*when work duties interfere with my private and personal life*"; and/or "*work-life conflict means work and family roles can be in conflict or can interfere with one another*".

5) Healthy balance difficult

Some of the participants in the study explained their understanding of WC in terms of the difficulty they find in attaining a healthy balance between work and non-work responsibilities. Like one of them stated, "*WLC ... err ... to me is the conflict that one has when he or she working and also taking care of the family that could ... err..., in a way, conflict with each other because you have to have time for both and not compromise one or the other. And in most cases you cannot strike a balance. So that is the conflict that would ... err... exist*"; while another simply stated that it is "*the need to balance personal and work-life.*"

Another participant stated that "*work-life conflict might be the stresses of non-work carried over to the working environment, thus affecting the balance between private and work-life*"; and yet another one simply stated that work-life conflict entails "*failure to balance work and personal life*". One participant simply said that it involves "*the inability to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life issues*".

6) Work-to-life and life-to-work interference

Several women managers in the study described WLC as one-directional, i.e. either as work interfering with life (i.e. work-to-life conflict) or as life interfering with work (i.e. life-to-work conflict) wherein they did not acknowledge both directions. The emphasis appeared to be on work interfering with the non-work space, i.e. the majority explained only the work-to-life interference. For instance, one of the participants expressed herself with observed exasperation like this: "*Maybe I can relate that to ..., and at the level at which we are at, as managers we are expected to be at work 24/7 without any, any, any reason of any kind whatsoever. So if you get a call from your child's school saying that you must come, you find that you are expected that there is something that you must still urgently do because anyway, that is how we operate as managers. So they will tell you that no there is something that is needed urgently so you can't go. So you end up, that's where the conflict comes in. Well, although the family comes first, but at work it is very difficult, to do that. You know at times you even go on leave but you are called back to work because there are things that you are expected to do*". Another woman simply stated that, "*my understanding is that the pressure of the work and the amount of work can lead to WLC. Because you carry work home, anywhere where you are to an extent that you end up doing work at home*".

Yet another example is one of the participants who first explained that WLC entails work and non-work responsibilities competing for an individual's time but then got carried away and started adding that: "*So the conflict is that it is possible that you could work too hard and that there will be no playing or not giving yourself time to focus on yourself, like 'me' time*".

Although most of the participants in the study described work-to-life interference, there were a few who understood WLC in the opposite direction as well, i.e. life-to-work interference. For instance, one said that "*Work-life conflict might be the stresses of the family carried over to the working environment, thus affecting the balance between private and work-life*", while another simply described WLC as "*Personal and social issues in conflict with official work that I am being remunerated for … Now at our age we have children's issues that we keep thinking about even at work. Like my son who is 21 years old is still repeating matric. He is in boarding school and he is not coping well at school. So I worry about him*". This is an example of life-to-work interference that also explains the experience this participant is going through in her personal space.

Another participant simply said that "*There are things that can disturb me when I am at work, family things that can disturb me while I am at work*". These and more responses from the participants in the current study were suggestive of challenges of coping with personal problems that eventually interfere with concentrating while at work and thus negatively affecting work performance. One participant emphasised the fact that personal life interferes with work that may be more important as it is rewarded by stating that work-life conflict involves "*life/social issues in conflict with official work that I am being remunerated for*". Therefore, both directions of WLC were given in the dialogues with women in the study, with more emphasis on the work-to-life interference.

5.2.2.2 Lack of understanding of work-life conflict concept

Some of the participants showed no understanding of what WLC entails. Several themes were identified in their description of what their understanding of WLC involves. The themes are as depicted in Figure 5.2.

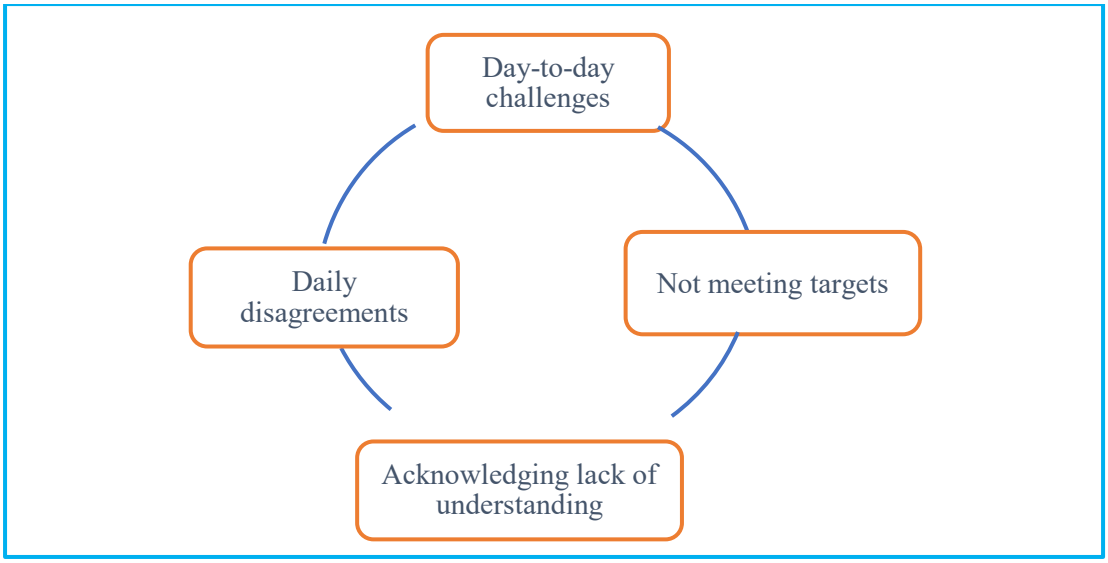


Figure 5.2: Themes elicited by participants who displayed incorrect understanding of what WLC means (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The several themes that were identified, showing a lack of understanding of the WLC concept, include those in Figure 5.2. The themes displayed are elaborated as follows:

1) Daily disagreements at work:

A few of the participants explained the work-life conflict in terms of misunderstandings or disagreements that happen between employees at work. For instance, one woman said that "*My understanding would be, - you know you work with people, obviously one way or the other you will agree or disagree on certain things. So as a manager you are there to ensure that whenever there is conflict amongst your subordinates you are able to address it."* The disagreements were said to be either between the employees themselves, between employees and their supervisors or between the managers. As stated by one woman that, "*work-life conflict is when you have a conflict with your colleagues or supervisor, which therefore affects your performance*". Besides, some of the explanations were a bit more elaborate like "*As one works with people disagreements are bound to crop up. Obviously, one way or another you will agree or disagree with your colleagues. So the role of the manager is to make sure that conflict is managed.*" Mostly those women who described WLC in terms of disagreements between individuals indicated that those disagreements and conflicts are mostly in the workplace. For instance, one of the participants elaborated that "… *It primarily applies to the disagreements*

that occur between employer and employee or employee and colleagues"; additionally, one participant said that it (WLC) is "*about a conflict between people who work together*".

One other participant mentioned that WLC "*can be due to managers interfering in one another's work*". Of note, also linked to the so-called disagreements at work, was the fact that at least two of the participants suggested during the dialogues that WLC is linked to employees fighting for positions in organisations. This can be indicated by the following response for example: *"… Where managers are not in good terms, perhaps fighting for positions…. People are always fighting for higher positions*". An additional perspective was that WLC is "*when there* is *no cooperation at work, where people, especially managers are fighting for positions".* The woman went on to state that *"managers can even sabotage one another".*

Some of the women in the study went further to indicate that these quarrels or disagreements at work have a negative effect on the overall work performance as "*they make it difficult for individuals to cope with and accomplish their work effectively*". Furthermore, another idea was that the conflicts in the working environments rendered the environments unhealthy or can even harm employees. For instance, one participant explained that WLC involves "*Conflict at work impacting on my personal well-being*"; or as explained by another participant: "*I think it* (WLC) *is a broad concept. Anything from occasional disagreements in our daily lives to harming one of your colleagues."*

A handful of the participants explained that the quarrels at work involve performance appraisal, in particular the outcomes of performance appraisal. There were responses like WLC involves "*conflicts and fights about performance management, when it is not fair, when Performance Management System is not paid in time. Levels of different officials should be considered when making payments."*

The discourses above suggest that these women participants encounter quarrels at work, which make them uncomfortable at the least and worried at some level. Furthermore, disagreements at work may hamper effective performance.

2) Day-to-day challenges

Examples of the understanding of WLC as challenges that people experience in their day-to-day lives can be shown by, for instance, one of the participants simply stated that WLC has to do with "*challenges in the work environment*"; and work-life conflict is "*Challenges that one*

faces during one's working life either at home or at work. But it is primarily at work"; while another suggested that "*Okay, work-life conflict, work-life conflict. I think work-life conflict can deal with challenges that one faces during one's working life. It can be challenges at work, it can be challenges at home, it can be challenges in any aspect of one's life. But I also think primarily it might apply to challenges in the workplace. That's also what I think."*

Worth noting from the above storylines is the fact that the participants see and emphasise that the challenges of everyday life happen generally at work.

3) Not meeting targets

Some of the participants in the current study also understood WLC in terms of their struggles to meet deadlines and targets as a result of the high workload. They reported that despite working overtime they still struggle to meet targets. One woman submitted that WLC is "*when you don't meet deadlines that lead to poor performance."* while another woman went on to say that *"… then when you don't meet deadlines that lead to poor performance, which results in stress and anxiety*". The prevailing concern is that as a result of struggling to meet targets they end up working overtime, either in the office or they take work home. Another woman narrated that "*Okay for me the work-life conflict is there is …, I feel very committed to my work and want to do it to the best of my abilities. But because of this and because of the workload that we are having, you actually work more overtime.*" For instance, one narration suggested that a lot of time during the day is wasted in meetings and other interruptions like attending to clients. As a result, she prefers to take work home. She stated that *"when we are in the office we spend a lot of time in meetings. For you to be able to meet targets … you will either have to do it at home or you stay at work until late. I don't prefer to work here until late because I am afraid. So I'd rather take work home and do it in my own space."*

4) Acknowledgement of lack of understanding

There were also those participants who, having no understanding of WLC, responded simply by saying that they "*do not know what it means*" i.e. they had no idea what it entails or an example of one who simply said that she has "*no understanding of what work-life conflict is at all*" and "*none*". While others who did not understand would still attempt to give responses that would look like "*work-life conflict according to my understanding is a family life or work-life*

connected to an individual"; or that WLC entails the fact that "*conditions at work may positively or negatively affect your personal life and vice versa*".

One participant indicated that "*I am not sure what it is. But I think it is when work-life clashes with my personal lifestyle like my studies.*"

5.2.3 Experiences of Work-Life Conflict

This section presents whether the women in the study experience work-life conflict or not. Work-life conflict, as already explained in chapter two of this study, is bidirectional, i.e. it can be either due to work interfering with the achievement of non-work responsibilities (i.e. work-to-life conflict) or non-work responsibilities interfering with the achievement of expectations of the workplace (i.e. life-to-work conflict). This section of the study presents results that answer the second, third and fourth research objectives as outlined in the first chapter of the study. These three research objectives answer whether the participants experience WLC or not. For ease of discussion, at this point, the research objectives are restated as follows:

- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict and its effects or not.
- To establish whether the women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict and its effects or not.
- To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict.

5.2.3.1 Whether women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict

From the dialogues with the women in the study, it can be deduced that they do experience work-to-life conflict. The women managers' experiences of work-to-life conflict can be explained by accounts from those participants who stated for instance, that, "w*ork activities interfere quite often with personal life. One is forced to often complete work-related tasks at home. For instance, I am always on my laptop. Mostly to finish reports that are due soon, the following day at times. Or preparations for the following day.*"

Another view was proffered by a woman who stated, "*I do report-writing at home. I take my laptop home. This year I am trying to cut down by leaving my laptop at work. That has helped me immensely. ... I coordinate research in the province, so they call me after hours. ... Here we get stuck in meetings and they do not keep to time. ... You cannot walk out of a meeting even if it is late as it would seem unethical. ... I sit and stress during the meeting, not concentrating but thinking about all the things I need to do* (at home)."

5.2.3.2 Whether women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict or not

From the dialogues with the participants in the current study, the women managers indicate experiencing life-to-work conflict. One of the important factors to note about the discourses associated with experiences of life-to-work interference is the issue of responsibilities towards family members, especially children, including an extended family.

From dialogues with the participants, it was found that women managers in the current study do experience life-to-work conflict. For instance, one of the participants indicated that: "*I find my personal life these days interfering a little bit more with my work-life because I have to look after my elderly parents. So sometimes I get a call from my mother saying oh we don't have bread or we don't have milk and it's during the day. What do I do? Or I have got to take them to the doctor. Or sometimes somebody collapses at home now I've got to phone an ambulance, or things like that. Or somebody is admitted to hospital and I've got to visit them during visiting hours which happens to be during working hours. So, yeah, I find more that my home life and especially with my parents, interferes with my work-life.*"

Another participant emphasised the fact that her personal life interferes with work, which she considers more important because it is linked to rewards. She stated that "*work-life conflict involves life/social issues in conflict with official work that I am being remunerated for*. *So, my life activities affect my promotion that comes with higher pay.*"

One other woman manager pointed out that her life activities sometimes interfere with her work. For instance, she said, "*in addition to being an employee I am a business lady. Sometimes they call me while I am at work to attend to (business) things while I am at work.*"

The one participant who indicated that her life interferes with her work pointed out that it is a recent issue. She stated, "*It was easier when my husband was working far from home. Now my husband is at home, he expects me to be back home at a certain time. Now he expects me to do*

things for him. He expects me to cook for him and dish for him. This is very heavy, and I am not coping with it. Sometimes if I sit and work he gives me the kind of look that shows that he does not appreciate that." She further explained that she used to work well at home, implying more work-to-life conflict, but now due to her husband, her work targets are behind.
Experiences of work-to-life conflict would be expected particularly in managers who have more responsibility in the workplace than non-managers. These current findings are in line with what other authors reported, that: firstly, due to economic needs women have to step up and earn a living; secondly, women emancipation and empowerment treaties and programmes in the workplace have resulted in increased participation of women in the workplace, as well as their upward mobility (Chetty & Naidoo, 2017; Moosa, 2017; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2015; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). Furthermore, increased access to technology around the clock has made the work-to-life conflict worse for every employee (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2015; Qi et al., 2017; Ross et al. 2016).

Unfortunately, for women, engagement in paid work does not mean they no longer perform domestic chores (Ogbogu, 2013; Sidania & Al Hakim, 2013). Therefore, women experience life-to-work conflict. Women managers in the current study do experience life-to-work conflict even though only 25% of them reported it. Researchers have shown that women experience life-to-work conflict, even more than their male counterparts, because they still carry the heavy burden of domestic chores (Ngubane, 2010; Sidania & Al Hakim, 2013; Agarwala et al., 2014; Chetty & Naidoo, 2017). The heavy burden of domestic chores results in women experiencing life-to-work conflict.

5.2.3.3 Which direction of work-life conflict do the women managers experience more: work-to-life conflict or life-to-work conflict

This section addresses the research objective: "To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict". This objective was to determine the directionality of the WLC that the women in the study experience, i.e. whether they experience work-to-life interference more or life-to-work interference more.

From the dialogues with women participants, most of the participants reported more work-to-life conflict. For example, one woman stated, *"In my case, my work in most cases conflicts with my life. I bring work home to catch up and I go to work over weekends. Sometimes I do not manage to pick up the child from school on time and have to pay extra money for child*

after-care. I go to work some Saturdays as I cannot finish everything during the week, plus at work it is better as the children disturb me at home. I even go to work on Sundays after church. It's like I am always working. I knock off late most of the time. Sometimes I even come to work earlier than I should, like an hour or two earlier."

Another response to the question of comparison between which conflict is experienced more was*: "Eish, in my case I would say my work in most cases conflicts with my home life in a way that you find that I have to bring work to … err … I would need to bring work home … err … which I have to catch up on. And sometimes you find that I am forced to go to work even on a weekend. So … yah! I think it is the work that is conflicting more with my life, yah!"*

Yet another participant emphasised that *"My work interferes more with my personal life than my personal interfering with my work"* while another one went further to state that *"Overall, work interferes more with personal life, - 90% more".*

An additional woman participant indicated that *"nowadays it is considered normal to work long hours and thus have work interfering with one's personal responsibilities".* So according to her work-to-life interference cannot be avoided. She further stated, *"I spend 90% of my time on my work, either at the office or at home. This is like a norm now. I do not have a choice. However, it becomes very stressful at times."*

5.2.3.4 No experiences of work-life conflict

For the current study, another point worth noting is that three (37.5%) of the women who were interviewed stated that they experience no work-life conflict, i.e. no interference between the work domain and the personal/life domain. They reported that they have managed to strike a balance between work and personal responsibilities. For example, one of the participants who indicated that work used to interfere more with her personal life, but not anymore said: "*I had to put a stop to it. I do not take work home anymore, specifically the laptop, it stays in the office. Two years ago they canceled our 3G and cell phone contracts. Since then I decided not to take calls on my personal cell phone and I do not access work emails on my personal internet."*

Another woman said, "*I try to separate work from home. I no longer take work home. I made a decision as my daughter complained about me not listening to her*".

Two of these women who stated that they have managed to strike a balance both specifically mentioned that they felt abused by their work when they first got into their management positions. As a result, after some time they had to make a conscious decision and concerted effort to separate work from home. One of them said, "*Now I have managed to strike a balance. There is no interference … I do not take work calls after work. I am not a doctor, so it is not a matter of life or death. Tomorrow is another day.*"

The other participant specifically recounted that she felt "*slave-driven*" earlier in her management position. Consequently, "*now I refuse assignments that will make me to work overtime … within reasonable limits"*. Her addition of the within reasonable limits phrase makes one wonder how often she may be obliged to take assignments after office hours and have her work interfering with her home life.

To sum up, to answer the research questions about the experience of work-life conflict: the research findings in the current study suggest that the participants do experience work-life conflict. The results further indicate that they (the participants) report experiences of more work-to-life conflict than life-to-work conflict.

5.2.4 The Type of Roles and Responsibilities Expected of the Participants

This section presents the results linked to the fourth objective of the study: "to investigate the type of roles and responsibilities that are expected of female managers, to cause work-life conflict, from the workplace and from the non-work domain". The presentation starts with the expectations from the non-work domain followed by those from the workplace.

5.2.4.1 The type of roles and responsibilities expected from the life/non-work domain

This section answers the question of the type of roles and responsibilities that are expected of the participants from their non-work space. From the qualitative conversations with the women who were interviewed, as well as from the open-ended questions in the last section of the questionnaire. The expected roles and responsibilities can be categorised into several themes as depicted in Figure 5.3 below.

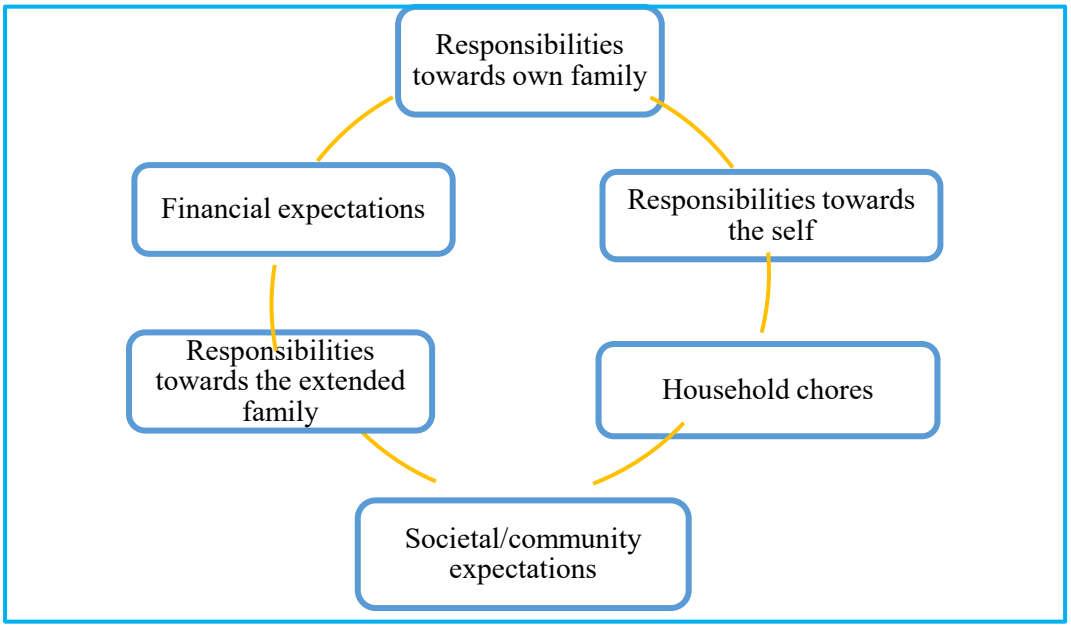


Figure 5.3: Identified themes about roles and responsibilities that are expected of the participants in the non-work domain (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

From the above Figure 5.3 the roles and responsibilities can further be grouped into: firstly, roles that are primarily for their immediate family, i.e. children and spouses, which also include financial responsibilities; secondly, those responsibilities that are for extended family members and the community, i.e. for instance elder care as well as the traditional expectations that include communal responsibilities; and lastly, those responsibilities that are personal, - with the personal almost taking the back seat. These identified themes are captured brilliantly by one of the outspoken participants who got animated when asked about her understanding of what work-life entails and went on and said, "*It involves taking care of sick children, children activities, taking care of husband, including husband's friends and big family, buying groceries, seeing to it that the house is clean …*". Through all that animation, there was some almost tangible and palpable bitterness in her voice.

Elaboration of the themes identified in terms of answering the question of the expected roles and responsibilities in the non-work domain (displayed in Figure 5.3) is as follows:

1) Responsibilities towards own family

The women in this study specifically pointed out that they are expected to provide for their families in terms of seeing to it that their physical needs are met, i.e. specifically feeding their families, - implying cooking for them. The roles and responsibilities expected by their immediate families can be subdivided into those expected for the children and those concerning their spouses.

i) Parental responsibilities

Dialogues about the roles and responsibilities associated primarily with parental responsibilities of taking care of own children (i.e. child-care responsibilities) were referred to and discussed foremost in most instances and were mentioned by the majority of the participants. The mothering, nurturing role of the women appear to be strong no matter what position at work and individual holds. These child-care activities involved seeing to it that their children are taken care of. This includes cooking for them and for those who are still young, bathing them and seeing to it that they are ready for school in the morning. For instance, one participant mentioned that "*Yah, it's like that one of picking up the child. If you cannot pick her up you have to maybe arrange for aftercare, at a cost, or at some point in time you have to put a child in a hostel because you do not have an alternative for now. For now, for example, for next year I am thinking that maybe to minimise these lot of interruptions with my work and everything I have to put her in a hostel. Of which it is an extra effort and money again. But that's the only way"*

Another participant mentioned that "*with only two children I get so tired running around in the morning preparing them for the school that when I arrive at work I am still so tired I need at least an hour to have coffee and recover before I am ready to work*." The interference with work due to the strain at home is apparent in this case.

Attending to the children when they are sick and having to take them to doctors/clinics is also an important concern for the women managers in the study. School-related engagements that include transporting the children to and from school daily, attending their school functions (e.g. award-giving ceremonies, extramural and sporting activities) were also mentioned as preoccupying these women and interfering with the achievement of their work expectations. These types of school activities sometimes take place during working hours. In addition, except for a few medical emergencies, doctor appointments or emergency illnesses are also during the

day. This implies that the participants will have to take some time from work to attend to them. Even if that time may involve normal leave the point remains that productivity at work suffers when they are away. Therefore, the time needed to attend to their children conflicts with the time needed to be productive at work.

In addition, when the children have challenges, the mothers, i.e. the participants, worry and are not able to concentrate well as work. For instance, one participant mentioned that "*I constantly worry about my son who is repeating grade 12 and is still not performing well*". Another participant went further to explain that "*I don't think that one can ever say they are balanced, there is always that feeling that you are not doing enough for your kids*".

ii) Spousal expectations and/or responsibilities

Researchers refer to marital responsibilities, as well as spousal/partner support as crucial on women's experiences of life-to-work conflict (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Michel et al., 2010). In the current study tending to the spouses' needs appeared to be ranking high after taking care of children. One of the participants had this to say about expectations from the non-work space, especially as expected by spouses: "*I am expected to cook daily*. *My husband cannot even boil an egg. For a very long time in my life, I took pride in cooking up a storm, for my family and my husband's friends. I thought I am the best woman slash wife ever. … I have moved on now … now I do not have a problem buying ready-made food and serving it at home, or reusing leftover food*". This woman spoke with some bitterness at how much energy she spent on tending to her husband, his friends and family. Even after she 'released' herself from cooking every day, it is still her responsibility to make sure that her family has something to eat whether that food is cooked at home or bought ready-made.

An addition was from another participant who declared that *"My husband still expects me to cook for him, not the domestic worker, except if I am out of town or something like that."*

Another woman manager in the current study explained that she "*was getting more and more tired, and increasingly irritable"* because of the husband's demand that she cooks for him despite her "*full day at work*". As a result, she "*decided to sort out this particular problem by letting the domestic worker still cook, but when my husband comes home I serve him the food as if I am the one who cooked*". She said that her decision helped her a lot as the husband was happy with his belief that the wife is the one who cooked and she was less tired after work.

Yet another participant mentioned that "… *my husband expects me to do laundry for him. He says that every woman should iron her husband's shirts. Not the domestic worker. So when I am tired, and he is not looking, I let her (*the domestic worker*) do it*".

The discourses above suggest that: 1) husbands still expect their wives to tend to their needs whether paid help (e.g. domestic worker) is available or not; 2) although the women still perform the chores that the husbands expect of them they are, for the most part, bitter, unhappy, exasperated and irritated that they have to do the chores. However, on top of the discontent about the expected roles, women participants give the impression that they want to keep their marriages intact at all costs, - by keeping their husbands happy even if it is through some form of deception. The discourses above, about children and husbands, suggest more willingness to tend to and nurture children as compared to tending to husbands, which is done grudgingly.

2) Responsibilities towards the extended family members

Extended family responsibilities elicited two subthemes, which are presented in Figure 5.5.

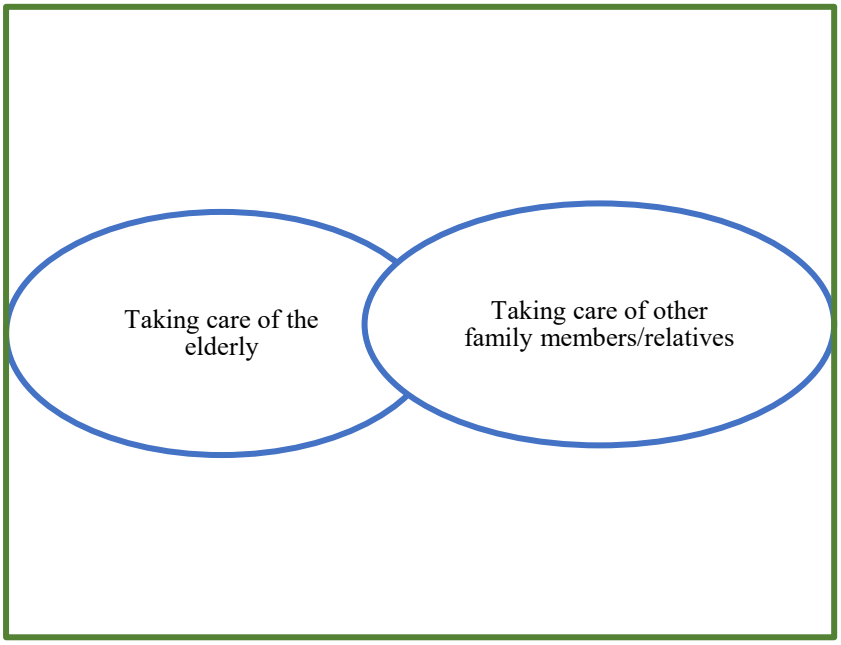


Figure 5.4: Responsibilities towards Extended Family Members

(Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The above subthemes (Figure 5.4) are discussed now.

i) Taking care of the elderly

From the discourses with the women participants in the study, some of them mentioned that they are expected to take care of sick relatives, mostly their elderly and ailing parents and/or parents-in-law. One woman mentioned that "… *even though I do not live with my mom, every month I have to fetch her from home and take her to the doctor for her follow-up appointments*".

Another woman who lived next to her elderly parents, who were both sickly at the time of the conversation with her, mentioned that her parents' problems like ill-health and the need to do shopping, interfere with her work, especially because oftentimes she checks on them during office hours. For instance, she stated "*I have to look after my elderly parents. So, sometimes I get a call from my mother saying oh we don't have bread or we don't have milk and it's during the day. What do I do? Or I have got to take them to the doctor. Or sometimes somebody collapses at home now I've got to phone an ambulance, or things like that. Or somebody is admitted to hospital and I've got to visit them during visiting hours which happens to be during working hours*". She mentioned all these responsibilities with a nervous giggle that hid, although not successfully, the apparent despondency about the roles she had to take on. She further added that it is fortunate that she has an understanding and supportive manager who "*does not mind me running off to check on my parents during the day*". She stated that she was exhausted and she was planning on taking her parents to an old age home and hoped that "*they* (her parents) *like it there and stay there forever, yah...* (giggling nervously). *Then it would free me because even now my weekends are very busy. On Saturdays is shopping, going to the post office, getting to their dentist and whatever needs to be paid for them get paid. I am occupied with running errands for them*". It would appear that she felt stressed out and particularly dejected that her life was taken over and consumed by her parents' lives and needs. This participant further explained that sometimes her manager allows her not to attend meetings, makes presentations on her behalf and then gives her feedback after the meetings. However, she said that in hindsight she worries that her taking care of her parents will, in the end, hamper her likelihood of getting promoted at work, as according to her "*my colleagues think that the reason my senior manager gives presentations on my behalf is that I am not capable. My colleagues are not aware that I prepare everything that my senior makes presentations on*". Consequently, she also wonders if the senior manager "*is taking advantage of the situation and taking all the glory*" as she apparently does not even acknowledge that the presentations were

prepared by this participant. The hopelessness and anxiety about her situation at work due to her responsibilities at home were substantial. This storyline, that talks about women still expected to take care of their elderly parents, suggests that the expected responsibilities: firstly, cause life-to-work conflict, which results in possible stress, anxiety and perhaps depression and, secondly, interferers with the achievement of work-related expectations and obligations, which will eventually get in the way of career progression.

The above participant further mentioned that "*I feel trapped as they dictate the rules and I have to dance to their tune. Right now I do not have weekends, I do not have a life. Saturdays are occupied with running errands for them.* The despondency in what she was saying, as well as how she expressed herself was evident.

ii) Taking care of relatives and solving their problems

Taking care of family, which is not their (participants') nuclear family (i.e. child or spouse) was not only for the elderly, it also involved other relatives like siblings, cousins, as well as orphaned children of relatives who have either passed on or are too poor to afford taking care of their children. Taking care of them involved taking care of the sick, providing for those who are struggling financially or when ends do not meet, as well as solving some of their day-to-day challenges for them. Conversations from the current study showed that another cause of the strain that women in this study carry, which contributes to their experiences of work-life conflict is taking care of the extended family. For instance, one participant who had to take care of her older sister who was not well mentally mentioned that "*We hired someone to take care of our sister at home. However, for some reason whenever our sister has a relapse, I am the one who takes over her care until she is stabilised*". The additional issue is that she has to go home during the day to cook for her sister and according to her "*traveling around during the day is tiring. I often need to take a breather when I go back to the office, a cup of coffee first you know, before I continue with work*".

Taking care of relatives also involved solving their problems or day-to-day challenges. One participant mentioned that she *"... is like the social worker of the family ... family should manage to discuss and resolve family-related matters without me, while I am at work. Or help me with my issues for a change*". The infuriation with having to be the one to go to with most family challenges was evident in her narration as well as in her tone of voice.

The participants in the current study also mentioned that they oftentimes have to solve issues like transport needs for relatives, including siblings, which frequently means picking them up during any time of the day, when they (relatives) need to run their errands. One woman mentioned that she lives with relatives who are looking for work. As a result, the reason for ferrying them around is because *"they are village kids who do not know city life, I have to take them around even during working hours"*.

With some undertone of irritation, another one stated that she is "*like their free taxi service as I am the only one of my close family members who has a car*".

One woman who expressed frustration with the extent of her work-to-life conflict, the time at work interfering with her family duties, had this to say, "*Again I have this other child that I am taking care of, a relative, she is seven now, … Err … there are most instances where you find that I would, … not necessarily forget, but that I do not manage to pick her up before 17h30 because I would still either be driving from wherever I was working or I am still stuck in a meeting. So, … in most instances the school would phone to say hey! Then I would jump to pick her up or find somebody else to pick her up because from 17h30 we are … charged R50 for every 15 minutes…* ". Her story highlights the responsibility of taking care of relatives, as well as the frustration of the work-to-life interference where the time taken to achieve work objectives and responsibilities interferes with the time needed to take care of life responsibilities.

In short, the discourses of the women participants about responsibilities towards extended family firstly, may account for the increase in life-to-work experiences; secondly, the responsibilities are not necessarily appreciated as there are dynamics of latent frustration, exasperation, irritation and anger that accompanies the narration of those responsibilities; and finally, they may be seen as (unwelcome) extended family requirements or obligations that are perhaps not negotiable.

The dialogues with some of the participants suggested that they are also expected to solve family members' problems. One of the participants mentioned that because she is more educated than her other family members and she is in a managerial position she "*suddenly has some form of awe and respect*" from her parents and siblings, including her older siblings. She went on to explain that "*unfortunately that respect comes with the expectation that I know everything*" and I am therefore expected to be able to come up with solutions to all family problems.

Another participant explained that she is *"always helping the family with their challenges. I am like the social worker of the family – all their problems come to me, financial, social, or otherwise. It is like me being childless, single and financially secure gives them the right to abuse me around the clock*". This narrative suggests some sadness and despondency, as well as possibly also reluctance to be the one to solve family problems all the time. Her utterances may also be suggestive of some resentment towards her family as she mentions feeling abused.

Yet another participant indicated that she is the one who "*fixes others' mistakes*" … *Sometimes I have to intervene in my siblings' affairs during working hours. I also intervene in any family matters that have been brought to my attention by my parents. They are always calling me!*" She placed such emphasis on the 'always' (calling her) that it reflected, like the previous participant, an implicit irritation, frustration and reluctance to be in the middle of family problems.

3) Household chores

The women participants mentioned that household chores are still primarily their responsibility. Only a few mentioned that their husbands sometimes help with especially cooking. For instance, one participant had the following opinion about her family and society's expectations: *"My goodness! I think that one of the major problems in South Africa is that we only have half the liberation. We only got to a point where the women got the right to work but you are only allowed to work if your house is clean, your children are cared for and your husband's shirt is ironed. In actual fact what we did was more or less liberate men from their financial responsibilities, because women help to take care of families financially while the men never really stepped in to take on some of the women's responsibilities. You never actually get a schedule that says 'today you cook, tomorrow I cook'. Your husband still expects you to take the responsibility to do groceries, do the cooking, washing and ironing, take the children to school and back and do their homework with them. So, I think specifically in South Africa there needs to be more space for men to take care of some of those responsibilities".*

Another participant added that the expectations of women's responsibilities in the home front are not only from a woman's family but that the wider society still expects the woman to do household chores. For instance, she said "*There is a lot of societal pressure. If you come into my house on Saturday and the house is not clean it reflects on me. It says nothing about the fact that I am the one who is working on that particular Saturday while my husband is busy*

with his biking activities and my daughter is just messing around. So, I think specifically in South Africa there needs to be more space to allow women to take care of those (home) responsibilities. Women are more busy, more stressed out and more tired".

4) Societal/Community expectations

An expectation that was cited by most women in this study was that of their community expecting them to attend all, typically lavish and over-the-top, functions, such as parties, weddings, and even funerals, hosted by family members, their in-laws, neighbours, friends and the community within which they reside. One of the women mentioned that "*At first I tried to attend all my in-laws' relatives' funerals. I have buried a lot of people I do not know or even understand how they are related to my in-laws. However, I got tired. Now I choose, … but now they are always asking my husband where I am…*" The women added that the major challenge with being expected to attend all these functions is that because they are so extravagant, there are a lot of chores to contend with, i.e. cooking and doing dishes, which come with the functions. As an example, one participant said "*women are always working at these functions. So they are tiring".*

The discourse as outlined above by the above participants suggests: Firstly, anger, annoyance and resentment at their families and society about being expected to continue to do the household chores, even though they have paid work; secondly, that the strain caused by possibly life-to-work conflict results in stress and exhaustion for them and other women.

5) Responsibilities towards the self

This aspect of responsibilities towards the self refers particularly to those activities that the women in the study mentioned that they perform for themselves, which can interfere with their work-related roles and responsibilities, and as such can increase the life-to-work interference. These personal activities encompass what one of the women in the study called '*personal errands*'. One of them said that "*…. I cannot take time off every time I need to go banking, take my car for servicing or for repairs or renew my car license…"* However, several of the women declared that these personal errands do not take a significant amount of time from their work time as they (errands) are not daily and take little time compared to the fact that they work "*extra time anyway*"; and that *"…these personal errands are not on a daily basis, they are only when needs be …*".

More personal activities that interfere with work time included for instance, "*Going to the doctor for check-ups*"; "*studying part-time, including doing study assignments during working hours*"; and "*attending to calls and emails, to and from friends and family*".

A few of the women in the study indicated that their life-to-work interference is because they have private businesses that sometimes affect their work, as they attend private meetings during working hours, engage clients and do business assignments and/or research during working hours.

6) Financial responsibilities

Financial responsibilities were mentioned as contributing to the experience of life-to-work conflict mainly because, according to the women in the study, they have to "*run around sorting out this and that for their relatives*" and at times they have to travel to where the relative resides to help them out of some predicament. Two subthemes emerged in terms of financial expectations from the women participants, viz. expectations to provide for their own families, as well as expectations to help their extended families financially if they are struggling.

In terms of providing for their families, the women pointed out that: "*as times are difficult it is necessary to work*". As one of them put it: *"it is no longer the role of only the man to bring bread home, we also have to meet them halfway*". This notion of helping with taking care of families was discussed at length by most of the participants. For instance, one woman explained that "*Women getting better jobs helped men because providing for the family is no longer just a man's role, it is the role of both the man and his wife. It is expected of a woman to help take care of the family financially as well*". This notion of women having to work (i.e. earn an income) and provide for themselves and their families appeared to be rather paradoxical. On the one hand, it was explained as unfair because men do not meet women halfway in terms of household chores, while on the other hand women stated that they like earning an income as it makes them more financially independent. Some of them stated that earning an income while helping the family, has also helped them to be self-reliant and to feel more in control of their lives. One of them stated that *"... my income has emancipated me*." However, one woman pointed out that "i*n working and bringing money home we are spoiling our men*". This statement suggests that the woman is unhappy to have to provide for her family and that the role of bringing bread home should be that of a man, thus perpetuating role stereotypes and the notion of division of labour. The accounts highlight the economic need to help to provide for

their families while at the same time being unhappy that while they help in the economic front men do not help in the domestic domain.

5.2.4.2 The type of roles and responsibilities expected from the work domain

This section addresses the research question: "What roles and responsibilities are expected from women female managers from their work domain (to account for work-to-life interference)?" The study wanted to explore the kind of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women in the current study from their work domain, which interfere with their non-work domain.

The women in the study when asked about the roles and responsibilities that they fulfil at work, that interfere with their life space, they essentially indicated that they perform "normal" duties that are expected of anyone who is in management. However, they have challenges of fullfiling them during working hours because of several factors that were deliberated on, at length, by some of the participants. Important to this study is the fact that the women who were engaged in the qualitative conversations were in middle management and higher. Therefore, most of the discussions of experiences of working particularly overtime, are reflections from the middle-level managers and mostly senior-level managers who mostly work for longer than the required minimum number of hours per day. There were several reasons that the women in this study proffered for them to work overtime frequently. Those reasons are viz. life-to-work conflict, the pressure to perform, lack of support structures, and stereotypes about women roles, are presented as subthemes in the above Figure 5.10. Further conversations with the women managers suggested that pressure to perform has sub-sub themes that are categorised into internal and external barriers. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of women managers are not necessarily different from what the organisations expect. However, it is their (women) dynamics that perpetuate the experiences of work-life conflict. Therefore, this section illustrates the reasons for their working overtime, their underlying forces as depicted in Figure 5.5.

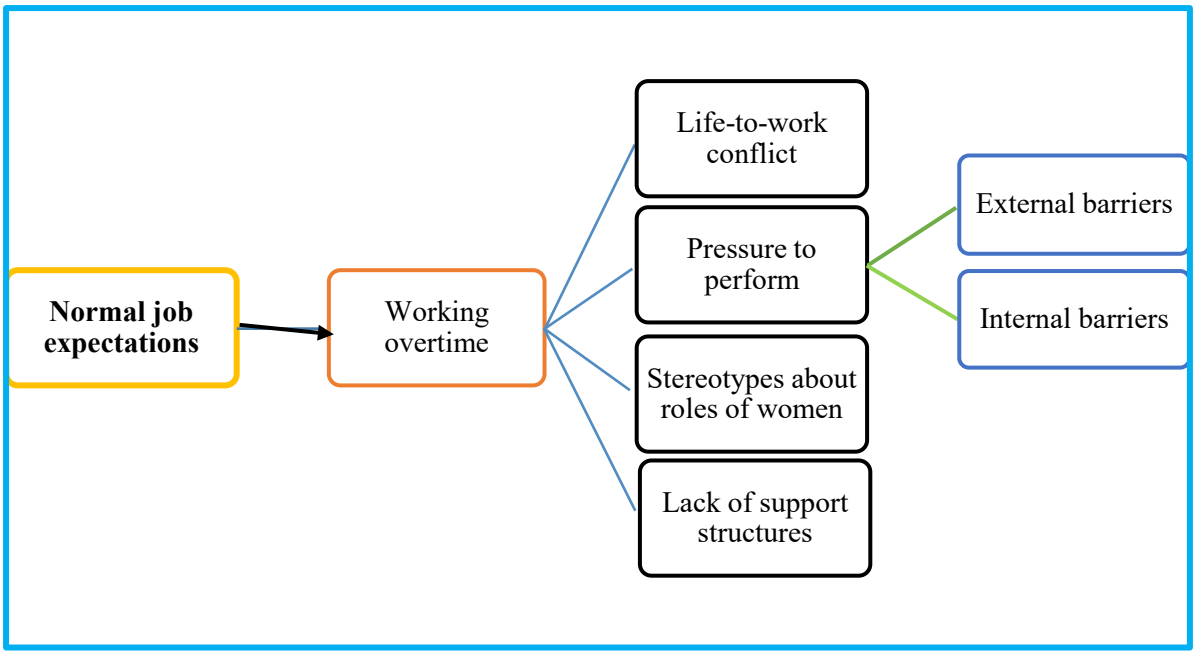


Figure 5.5: Identified themes and subthemes of roles and responsibilities from the workplace (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The above figure depicts first and foremost that women managers, just like any other manager in any organisation, are expected to perform 'normal' duties as outlined in their job descriptions where they have them. However, the one main theme that emerged was that the reason women experience more work-life conflict, specifically those in the current study, is that they are supposedly constantly working, i.e. working overtime. Then working overtime has subthemes as illustrated in Figure 5.5.

Therefore, the storylines of the women in this study suggested that they engage in work-related activities outside working hours, resulting in work-to-life conflict. The factors that make them work overtime are now discussed.

1) Life-to-work conflict

According to the participants in this study, women tend to work for longer hours, due to mainly two reasons. The first reason was described as the fact that they have more additional expectations in the non-work arena that interfere with their work time as compared to men, i.e. according to them they experience more life-to-work conflict as compared to their male counterparts. This higher life-to-work conflict is linked to the roles and responsibilities that

they still perform on the home front that interfere with the achievement of their work goals. These roles that include responsibilities towards their families (especially children and spouses), as well as household chores have been shown to interfere with the achievement of work objectives. (They are discussed in the section above section). To explain this one of the women said "*I think it is mostly women who are affected by having to stay on at work for longer hours. For instance, it is very rare to see a man running around picking up kids during the day. That takes away some of our time. You then have to make up for it either late at work, or much later in the night at home. It is difficult to be productive.*" They then went on to say that "*Working women have more responsibilities than men due to societal expectations*" and that *"… people still do not understand the plight of women. Whether you are single or married, family pressures never stop*".

2) Pressure to perform

The feeling that the women have pressure to perform as compared to their male counterparts was divided into two subthemes, viz. internal and external barriers, which will now be elaborated in more detail.

i) External barriers

The second reason for women committing to longer work hours than men was explained at length by the participants in this study. According to them this reason why women still feel the pressure to perform well in the workplace and still have the need to prove themselves is two-pronged. Firstly, it is due to other people's expectations (i.e. external expectations) and secondly, due to the fact that women do not believe sufficiently in themselves and their capabilities. Thus, some of the participants spoke about "*external and internal barriers*" that hinder women from being able to manage their WLC effectively. In terms of external barriers, the women said that "*We live in a patriarchal society and women are put under pressure to perform … The criticism from other women and men is overwhelming. A woman manager has to work 10 times harder than her male counterpart to be accepted by colleagues. We constantly have to prove our worth*". According to these women, there are still beliefs in society that women are not as capable in organisations as their male counterparts. One woman said that *"… even other women want to see if you can do it all",* i.e. achieve both in the work and non-work domains. That is why they are constantly working hard to prove themselves. Another

participant said that "*At work we experience external barriers that include the fact that we are continuously trying to prove to others that we are capable … To go up the ladder you have set accomplishments. With men they look at their potential, women have to prove themselves*."

ii) Internal barriers

According to the women participants in the current study, one of the internal barriers is the fact that women still do not believe that they are capable of achieving certain roles and responsibilities in the workplace. They do not trust themselves and project their lack of confidence in others and the working environment. They work hard and long hours because they are constantly trying to prove themselves to themselves, and presumably to others. One participant mentioned that at work, as a result of this low self-confidence, women limit themselves and they stop themselves from holding senior, decision-making positions. Furthermore, according to the same lady it is up to women to empower themselves and to also make their voices heard. She went on to suggest that *"… it is not necessarily culture that dictates that women be subservient and subordinates at work. Women do not believe in themselves. They still believe that for them to be competent they need men in leadership positions above them. We, as women, also need to emancipate ourselves"*.

To expand on the notion of internal barriers, the view of socialisation and the resultant internalised messages was brought up again. During dialogue with these women they implied that through observing others' incorrect perception of women's capabilities or lack of capabilities in leadership positions, women have internalised messages that end up prescribing what roles they expect or do not expect of themselves. One of them even gave a Northern Sotho idiom that says "*Ya etwa ke e tshadi pele e wela ka leopeng*", meaning that "*if people are led by a woman they will fall into a ditch*", i.e. they are doomed to fail. The internalised messages subsequently act as barriers that result in females to keep doubting themselves, and this inhibits them from performing well at work. According to the participants, these internalised messages tell women that they are better off performing household chores than making decisions in the working environment. Women still doubt themselves, - and that is supposedly one of the reasons why they underperform at work. One participant explained that "*We also have internal barriers as women. We tend to lower and humble ourselves. If you observe women generally, women tend to sit at the periphery in any decision-making forums. We are not aware of it … The notion is that the centre is for the more powerful people, who tend to be men. If an*

opportunity comes towards a woman, we put ourselves down. We tend to doubt ourselves, we undersell ourselves. We are fearful. We think we are a fraud. Even when we have achieved we still think 'maybe I am not the right person'. That is why we work hard continuously to prove that we deserve to be where we are. We do not embrace our achievements. We grew up with messages like 'Moipone you are as pretty as your mom' and 'my brother was as intelligent as my father'. So these are internal things that we grew up with and are now ingrained".

3) Lack of support structures

During conversations with the women in this study, they alluded to the fact that quite often women in managerial positions initially take long to learn what to do, as they learn by trial and error. They, as a result, have to work even after hours to make up for the initial slow pace and working by trial and error. These participants pointed out that "*little or no orientation takes place when we get appointed to higher positions*". Furthermore, one participant indicated that "*There is no orientation. You are just thrown into the job and you have to swim."*

Another participant explained, *"they do not induct new people immediately. Induction may sometimes happen only after six months. So, people get thrown into the deep end and just have to learn to swim. This results in incompetence in some instances".*

An additional point was that "*there should be an induction of new employees/managers within the first six months of them assuming their duties, which is not there at the moment… So, people get demotivated".*

Consequently, as explained by another participant, *"People do not know what they are doing, how they should be doing what they need to do and what policy guides them. So they keep making mistakes and fire-fighting, - they learn through trial and error, which is a waste of time and energy. So people end up working long unnecessary hours to get things done*".

Moreover, another participant indicated that "*Now I moved into management and came to work here* (head office)*. I did not realise what it entailed because I was not orientated. And I had a woman manager, an older woman. She made me come to work very early and leave late. I didn't know any better … I was tired all the time, I even felt it was not worth it"*.

On a related note, other participants stated that working long hours could be combatted by having coaching and mentoring programmes that can help them in knowing what to do.

Knowing what to do, according to them, will hopefully help them to take a shorter while to perform expected duties. One participant explained, "*I wish I had someone to hold my hand, show me the ropes, at least for a short while, like a coach you know*".

Other participants further pointed out the need for managerial training, which is not done and leads to newly appointed managers making mistakes and taking longer to achieve their objectives/targets. One stated, "*Because some of us we came into the (name of organisations) from private errr …, private companies and we came here, you know there is no mentoring, nothing. We're just thrown into the deep end. You find your own way of doing things. You know, there is no known structure that you can follow for you to know that okay, - this thing is done like 1, 2, 3*". While in addition, another woman mentioned that "*I didn't know policies, guidelines and such stuff, … I had to observe those who know what to do and ask them for help. I suffered a lot to know things. Even now I am still not confident enough about what I am doing…. I battled for years in this position*".

The same participant indicated that she is always behind schedule at work, always has to catch up in the evenings at home, as well as over weekends as she was not trained to manage like she is required to do. She stated, "*Right now I'm put in this position, I am managing 5 departments, … And then …* (sighs) *… As a person who has never done management at all, you know, totally, you don't know how to manage*". She added that "*personally I think that they mustn't just put a person in a post without training them…. Like me here, … I was just put in this position to manage. To manage what, I don't know*".

The women in this study suggested that orientation and inductions, coaching and mentoring, management training, as well as proper supervision especially for new female managers can help them. They said the result can be that they do "*not spend too much time trying to find our feet … This will help us to learn quickly ... Men are not willing to help women while women are not prepared to help other women*".

Therefore, the conversations here suggest several subthemes, viz. that there is no support by their organisations, shown by lack of orientation and induction programmes, no management training, as well as lack of coaching and mentoring; as well as lack of support from other managers, male or female. Accordingly, the women in the study suggested that more effort should be put into orientating and onboarding newly employed people, those who have been transferred or redeployed, or those who have been promoted especially to managerial positions. Furthermore, as it appears that other managers, male or female, are not willing to volunteer to

help one another, formalised coaching and mentoring programmes, if made available, can be helpful.

4) Stereotypes about roles and responsibilities of women

Stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women are unrelenting according to the participants in the current study and invade the workplace. According to some of the women in the study, men still expect their female colleagues to "*do things for them like making them tea at work, which I do not understand because we're equals here*". The same participant added that some of the men try to "*cushion this expectation by stating that* (the women should make them tea) *when making for themselves* because they may be aware that women are sensitive to being branded as "*tea-maker instead of a colleague*".

As another one of the participants put it "*Like the men in this place would expect us to make tea for them, - 'if we don't mind'. But they would not lift a finger for us. … They expect you to make them tea. My manager is male, so I just make him tea*". Another one who said that she used to make tea for her colleagues but decided to stop at some point. She says she just one day thought "*hold on, I still have to go home and make tea for my husband. We are all here to do a job. We are not here to serve individuals. We are here to serve our organisation".*

One woman took a different angle by explaining that men still expect inferior kinds of jobs to be done by women. For instance, she stated that "*in cases where there is no secretary, men will always look around and ask a woman to take minutes for a meeting. It's like taking minutes is beneath them. They always use an excuse that women have better handwriting. But I don't buy that. They are just being chauvinists*". Of note, is the fact that the undertone of irritation when she was narrating her story was intense.

The conversations above suggest that there are still stereotypes and expectations that women should do domestic chores, like making tea, and belonging to inferior, soft-skill positions that do not involve a lot of responsibility and decision-making like taking minutes. These discourses suggest irritation and perhaps anger, while begrudging men who would not lift a finger for them and have to use excuses about why women are expected to do secretarial duties for instance.

In short, in the workplace, performance and achievement of set work objectives are expected from any employee, male or female. However, according to the dialogues in the current study

it is difficult for the women to achieve set job responsibilities as and when expected, i.e. in time. This may be due to poor time management similar to what the study by Mani (2013) reported that poor time management is amongst the factors that affect the achievement of work-life balance of women. Other factors found in this study that are similar to what other studies have documented include the fact that: i) society still does not expect women to be capable enough to perform well in the working environment so they have to work harder to prove themselves; ii) women still doubt themselves and again work non-stop to prove their worth to themselves and others; and iii) their higher life-to-work conflict makes it necessary for them to continue working until late as they are unable to accomplish all the expected work roles during working hours. Therefore, according to the women participants in this study, the need to constantly prove themselves, as well as the substantial number of expectations in the non-work area make for the experiences of WLC.

5.2.5 Effects of Work-Life Conflict

The core of the current study entails an examination of WLC, either the work-to-life or life-to-work conflict direction, as experienced by the selected women managers in the current study. After considering the antecedents of WLC, i.e. the roles and responsibilities that are expected of the women managers in the current study to result in WLC, part of the experience would then logically include the consequences that WLC has on them (women managers).

Dialogues with the women participants elicited themes in terms of the experiences of the effects of WLC on the women in the current study. The themes included: Firstly, health issues, physical and psychological; secondly, effects on children; thirdly effects on relationships with significant others; fourthly, limitations on career progression of the women in the current study; and finally, financial repercussions. There were also a few of the women who said that they have managed to balance their work and non-work roles and as a result do not experience any challenges. The themes are presented in Figure 5.6 below.

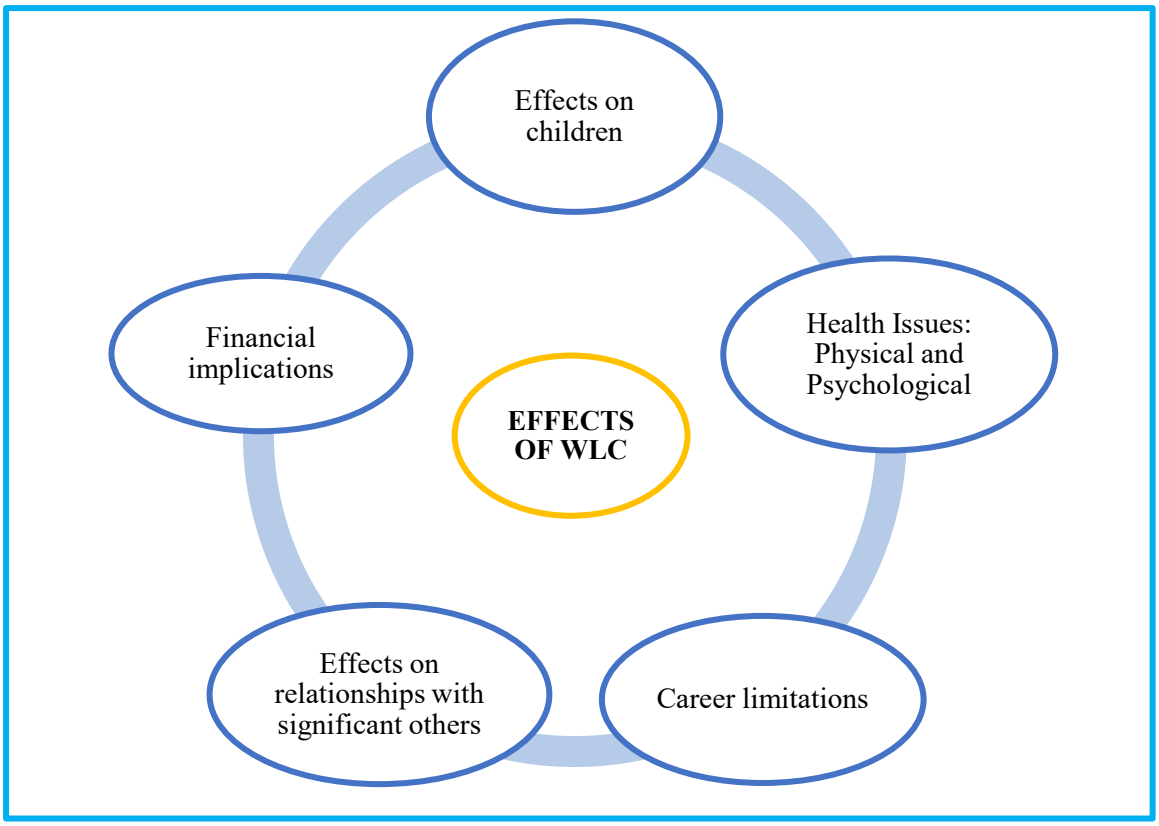


Figure 5. 6: Effects of Work-Life Conflict as Experienced by Woman Managers in the Current Study (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The effects on the women themselves will be presented first, i.e. health effects, secondly, the effects on children; thirdly the effects on significant others, fourthly, financial repercussions; fifthly, career limitations; and lastly, those who have managed to strike work-life balance will be presented.

7) Health effects on women participants

i. Psychological effects

Many of the participants brought up being stressed out, experiencing burnout as well as other psychological challenges like anxiety and depression. One of the participants said that "*Compromise is evident. … unfortunately I feel like I have compromised on my health, - … too much stress*". Another one stated that "*You find that we are so immersed in our work that we even end up picking up these ailments. For instance, you get so stressed out you end up being depressed and you find yourself complaining about each and every ailment. At times you know*

that you saw yourself going there but you could not stop yourself". Furthermore, some of them complained of stress and anxiety as a result of being overworked, they stated that "*There is a lot of stress and burnout from personnel because they are expecting us to do more than we can in 8 hours*". They also stated that the stress and anxiety end up affecting other spheres of their lives. An example from one participant was that "*Too much work can result in stress and anxiety which, will affect social life and effectiveness and work*". Likewise, from the questionnaires, 66.6% of the women indicated that they "often come home too tired to do some of the non-work things"; and that "due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy".

iii) Physical health effects

Some of the women in this study mentioned that they experience health problems as a result of dedicating too much time to work-related roles and responsibilities, i.e. high work-to-life interference. The commonest physical condition that they brought up was hypertension that they think is caused or exacerbated by overworking. One of them stated: "*I feel very committed to my work and want to do it to the best of my abilities. But because of workload one tends to work overtime. This has a problem when you are raising kids. Kids also need time and energy but when I get home I am too tired. I have no emotional energy to deal with them. As a result, I have developed other conditions. I even have a physical condition, high blood pressure. Work takes my time for pleasure.*" In her conversation she also brought up a lack of emotional energy and the fact that due to overworking she does not experience pleasure in life, i.e. her conversation suggested both physical and psychological consequences of increased work-to-life interference. So it is not easy to detangle the physical from the psychological effects.

Others mentioned stomach ulcers due to stress and not eating well as a result of the stress. Another one said that *"... now due to work stress I do not eat well, some days I do not eat at all.... when I look at the time it is time to knock off. I have lost a lot of weight. No matter what I do I cannot seem to be able to gain weight again*". This may suggest that some of them experience psychosomatic disorders as a result of dedicating too much time to work roles and responsibilities.

8) Effects on children

Children can also be regarded as significant others to the women who participated in this study. However, they are discussed separately because, as one of the participants mentioned, they (children) are the ones *"who are being mostly put out"* and they were mentioned more frequently than any other family member or other relationships. As one woman participant stated, "s*ometimes my children complain that they hardly see me, indicating that I spend more time at work than with my family*".

Most of the women in the study complained about the fact that they compromise on the time they could be spending with their children. As one of the women put it: "*My children often complain about not having enough time with me. The youngest one especially needs attention. He has to do homework on his own. Sometimes he calls me while I am still at work and I do homework with him over the phone. It is not fair on him. I also take care of a young child of a relative. Sometimes I forget to pick her up and the school would call to remind me that the child is still at school."*

Accordingly, it gives the impression that at times even the educational progress of children gets compromised by these women dedicating too much of their time to their work roles. This is supported by another woman who said that "… *I also have one child who is a slow learner and requires a lot of time and attention from me. I have noticed that if I give him the attention he copes better at school. But sometimes I cannot give him enough attention due to work*". One woman stated that children's complaints depend on the age of the child. She said that "*When they were younger it was difficult, but now my children are fine as they can work independently*".

Children reportedly get inconvenienced by other means as well. For instance, on some occasions their parents take them to work. As one of the participants put it: *"Again, as a single mum I cannot leave my child alone. So I take work home quite often. Some weekends I take her to work".* Furthermore, another participant went further to explain*, "my husband travels a lot. I rely a lot on the nanny who is luckily very reliable and has been with us for a long time. One time when she was not there because of family issues and I was attending a late meeting I had to take my daughter with me and find a comfortable place for her to do homework and then lie down to wait for me. It is extremely uncomfortable".*

9) Effects on relationships with significant others

After children, relationships with spouses/partners were also cited to be negatively affected by the participants' experiences of work-to-life interference. This negative effect can be illustrated by responses such as: "*To a certain extent my husband is not happy with me working all the time as he also needs attention. ... When my husband comes in I try to drop everything and make time for him*"; or "*… Sometimes that creates conflict in my marriage ... My husband is always complaining that: 'you are never here for me', or 'you did not listen when I was talking to you'".*

Some of the participants went further to suggest that marital relationships or partnerships do suffer as a result of women working incessantly. They said for instance that "*... it is not fair on my husband as he does not stay full-time at home. So I have had issues with my husband complaining about the amount of work I do at home*". One of the women indicated that she actually broke up with her fiancé as he could not cope with her *"constant working"* as she put it.

Another lady, who only started living with her husband a few months (less than a year) before this research interview mentioned that "*It was easier when my husband was working far from home. Now he is around and he expects me to be back home at a certain time. He expects me to cook for him and dish food for him. This is very heavy, and I am not coping with it. Sometimes if I sit and work at home he gives me the kind of look that shows that he does not appreciate that. ... He believes that a woman has to be in bed with her husband the whole night, but that does not work for me. Even if I was not working I would not be able to sleep that long. It was easier when he was not living with me. I could easily come back from home, ... rest and then later wake up and work. ... He is like an obstacle to my personal growth and development. We fight more now that he is at home than when he was away. Maybe it will get better with time, we are still adjusting. It is only a few months since we started living together like this."*

In addition to personal relationships with spouses/partners being negatively affected, there seems to be a negative spillover effect in the sense that firstly the work demands take too much of an individual's time, then the home environment is negatively affected by the time taken on work activities. This is followed by the individual's lack of focus and/or concentration at work, as they worry about deteriorating relationships in the non-work domain, resulting in poor performance at work. One woman put it this way: "*So there is tension between me and my husband because of my lifestyle of working hard. When we fight like that I cannot even*

concentrate at work which will affect my productivity. If I just slip up on one of my KPAs at work it is not good".

According to responses in this study, it is not only relationships with children and spouses that are negatively affected. It would appear that other relationships with significant others get compromised as well. For instance, one of the participants indicated "*Family relationships suffer … It may cause permanent damage that could be impossible to fix*".

Furthermore, the women indicated that there "*are complaints that they do not honour social invitations*". As one of them put it, *"the constant complaints*", from relations in the non-work environment "*do not make it easy*" for them, instead they further complicate coping with work and life in general, thereby making matters worse concerning their physical and psychological coping.

10) Financial implications

The women in the study mentioned that as they are at times unable to pick up their children from school during normal working hours, they have to either pay people who can pick up the children for them, or pay the schools for after-care, i.e. care of children who stay longer hours after normal school is out. Unfortunately, after-care charges tend to be more expensive than normal school hourly rates. So working long hours eventually ends up being costly. One woman added that "*I am a divorcee. It is a challenge as I have a little girl … family is not nearby, … That is why I rely on friends for help, -at a cost. Arranging someone to take care of my daughter has cost implications as I have to pay the friend*".

Some financial implications involve taking children to boarding school, which are often more expensive than children being day scholars. One of the participants indicated that "*at some point in time you have to put a child in a hostel because you do not have an alternative for now. For now, for example, for next year I am thinking that maybe to minimise these lot of interruptions with my work and everything I have to put her in a hostel. Of which it is an extra effort and money again. But that's the only way that it will minimise my work*". She mentioned that because was tired of having to arrange for someone to look after her child, the child was better off in boarding school. Therefore, not only does this arrangement of boarding school come with cost implications, but it also means change for the child.

Other indications were costs incurred to get domestic help, which is often the responsibility of women. The participants pointed out that "*I had to get help with family and household challenges. So I have a driver who picks up children from school and a maid who helps in the house*". Another participant indicated that for her peace when at home she decided to get help. She said that "*with home chores I have paid help* (meaning domestic worker)".

11) Career limitations

Although fewer women acknowledged life-to-work interference, mostly readily pointed out that non-work responsibilities interfere with their work sphere and can result in problems at work. Most commonly, they mentioned that their non-work responsibilities can have a negative impact on their prospects for promotion. For instance, one of the respondents mentioned that "*Again, as a single mum I cannot leave my child alone too often. Sometimes I deliberately miss workshops that are away from home. ... That can have a negative effect when I want to be promoted.*" Another one, who mentioned earlier that her manager sometimes makes work presentations for her so she can attend to her ailing, elderly parents pointed out that when it comes to promotion time, other people will not view her as competent enough to be promotable. She added that "*Colleagues do not even know that I prepare those presentations, they think she does everything for me. Sometimes I wonder if her stepping in is helpful or killing me! She does not even acknowledge my contribution*".

Another participant who was almost apathetic when talking about career limitations because of expectations from the life domain pointed out that "*I got a job in (another organisation), which implied the need for me to move to Durban. Unfortunately, I could not take the job. It is a senior position and the money offer was double what I am getting at the moment ... So I consulted and everyone told me that I should stop chasing after my career and give priority to my family. So, I came to my senses and I gave up on that dream. It wasn't easy though. I stressed over it for some considerable time ... If it was my husband in the same situation I believe he would have gone. As women we compromise a lot. Maybe we have that heart as women to tolerate things. It is still unfair*". The interview with this participant was particularly difficult because she started sobbing during the interview. This crying was especially when she narrated her challenges of: firstly, negative effects of work-to-life conflict on her marital relationship; and secondly, the effect of her marital relationship, specifically expectations from the husband, on her career mobility. When asked whether she wanted to stop the research

engagement she indicated that “no it’s fine, we can continue”. The depression as a result of the work-life conflict in this participant was apparent. She was given options of psychological help following the engagement.

One of the subjects that strongly came up during conversations with the women in the current study was the fact that they find it difficult to move, i.e. relocate for better job opportunities because of family ties and expected roles and responsibilities. This implies that they at times turn down higher/better job positions if those positions come with the need for them to relocate. They specifically mentioned this difficulty because they felt that as women they have limited opportunities for development in the workplace due to their non-work obligations. To explain this further they reported that they mostly avoid applying for positions that will put them in a position where they have to choose between work and family. For instance, a participant said that “*I just do not apply for jobs or positions that will require me to relocate. I do not want to relocate as I do not want to be away from family. I experienced that previously and now I deliberately avoid that kind of situation*”. Some of them indicated that they have contemplated and even applied for other jobs but eventually turned them down because of their obligation to be with family. One of them reported that “*I did that just recently. I got a job in FNB, which implied the need for me to move to Durban. Unfortunately, I could not take the job. The money offer was double what I am getting at the moment. … So I consulted family and friends and everyone told me that I should stop chasing after my career and give priority to my family. So I came to my senses and I gave up on that dream. If it was my husband in the same situation I believe he would have gone. As women we compromise a lot.”*

Some women recounted unpleasant experiences when they worked far from home and reasons why they “*now avoid doing that at all costs*” as they put it. For instance, one of them said that “*I had to relocate to an area around … I was forced to go there by the department. I luckily worked there for only 9 months. It was difficult for both my husband and kids. … My husband had to remain with the kids. … We fought quite frequently as according to him a woman should not stay far from home. There was fear of being apart. Luckily I got another post near home. Now I will never consider any promotion away from my family. Anything over 100km from home I will not take. Now you force me to do that, I resign*”. Another explained that staying away from her family was difficult as she and her husband did not trust one another. So it put a strain on their relationship.

5.2.6 Whether the Work-Life Expectations From Women are Cultural or not

This section addresses the research question: "*Are the roles and responsibilities that are expected of the female managers from the non-work domain cultural or not?*" The question wanted to explore whether or not the experienced roles and responsibilities are dictated by the women's culture or not. When the women were asked if the expectations of women's roles and responsibilities, particularly from the non-work domain are cultural or not, specifically in the context of ethnicity and religion. However, most women indicated that they believe that the expectations were cultural, but were not necessarily specific to any ethnic group.

5.2.6.1 Ethnic group

This section answers the objective of "whether the roles and responsibilities, i.e. antecedents of WLC, are influenced by culture, in terms of ethnic/racial group".

During conversation with the women in this study, they were specifically asked if it is their ethnic group that still expects them to carry out the roles and responsibilities as outlined in section 5.3.4 above. They indicated that in their observation the role expectations are cultural although not ethnic group-specific, i.e. they think that the expectations are the same for all ethnic and racial groups. They emphasised that the expected roles and responsibilities of women are generic to all ethnic groups and not culture-specific. For instance, one of them said that "*The kind of roles that women perform are just there. It is culture, not necessarily specific to any individual cultural or ethnic group. This is what we were born to do, to look after family, in-laws and the community at large. It is common sense; every woman knows that.*"

Another participant then indicated that "*I am not sure about other ethnic groups, but my observation is that we are the same. I see other women do the same and complain about the same things I am struggling with*".

An addition from another participant was that "*in the community where I come from women are still expected to do all the home chores like cooking. We have not reached that stage where men do not expect their women to do everything at home. I may appear as stereotyped perhaps, but I see my friends and colleagues from various ethnic and racial groups still do the same thing. Only single men do things for themselves*". These dialogues point out that women believe that diverse ethnic groups are still expected to perform household chores whether they are working or not. The implication from these conversations is that the tradition of expecting

certain roles from women is not specific to any ethnic group, especially in the area (Limpopo Province) where the study was undertaken.

To draw attention to the point that expectations and demands are not culture-specific, the dialogues with the women in the current study elicited two main themes. The themes include the fact that the roles and responsibilities expected of women 1) are common knowledge; they are a natural thing to do; and 2) are acquired and transferred from one generation to the next. The themes, as well as their subthemes, are presented in Figure 5.7 below.

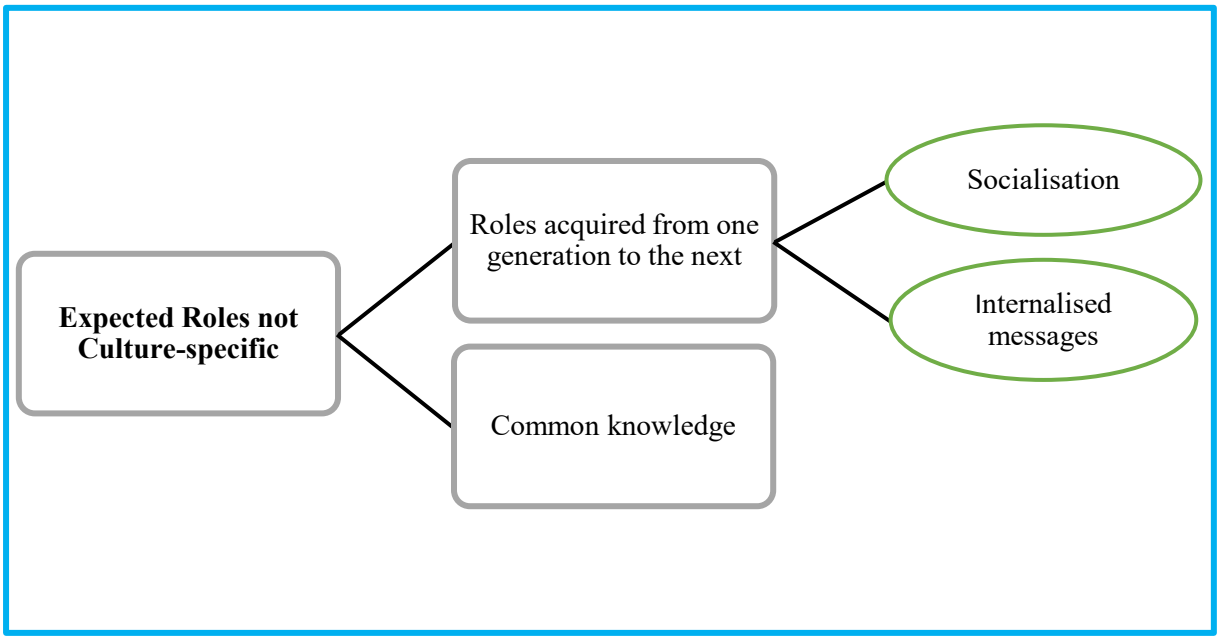


Figure 5.7: Themes identified for role expectations not culture-specific

(Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The themes and subthemes about the expected roles being generic and not culture-specific are now discussed.

1) Roles and responsibilities taught and acquired from one generation to the next

The women in the study indicated that they have observed from childhood what the expected roles of women are and that such roles should just be accepted without question. They indicated that the roles have been there, transferred to different generations of both boys and girls who end up expecting the same attitudes that they have observed and socialised to know. The

women pointed out that the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them in the home domain are due to *socialisation*, i.e. firstly, the way women were raised and *socialised* in the society around them suggested to them that the roles are clearly there for women to fulfil and are non-negotiable; secondly, that due to their observation of their mothers and other women in their family and society they *internalised the messages* about their roles and responsibilities, that they have to be adhered to and cannot be changed. Therefore, through observation of their mothers and mother figures, they learned and were socialised that certain roles are for women. From the socialisation they internalised the messages that to maintain some order in their home or life systems they just have to comply and continue performing the roles. Eventually, individuals get to expect certain behaviours from themselves and therefore *perpetuate* the expected gender role division.

The dialogues in this section supported sentiments that the expected roles are not culture-specific. For instance, one of the participants pointed out: "*It is a cultural thing. Not only mine … it is how we grew up that we got through socialisation. As girls we grow up in an environment that says that one day you are going to be married and be responsible for your kids and husband. …. I grew up in a family where my mother was a primary caregiver. Whatever we needed my mother was there. My father was working but my mother took care of things at home. So the messages that we grew up with have shaped who I am today. You think that I want to be like my mother, I want to be there for my kids. But times have changed. I am now a working mother and still want to achieve the things my mother achieved*". Therefore, in addition to the expectations not being culture-specific, the notion of *socialisation* is introduced here, - that is because they grew up observing women and mothers performing certain roles and responsibilities, thus they expect of themselves to follow suit.

Another perspective was offered by another woman who said, "c*ooking is my responsibility, every single night. … That came from me due to these internalised messages that we grew up with and carry with us as women".*

The explanations presented by some of these women suggested that due to the *internalised messages*, it is not only society that expects women to achieve these anticipated roles and responsibilities, but that women expect and require this of themselves and other women, even though they also work. They feel obligated to achieve these non-work roles without being told to perform them. Therefore, they preserve the messages and performance expected roles of women. As pointed out by one of the participants: *"as a daughter-in-law I am still expected to*

assist the family. I have to cook during weekends, I do that because I know I have to, not that it is expected of me by someone or some culture. I know it is my duty".

2) Common sense, the natural thing to do

Some of the women suggested that in their culture some of the perceptions about the reasons why they got married in the first place include taking care of their own nuclear families and their in-laws. For instance, one of the women said, "*We should not forget what we got married for as women. Personally I feel that there are expectations why we got married. The expectations are cultural and they stem from common sense and our understanding that there are things that are expected of you. Some men can assist but if you find one who cannot assist, then you have to do it all.*" While another one simply added that "*As a daughter-in-law, it is common knowledge that I am still expected to assist the family. I have to cook during weekends.*" Yet another participant put it this way: "*No, no it's not expected of me. It's just that, and I think that I naturally took to the role of the caregiver, you know, being a woman I just naturally took to it, and my brothers not being around. So, it fell on my shoulders and I just accepted it, even when my brother was staying with us.*"

One of them was of the opinion that "*I think it is not only about culture, it is about what we were born to do. I was born to bear children, to do house chores. Even though we are now in higher positions at work, we still have this in mind that I have to do household chores, I have to cook, I still have to bath the child. It is in us. So we expect this of ourselves. My husband still gives me money to run around and do things for the family, things for the house. Common sense still tells me that I got married to go and help in that family* (referring to in-laws). *These are my responsibilities as a woman. Educated or not I must procreate, and assist in whatever they do as a family. I need to know my position without being told. My position is to run the household. I must always find a way of running that household in whichever way.*"

In summary, it would appear from the storylines and dialogues in this section that, according to the women in this study, the non-work expectations are culturally based, but not generic and not specific to any ethnic group. These are traditions that have been communicated and transferred from one generation to the next. Furthermore, these role expectations are ingrained into the minds of women themselves and should be performed by women without question. They have been there forever and should be followed without question.

5.2.6.2 Religion

In terms of the dialogues with the participants, only two of the interviewed women are Muslim, while the rest of them are Christians. When asked whether the expected roles and responsibilities as outlined in the section above are due to religious dictates, most of the women felt that their religion has little to nothing to do with the roles and responsibilities that are expected in their homes. One woman who mentioned that she works so much overtime that she goes to work on Sundays said that, "*I go to church, worship, and get out. There's no time to listen to what I should or should not do at home. I feel churches should support us* (women) *more.*"

Another participant gave a similar narrative: "*Religion? Church? No … I am not too committed. Like I am a person that goes to church. I am not taking any part in church activities. I just go to church, listen to the word of God and go back home. I don't want to be … I've heard a lot of politics that when you become closer you hear.*"

Yet another participant mentioned that, *"I am actually frustrated with the church. Really I am! I was for a serious op* (operation) *in the hospital this year. And the doctor just, … ag my priest phoned me once. When I need him to discuss some issues he wasn't there. So I don't see them* (church) *as part of the support services for now…. Now there is no way they can dictate what happens in my life … So my biggest support systems are the Lord and my family … not my church."*

However, a few of them explained that they are not sure. One said, "*I think the church would support the notion of women taking care of families whether they have to work or not, but such things are not necessarily discussed in church.*"

There were two Christian women who particularly indicated that it is their *religion* that dictates some of these societal role expectations. One of the women pointed out that, *"In my culture and the way I was raised points out that a man is the head of the family. Religion and the Bible say so. So we have to comply with that. This means we have to do everything for our husbands, - cook, do laundry, and so forth.*"

Another participant went further saying that not only is it still expected of her to do household chores, but that women should be subservient to their husbands. She stated that *"… at home it is our culture. God made men to be above us. They are the head of the family. This is the Christian belief. I have to prepare food and a bath for him. Even if we both work a husband cannot do laundry for his wife for instance. If he were to do that people would frown upon such*

behaviour, like 'now his wife is controlling him'. It is Christianity, but it is not specific to any ethnic group."

One other participant explained further saying that "*the church does not necessarily tell us what to do with our families … except to respect our spouses and they respect us. However, we have mothers' meetings that mostly tell us about how to take care of your family, how to take care of your husband, how to conduct yourself as a woman, etc. However, most topics that are specific to the plight of women, especially as working women are often neglected.*" This discourse links with the notion of self-perpetuation of the expected roles and responsibilities by the women themselves. The woman here says the church does not dictate but the women themselves in their forums keep emphasising their duties towards their families.

From the dialogues with the participants in the study it would seem that in the Muslim faith it is still preferred that the woman stays home while the man remains the breadwinner. One of the Muslim participants stated that, "*According to 'role-clarification' a woman should be at home and a man should be working. This is according to religion, according to Islam. But then in the whole scheme of things men could not provide for everything. Our needs as women are high. … And on top of that women started to overtake men in terms of academia. This is what happened in the Muslim community. The girl started becoming very progressive and started studying and doing well. We are studying and working harder because we have to look after ourselves, as the men are disappointing us.*"

5.2.7 Suggestions of What Could be done to Help Women Managers Cope with Work-Life Conflict

The last objective of the study is "to design a framework that public organisation, specifically in the province of Limpopo may utilise to design programmes that may help women managers, as well as those women who are aspiring to become managers, to navigate the challenges of work-life conflict". In order to come up with a framework, that framework will be informed by recommendations. Accordingly, the participants were asked to deliberate on what they believe organisations, theirs and overall, should do to assist women to cope with work-life conflict and what their relatives and community in the non-work domain can do to help. It was envisaged that their suggestions would help in coming up with recommendations and thus in answering the last objective of the study. First, the suggestions of what organisations can do are discussed,

followed by what the women in the study thought their non-work environment can do to help them with work-life conflict.

5.2.7.1 How organisations could help women cope with work-life conflict

The women's suggestions on what organisations can do elicited several themes, viz. development of policies; training and development; human resource dynamics; availability of resources and facilities; and women support programmes. The themes and their subthemes are illustrated in Figure 5.8.

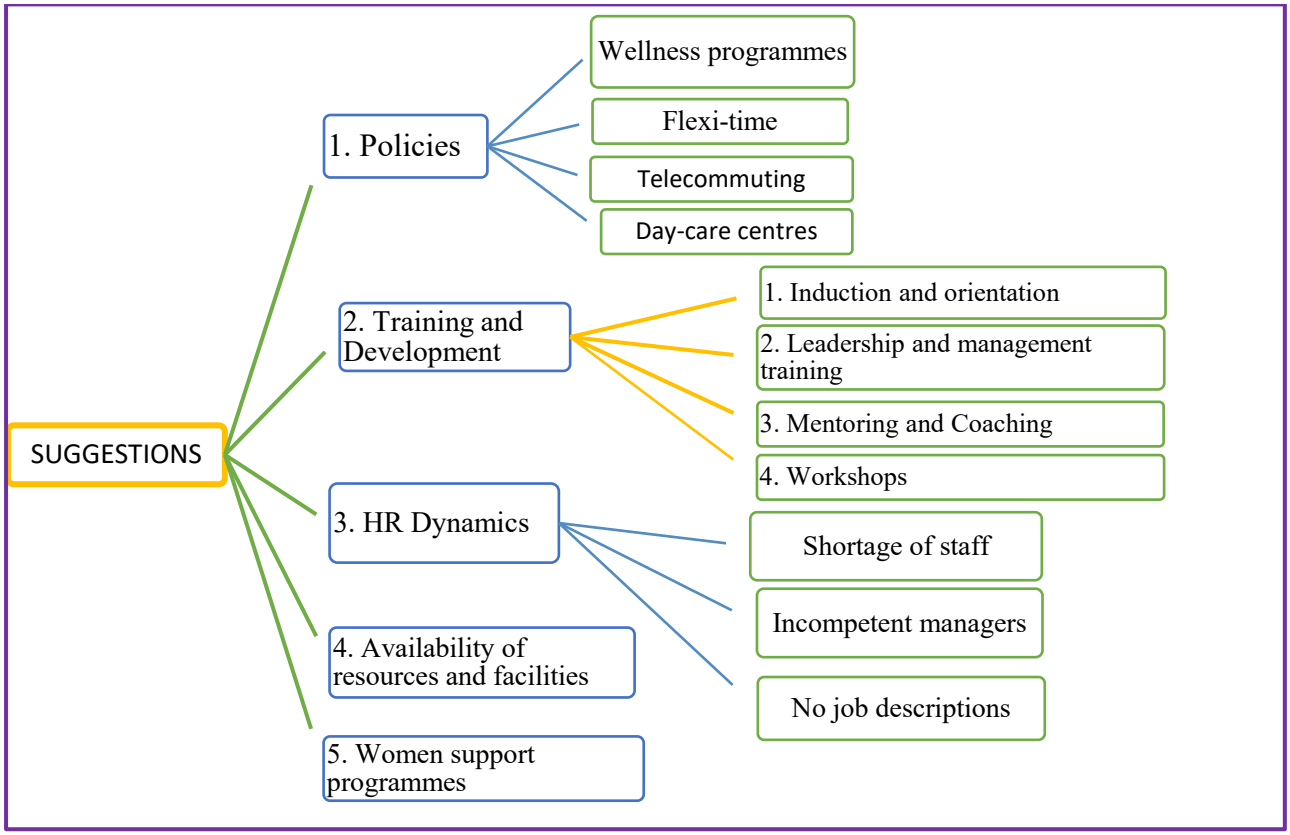


Figure 5.8: Suggestions as to what Organisations could do to help Women Cope with WLC Experiences (Source: Author's, based on field research analysis)

The following themes are discussed as displayed in Figure 5.8.

1) Policies to help in achieving Work-Life Balance

First and foremost, the participants suggested that organisations should craft policies on WLC for women managers to be able to achieve work-life balance/integration. One woman suggested that, "*policies on work-life balance should be recommended for all organisations. We struggle with our personal issues on our own without help from our employers. It is like they (employers) are not aware that we have personal issues*". The conversations on suggested policies elicited subthemes on policies about wellness and employee assistance programmes; working flexi-time; telecommuting; and having day-care centres in the workplace (as in Figure 5.12).

i) Wellness/Employee Assistance Programmes

Most of the participants in this study indicated that their organisations should have wellness programmes that could be useful in helping, firstly, to identify individuals at risk of developing problems, and secondly, to help those who already have problems to cope with. Some of them stated that although their organisations have them, these wellness programmes are not well utilised due to reasons that include:

- Employees not being aware of the programmes;
- The programmes are not accessible;
- Employees not trusting that their information, which they share with wellness employees would remain confidential. Accordingly, employees who know about other independent professionals like social workers, psychologists, priests, lawyers and financial advisers prefer to utilise those independent and external services.
- The stipulation that employees go to wellness only if referred by their manager(s) is a deterrent, as employees do not want to share personal issues with their supervisors; and,
- The tendency for organisations to refer employees who are about to undergo disciplinary procedures makes the employees not to trust the programmes where available.

The women in the study further suggested that the policies should be clear and communicated to all stakeholders. One participant said, "*There is wellness, which is also unfortunately not well-defined in the department. It is also not visible and it does not address issues of stress, finance, parenting, bereavement and overall support of employees. … If you lose a partner or child you will need support at work, but that kind of support is not there at work.*"

Another one recommended, "*There should be clear policies on how employees can be assisted. Some of the current policies tend to benefit higher levels of management and not everybody who is not in management knows about them. For example, I went through a rough divorce and did not even know how to access EAP services.*" The concerning fact is that this dialogue was with a participant in middle-level management. Her lack of knowledge of how to access EAP and its services is disconcerting as it may suggest that lower-level employees may struggle even more.

An additional point was stated as "*I do not see people utilising the wellness programme. I know it exists in our organisation. I have never used it personally. I know managers refer to the people who are not performing, or when they are drinking a lot or something like that. I know that if a person has a problem and they are about to go for disciplinary action, they get referred to wellness first*." Such perceptions that wellness programmes are for people who are about to undergo disciplinary action discourage employees from utilising the programmes.

ii) Flexi-time

As simply put by one of the women "*organisations generally need flexibility*". It was further suggested that "*public sector organisations should allow flexibility at work, not subject us to 07h45 to 16h30 working hours as sometimes it is just a waste of organisational resources to be at the office without anything crucial to do, - that time can be spared for family*".

Another participant explained, "*flexi-time is very effective at some organisations where women are allowed to juggle work and family responsibilities without the unnecessary stress and pressure to be present at a specific workstation for a specific period. As long as the work performance is acceptable and the employee is reliable, lenience should be available to assist women to attend to urgent family matters.*"

One of the women suggested it is ridiculous that all government departments close at the same time as this means taking time off work to access their services. They also suggested that the reason there is a demand for adherence to strict working hours is because managers do not trust that employees can work on their own and deliver results without being constantly monitored. One said that "*At this level managers must learn to trust us to deliver on our own … We are*

responsible people who are productive. So they should stop micromanaging us"; and "*We need colleagues to be more trusting of one another*".

iii) Telecommuting/working from home

The participants felt that they should be allowed to, within reasonable limits, work from home as long as they can achieve their goals and meet deadlines. One of them recommended that their organisation should not "*require us to work in the office all the time. Reports can be submitted on time without having to be literally in the office*". Another woman added that working from home should be accompanied by strict monitoring of achievement of targets and it needs employees who are honest and responsible. A further addition was from another who said*, "working from home can work. But before you give people the opportunity to work at home, you should have a strong team".*

Even though some of the women seem to believe that *flexi-time* and *telecommuting policies* can help to get top results/performance from employees, not every participant displayed confidence in that belief. Their explanations of lack of confidence include the fact that they believe that even if these policies can work elsewhere they do not see them working in South Africa anytime soon because:

Firstly, for the most part, especially in rural provinces, South Africa does not have the requisite infrastructure, "*especially adequate technological advancements particularly in people's homes for employees to work from home*"; secondly, "*the majority of South African employees are not technologically skilled enough to be on their own*"; thirdly, "*many employees are not skilled enough* (in their work) *for them to be able to work without constant guidance*" and/or supervision; and lastly, there is still a persistent lack of trust in one another, - as one of the women explained that "*employees cannot be trusted to produce if you do not monitor them or hold them by the hand*".

Secondly, that "*public sector organisations in SA are not ready for WLC policies*". As explained by one of the participants "*In government we have not reached the level of policies that can help us balance. Perhaps the government machinery is so backward. We've had discussions around those issues. ... Another question is that of who must initiate such discussions?*" This discourse suggests that the participants believe that there are no clear forums where issues of WLC can be raised and discussed.

Thirdly, in addition to the public sector not being ready for policies, other responses suggested that there is a lack of interest in the matter and a lack of implementation of plans in some

instances. This is supported by one participant who said, "*In government we sit once a year to talk about women issues. We make commitments to change this and that but there are still no substantial changes."* Another woman added that, "*We have been recommending to have flexi-time and working from home for those people who do not necessarily have to interact with others for some time now. The suggestions seem to fall on deaf ears. … So at the moment it works on internal arrangements …*", i.e. managers and employees within a department agree to flexitime within limited parameters

Lastly, there was a suggestion that women have the responsibility to take the lead in addressing women's issues in the workplace. As another woman stated that, "*This is not a priority for senior managers who are mostly men. The responsibility sits with us as women to educate our organisations and create those opportunities. Men cannot sit around a table and discuss women's issues. For instance, only a woman can understand the inconvenience of having to walk long distances when you are pregnant. So asking for a privilege to park nearer to the entrance when you are pregnant is a woman's responsibility. It is upon us to educate the community about our challenges."* This was in support of the women suggesting that it is up to women to advocate for and promote policies that will support employees, especially women, in the workplace.

There was also an indication that the women believe that although there are acts and policies in place to support and protect women, quite often those are not implemented properly. So some of the women suggested that organisations need to "e*nsure that gender policies are fully implemented and perpetrators are taken to book*". As such, some advocated for internal arrangements and agreements between senior managers and managers, as well as other employees instead of introducing policies on work-life balance, "*as a policy can be too rigid*". The internal arrangements mean that employers and employees can have flexible agreements of when and how employees can regulate their own time "as long as targets are met".

iv) Day care centres

It was also proposed that there is a need for in-house crèches, day-care facilities and child-friendly after-school facilities. The participants indicated that, "*These would help women as they* (women) *are always running around picking up kids, or asking to leave a bit early as their children's crèches close at five.*"

Furthermore, another participant explained that, "w*e also need an after school child minding facility where children are taken care of. The facility can include sporting activities and support for children who have to do homework. Then people (*women*) will not have to run around picking up and dropping children. Besides, if they bring them (*children*) to work where they get assistance with homework, then they do not have to rush home to help them with homework. They can focus more on their work for a while longer*."

2) Training and development

The women in the study suggested that their organisations need to develop and implement some training and development in, firstly, the technical/functional skills that every employee needs for them to be effective and productive in their jobs; and secondly training and development to make employees aware of issues of WLC as well as helping them to balance. They indicated that one of the reasons why people work for long hours is that they basically do not know what they are doing and take time through trial and error. In addition, those who know what to do end up doing the work for those who do not know, hence the need to have regular training and development sessions. Some of the proposed training sessions that they particularly think can help with WLC include:

i) Orientation and Induction

During conversations with the women in this study, they alluded to the fact that quite often hwomen in managerial positions initially take long to learn what to do, as they learn by trial and error. They pointed out that little or no orientation takes place when they get appointed to higher positions. Orientation and induction were also linked to the need for instituting formal mentoring and coaching programmes. For that reason, they suggested that more effort should be invested in orientating newly employed people, those who have been transferred, or those who have been promoted especially to managerial positions. For instance, one participant indicated that, "*There is no orientation. You are just thrown into the job and you have to swim. ...*"; or "… *People do not know what they are doing, how they should be doing what they need to do and know what policy guides them. So they keep making mistakes and fire-fighting, - they learn through trial and error, which is a waste of time and energy. So people end up working long unnecessary hours to get things done*"; and "… *Now I moved into management and came*

to work here. I did not realise what it entailed because I was not orientated. And I had a woman manager, an older woman. She made me come to work very early and leave late. I didn't know any better … I was tired, I even felt it was not worth it."

ii) *Leadership development initiatives/programmes*

The participants thought that the organisations should plan workshops for women in leadership to guide them in terms of how to conduct themselves as leaders and "*on how to lead*". Leadership development according to participants should also focus on training leaders how to cope with their own WLC, as well as that of their colleagues and subordinates. As one said: "*I think the organisation should capacitate women … and not compare them to their male colleagues.*"

iii) Mentoring and coaching

The participants proposed that there is a need for mentoring and coaching especially for new employees as well as those appointed in management positions. They pointed out that, "*Some of us come from different companies. There is no known structure to follow for one to know when to do what. I had to observe those who know what to do and ask them for help. I suffered a lot to know things. Even now I am still not confident enough about what I am doing…. I battled for years in this position.*" They suggested that coaching and mentoring and proper supervision especially for new female managers can help them "*not to spend too much time trying to find our feet … This will help us to learn quickly ... Men are not willing to help women while women are not prepared to help other women.*" The women in this study felt that as other managers, male or female, are not willing to volunteer to help one another, formalised coaching and mentoring programmes, if made available, can be invaluable.

iv) Workshops

- Diversity and sensitivity awareness and management workshops

A workshop on helping employees develop general awareness of the topic of WLC and its possible effects, especially for those employees in higher levels of organisational hierarchies was suggested. The participants felt that generally, although people are aware that individuals

have different roles and responsibilities, they are not aware of the possible effects of those roles and responsibilities on one another and on overall performance either in the non-work environment or in the working environment. Some participants pointed out that "s*ome managers are not sensitive to the fact that as employees we also have a life. … So we need workshops, workshops, workshops for diversity awareness and management."*

The participants added that managers are either insensitive, or they also do not know what to do when employees are not coping. Therefore, they thought sensitivity awareness should be linked with training on what to do to help employees cope with WLC. A woman participant indicated that "*Once … I had to rush to school to pick up my child who had chicken pox. Then I came back to work to ask to take three days off to take care of my child. I was told that they cannot just close the office, I must bring the child to work. However, on a later occasion the same manager was rushing to school to pick up her sick child who was vomiting. She had forgotten the time when she said I must bring my sick child to work. She took the rest of the day and the following day off to nurse her sick child. Why was she not sensitive to my plight? And why was she treating her situation differently? So that is why I say sensitivity training is required.*" To add to the need for sensitivity awareness and training one participant recounted her story about when her husband was ill it was difficult for her to take time off to be with him. When he finally passed on, she came back to work to be "*bombarded with requirements without even asking me how I was coping*". She says she "*had no time to mourn*" as she was just expected to move on and catch up with work immediately. She was told that she *"… was not effective due to my frequent time-offs when my husband was ill. So now I should catch up and submit reports on time. It felt like they meant that now that he has passed on there is nothing standing in my way of being effective at work. But I was still in mourning and I could not concentrate. So sensitivity is crucial.*"

Furthermore, the participants pointed out that they think men in the workplace are inconsiderate to women sometimes. They said that, *"… men are not sensitive that a woman has to bear children, clean and cook at home. They only have their jobs to do. They do not understand that we are working just as hard as them and still go home and work harder.*" The women also indicated that, "*organisations sometimes do not take into consideration the fact that as a woman you play different important roles in society. The work-life conflict arises because work always keeps you occupied forgetting that you have family, relatives and the community where you are expected to play a vital role*". However, one of the women added that as much as men should be sensitised to the plight of women, sensitivity education should be for women as well.

- *Conflict management workshop/education*

The participants pointed out that employees often encounter all forms of conflict in their work environment. Conflict, especially at work, can impact negatively on their coping mechanisms and on work performance. They also explained how the negative spillover effect of conflict experienced in the non-work environment, affected performance at work, and vice versa. For that reason, they suggested that workshops on conflict management would be valuable, and that "*Capacity building workshops on conflict management should be conducted to empower us*". According to them "*These workshops can assist in developing effective conflict resolution skill sets, which are an essential component of building sustainable businesses or organisations*".

- *Stress management workshop*

During the dialogues with women in this study they mentioned that they quite often get stressed out from: i) the many responsibilities that they have at home that encroach on their working time; ii) struggling to know what to do in the workplace; iii) being overworked; and iv) having other personal challenges to deal with, like financial problems and relationship challenges. Therefore, organisations could help by organising stress awareness and/or coping with stress workshops, because when they are not coping with their stress performance their work may suffer.

- *Communication*

The need for communication was discussed at two levels, viz. firstly, that it is crucial that managers should communicate more with employees to understand their (employees') needs and try to address those needs; and secondly, that managers should be taught how to communicate effectively, use communication media/channels that are effective in reaching their audience and show concern and regard about what their subordinates communicate to them. As one of the women explained: "*Organisations should strengthen communication lines between employees and managers, and make employees to be more aware of the available policies and help them to implement them.*"

- *Time management workshops*

Most of the participants suggested time management as one of the mechanisms that can help women cope, saying that "*People should keep to time and proper scheduling of activities to ensure that conflict and clash of the two (*work and life*) should not occur. … one has to be focused and have a clearly programmed schedule. However, it is unfortunate that most people do not even know how to draw up a schedule and adhere to it… .*"

In addition, another participant simply said, *"people should just learn how to keep to time, i.e. time management"*. Accordingly, it was recommended that organisations need workshops that can make them aware of time management and help them with that.

- *Emotional intelligence workshops*

It was suggested that people should be trained to understand themselves because if they do not understand themselves and their challenges they cannot understand others. One woman added, "*I think it is something in the line of emotional intelligence. People come with personal issues in the workplace. So if you do not understand yourself, you may not be able to look at people realistically. You may misunderstand people, especially those who offer their ideas that are challenging to you.*"

- *Team building sessions*

In addition to women-specific programmes some participants added that team-building programmes and exercises should be established to help all workers, not only women. They claimed that, "*there are no regular team-building activities, people work in silos. So there is no co-worker support really.*" Some of the women stated that their organisations used to have team-building sessions that were unfortunately discontinued due to either financial problems or that "*decision-makers did not care about employees. If they cared about the morale of their employees, they would do something about it. These days it is just work, work, work. These team building sessions can also be in the form of group meetings that can provide a neutral platform where employees can meet and dialogue freely about work and any other difficulties."* So the women expressed the desire for those sessions to be reintroduced.

3) HR dynamics

The women in the study raised several issues that they said have an effect on their coping with WLC that had to do with human resources. These included:

Firstly, there was a feeling from participants that most of the organisations are ***understaffed*** resulting in an increased workload, thereby further compounding the issue of work roles and responsibilities encroaching on the non-work space. As one of the participants indicated: "*there is a shortage of staff. So, I have too many job responsibilities. The scope is broad with very few hands. So for me to excel I have to work around the clock.*" Accordingly, they suggested that organisations should recruit and hire more employees.

Another one said, '*Maybe again another reason is … err … structurally the department, err … there is a lot of vacancy rate. So in my unit, personally I am alone … with one manager and my senior manager. So there's no way. It's like I am overloaded with work. And there is … I don't even have time to breathe when I am at work, to be honest. I am working … the way I see it there should be three positions and I am only one of those three positions. I tried to write motivations, … .*"

Secondly, the participants mentioned that at times *unqualified, inexperienced and incompetent senior managers* are hired and placed in high positions. However, due to inexperience and their lack of knowledge, they (women participants in the study) end up doing work for them. For instance, they indicated that, *"…some managers do not know their work and have us do our work and theirs. So that takes us too much time*". Therefore, the women in this study felt that having to do work for their seniors is unfair and it takes too much of their time. This links with their earlier complaints that they work overtime as they also do work that is not necessarily theirs.

Another addition was, "*Our seniors know and do nothing. When I check our quarterly reports, which we send to our GM (*general manager*) she does very little. At least she does not add to content. She consolidates our information from our different sections. Sometimes actually the PA is the one who consolidates and then the report gets passed to other levels.*"

Another participant went further to say, "*Our executive is only seen when signatures are required of them. We do the donkey work. We are the ones who get tired. They rubber stamp our work.*"

Thirdly, was the fact that some of the women felt that they get thrown into positions without clearly defined job roles and responsibilities. i.e. ***no job descriptions.*** One of them stated that she just got a sense "… *that there are high expectations due to the seniority of my position. However, those expectations were not very clearly defined*".

Another one added that, "*We're just thrown into the deep end. You find your own way of doing things. You know there is no known structure that you can follow for to know that okay, - this thing is done like 1, 2, 3*."

From the dialogues in this section, the women complained about being short staffed, resulting in high workloads that led to them working overtime. This links to section 5.3.4.2 where they also complained and displayed some annoyance that they perform work-related activities outside working hours a lot of the time. Further anger here is towards the perceived senior managers who add to these participants' workload. Linking to a lack of job descriptions is an earlier point of lack of orientation and induction. These two points, although different, are linked because if both are done properly within an organisation, they can facilitate the employee's adjustment to their organisation or position. Unfortunately, in the above discussions, we see the frustration that the women in the current study have because of not knowing what to do in terms of their job expectations.

4) Lack of resources and facilities

The discourses in this study further revealed that the women would like to have other facilities like laptops and internet connectivity that they can take home so that they do not have to stay late at work. They mentioned that, "*The fact that most of the time we do not have work resources is also stressful. We do not have work phones or the internet but we are expected to produce no matter what. So if one is far one has to drive to the office to submit such reports. It would be easier to just email the reports.*"

Another participant added that, "*sometimes they call me over the weekend to respond to 'an important email'. If I do not have personal data I have to run around internet cafes using my own money to read and respond to such emails.*"

The undertone of irritation and anger was palpable especially when talking about using her own time and money. She argued that if she had a 3G facility she would just respond from the comfort of her home.

Unfortunately having these resources is paradoxical because although it would help the participants to spend less time at work, it would still increase the amount of time they spend on work-related activities when in the non-work domain. In line with this, one woman was not in favour of that viewpoint of internet access around the clock. She stated that she used to have access to internet connectivity after hours but at some point her organisation took it back when they were struggling financially. She realised then that she was taking her home time to read and respond to work-related emails and was glad when that was taken away. She says, *"…taking it all back was actually a blessing. Now I can ignore work-related calls and emails with a clear conscience, because the organisation does not pay for those*".

5) Women support groups/organisatio*ns*

Following the pervasive feeling that generally there is very little to no organisational support for women, especially for those women in management positions, the participants proposed that organisations should "*Establish gender management forums and/or committees wherein work-life conflict issues are discussed and input is given towards policies*". They also suggested that public sector organisations should create programs that can enable and encourage women in high positions to advocate for "*the plight of women*", particularly those who are still in the lower ranks. To that effect, one of them pointed out that, "*Young women suffer as they do not know how to juggle all their responsibilities. They need support workshops to teach them to toughen up in this man's world.*"

The women also added that in addition to formal women's support structures, "*the onus is upon the women managers themselves to get together informally and support one another*". They further felt that women put pressure on themselves to do everything and do it well. One of them felt that instead of always trying to do everything, "*women managers should learn to delegate and then monitor progress regularly*", so that they must not lose track of how things are performed. Moreover, another one of the participants indicated that "*women should learn to be more assertive to refuse assignments or duties that will inconvenience them and managers should not feel offended when employees decline to perform some of the activities that take place after hours*".

A few of the participants indicated that there is no need to worry about policy or arrangements, or anything for that matter, as they believe that work and life will never balance anyway. One simply said that, "*It is just complex, no good formula. … so there is no need to even try*"; while

another elaborated by saying that "*I don't think it will ever balance. I think work will always interfere with home. I do not know about the kind of policies that can help. Life is too fast these days. People are running after money. As long as people run after money work will always interfere. Unless with people who just do not care, but those are exceptions and we cannot work with exceptions.*" Lastly, others felt it is not necessary to develop a policy on WLC simply because "*policy can be too rigid",* thereby creating other matters of compliance, monitoring of these policies and ensuing disciplinary concerns.

Perhaps it is just as well that some participants are doubtful whether policy on work-life balance is necessary or will be enough. Unfortunately, according to some authors, these family-friendly policies and programmes are usually not enough and more innovative ways of helping women still need to be investigated and designed to help women cope (Agarwala et al., 2015). According to Agarwala et al. (2015), increasing maternity leave for instance, may not be helpful to some women as they do not want to be behind in their careers. Therefore, they may not take prolonged maternity leave anyway. Furthermore, having childcare facilities at work will usually be where the mother works rather than where the father works implying that the mothers still need to take breaks to check on the child and will need to go home early anyway because they cannot take children home late. Accordingly, Agarwala et al. (2015) highlight the point that these programmes, may not necessarily achieve the goal of balancing work and life demands for women specifically. On a different note, employers sometimes do not see how these programmes increase the bottom line. In addition, some HR departments find it difficult to describe output as a function or end result of family-friendly policies and/or practices (Eversole & Crowder, 2020). As a result, they only implement these family-friendly programmes to comply with trends or do not invest in them at all (Lazăr et al., 2010; Racolta Paina & Andrieș, 2017).

Some authors have also commented on telecommuting, that there is a paucity of research on whether it works effectively or not. It tends to increase the work-to-life conflict because telecommuting individuals tend to work around the clock and not all jobs are amenable to telecommuting (Crosbie & Moore, 2004; Lazăr et al., 2010). Research by Masuda et al. (2011) reported that in some cultures, like the Asian cultures, telecommuting does not make sense because once the mother is at home, the homemaker expectations tend to override the work-related expectations. As a result, there may be increased life-to-work conflict, specifically strain-based interference, on the woman.

5.2.7.2 How the non-work domain could help women cope with work-life conflict

When asked what they think people from their non-work domain should do to help them in coping with WLC, the women in this study basically spoke about two things, viz. understanding and support. They spoke about needing support from family, friends, spouses, their communities, religious groups and other women.

1) Support by family members

The responses of the participants as to what the non-work environment can do to help them navigate the work-life conflict challenge elicited subthemes that suggested how family and friends can help. The subthemes are illustrated in Figure 5.9.

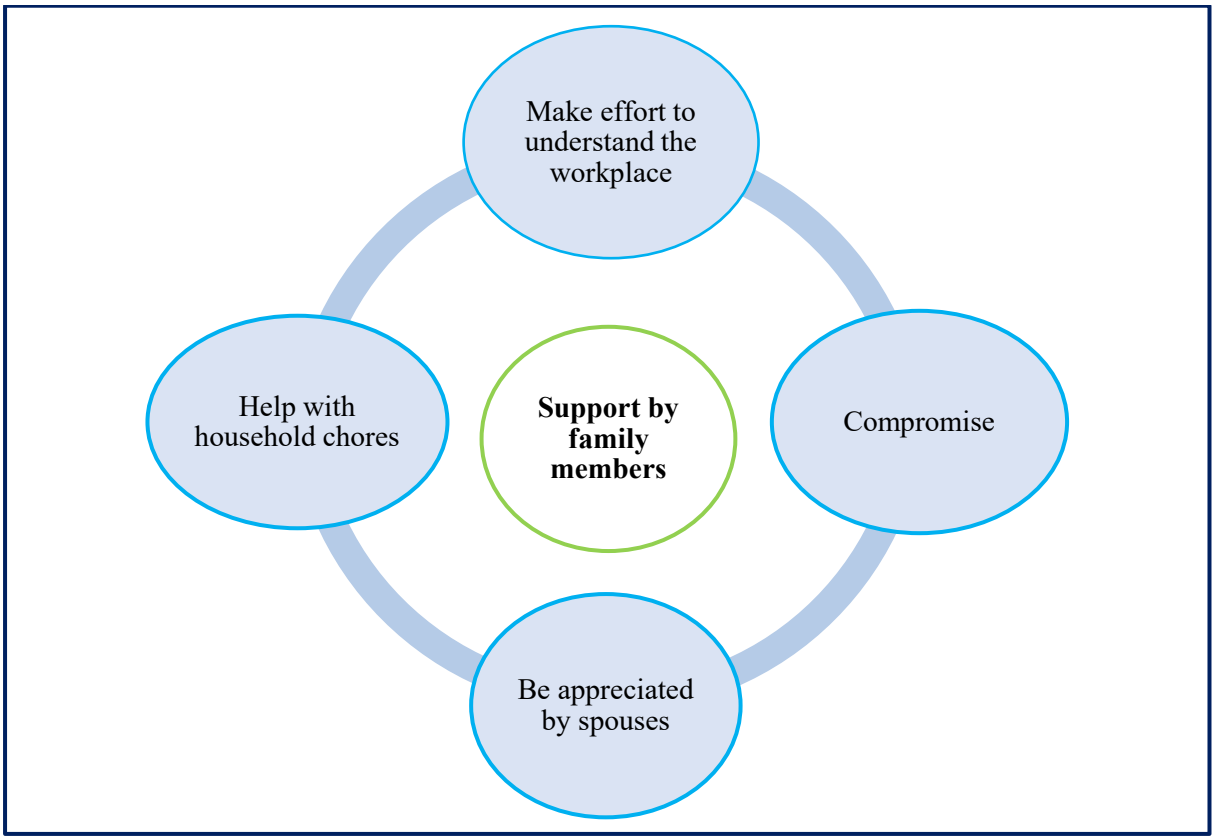


Figure 5.9: Expected support by family members

(Source: Author's own through analysis of data)

The subthemes about family support involve:

i. Firstly, making an effort to understand what their jobs in the workplace entail. The participants mentioned that family, including their children, as well as friends should "*reach out and try to acquaint themselves with the activities that most of us women engage in at work, so that they understand the pressures and demands that come with our work. This way it will be easier for family and friends to reduce their expectations of us*", as one of them put it.

They expressed a wish that family acquainting themselves with their work responsibilities could help them "*To understand my role and responsibilities as a career woman, that times are demanding for managers these days and that a lot is expected especially from women managers. So, as women we have to prove ourselves. Understand that for me to move up at work I need to exert extra effort, even if it means working outside official hours.*"

ii. Secondly, by learning to compromise, i.e. the participants pointed out that family and friends should "*learn to be tolerant*". Also, they should learn to compromise and accept food from take-away facilities and food cooked by maids and not always expect home-cooked food especially when the women are too tired to cook. They went on to state that, "*Take-away foods are not necessarily bad if they are chosen wisely and they are not done all the time. That's what they are there for, - to help people take a break from cooking.*"

iii. Thirdly, they expressed the wish to have support from family in terms of helping them with household chores like cooking and doing dishes to give them time to take a breather when they arrive at home. This help would "l*eave me to have time to myself*", as one of the participants pointed out.

iv. Finally, they wish their spouses would spoil them instead of expecting the women to do the 'spoiling' all the time. One explained that, "*I believe your spouse should help with some of the household chores and some of the responsibilities with children. But I believe cultures differ. In my culture, they do see the women as being responsible.*"

Another participant stated that her husband should *"...spoil me with a massage for instance, I deserve that*". The wistful undertone when narrating her suggestion was unmistakable. Furthermore, they expressed the wish for their spouses to be there for them "*to talk to and advise them when they are grappling with challenges, work-related or not*". "*Instead of asking*

how the day was, they ask what is there for supper", as stated by the participants who mentioned that she deserves a massage sometimes. Some of the women went on to state that they believe their spouses should understand them and give them time to breathe.

For example, another woman participant said that, "*I would expect my spouse to understand that my position at work comes with certain requirements. The salary I put on the table does not come easy. I would expect him to help me with certain household chores. Instead he still expects me to give him attention when he is taking a bath in the morning, put out clothes for him to wear. But I also have to prepare myself for work and check this and that with the domestic worker or the children before they start their day. I really expect some support.*"

2) Support by the extended family and community

The women participants in the current study indicated that "*the community should embrace change in the working environment, i.e. women are now taking more and more senior positions that are demanding, so they need some relief at home and not to be criticised for always working*".

The women in this study appeared to feel overwhelmed by the number of social/family functions that they are expected to attend. They stated that family members "… *should not always expect me to attend every single function, even of people I do not know, especially in-laws*. *Besides, when there is some family function or gathering, the family must not always expect me to work, particularly cooking and doing dishes, when there are alternatives like hiring caterers for instance*". One stated that in-laws should *"... not ask why I did not attend a function when I missed out, - I also have my family of origin and responsibilities as well as loyalties towards them*".

3) Support by religious groups

The participants in the study felt that their religious associations should have sessions that facilitate the sharing of experiences on WLC and how to navigate it from a religious perspective. They conveyed the fact that in their religious associations, members come from different organisations that they work for, thus sharing their experiences would be valuable. They added that they, in their religious forums, could invite speakers to provide motivational

talks for women. "*So instead of women groups doing community work and assisting others all the time, they could get to assist themselves … for a change."* One participant explained further saying that "*As a church they can also come with lessons or talks on what women battle with. So individual women can feel that they are not on their own. So the church can play a big role."*

The women in the study also suggested that churches can provide examples by allowing women to occupy positions of leadership within the churches. This can reinforce the religious institutions' belief in women as capable leaders. They stated that the fact that women are still not in high positions within churches "*does not show religious leaders' trust in women as capable leaders*". Furthermore, they believe that women's issues can never be addressed if there are no women at the top to talk for women.

4) Support of women by other women

As with support in the workplace, the women were also of the opinion that the onus is also upon themselves, in the non-work domain, to form support structures and/or networks. For instance, "… s*upport structures are now different from the olden days. I grew up in an environment where aunts, neighbours and people in the community helped with children. Now we live as nuclear families. So there are no such support structures. We need to form support structures ourselves, - through friends, churches and neighbours as well as parents of friends of our children.*" One of them also pointed out that, "*the onus is also upon women to remind themselves that they have a life outside work so they should learn to refuse assignments that will overstretch them and delegate whenever possible*". Equally relevant is the fact that some of them mentioned that it is the duty of every individual to look for a mentor if they feel they need one.

The suggestions that the women have made, about what they feel the organisations, as well as what the non-work domain and significant others could do to help women navigate the challenges of WLC have been documented. These suggestions will be useful in making recommendations for future studies or in showing managerial implications, as well as in coming up with a framework as stated in the last objective of the study.

5.3 QUANTITATIVE STUDY RESULTS

As stated above, the quantitative data, as collected with the use of a questionnaire, were to answer objectives two, three and four of the study. The research tool that was used is a standardised questionnaire that was used in the current study to answer the research questions of: "whether the women in the study experience work-to-life conflict", "whether they experience life-to-work conflict", as well as "to compare which one they experience more, i.e. determine the direction of their WLC". However, further analysis of the biographical data, as well as some individual questions within the research questionnaire was done whenever possible to support the qualitative results. The presentation will begin with the biographical data of those participants who completed the questionnaires, followed by a presentation of results that could confirm what the qualitative results described.

5.3.1 Biographical Information of Participants

For purposes of the quantitative part of the study data were collected with the use of the questionnaire. Although about 75 questionnaires were returned, only 68 of them could be used for data analysis as some of them were so incomplete or hastily done that they had to be discarded. Furthermore, here and there some of the participants did not fill in some information. Therefore, the totals in the tables presented for the study may not always add up to 68. The presentation of the biographical information will start with the age group of the participants and end with the organisation the women managers in the current study work for.

5.3.1.1 Age group of participants

Those participants of ages 35 to 44 were almost equal in numbers to those in the age range between 45 to 54 years of age as presented in Table 5.4 below. The least number of respondents were in the younger category of between 25 – 34 years of age, who also happen to be categorised as a youth in the South African context. This result corresponds with the qualitative results (p. 96) of the current study, which has the majority of participants in the middle age range of 45 to 55 years of age. The quantitative group also has a large number of women managers within the younger age group of 35 to 44 years. This group also has a bigger number of junior managers, unlike the qualitative group explaining the number of younger managers who could likely be junior managers. The result again highlights the relatively fewer number of women managers in senior and executive positions. Executive and senior positions are

responsible for overall organisational decisions and strategic direction. The table below presents the ages of the total participants.

Table 5.4: Age Group of Participants			
Age Group	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
25-34	15	22.1	22.1
35-44	26	38.2	60.3
45-54	26	38.2	98.5
55-65	1	1.5	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.1.2 Marital status of participants

The marital status of the participants who responded to the questionnaires in this study includes those who are single, cohabiting, married, divorced and widowed. They are presented in Table 5.5 below. As shown in the table below, the majority (58.8%) of the participants are married, followed by those who are single at 27.9%, and those with the least number are the divorced, as well as the separated participants. These results, similar to the qualitative findings, suggest that the majority of women managers are married. This may have implications for work-life conflict as managers are supposed to be contactable at all times for input into decisions and organisational processes while they still have their home (non-work) obligations.

Table 5.5: Marital status of quantitative participants			
Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Single	19	27.9	27.9
Married	40	58.8	86.8
Separated	1	1.5	88.2
Cohabiting	4	5.9	94.1
Divorced	1	1.5	95.6
Widowed	3	4.4	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.1.3 **Ethnic group of participants**

The different ethnic groups who responded to the questionnaire are presented in Figure 5.10. The results indicate that the majority of the participants at 58.8% were Northern Sotho, followed by Tsongas/Shangaans at 19.1% and the least were the Coloureds at 1.5%.

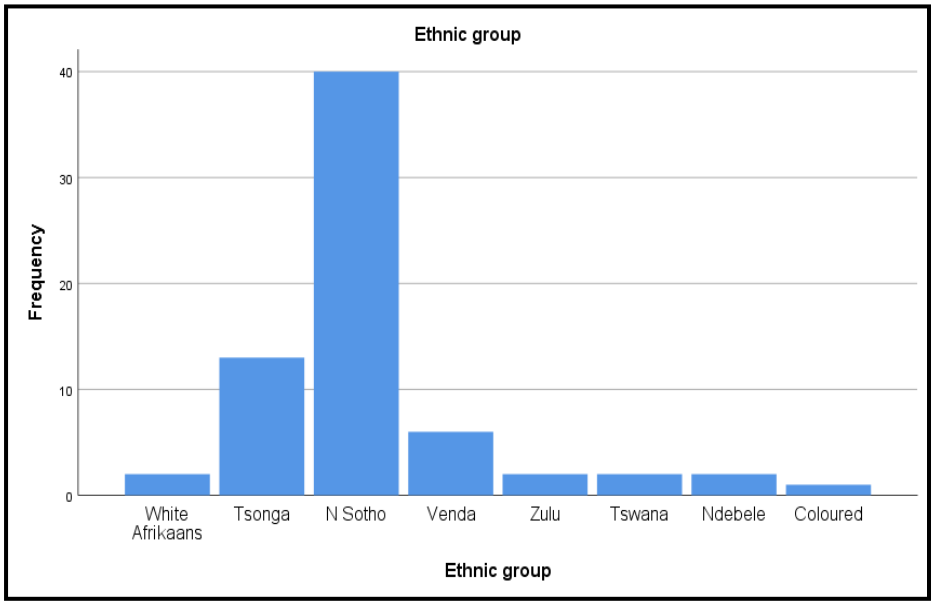


Figure 5.10: Ethnic Groups of Quantitative Participants

The above results on ethnic groups of the participants are similar to the ones for the qualitative part of the study (page 97). These demographics are also in line with those of the province of Limpopo where the participants came from. Following Census (2011) the Sepedi (N. Sotho) people were found to constitute 52.94% of the population in Limpopo Province, followed by Xitsonga speaking people at 16.98% (StatsSA, 2011).

5.3.1.4 **Religious affiliation of participants**

For the quantitative part of the study, 82.4% of the participants were Christians, 16.2% Muslims and only 1.5% Hindu. The religious affiliations of the participants in the study are demonstrated in Table 5.6 below. As stated in the qualitative part of the study (page 98), these results are in line with the overall demographics of the country that show that Christians are in the majority (StatsSA, 2015).

Table 5.6: Religious Affiliations of Quantitative Participants			
Religious Affiliation	**Frequency**	**Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Christian	56	82.4	82.4
Muslim	11	16.2	98.5
Hindu	1	1.5	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.1.5 **Position at work**

From the quantitative data the majority of the participants were middle-level managers (48.5%), followed by the junior managers (38.2%) and the least number were senior managers at 13.2%. The participants' positions are outlined in Table 5.7. Similar to the qualitative results, the higher the organisational hierarchy/position, the fewer the number of women get. This implies that the women are limited, i.e. they are mostly there to implement strategy and decisions made by senior and executive management but not to make the ultimate decisions for their organisations. This limitation has implications for making decisions that favour women's plight for the need to balance work and life's demands and expectations.

Table 5.7: Position of Participants			
Management Level	**Frequency**	**Per cent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Junior Manager	27	39.7	39.7
Middle level manager	31	45.6	85.3
Senior Manager	10	14.7	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.1.6 **The organisation the participants work for**

The participants in this study were from the public sector in Limpopo Province. The participants came from several public sector organisations, including state-owned agencies (SOEs) (also referred to as Parastatals). The organisations are presented in Table 5.8. Limpopo Province has ten departments, eight of which are represented in the sample for the current study, as well as a few participants from SOEs. Unfortunately, the numbers are not big enough for the results to be generalisable.

Table 5.8: Organisations that Participants Work for			
Organisation	**Frequency**	**Per cent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Not indicated	1	1.5	1.5
Agriculture	2	2.9	4.4
CoGHSTA	7	11.8	16.2
DSD	8	11.8	28.2
Education	13	19.1	47.1
Health	11	16.2	63.3
LEDET	7	10.3	73.6
Limpopo Treasury	3	4.4	78.0
Roads and Transport	1	1.5	79.5
SANDF	2	2.9	82.4
SOEs	12	17.6	100
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.2 The Participants' Understanding of the concept Work-Life Conflict

From the qualitative dialogues held with women in the study, one of the ways in which the women managers defined their understanding of WLC was that it involves work and personal/non-work responsibilities. One of the questions in the quantitative questionnaire state that, "my work schedule often conflicts with non-work-life'. Quantitative analysis of this question showed that at least 54.4% of the participants agreed with the question. This highlights the work-to-life interference, also described during a conversation with the women managers. The responses to this particular question are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Work schedule often conflicts with non-work-life			
Work schedule clashes with non-work	**Frequency**	**Per cent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Yes	37	54.4	54.4
No	31	45.6	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.3 Experiences of Work-Life Conflict

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to measure whether the participants, i.e. women managers in the current study, experience WLC or not. The aim was also to determine whether they experience more work-to-life conflict or vice versa. To measure work-life conflict and its bidirectionality, questions were specifically asked in a conversation with the participants for the qualitative part of the study. For the quantitative section, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire that was used to collect data had two sections, firstly, there was a section on biographical information of the participants; secondly, the section that had questions asking about work responsibilities and demands interfering with life, i.e. work-to-life conflict; and lastly, the other section that asked about life demands/expectations interfering with the achievement of work expectations and objectives, i.e. life-to-work conflict. The responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never, sometimes, often and always. For each participant the responses that showed as often and always were counted and recorded as agreeing with the statement. From the questionnaire, the participants were supposed to indicate whether statements on work-to-life conflict or life-to-work conflict applied to them or not. According to Hill (2015), a person who scores often and always is likely experiencing the given statement, which would mean the opposite for a response of seldom and never. For scoring and subsequent analysis, all the scores of often and always were assigned a 'yes' and those of seldom and never were assigned a 'no'. A total score of eight on the work-to-life section meant the individual experiences the work-to-life conflict. On the section of life to work a score of four meant the mild experience of the life-to-work conflict with increasing scores marking the severity of the experience.

Overall, from the responses to the questionnaire, 42.65% of the participants indicated that they do experience WLC. The following sections differentiate between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict experiences, ending with a comparison of which one of the women participants in the current study experiences more.

5.3.2.1 Whether women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict

Table 5.10 illustrates that 60.1% of women managers in the study reported experiencing work-to-life conflict. This finding answers the research objective of whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict. The result also corresponds with the discussions

from women who were interviewed where they confirmed that they do experience work-to-life conflict.

Table 5.10: Experiences of work-to-life conflict by participants in the current study			
Work-to-Life Conflict	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**	**Cumulative Percentage (%)**
Yes	41	60.1	60.1
No	27	39.7	100
Total	**68**	**100**	

5.3.2.2 Whether women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict or not

As illustrated in Table 5.11 below, from the questions on life-to-work conflict, there are at least 25.0% of women participants who reported that they do experience life-to-work conflict. Therefore, in answer to objective number three, of whether the women managers experience life-to-work conflict, only a few women report experiencing it as presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11: Experiences of life-to-work conflict by participants in the current study			
Life-to-Work Conflict	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**	**Cumulative Percentage (%)**
Yes	17	25.0	25.0
No	51	75.0	100
Total	**68**	**100**	

5.3.2.3 Which direction of Work-Life Conflict the women managers experience more: work-to-life conflict or life-to-work conflict

This section addresses the research objective: "To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict". This objective was to determine the directionality of the WLC that the women in the study experience, i.e. whether they experience work-to-life interference more or life-to-work interference more. The quantitative data were computed to establish how many of the respondents reported experiencing work-to-life conflict as compared to those who experience life-to-work conflict. Table 5.12 displays the results.

Table 5.12: The direction of work-life conflict as experienced by participants in the current study						
Direction of Conflict	**Yes**		**No**		**Total**	
	Frequency	**%**	**Frequency**	**%**	**Frequency**	**(%)**
Work-to-Life	41	60.1	27	39.7%	68	(100%)
Life-to-work	17	25.0%	51	75.0%	68	(100%)

The results as presented in Table 5.12 suggest that 60.1% of the participants in the study report experiencing work-to-life conflict while only 25.0% of the participants reported experiences of life-to-work conflict. These findings imply that the women in the current study experience more work-to-life than life-to-work conflict.

As illustrated in Table 5.12, as well as from the dialogues in the study, the women in the current study experience more work-to-life than life-to-work conflict. Documented results by other authors are still not in agreement. Some authors report that due to increased participation of women in the labour market (Sidania & Al Hakim, 2013), their upward mobility into management positions (Fujimoto et al., 2012; Nemoto, 2013; Schierman & Glavin, 2016), as well as easier and around-the-clock availability of technology (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2015; Nwanzu & Bojeghre, 2016; Ross et al., 2016; Qi et al., 2017; DePasquale et al., 2017; Isa, Singh & Hashim, 2018), it becomes easier and tempting for anyone, women included, to work for longer hours on paid work. As a result of the increased focus on paid work, employees, including women managers, experience more work-to-life conflict. According to DePasquale et al. (2017) the problem of working long hours is worse for employees in management as their positions involve more responsibility. This highlights the experiences of work-to-life conflict by, particularly women managers. These are the kinds of arguments that the current study results would perhaps tend to agree with.

However, a lot more reports in the literature point to the fact that women in particular experience more life-to-work conflict than work-to-life conflict (Broadbrige, 2009; Agarwal, 2015; Annor, 2016; Plickert & Sterling, 2017; Lewis & Beauregard, 2018). This direction of the experience of WLC is especially reportedly more pronounced in African and Asian cultures. This direction of life-to-work conflict is supposedly due to the fact that these cultures apparently remain patriarchal, prejudiced against women with stereotypes about what women can and should be able to do. These cultures still largely expect their women to carry the heavy load of domestic chores, with very little or no help from their male counterparts, despite their

engagement in paid work and progression to high managerial positions (Ngubane, 2010; Msholoolo, 2011; Ogbogu, 2013; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Noge, 2014; Akinyele et al., 2016; Chetty & Naidoo, 2017). In South Africa specifically, Marais and Mostert (2008) report that Afrikaans-speaking individuals experienced lower levels of life-to-work conflict compared to their English-speaking and Setswana-speaking counterparts. De Klerk and Mostert's (2010) study, Mostert and Oldfield's (2009), as well as Marais and Mostert's (2008) studies report that White Afrikaans-speaking participants experienced lower life-to-work interference as compared to their Black counterparts. In addition, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found differences between Africans who experienced specifically higher levels of life-to-work conflict as compared to their Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking counterparts. Therefore, it would appear from the documented research results that South Africans, Blacks included, tend to experience higher levels of life-to-work conflict. For that reason, it would seem that the current results, as they report more work-to-life conflict for a largely African group of participants, differ from the research studies that have been cited above. The current results differ from the results that they would have been expected to agree with. However, they agree with some reported research whose context is different from theirs (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2015; Isa, Singh & Hashim, 2018; Qi et al., 2017). Perhaps one of the reasons why they do not seem to see life-to-work burdens as a problem is the fact that they are so accustomed to carrying the life burden that they have normalised it. As such, when something is seen as a normal everyday 'must-do' it may not be construed as problematic.

5.3.4 The Type of Roles and Responsibilities Expected of the Participants

The qualitative engagements with the participants suggested the types of roles and responsibilities that are still expected of the women, managers or not, from both the non-work and work domains. Some of the themes that came up during the dialogues with the women managers could be corroborated by some of the information from the quantitative part of the study. Consequently, through further analysis, some of the quantitative questions were used to corroborate some of the information/themes that came out during dialogue with the women in the qualitative part of the study. The presentation in this section starts with the roles and responsibilities expected from the non-work domain followed by those from the workplace.

5.3.4.1 **The type of roles and responsibilities expected from the life/non-work domain**

The qualitative results of the current study in section 5.2.4 suggest that some of the roles that are still expected of women from the non-work domain include responsibilities towards family members, particularly, viz. i) children (i.e. parental responsibilities), ii) care of the elderly, as well as iii) taking care of relatives. The responsibilities towards family members are now presented to corroborate the storylines that were outlined by the interviewed women.

1) Parental responsibility

Engagements with the women in the current study about what is expected of them identified child-care responsibilities as chief amongst what others expect of them, as well as what they expect of themselves. There were lengthy dialogues about their responsibilities towards their children. In terms of the quantitative analysis in the current study, the finding of the preoccupation with the responsibilities towards children would make sense as over 90% of the participants in the study have children (presented in Table 5.13). Several researchers have suggested that child-care responsibilities contribute to the experiences of WLC, in particular strain-based, as well as time-based life-to-work conflict (Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Gamor et al., 2014; Clark et al., 2015). This means that the women carry the burden (strain) of taking care of children with little help from their non-work environment and as a result, sometimes they find themselves engaged in non-work activities during the time for work activities (e.g. fetching the child from school during working hours). These conflicting roles and responsibilities can be a source of strain for the women, possibly resulting in some of the problems that have been documented in section 5.2.5 in this study. Table 5.13 below presents the number of women who reported having children in the current study.

Table 5.13: Number of participants who have children

Children	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	62	91.2	91.2
No	5	7.4	98.5
Not indicated	1	1.5	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

Further analysis indicates that over 70% of the participants in this study have children who are 18 years and younger. The burden of children increases and has an impact on the strain that these women experience.

Table 5.14 illustrates the age ranges of the children of the women in the current study. The results reveal that over 36% of the women reported that they have children of ages 0 to 14 years of age, an age range that still depends more on others for their needs, especially mothers. The ages of the children of the participants are depicted in Table 5.14 below.

Table 5.14: Age ranges of Children of Participants

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
0 – 14 yrs	25	36.7	36.7
15 – 18 yrs	26	38.2	74.9
Over 18 yrs	17	25.0	100
Total	**68**	**100**	

Taking care of children, especially those younger than 18 years of age, results in increased strain, which leads to strain-based conflict. Strain-based conflict in this context would affect the life-to-work conflict. This result links with what the one mother (above in the dialogue section) indicated that in the morning she goes to work already tired from preparing her children for school, which constitutes possible life-to-work interference as it is inevitably going to interfere with her achievement of her workplace objectives, at least in the early hours of the day.

Further analysis of the questions within the questionnaire indicates that 82.4% of the participants responded affirmatively to the question that says when they are at work they often try to "*arrange, schedule or perform non-work activities like picking up kids or elder care*". Besides, 61.8% of them agreed with the question that says, "they often take time off work to fulfil responsibilities towards their husbands or children".

2) Taking care of the elderly

The qualitative results suggest that taking care of the elderly" is one of the roles and responsibilities that are expected of the participants in the study. The quantitative results (exhibited in Table 5.15) illustrate that over 40% of the women participants who completed the questionnaires in this study have responsibilities of taking care of the elderly, often parents or parents-in-law. Furthermore, as stated in the above paragraph, over 82% of the participants indicated that during working hours they often "arrange, schedule or perform non-work activities like picking up kids or eldercare". These findings suggest that women are still expected, or expect of themselves, to live with and take care of their elderly, often sickly and frail parents or parents-in-law. The number of participants with responsibilities for taking care of the elderly is presented in Table 5.15. The number is big enough to notice even though it is less than 50% of the participants.

Table 5.15: Participants with responsibilities for taking care of the elderly

Eldercare	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Cumulative Per cent (%)
Yes	32	47.1	47.1
No	36	52.9	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

Further data analysis revealed that of the women who reported that they take care of the elderly, 60.0% of them, as illustrated in Figure 5.11, experience life-to-work conflict. This finding suggests that being expected to take care of their elderly parents and parents-in-law result in an added strain that can then interfere with the achievement of their work responsibilities. This highlights the probable connection between life-to-work conflict and the care of elderly relatives. These findings that eldercare responsibilities are related to the increased strain that has an effect on experiences of WLC corresponds with what other authors have documented (Tsai, 2008; Ogbogu, 2013; Gamor et al., 2014).

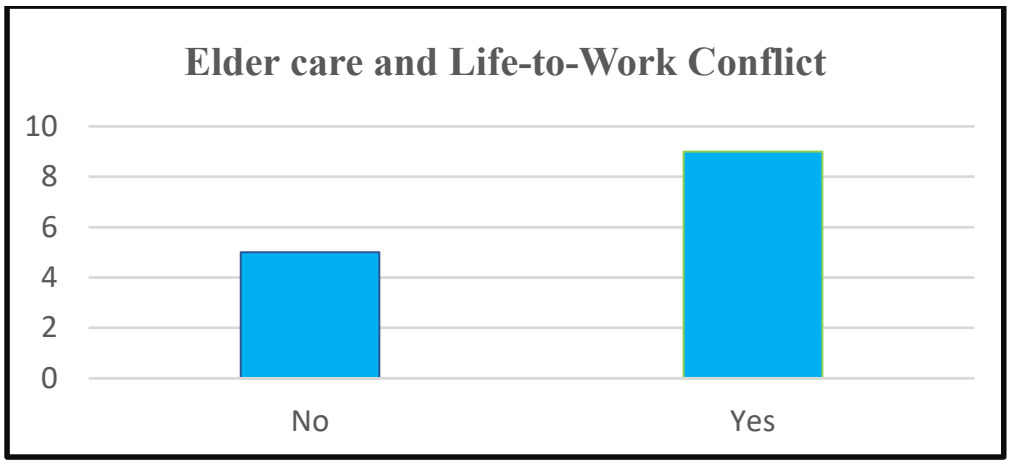


Figure 5.11: Participants who experience life-to-work conflict and have elder care responsibilities

Another finding from the results of the current study worth mentioning is the fact that further analysis illustrates (in Figure 5.12 below) that those women who do not have responsibilities of taking care of the elderly tend to experience more work-to-life conflict compared to those who have eldercare responsibilities. This may be due to the fact that perhaps those without eldercare responsibilities do not rush home and are likely to continue with work-related activities long after those who have to cook and administer medications to the elderly have gone home. Furthermore, even when at home those without eldercare responsibilities may be able to continue with work-related activities instead of nurturing and tending to the elderly who are often frail and/or sickly (Akkas, Hossain & Rhaman 2015; Qi & Huang, 2017).

These results of the effect of responsibilities of taking care of the elderly are similar to what other researchers have reported that women with less eldercare responsibility tend to have higher levels of work-to-life conflict mainly because they are free to engage in paid work for longer periods (Ahmad et al., 2011; Akkas et al. 2015; Qi & Huang, 2017). This is also similar to the documented reports that women with more children to take care of experience more life-to-work conflict while those with fewer child care responsibilities tend to have a higher work-to-life conflict for similar reasons as those of eldercare (Akkas, Hossain & Rhaman 2015; Dartey-Baah, 2015; Fernando & Sareena, 2017; Nichols & Swanberg, 2018). Figure 5.12 below presents the number of participants with or without eldercare responsibilities versus their experiences of work-to-life or life-to-work conflict. The results as displayed in the figure

illustrate that participants without eldercare responsibility have more work-to-life conflict than those with eldercare responsibility.

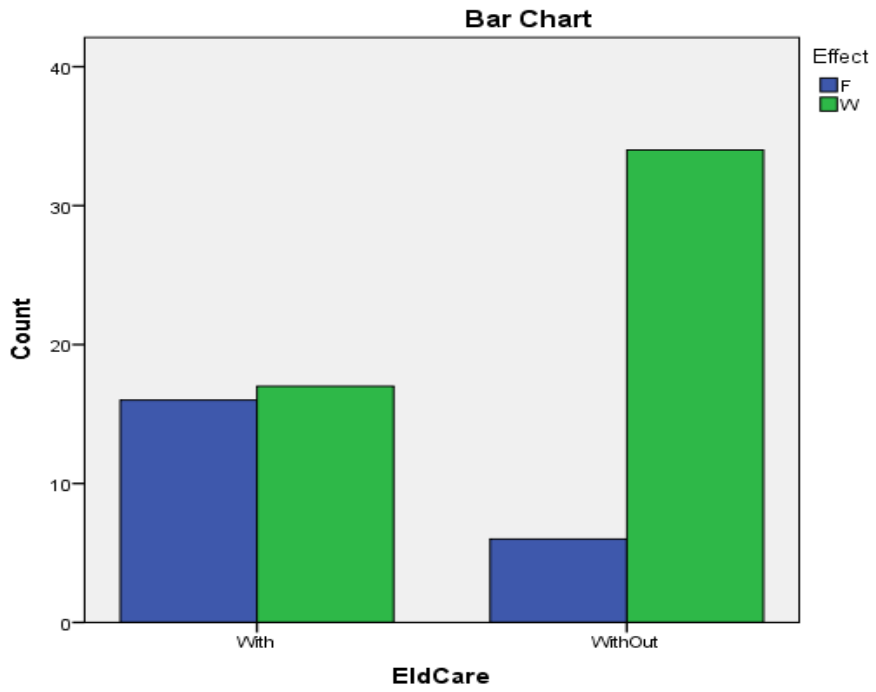


Figure 5.12: Number of Participants with Eldercare Responsibilities versus those without

Key: F (blue) = Life-to-work conflict
W (green) = Work-to-life conflict
Eldcare = Eldercare
With = with elder care responsibilities
Without = without elder care responsibilities

3) Taking care of relatives

Further analysis indicated that of the 22.1% of participants who reported experiencing life-to-work conflict, 57.14% of them have a responsibility towards extended family members who also live with the participants' families as responses on the questionnaire suggested. Figure 5.13 below represents the number of participants who live with and take care of extended family members without being specific about the relationship with the family member.

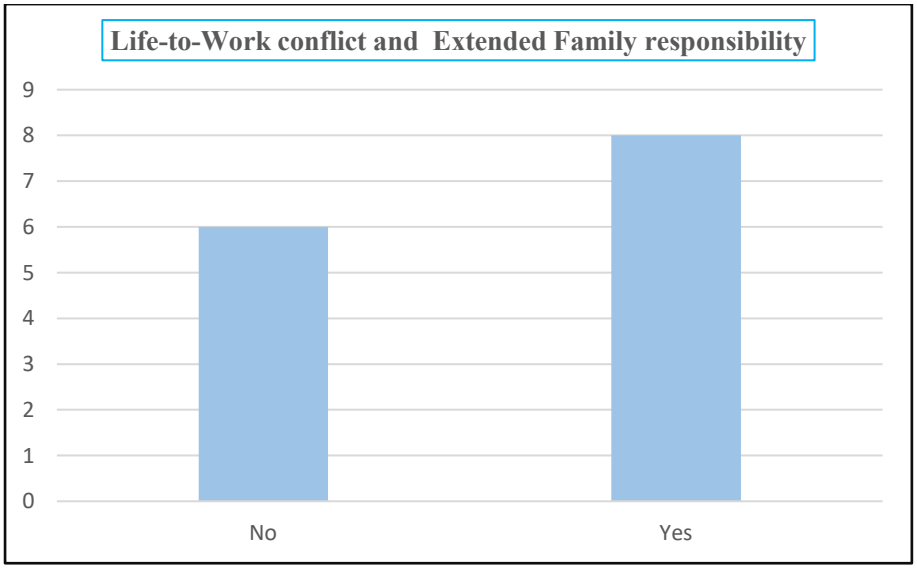


Figure 5.13: Number of participants who have life-to-work conflict and live with extended family members

5.3.4.2 The type of roles and responsibilities expected from the work domain

From the qualitative discussions in the current study, the women managers explained that they are expected to achieve organisational objectives and/or work according to their job descriptions, just like all the other members of their organisations. However, they mentioned that they particularly have to work more overtime as compared to their male counterparts due to the challenges and circumstances mentioned in section 5.2.4.1. Quantitative analysis followed up on the theme of working overtime, especially seeing that this is one of the themes that the women conversed about for long. Accordingly, the analysis focused on the number of hours the women managers actually work on an average day. The hours are presented in comparison to the level of management and are illustrated in Table 5.16.

The results show that junior managers work on average the number of hours they are supposed to work per day, while the number of hours increases slightly for middle-level managers and increases even more for the senior managers. Therefore, the higher the position the more hours the participants work. This trend, that the higher one goes up the organisational hierarchy the more hours they work, was found to be statistically significant when computing the Chi-Square test of significance ($p = 0.03$). These results correspond with other researchers that suggest that managers, especially higher ranking ones, tend to work long hours due to their increased responsibilities at work (Fujimoto, Azmat & Hartel, 2012; Ross, Intindola & Boje, 2016). This

result translates into experiences of work-to-life conflict. For women, who are still expected to bear the burden of household chores, the strain may be especially too much to bear comfortably.

Table 5.16: Level of management compared to the average number of hours worked per day			
No of Hours Worked Per Day			
Position at Work	**Mean**	**n**	**Std. Deviation**
Junior Manager	8.00	27	1.710
Middle level manager	8.65	31	1.762
Senior Manager	10.00	10	1.633
	8.59	**Total (N) = 68**	**1.822**

5.3.5 Effects of Work-Life Conflict

The qualitative conversations revealed that WLC can have some untoward effects on the women managers, and perhaps on any other employee who is not navigating the experience of work-life conflict well. From the quantitative questionnaire, some questions were phrased in a way that suggested not coping with WLC. The questions were analysed and are now presented in this section.

Over 69% of the participants answered yes to the question about the fact that participating in work activities keeps individuals from the non-work circle of people. Those responses are illustrated in Table 5.17 below. This shows that due to involvement in work responsibilities, i.e. work-to-life conflict, these women managers end up neglecting their social networks that could act as sources of support in cases of need.

Table 5. 17: Work keeps participants from non-work circle of people			
	Frequency	**Percent (%)**	**Cumulative Percent (%)**
Yes	47	69.1	69.1
No	21	30.9	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

The second question that showed the negative effects of WLC was about the fact that there are complaints by family members, i.e. the point that the family dislikes the fact that the

participants are too preoccupied with work over home activities. Over 47% of women (as in Table 5.18) indicated that their families dislike their preoccupation with work. Again, this may have negative repercussions on the relationship of the participant with the social system that acts as the source of support for any working individual. The results are presented in Table 5.18 below.

Table 5. 18: Family dislikes participants' preoccupation with work

Family dislikes preoccupation with work	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	32	47.1	47.1
No	36	52.9	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.6 Whether the Experiences of Work-Life Conflict were determined by Ethnic Group or Religious Affiliation

This section answers the research objective of whether the expected roles and responsibilities are determined by the participants' ethnic group and/or by their religious affiliation. The presentation starts with the question of whether or not the women's roles are dictated by their ethnic group followed by whether they are dictated by their religion.

5.3.6.1 Experiences of work-life conflict determined by ethnic group or not

From the quantitative analysis, the responses were picked from the open-ended section of the questionnaire where the participants were asked if the expected roles and responsibilities were dictated by their ethnic group. The results as illustrated in Table 5.19 suggest that 57.4% of the participants believe that the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them, particularly from the non-work environment, are determined by their culture.

Table 5.19: Expected Roles as Determined by Ethnic Group Dictates

Roles established by ethnic group	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	39	57.4	57.4
No	29	42.6	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

The above results relate well with the qualitative results in the current study. The dialogues there indicate that the roles and responsibilities are determined by culture. However, the expectations are not ethnic or rather culture-specific. The women managers indicated that they believed the expected and eventually performed roles and responsibilities are generic to almost all ethnic groups in the province, and perhaps the country as well.

5.3.6.2 **Experiences of work-life conflict determined by religious affiliation or not**

This section answers the research objective of "whether the expected roles and responsibilities were dictated by the participants' religious affiliation". From the quantitative part of the study, the results show that the participants do not feel that religion dictates their roles and responsibilities. The findings are displayed in Table 5.20, which shows that only a little over 10% of the participants in the current study feel that their religious activities have an impact on work-life conflict.

Table 5.20: Expected roles as determined by religious affiliation dictates

Roles established by religious affiliation	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	7	10.3	10.3
No	61	89.7	100.0
Total	**68**	**100.0**	

5.3.6.3 The relationship between religion and ethnic group and work-life conflict

Tests of significance were conducted to establish the relationship between ethnic and religious groups and work-life conflict. Each of these variables was tested for their relationship with life-to-work conflict, as well as work-to-life conflict.

For the ethnic groups, as already shown in Table 5.3 earlier in this chapter, the Northern Sotho participants were the most in number followed by the Tsongas/Shangaans. As a result, for purposes of the analysis, all the other groups were left out and for sub-sampling purposes every second Northern Sotho participant was included until a number equal to that of the Tsongas was reached. The results are now discussed.

1) Relationship between ethnic group and life-to-work conflict

Tests of significance were conducted to try to quantitatively ascertain whether an ethnic group is significantly related to the life-to-work conflict. In order to determine this quantitatively the tests in Tables 5.21 - 5.23 display the significance results for Chi-square and additional symmetric measures, the Phi and Cramer's V tests. Tested at the 5% level of significance the Chi-square significance test at one and two-tailed show p-values of 0.34 and 0.68 respectively. Additional symmetric tests (Phi and Cramer's V tests) show a p-value of 0.408 on the approximate level and a p-value of 0.680 for the exact significance. These values are well above the alpha (α) level of 0.05 (5%). This result indicates a lack of significant relationship between ethnic groups and life-to-work conflict. This means that based on the data available and the scope of the current analysis there is no relationship between ethnic orientation and life-to-work conflict.

Table 5.21: Case processing summary (ethnic group vs. life-to-work conflict)

	Cases					
	Valid		Not Indicated		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Ethnic vs life-to-work conflict	24	100.0%	0	0.0%	24	100.0%

Table 5.22: Ethnic group versus life-to-work conflict cross tabulation

			Life-to-Work		
			No	yes	Total
Ethnic group	N. Sotho	Count	6	6	12
		Expected Count	5.0	7.0	12.0
		% within Eth	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within ltw	60.0%	42.9%	50.0%
		% of Total	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%
	Tsonga	Count	4	8	12
		Expected Count	5.0	7.0	12.0
		% within Eth	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
		% within ltw	40.0%	57.1%	50.0%
		% of Total	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Total		Count	10	14	24
		Expected Count	10.0	14.0	24.0
		% within Eth	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%
		% within ltw	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	41.7%	58.3%	100.0%

Table 5.23: Chi-Square Tests (Ethnic group versus life-to-work conflict)					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.686[a]	1	.408	.680	.340
Continuity Correction[b]	.171	1	.679		
Likelihood Ratio	.689	1	.406	.680	.340
Fisher's Exact Test				.680	.340
N of Valid Cases	24				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Table 5.24: Symmetric Measures				
		Value	Approximate Significance	Exact Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.169	.408	.680
	Cramer's V	.169	.408	.680
No of Valid Cases		24		

Figure 5.14 displays a comparison of how many people responded yes to life-to-work conflict being dictated by ethnic group versus those who said no. That is, more Xitsonga speaking participants agreed that their ethnic group dictates what roles and responsibilities they have to achieve. However, the differences between the responses by the Tsongas and Northern Sothos was not statistically significantly different.

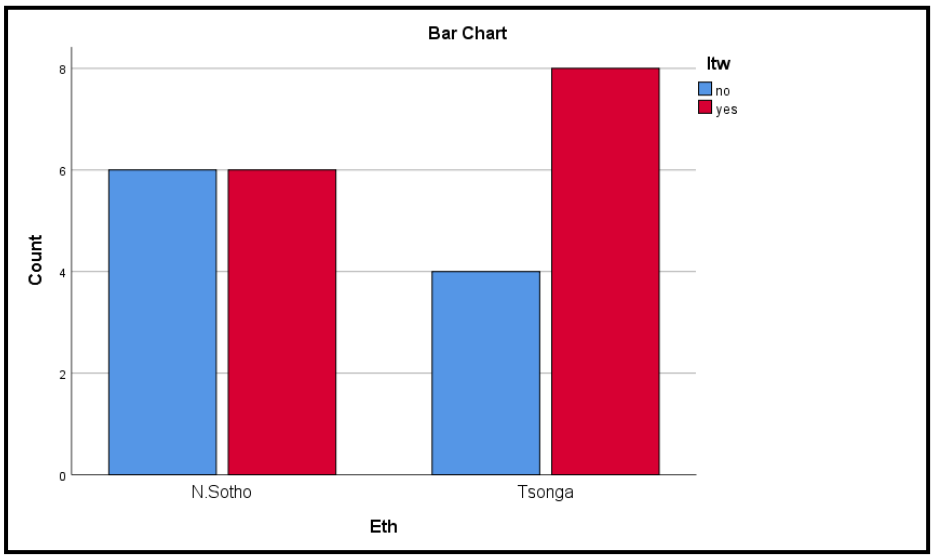


Figure 5.14: Bar graph for ethnic group vs life-to-work conflict

2) Relationship between ethnic group and work-to-life conflict

Tables 5.25 – 5.28 present the analysis of the relationship between ethnic group and work-to-life conflict. The Chi-square test shows results for Pearson and Fisher's exact tests. The analysis was conducted at an alpha level of 0.05 (5%). Results from the Chi-square test illustrate p-values of 0.5 and 1.0 for one-tail and two-tails respectively for the Pearson Chi-square test. Further analysis shows the Fisher's Exact Test p-values of 0.5 and 1.0 while the p-values for the Phi and Cramer's V tests are both higher than 0.05. These findings imply that there is no relationship between ethnic group and work-to-life conflict. One can point out that perhaps a study that can split ethnic groups might yield different results. This can be considered by future research.

Table 5.25: Case processing summary (ethnic group vs. work-to-life conflict)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Ethnic Group vs. Work-to-Life Conflict	24	100.0%	0	0.0%	24	100.0%

Table 5.26 Ethnic group versus work-to-life conflict cross tabulation

			Work-to-Life Conflict		
			no	yes	Total
Ethnic Group	N. Sotho	Count	1	11	12
		Expected Count	.5	11.5	12.0
		% within Ethnic Group	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	100.0%	47.8%	50.0%
		% of Total	4.2%	45.8%	50.0%
	Tsonga	Count	0	12	12
		Expected Count	.5	11.5	12.0
		% within Ethnic Group	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	0.0%	52.2%	50.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Total		Count	1	23	24
		Expected Count	1.0	23.0	24.0
		% within Ethnic Group	4.2%	95.8%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.2%	95.8%	100.0%

Table 5.27: Chi-Square tests (ethnic group vs. work-to-life conflict)					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.043[a]	1	.307	1.000	.500
Continuity Correction[b]	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	1.430	1	.232	1.000	.500
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.500
No of Valid Cases	24				
a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .50.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Table 5.28: Symmetric Measures				
		Value	Approximate Significance	Exact Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.209	.307	1.000
	Cramer's V	.209	.307	1.000
N of Valid Cases		24		

Figure 5.15 presents the responses of the participants on experiences of work-to-life conflict according to ethnic groups. The differences in the responses between the two ethnic groups are not significantly different.

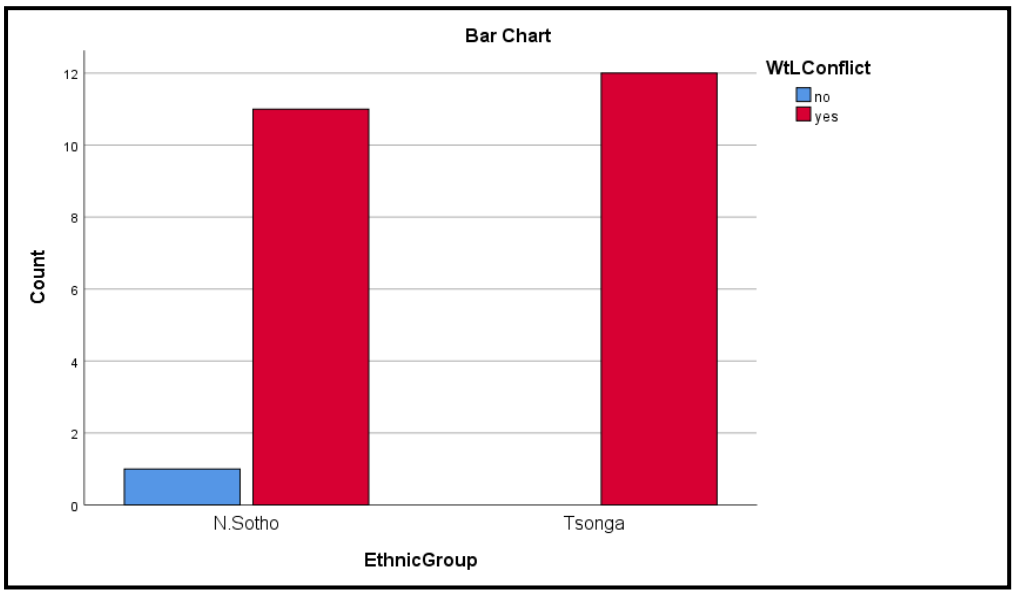


Figure 5.15: Bar Graph for Ethnic Group versus Work-to-Life Conflict

3) Relationship between religious affiliation and life-to-work conflict

This section is about the relationship between religious affiliation and life-to-work conflict experiences. Tables 5.29 to 5.31 present Chi-square test results of the relationship between religious affiliation and life-to-work conflict. Under the Chi-square test two analyses were done, viz. the Pearson Chi-square test and Fisher's Exact test. The analyses were at an alpha level of 0.05 (5%). Results from the Pearson Chi-square test indicate a p-value of 0.5 and 1.0 at one-tail and two-tails respectively. In the same vein, the Fisher's Exact test showed p-values of 0.5 and 1.0 for one-tail and two-tails respectively.

Further analysis in Table 5.32 presents a symmetric measure for Phi and Cramer's V tests. Results indicate p-values of 1.0 and 0.65 for the exact significance and approximate significance respectively. Since these results portray p-values higher than the alpha value of 0.05, the researcher cannot conclude that a significant relationship exists between religious affiliation and life-to-work conflict within the current study.

Table 5.29: Case processing summary (religion vs life-to-work)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Religion vs Life-to-Work	24	100.0%	0	0.0%	24	100.0%

Table 5.30: Religious affiliation versus life-to-work conflict

			Life-to-Work Conflict		
			no	yes	Total
Religion	Christian	Count	8	4	12
		Expected Count	8.5	3.5	12.0
		% within Religion	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
		% within Life-to-Work conflict	47.1%	57.1%	50.0%
		% of Total	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%
	Muslim	Count	9	3	12
		Expected Count	8.5	3.5	12.0
		% within Religion	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
		% within Life-to-Work conflict	52.9%	42.9%	50.0%
		% of Total	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%
Total		Count	17	7	24
		Expected Count	17.0	7.0	24.0
		% within Religion	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%
		% within Life-to-Work conflict	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	70.8%	29.2%	100.0%

Table 5.31: Chi-Square tests (religion vs life-to-work)

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.202[a]	1	.653	1.000	.500
Continuity Correction[b]	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.202	1	.653	1.000	.500
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.500
N of Valid Cases	24				
a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.50.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Table 5.32: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance	Exact Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.092	.653	1.000
	Cramer's V	.092	.653	1.000
No of Valid Cases		24		

Figure 5.16 portrays the responses of the participants on whether there is a relationship between religious affiliation and experiences of life-to-work conflict. The results do not show any significant difference between responses of women of the Christian faith compared to those of the Muslim faith.

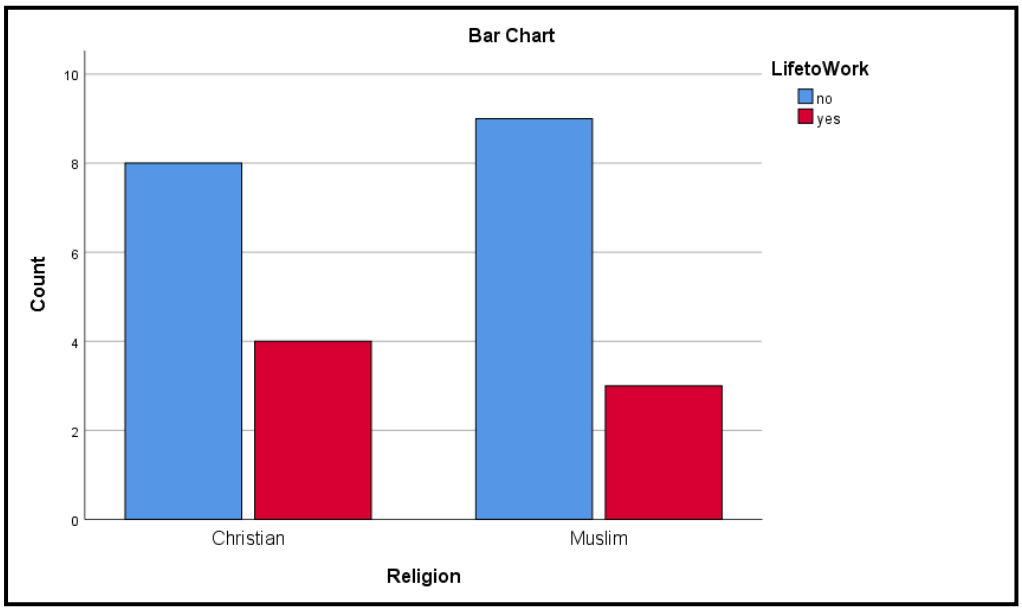


Figure 5.16: Bar Graph for Religious Affiliation versus Life-to-Work Conflict

4) Relationship between religious affiliation and work-to-life conflict

This section presents an analysis of the relationship between religious affiliation and work-to-life conflict. Tests of significance were conducted at an alpha level of 0.05 (5%). Results portrayed in Tables 5.33 to 5.35 indicate Pearson Chi-square significance level at p-values of 0.295 and 0.590 for one-tail and two-tails respectively, besides, the Chi-square significance test was also tested for Fisher's Exact test with p-values of 0.295 at one-tail and 0.590 at two-tails respectively.

Further symmetric test in Table 5.36 depicts p-values of 0.59 and 0.59 for the Phi and Cramer's V tests respectively. Given that the p-values for both tests are greater than the research alpha level of 0.05; there is therefore not enough information to conclude that a significant relationship exists between religion and work-to-life conflict within the scope of data available for this research study.

Table 5.33: Case processing summary (religion vs. work-to-life conflict)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Religion vs. Work-to-Life Conflict	24	100.0%	0	0.0%	24	100.0%

Table 5.34: Religious Affiliation versus Work-to-Life conflict cross tabulation					
			Work-to-Life Conflict		Total
			no	yes	
Religion	Christian	Count	1	11	12
		Expected Count	2.0	10.0	12.0
		% within Religion	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	25.0%	55.0%	50.0%
		% of Total	4.2%	45.8%	50.0%
	Muslim	Count	3	9	12
		Expected Count	2.0	10.0	12.0
		% within Religion	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	75.0%	45.0%	50.0%
		% of Total	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%
Total		Count	4	20	24
		Expected Count	4.0	20.0	24.0
		% within Religion	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
		% within Work-to-Life Conflict	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	**16.7%**	**83.3%**	**100.0%**

Table 5.35: Chi-Square tests (religion vs. work-to-life conflict)					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.200[a]	1	.273	.590	.295
Continuity Correction[b]	.300	1	.584		
Likelihood Ratio	1.247	1	.264	.590	.295
Fisher's Exact Test				.590	.295
N of Valid Cases	24				
a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Table 5.36: Symmetric Measures				
		Value	Approximate Significance	Exact Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	-.224	.273	.590
	Cramer's V	.224	.273	.590
N of Valid Cases		24		

Figure 5.17 portrays the responses of the participants on whether there is a relationship between religious affiliation and experiences of life-to-work conflict. The results depict some slight differences between responses of women of the Christian faith compared to those of the Muslim faith. Of note is the fact that there are more positive responses as compared to Figure 5.17, which looked at life-to-work responses. This finds links with the earlier findings that the women in the study complain more of experiences of work-to-life conflict rather than life-to-work conflict.

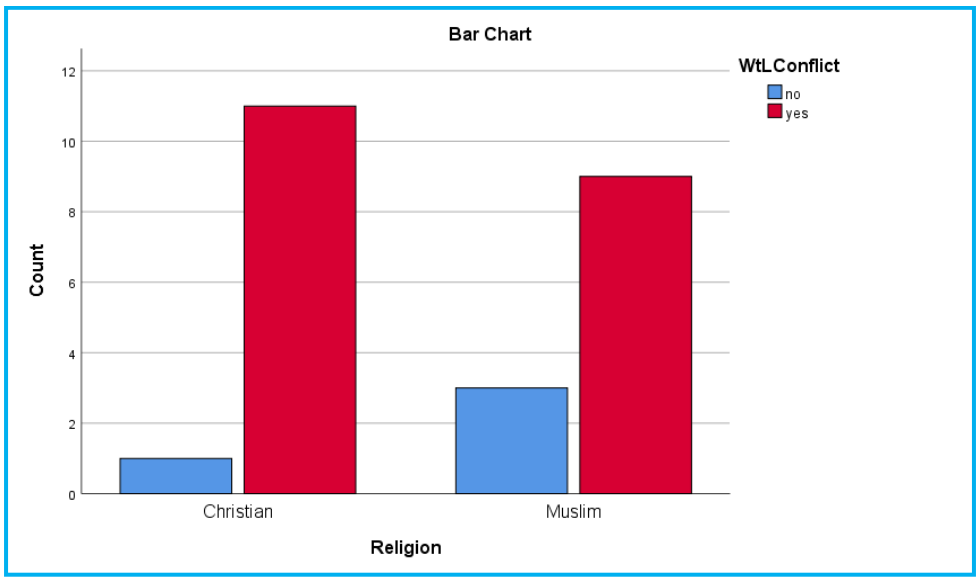


Figure 5.17: Work-to-life experience as influenced by religious affiliation

This section first discussed discourses, which suggest that there is no relationship between ethnic group and work-life conflict, as well as little or no relationship between religious affiliation and work-life conflict. The earlier discourses are corroborated by the above tests of significance. The analyses show no significant relationships between religion and work-to-life as well as no relationship with life-to-work conflict. In addition, they portray no correlation between ethnic group and life-to-work conflict as well as no correlation with work-to-life conflict. These findings imply no significant relationship between ethnic group and religious affiliation with work-life conflict (WLC).

5.4 SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This section briefly discusses the results in line with the study objectives and previous research findings. In terms of the understanding of what work-life conflict entails, some women managers have a working understanding of what the concept involves. Some understand the concept in one direction, mostly as work interfering with the achievement of life roles, whereas it is bidirectional, i.e. work can interfere with life and vice versa (Pasamar, Johnston & Tanwar, 2020). Another point worth noting is the fact that those participants who did not give what can be described as an adequate understanding of the WLC concept narrated issues that ranged from mundane disagreements to individuals sabotaging one another in fighting for positions at work. Others mentioned that work-life conflict means work clashing with their studies. This clash with studies, while it shows a poor understanding of WLC, may be highlighting the need for development, i.e. suggesting some expectation that the workplace should afford individuals time to study to develop themselves. This notion is in line with what other researchers have documented that employees expect to continue to develop when employed by engaging in career development activities either during their time or "work time" (Awasthi & Kumar, 2016, p.67). No research studies that looked at the women managers' understanding of the concept could be found to compare their knowledge.

These current results suggest that the participants are experiencing more work-to-life than life-to-work conflict. This finding matches what other researchers have documented that more and more women are increasingly experiencing work-to-life conflict as their engagement in paid work increases (Ahmad et al., 2011; Pasamar et al., 2020). Researchers have argued that women have entered the workplace and risen within the hierarchies of organisations largely following women's emancipation efforts and programmes. The increase in their responsibilities in the work environment results in work-to-life interference. Nevertheless, their expected performance of household chores has mostly remained unchanged (Sidania & Al Hakim, 2012; Ogbogu, 2013; Gerber & Schlechter, 2020). As a result, women also experience life-to-work conflict. According to Okonkwo (2013) women in sub-Saharan Africa still carry the heavy burden of domestic chores. Okonkwo (2013) claims that as the individual's work-to-family conflict increases, so does the experience of family-to-work conflict, i.e. the more time the individual spends on work-related activities, the less time they have to accomplish the non-work activities. The only difference is that after going home and completing their household activities they go back to their work-related roles thereby working overtime. that is the reason for experiencing work interfering with life (Okonkwo, 2013; Van Zoonen et al., 2020).

Work interfering with life activities, from the women's storylines, appears to be associated with working overtime. Working overtime seems to be made easier by the availability and accessibility of technology. This is in concurrence with other studies which have reported that technology makes it easier for people to work wherever they are and whenever. It also makes individuals to put off working at some work tasks during official working hours to work later when they can concentrate better (Nam, 2014; Hubbard, 2016; Van Zoonen et al., 2020).

The participants' accounts were in terms of time and strain, i.e. more time at working making it difficult to achieve non-work responsibilities or high workload causing strain-based conflict. High workload and the need to rush home to fullfil household chores lead to women in this study reporting that they work all the time. Mostly after doing domestic chores they get back to their laptops and work again cementing the high work-to-life interference. From these dialogues, it would appear that time that could be spent with family, is utilised for work-related activities. This links with the time-based interference.

There are, however, other researchers who reported that women tend to experience more life-to-work than work-to-life conflict (Ahmad, Fakhr & Ahmed, 2011; Msholoolo, 2011; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Noge, 2014; Nwanzu & Bojeghre, 2016). According to Nwanzu and Bojeghre (2016), the high life-to-work conflict, which is experienced more by women than their men counterparts, is due to the persistent stereotypes about gender roles. These unrelenting stereotypes continue to be transferred from one generation to the next through socialisation. The dialogues of the women in this study were very detailed about the life roles and responsibilities as well as the stereotypes that still accompany them. However, their storylines describe the expected roles and responsibilities as "*the norm", "common sense",* something they were "*born to do*". their conversations can be explained through the cognitive role theory (CRT), which is focused on the "relationship between role associations and behavior" (Whelan, 2014, p. 14). Women managers in the current study associate their non-work roles and responsibilities with a state of normalcy. They thus perform them with little or no complaints. The structural-functionalism theory states that women normalise the life expectancies to maintain stability and peace within their non-work structures. It is perhaps their normalisation of the expectations that make them not to report life as interfering with work despite their exasperation with the relentless, stereotypical gender roles.

The discourses in this chapter suggest that in the non-work environment women are still expected to be primary family caretakers, which involves taking care of their children, spouses and extended family members. This result is in keeping with gender role theory, which states that delineation of roles according to gender is irrefutable (Kray et al. 2017). Of the caretaker roles that are still expected of women the parental role, i.e. taking care of children is ranked as the number one responsibility in this study and other researches before This finding is similar to what has been reported by previous researchers (Annor, 2016; French et al., 2018; Jackson 2018; Adriano & Callaghan, 2020). According to the women in the current study, even though some men may help to execute some of these household chores, it is not expected of them, actually, in some cases, it is frowned upon. For instance, one of the participants said that people will think that "*now she is controlling her husband*" or "*she has bewitched him*". The finding about parental responsibilities ranked highest in this study, which is in line with what other researchers have documented that one of the demanding roles, which contributes to strain, is that women are responsible for child-care (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Michel et al., 2010; Ahmad et al., 2011; du Preez, 2017). Several researchers have found out that childcare increases work-life conflict, particularly the burden/strain that results in life-to-work conflict (du Preez, 2017; Fernando & Sareena; 2017; Morgenroth, Ryan, Rink & Begeny, 2020). Furthermore, the younger the children, especially below 12 years of age, the heavier the burden/strain of taking care of them (Michel et al., 2011; Duxbury et al., 2015; DePasquale et al., 2017).

Similar to other studies women managers in this study pointed out that parental responsibilities are followed by responsibilities towards the spouse (Michel et al., 2011; Ahmad et al., 2011; Agarwal, 2015). The conversations from the participants in the current study suggest that the responsibilities of taking care of the frail, elderly relatives, play a role in the experiences of work-life conflict. Other researchers have also indicated that elder care is one of the issues that increase the strain on women and contribute to their experiences of work-life conflict, in particular, life-to-work direction (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Gordon, Pruchno, Wilson-Genderson, Murphy & Rose, 2012; Akinyele, 2016; du Preez, 2017;). Gordon et al. (2012) went further to point out that due to better medical technology, more and more people live to old age. As a result, there is an increasing number of the elderly who need to be taken care of, - that caring responsibility mostly goes to women. Gordon and Rouse (2013) explain that eldercare is difficult to deal with because organisations do not recognise it the same way they recognise and acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of parents towards their children.

Consequently, it becomes a difficult challenge to deal with in terms of helping employees navigate work-life conflict. Therefore, the current participants suggested that more and more employers need to be reminded of this reality that needs attention as it complicates experiences of work-life conflict (Gordon & Rouse, 2013).

Taking care of the elderly ranked the highest in this extended family category and was associated with an increase in experiences of work-life conflict, strain-based interference. Other studies have also reported that part of the burden that women carry is due to taking care of their elderly, often frail and ailing parents (Ogbogu, 2013; Chiappo & DiDona, 2014; Nichols & Swanberg, 2018). DePasquale et al. (2017) went further to state that this increase in elder-care responsibility is due to improvements in medical technology and care, while due to economic needs people cannot afford to leave their jobs. Participants in the current study seem to be at the life point that is referred to as "sandwiched caregivers" according to DePasquale et al. (2017, p. 1496), i.e. they have both child and elder caregiving responsibilities. These sandwiched caregivers typically report experiences of high life-to-work conflict (DePasquale et al., 2017) unlike the participants in the current study who complained more of work-to-life conflict.

Some researchers have reported differing findings on the role of the extended family, including elderly parents. These researchers suggested that the extended family members can be a source of strain on the one hand (Ogbogu, 2013; Agarwala et al., 2015;), while on the other hand, they can help with taking care of other matters like household chores or looking after young children. The support from the extended family can help relieve the burden or strain of life-to-work conflict (Michel et al., 2011; Agarwala et al., 2014; Nwanzu & Bojeghre, 2016).

In addition to responsibilities towards their families and relatives, participants in this study also reported that they are still expected to attend functions that include parties, funerals and weddings that often involve a lot of work pre and post the event. These preparations and subsequent clean-ups are often done by women and they purportedly exacerbate experiences of work-life conflict according to participants in this study. Authors also documented the same expectations as these in the current study (Aryee, 2005; Molapo, 2005; Durrani & Khan, 2014; Annor, 2016). Often there is a reinforcement of stereotypes about women's domestic roles where they will be involved in, for instance, cooking and doing dishes at such events. (Aryee, 2005; Annor, 2016). The women in this study also reported that they feel obliged to help family and relatives with finances. This obligation intensifies their need to work hard thereby

heightening their strain-based conflict. These results of financial obligations are comparable with research outcomes by other researchers (Bradshaw, 2014; Annor, 2016).

The discourses about the role expectations from the workplace were not as numerous and elaborate as the expected roles and responsibilities in the non-work domain. Discussions about the expectations from the workplace pointed out to the fact that they are expected to achieve 'normal' job responsibilities. However, they went further to mention that they find themselves not being able to achieve expected job roles during normal office hours. Not finishing work during office hours leads to them working overtime or in the night at home thereby impacting their work-life conflict experiences. Working overtime is reportedly due to several reasons that include a high workload that is linked to being short staffed, feeling the pressure to perform, life interfering with work (i.e. life-to-work conflict), lack of support structures, as well as stereotypes about roles and responsibilities of women. The results in the study are in line with several studies that have described similar findings (Bradshaw, 2014; Akinyele et al., 2016; Nwanzu & Bojeghre, 2016; Connoly et al., 2017; Eversole & Crowder, 2020). The studies have reported that support of employees in the work environment in terms of policies that are family-friendly as well as family support in terms of helping with household chores can go a long way in assisting the women to cope with work-life conflict (Dartey-Baah, 2015; French et al., 2018; Akinnusi et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2018). Life-to-work conflict, i.e. non-work responsibilities interfering with the achievement of work responsibilities has been documented to be contributory to the strain experienced by employees (Chiappo & DiDona, 2014; French et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2018; van Egdom, 2020).

This study also describes the pressure to perform as one of the main reasons why women work overtime. These women managers end up working around the clock thereby complicating their work-life experience. Researchers have documented that this pressure to perform emanates from the fact that women do not have self-confidence and they second-guess themselves. The result is that they have to do something over and over again before they are comfortable enough with the outcome (Senden & Visser 2014; Sarsons & Xu, 2015; Chichester, Pluess & Lee, 2017; Golele & Rachidi, 2017). The pressure to perform is due to ingrained messages transmitted from generation to generation through socialisation conveying the message that women are only good for domestic chores. The women in the current study also identify the lack of self-confidence that is prevalent in women managers. A notion of note is how the women managers in this study classified the causes of the pressure to perform into internal and external barriers. These results are similar to what previous studies have documented that

women lack self-confidence and their working hard goes towards proving to themselves and others that 1) they deserve the positions and 2) they can perform according to what the positions expect (Mani, 2013; Senden & Visser 2014; Akinyele et al., 2016; van Egdom 2020). In addition to self-doubt, women tend to be conscientious workers, - they are meticulous and attend to detail and are prone to guilt when things are not done the way they are supposed to. Being meticulous in the way they work may be a feature that applies also to the women managers in the current study. Although these are some of the traits that are positive in women they can unfortunately compound the slow pace of finishing the set goals (Louw, 2014).

Regarding the consequences of WLC, the participants in this study mentioned several factors. The negative effects that they alluded to include physical and psychological health challenges, as well as social consequences. For instance, they reported suffering from headaches and depressions while their chances of getting divorced increased. Similar results have been documented by previous researchers (de Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Kan & You, 2014; Clark et al., 2015; Qi, Huang & Liu, 2017; Liu et al., 2020; Morgenroth et al., 2020). The participants also pointed out that their obligations towards their families have had career-limiting implications similar to what other researchers have documented (Amin, Zafer & Haider, 2020). The career limitation is because they still carry heavy burdens of domestic chores, which their male counterparts do not carry as much. Furthermore, quite often they have had to choose between changing jobs and their families, especially children, and they compromised their careers by choosing their families (Prozesky & Mouton, 2019; Jáuregui1 & Olivos, 2018). The study findings further show that the participants incur financial repercussions as a result of WLC, such as paying charges at children's aftercare facilities along with paying for domestic help. This notion is seen as particularly new because the extended family used to be the support needed with especially children without financial implications (Aryee, 2005; Cheung & Halpern, 2010; Zhang & Liu, 2011). The study found that the newness of this notion has resulted in there being very little information that has been documented about the financial consequences of WLC.

The suggestions that the women in the study preferred are in accord with what previous researchers and authors have documented about the importance of work-family policies, also known as family-friendly policies, on programmes that can support and help women achieve a work-life balance. Such programmes, similar to the ones mentioned by the current study include flexitime, childcare facilities, i.e. day care centres at work, telecommuting, as well as leave for different needs or occasions, e.g. maternity leave (Abdullah & Raoh, 2017; Fernando

& Sareena 2017; Jackson & Fransman, 2018; French et al., 2018). Such programmes, including supervisor/manager support, are crucial in organisations to help in reducing both work-to-life and life-to-work conflict (Agarwala et al., 2015; French et al., 2018; Durbin, House, Meagher & Rogers, 2019; Wong et al. 2020). Training and development has also been seen as important in helping women navigate the challenges of WLC (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Lazăr et al. 2010). Training in time management, advocated by women in the current study, has also been documented as important since it can help train employees to eventually work smarter for shorter periods while achieving the same results (Lazăr et al., 2010). Organisations focusing on family-friendly programmes make sense. They achieve work-life balance that eventually results in lowered absenteeism rate, better job satisfaction, which may all lead to increased overall performance of employees (Lazăr et al., 2010; Naithani, 2010). Coaching and mentoring programmes have also been reported to be useful in helping women cope with their work and therefore being able to balance the work and life demands (Williams et al., 2015).

In terms of the non-work domain, the women in the current study have advocated for support for them to cope with work-life conflict. Support of women in the non-work domain, although reported as important, has not been given as much attention as organisational support to help women attain work-life balance (Tamunomiebi & Oyibo, 2020). Some researchers have advocated for especially spousal support to help women with life-to-work conflict, as well as educating children to help mothers with household chores (Lazăr et al., 2010; Naithani, 2010; Agarwala et al., 2015). Unfortunately addressing life/home factors that contribute to work-life conflict may be a tall order because the women in this study see those roles and responsibilities as theirs to achieve and as not negotiable. Work-life conflict issues, as well as challenges of barriers to women empowerment and advancement will likely take time to resolve. This need for time is because in most instances work-life balance programmes are addressed from the workplace but not from the life domain. Nonetheless, there are still a lot of issues from the life domain, which are seen as 'normal' by women themselves and have an effect on their (women's) WLC experiences. Furthermore, authors like Williams et al. (2015) have reported that it is still going to be somewhat difficult because, for instance, women are better at giving emotional support to their husbands than the opposite.

On the question of whether the women's WLC is affected by their religion or not only a few women in the current study indicated that there is a relationship between religious dictates and the experiences of WLC. However, the majority of the participants indicated that religious affiliation hardly ever comes into the picture when they have to perform expected roles and

responsibilities in the non-work domain. They added that even during religious engagements discussions on WLC challenges or how to navigate those challenges never come up. From documented research, there are inconsistencies about religious affiliation and the relationship with experiences of WLC. For instance, Kulik and Rayyan (2006) found differences in the way in which Muslim and Jewish women react to and cope with work-life challenges. However, Tsai (2008), working with participants of the Hindu faith, Hassan et al. (2017) studied Muslims, as well as Henderson (2014) working with Christians, reported that religion does not dictate what women ought to do or not to do in their lives. However, religion helps women to cope with challenges with WLC. Hassan et al. (2017, p. 862) recommend that "organizations should include religious activities to encourage work-life balance among employees". This help is unfortunately a kind of support that the participants in the current study seem to miss. This is seen from the fact that when asked about the kind of suggestions of what factors could help them they mentioned that religion should be more involved in helping women navigate the challenges of WLC. Henderson (2014) went further to point out that there is a paucity of information on the relationship between religion and experiences of WLC, which needs to be corrected through conducting further research. Research by Rogers and Franzen (2014) indicated that women who live in communities that dictate what they ought to or not to do, would most likely not be found in the workplace because those religions would usually dictate that they stay at home as their expected roles and responsibilities are those of home maker. Therefore, the jury is still out on whether religion dictates the kind of roles and responsibilities that are expected of women by society.

Regarding whether the roles and responsibilities are dictated by their ethnic groups, the participants in the current study reported that the role and responsibility expectations are dictated by culture. However, they were quick to state that the dictates do not differ from one ethnic group to another. Their dialogues indicated that all women, from different ethnic groups, with similar profiles as those of the current study were fighting similar battles and gender stereotypes that result in experiences of WLC. This finding is contrary to what other researchers that specifically looked at different ethnic groups indicated that expectations of roles and responsibilities of women, as well as their WLC experiences differ according to their ethnic group. For instance, Chiappo and DiDona (2014) found differences in Hispanics and Non-Hispanics; Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) reported that English-speaking respondents in South Africa experienced higher levels of WLC than the participants who were Afrikaans speaking and those who spoke African languages. Additionally, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) found

differences between Africans who experienced specifically higher levels of family-to-work interference as compared to the Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking respondents.

This current study compared specific ethnic groups in the Limpopo Province, not national cultures. According to French et al. (2019), research on culture is important. Culture gives context, which "is important as recent meta-analytic findings shed light on systematic differences in levels of work-family conflict across cultures" (French et al. 2019, p. 4). However, unlike the current study, most studies talk about national cultures, like Western society and/or Asian society (Chandra, 2010; Masuda et al. 2012), or one country or nationality versus another like Lu et al. (2010) who found WLC culture-specific differences between the Taiwanese and British employees, as well as Mathis, Brown and Randle (2009) who reported differing ways of coping with and reacting to WLC between Blacks and Whites in the United States. In South Africa, Steyl and Koekemoer (2011) reported that White and African groups experienced higher levels of WLC as compared to the Coloured and Indian groups. De Klerk and Mostert (2010) spoke about the difference between their White and Black participants. The discourses from the current study that looked at ethnic groups showed that the expected roles and responsibilities are passed from one generation to the next through socialisation, the women then internalise the messages, which eventually leads to them "*just knowing what has to be done*". This discourse leads to the conclusion of deeply embedded enculturation that is perceived to be non-negotiable and cuts across the different ethnic groups that were involved in the conversation in the current study.

The deeply ingrained enculturation links with the women's report of life-to-work versus work-to-life conflict. Although the women in this study reported more work-to-life conflict than life-to-work conflict their long conversations about the expectations from the life environment versus those from the work environment depict a different picture. These discourses point to the fact that there is probably more life-to-work conflict. However, it (life interference) is not felt and reported as burdensome by these women because they perceive it and describe it as '*normal*', '*just there*' and/or as something that '*has to be done without question"* or *"it is non-negotiable*'. Moreover, the life expectations seem to be so deeply ingrained that although they probably cause more strain, they are not reported as such. These discourses may have implications for programmes that are geared towards women empowerment and gender equity in the workplace. Currently, such programmes are mostly in the workplace and very little change is happening in the non-work domain. This is also a paradox because most women still expect themselves to be able to "*do it all*", they still see the life-to-work conflict as normal.

The perception of normalcy suggests that they will not see the non-work domain as a place that is suitable for addressing women's emancipation. To compound this matter is the observation that the long list of suggestions they gave to help them cope with WLC is mostly to address the workplace. The workplace has been a focus of women's programmes to alleviate WLC as well as women's emancipation. Although progress has been made more still needs to be done. The non-work environment also needs to be an important focal point for the alleviation of experiences of WLC. The reason for focussing on WLC is that if the strain and burden of the conflict are alleviated, women will be left to focus well on their careers and their upward mobility, i.e. promotions into decision-making positions. Currently, women have to choose between non-work (i.e. family/life) obligations and work. If the non-work domain is attended to it will help them rest after work and have better non-strained connections with their families and focus on work when in the workplace. The effects of WLC on other factors, such as health and relationships with significant others may be relieved.

In summation, the women managers in the current study report experiences of WLC. They also mention experiencing more work-to-life than life-to-work conflict. Moreover, they tend to normalise the myriad of roles and responsibilities that are still expected from them in the non-work domain. The gender role theory would explain the delineation of roles according to gender. According to the structural-functionalism theory performance of these various life roles and responsibilities appear to serve the function of keeping peace and stability in their non-work domains. Then, although the women are expected to perform a multitude of tasks in the non-work domain, which should be causing more life-to-work conflict compared to work-to-life conflict, the women choose to see work as interfering more with life. The cognitive role theory (CRT) would clarify that these women elect, unconsciously in this instance, to perform the non-work responsibilities to maintain equanimity in the non-work environment. They perceive the preplanned roles within the workplace (ORT) as the ones to achieve because they are remunerated. The women in the study believe that the various roles expected of them from the non-work space are the same for all women no despite their religious affiliation or ethnic group. They are not navigating the WLC challenges too well as evidenced by them reporting that they experience physical, psychological and social consequences of WLC. They make suggestions about how they think the workplace should help them plus the non-work domain. These suggestions are incorporated in an integrative framework that will help in understanding the WLC experiences of the women managers in the province, the antecedents of these experiences as well as the consequences and the managerial implications as suggested by the

women themselves. This framework, for understanding the work-life conflict of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province is presented in section 5.5 hereunder.

5.5 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE: PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WORK-LIFE CONFLICT OF WOMEN MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

The last research question of this study intended to contribute to knowledge by proposing a framework for understanding the work-life conflict of women managers in the public sector. This is necessitated by the fact that no previous research has presented a framework of such nature. Some previous frameworks (Appendix F) were considered. For instance, the one by Pavani, Rao and Kumar (2017, 559) based on their study on "developing a research framework for studying work-life balance" is focused on the positive effects of attaining work-life balance. Even though attaining work-life balance is critical in their study their framework does not illustrate how employees go about attaining work-life balance or the managerial implications. Another model by Martin (2013, p.142) emphasises support in both the non-work and work domains to facilitate organisational engagement and eventual overall organisational support. The model by van der Linde (2019) emphasises the demographic factors that, almost similar to antecedents of work-life conflict, as well as how the different generations react and eventually achieve work-life balance. The model concludes with the well-being experienced by employees who have realised work-life balance. Tariq, Aslam, Siddique and Tanveer (2012) outline the theoretical basis for attaining work-life balance. They also suggest that it is not only the responsibility of the organisation but that of the individual employees as well to promote the achievement of work-life balance. Their model then gives a detailed list of the programmes that the organisations can put into place to help in achieving work-life balance. The consolidated model by Raisinghani and Goswami (2014, p. 54) stresses the antecedents of work-life conflict as well as its outcomes. These factors that they emphasise are included in the framework proposed by the current study. The different models and frameworks have their areas that they highlight. What comes out are the antecedents of work-life conflict, the consequences of work-life conflict, non-work as well as workplace support for employees and the kind of programmes that organisations can organise to help employees cope.

The framework that is illustrated by the current study contributes to an expansion of these previous models and frameworks. While it demonstrates the antecedents of work-life conflict

as well as the outcomes/effects, it has more aspects that need to be taken into consideration for future research as well as implementation implications. The framework depicts the understanding of WLC by women managers. This understanding is particularly critical when bearing in mind their positions as managers where they are supposed to contribute to significant organisational decisions. No other studies could be found that draw attention to whether women managers understand the WLC concept or not. This framework also illustrates what women managers state they require from the work domain, as well as from the non-work domain for them to be able to attain work-life balance versus what researchers and authors assume is required. This, what women require, has implications for crafting policies as well as implementing them. The study designed a framework that shows how the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand and experience WLC.

Hence, the main contribution of this research is to draw from the foregoing analyses and present a novel framework for managers and academia to understand factors that constitute the work-life conflict of women managers in the public sector as illustrated in figure 5.18.

As represented in figure 5.18 the study summarises that:

1) The women managers in this study experience work-life conflict (WLC).
2) Some of the women managers in the study have a working understanding of what the WLC concept entails. These women who understand what the concept entails also appreciate that this interference makes it difficult to balance the performance of roles in the workplace and non-work space. However, most women in this study understand WLC from one direction of life/non-work responsibilities interfering with the achievement of work. For that reason, the women managers' perception is that the performance of non-work activities interferes with work, which is rewarded (i.e. non-work interferes with the achievement of work roles). It was a tad disconcerting to realise from the study results that some of the participants had no idea what WLC entails. The positions they hold suggest that they are supposed to be involved in discussions and subsequent decisions about programmes on helping women navigate the challenges of WLC so that they can make progress in their careers.
3) Notwithstanding this indication of more non-work activities interfering with work, the women managers in this study indicated that work interferes more with their non-work expectations than the other way, i.e. they experience more work-to-life as compared to life-to-work conflict. Women managers in the current study do not perceive the strain of non-work activities as interfering with their work performance because they characterise these

non-work activities as ‘normal’, ‘common knowledge’, ‘just there’ and ‘non-negotiable’. These non-work roles and responsibilities, which result in life-to-work conflict, include childcare, spousal expectations, household chores, financial responsibilities as well as care of the elderly, the siblings and orphaned children. The perception of more work-to-life conflict despite evidence from the current research pointing in the life-to-work conflict direction has implications for policies and programmes that are designed for women, as well as other employees, to navigate the challenges of WLC.

The strain of WLC reportedly results in negative consequences as illustrated in Fig. 5.6. These consequences include 1) the women not being able to cope and consequently experiencing psychological and physical health complications. 2) The work-to-life conflict results in negative effects on children like poor performance at school as well as in poor relationships with significant others 3) The life-to-work conflict can be career-limiting as women tend to select family over career opportunities offered to them that involve, for example, relocating to different geographical locations. The choice of family above work is to maintain the non-work equanimity at all costs.

4) Expectations from the workplace (depicted in Fig. 5.5) include the fact that stereotypes of domestic duties of women persist, e.g. some of them, although in managerial positions, are still requested by their male counterparts to make tea for them. The women in the study added that they tend to work all the time, including working overtime because, firstly, they lack support structures that help in showing them what to do, resulting in their working by trial-and-error; secondly, they lack orientation when they first start their jobs and are thrown into the deep end; thirdly, they lack self-confidence, they second-guess themselves and tend to do their work over-and-over again; fourthly, the expectations from their non-work i.e. life-to-work conflict, interfere with their accomplishing their work duties in time.
5) In terms of answering whether the WLC experiences are influenced by the ethnic group and/or religious affiliation, the women in the current study indicated that the expected roles and responsibilities are dictated by culture, but the dictates are not ethnic-specific. They stated that all women of all ethnic groups, especially in South Africa, go through the same expectations by their families and communities within which they function. In terms of religion, they stated that religious affiliation does not dictate what roles and responsibilities they should perform or not perform. However, belonging to a religious group apparently acts as a cushion to the negative effects that they would otherwise experience as a result of WLC.

6) The women in the study indicated that they need support from both the work and non-work spaces for them to achieve work-life balance. In keeping with their perception that the life activities are '*normal*', they expressed very little need for support in the non-work domain. In contrast, they went at length to describe the kind of support women managers can get from the workplace for them to achieve work-life balance. These suggestions from the women themselves have some bearing on future managerial strategies to help with navigating work-life conflict.

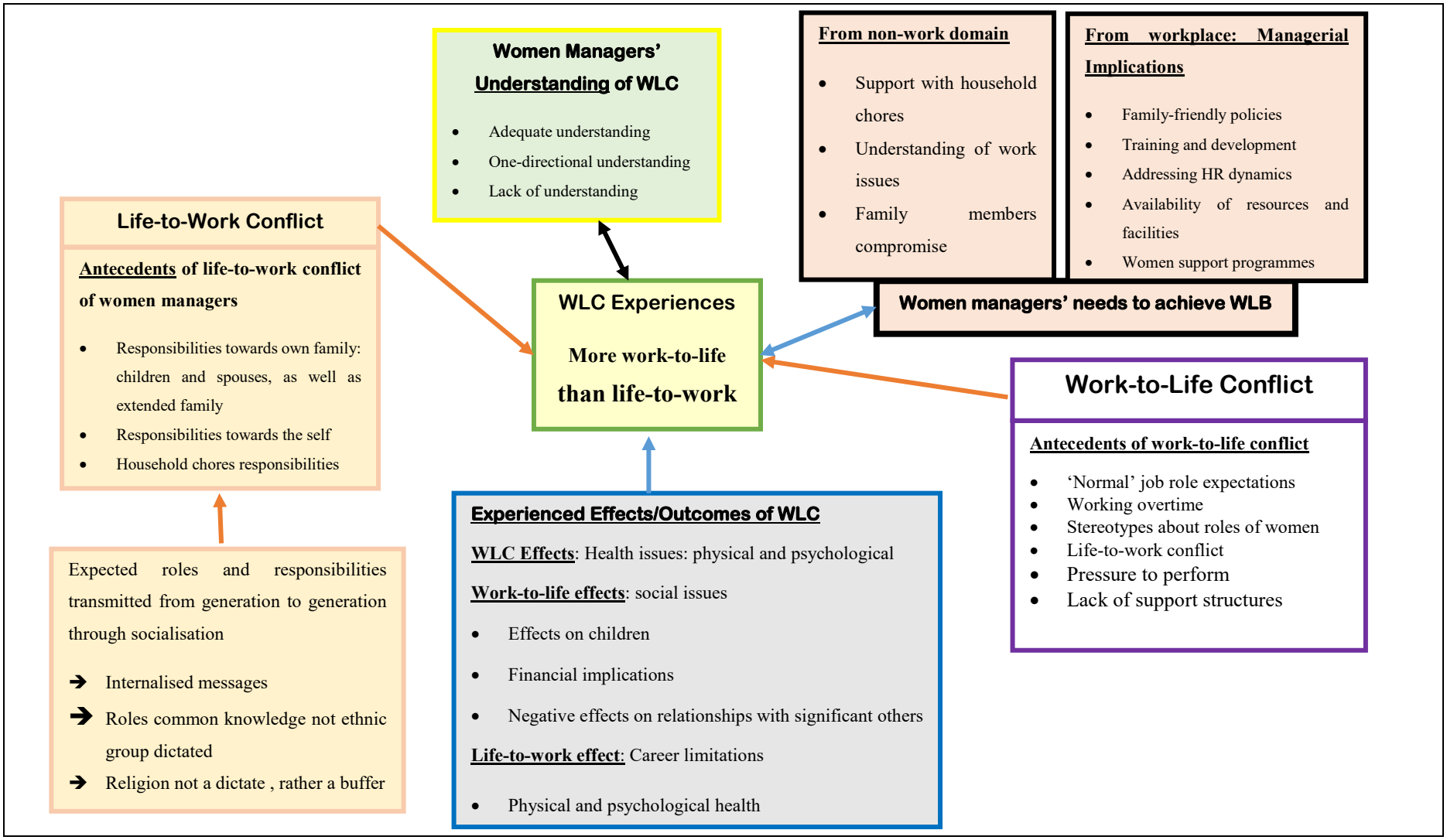


Figure 5.18: An Integrated Social Framework for Understanding the WLC Experiences of Women Managers *Source: Author's own*

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the results from data collected from women managers within the public sector of Limpopo Province. A total of 68 questionnaires were returned from the participants. Their biographical information was described as well as some answers to the questions of the study as outlined in chapter one. In addition, 13 women were engaged in conversations about their experiences of WLC within the context of their culture. The chapter proceeded to define WLC, as well as indicating that the concept is bidirectional. The participants' understandings of the WLC concept were then outlined, including whether they experience more work-to-life or life-to-work interference. In line with these experiences, the participants also described the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them from both the non-work domain and workplace to account for their WLC experiences. Organisations may have policies for supporting employees with WLC or particularly work-life balance. The chapter therefore also presents women's understanding of such policies and whether or not their organisations have the policies. Further than that, the study submits that organisations may have to have a reconsideration about strategies that can be appropriate and relevant for them to assist their employees in coping with WLC. Support structures from the non-work domain, existent and expected by these women, are also presented. An integrative framework, which is an improvement on the previous ones is also proposed and illustrated in this chapter. The chapter ends with suggestions from participants on how organisations and the non-work domain can help women managers, and employees generally, cope with their WLC. The next chapter will present a summary of the results of the study, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This, the final chapter of the current study presents firstly the summary of the results of the study. The summary is expressed in connection with the objectives of the study as set out in the first chapter of the study. Afterward, to acknowledge that no single study can be perfect, the limitations of the study are described in this chapter. After the limitations, the recommendations are presented according to implications for future implementation and understanding of WLC in women managers, as well as implications for future research. Then, the conclusions are explained, followed by a summary of the study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The current study intended to investigate the work-life conflict (WLC) experiences of women managers in Limpopo Province, as well as find out if the role expectations that account for experiences of WLC are dictated by the ethnic and/or religious groups the women belong to. The findings of the study are based on data that were collected through the mixed-method design, where qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, given equal weight to triangulate the results. This section gives the summary of the biographical data that are core to the study first, followed by the findings according to the study objectives as stated in the first chapter of this study.

6.2.1 Summary of Biographical Data

The data from this study were derived from interviews with 16 women managers, as well as from a total of 68 usable questionnaires, which were received from the quantitative participants. The participants were from different ethnic groups. The qualitative group was dominated by the Northern Sotho's who were the most at 58.8%, followed by Tsongas at 19.1%. With the quantitative category, again the N. Sotho's were the most at 43.8% and the other ethnic groups at 12.5% each. In terms of religious groups, 82.4% were of Christian faith, 16.2% were Muslims and only 1.5% were Hindu. For the group that was interviewed 13 were Christians, two Muslims and one atheist. In terms of managerial level 38.7% were junior managers, 45.6% middle level managers and 14.7% senior managers for the quantitative group. For the

qualitative group there were no junior managers, 14 (87.5%) were middle-level managers and two (12.5%) were senior managers.

6.2.2 Summary of Results in Relation to the Objectives of the Study

- **Objective one**: To find out what the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province understand by work-life conflict.

  Some of the participants showed a correct understanding of the concept of WLC. WLC is bidirectional, i.e. either work-related activities interfere with achievement on non-work roles and responsibilities (= work-to-life conflict), or non-work activities interfere with the effective performance of expectations in the work domain (= life-to-work conflict). Those participants who showed what is an adequate understanding of the concept described it as the interference between work and private life; a clash between work and personal roles and responsibilities; difficulty meeting family and work demands at the same time. In terms of the definition of WLC, the participants' responses alluded to the time-based type of conflict. Other women described WLC in terms of one direction, i.e. in terms of either life-to-work conflict or work-to-life conflict. Of note, is the fact that most of them described the concept in terms of work-to-life conflict alluding, therefore, to the fact that they may be experiencing more work-to-life conflict.

- **Objective two:** To establish whether the women managers in the study experience work-to-life conflict.

  As illustrated in Tables 5.10 over 60% of the women managers in this study do experience work-to-life conflict.

- **Objective three**: To establish whether the women managers in the study experience life-to-work conflict.

  The women managers in the study do experience life-to-work conflict. However, only a small percentage of the participants reported experiences of life-to-work conflict as depicted in Table 5.11.

- **Objective four**: To compare which one they experience more between work-to-life conflict and life-to-work conflict.

  The results as depicted in Table 5.12 indicate that about 60.1% of the participants in the study experience work-to-life conflict while only 25.0% of the participants reported

experiences of life-to-work. These findings imply that the women in the current study experience more work-to-life than life-to-work conflict. At the same time, from the dialogues with women participants, most of the participants reported more work-to-life conflict

- **Objective five**: To investigate the kind of roles and responsibilities that are expected from the women managers in their non-work space, as well as in their workplace that affect their experiences of work-life conflict.

  The women managers in the current study mentioned several roles and responsibilities that are expected of them from the non-work domain. Those expectations were categorised into responsibilities towards own family and extended family, responsibilities towards the self, household responsibilities, as well as expectations from the community and financial expectations. Of the expectations towards their families, parental responsibilities ranked the highest followed by responsibilities towards spouses.

- **Objective six:** To determine whether the women managers perceive the roles and responsibilities that are expected of them as culturally based or not, i.e. as differing according to their different ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations.

  The objective has two parts, i.e. the one on the ethnic group as well as the second one on religious group and role expectations. With regard to the relationship between ethnic group and WLC, the women clarified that the expectations are cultural, but not specific to any ethnic group. According to them, these expectations are for all women and are expected of all women despite their ethnic background. In addition to these roles and responsibilities being expected by family and society, the women explained that they also expect the same roles and responsibilities of themselves. This expectation follows what they have learned through socialisation, which results in internalised messages of what is expected. Consequently, they mostly see these expectations as '*just there, normal and non-negotiable*'. Their discourse of normalising the expectations and burden that comes with trying to achieve them gives a sense of deeply embedded enculturation. "Enculturation is described as the process of socialization to and maintenance of the norms of one's heritage culture, including the salient values, ideas, and concepts" (Kim & Alamilla, 2016). Enculturation is passed on through socialisation and serves to retain the beliefs and practices that people believe to be part of their cultural heritage. This highlights the reason why the women in the study see their expected roles as a norm and that they just have to continue with them to maintain the homeostasis within their social structure.

- **Final objective**: To design a framework that public organisations, specifically in the province of Limpopo may utilise to design programmes that may help women managers, as well as those women who are aspiring to become managers, to navigate the challenges of work-life conflict. The framework that the study has designed based on the study results was presented in figure 5.18 and discussed in the section below it. The framework derives from the results of the study. From the framework it can be seen that in line with the objectives of the study the following is noted.

a) Some women understand the WLC concept while others do not understand the concept. This understanding, description in one direction, as well as a total lack of understanding of the WLC has implications and challenges for policy formulation. The fact that some women managers do not understand the concept of work-life conflict has implications for possibilities of input into decisions that can help in crafting policy and designing programmes that can help women navigate the challenges of WLC.
b) The women managers do experience both life-to-work and work-to-life conflict, although life-to-work conflict is reported to a lesser extent. The women managers in the study described experiences of more work-to-life despite the fact that their dialogues pointed towards the life-to-work direction.
c) The evident life-to-work conflict can be supported by how much time they dedicated to conversations about non-work roles and responsibilities (summarised in Fig 5.4) that may interfere with the achievement of work expectations. As a result of their not perceiving life roles and responsibilities as interference, the women managers in the study tend to understate the need for support in the non-work environment while emphasising the need for support in the working environment.
d) From the workplace, they reported that they are expected to achieve the objectives of their organisations, just like any other manager. However, their biggest challenge is that they seem to work overtime most of the time due to lack of orientation, lack of support and lack of confidence in themselves. From the non-work domain they engaged in long dialogues about what they are still expected to do, the effects of WLC, as well as what they think the workplace and non-work domain ought to do to help them cope with WLC.
e) The women managers stated that the roles and responsibilities that are still expected of them are culture-dictated. However, the dictates are not specific to any particular ethnic group. They explained that all women within the South African context go through the same plight, similar expectations by their families and societies. In terms of religious

affiliation, they explained that being engaged in religious activities can act more as a buffer than a dictate, i.e. their religious groups help them as a form of solace or cathartic space when they are overburdened by their roles and responsibilities in either or both the working and non-working environments.

f) Finally, the study presented a social framework that can be utilised to help understand how the women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province experience work-life conflict.

This framework is followed by recommendations put forth by the study.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015, p. 63), "no research project can be perfect and an honest researcher will not pretend that it is". Although this current study makes valuable input into issues of WLC of women managers, interpretation of the results should consider the following limitations:

The study was conducted in only one province of the country. The study results may serve as a guide to others but may not be generalizable. Furthermore, in South Africa the composition of the ethnic groups differs from province to province. There was also one predominant ethnic group. Circumstances where the different ethnic group numbers balance may give a different picture to what this study found out. The same applies to religion where the participants were predominantly of the Christian faith.

Not all public sector organisations were represented in the current study, which may not be necessarily comparable with other provinces. Therefore the results should be interpreted with caution.

The study was also limited to the public sector. More studies need to perhaps be undertaken in the private sector to see the kind of results that can come from there.

6.4 STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

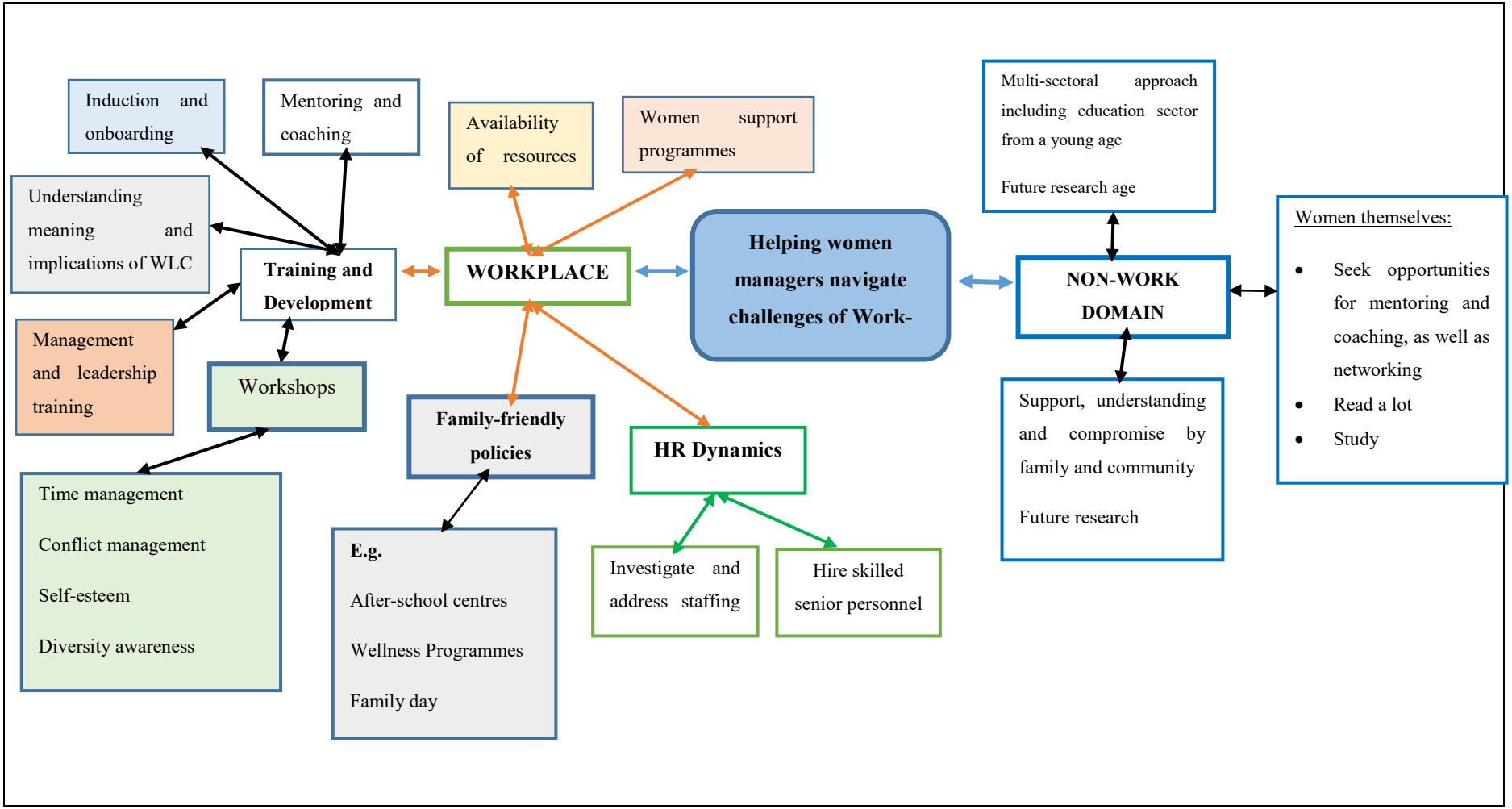


Figure 5.19: Illustration of Recommendations for the Current Study *Source: Author's own summation*

Recommendations of the study are illustrated in Fig. 5.20. They have implications for future implementation in the workplace, as well as in the non-work environment as explained below.

6.4.1 Implications for Future Implementation

From Figure 5.20 above the study has recommendations from both the workplace and the non-work domain. The recommendations start with the workplace as follows:

a) Training and development:

Firstly, the fact that some of the participants in this study do not understand what WLC entails is worrying because, as explained earlier, they are in positions where they are supposed to make contributions that can inform policies that can have a positive effect on how women, as well as other employees, cope with WLC. This highlights the need to educate them on what WLC, as well as work-life balance entail and include matters that have to do with the struggles and/or challenges that are linked to WLC. Future research can look at who has to educate women on WLC and related matters, as well as the feasible method of educating them.

Secondly, the women in the current study complained about not knowing how to manage and how to lead. This implies that they do not know when to delegate, compounding their problem of always working, working overtime. Some, if not most of the women, just got promoted and found themselves at the level at which they are currently without any training. They mentioned being thrown in the deep end and doing things by trial-and-error. This trial-and-error wastes time at work and compounds their problem of working overtime and depriving their families of time to spend with them.

Thirdly, again to help them to know what is expected of them in their management positions in terms of policies and technical requirements, there needs to be orientation and onboarding. This links with their complaint that they learn by trial-and-error as more than half the time they do not know what is expected. Orientation and onboarding should be done whether the person is from outside or rose through the ranks from within the organisation.

Fourthly, organisations can establish mentoring and coaching programmes, which can help not only women managers but also all managers, as well as those employees who are aspiring to climb up the organisational ladder.

The onus is also upon the women to look for mentoring opportunities, as well as find training opportunities and enrol to improve their management and leadership skills.

Lastly, several workshops can be organised to assist women managers. Such workshops include, but are not limited to:

- Time management: this is especially relevant as the women complain of working all the time and taking time at home to complete work-related activities (resulting in time-based conflict).
- Diversity awareness as the women participants in the current study felt that employees are not quite aware of the plight of women especially in terms of trying to balance work and non-work responsibilities.
- Conflict management: because some of the women mentioned that at times they cannot handle conflict, especially between employees in management positions.
- Stress management: to discuss strategies that managers can use to navigate the challenges of WLC.
- Team-building sessions: so that they can stop working in silos, - they can work as teams and hopefully achieve better.

b) Organisational support mechanisms:

There are several strategies that organisations can employ in their pursuit to help women managers in particular to cope with the challenges of work-life conflict. These strategies include:

- Family-friendly policies: Reports have shown that family-friendly policies that especially address the needs of children tend to help alleviate the anxiety that accompanies the absence of the mother as they pursue the achievement of organisational objectives (Racolta Paina & Andrieș, 2017; UNICEF Report, 2019; Eversole & Crowder, 2020). The women in the study also recommend that more robust discussions and subsequent design and implementation of family-policies be considered. They also recommend, in line with considering the family-friendly policies, an increase in the number of women in senior management positions stating that currently, it is mostly males in those positions who could hardly be trusted to have vested interest in policies that would benefit women.
    - Flexitime and telecommuting arrangements can also be considered as they have been noted to be helpful in reducing time and the stress of being on the road during peak traffic times. Telecommuting, in particular, gives employees leeway to work at their own time and pace, while being able to attend to their family needs.

- Management and co-worker support: following the results of this study management and co-worker support would mean implementing proper orientation and induction programmes, mentoring and coaching, diversity awareness and simply helping struggling women managers. Seeking out help is also upon the individual manager who is not coping and identifies the need to get help.
- Wellness programmes: the women in the current study reported that they do end up with health problems as a result of navigating the challenges of WLC well. Therefore, wellness programmes that are implemented effectively may go a long way in assisting that the women should not, on top of other expected activities, run around seeking help with their health and other issues that wellness programmes can handle.

c) **HR Dynamics:**

The participants in the current study alluded to the fact that in some situations managers senior to them are not well qualified or competent enough to achieve the expected objectives within their organisations or departments. In addition to that, they complained of staff shortages and lack of job descriptions. This incompetence and lack of job descriptions are factors that may be interrelated or may complicate their (women managers') need to work overtime. The complication may be due to: firstly, the need to do the work of their incompetent seniors in addition to their own, secondly, performing the work that is supposed to be done by two or more people, - as in the case of the one lady who mentioned that the unit where she works the organisational structure indicates that there are supposed to be three positions but two of them are vacant; lastly, working without job descriptions may imply not knowing what is expected of you, thus complicating the problem of working through trial-and-error already mentioned earlier in the results section of this study.

d) **Availability of resources and/or facilities**:

Lack of facilities and resources hinder the likelihood of working effectively and comfortably, as stated by the participants in this study. Such facilities would include for instance no internet access once away from work. For instance, some women mentioned having to use their own resources at times when they needed to work but were far from their offices. Consequently, the availability of resources can alleviate the stress and anxiety of having to drive to the office after hours or during weekends.

From Fig. 5.20 it can be seen that the study also makes recommendations about what could be implemented in the ***non-work domain*** to assist women in navigating the challenges of WLC. The recommendations include:

a) A *multi-sectoral approach* that includes the role of the family, the community, as well as the education sector to educate girls and boys from an early age not to stereotype the roles of men and women. This may help in alleviating the issue of enculturation and internalised messages that are so deeply embedded that although they have a harmful effect on the coping of women, as well as their health, they are still understated.

b) This approach can also include women managers who are prominent in organisations and society coming up to mentor younger women employees. In addition, workshops with young, high school girls can help in developing their self-esteem from an early age and show them that they can succeed and step up into positions of leadership and management where they can be part of decision-making forums.

c) *Women themselves* need to look for opportunities to be mentored and coached. They can also look out for workshops and conferences that dialogue about women's issues and attend them to learn from those already in the field. An alternative is to continue to study to upgrade their skills and knowledge about management, managing people, conflict resolution and time management for instance.

d) *The home front* may help in terms of making an effort to understand what being a woman manager entails to be able to empathise and compromise when it comes to helping with household chores, as well as societal expectations to perform certain activities during family and community functions.

6.4.2 Implications for Future Research

Future research can look at the following:

a) Research on the feasibility of family-friendly policies, which is under what circumstances will which of the policies be applicable. For instance, in some instances where internet connectivity is a challenge especially in the South African context arrangements such as telecommuting may not be possible. Furthermore, research showed that some of these arrangements may end up increasing life-to-work conflict in situations where the family members do not help with household chores. For instance, telecommuting may just mean that the mother, who is a manager, is more available and

accessible to her family while still expected to achieve organisational objectives. Researchers like Racolta Paina and Andrieș (2017) have indicated that some of these arrangements help women to cope with WLC where men also help with domestic work. However, several researchers have suggested that in most African contexts men still do very little domestic work (Annor 2016; Aryee, 2005; Durrani & Khan, 2014; Molapo, 2005; Nwanzu & Bojeghre, 2016; Gerber & Schlechter, 2019). One of the participants captured this notion remarkably well when she stated that, "*I think that one of the major problems in South Africa is that we only have half the liberation. We only got to a point where the women got the right to work but you are only allowed to work if your house is clean, your children are cared for and your husband's shirt is ironed. In actual fact what we did was more or less liberate men from their financial responsibilities, because women help to take care of families financially while the men never really stepped in to take on some of the women's responsibilities. … So, I think specifically in South Africa there needs to be more space for men to take care of some of those responsibilities."* This is one of the thoughts that highlights the importance of early education and intervention so that the men of the future can know and behave differently. This is a point that needs more research because this early education will need role models that are hardly there in the South African context.

b) Investment in early education on diversity awareness and avoidance of stereotyping the roles and responsibilities of women is crucial. However, research still needs to be conducted to determine the type of education that should be implemented, i.e. the programmes and content as well as at which sector or level. This links with the above about the kinds of family-friendly policies that can work.

c) There are currently women who are in management already. Research can be done to assist them to know how to approach and help younger girls in developing their self-esteem, i.e. how to work with the education system and/or other sectors like the health or social development sectors to upgrade the level of confidence in girls about their capabilities and opportunities. The teachers can also find opportunities to invite influential women leaders/managers to address their young girls in perhaps life orientation classes. However, research is recommended so that proper content, at age-appropriate levels is delivered.

d) From this current study, the participants' discourses about their expected roles and responsibilities in the non-work domain were extensive. Programmes that have been typically designed as conducive to achieving work-life balance, including family-

friendly policies, leave and some fringe benefits have focused mainly on the workplace or rather on a healthy employee. Women in this study expressed the need for their spouses, children and community members to understand what their jobs entail and give them a break when it comes to domestic chores at home and at functions. The question of how the families and communities can be made aware in a sensitive way that will not be seen as demeaning the embedded, encultured beliefs remains unanswered. This is another question that needs to be managed carefully and would be addressed better if informed by thorough research.

e) The study results mention women support programmes as a prospect for helping women managers cope with WLC. These programmes have been brought up as possible strategies for assisting with WLC concerns in both the workplace and non-work domain. However, the structure and process that these women's programmes need to follow are still not well defined. These women's programmes can therefore be informed by research.

f) It would also be helpful to conduct other studies that would have a better distribution of ethnic groups and representation of different religious groups.

g) There was mention that wellness programmes may be used to help especially when women are experiencing some of the negative effects of experiencing WLC. However, several of the participants indicated that their organisations have these programmes. However, these programmes are not utilised effectively. For instance, one participant stated that

"*I've never used it (wellness programme). Because I don't know. ... I just know that there is an office that does that. I would be lying if I told you that they have created awareness amongst employees to say if you have this kind of a problem visit that unit. Because it's like the way we see it, it's like when a person has ... not been performing, then maybe the person is being reprimanded, if they are getting verbal warnings and what, what, then the person can be charged. That's when I know that they have to be referred to wellness so that they can see what it is that is troubling this person, what is interfering with his work whatever. Other than that, unless you have reached that stage, I don't see people utilising it.*"

Given that, one of the research focuses may include finding out reasons for the underutilisation of wellness programmes. Furthermore, there also seems to be the

wrong perception of wellness programmes. To make employees aware and to utilise the programmes may need information that is researched meticulously.

h) This study has proffered a framework that shows possible integration of the theory as summarised in Fig. 2.1 of the current study. It is recommended that similar studies be undertaken in the private sector to see the kind of results that can come from there.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

The women managers in the study have some understanding of the WLC concept. However, a lot of them understand it from one direction whereas the WLC concept is bi-directional. The other women managers do not have an understanding of what the concept entails. Their lack of understanding of what the concept entails is disquieting as they are in positions in which they should be able to initiate or contribute to negotiations and deliberations about making the lives of women more comfortable in the workplace. Helping the women to work more comfortably increases their effectiveness and efficiency and as a result contributes towards women empowerment and their upward progress to decision-making positions.

The participants' discourses indicate that they do experience WLC. They gave long discussions about their life-to-work interference. They narrated these life-to-work conflict experiences with some noticeable anger, irritation and even depression for some, but they did not report this interference as strenuous and difficult. The storylines on the work-to-life experiences were not as long or detailed. However, women managers reported that they experience more work-to-life conflict. Unfortunately, some practical implications link with WLC experiences of women and their poor progress in organisations. Currently, several policies and treaties address the importance of work-life balance from the workplace. Some positive outcomes have been achieved although much can still be done. However, the non-work environment is hardly ever spoken about when issues of WLC are discussed. The contribution and effect of the non-work domain on WLC experiences is unlikely to subside in the near future if non-work role expectations and activities are still categorised as 'normal' by women themselves even though they result in negative consequences for them. These normalising and stabilising categorisations of the effects of the life-to-work conflict demonstrate a deep level of embedded enculturation that will take a long-term concerted effort to uproot and help future women managers. According to the participants in the current study this enculturation is not specific to any ethnic group, especially in the South African context.

For instance, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has goals on the achievement of for instance, "inclusive and equitable quality education" and "gender equality and empower all women and girls". In addition, treaties have been entered into by several governments to empower women, especially in the workplace. There are also those policies that address women's access to land, health, finance, development through education as well as science and technology, and many more others. However, these women will, for instance, get educated, have access to land, till and tend that land all day long and then go back home to do household chores that they see as a norm and end up with strain-based conflict that may compromise their health, as well as progress in the workplace. Furthermore, in South Africa, there are acts and policies that are governed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 of 1997, which details issues like the different types of leave (annual, family responsibility, compassionate, maternity and paternity) that can assist employees to cope with the demands and roles of both the work and non-work environments. Therefore, the women managers will take some form of leave to go home and work even harder on household chores. This norming of the burden of life expectations, unfortunately for many, makes it difficult to focus on workplace mandates and expectations. This implies that the life-to-work conflict may remain a challenge for a while longer. For that reason, while the focus on concerns about access and levelling the playing field are important, the effect of the non-work environment role expectations cannot continue to be ignored.

The women managers in the study also mentioned many factors that can be addressed in the workplace to help them and future managers cope with WLC. Only a few items were mentioned for the non-work environment. This highlights the feeling of the participants that it is the workplace that needs 'fixing' for them to attain some work-life balance. 'Fixing' the home front to help women cope will take a long time and feels late for those who are already mothers and working. This fixing, or rather managing the challenges in the non-work domain, should reasonably start with a much younger cohort of children who have to learn early in life that household chores can and should be shared by people of different genders.

The results indicate that the women managers in the current study do experience WLC, both the work-to-life and life-to-work conflict. They seem to be more worried about the experiences of the work-to-life conflict than the other direction. In terms of the link with Fig 2.2 (in chapter two), the results suggest that the life-to-work conflict, i.e. the interference as a result of the roles and responsibilities from the non-work domain are understated. That is, the women managers in this study reluctantly consent to the expected roles (role consensus) and grudgingly

perform roles/activities in line with those expectations (role-taking) to maintain the social harmony/cohesion within their social structures, i.e. the non-work domain. For instance, although they complained at length about the expected performance of household chores, they continue to perform them. Their normalising the role expectations and continued achievement of those role expectations helps them to justify and use the rationalisation way of coping. Subsequently. The rationalisation mechanism helps them to navigate the role overload, i.e. strain-based conflict. It acts as a buffer for experiencing life-to-work conflict as burdensome. The women managers' compliance with the expected roles serves a function of maintaining homeostasis in their social structure (i.e. structural functionalism). This continued compliance is transmitted through words, the continued achievement of the expected roles, as well as anticipation of the next generation to continue with the compliance. The transmission is through individuals (e.g. mothers to their daughters) interacting with one another (interactionism), as well as through the socialisation process, resulting in internalised messages that are deeply entrenched in the current and next generations. This, the transmission of the expected roles from mothers to daughters (and sons) takes place from an early age, thus underlining the need to begin addressing the development of undesirable stereotypical beliefs about women roles from an early age.

Unfortunately, as women managers in the current study are maintaining homeostasis in the life domain, there are organisational role expectations because they are employed, in the form of job descriptions, that they are supposed to comply with (as described in the organisational role theory). Due to the many expectations from both the workplace and non-work domain, the women managers are not able to navigate well. They find themselves utilising the time that they should be spending on non-work activities for work responsibilities while also performing non-work activities during working hours, thus experiencing work-life conflict. Furthermore, the women managers reported are endlessly working overtime. Therefore, they experience time-based and strain-based conflict. The results from the current study further suggest that experiences of WLC can at times lead to negative consequences on the women managers personally (e.g. physical and/or psychological ill-health), or on relationships with significant others (e.g. children, spouses, friends). The cognitive role theory states that individuals, women managers, in this case, have the intellect to select which roles they comply with and to what end. The women managers in this study appear to select achieving role expectations from both the work and non-work domains. They decide to work overtime because the achievement of work roles is rewarded (salary, promotions, etc.) and, despite everything, go home to perform

non-work expectations (to maintain the status core and balance in the non-work system). They do not seem to be coping well, hence the WLC experiences. The study makes recommendations as to what organisations can do to assist. Moreover, the extensive dialogues of the women managers in the current study about what the non-work domain could do to assist them to navigate the challenges of WLC help in putting forth recommendations of how the non-work domain can help. Intervening in the non-work domain may help the women to maintain the balance, not at the expense of performance in the workplace because that delays their progress and interferes, to some extent, with efforts that are affected in the workplace. The current results show the link with the theory that was outlined in chapter two of this study. However, none of the theories discussed in this study have propounded any integrative framework for understanding the WLC of women managers in the public sector. Hence this contributing framework bridges the existing gap in theory and research.

REFERENCES

AAUW Report. (2016). *Barriers and bias: The state of women in leadership.* AAUW: Washington, DC 20036.

Abdullah, D. N. M. A., & Raoh, N. S. A. (2017). Work-life conflict among working women. *The Social Sciences*, *12*(2): 266-270.

Adriano, J., & Callaghan, C.W. (2020). Work-life balance, job satisfaction and retention: Turnover intentions of professionals in part-time study. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences,* https://doi.org/.10.4102/sajems.v23i1.3028.

Agarwal, S. S. (2015). Gender Differences between Role Expectations, Role strain and use of coping strategies among dual-earner couples. *International Journal of Applied Research*, *1*(11): 248-255.

Agarwala, R., Mishra, A. K., & Dixit, P. (2015). *Gender and work-life balance*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Science, Technology and Management, University of New Delhi, New Delhi, India, September 2015.

Agarwala, T., Arizkuren-Eleta, A., Del Castillo, E., Muniz-Ferrer, M., & Gartzia, L. (2014). Influence of managerial support on work-life conflict and organizational commitment: an international comparison of India, Peru and Spain. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 25*(10), 1460 – 1483.

Ahmad, M. S., Fakhr, Z., & Ahmed, J. (2011). Working women work-life conflict. *Business Strategy Series*, *12*(6), 289 – 302.

Ajala, E. M. (2017). Work-family-conflict and family-work-conflict as correlates of job performance among working mothers: implications for industrial social workers. *African Journal of Social Work, 7*(1): 52-62.

Ajayi, M. P., Olawande, T. I., Jegede, A. E., Amoo, E. O. & Olawole-Isaac, A. (2020). Work-family conflict: Evaluating the mediating role of personal intervening strategies, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1), 1731224.

Akanji, B. (2012). Realities of work-life balance in Nigeria: perceptions of role conflict and coping beliefs. *Business, Management and Education*, 10(2): 248-263.

Akkas, M. A., Hossain, M. I., & Rhaman, S. (2015). Causes and Consequences of Work-Family Conflict (WFC) among the Female Employees in Bangladesh: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Business and Economics, 6*(12), 2063-2071.

Akinyele, S. T., Peters, M. C., & Akinyele, F. E. (2016). Work-life balance imperatives for modern work organization: A theoretical perspective. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research, 4*(8), 57-66.

Akinnusi, D.M., Oyewunmi, A.E., & Sonubi, O. (2018). Work-Family Conflicts: Assessing a South African Sample of Urban Employees. *International and Multidisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences,* 7(2), 108-134.

Akobo. L.A., & Stewart, J. (2020). Contextualising work–life balance: a case of women of African origin in the UK. *Industrial and Commercial Training,* 52(3), 133-153.

Almpanis T. (2016). Using a Mixed Methods Research Design in a study investigating the Heads' of elearning perspective towards technology enhanced learning. *The Electronic Journal of e-Learning*, 14 (5), 301-311.

Amin, S., Zafer, A. & Haider, E. (2020). *Impact of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Health Sector of Pakistan.* EasyChair Preprints. Available from: https//:easychair.com.

Annor, F. (2016). Work-family conflict: A synthesis of the research from cross-national perspective. *Journal of Social Sciences*, *12*(1), 1-13.

Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars,* 1(2), 30-33.

Aryee, S. (2005). The Work-Family Interface in sub-Saharan Africa: A Theoretical Analysis. In S. Poelmans (Ed.), In *Work and family: An international research perspective* (pp. 261-286). London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Babalola, S. S., Oladipo, S. E., & Chovwen, C. O. (2015). The influence of organisational factors and work-family conflict on organisational commitment among working parents. *Inkanyiso, Jnl Hum & Soc Sci*, *7*(1): 29 – 37.

Babbie, E., & Mouton, J. (2001). *The practice of social research: South African edition.* Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Baltes, B. B., Clark, M. A., & Chakrabarti, M. (2010). Work-life balance: The roles of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation. In P. A. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work* (pp. 201–212). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bandura, A. (1999). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *2,* 21 – 41.

Banumathi, M., & Samudhararajakumar, C. (2015). The role of middle level managers and corporate entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Management Studies*, *1*(9), 21-26.

Bates, F. L., & Nix, H. L. (1964). *Social disorganization at the group level: A role theory approach.* Paper read in the 1964 meeting of the American Sociologies Society, Montreal, Canada.

Bates, F. L., & Peacock, W. G. (1989). Conceptualizing social structure: The misuse of classification in structural modelling. *American Sociological Review*, *54*, 565-577.

Bazana, S., & Dodd, N. (2013). Conscientiousness, work family conflict and stress amongst police offices in Alice, South Africa. *KRE Journal of Psychology*, *4*(1): 1–8.

Biddle, B. J. (1979). *Role theory: expectancies, identities, and behaviors*. New York: Academic Press.

Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent development in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *12*, 67–92.

Birukou, A., Blanzieri, E., Giorgini, P., & Giunchiglia, F. (2009). *A formal definition of culture*. A technical report for the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI'09), Italy.

Bisschoff, M., Koen, V., & Ryke, E. H. (2018). Strategies for work–family balance in a South African context. *Community, Work & Family*, https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1473337.

Boles, J. S., Wood, J. A., & Johnson, J. (2003). Interrelationships of role conflict, role ambiguity, and work-family conflict with different facets of job satisfaction and the moderating effects of gender. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, *XXIII* (2): 99–113.

Bracio, K., & Szarucki, M. (2020). Management Research: A Systematic Literature Review and Meta-Summary. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management,* http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/jrfm13110252.

Bragger, J. D., Rodriguez-Srednicki, O., Kutcher, E. J., Indovino, L., & Rosner, E. (2005). Work-family conflict, work-family culture, and organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *20*(2), 303-324.

Brierley, J.A. (2017). The role of a pragmatist paradigm when adopting mixed methods in behavioural accounting research. *International Journal of Behavioural Accounting and Finance*, 6 (2), 140-154.

Broadbridge, A. (2009). Sacrificing personal or professional life? A gender perspective on the accounts of retail managers. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, 19*(3): 289–311.

Brooks, A. T., Krumlauf, M., Beck, K. H., Fryer, C. S. Yang, L., Ramchandani, V. A., & Wallen G. R. (2019). A mixed method examination of sleep throughput the alcohol recovery process grounded in the social cognitive theory: The role of self-efficacy and craving. *Health Education and Behavior*, *46*(1), 126-136.

Burke, R. J., & El-Kot, G. (2010). Correlates of work family conflicts among managers in Egypt. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management, 3*(2), 113–131.

Business Women Association South Africa (BWASA) Report (2017). *Women in Leadership Census.* Available from: https://bwasa.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2017-BWASA-CENSUS-report.pdf.

Calvert, E., Russell, H., O'Connell, P., & McGinnity, F. (2009). Reconciling work and family life: workplaces, occupation and the experience of work-life conflict. *ESRI Research Bulletin*, *3*(4), 55–59.

Campbell, S. (2018). Role theory, foreign policy advisers, and U.S. foreign policymaking. *International Journal of Social Science, 59*(1), 43 – 55.

Cannizzo, F. & Osbaldiston, N. (2015). Academic work/life balance: A brief quantitative analysis of the Australian experience. *Journal of Sociology*, 4, 890–906.

Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., & Williams, L. J. (2000). Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional measure of Work–Family Conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 56*, 249–276.

Carter, M. J., & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic Interactionism. *Sociopedia.isa. Vol no?* DOI: 10.1177/205684601561.

Chandra, V. (2010). Women and work-family interface: Indian context. *Journal of Asia Pacific Studies, 1*(3), 235–258.

Chaudhry, A. A., Malik, M. I., & Ahmadi, I. (2011). Examining the relationship of work-life conflict and employee performance: A case from NADRA Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *6*(10), 170–177.

Cheung, F. M., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, *65*(3), 182 – 193.

Chiappo, I.L., & DiDona, T. (2014). Ethnicity on Work-Family, Family-Work Conflicts & Time-Based, Strain-Based Interferences. *International Journal of Education and Social Science, 1*(4), 51-60.

Chichester, O., Pluess, J. D., & Lee, M. (2017). *Women's Economic Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recommendations for Business Action.* A BSR Paper. Retrieved November, 1, 2018, from www.bsr.org.

Chinyamurindi, W.T. (2019). *Framing career wellbeing amongst expatriate workers: A narrative analysis.* Book chapter in international text published by Springer: Theory, Research, and Dynamics of Career Wellbeing: Becoming For the Future. Edited by Ingrid L. Potgieter., Nadia Ferreira, and Melinde Coetzee. Pages 283-308. ISBN: 978-3- 030-28179-3.

Clark, M. A., Rudolph, C. W., Zhdanova, L., Michel, J. S., & Baltes, B. B. (2015). Organizational support factors and work-family outcomes: exploring gender differences. *Journal of Family Issues*. DOI: 10.1177/0192513X1555809.

Coffey, B. S., Anderson, A. E., Zhao, S., Liu, Y., & Zhang, J. (2009). Perspectives on work-family issues in China: The voices of young urban professionals. *Community, Work & Family*, *12*(2), 197–212.

Colombo, L., & Ghislieri, C. (2008). The work-to-family conflict: Theories and measures. *TPM*, *15*(01), 35 – 55.

Cooper, R., Fleisher, A., & Cotton, F. A. (2012). Building Connections: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Qualitative Research Students' Learning Experiences. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(17), 1-16.

Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2011). *Business research method*, 11th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill International.

Coetzee, M. (2017). Fairness as it relates to employment equity for women. In A. Bosch (Ed.), *South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2017*, pp. 26 – 31. Rosebank, South Africa: SABPP.

Coetzee, J. F., & Kluyts, H. (2020). Burnout and areas of work-life among anaesthetists in South Africa Part 2: Areas of work-life. *Southern African Journal of Anaesthesia and Analgesia*, 26(2), 83-90.

Crisogen, D. T. (2015). Types of Socialization and Their Importance in Understanding the Phenomena of Socialization. *European Journal of Social Sciences, Education and Research,* 2(4), 331-336.

Dartey-Baah, K. (2015). Work-family conflict, demographic characteristics and job satisfaction among Ghanaian corporate leaders. *International Journal of Business*, *20*(4), 291-307.

De Klerk, M., & Mostert, K. (2010). Work–home interference: Examining socio-demographic predictors in the South African context. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/ SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*, *8*(1), DOI: 10.4102/sajhrm.v8i1.203.

DePasquale, N., Polenick, C. A., Davis, K. D., Moen, P., Hammer, L. B., & Almeida, D. M. (2017). The psychosocial implications of managing work and family caregiving roles: Gender differences among information technology professionals. *Journal of Family Issues*, *38*(11), 1495 -1519.

De Vos A. S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C. B., & Delport, C. S. L. (2011). *Research at grass roots: For the social science and human service professions.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Dishon-Berkovits, M. (2014). Burnout: contributing and protecting factors within the work-family interface. *Journal of Career Development*, *41*(6), 467-486.

Do-Hyung, L., & Zeng, L. (2013). Antecedents of work-family conflict and moderating effect of perceived organizational support in China. *Asian Social Science*, *9*(13), 28–39.

Donald, F., & Linington, J. (2008). Work/family border theory and gender role orientation in male managers. *South African Journal of Psychology*, *38*(4), 659 – 671.

Dos Santos, Erdmann, A. L., Meirelles, B. H. S., de Melo Lanzoni, G. M., da Cunha, V. P., & Ross, R. (2017). *Texto Contexto Enferm,* 26(3), http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0104-07072017001590016.

Doubell, M., & Struwig, M. (2014). Perceptions influencing the career success of professional and business women in South Africa. *SAJEMS, 17*(5), 531 - 543.

Downes, C., & Koekemoer, E. (2011). Work–life balance policies: Challenges and benefits associated with implementing flexitime. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur, 9*(1), DOI:10.4102/sajhrm.v9i1.382.

Du Preez, T. (2017). *Determinants of work-life conflict and its role in burnout among nursing staff.* A Master of Commerce (Industrial Psychology) thesis, in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Duran, L., & DelCampo, R. G. (2010). The influence of family obligations on the job performance of professional Hispanic women. *The Business Journal of Hispanic Research*, *4*(1), 18–21.

Durbin, D. R., House, S. C., Meagher, E.A., & Rogers, J. G. (2019). The role of mentors in addressing issues of work–life integration in an academic research environment. *Journal of Clinical and Translational Science*, 3,302–307.

Durrani, A., & Khan, R. N. A. (2014). Women roles in weddings: ethnography of wedding rituals among Rajput in Punjab, Pakistan. *Eurasian Journal of Anthropology*, *5*(1):32−45.

Duxbury, L., & Higgins, C. (2001). *Work-life balance in the new millennium: Where are we? Where do we need to go?* (CPRN Discussion Paper No. W12). Retrieved September, 19, 2017, from http://www.cprn.org/documents/7314_en.PDF.

Erdamar, G., & Demirel, H. (2013). *Investigation of work-family, family-work conflict of the teachers.* A research paper presented at the 5th World Conference on Educational Sciences Date of conference? – WCES, DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1050.

Ergeneli, A., Ilsev, A., & Karapinar, P. B. (2010). Work-family conflict and job satisfaction relationship: The roles of gender and interpretive habits. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 17(6): 679–695.

Eversole, B. A. W., & Crowder, C. L. (2020). Toward a Family-Friendly Academy: HRD's Role in Creating Healthy Work–Life Cultural Change Interventions. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 22(1), 11-22.

Fatoki, O. (2017). Gender and the work-life conflict of immigrant entrepreneurs in South Africa. *Gender & Behaviour,* 15(1), 8367-8379.

Fourie, D. (2014). The role of Public Sector Enterprises in the South African Economy. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 7(1), 30-40.

French, K. A., Dumani, S., Allen, T. D., & Shockley, K. M. (2018). A Meta-Analysis of Work-Family Conflict and Social Support. *Psychology Bulletin*, *144*(3): 284–314.

Fujimoto, Y., Azmat, F., & Härtel, C. E. J. (2012). Gender perceptions of work-life balance: management implications for full-time employees in Australia. *Australian Journal of Management,* 1–24. DOI: 10.1177/0312896212449828

Gamor, E., Amissah, E. F., & Boakye, K. A. A. (2014). Work-family conflict among hotel employees in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, Ghana. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *12*, 1 – 8.

Gerber, C., & Schlechter, A. (2019). *To (queen) bee or not to bee?.* In A. Bosch (Ed.), South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2019, pp. 22 – 25. Rosebank, South Africa: SABPP.

Gesauldi, M. (2017). *Extending organizational role theory to understand shared resources and role encroachment in organizations.* A Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation in Media and Communication, Temple University, USA.

Golele, F. H., & Rachidi, M. F. (2017). The challenges of achieving gender equity in a government department: a case study of the Department of Health, Limpopo Province, South Africa. *Gender & Behaviour, 15*(3), 9584-9606.

Gordon, J. R., Pruchno, R. A., Wilson-Genderson, M., Murphy, W. M., & Rose, M. (2012). Balancing Caregiving and Work: Role Conflict and Role Strain Dynamics. *Journal of Family Issues, 33*(5), 662–689.

Gordon, J. R., & Rouse, E. D. (2013). The relationship of job and elder caregiving involvement to work-caregiving conflict and work costs. *Research on Aging, 35*(1) 96 –117.

Gragnano, A., Simbula, S., & Miglioretti, M. (2020). Work–Life Balance: Weighing the Importance of Work–Family and Work–Health Balance. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17030907.

Green, G. T., Deschamps, J., & Paez, D. (2005). Variation of individualism and collectivism within and between 20 countries: A Typological Analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 36*(3), 321-339.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(1): 76–88.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (1999). *Reconceptualizing the work-family interface: An ecological perspective on the correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family.* CDE Working Paper No. 99 (03). Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Guirguis, L. M., & Chewning, B. A. (2005). Role theory: Literature review and implications for patient-pharmacist interactions. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, *1*, 483-507.

Haines, E.L., Deaux, K., & Lofaro, N. (2016). The times they are a-changing … or are they not? A comparison of gender stereotypes, 1983–2014. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 40*(3) 353-363.

Hämmig, O., & Bauer, F. (2013). Work, work–life conflict and health in an industrial work environment. *Occupational Medicine*, *64*, 34–38

Hansen, K. P., Scheffer, J., Rathje, S., & Schulz, M. (2009). The definition of culture: An application-oriented overhaul. *Inter-culture Journal*, *8*, 34–58.

Hassan, Z., Ibrahim, K. A., Nor, N., Sabil, S., & Bandar, A. (2017). Relationship between aspects of religion and work-family interface in Malaysia: A longitudinal study. *International Journal of Business and Society*, *18*(4), 862-868.

Henderson, A. K. (2014). Jesus didn't teach us to juggle: religious involvement, work-family conflict, and life satisfaction among African Americans. *Journal of Family Issues,* 1-27. DOI: 10.1177/0192513X14561520.

Herst, D. E. L. (2003). *Cross-Cultural Measurement Invariance of Work/Family Conflict Scales Across English-speaking samples.* A Doctor of Philosophy dissertation in Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Florida.

Higgins, C., Duxbury, L., & Lyons, S. (2008). *Reducing WLC: What works? What doesn't?* Research report for Health Canada, Canada.

Hochschild, A. R. (1997). *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. Henry Holt and Company: New York.

Hubbard, A. G. (2016). The effect of technology on work-life balance: Women in higher education. *Masters Theses, (*98). Retrieved November, 1, 2018, from https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/master201019/98.

Huitt, W. G. (2017). *Understanding reality: The importance of mental representations.* Atlanta, GA: Community Development through Academic Service Learning. Retrieved November, 3, 2018, from http://www.cd-asl.org/papers/2017-huitt-mental-representations.pdf.

Hutson, S. (2007). Gender oppression and discrimination in South Africa. *ESSAI*, 5(26). Retrieved September, 18, 2017, from http://dc.cod.edu/essai/vol5/issl/26.

Idris, M. K. (2011). Over Time Effects of Role Stress on Psychological Strain among Malaysian Public University Academics. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 2*(9)*,* 154-161**.**

Igbinomwanhia, O.R., Iyayi, O., & Iyayi, F. (2012). Employee Work-Life Balance as an HR Imperative. *African Review Research, 6*(3), 109-126.

International Labour Organisation (2019). *Women in business and management: The business case for change*. International Labour Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland.

Institute of Internal Auditors. (2011). *Supplemental Guidance: Public Sector Definition.* Available from: www.globaliia.org/standards-guidance

Isa, N. M., Singh, H. K. L., & Hashim, R. (2018). Job stress, work-to-family conflict and social support in the education industry. *Journal of Administrative Science, Special Edition: ICOPS, 15*(3). Retrieved October, 7, 2019, from http:jas.uitm.edu.my.

Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Piano Clark, V. L. (2016). Foundations and approaches to mixed methods research. In K. Maree (Ed.). *First steps in research*, 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Jackson, J. (1998). Contemporary criticisms of role theory. *Journal of Occupational Sciences*, *5*(2), 49-55.

Jackson L. T. B. & Fransman, E. I. (2018). Flexi work, financial well-being, work– life balance and their effects on subjective experiences of productivity and job satisfaction of females in an institution of higher learning. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences 21*(1), a1487. https://doi.org/10.4102/ sajems.v21i1.1487.

Jang, S.J., & Zippay, A. (2011). The juggling act: Managing WLC and work–life balance. *Family Functioning and Interrelationships*, *92*(1): 84–90.

Kan, D., & Yu, X. (2016). Occupational stress, work-family conflict and depressive symptoms among Chinese bank employees: The role of psychological capital *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *13*(134), DOI: 10.3390/ijerph13010134.

Karimi, Q., Jomehri, F., Asadzade, H., & Sohrabi, F. (2012). Consequences of conflict between work and family among Iranian female teachers. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research, 2*(2), 1869–1875.

Karkoulian, S., & Halawi, L. (2007). Women and work/life conflict at higher educational institutions. *International Journal of Business Research, 7*(3), 116–126.

Kasper, H., Meyer, M., & Schmidt, A. (2005). Managers dealing with work-family-conflict: an explorative analysis. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *20*(5), 440 – 461.

Kaushik, V., & Walsh, C.A. (2019). Pragmatism as a research paradigm and its implications for social work research. *Social Science,* http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/socsci8090255.

Kelly, M., Dowling M., & Miller, M. (2018). The Search for Understanding: The Role of Paradigmatic Worldviews. *Nurse Researcher*, 25(4), 9-13

Kettles, A. M., Creswell, J. W., & Zhang, W. (2011). Mixed methods research in mental health nursing. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, 8*(6): 535–542.

Kim, J. C., & Alamilla, S. (2016). *In Blume A. Social challenges in living colour: Challenges and solutions from the perspective of Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Santa Barbara, California: Arthur Blume Publishers.

Young-Mee, K., & Sung-il, C. (2020). Socioeconomic status, work-life conflict, and mental health. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 63:703–712.

Kossek, E. E., Pichler, S., Bodner, T., & Hammer, L. B. (2011). Workplace social support and work–family conflict: a meta-analysis clarifying the influence of general and work–family-specific supervisor and organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, *64*, 289–313.

Kray, L.J., Howland, L., Russell, A.G., & Jackman, L.M. (2017). The effects of implicit gender role theories on gender system justification: Fixed beliefs strengthen masculinity to preserve the status quo. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 112, (1), 98–115.

Kulik, L., & Rayyan, F. (2006). Relationships between dual-earner spouses, strategies for coping with home-work demands and emotional well-being. *Community, Work and Family*, *9*(4), 457–477.

Lazăr, I., Osoian, C., & Raţiu P. (2010). The role of work-life balance practices in order to improve organizational performance. *European Research Studies,* XIII(1), 201-214.

Lavassani, K. M., & Movahedi, B. (2014). Developments in theories and measures of work-family relationships: from conflict to balance. *Contemporary Research on Organization Management and Administration, 2*(1), 6-18.

Lee, N., Zvonkovic, A. M., & Crawford, D. W. (2013). The impact of work-family conflict and facilitation on women's perceptions of role balance. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(9), 1252 – 1274.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical research: Planning and design* (11thed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education International.

Leineweber, C., Baltzer, M., Magnusson Hanson, L. L., & Westerlund, H. (2012). Work–family conflict and health in Swedish working women and men: a 2-year prospective

analysis (the SLOSH study). *The European Journal of Public Health*, DOI:10.1093/eurpub/cks064.

Lewis, D. (2019). *Neo-liberalism, gender, and South African working women.* In A. Bosch (Ed.), South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2019, pp. 10 – 16. Weltevredenpark, South Africa: SABPP.

Lewis, S., & Beauregard, T. A. (2018). The meanings of work-life balance: A cultural perspective. In R. Johnson, W. Shen, & K. M. Shockley (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of the global work-family interface* (pp. 720-732). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lidzy, S. D. (2005). Gender role expectations of students at a Christian university: Cultural notions of masculinity and femininity. *Christian Higher Education, 4*: 317–332.

Linh, N.T., Jin, T.C., Kiong, T.P., & Fah, B.C. (2016). Work-family conflict and employee job satisfaction: a comparison of state-owned and foreign-invested enterprises in Vietnam. *Asian Economic and Social Society*, *6*(4), 63-72.

Liu T, Wu L, Yang Y & Jia Y. (2020) Work-to-Family Spillover Effects of workplace Negative Gossip: A mediated moderation model. *Frontiers in Psychology,* 11:1612. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01612

Lu, L., Cooper, C. L., Kao, S., Chang, T., Allen, T. D., Lapierre, L. M., & Spector, P. E. (2010). Cross-cultural differences on work-to-family conflict and role satisfaction: A Taiwanese-British comparison. *Human Resource Management, 49*(1), 67–85.

Lyonette, C., Crompton, R., & Wall, K. (2007). Gender, occupational class and work-life conflict: A comparison of Britain and Portugal. *Community, Work and Family*, *10*(3): 283–308.

Louw, C. (2014). *Work-family conflict and personality: The moderating role of gender*. A Master of Commerce mini-dissertation, in Industrial Psychology, Faculty of Management, University of Johannesburg.

MacDermid, S. M. (2005). (Re)Considering conflict between work and family. In E. N. Kossek & S. J. Lambert (Eds.), *Work and life integration: Organizational, cultural and individual perspectives* (pp. 19–40). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

MacInnes, J. (2008). Work-life balance: Three terms in search of a definition. In C. Warhurst, D. R. Eikhof, & A. Haunschild (Eds.), *Work less, live more? Critical analysis of the work-life boundary.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, *16*(2): 193–205.

Madsen, S. R., & Hammond, S. C. (2005). The complexification of work-family conflict theory: A critical analysis. *Tamara Journal*, *4*(4): 151–179.

Mani, V. (2013). Work-life Balance and Women Professionals. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research Interdisciplinary, 13*(5), 34-41.

Marais, C., & Mostert, K. (2008). Work-home interaction of police officers in the North West Province: Examining sociodemographic differences. *Acta Criminologica*, *21*(1), 62–76.

Marouf, (2019). Pragmatism as a Supportive Paradigm for the Mixed Research Approach: Conceptualizing the Ontological, Epistemological, and Axiological Stances of Pragmatism. *International Business Research,* 12,(9), doi:10.5539/ibr.v12n9p1.

Masuda, A. D., Poelmans, S. A. Y., Allen, T. D., Spector, P. E., Lapierre, L. M., Cooper, C. L., Abarca, N., Brough, P., Ferreiro, P., Fraile, G., Lu, L., Lu, C., Siu, O. L., O'Driscoll, M. P., Simoni, A. S., Shima, S., & Moreno-Velazquez, I. (2012). Flexible work arrangements availability and their relationship with work-to-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions: a comparison of three country clusters. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *61*(1), 1–29.

Mathis, C. J., Brown, U. J., & Randle, N. W. (2009). Antecedents of work-family conflict: Racioethnic differences among working professionals with families. *Journal of International Business Disciplines*, *4*(1), 14–35.

May, M., & Reynolds, J. (2018). Religious affiliation and work-family conflict among women and men. *Journal of Family Issues*, *31*(7), 1797-1826.

McLellan, K., & Uys, K. (2009). Balancing dual roles in self-employed women: An exploratory study. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *35*(1). Retrieved 5, September, 2017, from http://www.sajip.co.za.

McMillan, H. S., Morris, M. L., & Atchley, E. K. (2011). Constructs of work/life interface: A synthesis of the literature and introduction of the concept of work/life harmony. *Human Resource Development Review, 10*(1), 6–25.

Michel, J. S., Clark, M. A., & Beiler, A. A. (2013). Work-life conflict and its effects. In D. A. Major & R. J. Burke (Eds.), *Handbook of work-life integration among professionals: challenges and opportunities.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Mihelič, K. K. (2014). Commitment to life roles and work-family conflict among managers in a post-socialist country. *Career Development International, 19*(2), 204 – 221.

Mohajan, H. K. (2017). Two criteria for good measurements in research: Validity and reliability. *Annals of Spiru Haret University*, *17*(3): 58-82.

Molapo, E. L. M. (2005). *Women and patriarchy in Lesotho: A deconstructive study.* Thesis for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Moleko, N. (2018). *Women en route to technical vocations.* In A. Bosch (Ed.), South African Board for People Practices Women's Report 2018, pp. 19 – 23. Rosebank, South Africa: SABPP.

Moosa, R. (2017). *Exploring work-life balance amongst female flight attendants at selected airlines in the Western Cape*. Master of Commerce Thesis, in Industrial Psychology, in the Faculty of Economic and management Sciences, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Morgenroth, T., Ryan, M. K., Rink, F. & Begeny, C. (2020). The (in)compatibility of identities: Understanding gender differences in work–life conflict through the fit with leaders. *British Journal of Social Psychology,* DOI:10.1111/bjso.1241.

Mortazavi, S., Pedhiwala, N., Shafiro, M., & Hammer, L. (2009). Work-family conflict related to culture and gender. *Community, Work & Family*, *12*(2), 251–273.

Mostert, K. (2008). Time-based and strain-based work-family conflict in the South African police service: examining the relationship with work characteristics and exhaustion. *Acta Criminologica: Southern African Journal of Criminology*, *21*(3), 1-18.

Mostert, K., & Oldfield, G. R. (2009). Work-home interaction of employees in the mining industry. *SAJEMS*, *12*, 81–99.

Moyo, C. S., & Francis, J. (2010). Women Empowerment Initiatives for Rural Development in South Africa: The Missing Piece of the Puzzle. *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies, 24*(1), 43-63.

Mshololo, N. (2011). *A qualitative exploration of a women's work-life balance over the life course: A case study of female managers.* An unpublished Master of Social Science dissertation in Industrial Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Naithani, P. (2010). Overview of work-life balance discourse and its relevance in current economic scenario. *Asian Social Science*, *6*(6), 148–155.

Nam, T. (2014). Technology Use and Work-Life Balance. *Applied Research Quality Life*, *9*, 1017–1040.

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and Validation of Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict Scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, (4): 400 – 410.

Neuendorf, K.A. (2019). Content analysis and thematic analysis. In Brough P. (ed) *Advanced research methods for applied psychology: Design, analysis and reporting.* Taylor and Francis Group: London, pp. 211-223.

Ng, C. W., & Fosh, P. (2004). The effect of career ambition and satisfaction on attitudes towards equal opportunities and family-friendly policies for women: A case study in Hong Kong. *Community, Work and Family, 7*(1), 43–70.

Ngubane, S. J. (2010). *Gender roles in the African culture: Implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS.* An unpublished research assignment for the degree of Master of Philosophy in HIV/AIDS Management at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Nichols, H. M., & Swanberg, J. E. (2018). Measuring Work–Life Conflict among low-wage workers. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, *9*(3), doi: 10.1086/6978254.

Niewenhuis, J. (2016). Analysing qualitative data, in K. Maree, *First Steps in Research*, 2nd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Noge, M. T. (2014). *Evaluating patriarchy and gender inequality in an era of democracy: case of South Africa (1994-2012)*. Unpublished Master's Degree dissertation in International Relations at the North West University, South Africa.

Noor, S., & Maad, N. (2008). Examining the relationship between work-life conflict, stress and turnover intentions among marketing executives in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *3*(11), 93–102.

Nwanzu, C. L., & Bojeghre, N. H. (2016). Gender, work-family conflict and family-work conflict: a test of domain flexibility and domain salient perspectives. *Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, *11*(1), 27-36.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Report (2019). *South African Gender Index report*. Retrieved 01, April, 2020, from https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/ZA.pdf.

Ogbogu, C. O. (2013). Work-family role conflict among academic women in Nigerian public universities. *The 2013 WEI International Academic Conference Proceedings*. Orlando, USA.

Okonkwo, E. 2013. Correlational analysis of work-family conflict bi-directionality. *Ife PsychologIA*, 21(2), 301-308.

Pankin, J. (2013). *Schema theory.* Retrieved 24, May, 2019, from web.mit.edu/pankin/www/schema_Theory_and_Concept_Formation.pdf.

Parsons, T. (1991). *The social system.* London: Taylor & Francis.

Parsons, T. (2007). An Outline of the Social System [1961]. In Calhoun, C., Gerteis J., Moody J. Pfaff S. and Virk I. (eds.). *Classical sociological theory*, 2nd ed. Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA.

Pasamar, S., Johnston, K., & Tanwar, J. (2020). Anticipation of work–life conflict in higher education. *Employee Relations: The International Journal,* 42(3), 777-797.

Pavani, I., Rao, D.N., & Kumar, D. K. (2017). Developing a research framework for Studying work-life balance. *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, 6(3), 559 – 560.

Pickard, A., & Dixon, P. (2004). The applicability of constructivist user studies: How can constructivist inquiry inform service providers and system designers? *Information*

Research, *9*(3). Retrieved 6, October, 2017, from http://InformationR.net/ir/9-3/paper175.html.

Pieterse, M., & Mostert, K. (2005). Measuring the work-home interface: Validation of the Survey Work-Home Interaction – Nijmegen (SWING) Instrument. *Management Dynamics*, *14*(2), 2–15.

Plickert, G., & Sterling, J. (2017). Gender still matters: effects of workplace discrimination on employment schedules of young professionals. *Laws*, *6*(28), doi:10.3390/laws6040028.

Poelmans, S., O'Driscoll, M., & Beham, B. (2005). An overview of international research on the work-family interface. In S. A. Y. Poelmans (Ed.), *Work and family: An international research perspective* (pp. 3–46). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Powell, G. N., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2010). Sex, gender, and the work-to-family interface: Exploring negative and positive interdependencies. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(3): 513–534.

Prozesky, H., & Mouton J. (2019). A gender perspective on career challenges experienced by African scientists. *South African Journal of Science, 115*(3/4), https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2019/5515

Public Servants Association (2019). Women and the workplace: Challenges of diversity and women progression. *PSA Newsletter*, August.

Qi, C., Huang, J., & Liu, O. (2017). *Exploring the Antecedents of Work-to-life Conflict under the Context of Bring Your Own Device*. Pacific Asia Conference on Information Systems (PACIS) 2017 Conference Proceedings, Langkawi.

Racolta Paina, N. D., & Andrieș, A. M. (2017). New perspectives on family friendly policies from the stakeholders' point of view. *On-line Journal Modelling the New Europe*, *22,* 57-84.

Rahman, M. M., Ali, N. A., Mansor, Z. D., Jantan, A. H., Samuel, A. B., Alam, K., & Hosen, S. (2018). Work-family conflict and job satisfaction: The moderating effects of gender. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, *17*(5), doi: 1939-6104-17-5-270.

Raisinghani, M., & Goswami, R. (2014). Model of Work-life Balance: Explaining relationship constructs. *International Journal of Application or Innovation in Engineering & Management,* 3(2), 46 – 59.

Rantanen, R., Kinnunen, U., Mauno, S., & Tillemann, K. (2011). Introducing theoretical approaches to work-life balance and testing: A new typology among professionals. In S. Kaiser, M. J. Ringlstetter, D. R. Eikhof, & M. Pina e Cunha (Eds.), *Creating balance? Work-life integration of professionals.* Springer-Verlag: Berlin Heidelberg.

Rehman, S., & Roomi, M. A. (2012). Gender and work-life balance: a phenomenological study of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *19*(2), 209-228.

Reiners, G. M. (2012). Understanding the Differences between Husserl's (Descriptive) and Heidegger's (Interpretive) Phenomenological Research. *Journal of Nursing and Care* 1:119. doi:10.4172/2167-1168.1000119.

Robinson, O. (2011). A definition of gender role conflict among Black professional fathers. *The Qualitative Report, 16*(5), 1389–1406.

Rogers, J. G., & Franzen, A. B. (2014). Work-family conflict: The effects of religious context on married women's participation in the labor force. *Religions*, *5,* 580–593.

Ross, J. P., Intindola, M. L., & Boje, D. L. (2016). It Was the Best of Times; It Was the Worst of Times: The Expiration of Work–Life Balance. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 1–14, doi: 10.1177/1056492616675414.

Russell, H., O'Connell, P. J., & McGinnity, F. (2009). The impact of flexible working arrangements on work-life conflict and work pressure in Ireland. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, *16*(1), 73–97.

Ryan, B., Ma, E., Hsiao, A., & Ku, M. (2015). The work-family conflict of university foodservice managers: An exploratory study of its antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *22*, 10–18.

Sabil, S., & Marican, S. (2011). *Working hours, work-family conflict and work-family enrichment among professional women: A Malaysian case.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Science and Humanity, *IPEDR, 5*, 206–209.

Sarsons, H., & Xu, G. (2015). *Confidence men? Gender and confidence: Evidence among top economists*. Retrieved 18, November, 2019, from: https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarsons/files/confidence_final.pdf.

Sato, T. (2011). Functionalism: Its axiomatics. *Sociopedia.isa*, doi: 10.1177/20568460133.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research methods for business students*, 7th edition. Pearson: London.

Saxena, R., & Bhatnagar, D. (2009). Gendered career patterns within dual career couples. *Vikalpa*, *34*(4), 83–85.

Schalkwyk, J. (2000). *Culture, gender equality and development cooperation*. Report prepared for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Retrieved 26, September, 2018, from http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca.

Schein, E. H. (1984). Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture, *Sloan Management Review*, *25*(2), 3-16.

Schierman, S., & Glavin, P. (2016). The pressure-status nexus and blurred work-family boundaries. *Work and Occupations, 43*(1), 3–37.

Schoonenboom, J., & Johnson, R. B. (2017). How to Construct a Mixed Methods Research Design. *Kolner Zeitschrift fur Soziologie und Sozialpshychologie*, DOI 10.1007/s11577-017-0454-1.

Segal, J. (2013). *A South African perspective on work-life balance: A look at women in academia.* An unpublished research project Masters of Arts in Industrial/Organisational Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.

Senden, L., & Visser, M. (2014). *Promoting women in management*. Report for the CEC European Managers, Centre for Inclusive Leadership, Universiteit Utrecht.

Serpe, R. T., & Stryker, S. (2011). The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory. In S.J. Schwartz et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research,* doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9_10.

Shah, V., & Shah, P. (2016). Work-family balance – A challenge for a women. *Indian Journal of Technical Education, Special Issue*, 85–90.

Shin, D., & Enoh, J. (2020). Availability and use of work–life balance programs: Relationship with organizational profitability. *Sustainability*, http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su12072965.

Sidania, Y. M., & Al Hakim, Z. T. Work–family conflicts and job attitudes of single women: a developing country perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *23*(7), 1376–1393.

Sinden, E. (2017). Exploring the gap between male and female employment in the South African workforce. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 8*(6), 37-51.

Skinner, N., & Chapman, J. (2013). Work-life balance and family friendly policies. *Evidence Base*, *4,* 1-25.

Skinner, N., & Pocock, B. (2008). Work–life conflict: Is work time or work overload more important? *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, *46*(3), 303-316.

Smith, P. J., Botha, T., & Vrba, M. J. (2016). *Management principles: A contemporary edition for Africa, 6th ed*. Juta & Company (Pty) Ltd: Pretoria.

South Africa. Public Service Act of 1994, as amended by Act 30 of 2007. Proclamation 103 published in GG 15791 of 3 June 1994. Government Printers, Pretoria.

Spector, P. E., Allen, T. D., Poelmans, S., Cooper, C. L., Bernin, P., Hart, P., & Yu, Y. (2005). An international comparative study of work-family stress and occupational strain. In S. A. Y. Poelmans (Ed.), *Work and family: an international research perspective* (pp. 71–84). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). What is Culture? A compilation of quotations. Retrieved 10, June, 2019, from GlobalPAD Open House http://www.warwick.ac.uk/globalpadintercultural.

Statistics South Africa (2008). *Community Survey, Basic Results: Municipalities*. http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications.pdf.

Statistics South Africa (2014). *Provincial profile: Limpopo, Census 2011.* http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications.pdf.

Statistics South Africa (2015). *General household survey.* Statistical release P0318. http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182015.pdf.

Steyl, B., & Koekemoer, E. (2011). Conflict between work and nonwork roles of employees in the mining industry: Prevalence and differences between demographic groups. *SA*

Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur, *9*(1), 85–96.

Suter, J. & Kowalski, T. (2019). The impact of extended shifts on strain-based work–life conflict: A qualitative analysis of the role of context on temporal processes of retroactive and anticipatory spillover. *Human Resource Management Journal,* https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12321

Tamunomiebi, M. D., & Oyibo, C. (2020). Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance: A Literature Review. *European Journal of Business and Management Research,* 5, (2), DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2020.5.2.196 1.

Tariq, A., Aslam, H. D., Siddique, A., & Tanveer, A. (2012). Work-Life Balance as a Best Practice Model of Human Resource Management: A Win-Win Situational Tool for the Employees and Organizations. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 3(1), 577-585.

Tharp, B. M. (2006). *Defining "culture" and "organizational culture": from anthropology to the office*. Haworth, Inc. Retrieved 3, March, 2018, from www.haworth.com/docs/default-source/white-papers/defining-culture-and-organizational-culture_51-pdf-28527.pdf.

Thobejane, T. D. (2014). Re-envisioning the fight against patriarchy: The case of South African women. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 5(7), 896-899.

Thulasimani, K. K., Duraisamy, M., & Rathinasabapathi, S. S. (2010). A study on work-life balance amongst managers of garment units in Tamildadu State, India. *International Journal of Human Sciences, 7*(2), 445–460.

Tsai, H. (2008). *Work-family conflict, spillover, and emotions among Asian American mothers.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan.

Trzebiatowski, T., & Triana, M. (2020). Family responsibility discrimination, power distance, and emotional exhaustion: When and why are there gender differences in work-life conflict? *Journal of Business Ethics.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-4000-5

Ulin, P. R., Robinson, E. T., Tolley, E. E., & McNeill, E. T. (2002). *Qualitative methods: A field guide for applied research in sexual and reproductive health.* North Carolina: Family Health International.

UNICEF Report (2019). *Family-friendly policies: Redesigning the workplace of the future, a policy brief.* UNICEF, New York. Retrieved 28, October, 2019 from www.unicef.org/early-childhood-development/family-friendly-policies.

United Nations. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* Retrieved 04, November, 2019, from sustainabledevelopment.un.org.

Van der Horst, M. (2016). *Role Theory*. Sociology - Oxford Bibliographies. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199756384-0175.

Van Egdom, D.A. (2020). *The importance of fathers' gender role beliefs and mothers' work identity for mothers' work and breastfeeding decisions.* A thesis submitted to the Department of Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, University of Houston.

Van Zoonen, W., Sivunen, A., & Rice, R. E. (2020). Boundary communication: how smartphone use after hours is associated with work-life conflict and organizational identification. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 48(3), 372-392, DOI: 10.1080/00909882.2020.1755050.

Wang, Y. D. & Niu, H. J. (2010). Multiple roles of Human Resource Department in building organizational competitiveness – perspective of role theory. *International Management Review*, *6*(2), 13 – 19.

Welford, C., Murphy, K., & Casey, D. (2012). Demystifying nursing research terminology: Part 2. *Nurse Researcher*, *19*(2): 29 – 35.

Wheeler, S. C., Petty, R. E., & Bizer, G. Y. (2005). Self-schema matching and attitude change: Situational and dispositional determinants of message elaboration. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *31*, 787 – 797.

Whelan, J. (2014). *A cognitive role theoretic approach to the consumer role*. An unpublished Doctor of Philosophy Thesis in the Graduate Program in Business Administration. The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada.

Wickham, M., & Parker, M. (2007). Reconceptualising organisational role theory for contemporary organisational contexts. *Journal of Managerial Psychology,* doi: 10.1108/02683940710757182.

Wium, A-M., & Louw, B. (2018). Mixed-methods research: A tutorial for speech-language therapists and audiologists in South Africa. *South African Journal of Communication Disorders, 65*(1), a573. https://doi.org/ 10.4102/sajcd.v65i1.573.

Wolor, C. W., Siti, K., Zahra, F., & Martono, S. (2020). The importance of work-life balance on employee performance millennial generation in Indonesia. *Journal of critical reviews,* 7(9),1103-1108.

Wright, K. B., Abendschein, B., Wombacher, K., O'Connor, M., Hoffman, M., Dempsey, M., Krull, C., Dewes, A., & Shelton, A. (2014). Work-related Communication Technology use outside of regular work hours and work-life conflict: The influence of Communication Technologies on perceived work-life conflict, burnout, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. *Management Communication Quarterly, 28*(4)*,* 507-530.

Yang, N. (2005). Individualism–collectivism and work-family interfaces: A Sino-US comparison. In S. A. Y. Poelmans (Ed.), *Work and family: An international research perspective* (pp. 287–317). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Zhang, J., & Liu, Y. (2011). Antecedents of work-family conflict: Review and prospects. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *6*(1), 89–103.

Zhang, X., Siu, O. L., Hu, L., & Zhang, W. (2014). Work-Family Interactions and Psychological Well-Being: Three-Wave Cross-Lagged Study in China. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *13*(2), 87-96.

Zhou, S., Da, S., Guo, H., & Zhang, H. (2018). Work–family conflict and mental health among female employees: A Sequential Mediation Model via negative affect and perceived stress. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*(544), doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00544.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking a moment to look at my study questionnaire. My name is Mamoloko Rangongo, a doctoral student in human resource management at the University of Limpopo. I am researching an area that is essential for women's development and empowerment titled: "Work-Life Conflict experiences and cultural expectations of women managers in the public sector of Limpopo Province". The purpose of the study is to explore work-life conflict experiences of women managers within the public service of Limpopo Province, the expected roles and responsibilities that contribute to those experiences, as well as whether those expectations are determined by their ethnic and religious groups or not. Your contribution in this study will assist in informing human resource policies that specifically address women's challenges thereby helping women to navigate those challenges as they move up to positions of management and leadership.

Kindly note that your information will be kept anonymous and confidential. In addition, your participation in this study will not be remunerated in any way. Should you want to withdraw from participation you are free to do so. Should you withdraw your participation your reasons and/or recommendations would be most welcome as they may assist in the study.

Your consent is implied when you complete the attached research questionnaire. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at mamoloko.rachidi@ul.ac.za.

Thank you

MF Rangongo

APPENDIX B: WORK-LIFE CONFLICT INTERVIEW GUIDE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age (circle): 1) 25 – 34 yrs 2) 35 – 44 yrs 3) 45 – 54 yrs 4) 55 and over years
2. Which organisation/department are you working for? _____
3. How many hours per day are you supposed to work? _____
4. How many hours per day do you think you actually work? _____
5. What is your position at work: 1) Junior manager (supervisor)
   2) Middle-level manager 3) Senior/Executive level manager
6. *Your Ethnic Group: 1) White English 2) White Afrikaans 3) Tsonga/Shangaan
   4) N Sotho 5) S Sotho 6) Venda 7) Zulu 8) Tswana 9) Xhosa
   10) Ndebele 11) Swazi 12) Coloured 13) Asian 14) Other (specify) _____
7. *Religion: 1) ____ Christian 2) ____Muslim 3) ____Jewish 4) _____ Other (specify)
8. Marital Status (tick):
   1) __ Single, never married 2) ___ Married
   3) __ Separated 4) ___Living with a significant other (cohabiting)
   5) __ Divorced 6) ___Widowed
9. Do you have any children? 1) ___ YES 2) ___NO (If no skip to question 12)
10. Please list the **number** of children in each age category below.
    1) _____0 to 2 2) _____3 to 5 3) _____6 to 9
    4) _____10 to 13 5) _____14 to 18 6) _____over 18
11. How many of your children currently live with you? _____
12. Are you primarily responsible for the care of an elder (e.g. parent, grandparent, elderly in-law)? 1) _____YES 2) _____NO
13. How many elders do you take care of? _____
14. How many relatives (besides your own nuclear family) do you live with? _____

SECTION B

Kindly look at the following questions. I request a moment of your time to discuss them as honestly, openly, and as detailed as possible. Should you feel uncomfortable with anyone one of them please feel free to decline to answer. In the same breath, should you feel you want to expand on any of the topics, please feel free to do so.

15. What is your understanding of work-life conflict?
16. What are the kind of work-related activities you perform outside your official working hours (as many as you can think of)?
17. What are the kinds of roles that your family/society still expects of you?
    (With further probing on whether the discussed roles in both questions 16 and 17 above are dictated by culture in terms of ethnicity or religion).
18. What do you think your organization and organisations generally should do to help you (or other women managers) cope with work and non-work conflict?
    1) Your organisation:
    2) Organisations generally:
19. What do you think your family (including extended family, friends, and religious colleagues) should do to help you cope with work-life conflict?
20. Do you have any additional comments/suggestions regarding work-life conflict and/or organisational policies that help in balancing work and non-work responsibilities?

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

For each of the following questions, please tick or circle the appropriate answer (i.e. the one that applies to you). These questions deal with different aspects of yourself, your job, and your living situation which may be related to your experience with balancing your work and family life. (The questions marked with an asterisk (*) are particularly important as the study specifically looks at culture and ethnicity and work-life conflict. Please assist by filling them in as well.)

1) Age (circle): 1) 25 – 34 2) 35 – 44 3) 45 – 54 4) 55 and over years
2) Which organisation/department are you working for?
_____
3) How many hours per day are you supposed to work?
_____
4) How many hours per day do you think you actually work?
_____
5) What is your position at work: 1) Junior manager (supervisor)
2) Middle-level manager 3) Senior/Executive level manager

6) *Your Ethnic Group: 1) White English 2) White Afrikaans 3) Tsonga/Shangaan
4) N Sotho 5) S Sotho 6) Venda 7) Zulu 8) Tswana 9) Xhosa
10) Ndebele 11) Swazi 12) Coloured 13) Asian 14) Other (specify)
_____
7) *Religion: 1) ____ Christian 2) ____Muslim 3) ____Jewish 4) _____ Other (specify)
8) Marital Status (tick):
1) __ Single, never married 2) ___ Married
3) __ Separated 4) ___Living with a significant other (cohabiting)
5) __ Divorced 6) ___Widowed
9) Do you have any children? 1) ___ YES 2) ___NO (If no skip to question 12)
10) Please list the **number** of children in each age category below.
2) _____0 to 2 2) _____3 to 5 3) _____6 to 9

4) _____10 to 13 5) _____14 to 18 6) _____over 18
11) How many of your children currently live with you? _____
12) Are you primarily responsible for the care of an elder (e.g. parent, grandparent, elderly in-law)? 1) _____YES 2) _____NO
13) How many elders do you take care of? _____
14) How many relatives (besides your own nuclear family) do you live with?
_____

MULTIDIMENSIONAL WORK/FAMILY CONFLICT SCALE

For this section kindly read the questions and tick the answer that applies to you.

(**Kindly note**: in all instances, in this questionnaire, -

- F**amily and/or Non-work** responsibilities/activities refer to any one of the following: 1) your nuclear family (husband/partner and children); 2) extended family (family of origin and in-laws); 3) friends; 4) religious activities/responsibilities; 5) recreational activities; and 5) essentially all activities and/or responsibilities that are not related to your paying job - and
- **Work** refers to your formal employment and all the obligations/responsibilities/activities related to it.).

SECTION B: QUESTIONS ON WORK-TO-LIFE CONFLICT	**Never**	**Seldom**	**Often**	**All the time**
15) My work keeps me from my non-work more than I would like				
16) My work schedule often conflicts with my non-work-life.				
17) My work keeps me from my non-work circle of people more than I would like.				
18) After work, I come home too tired to do some of the family/non-work things/chores I would like to do.				
19) My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work while at home.				
20) Because my work is so demanding, at times I am irritable at home.				
21) The demands of my job make it difficult for me to be relaxed at home and/or with other non-work people.				
22) My work takes up time that I would like to spend with my family and/or others.				
23) My job makes it difficult to be the kind of spouse/partner or parent I would like to be.				
24) I have to put off doing things I like to do (non-work interests/activities) because of work-related demands.				
25) Due to work-related duties, I frequently have to make changes to my personal plans.				
26) The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family/non-work responsibilities, like attend social functions, etc.				
27) My job produces a strain that makes it difficult to fulfil my personal obligations.				
28) The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities, like cooking, cleaning, attending family functions, etc.				
29) I have to miss family/non-work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.				
30) When I get home from work I am often too frazzled/exhausted to participate in family activities/responsibilities.				
31) I am often so emotionally drained that when I get home from work it prevents me from contributing to my family (non-work environment).				

32) Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do things I enjoy.				
SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON LIFE-TO-WORK CONFLICT				
33) The time I spend on family (non-work) responsibilities often interferes with achievement of my work responsibilities				
34) The time I spend with my family (non-work people) often causes me not to spend time in activities at work that could be helpful to my career.				
35) I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I spend on family (non-work) responsibilities.				
36) Due to stress/demands at home (non-work environment), I am often preoccupied with family matters when at work.				
37) Tension and anxiety from my family (non-work) often weaken my ability to do my job.				
38) When at work, I often try to arrange, schedule, or perform family/non-work related activities, like picking up the kids, elder care, etc.				
39) My religious activities/responsibilities interfere with my work obligations; I take time off work to fulfil those responsibilities.				
40) My responsibilities as a daughter-in-law (i.e. with my in-laws and 'their' relatives) oblige me to take time off work to fulfil those responsibilities.				
41) My responsibilities towards my family of origin (and relatives) oblige me to take time off work to fulfil those responsibilities.				
42) My responsibilities towards my own children and husband (not extended family) oblige me to take time off work to fulfil those responsibilities.				

SECTION D

Kindly answer the questions in this section as openly and detailed as possible.

43) What is your understanding of work-life conflict?

_____

_____

_____

44) List the kind of work-related activities you actually perform outside your official working hours (as many as you can think of).

_____

_____

_____

45) List the kind of family/non-work activities you actually perform during working hours (also as many as you can think of):

_____

_____

_____

_____

46) The kind of activities expected from you (listed above), are they dictated by your ethnic group?

Yes: _____ No: _____
If yes, in what way?

_____
_____
_____

47) The kind of activities expected from you (listed above), are they dictated by your religious affiliation?
Yes: _____ No: _____
If yes, in what way?

_____
_____
_____

48) What do you think your organisation and organisations generally should do to help you (or other women managers) cope with work and non-work conflict?
i. Your organisation:

_____
_____
_____

ii. Organisations generally:

_____
_____
_____

49) What do you think your family (including extended family, friends, and religious colleagues) should do to help you cope with work-life conflict?

_____
_____
_____

50) Do you have any additional comments/suggestions regarding work-life conflict and/or organisational policies that can help in balancing work and non-work responsibilities?

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU. YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY IS MUCH APPRECIATED!!!!

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 05 September 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/141/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Work-Life Conflict Experiences and Cultural Expectations of Women Managers in the Public Sector of Limpopo Province.

Researcher: MF Rangongo
Supervisor: DR S Makwembere
Co-Supervisor/s: Prof MP Sebola
School: School of Economics and Management
Degree: Doctor of Commerce

PROF TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:
i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

APPENDIX E: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

N J Nel
PO Box 365,
BENDOR PARK
0713

Tel: 0741849600

CERTIFICATE

This serves to certify that I have language edited the Doctoral Thesis of

Ms FLORAH RANGONGO MAMOLOKO

Student number: 9911558

Entitled:

"WORK-LIFE CONFLICT EXPERIENCES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS OF WOMEN MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE."

N J Nel

Lecturer of English, Department Applied Languages
Tshwane University of Technology
(Retired)

24/ 06/ 2020

APPENDIX F: WORK-LIFE BALANCE MODELS

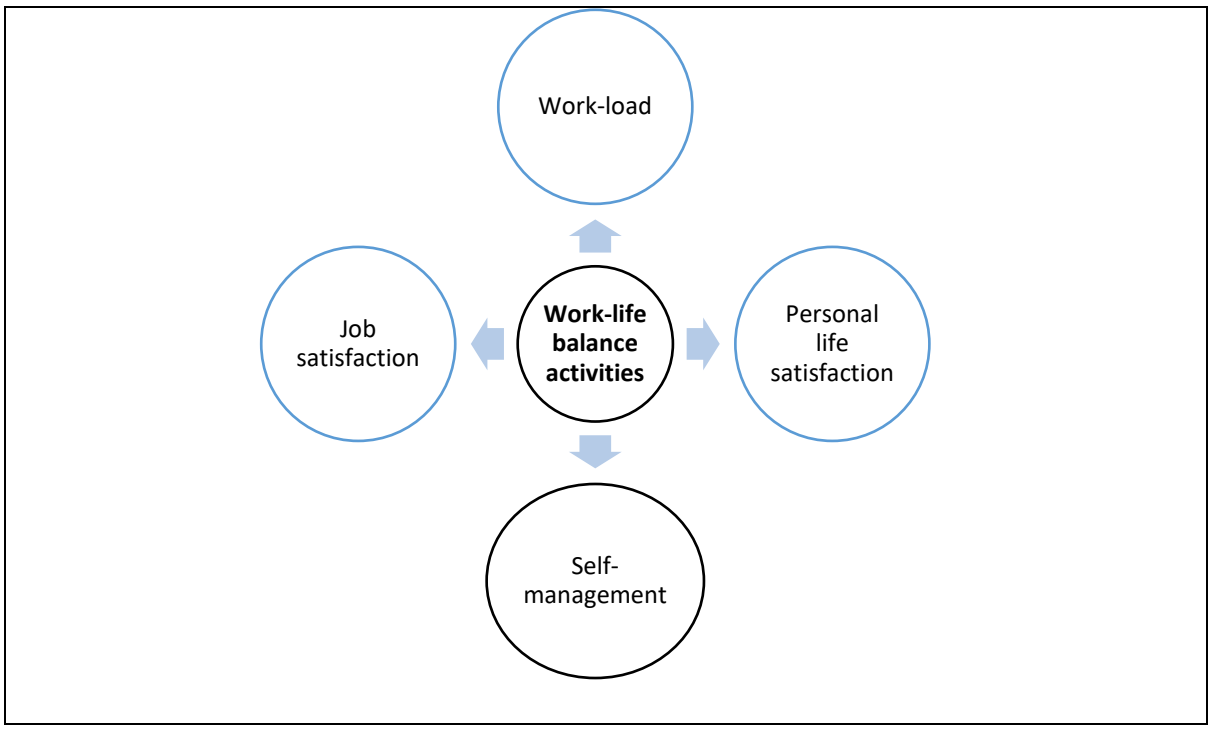


Figure 1: Proposed model for studying impact of work-life balance activities (Pavani, Rao & Kumar, 2017, p.559)

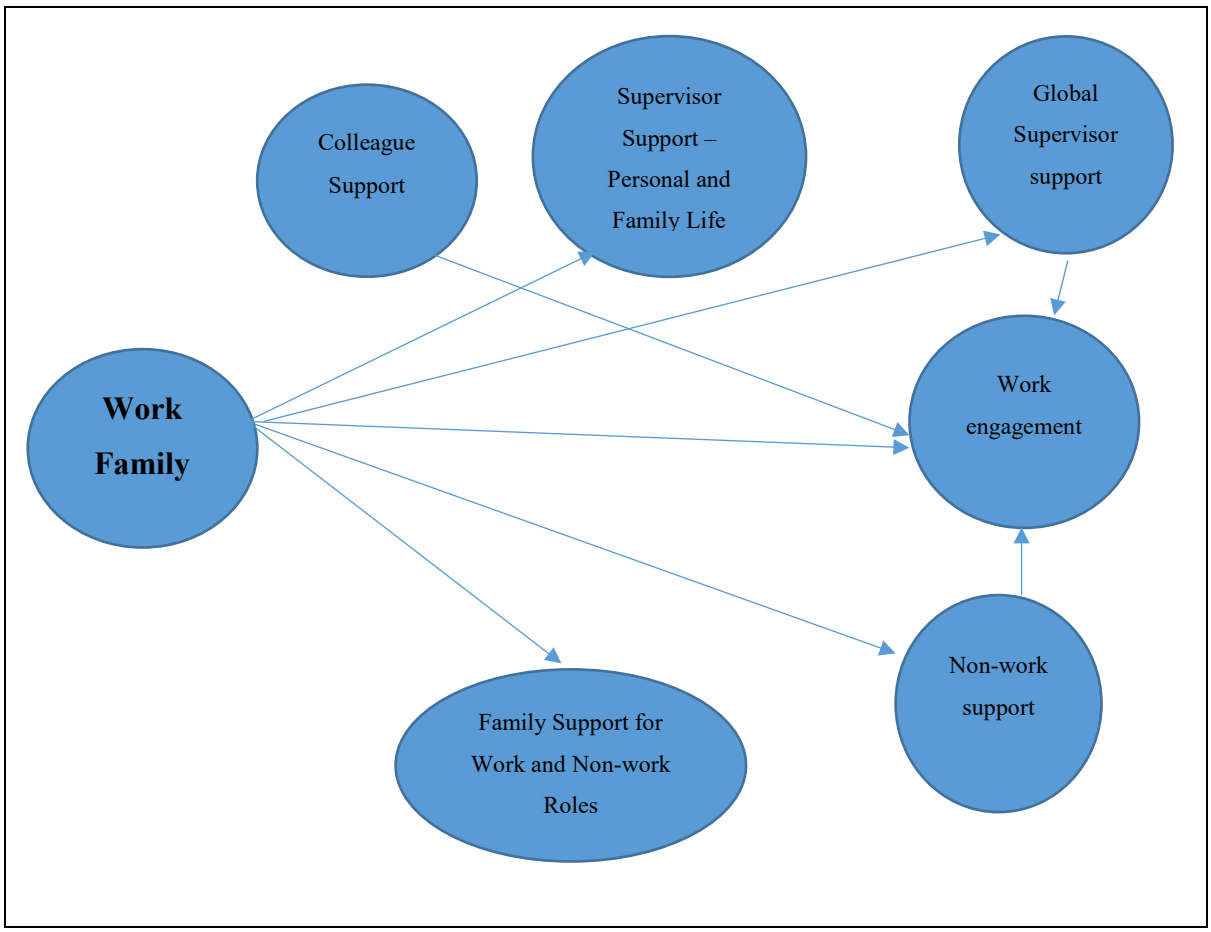


Figure 4.1. Final Path Model (Martin, 2013, p. 142)

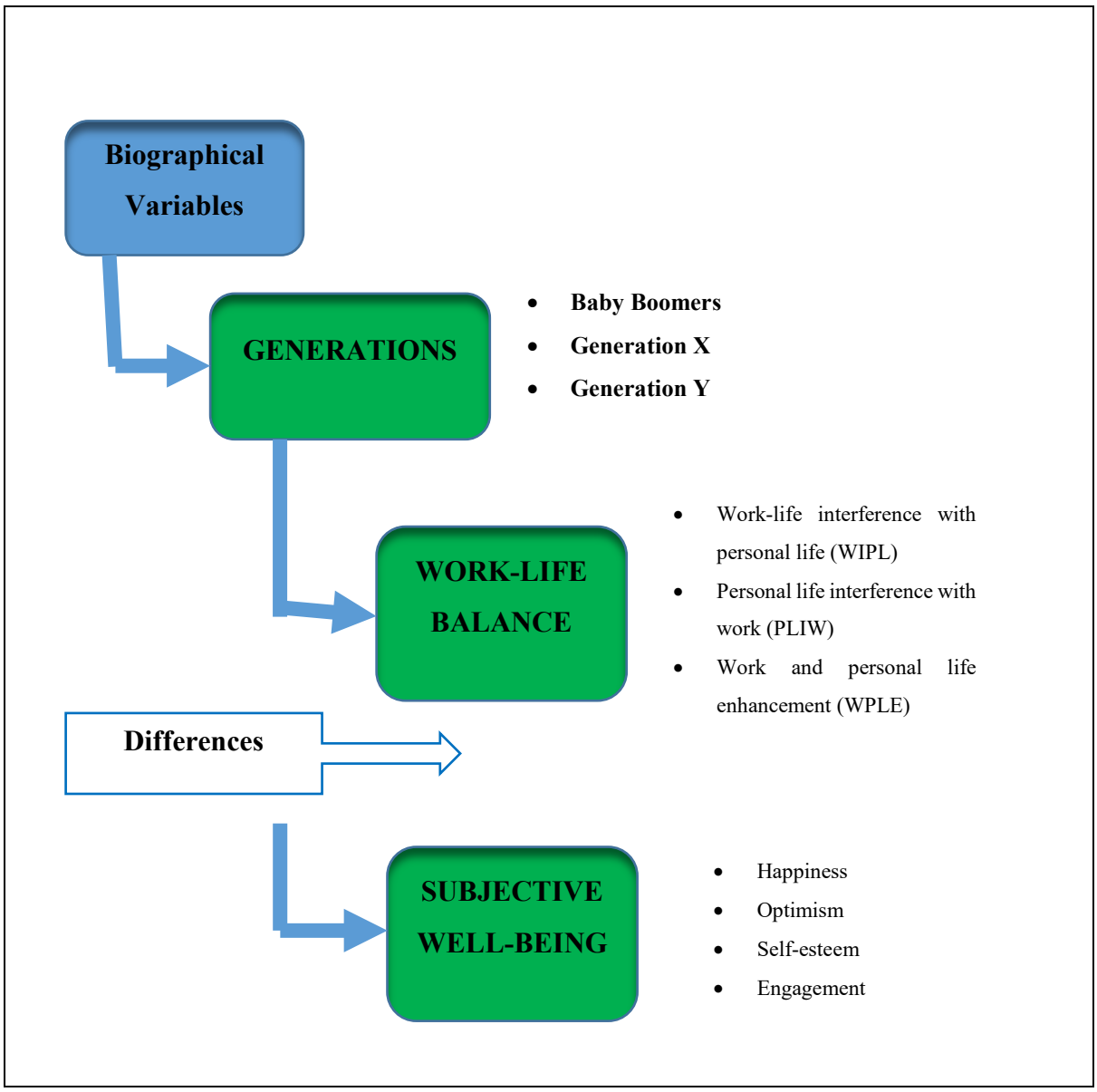
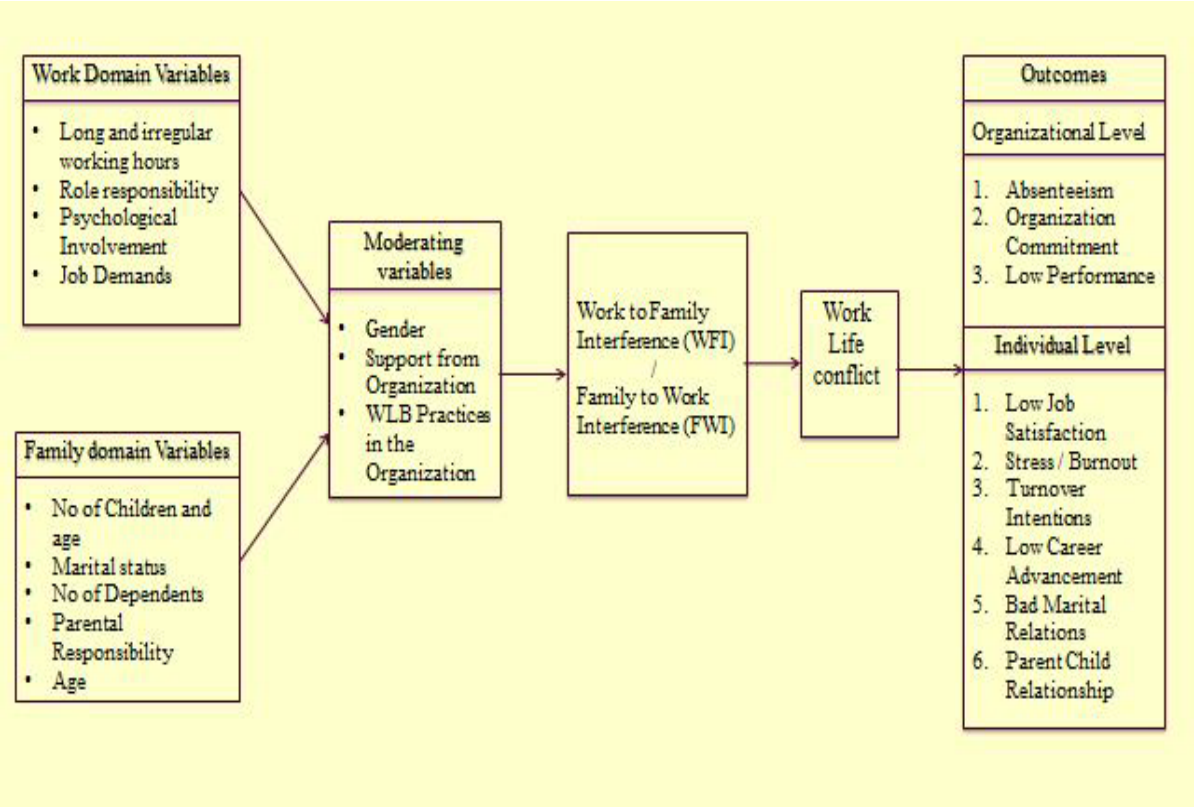


Figure 8.1: Proposed theoretical model (van der Linde, 2019, p.186)



"**Fig: 4 Consolidated Model explaining the relationship of Individuals work-life conflict and its outcomes affecting the organization**." (Raisinghani1 & Goswami, 2014, p. 54).

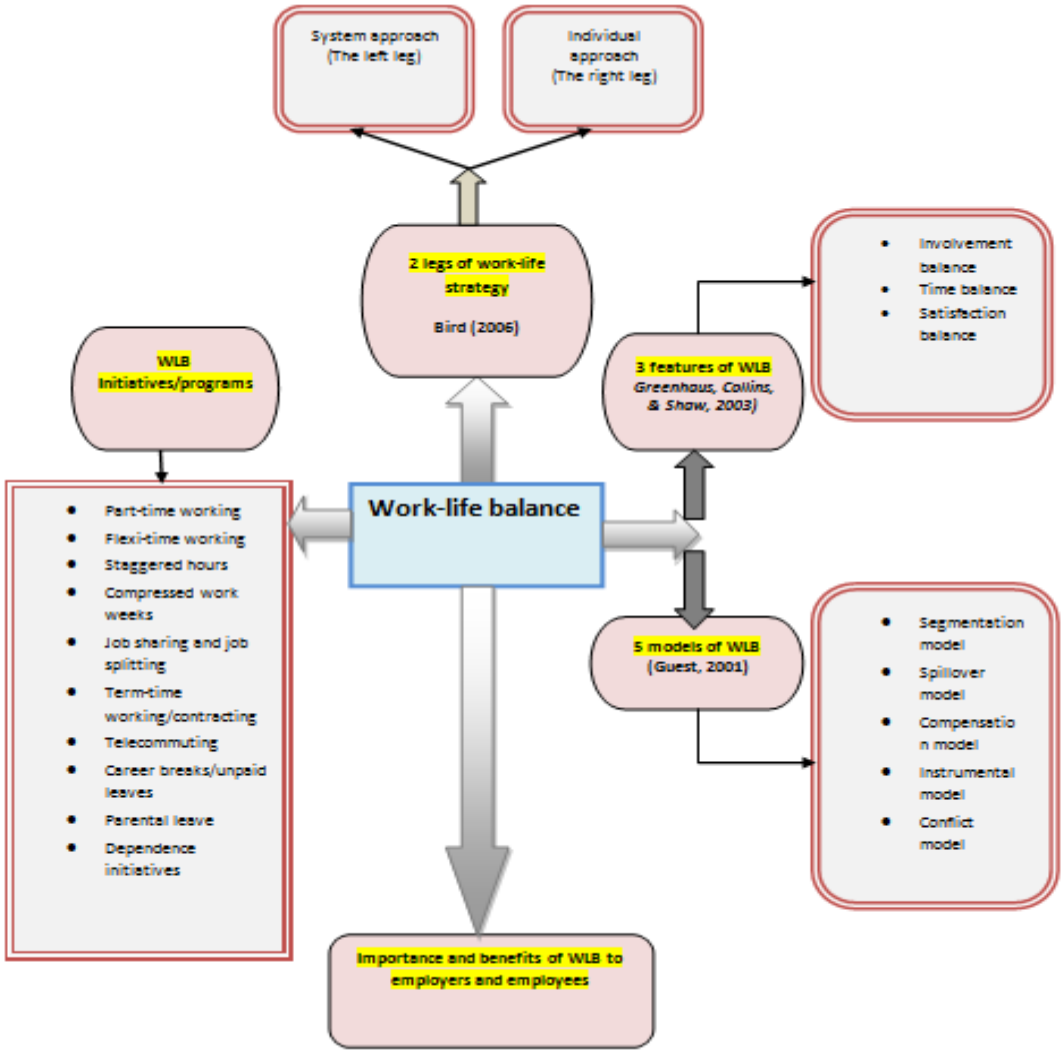


Fig 1. Work-Life Balance Model (A win-win situational tool for the employees and organizations) (Tariq et al., 2012, p.579)